

Partnerships: The Key to Successful Volunteer Monitoring Ventures in Pennsylvania

Cheryl D. Snyder

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Watershed Management, P.O. Box 8555, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8555

Biographical Sketch of Author

Cheryl Snyder works as a biologist in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP), Bureau of Watershed Management and is DEP's Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator. She coordinates various activities for this statewide program and provides assistance to volunteer monitors in water quality sampling, biological monitoring, habitat assessment, streamside physical monitoring and watershed restoration project monitoring as well as helping volunteers develop study designs for their monitoring programs. Cheryl has worked in a number of water programs for DEP since 1986.

Abstract

Volunteer monitoring has increased in Pennsylvania with the addition of resources from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Program (CVMP) and the increased availability of watershed restoration grant monies. To meet volunteer needs, the CVMP developed numerous partnerships. Three of these successful partnerships (a combination agency/volunteer driven partnership, an agency-driven partnership and a partnership where the CVMP provides oversight and technical assistance) will be discussed. A volunteer lake monitoring program partnership exists between the CVMP and the Clean Lakes Program (a program supported by the Department's Nonpoint Source Management Section). This combination agency/volunteer driven partnership has involved 24 volunteer groups monitoring a total of 28 lakes since 2001 with the CVMP providing a monitoring protocol, training, supplies and equipment. The volunteer bacteria-monitoring partnership, an agency-driven partnership, provides the DEP with data to confirm stream bacterial contamination and data for use in the 305(b) process. The CVMP provides sampling training, bottles, lab analysis and acts as a liaison between the volunteers and the Department's Assessments and Standards Division. The Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement monthly water quality monitoring partnership engages senior volunteers in a monthly water quality monitoring program. The volunteers monitor flow and water quality monthly while assessing habitat and identifying macroinvertebrates twice a year. The CVMP provides technical guidance to the program that currently services 51 of 67 counties in Pennsylvania. These partnerships are the key to successful volunteer monitoring projects and demonstrate that collaboration between volunteers and agencies results in grassroots watershed stewardship in Pennsylvania.

* * * * *