

Data quality reviews

After completing a stream survey at their selected station, monitors mail their surveys to the program coordinator where data is analyzed for accuracy. Survey accuracy is determined by reviewing a number of questions on the survey form, which assist staff in determining if results are correct. For example, if native trout are known to be in the stream, yet results indicate a biologically dead stream, the monitoring is not considered correct.

The Program Coordinator and designated staff will review the field survey sheets and if there are any problems or questions, the monitors will be notified by mail, e-mail or phone of the corrections needed. After the review is completed, the coordinator will return the original field survey sheets to the monitor for their own records.

If the riffle is classified as "60 percent mud," an improper location was selected and results are not considered accurate. Also, answers to questions like "sample number" demonstrates that a monitor has taken three samples and has recorded the most diverse of the three samples. In situations where incongruities exist, monitors are called, and the results are discussed. Staff has found that usually a simple adjustment in monitoring technique or perhaps moving to a better location is all that is required to improve results. Monitors also submit letters with specific questions on identification problems or pollution issues. The program coordinator can assist monitors with these problems by phone or letter. Local program trainers can also be called upon for site visits or any further assistance that is required.

After results are deemed accurate by program staff the data is input into the Volunteer Access Database (VAD). The volunteer group can also access the VAD and enter data, however to ensure adequate quality the coordinator should first review the information. Once the coordinator completes the review, volunteer groups are encouraged to enter their own data and use the VAD as an outreach tool.