Appendix H: Glossary

Adaptation: The modification, over time, of the structure, function, or behavior of an organism, which enables it to be more suited to its environment.

Aquatic: Relating to or consisting of or being in water.

Collectors: Macroinvertebrates that collect bits of food from the water column.

Contaminant: Any substance that when added to water (or other substance) makes it impure and unfit for consumption or use.

Decomposition: The breakdown or decay of organic matter through the digestive processes of microorganisms, macroinvertebrates, and scavengers.

Dichotomous Key: A tool for identifying objects, such as macroinvertebrates. The key presents a series of "yes or no" questions to the observer; each question brings the observer closer to the identification.

Dissolved Oxygen (DO): Oxygen dissolved in water and available for living organisms to use for respiration.

Emergent vegetation: Plants rooted underwater, but with their tops extending above the water.

Engulfers: Macroinvertebrate predators that feed by swallowing their prey whole.

EPT Value: An index of water quality derived from the percent of Ephemeroptera (mayflies), Plecoptera (stoneflies), and Tricoptera (caddisflies) in a 100-individual sample of macroinvertebrates.

Functional Feeding Groups: Classification of macroinvertebrate groups according to their mode of feeding.

Habitat: The environment occupied by individuals of a particular species, population, or community.

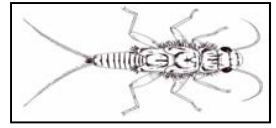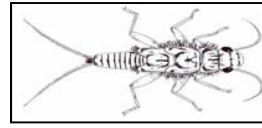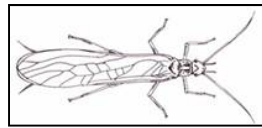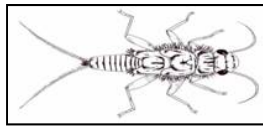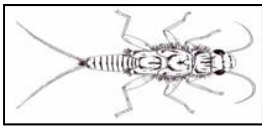**Hypoxia:** Depletion of dissolved oxygen in an aquatic system.

Indicator: A gauge of water pollution: not legal criteria, but rather a sign that there may be a problem. When an indicator level is exceeded, further studies are done.

Kick Net: A fine mesh net used to collect organisms. Kick nets vary in size and shape.

Larva: The immature, wingless, feeding stage of an insect that undergoes complete metamorphosis.

Macroinvertebrate: Organism that lacks a backbone and can be seen with the naked eye.

Niche: The role, or combination of functions, that an organism holds in the environment.

Nymph: The young of an insect that undergoes incomplete metamorphosis.

Piercers: Macroinvertebrate predators that feed by injecting a sharp mouth part into their prey and sucking out body fluids.

Predator: An animal, such as a macroinvertebrate, that feeds on other animals.

Riparian: The area of land next to a stream or river.

Riparian vegetation: The vegetation growing in the riparian area. Healthy riparian vegetation consists of native, hydrophilic (water loving) plants that help stabilize the stream banks and control flood waters from inundating adjacent lands.

Scrapers: Macroinvertebrates that feed by scraping algae and other material from the surface of plants, wood, and rocks. Also known as grazers.

Shredders: Macroinvertebrates that feed by cutting or tearing leaves and woody material that fall into the stream.

Substrate: Refers to a surface. This includes the material comprising the streambed or the surfaces which plants or animals may attach or live upon.

Tolerance: The ability to withstand a particular condition – e.g. pollution tolerance indicates an ability to live in polluted waters.

Water Quality: The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water with respect to its suitability for a particular use.

Water Quality Criteria: Maximum concentrations of pollutants that are acceptable, if those waters are to meet water quality standards. Listed in state water quality standards.

Water Quality Rating Index: An index of water quality derived from a 100-individual sample of macroinvertebrates. The more pollution-intolerant individuals found in the sample, the better the water quality.

Water Quality Standard: Recommended or enforceable maximum contaminant levels of chemicals or materials (e.g. nutrients).