

pH

pH is a measurement of the alkalinity or acidity of a substance on a scale from 1 (most acidic) to 14 (most alkaline). Some streams are more acidic or more alkaline than others, and aquatic organisms in a particular stream are adapted to life in that stream's range of pH. Water with a pH range of 6.5-8.6 will have little effect on most organisms. If the pH of a stream falls unnaturally below 5 (becomes more acidic) or increases unnaturally above 9 (becomes more basic), the health of aquatic life will be in jeopardy.

Use the pH test kit for your measurement. Follow the directions provided by your leader. Once you determine the pH of your stream, put an arrow on the chart in the data sheet below.

Keep in mind that you are testing the pH of your stream at one point in time. In order to assess the health of a riparian zone, scientists look for changes and trends over time.

