

FIELD TRIP 8.1 PREPARATIONS

Preparation for bottom-material sampling starts with an understanding of the scientific approach of the study. The quality of the data to be collected depends on a field team that has the knowledge and experience needed to select sites, equipment, and methods for collecting and processing samples that will fulfill study objectives.

Before each field trip plan carefully for field activities:

- ▶ Schedule adequate time to review data requirements.
- ▶ Select a protocol for bottom-material data-collection activities.
- ▶ Develop and use checklists of activities, equipment, and supplies to ensure that field activities will be completed efficiently (see section 8.7).
- ▶ Create or update a field folder for each site at which samples and ancillary data will be collected. Review the information before starting field work.

10—BOTTOM-MATERIAL SAMPLES

Before selecting sampling sites and equipment:

- ▶ Review the project work plan, especially noting the types of measurements and samples required. +
- ▶ Make reconnaissance field trips.
 - Note conditions that would affect sampling operations (such as high flow versus low flow in streams, or unusual aspects of the site that might be sources of contamination).
 - Evaluate potential sources and sinks of contaminants or other chemical constituents of interest.
- ▶ Review site files and field folders (note site location and description and site-access instructions; review any previously collected physical, chemical, and biological data).
- ▶ Obtain (and update) training needed to perform routine and special procedures.
- ▶ Understand the limitations of each piece of equipment. Verify and test, if possible, the operational range and potential for contamination of sampling equipment.

Data quality begins before the first sample is collected. +

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