

2001 Nitrate Concentration Distribution For Raccoon River Watershed

ACWA & DMWW

- The Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA), working in partnership with the Des Moines Water Works, is sponsoring an on-going water monitoring program in the Raccoon River watershed. During the summer, volunteers collect water samples bi-weekly from 42 remote sites located throughout the watershed. The samples are analyzed and data is processed at the Des Moines Water Works water quality laboratory.

Map

- Analysis of 2001 data is graphically illustrated on a map (see pg. 2) showing average nitrate concentration distribution from 28 subwatersheds nested within the Raccoon River watershed. The results for this year are similar to previous analysis, which illustrate nitrate concentration is closely related to landform, land use and rainfall. All streams within the Des Moines lobe landform region (north and eastern side of the watershed) exceeded the EPA drinking water maximum contamination level (MCL) of 10 mg/liter nitrate-N during all or most of the sampling period. This landform region has little natural drainage. Much of the water quickly drains to surface waters through extensive tile drainage systems. Above average rainfall during the spring and summer created favorable conditions for losses of nitrate from the landscape.

Members

- The ACWA is comprised of eleven fertilizer dealers in the Raccoon River watershed that sell and apply most of the fertilizer on farm fields in the watershed. In unity, these members are pursuing efforts to improve water quality in the Raccoon River. ACWA members work with watershed area farmers providing them with information about the watershed, sound management advice and products that improve the performance of management practices. Their vision is to help farmers apply the best agronomic science on farms in the watershed. The ACWA is continuing sponsorship of the water-monitoring program to help focus future action and to track changes due to changing agricultural practices.

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