

For Immediate Release

July 9, 2019

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### Beating the Heat in the Mad

Sampling results from the third round of Friends of the Mad River's 2019 Mad River Watch water quality monitoring show **no sites with unfavorable *E. coli* levels as of Monday morning**. Saturday afternoon thunderstorms broke up an otherwise hot and muggy July Fourth holiday week and washed most pollutants off the landscape, into the water, and downstream prior to sampling on Monday morning.

Water temperatures on Monday ranged from 55F in the headwaters to 67F along the Moretown Main Stem, with a high of 73F at Blueberry Lake. Many community members and visitors took advantage of this cool water temperature and took a break from the holiday week's heat in the Mad River! Swimholes across the Valley were dotted with swimmers, sun bathers, and river enthusiasts of all ages!

At the time of sampling on Monday morning, the river's discharge (volume per second) was 195 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the US Geological Service flow gage in Moretown, having dropped from a high of 562 cfs at 8 pm on Saturday evening after thunderstorms moved through the area. The flow condition of the Mad River at the time of sampling Monday morning was Low and Steady (LS). The mean flow for this date over the last 90 years is 127 cfs; the water was only slightly higher than usual at this time of year.

Remember that rains can cause *E. coli* levels to fluctuate, even on a daily basis, as water carrying pathogens moves down the watershed. Tuesday's rain most definitely washed pollutants into the water – Friends' *E. coli* sampling results are only a snapshot in time intended to give you a sense of the conditions that lead to high pathogen levels in the water so you can be informed. **You** are your best protector - use common sense and don't swim for several days after a rain. It is estimated that at the level of 235 colonies *E. coli* per 100 mL water,



*Holiday week enjoyment of the Mad River in Waitsfield. Photo by Peg Mehuron*

approximately 8 out of every 1,000 swimmers are likely to contract a water borne illness related to fecal contamination.

### **Mad River Watch**

As part of the Mad River Watch program, community volunteers collect samples of water on six occasions throughout the summer from about three dozen river and tributary sites. Then, Friends' lab and Vermont's Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory (VAEL) analyze the samples' bacteria and nutrient levels. Friends posts *E. coli* data in the Valley Reporter, on its Facebook and web sites, and on signs at ten popular swimholes across the Valley so that people have information to make their own recreational health decisions. In addition to *E. coli* data, Friends posts total phosphorus and nitrogen data on its website at summer's end when received back from the state lab. Over the decades, Friends has used Mad River Watch data to guide many successful clean-up efforts.

This week's volunteers include: Charlie Baldwin, Sally Boudreau, Annie & Jula Fender, Rick Hungerford, Ruth & Steve Lacey, Susanne & George Schaefer, Chris Shaw, Michael Ware, and Julie & Ingrid Westervelt.

For more information about *E. coli* and the Mad River Watch program visit [www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org](http://www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org). Throughout the summer, Mad River Watch results will be available in the Valley Reporter, on Facebook ("Friends of the Mad River"), and on sign posts at swimholes across the Valley. Friends of the Mad River is a community-supported organization committed to healthy land, clean water, and a vibrant community. Mad River Watch and other important programs depend on the generosity of community members; learn how to become a member and donate securely online at Friends' website.

### **Data Follows**

July 8, 2019

SITE LOCATION	SITE #	Water Temp. °F	<i>E.coli</i> per 100ml *
Blueberry Lake	BBL	73	5.2
Warren Falls (Mad River)	1	55	17.3
Warren Store (Freeman Brook)	4	55	11.0
Warren Riverside Park (Mad River)	7	57	15.6
Lareau Swimhole (Mad River)	19	56	24.1
Couples Club Field (Mad River)	19.2	56	36.9
Waitsfield Covered Bridge (Mad River)	20	59	18.9
Meadow Road Bridge (Mad River)	23	58	52.0
Moretown Village Swim Access (Mad River)	27	62	22.6
Ward Swimhole (Mad River)	29	64	26.9

\* > 235 *E.coli* /100ml = Not suitable for recreation, according VT Department of Health and EPA

### **Data, Weather, and Flow Analysis**

Sampling results from the third round of Friends of the Mad River's 2019 Mad River Watch water quality monitoring show no sites with unfavorable *E. coli* levels as of Monday morning. Saturday afternoon thunderstorms broke up an otherwise hot and muggy July Fourth holiday week and washed most pollutants off the landscape, into the water, and downstream prior to sampling on Monday morning. Water temperatures on Monday ranged from 55F in the headwaters to 67F along the Moretown Main Stem, with a high of 73F at Blueberry Lake. At the time of sampling on Monday morning, the river's discharge (volume per second) was 195 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the US Geological Service flow gage in Moretown, having dropped from a high of 562 cfs on Saturday evening at 8 after thunderstorms moved through the area. The flow condition of the Mad River at the time of sampling Monday morning was Low and Steady (LS). The mean flow for this date over the last 90 years is 127 cfs; the water was only slightly higher than usual at this time of year.

### **River Flow**

**LS - low and steady:** It has not rained in several days and the water is low.

### **Thanks to this week's volunteers!**

Samplers - Charlie Baldwin, Annie & Julia Fender, Rick Hungerford, Ruth & Steve Lacey, Chris Shaw, Michael Ware, Julie & Ingrid Westervelt.

*E. coli* Lab Coordinator - Paula Baldwin

Posting Results - Sally Boudreau

Transporting Samples - Susanne & George Schaefer

Training and Support - Charlie Baldwin