

Running a MiCorps Monitoring Event: Volunteers and Logistics



Outline

- Why monitor
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Event overview/example
- Questions



Ultimate Goal: Protection of our fresh water

Through:

- Engaging citizens
- Educating public
- Creating stewardship



How?



A robust group of enthusiastic,
effective volunteers
who enjoy
working with you
and vice versa.

Taking actions together to
protect the future of our fresh
water!

What would a successful volunteer monitoring program look like?

- Collect data about your fresh water
- Data and the monitoring process used to educate and foster “stewardship”
- Continually reaching new people
- Human impacts to the watershed are alleviated

Recruiting volunteers 101

- Classic media (newspapers, radio, TV, local newsletters, posters)
- Digital age (web, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Booth at a local events
- Partnerships with schools, professors, DNR, DEQ, fishing clubs, literary clubs, gardening clubs, etc. etc. etc.
- Ask people how they learn about events

Recruiting volunteers 101

Announcements / PR

- List: date, location, time commitment, etc.
- Clearly identify tasks
- Describe benefit/value of project
- Contact information
- Additional information as necessary
(what to wear, what to bring, where to meet, etc.)
- What to do in inclement weather

Side note: Protect yourself and your volunteers



- Safety first → always stress safety at every event
- Liability waiver

Recruiting volunteers 501...

Motivational Forces

- Learning
- Teaching
- Socializing
- Doing
(protecting the environment,
being a steward)



Retaining volunteers

Before, during, & after

- So much of it is about respect
- Reply as soon as they offer help
- Start on time
- Illustrate how their work is important & well used
- Follow up on any commitments you've made
- Minimize as many barriers to their work as possible (don't have excessive trainings)
- Have fun (and food)



Retaining volunteers

- Build their training and responsibility
- Over time, convert new volunteers into trained leaders
- Articulate what they have accomplished
- Say *THANK YOU!*



Retaining volunteers

Create a
Volunteer
Database



Evaluate, Evaluate, Evaluate

- Improve your program
- Get compliments and feedback for your leaders
- Ask if their work has changed their behaviors... fodder for future publicity and grant applications!
- Let people know you are listening to them
- When? All the time!

Organization of the Monitoring

- MiCorps encourages your group to monitor on one day, as an event
- Rather than teams choosing their day and organizing themselves
- This requires lower driving times for staff, but high driving for volunteers.
- Everyone comes to a kick-off point, and then drives to their site.
 - Upper Peninsula groups in particular find this challenging to do.
 - Two-week window

Why Monitor as an Event?

- Those motivational forces
- Frees up your schedule
- Fun to gather as a group
- Drop-outs are not as deleterious
- However: You need more equipment and the space to store it



An example event:



HRWC's River Roundup

Before the event...

- Publicity (1-6 weeks) and registration
- Check equipment quality and quantity
- Prepare datasheets and other paperwork
- Train and retrain readers
- Create teams of 4-6 people



Leader and Collector Training...



- ▶ Leader training is held 2-3 weeks prior to every collection event
- ▶ One collector and one streamside leader in each team
- ▶ Number of teams is constrained by the number of trained leader/collectors
- ▶ Leaders and collectors are asked to retrain every 3 years

Site assignment...

- Prior to the event, each team is assigned to 2 stream sites
- One site is “good”, the other is “poor”



- People are, in general, assigned to different locations each time
- We intend to achieve a commitment to the overall watershed and organization rather than a specific location.

Day of the event:

- People gather and form into their pre-assigned teams
- Buckets of equipment are awaiting each team
- Volunteers are given directions and told about the organization
 - Note: Average volunteers should not need to get trained beyond 10-15 minutes of explanation.
- Trained leaders get a refresher course (10 minutes) on procedures



Off they go...

- Road directions and aerial maps are in each set of equipment
- Groups carpool to both sites, with trained leaders and collectors in charge
- Staff prepare for volunteers' return



...and back they come

Volunteers are asked to

- clean and put away equipment
- turn in their bugs and forms
- fill out an evaluation



Next Steps...

- ID Day (same day or within a month)
- Follow up with any problems or complaints
- Follow up publicity...demonstrate success!
- Keep volunteers in the loop
 - any follow up
 - results and reports



Questions?

- Paul Steen, psteen@hrwc.org
- Sign up for VolMonitor listserve:
 - Send blank email to:
volmonitor-subscribe@lists.epa.gov
 - Google “VolMonitor”