

# **Regional Biological Monitoring: A coordinated effort by professional and volunteer monitors**

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## **Biographical Sketch of Author**

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## **Abstract**

In 2001, two biomonitoring programs were initiated in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA). The Stream Biomonitoring Program at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES), the regional planning agency for the TCMA; and, the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Partnership (VSMP) at the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center.

The vision of these two programs is to develop a picture of the biological integrity of the streams in the TCMA. The Stream Biomonitoring Program at MCES supplements the existing Stream Water Quality Monitoring Program, which characterizes stream water quality by monitoring flow and collecting samples during run-off events and baseflow conditions. The samples are analyzed for a variety of non-point source pollutants. The biomonitoring data will be used to establish reference information about the biological communities and habitat in TCMA streams. VSMP is supporting regional volunteer stream monitoring programs by promoting citizen monitoring, suggesting monitoring strategies, and providing training and support for citizen volunteers.

Each monitoring program adds value to the other, and the programs work together in several ways. In 1999, the Metropolitan Council provided \$400,000 to VSMP to fund the first two years of the program. MCES staff members work closely with VSMP staff to hire VSMP staff; determine VSMP sampling protocols; and develop a data management system, including a centralized database at MCES with web-accessible data entry forms. VSMP extends MCES monitoring efforts by increasing the number of sites that are sampled each year.