

# SAVE OUR STREAMS

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Healthy streams are vital to healthy communities. It's where our kids play and dogs splash. And some of these streams provide the water we drink. But is the water in these streams clean and safe? The truth is, for most local streams, no one knows. That's a problem – one the Izaak Walton League has been working on since 1969. Explore our national water monitoring map at the Clean Water Hub: [cleanwaterhub.org](http://cleanwaterhub.org)

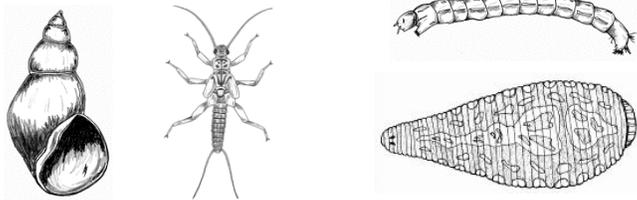
## What is *Save Our Streams*?

Save Our Streams (SOS) is a citizen science stream monitoring program. The Izaak Walton League trains volunteers across the country to measure the health of their local streams. Our monitors can use this information to educate their community, inform decision makers, and help lawmakers make decisions about their local waterways.



## Biological Monitoring

One way to measure the health of a stream is to identify and count the animals living in the water. We collect and identify *aquatic macroinvertebrates*: animals without a backbone that live at the bottom of streams. Some "macros" are very **sensitive** to pollution, while others are more **tolerant**. By counting which macros live in a stream, we can see if the stream is healthy or polluted.



**Gilled snails** and **stonefly larvae** are sensitive, and need a lot of oxygen to breath underwater. **Leeches** and **midges** need less oxygen and are tolerant of pollution. Our volunteers identify 24 different kinds of macroinvertebrates during their surveys.

## Chemical Monitoring

We can also test a stream for unhealthy amounts of chemicals. Fertilizer, road salt, and even air pollution can dramatically affect creeks and streams. Our monitors measure nitrogen, phosphorus, chloride, pH, oxygen, and even turbidity of the water to find out if a stream is polluted.

## How can you help?

Anyone can be a stream health monitor! You can become a stream monitor by attending a training and becoming a certified stream monitor. The data you collect will be used to restore and protect the creeks and streams in your own backyard.

Find your local chapter or contact the Izaak Walton League to organize a training event in your area!