

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Bacterial Monitoring Program Looking for Volunteers

(HENDERSONVILLE, NC, July 14) – ECO, the Environmental and Conservation Organization has scheduled a Bacterial Monitoring Orientation Session for new volunteers on Tuesday, July 20 at 7:00 pm. Few residents realize that there are dozens of wastewater treatment plants in Henderson County whose effluence gets into our rivers and streams. When these plants are running as they should, people and aquatic life have nothing to fear. However, this is not always the case. Bacterial pollution can be caused by a number of issues: outdated septic systems, livestock operations, and poorly maintained wastewater treatment facilities. Given that the state or county authorities offer little oversight of wastewater plants, ECO, has recently launched a bacterial monitoring program to assess the health of our streams.

According to Jamie Wyatt, an Environmental Sciences student at Western Carolina University and an ECO intern, “Bacterial testing for *E.coli* is an easy and effective way of evaluating the health of our streams. Our results have been mixed, but the only way to be sure our waterways are safe is to have enough volunteers testing them on a regular basis.” The program consists of volunteers who sample treated effluent for *E.coli*, a good indicator of bacterial pollution. The results from these tests help landowners, farmers, water treatment plant managers and citizens better understand the problems in streams and to take action to remediate any problems that might exist. Since many waste discharge points are also sources for recreation and drinking, close monitoring insures public health and safety as well as environmental efficacy.

For more information about ECO’s Bacterial Monitoring Orientation, to be held Tuesday, July 20, at 7:00pm at the ECO office, or any of ECO’s water quality programs, call the ECO office at 692-0385 or online at www.eco-wnc.org.