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Ohio EPA Launches Studies of Deer Creek, Lower Scioto River Watersheds

As part of Ohio EPA's continuous effort to monitor and report on the quality of rivers and streams throughout Ohio, the Agency is launching a study this year of the [Deer Creek watershed](#), which includes Sugar and Hay Runs and several [inland lakes](#). Two lakes (Madison and Deer Creek) are in [Ohio State Parks](#). The watershed primarily flows through Madison, Pickaway and Ross counties. Deer Creek flows into the Scioto River north of Chillicothe in Ross County.

Ohio EPA also is studying the [Lower Scioto River watershed](#) this year. The lower portion of the river begins in Pickaway and Fairfield counties and flows south primarily through Ross, Pike and Scioto counties into the Ohio River. In addition to the mainstem of the river, Ohio EPA will study Scippo, Kinnikinnick, Walnut, Pee Pee, Big Beaver, Camp and Sunfish Creeks.

Studies take about two years to complete. Preliminary findings should be available next year.

Sampling Protocol and Purpose

Ohio EPA employees will collect water and stream sediment chemistry samples, survey aquatic communities and evaluate stream habitat through October from dozens of sites in each study area. Samplers all carry a photo ID and may request private property access from landowners if needed.

The Agency has one of the most advanced water quality monitoring programs in the nation, determining the health of rivers and streams by sampling aquatic biology and habitat in addition to water chemistry. Biology and habitat show long-term trends in water quality rather than just snapshots.

Ohio EPA analyzes information about the abundance and variety of fish and aquatic insects, especially those species sensitive to pollution, in addition to the concentration of bacteria, metals and nutrients. The Agency also takes a comprehensive look at all pollution sources. This includes point sources, such as wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities, and nonpoint sources, like urban and rural runoff. To help address impairments, Ohio EPA may develop a watershed restoration report, known as a [Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) report.

The Agency shares its information with local governments, landowners and citizens so they also can develop plans to maintain and/or restore impaired waterways. Stakeholders can use Ohio EPA's information to request assistance from the Agency and other funding sources for projects that alleviate water quality problems and protect the resource for drinking water and recreational enjoyment.