

The Williams River is Being Tested Again This Summer!

The Williams River is being tested again this summer by a dedicated group of volunteers organized by the Chester Conservation Committee. The eight sites are scattered from the Blue Hill Rd. crossing over to the Church St. crossing, and all the way down to the Bartonville Covered Bridge. The goal of the testing is to gather information that can support local and state knowledge of water quality. The volunteers head out every other Wednesday morning around 6:45AM to collect samples, gather temperature data, and complete paperwork. The samples are transferred to the Southeastern VT Watershed Alliance (SeVWA). SeVWA is responsible for gathering samples from nine rivers and streams in the area.

The water quality results are fairly straight-forward. The information that is most valuable for the public are the E. coli counts. E. coli are coliform bacteria that live in the intestines of humans and animals. Most strains of E. coli are harmless, but some are known to make toxins that can cause diarrhea and illness. The E. coli count provides an indication of how much bacteria is in the water. VT and the EPA define a level of 235 E. coli per 100mL of water to be suitable for swimming. So far this year, the June 21st levels were all below the 235 level. On July 5th, six of the eight sites were above the 235 limit. We had approximately ½ inch of rain on July 17th, six out of seven of E. coli levels on July 19th for the Williams River were suitable for swimming.

The SeVWA River Report states, "These results represent a snapshot of river conditions at the moment the sample was taken. Please be aware that conditions can and do change over time, especially in relation to weather. **Bacteria levels are typically elevated during and shortly after wet weather events.** It is recommended to wait 24 - 48 hours to resume swimming in lakes and streams. The US EPA recommends E. Coli as an indicator of health risk from water contact in recreational waters. Swim at your own discretion."

The testing results will be posted at the Rainbow Rock and at the Chester, VT website [<http://www.chestervt.gov/>]. For more information, you can contact the SeVWA at [<http://www.sevwa.org/>]. If you want to help with the water testing, contact Frank Kelley at [frank.kelley@trsu.org].

Photo #1: Williams River Water Tester, Hannah, collecting samples.

Photo #2: Williams River Water Testers, Cathy, John, and Suzy, passing off samples and paperwork.



