

News**National Report Shows Only 2 Percent of Streams and Rivers Actually Tested for Water Quality – and Half Don't Meet State Water Quality Standards**

By Dawn Merritt
Izaak Walton League of America

GAITHERSBURG, MD – Every American has the right to know whether the streams and rivers running through their backyards and neighborhood parks are safe for their kids to play in or dogs to splash through. But a report released today by the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) shows that state water quality monitoring in streams across the country is haphazard and limited, leaving Americans in the dark about the health of local waters – and potentially leaving pollution undetected.

The Izaak Walton League conducted an extensive investigation into stream monitoring practices and water pollution problems in all 50 states and uncovered startling results.

- Our analysis shows that states are effectively monitoring water quality in only 2% of rivers and streams nationwide.
- Based on state reports to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), more than half (55%) of the streams and rivers tested were not safe for designated uses such as swimming, fishing, and as sources of drinking water.
- Pollutants in these waters include a laundry list of bacteria, carcinogens, and nutrients.
- Testing sites are often randomly located and limited in number, and most information about water quality in streams is 5 to 10 years old.
- More than half of all states (26) received D or F grades for the overall effectiveness of the state's stream monitoring efforts.

For the full report, including state-by-state grading, visit www.iwla.org/

righttoknow.

Oregon receives a C overall for how effectively the state monitors water quality in streams and rivers and engages with volunteers. Oregon misleads the public on the percentage of streams and rivers the state tests for pollution. The state claims to test 40% of streams and rivers while IWLA's calculation is 1%, earning the state a C in this category. Moreover, Oregon does not test enough local river and stream sites to make reliable claims about the safety of these waterways statewide. The state also uses data that is up to 10 years old when reporting on water quality. The most common pollutants found in Oregon's waters include toxic metals, bacteria, acids, nutrients, and sediment. Although the state's overall grade is average, Oregon is a national leader in partnering with volunteer stream monitors, earning a B in this category.

"There is an alarming lack of timely information about water quality in this country, including in Oregon,"

“Every morning, you can read about that day's air quality in the local paper or on your smart phone. Yet information about the health of local streams is 5 to 10 years old.

said IWLA Executive Board Chair Jodi Arndt Labs. "Every morning, you can read about that day's air quality in the local paper or on your smart phone. Yet information about the health of local streams is 5 to 10 years old. That's a problem!"

The Clean Water Act of 1972 requires states to monitor the safety of all waterways, report water quality information publicly every two years, and address pollution problems. However, states vary widely in virtually every aspect



In this July 16, 2010 photo is Reservoir 1 and Dam 1 on the Bull Run River. As the main source of Portland's drinking water, the Bull Run River watershed is largely restricted to uses related to water collection, storage, and treatment, and to forest management

of water quality monitoring, including standards used to assess water quality; where, when, and which waters are tested; the types of tests performed; and how states provide information to the public. The Izaak Walton League found that many states have weak water quality standards that can inflate

plex certifications or send water samples to labs for expensive tests before the state will consider their data. This erects barriers to citizen engagement and reduces the amount of timely water quality information available to the public. Twenty-nine states received D or F grades for volunteer engagement because they do not effectively partner with volunteer monitors or use the data volunteers collect.

The Izaak Walton League of America was founded in 1922 to conserve America's natural resources – including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife – for future generations. The League has been at the forefront of every major clean water battle in the United States, from a push for federal water pollution control in the 1930s to breaking the political ground necessary for passage of the landmark 1972 Clean Water Act to current efforts to restore Clean Water Act protections for streams and wetlands. Citizens across the country use the League's pioneering Save Our Streams program to monitor local waterways, plan restoration projects, and report water quality problems. Today, League priorities include engaging youth in the outdoors; restoring and conserving habitat for fish and wildlife; and ensuring America's streams, rivers, and other waters are clean and safe. With 43,000 members and 240 local chapters nationwide, the League is a powerful voice for community-based conservation. For more information visit www.iwla.org, call 301-548-0150, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

the number of waters rated clean and healthy – and most states don't monitor water quality often enough to make accurate statewide safety claims.

The Izaak Walton League has a solution to this problem: empowering citizens to collect scientifically valid water quality data (and ensuring states use this data more effectively).

The League has been training and supporting citizen volunteers for decades through our groundbreaking Save Our Streams (SOS) program. Variations of the League's SOS program have been adopted by states and volunteer groups across the country. It is vital to the health of our nation's waterways – and Americans who depend on those waterways – to expand stream monitoring across the country.

However, rather than embrace volunteer help, many states hold citizen volunteers at arm's length. Some states don't use the water quality data citizens provide. Other states require volunteers to complete unnecessarily com-



*Prayer and
Bible Study*

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of the month @ 7pm**

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**For directions or more information,
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