



2005 MiCorps Stream Grant Programs Wrap Up Monitoring Grants

Each year, MiCorps provides grants for water quality monitoring in wadable streams and rivers through the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Grant Program (VSMGP). MiCorps distributed its first round of monitoring grants in 2005 and these grantees have all recently finished their monitoring projects. Funded projects included 1) Muskegon River Water Monitoring Program

– Muskegon River Watershed Assembly; 2) Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program - Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council; and 3) Grand Traverse Stream Search -

The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay. The efforts and accomplishments of all projects during their grant periods were outstanding and set a high standard for all MiCorps volunteer monitoring programs.

Together, the three funded projects recruited more than 200 volunteers and monitored over 70 sites on 30 different streams throughout the state. Each program plans to continue its monitoring project beyond the grant period.

The groups accomplished a tremendous amount in such a short period of time and the MiCorps team is extremely proud of what each group has achieved. They set

an excellent example for future programs funded under MiCorps. A full summary of each group and its accomplishments is included inside this edition of the MiCorps newsletter.

MiCorps offers full grants to organizations that assess benthic invertebrate communities and stream habitat. MiCorps provides

training and support to grantees to ensure they are collecting reliable, high-quality data. MiCorps also offers start-up grants as “seed money” for newly forming volunteer monitoring

groups. The funds are intended to help groups design monitoring strategies and to draft full proposals for the 2009 VSMGP. Each year, at least \$50,000 is available for volunteer stream monitoring grant awards.

Staff are currently reviewing applications for the 2008 grant cycle, the fourth year of the program under MiCorps. There are currently 12 programs funded through the VSMGP, including nine full grants and three start-up grants.

For more information, contact Jo Latimore at the Huron River Watershed Council, jlatimore@hrwc.org, 734-769-5123.

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About the MiCorps Monitor

The *MiCorps Monitor* newsletter is a semiannual publication aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and ideas among volunteer monitoring program leaders, volunteers, and resource professionals on volunteer monitoring issues specific to Michigan.

Contact the Editor

For information about the MiCorps program or the *MiCorps Monitor* newsletter, or to submit items for future newsletter issues, contact Elizabeth Johnson of the Great Lakes Commission at 734-971-9135, ejohnson@glc.org

Back Issues

Archived issues of this newsletter can be downloaded from the MiCorps web site at www.micorps.net/newsletter

Reprinting material is encouraged, but we request that you notify the editor of your intentions, give credit to *The MiCorps Monitor*, and send a copy of your final publication to the editor.

Defining Sustainability



Jo Latimore, MiCorps
Program Manager

“Sustainability” is a buzzword in natural resource and environmental literature, and rightfully so. It is a concept that moves us from thinking only of the current state of a resource, such as a lake or a stream, but also of how our actions today might impact the future of that resource. Thanks to the growing number of individual volunteers and organizations monitoring their local lakes and streams through MiCorps, the future of Michigan’s aquatic resources looks increasingly bright.

One definition of “sustain” is “to keep up, or keep going” – and that is the renewed focus of the MiCorps program today. Beginning in 2004, the MiCorps team worked hard to develop a vision of the new Michigan Clean Water Corps and launch a program that would support, empower, and network Michigan’s lake and stream monitoring volunteers. Now that MiCorps is in full swing, we are looking toward a sustainable future – both for MiCorps itself and for all of the individual volunteer monitoring programs that are part of this outstanding network. Our inspiring third annual conference in October, themed “Building Sustainability and Ensuring Success,” was a fitting kick-off for this new focus for MiCorps.

Personally, I am also happy to have recently accepted new responsibility as Program Manager for MiCorps – I am thrilled to be able to continue to work closely with all of our extraordinarily dedicated member monitoring groups, our committed Steering Committee, the outstanding MiCorps

staff at the Great Lakes Commission and Huron River Watershed Council, and our dedicated partners at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Another definition of “sustain” is “to provide for (an institution or the like) by furnishing means or funds.” Along that theme, we are very pleased to announce that, in recognition of the great importance of volunteer monitoring to Michigan’s aquatic resources, DEQ has approved the next two years of funding support for MiCorps. The MiCorps team has developed an ambitious plan for the next two years, with a focus on sustaining the momentum that has built over the first three years of MiCorps and supporting our existing and new member programs.

One significant goal for the immediate future is to upgrade the online MiCorps Data Exchange (MDE). With feedback from volunteers who are entering data, people searching the MDE for information, and our own use of the MDE for reporting, we’ve identified a number of ways to make the system easier to use and more efficient. Work on these updates has already begun, and we’re looking forward to your feedback on the updated system – get ready for “MDE 2.0”!

We are proud of how MiCorps has grown over the past three years, and continue to be energized and inspired by the staff and volunteers of all of the phenomenal monitoring groups within MiCorps. On behalf of the MiCorps staff, Steering Committee, and DEQ, I wish you all the best for 2008.

Jo A. Latimore, Ph.D.
MiCorps Program Manager

New Additions to the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program

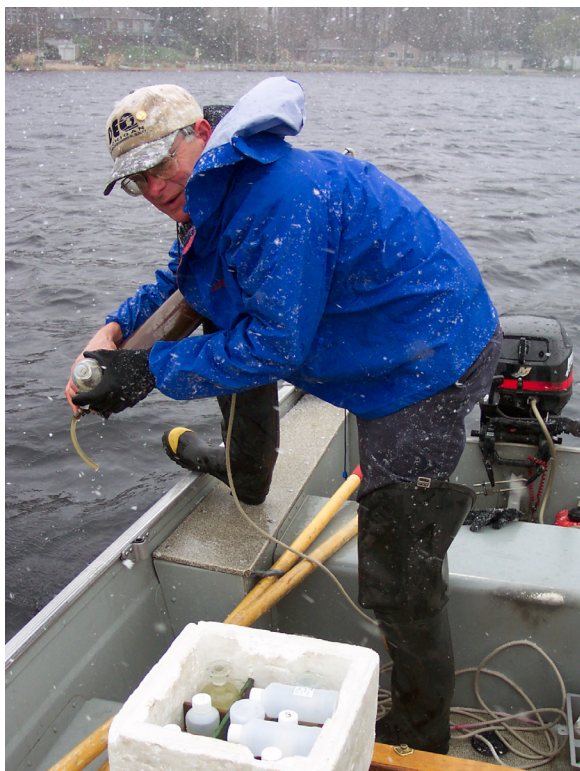
The Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) is wrapping up its 2007 sampling and is accepting enrollment for 2008. In 2007, 229 lakes participated in at least one of the program's five monitoring protocols: Secchi disk transparency, total phosphorus, chlorophyll a, dissolved oxygen and temperature, and aquatic plant mapping.

All of the monitoring results from 2007 have been incorporated into the MiCorps Data Exchange and are ready for distribution and future trend analysis. For more information or to search the database, visit the micorps web site at: www.micorps.net/datasearch. In addition, the CLMP Steering

Committee compiles and analyzes the monitoring results and publishes the summary results in an annual report. The 2007 annual report is available online at the MiCorps website at www.micorps.net/lakereports.

During 2007, the CLMP introduced a new monitoring project to train volunteers to identify and map exotic aquatic plants. The purpose of this monitoring project is to provide lake communities with a strategy for monitoring troublesome exotic aquatic plants in order to detect early infestations of these disruptive species. If detected early, the community can use integrated pest management strategies to

reduce the probability that the exotic infestation will cause significant disruptions to the lake ecosystem and recreational uses. Curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian milfoil, and Hydrilla are covered by the program, and additional exotic plants may be included if they become a threat.



Rain, sleet or snow! DEQ's Ralph Bednarz conducting side by side sampling. Photo: Jo Latimore

The program has attracted a lot of interest, but participation in 2007 was low. Because of the limited number of lake communities that participated in 2007, the Exotic Aquatic Plant Monitoring project is again being offered as a pilot program in 2008.

Another new development for the CLMP is the implementation of a new online application system for the program. This system will help streamline the process for volunteers to enroll in the program. The online application can be viewed online at www.micorps.net/CLMPregister. The Michigan Lake & Stream Associations (MLSA) is continuing to process applications and coordinate volunteer sampling and training for the CLMP.

For more information, contact Jo Latimore at the Huron River Watershed Council, jlatimore@hrwc.org, 734-769-5123.

Steering Committee

Mr. Elwin Coll, Chair
Citizen

Ms. Pearl Bonnell
Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc.

Mr. Robert Burns
Friends of the Detroit River

Mr. Kevin Cronk
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Ms. Jane Herbert
Michigan State University Extension

Dr. Joan Martin
Huron River Watershed Council

Lori Phalen
Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

Upcoming Events

47th Michigan Lake and Stream Associations Conference

April 25, 26, & 27, 2008
Ramada Inn, Grayling, MI
www.mlsna.org

21st Annual National Conference - Enhancing the States' Lake Management Programs: Building Partnerships for Improved Fisheries and Lake Water Quality

April 29 – May 2, 2008
Chicago, Illinois
<http://nalms.org/Conferences/2008Chicagoence/2008>

Sixth National Monitoring Conference - Monitoring: Key to Understanding Our Waters

May 18-22, 2008
Atlantic City, New Jersey
www.acwi.gov/monitoring/conference/2008

Fourth Annual MiCorps Conference

October 20-21, 2008
Higgins Lake, Michigan
www.micorps.net/conference

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

Grantee: *Muskegon River Watershed Assembly*

Project Title: *Muskegon River Water Monitoring Program*

Watershed(s): *Muskegon River and Tributaries*

Funding Amount: *\$10,755*

Project Duration: *2005 - 2007*



Project Summary

The Muskegon River Watershed is one of the largest watersheds in Michigan, encompassing over 2,700 square miles, and is fed by warm, cool and coldwater tributaries. With its headwaters in the Higgins Lake/Houghton Lake area and outlet into Lake Michigan in Muskegon, the river is over 219 miles in length and is the second longest river in Michigan.

The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MWRA) proposed to recruit volunteers, train them and provide them with equip-

ment to conduct water monitoring in the streams and rivers of the Muskegon River Watershed. The program funded through MiCorps was a new monitoring program, the overall goal of which is to encourage citizen interest in water quality issues by training and providing them with equipment to conduct water monitoring. A secondary goal is the collection of water monitoring data to assist the MRWA, local government officials and other organizations in developing protection and restoration projects and implementing better local ordinances.



Project Accomplishments

- *Four training sessions conducted*
- *Twenty-six volunteers trained*
- *Thirty-five volunteers monitored 29 sites at final monitoring event*
- *Sites in 12 of 40 subwatersheds of the MRW are being monitored*
- *Monitoring sites are located in 12 townships of five MRW counties*
- *Two annual meetings conducted*
- *MRWA database created to store data*
- *MRWA webpages publicize project and provide volunteers with information*



Muskegon River Watershed Assembly volunteers sampling in the stream.

Photo: Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Grantee: *Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council*

Project Title: *Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program*

Watershed(s): *Mullett Lake, Torch Lake, and Lake Charlevoix Tributaries*

Funding Amount: *\$12,104*

Project Duration: *2005 - 2007*

Project Summary

The goal of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program is to protect and improve the water quality of streams in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula.

The specific objectives include: collecting baseline data, characterizing stream ecosystems, identifying specific water quality problems, determining water quality trends, and informing and educating the public about water quality issues and aquatic ecology.

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council monitoring project was located within the four-county service area of Emmet, Cheboygan, Charlevoix and Antrim counties. Project partners included The Lake Charlevoix Association, Friends of the Boyne River, Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Mullet Area Preservation Society and the Three Lakes Association. Petoskey High School assisted in providing volunteers. The Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and Charlevoix County Community Foundation provided matching funds.

Project Accomplishments

- *Nearly 100 volunteers sampled sites on 10 streams within four watersheds of the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan.*
- *Nearly tripled the number of volunteers from 2005 – 2007.*
- *Expanded the program, adding the Bear River in 2006 and the Jordan River and Tannery Creek in 2007. The number of sites sampled increased from 15 to 23.*
- *Collected data that's been invaluable in determining the health of these streams.*
- *Utilized data - notified one community of a sudden drop in diversity that coincided with construction activities on a nearby stream bank.*

Volunteer Stream Monitoring field day on the Boyne River.

Photo: Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council



Our Mission

The mission of MiCorps is to network and expand volunteer water quality monitoring organizations statewide for the purpose of collecting, sharing and using reliable data; educate and inform the public about water quality issues; and foster water resources stewardship to facilitate the preservation and protection of Michigan's water resources.

Become a MiCorps Member

Volunteer monitoring organizations that meet quality assurance and operating procedure criteria are eligible to become MiCorps member organizations. MiCorps members represent a select group of monitoring programs in Michigan and receive a variety of benefits, including permission to enter data into the online database, which can be accessed by the monitoring community and the general public. The data will be used by the DEQ as a screening tool and as supplemental data for its water resources management programs. If you are interested in registering your organization as a MiCorps member, please visit the MiCorps web site at www.micorps.net/register.html

Grand Traverse Stream Search

Grantee: *The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay*

Project Title: *Grand Traverse Stream Search*

Watershed(s): *Grand Traverse Bay Tributaries*

Funding Amount: *\$7,687.20*

Project Duration: *2005 - 2007*



Project Summary

The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay (TWC) received funding to continue implementing the Grand Traverse Stream Search volunteer monitoring program. Stream Search, launched in June 2003, is TWC's biannual monitoring program that consists of groups of volunteers, led by a trained team leader, that are assigned to area streams to sample macroinvertebrates and complete habitat assessments in the spring and fall of each year.

Stream Search provides valuable data to track and detect early changes to a stream system and also serves as an important educational tool. Its primary goals are to increase interest and awareness of watershed issues and stewardship of the resource among area residents and visitors.

Some of the Stream Search's major objectives included conducting team leader training and monitoring events; developing the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); planning sampling events and recruiting volunteers; and compiling, summarizing and reporting monitoring results to partners and the broader community.



Dick Thompson and Liz DeLaRossa sampling at Ptobego Creek. Photo: TWC



Project Accomplishments

- Conducted four stream macroinvertebrate monitoring events and four team leader training events.
- Sampled 10 streams, including Acme, Baker, Brewers, Cedar, Jack's, Kid's, Mier, Mitchell, Ptobego, and Yuba creeks.
- Sampled 16 sites on 10 different streams (1-2 sites per stream).
- Recruited and trained 25 team leaders.
- Recruited and utilized 75 volunteers.
- Advertised and notified the public of upcoming events and past results through a variety of media.
- Products included spreadsheets and tables summarizing streams sampled, their rankings, and the numbers of team leaders and volunteers for each event.
- Measurable Results: Most streams ranked in the fair-good range, with some fluctuations from year to year.
- Working to transform Stream Search into an Adopt-A-Stream program and produced a new marketing video (using other funding sources).

Third Annual MiCorps Conference

The third annual MiCorps conference was held on October 15-16, 2007 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center in Higgins Lake. The conference featured presentations from regional experts and provided training for both beginning and advanced monitoring programs.

"Best small conference I've ever been to!" said one conference attendee.

Conference sessions addressed such topics as fundraising; managing and using data; designing a monitoring strategy; outreach and collaboration; *E. coli* monitoring; and monitoring Michigan's lakes. Representatives from MiCorps and the

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality reviewed trends in water quality in Michigan and discussed the role that volunteer monitoring data plays in supporting water quality protection efforts in Michigan. Peter Jackson, Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator for U.S. EPA's Midwest Region 5, presented the keynote address. He provided a regional perspective on volunteer monitoring and discussed key issues facing volunteer monitoring programs,

including program sustainability and volunteer retention.

Three optional training sessions for volunteer monitors were offered on Monday, including Stream Monitoring, Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Identification, and Marketing the Environment.

The conference was an excellent opportunity for those involved with volunteer water quality monitoring to network with other resource professionals, citizen volunteers,

state leaders in the volunteer monitoring community, and MiCorps and DEQ staff. Nearly 75 people attended the conference, representing

more than 50 agencies and local volunteer monitoring programs from across the state. Presentations and training materials presented at the conference are available on the MiCorps web site at www.micorps.net/conference.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Johnson at the Great Lakes Commission, ejohnson@glc.org, 734-971-9135.

*Best small conference
I've ever been to!"
- a conference attendee*

At the conference, the 2007 Start-up Grantees receive certificates for their participation in the MiCorps program.

Photo: MiCorps



MiCorps Members

Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc.

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Sierra Club - Michigan Chapter

Glen Lake Association

Friends of the Rouge

Upper Peninsula RC&D

Barry Conservation District

River Raisin Watershed Council

Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council (pending)

Clinton River Watershed Council (pending)



MiCorps Partners



Michigan Department of
Environmental Quality



Great Lakes Commission



Huron River Watershed
Council



Michigan Lake & Stream
Associations, Inc.



Michigan State University
Extension

About MiCorps

The Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) is a network of volunteer monitoring programs in Michigan. It was created in 2004 through an executive order by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm to assist the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in collecting and sharing water quality data for use in water resources management and protection programs.

Who We Are

The Great Lakes Commission, in partnership with the Huron River Watershed Council, was contracted by the DEQ to develop, implement and administer MiCorps under the direction of DEQ and with advice from a steering committee. The program began in fall 2004 and is funded through August 2009. MiCorps staff also are partnering with the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations and Michigan State University Extension to administer the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program.

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