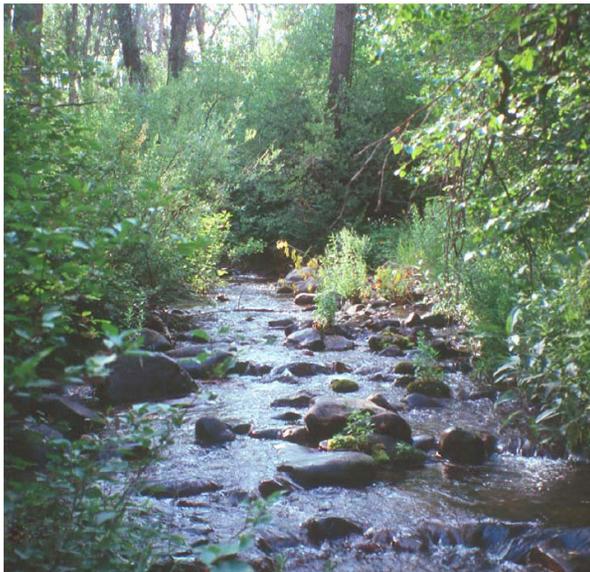


Idaho is well-recognized for its scenic streams, rivers, and lakes and abundant water recreation opportunities that attract visitors from around the globe. To ensure that Idaho's water bodies remain clean and available for swimming, fishing, and domestic water supply, continuous monitoring and evaluation are needed.

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for providing consistent water body monitoring and assessment. Through the Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program, or BURP, DEQ gathers reliable data on the biology, chemistry, and habitat conditions of Idaho's water bodies.

Read this brochure to learn how BURP helps maintain the quality of Idaho's streams, rivers, and lakes.



## For More Information

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DEQ BURP Webpage: [www.deq.idaho.gov/burp](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/burp)



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## Water in Idaho

# Idaho's Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program

Working to maintain  
the quality of our  
streams, rivers, and lakes



Idaho Department of  
Environmental Quality  
[www.deq.idaho.gov](http://www.deq.idaho.gov)



## What is BURP?

The Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program, known as BURP, is a cost-effective, efficient monitoring survey of Idaho's streams and lakes. The purpose of the program is to collect and measure key water quality parameters to aid DEQ in determining whether a water body is supporting its beneficial uses.

*A beneficial use is any of the various uses of water including, but not limited to, aquatic biota, recreation, water supply, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics.*

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop standards to protect water bodies based on their beneficial uses. For example, if a river is designated to support salmonid spawning, then standards are applied to ensure that the water quality is suitable for salmonid reproduction. In Idaho, beneficial use designations are required for aquatic life and recreation.

## How BURP Data Are Collected

Each summer, DEQ technicians follow standardized procedures to:



- collect *algae* and *aquatic insects*
- conduct *fish* surveys and
- document *habitat* conditions from streams, rivers, and lakes.

BURP surveys are performed during the same low-flow time period each year—July 1 to September 15—so the information is comparable from one year to the next.



## Where BURP Surveys Are Conducted

To ensure assessments can be applied to longer stream reaches or entire streams, monitoring sites must be representative. DEQ uses standard selection steps to identify potential sites.

BURP surveys are conducted on both public and private lands. DEQ's ability to enter private property is at the discretion of the property owner. If a private property is identified as a desirable monitoring location, DEQ always requests permission from the property owner before conducting any sampling. In addition, DEQ assures the landowner that monitoring will not damage the property or resources.

## How DEQ Ensures Quality

Data gathered from BURP monitoring are the basis for many surface water quality decisions made by DEQ. The quality of data is ensured by providing centralized training for crews, using a standardized manual, following annual work plans, conducting annual field reviews, and following a quality assurance plan.

## Why monitor aquatic life?

The BURP procedure calls for the collection and analysis of aquatic insects and fish as "biological indicators." Biological indicators are used because they are very sensitive to changes in water quality, so their presence, abundance, and health serve as indicators of the overall quality of a water body. Generally, unpolluted waters support a greater variety of aquatic insects and fish than polluted waters.

## How BURP Data Are Used

The BURP data are evaluated to determine if the water body is supporting its designated beneficial uses.

If a water body is found to be not supporting beneficial uses, a water quality improvement plan, known as a total maximum daily load (TMDL), is developed. If a water body is found to be supporting beneficial uses, it may be monitored again in the future to ensure it continues to do so.

