

College Community Partnerships as a Path to Building & Sustaining Successful Volunteer Monitoring & Watershed Assessment Programs

Lauren S. Imgrund

The Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring, Dickinson College, Environmental Studies Dept.,
PO Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013

Biographical Sketch of Author

Lauren Imgrund is the Director of The Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM) at Dickinson College. She is responsible for leadership of the ALLARM program including overseeing the operation, managing the budget, fundraising, training, and supervising the staff. She develops and executes technical assistance to watershed organizations and represents ALLARM on state and non-profit advisory panels. Lauren has worked in the conservation field for 15 years and has a B.S. in Environmental Science from Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA.

Abstract

The Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM) a community science project of the Environmental Studies Department at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA has collaborated with Pennsylvania volunteers in citizen science and water quality monitoring initiatives since its founding in 1986. ALLARM has two major goals: to build and enhance the effectiveness of community watershed organizations by providing capacity building programmatic and technical assistance; and, to provide Dickinson College students with opportunities to apply their classroom knowledge to work with these organizations thereby enhancing and enriching the college curriculum.

ALLARM is an excellent example of the mutual value of a strong partnership between an academic institution and its community. This presentation will focus on the power and challenge of college-community partnerships for water quality monitoring programs. It will address the benefits to the community, the college, and the students. The focus will be on how a college acting as a service provider can bridge the gap between scientists, policy makers and the community; and, how community-based participatory research projects can be an effective vehicle for meaningful undergraduate science education. Also discussed will be institutional obstacles particularly in terms of the traditional science curriculum and the commitment of college resources required for this type of project. In addition the challenges of partnering with volunteer-driven community groups will be examined.

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