FACT SHEET

Geospatial Data – 2026 WQM Monitoring Plan

Overview

This fact sheet summarizes the geospatial data associated with the 2026 Water Quality Monitoring Annual Monitoring Plan. Included below is a narrative summary of the Monitoring, definitions of the fields contained in associated geospatial dataset, and additional technical specifications about the data.

Dataset Summary

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) publishes the Annual Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Monitoring Plan) to provide transparency and inform the public about water quality monitoring activities conducted across the Commonwealth over the course of the upcoming year. The Monitoring Plan aims to implement the goals and objectives of DEQ's Water Quality Monitoring Strategy in accordance with the Virginia Water Quality Monitoring, Information, and Restoration Act (WQMIRA; § 62.1-44.19:5.). This dataset includes geographic locality information and monitoring details (monitoring programs, sampling parameters, and frequency of visits) for planned 2026 sampling stations. This dataset is also presented in an interactive web application located at https://datascience.deq.virginia.gov/Water-Monitoring-Plan.

Dataset Description and Purpose

Every year, DEQ's Water Division makes available to the public its annual monitoring plan, which summarizes the water quality monitoring activities to be conducted that year. This information is presented in compliance with WQMIRA to help ensure public awareness of water quality issues and conditions.

The plan is available in an interactive mapping application (https://datascience.deq.virginia.gov/Water-Monitoring-Plan), which contains detailed information on DEQ's monitoring activities including the station locations, specific monitoring activities and frequency of monitoring. A station list identifies the location of each station and provides data helpful for other mapping applications. This dataset is a static, two-dimensional table of these data.

The monitoring plan is used by DEQ to calculate estimates for laboratory analysis costs for the coming year and to evaluate the standardization of statewide monitoring efforts (e.g., site selection, parameter selection and frequency of sampling). It also provides a convenient source from which to extract descriptive summaries of specific regional and statewide programs based on station locations, parameters sampled, and frequencies sampled.

Resource Constraints / Use Limitations

Data Contact:

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Dataset Credits:

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Ecology, Water Monitoring & Assessment Program

Update Cycle:

The Water Quality Monitoring Annual Monitoring Plan is developed annually and released in the early part of each year.

Crediting the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as data source is requested. This data may be shared with others.

Data Disclaimer

This geographic information system (GIS) data is made available as a public service. This dataset is to be used for reference purposes only and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained. No responsibility is assumed for damages or other liabilities due to the accuracy, availability, use or misuse of the information herein provided. GIS information is in the public domain and may be copied without permission; citation of the source is suggested.

The information contained within this geospatial dataset is for reference purposes only and is not to be construed or used as a "legal description" or for legal purposes. This information is believed to be accurate, but accuracy is not guaranteed. Information drawn from this dataset must be used in consultation with appropriate federal, state, or local resource management officials. Any errors or omissions should be reported to Virginia Department of Environmental Quality via email, or via the contact listed within this Fact Sheet.

Data Quality

Geographic point data for stations and associated spatial metadata within this dataset are sourced from DEQ's Comprehensive Environmental Data System (CEDS).

Spatial Reference Information

[NAD83, Virginia Lambert (EPSG: 3968) https://epsg.io/3968]

Data Dictionary / Field Information

Field Name	Field Alias	Field Summary
STATION_ID	Station ID	Unique identifier for monitoring stations
LATITUDE		Latitude in decimal degrees
LONGITUDE		Longitude in decimal degrees
COUNTY		County/City where station is located
HUC6_NAME		VA HUC 6 name
VAHU6	VA HUC 6 Code	VA HUC 6 unique identifier
Basin		Basin name
Subbasin		Subbasin name
STREAM_NAME	Waterbody Name	Waterbody name
STATION_DESRIPTION	Description	Short description of station location
DEQ Region		DEQ regional office
STATION_COMMENT		General station comments
FIRST_SAMPLE_DATE		The date the first sample was collected in a station's history
LAST_SAMPLE_DATE		The date the most recent sample was collected in a station's history
SAMPLE_COUNT		Total number of samples collected in a station's history
SURVEY_PROGRAM_DESCRIPTION		Name of a monitoring program
n_prog		Is the station monitored for a single or multiple monitoring programs
SURVEY_PROGS	Monitoring Programs	List of monitoring programs associated with a station