



Why Monitoring?

Because water covers about 70 percent of the Earth's surface, it may appear that we have an abundant supply. It is important to realize, however, that 97 percent of the supply is salt water, and two percent is fresh water frozen in glaciers. That leaves only one percent as a readily useable resource to support drinking, cooking, bathing, agriculture, industry, recreation, and other needs.

The limited supply of fresh water, and our dependency on it, means that we must use this resource wisely. Every human being plays an important role in caring for water. Throughout each of the world's watersheds, people are the consumers of and the advocates for water resources. It is our responsibility to respectfully manage them.

Government efforts alone cannot provide the range and variety of information needed to assess water quality in each watershed. Therefore, it is essential that citizens become involved in protecting the health of their local waterbodies. Citizens who are willing to build upon governmental efforts play an important role in helping to protect local watersheds.

World Water Monitoring Challenge (WWMC) is designed primarily as an education and awareness-raising activity to connect communities to their water resources. The data collected can give an annual snapshot of local water quality and gives community groups, students, citizens, scouts, and others the basic skills needed to participate in more formal citizen monitoring programs.

By working together, we can continue to expand worldwide educational efforts to make people more aware of the effects of point source pollution from specific discharges, as well as nonpoint sources, such as urban and agricultural runoff.

Water protection and pollution prevention must be essential components of our activities on land, in our vehicles, and within our waters. By recognizing water quality indicators, we can minimize pollution sources and protect our watersheds. Education and experience are important means of instilling a "stewardship mindset" in local citizenry throughout the world.

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We understand only what we are taught."

– Baba Dioum, Senegalese Environmentalist

Earth's Water

