

## Changes in VAP Biocriteria Certification

At the end of 2012, the two staff who provided the Voluntary Action Program (VAP) in the Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization (DERR), with aquatic biology testing and technical assistance (which included maintaining the VAP Biocriteria Certification program) retired. These positions were not replaced due to funding reductions. DERR had to identify a way to ensure that those individuals who were certified to conduct biocriteria testing for the VAP could continue to have their certifications renewed into the future. The answer was found in the Division of Surface Water, which had developed its own chemical and biocriteria testing certification program, known as the Ohio Credible Data Program. The program formed in 2003 in response to legislation that required Ohio EPA to develop standards to determine the scientific validity of the water quality data that are collected by watershed groups, local governments, educators, private businesses and others who do not work for Ohio EPA.

Consultants who are currently certified as VAP biocriteria evaluators can apply to be a Credible Data Collector Level 3 (level 3 is the highest level of data quality and scientific validity) without having to take the Credible Data Level 3 training. This is because the VAP biocriteria training is identical to the Credible Data Level 3 training. The only change the current VAP biocriteria evaluators will experience is when they need to renew their certification, they will renew through the Division of Surface Water's Credible Data Program rather than DERR. The certification period under the Credible Data Collector Level 3 is two years, which is the same as it was under the VAP biocriteria evaluator certification. The recertification requirements are also essentially the same.

**For a list of all Ohio EPA Credible Data Collectors (including Level 3 collectors who meet the qualifications to collect data for VAP Biocriteria demonstrations can be found here on Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water Website: <http://epa.ohio.gov/portals/35/credibledata/CurrentQDCs.pdf>**

More information about Ohio EPA's Credible Data Program can be found here:  
<http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/index.aspx>