

**Workshop:**  
**Start with the End in Mind: Key Ingredients for Effectively Putting Your Data to Use**

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**ABSTRACT**

Well designed monitoring programs have clear goals for their data – whether it's building a solid water quality database for future trend analysis or documenting a pollution source in the watershed. Defining your data use, data users and developing a data communication plan is too often an afterthought for many monitoring programs. It is vital to define your data users and your uses as you start to plan your monitoring program. All too often volunteers try to fit their data/information into classic data use scenarios. When asked about data use goals for their program, volunteer program coordinators will often respond "we want our data to be used by the state," when in reality they are action-oriented and truly interested more interested in protecting, improving, or making a difference in their favorite waterbody or watershed. The first part of this workshop will focus on the key ingredients to consider when you design a monitoring program. The second part of the workshop is designed to help volunteer water quality monitoring coordinators explore and share different methods for interpreting and presenting water quality information. We'll provide tips and tools for presenting complex water quality information in an effective, relevant way that stimulates interest and action – in particular examples and stories of successful data use beyond the realm of 303 d/305b reports, in other words data use for local change. Participants are welcome to bring examples of what has worked and not for them.

**KEYWORDS**

Program design, volunteer monitoring, data use, data users, outreach, watersheds