

*Anne Arundel County's Countywide Biological Monitoring Program:*

Every year, Anne Arundel County's Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration samples the fish and aquatic insects in randomly selected stream reaches around the County, as a part of the Countywide Biological Monitoring Program (Program). Initiated in 2004, the Program's purpose is to measure biological conditions as a cost-effective way to understand the overall health of County streams and rivers that drain to the Chesapeake Bay.

All Program activities take place within a ~250 foot long stretch of a stream. The assessment is spread out over two visits. All streams are visited between March 1 and April 30, which involves collecting a sample of stream insects, a water sample, a slope measurement of stream banks using survey equipment, and a visual evaluation of overall habitat of the stream. Depending upon the size of the stream, the second visit takes place between June 1 and September 30 and involves using specialized equipment to sample the types of fish that live in the stream.

Using specialized computer software and digital stream maps, all Program sampling locations are selected at random. In 2021, many stream reaches we seek to sample are located on farms and other agricultural operations. Before any sampling takes place, the County sends letters to all selected private landowners seeking permission to access the streams on their property. The letters, which will be sent in January 2021, explain the details of the Program, include a FAQ, and an attached stamped postcard for the landowner to respond. With the letter, a landowner can choose to participate in the Program or not, provide their email for contact information, and request to be present at the time of the sampling. All results about the fish and insects that live in their stream on the property will be happily shared with the landowner if requested.

- January 4, 2021: Property access letters are mailed to site landowners
- January 20, 2021: Landowner deadline to respond to letter
- March 1, 2021: Program's spring sampling starts; Coordination with "yes" landowners
- April 30, 2021: Last day of spring sampling
- June 1, 2021: Program's summer sampling starts; Coordination with "yes" landowners
- September 30, 2021: Last day of summer sampling
- June 1, 2022: Results available of all sites and watersheds

*Timeline of important events and dates of the Countywide Biological Monitoring Program.*

If you receive a letter this January, please make sure to respond to this wonderful project in order to help us get an overview of the water quality and stream health throughout Anne Arundel County! For more information or any questions on the Program, please visit <https://www.aacounty.org/departments/public-works/wprp/ecological-assessment-and-evaluation/biological-monitoring/> or contact the Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration (410-222-0545) or the AASCD office (410-571-6757).