

Why macroinvertebrates?

These aquatic animals spend all or part of their lives in the stream. Some macros can survive when the water is polluted, and some can't. We know the stream is healthy if we find lots of macros that can only survive in very clean water, Alternatively, if only pollution-tolerant macros are found, it indicates that there is a pollution problem. From there, further investigation is needed to determine the cause.

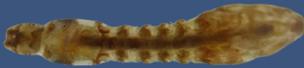


How is VA SOS data used?

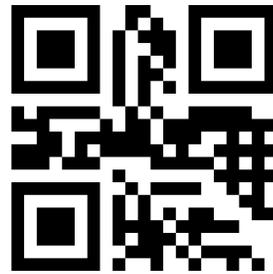
Data is...

- Uploaded to the Clean Water Hub (cleanwaterhub.org), where it is publicly available
- Included in the Chesapeake Data Explorer and used by the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Used by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to target streams for further monitoring, track restoration efforts, and educate the public

YOU can use VA SOS data to raise awareness and make a difference in your community.



Share it with local landowners and decision makers, incorporate it into editorial columns or opinion pieces, or bring it to public forums.



vasos.org

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Become a certified stream monitor!



vasos.org

What is Virginia Save Our Streams?

Since 1989, Virginia Save Our Streams (VA SOS) has monitored Virginia's streams and promoted public awareness of water quality. Volunteers assess stream health by collecting and identifying benthic macroinvertebrates — organisms whose diversity and abundance indicate pollution levels.



Why monitor?

Having site-specific and timely water quality information allows us to identify pollution problems and then work to solve them for the benefit of environmental and human health.

Only about 30% of US streams are monitored by professionals, so volunteer data is critical to fill the gap.



Monitoring



Who can be a monitor?

- Anyone 14 and older can become certified
- No prior stream monitoring experience necessary!
- Even if you can't get in the stream, you can help by identifying macroinvertebrates, submitting data, or coordinating other local volunteers and monitoring events

How do I start?

- Once you're certified, purchase the necessary monitoring equipment and request reimbursement from VA SOS
- Choose a stream site near you to monitor
- Grab a buddy (they don't need to be certified!) and monitor your stream once every spring and fall
- Submit your data to the Clean Water Hub



What is the time commitment?

- 2-4 hours per stream site twice per year
- Take on as many sample sites as you'd like!

Steps to Certification

✓ Complete Online Training

- ✓ Watch three webinars
- ✓ Fill out form
- ✓ Pass macroinvertebrate identification exam



iwla.org/sostraining



✓ Attend Field Training

- ✓ Find a scheduled event or reach out to a trainer near you
- ✓ Attend one or more 3-4 hour field sessions
- ✓ Pass protocol exam

Monitor and submit data to the Clean Water Hub at least once every two years to maintain your certification!

