



Citizens Monitoring *E. coli* Bacteria in Streams

Summary: Seeking fourteen citizens interested in participating in a research study about *E. coli* bacteria monitoring in streams during summer 2006.

Project Background: Six upper Midwest states were awarded a three year grant starting in 2004 to conduct research that:

- compares home lab methods for monitoring *E. coli* vs. standard laboratory methods
- assesses citizens' preferences about each of the home lab methods

Volunteer in two states (IN and IA) assessed five methods in 2004 and a recommendation was made for which methods to use in the other four participating states (MI, WI, OH, MN) for 2005. Two methods were chosen to be tested in these states due to the methods' strong correlation with lab results, similar rating by volunteer monitors and similar costs. The chosen methods were 3M Petrifilm and Coliscan Easygel. During 2006 monitoring will continue in MI, MN, OH and WI with the methods recommended based on both 2004 and 2005 comparison and preference data. For more information about the project, visit:

<http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/EColi/index.html>

Volunteer Monitor Responsibilities: Volunteers who participate in monitoring in 2006 must:

- Attend (in its entirety) a 3 hour training session to be held in late April or early May on a weekday evening or weekend day in an area local to the volunteers
- Commit to sample on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday morning a minimum of 8 times between May and September 2006
- Be available three days in a row (including the sampling day and the two days following the sampling day) each time they sample in order to initially sample and prepare plates (day 1) and then count bacteria colonies (days 2 and 3). This will take approximately 2 hours the first day (if sample site is within a 20 minute drive from the monitor's home), and approximately 1/2 to 1 hour each of the following two days.
- Store sterile monitoring supplies in their refrigerator and freezer, and other supplies in their home
- Complete a series of surveys about the training and opinions about the monitoring methods they will follow
- Turn in data to Kris Stepenuck in a timely fashion (addressed and stamped envelopes will be provided to the volunteers)
- Report problems to Kris Stepenuck (or local contact) as they arise

Volunteer qualifications:

- No science background is needed, training will be provided to those who are interested and able to meet the defined responsibilities
- Ability to walk along river banks and enter the water to access a monitoring site
- Enjoyment of the outdoors
- Concern for the community and its environment
- Must not have color-blindness impairment

Training will be provided by the Water Action Volunteers Program

For more information about this opportunity contact:

Kris Stepenuck

210 Hiram Smith Hall

1545 Observatory Drive

Madison, WI 53706-1289

Phone: 608-265-3887

kfstenuck@wisc.edu

Web: <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav>