

“YOU CAN’T JUDGE A STREAM BY ITS COLOR”

A Video Presentation

By

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Abstract

Water quality of streams and rivers in the U.S. has captured the attention of many citizens, local businesses, and state and county governments because of the quality of life and economic development that pure water brings to an area. Drinking water and water recreation are important to everyone. In response to the growing interest in water quality issues, watershed organizations have been established in many parts of the U.S. The mission statements of most watershed organizations include educating the public about the intricate beauty and value that water resources provide, partnering with local interested parties on the watershed development, and promoting the restoration and preservation of water bodies.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and other federal and state governments have recently made money available to watershed organizations to help clean up streams and rivers. For example, USEPA has provided substantial amounts of money (>\$100,000) to Friends of the Cheat, a northern West Virginia watershed organization, to construct water quality improvements on the Cheat River in West Virginia. The State of West Virginia, through its Governor’s Stream Restoration Program, also provides money to watershed organizations. In order for Friends of the Cheat and other watershed organizations to receive construction money, a defined project with predicted water quality improvement results were required. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of the flows and water quality of various streams during the year in the watershed must be achieved.

The methods to document water flows and water quality are well known to scientists involved in such studies. However, these methods are generally unknown to most of the public and to individuals within watershed organizations. At past USEPA acid mine drainage (AMD) watershed conferences, workshops were given that demonstrate to the attendees the methods for measuring water flows, the field kits available to measure water quality, the proper techniques for taking water samples, and ways for determining benthic macroinvertebrate populations. All of these things then can be used to evaluate the quality and health of a stream.

Many active individuals in watershed organizations do not have the means or time to attend watershed conferences to gain the knowledge necessary to allow them to determine water quality of their streams. Therefore, a training video was created that illustrates the methods for determining the water quality of streams.

Jeff Skousen of West Virginia University and Craig Mains of Downstream Alliance have teamed up with Ron Hamilton of Telestrella Productions to produce a video entitled “You Can’t Judge A Stream By Its Color.” This video is based on workshops that Mr. Skousen and Mains have taught at USEPA conferences. The video has been developed and produced, and is available from Telestrella Productions. A proposal has been submitted to the Canaan Valley Institute for final production costs and to copy the video and distribute it to watershed organizations in West Virginia.