

Senior Environment Corps

Water Quality Monitoring Program:

SEC volunteers perform water quality monitoring on streams in Montgomery County. The monitored streams cover segments of the three sub-watersheds (Wissahickon, Perkiomen and Neshaminy) in the North Penn area and form part of the Lower Delaware River Basin.

Water quality monitoring is an integrated activity for evaluating the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of water in relation to human health, ecological conditions, and designated water use. Stream side physical and chemical tests are conducted monthly and biological surveys are conducted semi-annually. The results of the tests and surveys are recorded to maintain a historical record of information on a stream.

Building a historical record of a stream through water quality monitoring aids in efforts to: conserve, protect and restore the resource; helps to determine the stream's designated use (e.g., exceptional value, high quality, warm or cold water fishery); and is important in involving and educating the public in sound environmental decision making.

The protocols used for this monitoring program were developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The monitoring data is stored in a database for use by the DEP and other interested organizations.

New volunteers do not require prior knowledge or a background in chemical or biological sciences. New user training is provided to new volunteers and additional stream side help is always available. The protocols are designed in a step by step procedure that the volunteer follows to complete a specific test. It's up to the volunteer as to how much knowledge he or she wishes to attain on any or all of the tests. In-house training or other venues are available to those who wish to increase their knowledge on this subject matter.

Interest in the SEC water monitoring program should be directed to the SEC Coordinator on 215-362-7432 Ext. 224.