

Water WoRDs

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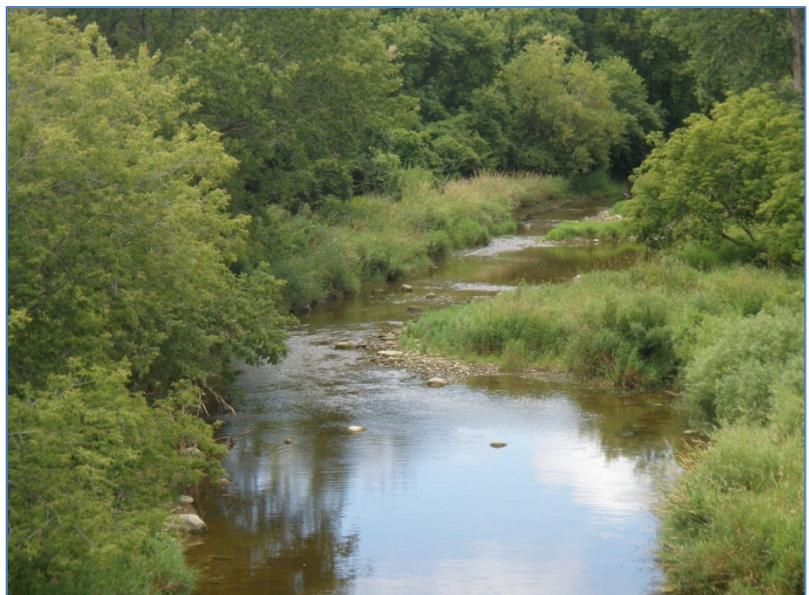
Calling All Water Quality Monitoring Requests!

Fall colors are upon us and snow-shoveling season will soon be here. It's the time of year when thoughts turn from enjoying summertime fun in Michigan's great out-of-doors to cooler weather activities and the hustle and bustle of the impending holidays. For staff in the Water Resources Division's Surface Water Assessment Section, the changing seasons signify a shift from "field work" toward planning for the upcoming year. Assessment Section staff are always interested in hearing about new opportunities to assess our water resources and are keeping an eye out for surface water monitoring requests to incorporate into their 2014 field season plans. We need your help!

The WRD welcomes monitoring requests from State agencies, environmental groups, other stakeholders, and the general public. A [monitoring request form](#) is available and must be submitted no later than November 15, 2013, for consideration. In an effort to improve both the targeted monitoring request submission and review processes, the request form has been updated from earlier versions. It is now available in a PDF file format, which is intended to be completed electronically and submitted as an attachment via e-mail. Several fields in the new form are highlighted in red and every attempt should be made to complete those essential fields. A separate document on the same Web page includes instructions on how to complete the new form.

Environmental monitoring is an integral part of the WRD Mission and relates to a number of the metrics within our [Measures of Success](#) strategy for protecting human health, improving aquatic resources, reducing untreated sewage discharges, restoring beneficial uses in Great Lakes Areas of Concern, and reducing the release of harmful contaminants.

The WRD's Assessment Section helps oversee the protection of the quality of surface waters (lakes, streams, and wetlands) throughout the State of Michigan. Driven by a [monitoring strategy developed in 1997 and revised in 2005](#), the Assessment Section monitors



nine interrelated elements: fish contaminants, water chemistry, sediment chemistry, biological integrity, wildlife contaminants, bathing beaches, inland lake quality and eutrophication, stream flow, and volunteer monitoring. The culmination of these monitoring elements provides a comprehensive picture of Michigan's surface waters.

Much of the monitoring performed by Assessment Section staff is done to assess either the current status of Michigan's surface waters or trends in water quality over time using a mix of randomly-selected and repeat-visit sites. However, staff typically conducts some supplemental monitoring, in addition to these "standard" monitoring activities, based upon input received via "targeted" monitoring requests suggested by interested individuals and organizations.

All monitoring recommendations submitted prior to the deadline are reviewed by WRD Assessment Section staff with expertise in the topic and/or familiarity with the region for which the request was made. A number of criteria are used to prioritize which monitoring requests can be fulfilled, including (but not limited to): urgency or severity of the problem, proximity of the requested monitoring to planned efforts (e.g., priority watersheds for 2014), and the costs associated with monitoring or analysis efforts.

Please consider adding the [WRD monitoring request form](#) to your autumn to-do list. Your suggestions are much appreciated and help Michigan maintain its tradition of protecting its water resources.

What do you do in the WRD? Meet Tom Alwin and Jeff Varricchione



Tom Alwin has worked for the Department of Environmental Quality since 2010. Tom earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at Michigan State University. He began his career in the DEQ issuing permits for chemical treatment of nuisance aquatic plants, and in 2012 transferred to an Aquatic Biologist position. His current responsibilities include: monitoring surface water quality, reviewing water quality monitoring grant applications, and assisting with the targeted monitoring process.



Jeff Varricchione has been an Aquatic Biologist for over 14 years. The past 3 years have been with the WRD Assessment Section. Jeff has a B.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont and a M.S. in Biology from Idaho State University. He spends his time monitoring water quality, biological communities, and habitats in streams, rivers, and lakes across the state and also co-coordinating both the DEQ's Water Chemistry Monitoring Program and targeted monitoring request process.