

Volunteer Monitoring of Degraded Aesthetics. Explanation of Datasheet for Trainers.

The datasheet

- Accurate data is invaluable to our delisting process. The most important part of the aesthetics survey is a completely filled out datasheet. There are no wrong answers because this is a subjective survey seeking mostly opinion from the volunteers based on their personal perspective to the aesthetics of the AOC. All questions with a **bold option for Yes or No** need to be filled out for the survey to be used in our study.
- The Yes and No questions are the only questions to be scored. (Along with overall aesthetic impression Q6). All other information is designed to help target potential problems and projects.
- Date, time, and demographic information are also important to the study.
- Volunteers need to follow along the datasheet instructions packet! This will answer many “on the spot” questions.

Questions 7-9

- Question 7 and 8 are differentiated between **materials** causing undesirable conditions (odor, color) and the **water** causing undesirable conditions (color, clarity, odor). These are not defined to a location within the site. There is the possibility that items described here may overlap with Q10 and 11. That’s ok.
- Question 9 is a follow up of question 7 and 8. 9A-D should describe the conditions present during the survey visit. These conditions should be described **regardless** of their ability to make the area unpleasant or block your ability to use or access the water. Volunteers should have already answered if any of these made the area unpleasant or block their ability to access or use the water.

Questions 10 and 11

- Question 10 and 11 address **substances**. Substances (in this case) is a general term used in the delisting criteria and are defined as physical things **that in the opinion of the volunteer** are making the area unpleasant or blocking their ability to use or access the water. **These substances may be present at the time of the survey, but may NOT be making the area unpleasant or blocking their ability to use or access the water. In this instance, volunteers should NOT record these substances unless in the opinion of the volunteer a substance is making the area unpleasant or blocking their ability to use or access the water.**
- Question 10 and 11 are differentiated between locations of substances causing objectionable deposits. It was discussed that question 10 is defined as the shoreline extending to the bottom of the waterbody. Question 11 includes any substances in the water (floating or suspended in the water).

Example: Algae is washed on the shoreline, in my opinion this is not unpleasant and would not stop me from using the water to my liking. I would choose **No** for algae under question 10; I would not describe the algae or estimate a percentage. There are algae on the water surface and suspended in the water at this location and that would hinder me from using the water to my liking. I would choose **Yes** for Algae under question 11, estimate a percentage, and describe it.

Overall Recommendations

- Try to keep it simple. Volunteers should not be worried about choosing a wrong answer. Go with the gut feeling. That is the true impression. If a volunteer is unsure about something and they want to leave an answer blank, I would ask them to go with their initial gut feeling whether or not a certain parameter is causing an aesthetic problem for them.
- Keep safety in mind. It is ok for a volunteer to estimate things. **No data is worth risking personal safety.**
- The best results happen when volunteers fill out the datasheet in order and take their time.
- Some answers may be a little repetitive, but questions are worded the way that they are to be able to directly tie the answers into delisting criteria.