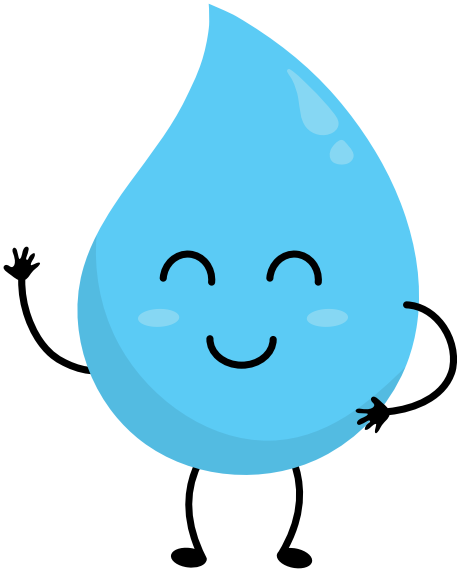
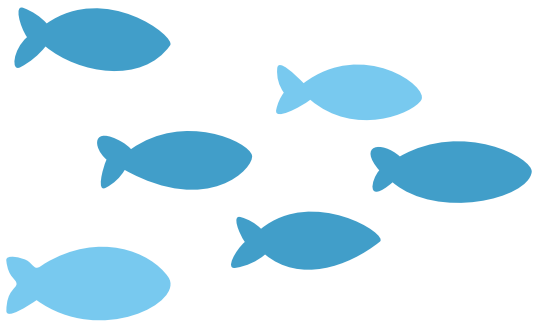
Friends of the Reedy River

What is pH?

pH is a measure of hydrogen ion concentration. pH measures how acidic or basic a substance is on a scale of 0-14. 0-6 is acidic, 8-14 is basic, and 7 is considered neutral. Each step on the scale represents a tenfold change in acidity, so a river with a pH of 6 is ten times more acidic than one with a pH of 7. In rivers, the healthy range is usually between 6.5 and 8.5. The pH of a river is influenced by the concentration of acids in rain and the different types of soils and rocks in the watershed.





Why does pH matter?

Low pH can harm fish and insects. Acidic water or acid rain (high pH) allows toxic substances such as heavy metals to leach from soil and be taken up by aquatic plants and animals.

How is pH measured?

pH is measured by adding a reagent (a substance used to cause a chemical reaction) which reacts with the pH to produce a color. The color is then matched to a color comparator to determine the water's pH.

Source: South Carolina Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer Freshwater Monitoring Handbook
To learn more, visit the South Carolina Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer Freshwater Monitoring Handbook!