

## **Volunteer Lake Water Quality Data – An Effective Tool for Lake Management**

Elizabeth Herron, University of Rhode Island  
URI Watershed Watch Program  
Department of Natural Resources Science  
CIK, 1 Greenhouse Road  
Kingston, RI 02881

### **ABSTRACT**

Volunteers have been monitoring lakes for more than 30 years in some places, creating extraordinarily useful long-term datasets. The goal of most volunteer lake water quality monitoring programs is to provide information on overall lake and watershed condition, baseline data, on which to base management decisions. However, these unique data are often put to unexpected or unplanned uses. By integrating volunteer generated data with that of other monitoring efforts, these data can help in the development of total daily maximum loads, in assessing the effectiveness of restoration activities, the impact of watershed development or even the susceptibility of a lake to invasion by invasive species. This presentation will briefly review the history of lake volunteer monitoring and the parameters typically monitored, highlight some of the diverse uses to which volunteer data have been put.

### **KEYWORDS**

Water quality, monitoring, lakes, watersheds, volunteer monitoring, TMDL, invasive species.