Volunteer Monitoring: A Sound Investment

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ALLARM Background

• Empower communities with scientific tools to carry out water quality assessments.

Role of Volunteers

- Effective eyes, ears, and voices of local waterways
Volunteer Monitoring Programs

• Customized (resource and time intensive)

• Standardized (large geographic range, upfront resource and time investment)
Upfront Investment

1. Data use
2. Coordinator positions
3. Protocol & equipment identification
4. Quality assurance/quality control
5. Data management
1. Data Use

- Think through data use before starting a volunteer program
2. Coordinator positions

- Point person
- Big picture
3. Protocol & Equipment Identification

- Research appropriate protocols and equipment
4. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

• Make sure volunteers are using equipment and protocols correctly and collecting credible data
5. Data Management

- Clear protocols for data entry
Continuous Investment

1. Training
2. QA/QC
3. Volunteer Appreciation
Volunteer Appreciation

• Key to retaining volunteers
Pennsylvania Example

- 2009 budget cuts
  - 258 positions lost
  - $60 M budget cut

- Marcellus Shale Natural Gas
  - Flow back, incident monitoring
Role of Volunteers

- 250 volunteers
- Collect weekly TDS, conductivity, and visual data
- 250 volunteers x 2 hours x 52 wks x $19.61 = $509,860
Questions?

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