

The background of the slide is a photograph of two aluminum rowing boats on a calm body of water. The boats are positioned in the upper left and center of the frame. The water is dark and reflects the sky and the boats. The text is overlaid on this image.

Getting Started in Volunteer Monitoring

Things to Think About Before Getting Your Feet Wet

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Workshop Overview

- 💧 **Introductions** (10 minutes)
- 💧 **Getting Started in Volunteer Monitoring** (25 minutes)
- 💧 **NJ's Tiered Approach to Volunteer Monitoring** (25 minutes)
- 💧 **Let's Play ... *Name that Tier*** (30 minutes)



Introductions

- 💧 Who are you?
- 💧 Where are you from?
- 💧 Are you currently involved with volunteer monitoring
- 💧 In thirty seconds tell us
what is your main reason for taking this workshop?



Session Overview

- 💧 Characteristics of Successful Programs
- 💧 Program Development
- 💧 Training Tips
- 💧 Funding Ideas and Issues
- 💧 Equipment and Resources

Your handout is the long version, this presentation is the short one



Successful Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Programs are. . .

- 💧 Well-organized
- 💧 Sound scientific basis 
- 💧 Report results
- 💧 Strong institutional support
- 💧 Make a difference

Successful Programs Make A Difference

- 💧 Involve people in real science
- 💧 Raise awareness
- 💧 Create an informed constituency
- 💧 Promote individual actions for water quality protection
- 💧 Provide information on places where no one else is looking
- 💧 Identify & solve problems locally



Getting Started Compile Information



- 💧 About the resource
- 💧 About the goals of the organization/community
- 💧 About current & past monitoring or research efforts
- 💧 About volunteer monitoring

**Why are you getting started in
volunteer monitoring?**



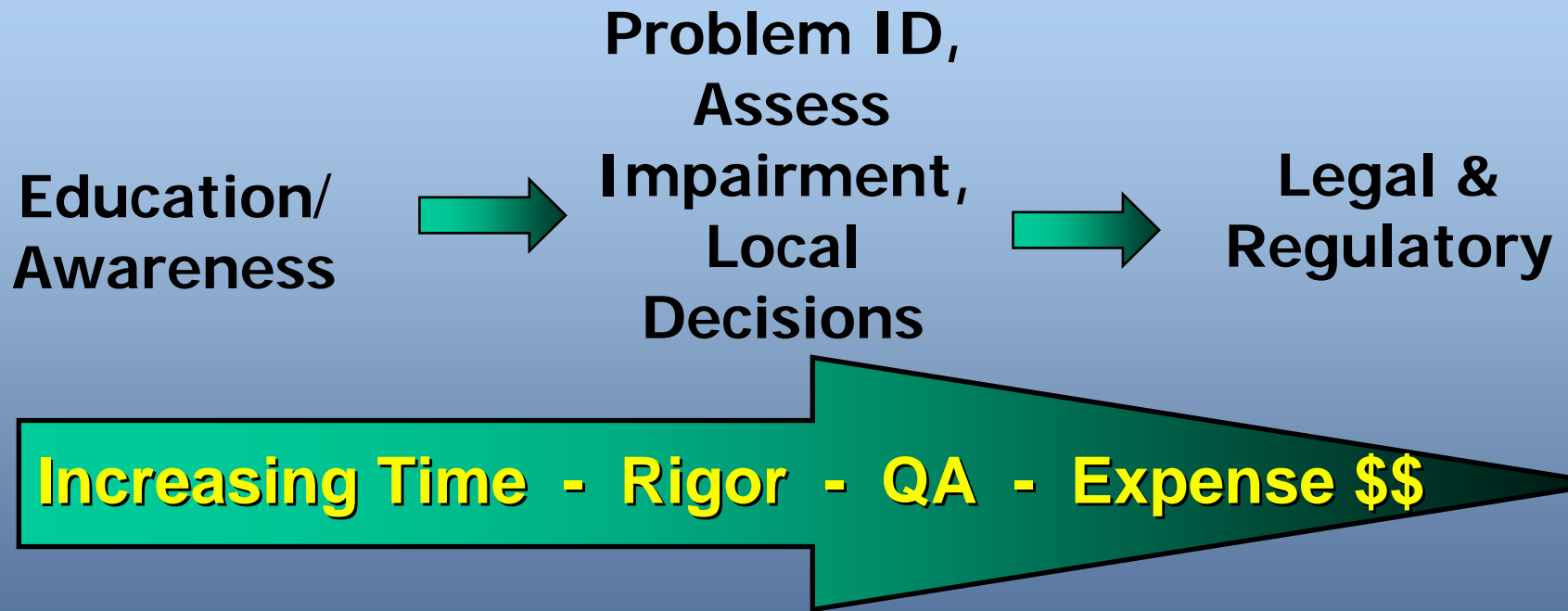
Assessing What is Possible

Consider

- 💧 Skills and knowledge
- 💧 Potential data uses and users
- 💧 Level of commitment
- 💧 Financial resources

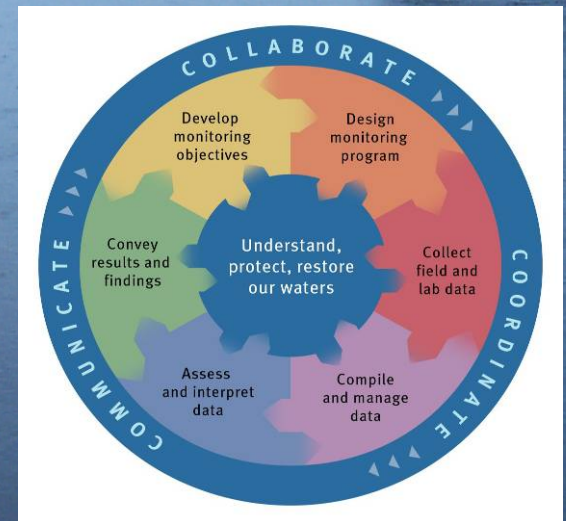


The Continuum of Monitoring Data Use



Program Planning: *The Framework for Monitoring*

- Assess the need
- Develop objectives
- Design your program
- Collect the data
- Compile and manage data
- Assess and interpret data
- Convey results and findings
- Evaluate your program



National Water Quality Monitoring Council "A Framework for Monitoring"

Goals and Objectives

💧 **Goal – where do you want to go?**

- I want to swim in Deep Reservoir

💧 **Objectives – Specific and measurable**

- To be able to see the bottom from my dock
- To reduce # of algal blooms in Deep Reservoir
- “Reduce phosphorus concentrations in runoff by 35%”

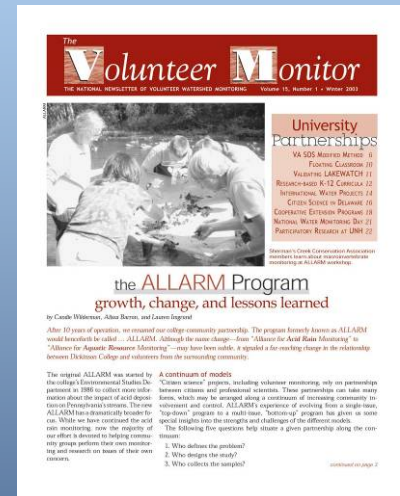
💧 **Revise as needed to reflect successes, changes in priorities, or program expansion**

**Start small,
start simple**



Useful Sources to Locate Methods

- EPA Guidance Manuals
- *The Volunteer Monitor* newsletter
- LaMotte/Hach kits and catalog
- Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater
- Secchi Dip-In website (<http://dipin.kent.edu/>)
- Conferences
- Listservs
- NEMI (<http://www.nemi.gov/>)

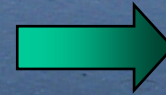




Education/
Awareness



Problem ID,
Assess
Impairment,
Local
Decisions



Legal &
Regulatory

Increasing Time - Rigor - QA - Expense \$\$

Program Management Design Considerations

- 💧 All volunteer, paid staff or combo
 - Dedicated staff is critical to success
- 💧 Home organization
 - ✓ University
 - ✓ Agency
 - ✓ County Extension
 - ✓ Non Governmental Organization



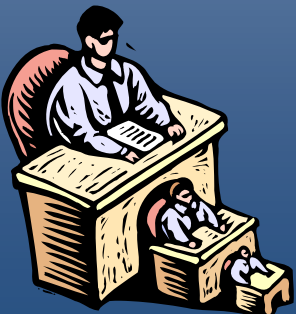
Program Design: Umbrella vs. direct management

**Umbrella – acts as
a service provider**

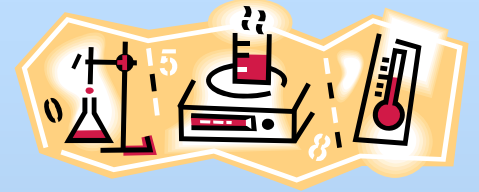
- 💧 Training
- 💧 Equipment
- 💧 Analytical support
- 💧 Data interpretation

**Direct management –
provides all of the
umbrella services *plus***

- 💧 Volunteer recruitment and management
- 💧 Data reporting and presentation
- 💧 Budgeting and financial management



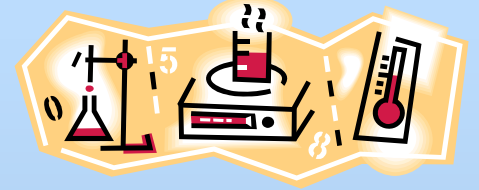
Program Design: In house vs. contract lab



In house – program has own equipment and analysts

- 💧 **Resource intensive - requires physical space, equipment and expertise**
- 💧 **Convenient – especially for re-sampling**
- 💧 **Allows the program full control of QA/QC**
- 💧 **Can be limited by what you already have available**

Program Design: In house vs. contract lab

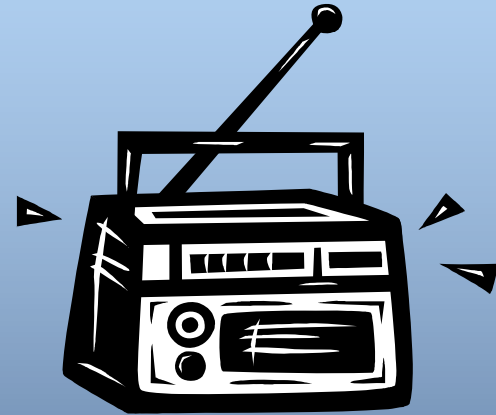


Contract – samples sent to an established lab

- 💧 **Less resource intensive – but can be expensive on a per sample basis**
- 💧 **Easier – little technical knowledge needed**
- 💧 **Depend upon the lab for QA/QC**
 - 💧 **Watch for detection limits!**
- 💧 **Sometimes viewed as more credible**

Recruiting Volunteers

- 💧 Articles in newspapers/newsletters
- 💧 Community organizations - churches
- 💧 Schools/Youth groups
- 💧 Shoreline residents
- 💧 Sporting/envIRON. organizations
- 💧 Fairs, festivals, community events
- 💧 Inserts in utility bills
- 💧 Word of mouth



Effective Volunteer Training Is...

💧 Essential for
Program Success

💧 Essential for
Volunteer Success

“Well-run
volunteer
programs
recruit
automatically.
Build a better
program and
the
volunteers
will beat a
path to your
door.”

101 Ways to Recruit Volunteers, S. McCurley and
S. Vineyard, Heritage Arts Publishing Co., 1986

Training is a Process that Flows Throughout the Program

- 💧 **Orientation (classroom)**
- 💧 **Monitoring Skills (class & field)**
- 💧 **Field visits by staff (field)**
- 💧 **QA/QC testing (lab or field)**
- 💧 **Annual refresher / re-certification**
- 💧 **Advanced training**

Group versus One-on-One

Group:

- 💧 Saves time and money
- 💧 Volunteers can learn from others
- 💧 Can not address unique problems or characteristics of individual waterbodies

One-on-One:

- 💧 Time consuming and expensive
- 💧 Procedures learned under actual conditions the volunteer will encounter
- 💧 Can account for unique situations

Training Tips

💧 Avoid learning overload

- ✓ Break topics into manageable chunks
- ✓ Repeat information through multiple sessions

💧 Make use of experts/practioners

- ✓ Provides new perspective
- ✓ Change in style and voice

💧 Provide on-site assistance

- ✓ Builds confidence
- ✓ Assures technical proficiency

Resources Available for Monitoring Programs:



You aren't alone

River Network Mission



To help people collect, understand and use information about the health of their rivers and the people who depend on them

Program Support-Nationwide

💧 EPA (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/>)

- What Volunteer Monitoring Is
- Volunteer Monitoring Methods
- National Directory of Volunteer Monitoring Programs
- *Volunteer Monitor* Newsletter
- QAPP Guidance

💧 EPA regions



Program Support-Nationwide

💧 CSREES Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Project

✓ www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer

- Monitoring Manuals
- Quality Assurance Project Plans
- Education and Outreach Materials
- Examples of Data Reporting
- Program Contact Information
- Current Research with / about Volunteers



Volunteer Monitoring List Servs

💧 volmonlists@epa.gov

💧 csreesvolmon@lists.uwex.edu

💧 Post queries see who responds

✓ Exchanges archived at

www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer



Volunteer Monitoring: Cost Effective – Not Cost Free

- 💧 Staff (incredibly hard-working, usually underpaid)
- 💧 Field and lab equipment and supplies
- 💧 Laboratory space or analytical services
- 💧 Office supplies
- 💧 Communication and mailing
- 💧 Publications
- 💧 Conferences / workshops
- 💧 Transportation (personnel or samples)
- 💧 Insurance
- 💧 Special events / volunteer recognition



Consider Charging for Services

- 💧 Greater value often placed on things with a cost
- 💧 Supports the program
- 💧 Provides stability – which can attract additional funds
- 💧 Can be used for match
- 💧 Can enhance perception of credibility

Volunteer Effort As Match

Volunteer time can often be used as match

💧 Document effort

- ✓ Start/end time on data sheets

- ✓ Survey average time per sampling event

💧 Identify acceptable 'hourly rate' equivalent

- ✓ Independent Sector

(www.IndependentSector.org)

Currently \$18.04 (2005)

- ✓ Minimum wage

Keys to Success

- 💧 The more different funding sources you tap into, the more secure your financial base will be.
- 💧 Ongoing support is harder to find than start-up funding. But monitoring by nature is long-term, so funding needs to be long-term – keep focused.

More Keys to Success

- 💧 **Whoever is using the monitoring data – whether it's a government agency, university or community – should be helping pay for it.**
- 💧 **In-kind support, such as donations of technical expertise, equipment or laboratory analysis can really help keep a program going!**

Summary

- 💧 **Start by addressing the tough questions**
- 💧 **Determine objectives**
- 💧 **Develop a written plan**
- 💧 **Form partnerships/involve partners**
- 💧 **Use both classroom and field training sessions**
- 💧 **Seek varied sources of funding**
- 💧 **Use all available resources**
- 💧 **Applaud your volunteers!**

THANKS!

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✓ www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer

✓ www.uri.edu/ce/wq click on URI
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✓ 609-633-9241

✓ www.nj.gov/dep/watershed_mgt/

