

Announcing the 2017 Wisconsin Volunteer Stream Monitoring Award Recipients

Since 2002, the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have recognized exemplary work in volunteer stream monitoring in Wisconsin with the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Awards Program. Individuals and groups are recognized for their efforts leading to increased participation in stream monitoring, collecting valuable stream data, and sharing their knowledge of stream monitoring with others.



Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Milwaukee Riverkeeper is an organization working for swimmable, fishable rivers throughout the Milwaukee River Basin. Milwaukee Riverkeeper volunteers have been involved in water quality monitoring through an association with the Water Action Volunteers program since 2006. The group supports volunteers at sites throughout the Milwaukee River Basin who monitor for the introductory level of Water Action Volunteers, self-fund total phosphorus monitoring and road salt monitoring, and participate in stream aesthetics monitoring. In partnership with the Urban Ecology Center, Carroll University, UW-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences and the School of Public Health, they piloted an emerging contaminants monitoring project which included collecting water samples from 14 sites the Saturday after Thanksgiving and analyzing those samples for typical holiday spices!

Dick Tripp

Dick Tripp began monitoring in the Lower Sugar River in 2012 when the Lower Sugar River Watershed Association (LSRWA) held its first training session. He and his wife Meredith completed the training and started Water Action Volunteers Level 1 and phosphorus sampling on sites on the Juda Branch and Sylvester Creek. Today, Dick is coordinating the LSRWA monitoring efforts and has also coordinated sampling and monitoring with the Lake Winnetka Sugar River Improvement Association. In total, Dick has sampled eighteen sites and his efforts are a big reason the LSRWA has been able to complete multi-year sampling of all 11 sub-watersheds in the Lower Sugar River as well as all of the subwatersheds in the Middle Sugar River. Dick is personally committed to quality improvements to the river and exudes a passion and knowledge of river conditions.

Dick and Judi Oehler

Dick and Judi's participation in Water Action Volunteers has spanned more than a decade and includes nearly all possible monitoring projects and activities. In addition to extensive Level 1 (introductory) and Level 2 (status and trends) monitoring, they participated in a multistate and multi-method E. coli bacteria monitoring study, which resulted in recommended best practices for volunteer monitoring that have been used by multiple programs in the US and other countries. They also assisted with a streamflow monitoring methods comparison study and participate in the total phosphorus monitoring project, collecting monthly water samples from the Deerskin River each May through October. Dick and Judi have enthusiastically shared their passion for monitoring as well as their data, when making presentations to the Trout Unlimited Chapter and working with students from the local middle school and their visiting student guests from China. Over the years, the Oehlers have helped sustain the Deerskin monitoring group and have shared knowledge, passion and respect for the river and its surroundings. They have succeeded in their goal of creating a long-term data set that paints a picture of the river's health for the benefit of current users, managers and future generations.

Jean Abreu

From 1998 through her retirement in 2016, teacher, Jean Abreu, monitored a site on the Rib River with her students. She used monitoring activities to expose her students to the environment and provide an understanding of water quality monitoring. During this time, Jean also worked with the Marathon County Land Conservation Department to share her monitoring results with them and others who were interested in the data she had collected. In 2006, Jean secured grant funds to collect continuous temperature data that she used in her classroom and supplied to the local Trout Unlimited Chapter and the DNR. Jean also contributed to the development of the TMDL for the Big Eau Pleine Flowage. For six years she collected monthly water chemistry samples from three locations. The data from student monitoring was shared with the Lake Association