



“It’s a good learning experience for people our age, if you let people learn this stuff when they’re young, they’ll practice some of the principles later on.”
student Rufus King High School, Milwaukee



Natural resources and environmental issues impact many parts of our lives: our enjoyment of the out-of-doors and recreational pursuits; our connection to past history and culture; our personal health and the health of area plant and animal communities; and the economic health of the basin.

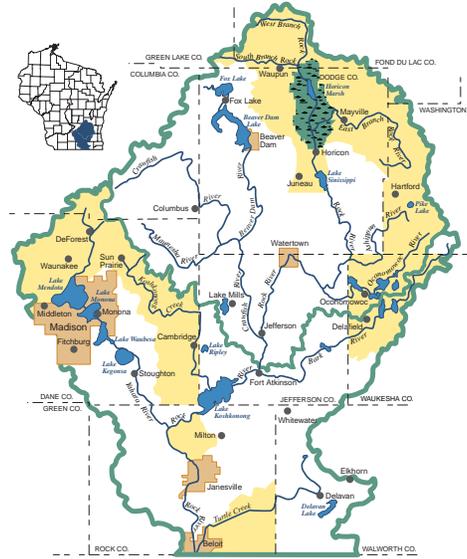
We believe that working together, we can make improvements in all of these areas.

Rock River Coalition

The Rock River Coalition is a private nonprofit organization composed of citizens, agencies, businesses and organizations dedicated to preserving and promoting the economic, cultural and environmental resources of the basin. The RRC has organized two basin forums, well abandonment demonstrations and conservation-minded subdivision workshops.

They have offered farmstead groundwater risk assessments to farmers, developed shoreline restoration projects in county parks and developed educational displays and brochures.

The **Rock River Basin** is the land area that drains to the Rock River. The basin covers more than 3,700 square miles. It stretches from the Theresa and Horicon marshes in the north to Beloit on the south; on the western border it includes most of Madison and the Yahara lakes, on the east is Oconomowoc with its own cluster of lakes. The basin is home to rich farmlands, thriving industries and flourishing communities, both large and small.

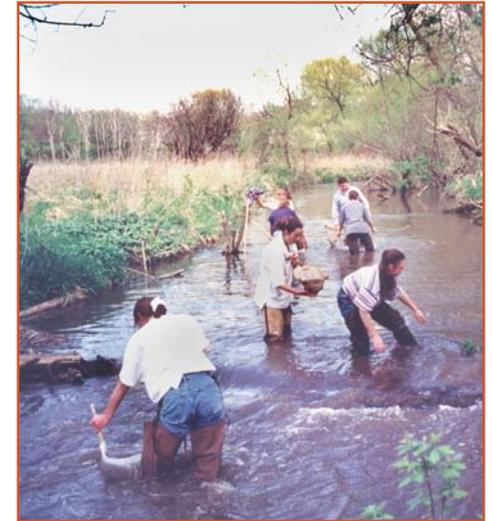


 Areas targeted for monitoring in 2002
 Cities in the Rock River Basin

Why Target Areas for Monitoring?

In each county there are watersheds where data is particularly important. We need to insure the most useable data is collected first. The local coordinator, (a Land Conservation Department staff person or Rock River Headwaters, Inc staff), can only work effectively with 6 –12 teams. Therefore, people interested in monitoring within the targeted areas will be accepted into the program first. If there is room for additional teams, then people who desire to monitor a river or stream not in the targeted area will be accepted. During future years the program will expand to other counties and watersheds in the basin.

Citizen Monitoring in the Rock River Basin



People involved in their community and the environment

Sponsored by the
 Rock River Coalition Inc
 Land & Water Conservation Departments in
 Washington, Waukesha, Rock & Dane counties
 Rock River Headwaters Inc
 University of Wisconsin-Extension
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Monitoring - a way to improve life in the Rock River Basin

Monitoring connects people to the natural world around them. It makes them part of the annual ebb and flow of life. Families and groups who look closely at one special area on a regular basis, not only learn about that area, but make a deeper connection with the environment and with each other. Monitors can be families, groups, friends or business teams. Schools and youth groups can also become involved.

Monitoring also provides valuable data for local resource agencies. One of the difficulties with making decisions about local resources is not having enough information. While volunteer data can't be used for regulatory purposes, it does provide important baseline and trend data. It is often the only data available.

Farmers and businesses are often skeptical of water quality concerns and their own impact on streams and rivers. This program allows them to find out for themselves, what the concerns are, what they are already doing that is positive for the environment and what they can do to further protect water quality.

Informed decision-makers need the skills, knowledge and desire to help solve complex environmental problems. Monitoring helps develop those skills in local citizenry, especially when the monitoring is combined with an annual sharing summit where concerns and questions are addressed.

What does a stream monitor do?

Stream monitors work in teams of 2-5 at a location selected with the help of the local Land and Water Conservation Department (LCD).

Monitoring teams are trained in measuring 6 important elements for stream health:

Dissolved oxygen, temperature, water clarity, habitat, water flow and everyone's favorite: ...stream invertebrate life (insects, worms, clams and crustaceans).

How about commitment?

Each team agrees to measure

Habitat once a year
Animal life and flow twice a year
Dissolved oxygen, temperature and clarity once a month, April - November

Each team sends their data to their coordinator every month to be included on a web-based accessible database.

Monitors have the opportunity to attend a fall summit, receive awards and celebrate successes together.



Where does the funding come from?

Initial funds are from a DNR River Protection Grant and UW-Extension. Additional funds are needed to make this program a success.

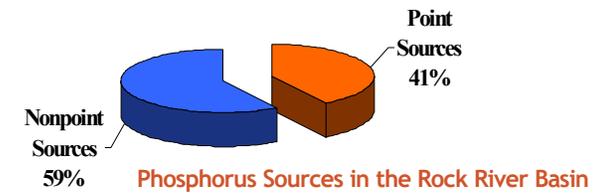
Currently foundations, businesses and groups are being asked to contribute to the program. No fees will be charged to the individual monitor.

Cost for each team is:

\$ 200 Equipment
\$ 140 Training and Summit
\$ 700 Local support - County Coordinators
\$ 700 Overall support - Project Director

\$1,740 total cost per team

The RRC welcomes any donations to support this program.



Nonpoint source or runoff pollutants include soil, nitrates, phosphorus, pesticides, organic matter, heavy metals, bacteria and other chemicals.

In rural stretches of the basin, farming practices can add large amounts of soil. Farm and golf courses add fertilizers and pesticides to our rivers and lakes.

In the suburbs, soil from construction sites adds sediment and phosphorus to our water, while failing septic systems contribute nitrates and bacteria.

In the city, every rain washes a smorgasbord of chemicals, leaves, litter, pet waste and debris into storm drains that rush water directly to streams, rivers and lakes.

Wastewater treatment plants and industry are point sources and currently contribute 41% of weed and algae growing phosphorus to our surface water.

How about lake, wetland, prairie or forest monitoring?

People interested in lakes and lake monitoring can join the DNR Self-Help Lake Monitoring Program by calling 608/267-7694.

Monitoring programs for wetlands, prairies and forests will be developed in the future. Contact Suzanne Wade at 920/674-8972 if interested in these programs.

People who monitor any of our natural resources will be invited to the annual Rock River Basin Monitoring Summit.

How do I get involved?

Contact the Rock River Coalition by calling 920/674-7443 or email rriver@excel.net for monitoring, membership or donor information.

You can contact the local coordinators directly:

Rock County 608-754-6617 ext 118
Dane County 608-224-3733
Washington County 262-335-3807
Waukesha County 262-896-8305
Rock River Headwaters, Inc 920-387-7865