



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Establishing a volunteer stream monitoring program in rural southwest Ohio](#)

To comply with the Butler County Ohio Storm Water Management Plan, the Butler County Storm Water District (BCSWD) teamed up with the Institute of Environmental Sciences (IES) at Miami University and the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District (BSWCD) to promote and implement a monthly volunteer stream monitoring program to assess local stream quality. This program is modeled after the Saturday Stream Snapshot Program conducted by the Greenacres Foundation on the Little Miami River. Each entity brings different perspectives and insight to the project. IES provides the laboratory equipment and technical expertise for chemical and bacteria analyses, BCSWD provides input on regulatory requirements and funding of expenses, and BSWCD provides outreach coordination. The target area is the rural part of southwest Ohio. The partners jointly determined the criteria for establishing a successful volunteer monitoring program which includes a safe sample collecting method, a realistic sampling and data quality goal and a unique outreach approach. In addition, the partners are working with Ohio EPA on ensuring the sampling and analytical procedures are credible through the OEPA credible data program. To simplify the sampling method, volunteers are given a basket collector to lower to the center of a stream from a bridge/overpass to collect the stream samples. A simple sampling device was invented to alleviate the risk of unreachable sample locations and unsafe situations for sample collection. The partners also developed the idea of promoting the monthly stream sampling at the local farmers markets. Booths were set up the week before the sampling event to distribute sampling bottles and again set up on the sampling day to collect samples from volunteers. These efforts promote collaboration of local entities where the benefits of students learning from practical experience, reaching out to a rural community and fulfilling regulatory requirements can all be achieved.

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