

# How to be a Streamwatcher



More than 70 Streamwatchers monitor almost 100 sites in the Brodhead Watershed, acting as stewards of streams near their homes. Volunteers collect water quality data from one or more sites, working for one to two hours once a month. The data provides a graphic, long-term snapshot of the health of the streams. **This is a summary of the important work our volunteers do.**

## TESTING SITES

Test sites are chosen by Streamwatch team leaders for safety, convenience, and validity of test results. Volunteers are assigned a site near their homes if possible. Sites are marked with a "BWA Streamwatch Site" sign.



## TESTING AT THE SITE

As a scientific study, this procedure requires standardization and objectivity. Take your monthly readings from the same spot and at approximately the same time. Note the date, time, and weather, along with air and water temperatures.



There are three tests each month, using chemicals and equipment provided in a kit shared among team members. Each new Streamwatcher is trained in the use of these kits.

The streamside test measures pH levels. Record the water level (depth from stream bottom) of sample taken, as well as water clarity and color information. Fill a jar with water for tests at home.

## TESTING AT HOME

Once your water sample is at room temperature, the nitrate-nitrogen and ortho-phosphate tests can be done.



## AFTER THE TEST

It is extremely important to clean all monitoring equipment after use and store them in a cool, dry place, away from kitchen cleaners and other contaminants.

Waste from the pH test and ortho-phosphate test can be safely disposed of on the land, away from the stream, or down the drain. Waste from the nitrate-nitrogen test should be stored in a dedicated jar and, when full, given to your team leader for safe disposal.

## RECORD KEEPING

Record test results each month on field data sheets. Your team leader will request a copy of your data periodically. If there is a significant change in any test or conditions at the site, the team leader should be notified immediately. Volunteers should complete an Incident Report Form and call their team leader if they spot any unusual occurrence at their site(s).

*This is a brief summary of the Streamwatch procedure. The volunteer manual, with details and tips, is at [brodheadwatershed.org/SW/Volunteerpage.html](http://brodheadwatershed.org/SW/Volunteerpage.html).*

**Would you like to become a Streamwatcher? Contact BWA at 570-839-1120 or [info@brodheadwatershed.org](mailto:info@brodheadwatershed.org).**