



Protecting Our Waters

WATER QUALITY AND FLOW MONITORING IN DANE COUNTY

Monitoring our streams and rivers helps inform decision-making, which in turn protects sensitive ecosystems, enhances public health, and supports long-term sustainability.

Why Monitor Water Quality & Flow?

Public Health

Detecting pollutants like E. coli, nitrates, and chlorides protects drinking water and recreational users

Environmental Protection

Monitoring water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and turbidity informs stakeholders about risks to stream health

Flood Management

Real-time flow data helps predict and alert communities to flood risks, especially in urban areas

Agricultural Sustainability

Monitoring runoff helps farmers manage nutrients and reduce impacts on waterways

Climate Resilience

Long-term data reveals trends in temperature, precipitation, drought, and streamflow to support climate adaptation



How You Can Get Involved

- Encourage your local community to support and fund water quality monitoring efforts
- Practice responsible land use, lawn care, and winter salting practices to help reduce runoff and pollution
- Join a local watershed group or volunteer through Water Action Volunteers (WAV)

WAV Volunteer Opportunities

Help monitor Wisconsin streams and rivers. Training and equipment provided



What's Measured?

Flow Rate — Tracks critical baseflow and high flows during flood events

Temperature — Affects aquatic life, water quality, and other biological and chemical processes

Dissolved Oxygen — Essential for aquatic organisms and overall biological health

Nutrients (Nitrogen & Phosphorus) — Elevated levels cause algal blooms & degraded water clarity

Turbidity — A measure of water clarity and indicator of runoff issues

Chlorides — Elevated levels from oversalting can be toxic to aquatic life and impact groundwater quality

Dane County In Focus



500+ miles of streams and rivers that connect communities

20

monitoring sites managed by the US Geological Survey



32 DNR-designated Class I or Class II trout streams

60+

Water bodies designated as impaired by the Wisconsin DNR

USGS National Water Dashboard

Provides real-time updates on water levels, weather conditions, and flood forecasts

