
V

POST SITE VISIT FOLLOW-UP

After your class has returned from the field site and completed all the tests (it will take another two days before you have the results of the coliform test and five days before you can complete the BOD test), we recommend that you devote at least another class period to discussing the results. We also suggest that your students submit group reports or journals about the tests they performed and that the class as a whole record the compiled results. You may also review the predictions that your class made prior to the site visit.

Recording Results

Each group should record the results of their test/s on the *Data Recording Form*. We suggest the groups also keep a lab journal, in which they can discuss their expectations and any difficulties they had in the field or doing the test. You may also want to make a class journal, lab report booklet, or poster to record the results of all the tests.

The records should indicate the date, time of day, weather conditions, level of recent rainfall, tide, and any other relevant information. This information is essential for two reasons. First, it directly affects the results of your tests. (If the weather has been warmer, dryer, sunnier during one test session than during another, you may have very different results.) Second, if you choose to repeat this activity year after year in order to “monitor” the same site, you will need to compare weather conditions as well as the test results. From

one year to the next, the conditions that indicate water quality may differ. That difference may or may not indicate that the water quality is improving or deteriorating. Variations in the weather may have led to the variations in results.

Reporting Results

Each group should report about the tests they conducted to the rest of the class. These reports should include the results they had expected, the results they actually got, and the significance of these results. For instance, a group's report on pH should mention the effect of the pH level on fish life, and should hypothesize about the conditions in the watershed that might have led to the pH levels they found. It should also discuss the interaction of pH with other conditions tested at the field site.

We recommend oral reports so the whole class will hear a review of each of the tests in the context of the entire program. Group members can report on different aspects of their topics.

Comparing Results With Predictions

Did the results match the predictions? Discuss what could have led to the results you obtained.

- You may not have been able to take a "representative" sample because of safety or access restraints; a representative sample might have yielded the results you predicted.
- The weather conditions at the time of the site visit may have temporarily changed conditions. Such factors as higher than normal air temperatures, unusually high or low rainfall, or extended periods of cloud cover may affect test results.
- The conditions at your site may vary from conditions throughout the watershed, or may be affected by factors you could not have anticipated.

Sharing the Results of Other Classes and Other Sites

Complete the *Data Recording Form* at the conclusion of your testing. Submit this form to the MWRA. We will compile these forms regularly and send them to teachers who have attended our workshops. They should provide a valuable long-term guide to problems and solutions teachers encounter.