

Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program (VSCP) Annual Wrap Up

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MiCorps Stream Program Manager

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MiCorps VSCP provides small grants to local units of government to help implement trash cleanup of rivers, streams, and creeks to improve the waters in Michigan. Local units of government are eligible to get the grants, and often partner with nonprofit organizations or other volunteer groups to carry out the cleanups.

\$25,000 is made available each year in VSCP grant funding. EGLE's appropriation for this program originates from fees collected from the sale of the state's Water Quality Protection license plates (2000 PA 74). Eligible organizations may apply for up to \$5,000 on their project. The grants require 25% local match of the total project cost. Grant funds are disbursed on a cost-reimbursement basis, and only disbursed after satisfactory completion of the cleanup project and final reporting requirements.

Seven eligible organization applied for and received funding in 2021: Benzie Conservation District, City of Ecorse, the Clinton County Conservation District, Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission, Grand Traverse Conservation District, Missaukee Conservation District, and St. Joseph Conservation District. Each of the organizations completed fact sheets that summarize their project and are included in the next pages of this report.

In total, the seven organizations received \$15,509.57 (out of the \$25,000 available.). This means that \$9,490.43 went unspent, but it was MSU's and HRWC's first time managing the project with only a couple of months of lead time before the request for proposals went live. We anticipate more applications in 2022 since we have been talking about the project for a year now in various locales.

Other Summary Numbers (Across all 7 grants)

- Total spent: \$15,509.57
- Total Local Match: \$20,597.88 (132% of grant dollars; includes volunteer labor)
- Volunteers Participating: 637
- Total Volunteer Hours: 1080
- Total River Miles Cleaned: 142
- Total Garbage Weighted: 4,698 pounds
- Not all grantees had the ability to weigh garbage. In addition to weighted garbage there was also: 92 full trash bags, 1 8x10 trailer, and 1 dumpster.
- Types of garbage: Tires, fishing line and hooks, bottles, sandals, 60 pound pop-up tent, a plastic chair, bucket, food wrappers and containers, beverage containers, bicycles, swimming rafts, large wood pieces, 12 shopping carts in one location, pallets, more tires, old metal garbage, plastic bags, cans, cups, Styrofoam, clothing, more tires, various metal pieces ranging from sheets to 10 foot poles ending in concrete, car parts, more shopping carts, plywood, mattresses, a unicorn float, lumber, old washing machine, barrel, play equipment, clothing, aerosol cans, another barrel, a doll, and more tires.

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Benzie Conservation District
Program Name: Platte and Betsie River Cleanups
Streams Cleaned: Platte River from US-31 Veteran's Park to Deadstream Road, Honor MI, 49640. Betsie River from the Homestead dam to the West River Road crossing, Benzonia MI, 49616.
Watershed(s): Platte River and Betsie River Watersheds
County: Benzie

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Benzie Conservation District (BCD) partnered with the Boardman River Clean Sweep and the Traverse Area Paddle Club to host river cleanups on the Platte and Betsie rivers in 2021. The first cleanup was on the Betsie River on June 12th. We hosted a total of 21 volunteers (and four staff) and cleaned three sections of river starting at the Homestead Dam and finishing at the River Road boat launch covering about 8 miles of river. This section of the Betsie is heavily fished during the fall salmon run and is full of fishing line and lures. These create a hazard for paddlers and wildlife alike. In total we cleaned over 100 lbs. of trash from the Betsie River. The BCD provided volunteers with breakfast and a boat wash before the cleanup. We also worked with the kind folks at the Betsie River Resort who let our upstream crew take out at their launch and use their dumpsters for river trash.

On July 17th we hosted 27 volunteers for the Upper Platte River Clean Sweep from US-31 at Veteran's Park down to Deadstream Road. We split the nine river miles into two sections. Again, boat washes were available for any paddlers who had been in another waterbody within the previous two weeks. We had a record number of volunteers for the Platte which was likely because we switched from our traditional day of the last Thursday in May to a Saturday in July. We cleared about 150 lbs. of trash from the Upper Platte River including a pop-up tent frame, numerous sandals, and bottles. We also found a dead duck that was hooked on a fishing lure dangling from an overhanging branch. After the cleanup we grilled brats and enjoyed lunch in the Honor Park.

Between the two clean sweeps we had a total of 48 volunteers and cleaned out 250 pounds of trash from our beautiful waterways!

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$725
Local Match \$ Amount: \$2757.67
Volunteers participating: 48
Volunteer hours: 192

Stream Miles Cleaned: Platte 9 miles, Betsie 8 miles.

Amount of Trash removed: 250 pounds

Types of Garbage Removed: fishing line and hooks, bottles, sandals, pop-up tent, a plastic chair, bucket, and food wrappers and containers

Most Interesting Item Found: Frame for a pop up tent



Volunteers excited and ready to clean up the Betsie River, June 12, 2021

Cleanup highlights



Volunteer group picture on the Upper Platte River



Sandals picked out of the Platte River. Any matches?



Volunteer appreciation lunch after a hard day of cleaning



A full load of debris from the Upper Platte



A typical tangle on the Betsie River



Volunteers with their haul of trash on the Betsie

Funding for the Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program is provided by Water Quality license plate fees.

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Ecorse Creek Committee
Program Name: Ecorse Creek Clean Up
Stream(s) Cleaned: Ecorse Creek, from the mouth near the Detroit River, up the north branch to Fort Street, and up the south branch to Harrison Street
Watershed(s): Ecorse Creek and Detroit River
County(ies): Wayne County, MI
Program Manager: Tim Sadowski, 313-920-0026 (Cell)



The City of Friendship



CITY OF LINCOLN PARK



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Successes: The Ecorse Creek Committee had a busy summer hosting three litter clean ups, in three cities, along Ecorse Creek. Collectively, 126 volunteers from all over Southeast Michigan joined together to remove over 2,398 pounds of litter from the creek! The Committee is thrilled with this year's results and are already planning for even bigger events in spring and summer 2022. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported the clean-up efforts, including Ecorse's Department of Public Works. Their heavy equipment made quick work of equipment cleaning.

Challenges and Lessons Learned: Our challenge is always to get more people from the shoreline, into boats, and onto the the water. Due to COVID, some of our trusted partners were no longer interested in renting kayaks for these types of events. Thankfully we found another partner and we able to supply additional kayaks, and a few canoes to serve as barges, for our September clean up. They were very well received. Our main lesson learned is to begin outreach and advertising MUCH earlier in the year to ensure people have the clean up dates on their calendars.

Partners: Cities of Ecorse, Lincoln Park, and Wyandotte, including their Department of Public Works employees; Friends of the Detroit River; Friends of the Rouge, Michigan Sea Grant; Downriver Delta; EGLE; and US Fish and Wildlife Service (Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge).

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$2,545

Local Match \$ Amount: \$2,529

Volunteers participating: 126 volunteers

Volunteer hours: 378 hours + planning time

Stream Miles Cleaned: 4.5 miles

Amount of Trash removed: 2,398 pounds

Types of Garbage Removed: Mostly beverage containers, but also large items such as shopping carts, bicycles, swimming rafts, large wood pieces, etc.

Most Interesting Item Found: 12 shopping carts in one location



Thank goodness the USFWS provided canoes to act as barges because we are full!! Photo credit : USFWS

Cleanup highlights



The Council Point Park creek crew with their haul! Photo credit: USFWS



Mary Bohling, MI Sea Grant, with her best find! Photo credit: USFWS



John Buszkiewicz, MI DNR, getting dirty. Photo credit: USFWS



We found some Creeper Mussels in the creek. Photo credit: USFWS



It feels good to stretch your legs after three hours on the water. Photo credit: Kelly Rose



Thanks to the Ecorse DPW for making quick work of equipment clean up. Photo credit: Kelly Rose



You never know what you will find cleaning up an urban waterway. Photo credit: USFWS



Some first time kayakers. Photo credit: Kelly Rose

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Clinton Conservation District
Program Name: 2021 Looking Glass River Stream Clean Up
Stream(s) Cleaned: Looking Glass River from Wood Road to S Bridge Street, Dewitt Michigan 48820
Watershed(s): Looking Glass River watershed
County(ies): Clinton
Program Manager: Kelcie Sweeney, Executive Director
Date(s) of Cleanup event: August 15, 2021

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Clinton Conservation District partnered with the Friends of the Looking Glass to host a river cleanup in Dewitt at Riverside Park to provide water quality education and increase awareness of water recreation opportunities on the Looking Glass River. Local groups such as Friends of the Maple River, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, and the Clinton County Parks and Greenspace Commission helped promote this event. Support from Dewitt Township allowed us to use the park space free of charge. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department also assisted by providing water sampling for *E. Coli* levels at local road stream crossings.

The Friends of the Looking Glass (FOLG) has a newer board of directors that are passionate about paddling and increasing engagement along the Looking Glass River corridor in Clinton County. The river, with some regular maintenance, is a very easy float for canoers and kayakers alike. The FOLG actively recruits membership for their organization in light of increasing community interest in the river for recreation over the past couple years. Our collaboration with the FOLG focused on the most urban 3.5 mile stretch of the river – a section with the most put-ins compared to any other section. However, the FOLG held two additional cleanups in June and September which resulted in 15 miles of cleaned river total over the three events. Our greatest challenge during event planning was the gaps in communication between organizers. This challenge emerged when our original event, planned for July, was rescheduled due to flooding. Unfortunately, the rescheduled event was coordinated with another organization without our knowing. Going forward, we have learned that clear communication and setting explicit guidelines for our program partners is an essential piece of organizing a river clean up event.

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$1,400
Local Match \$ Amount: \$590

Volunteers participating: 35
Volunteer hours: 140

Stream Miles Cleaned: 3.5 miles with us, 15 miles total

Amount of Trash removed: 1,390.6 lbs plus 2 truck tires and 5 pallets

Types of Garbage Removed: Pallets, tires, old metal garbage, plastic bags, and cans

Most Interesting Item Found: Old propane tank



Friends of the Looking Glass posing with a Granger bin during the August 15, 2021 clean up.

Cleanup highlights



Figure 1. Friend of the Looking Glass floating with a pallet.

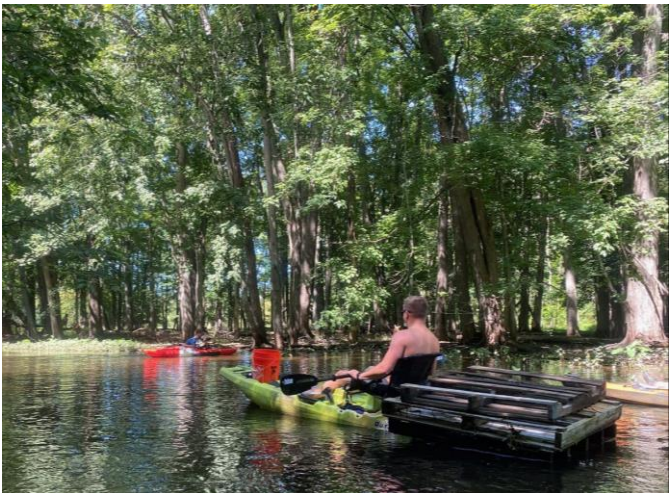


Figure 3. Friends of the Looking Glass floating with pallets for 2 miles.



Figure 2. Mid MI District Health Department sampling the Looking Glass River ahead of clean up.



Figure 4. River clean-up kits offered to event participants and independent volunteers.

Funding for the Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program is provided by Water Quality license plate fees.

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Genesee County Parks; Flint River Watershed Coalition
Program Name: Flint River Volunteer Stream Cleanup
Stream(s) Cleaned: Flint River, from Grand Traverse Street to Mitson Blvd, Flint Mi 48503 & 48504
Watershed(s): Flint River Watershed
County(ies): Genesee
Program Manager: Hollie Marlett, GCP, Jaime Welch, FRWC



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Genesee County Parks partnered with the Flint River Watershed Coalition to host stream cleanups along the Flint River in Flint, Michigan. This program is celebrating the amount of larger objects in the river that the cleanup crew were able to retrieve in spite of the water conditions. These objects posed a threat to both the health of the Flint River and the health and safety of those who use the Flint River for recreation. Large items like car doors and bumpers, large furniture pieces, pieces of sheet metal, and metal poles were removed during periods when the river was safely accessible, along with dozens of trash bags of litter like cups, bottles, debris from fishing, and other trash.

Due to unseasonably high water all season, averaging several feet above normal levels, cleanups along Dort Highway were not attempted. Water level checks were performed, but it was decided that it was unsafe to pull tires this season. Cleanups occurred along the Flint River through Chevy Commons when the water levels were low enough to permit access, and these cleanups covered a route of 3.25 miles that was revisited 4 times over the summer by our cleanup crews.

Normally, cleanups are performed by walking through Chevy Commons pulling kayaks and a flat bottomed boat behind us with tethers until we hit deeper water at the entrance to Mott Park. Due to the high water that method was not feasible most of the summer, and the fast water added a degree of difficulty at pulling trash out of strainers, which are downed trees that pose a hazard to recreational kayakers. But our team adapted, and was able to pull a large amount of trash from this stretch of the river, including an entire muffler system and a floating pound of butter.

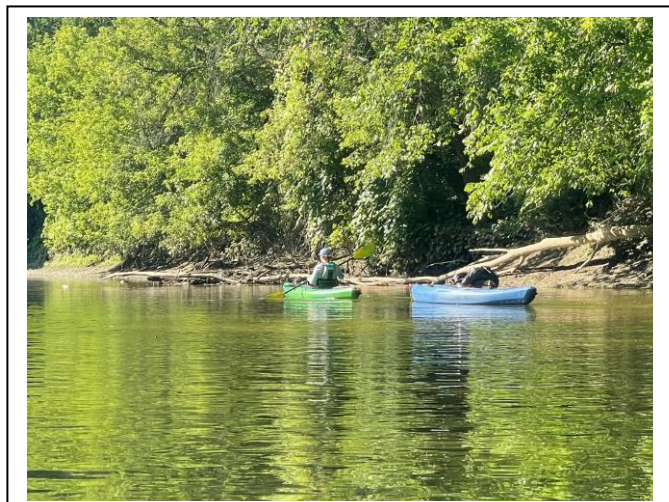
PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$4272.45
Local Match \$ Amount: \$7277.16
Volunteers participating: 26
Volunteer hours: 176 total hours
Stream Miles Cleaned: 3.25

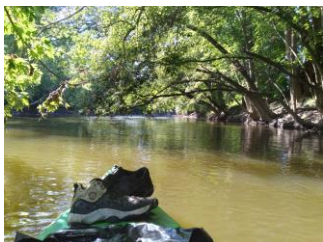
Amount of Trash removed: Filled an 8x10 trailer to overflowing, filled approximately 30 trash bags with smaller debris, filled approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 dumpster with larger debris such as metal, car parts, furniture, household items, traffic cones, large wood debris such as picnic table pieces, section of a dock.

Types of Garbage Removed: litter (cups, Styrofoam, fishing line, bags, clothing, spent grocery items) tires, various metal pieces ranging from sheets to 10 foot poles ending in concrete, car parts, shopping carts, plywood, mattresses.

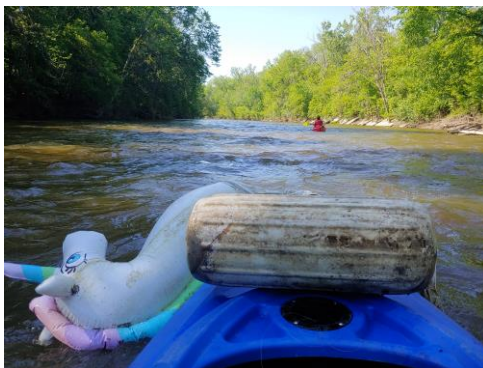
Most Interesting Item Found: Most of a car – doors (1), steering wheel, bumpers (2), axle



Cleanup highlights



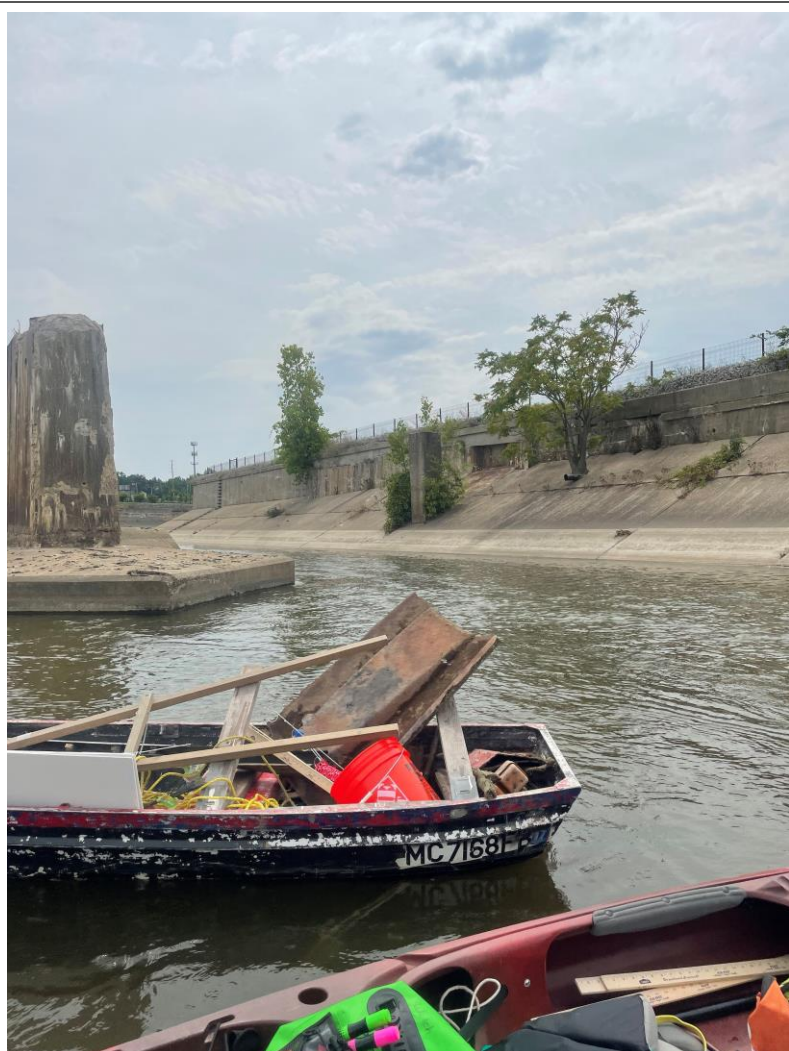
We even found a pair of sneakers!



This was probably our most “fun” find, a unicorn float caught in a tree.



One of the flat bottom boats used for cleanups. This is the before picture.



This is halfway through one cleanup and it is starting to get loaded down.



One of our cleanup crew towing a boat full of trash



Funding for the Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program is provided by Water Quality license plate fees.

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Grand Traverse Conservation District
Program Name: 16th Annual Boardman River CleanSweep-2021
Stream Cleaned: Boardman River from Forks State Canoe Launch to Grand Traverse Bay
Watershed: Boardman River Watershed
County: Grand Traverse
Program Manager: Steve Largent, Conservation Team Coordinator



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Due to Covid-19, this year's Boardman River Clean Sweep event was not done in one day but in 5 days. The first clean-up event in partnership with Boardman River CleanSweep founder Dr. Norm Fred, took place on May 15th when a group from Back Country Hunters and Anglers asked if they could help. The group conducted a clean-up of the downtown section. The 5 sections in the upper part of the Boardman were cleaned over the course of 3 days...June 6, 14, & 16. It was much easier to break the clean-up down over a three day period which resulted in fewer people to shuttle and less chance of a Covid infection spreader event.

During the June events in the upper river, one of our crews found and photographed 5 pieces of large flood debris in the Shumsky to Beitner section. On July 21, we took 7 canoes and 9 people to take out these sunken docks. The size and weight of the debris required us to leave some of the debris on the shore out of the flood plain for later retrieval. The locations were marked with GPS coordinates.

The September event for a 2nd downtown cleanup was canceled due to the Covid Delta surge.

Success: We were afraid this year would be a total loss but it turned out so much better than we had imagined. With some careful planning, we were able to safely do more projects than we thought possible back in March and April. We also gained a new group in the Back Country Hunters and Anglers that pledged to come back next year. **Challenge:** COVID-19 Delta Variant. **Lessons Learned:** We did have a mishap on the large debris project day where a volunteer took off his PFD and then flipped in a strong current. It was scary and a close call but he came up in a few very long seconds with a few scratches on his legs. I think he learned his lesson and so did the rest of us. We will tell his story to others as a reminder of the value of a PFD while paddling and working on the river.

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$1,730.00
Local Match \$ Amount: \$3,475.04

Volunteers participating: 92
Volunteer hours: 276

Stream Miles Cleaned: 30

Amount of Trash removed: 45 Bags of trash;
1-tire; 150 lbs of large assorted pieces of old dock.

Types of Garbage: Trash; Tires; Old docks.

Most Interesting Item Found: Old docks?



Fitting find for the 16th Annual Boardman River CleanSweep

Cleanup highlights



Dr. Norm Fred, Founder Boardman River CleanSweep poses with a tire found in the lower Boardman that took place on May 15th. 25 volunteers removed 25 bags of trash, a tire, and a sundry of larger items. For a complete trip report with pics visit:

https://tapc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=5&club_id=813410&item_id=64319

Another bottle removed from the Boardman River between Forks Canoe Launch & Scheck's Landing on June 6, 2021. 5 volunteers removed ½ bag of trash. For complete trip report with pics visit:

https://tapc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=5&club_id=813410



Misc items found between Scheck's Landing & Brown Bridge. 8 volunteers collected 2 bags of trash plus the chair. For complete trip report with pics visit:

https://tapc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=5&club_id=813410&item_id=65141



Grand Traverse Conservation District staff and Boardman River CleanSweep volunteers remove a large section of dock from the river. 5 docks total were removed this year. For complete trip report with pics visit:

http://brcleansweep.org/2021_0721_Flood_Debris_Report.html



MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: Missaukee Conservation District
Program Name: Volunteer stream clean-up
Stream(s) Cleaned: Muskegon River and Big Manistee River
Watershed(s): Muskegon and Manistee
County(ies): Missaukee and Kalkaska
Program Manager: Sherry L. Blaszak, District Manager,
231.839.7193, sherry.blaszak@macd.org
Date(s) of cleanup events: On-going

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

There were several challenges of this project. We had started out being sensitive to the Covid-19 pandemic, not being sure if groups would be able to gather, etc. and set out to have river clean-up kits distributed to White Birch Campground and Canoe Rental LLC who would distribute river cleanup kits to paddlers using his services. Mr. Howard, the owner, agreed to gather and weigh trash that was removed from the river and record it.

Problems ensued when orders were placed for the items to be included in the river clean up kits – there were delays, unavailable products, and unreachable vendors.

The kits were assembled with products received by a team of volunteers from the Lake City Women's Club on 7/30/21. Information on the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly Trash Bash and Michigan Paddle Stewards was included. Kits were dropped off August 3. Promotions were made on Facebook and Instagram and in area retail stores. Kits were kept in our office for those who were headed to a different part of the river.

We expanded to Smithville Landing, Big Manistee River, in Kalkaska County. The owners also agreed to distribute clean-up bags and weigh the trash removed and dropped off the kits August 12. 2 the Moon Bakery had a river trip as a reward for their employees, as noticed on Facebook by Missaukee CD staff, so they were contacted and received bags. A 13# trash bag was filled! Smithville Landing stated they had 4 groups that utilized the bags and covered 12 miles each for a total of 48 miles; amount of trash removed wasn't known.

While this year's results were poor, we know our numbers will shoot up by mid-summer 2022.

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$4547.71
Local Match \$ Amount: \$8160

Volunteers participating: 28
Volunteer hours: 50

Stream Miles Cleaned: 51

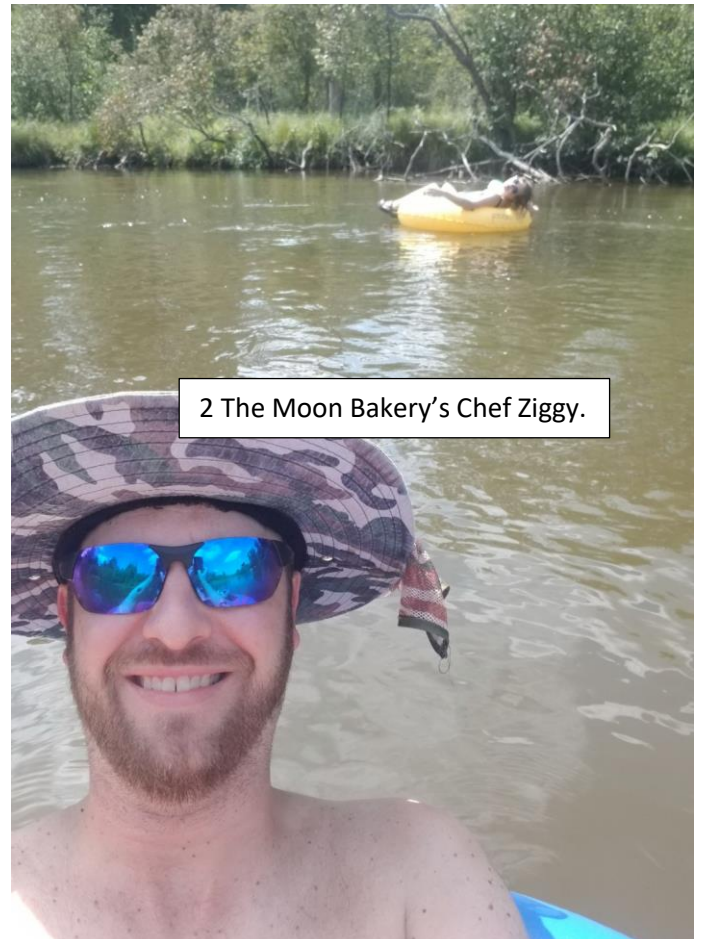
Amount of Trash removed: 13-gallon trash bag;
Smithville Landing didn't report the amount
picked up from their 16 bags distributed.

Types of Garbage Removed: standard

Cleanup highlights



2 The Moon Bakery owners & staff on the Manistee River.



2 The Moon Bakery's Chef Ziggy.

Funding for the Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program is provided by Water Quality license plate fees.

MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program Project Fact Sheet



Organization Name: St Joseph County Conservation District
Program Name: volunteer stream cleanup
Stream(s) Cleaned: Fawn, Portage, Prairie, Rocky
Watershed(s): St. Joseph
County(ies): St. Joseph county
Program Manager: Jacob Phillips Jacob.phillips@macd.org
Date(s) of Cleanup event: 6/5, 7/17, 7/19, 8/30, 9/11



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

This year we successfully cleaned 5 different stretches of the river. We removed a good amount of trash from the rivers including several tires, a washing machine, barrel, shoes, cans, wrappers, styrafoam ect.. the majority of the challenges we faced were weather related. Our second scheduled cleanup for June 19th had to be canceled the morning of the cleanup due to incimate weather, a challenge was selecting a date to reschedule that worked with all parties involved as it was supposed to be a public cleanup including a group of boyscouts. Something I would do differently would be to plan backup dates ahead of time as a failsafe plan if the original date has to be postponed. Aside from the setbacks of weather causing a lower number of volunteers we had a successful turnout for the rest of the dates.

Next year I will do more to promote the cleanups through social media and more newspaper articles to encourage a larger turnout of volunteers and to get the idea and promotion of keeping our rivers clean out there. I am very gratefull for this opportunity and plan to keep improving the program.

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

MiCorps Grant \$ Amount: \$814.41

Local Match \$ Amount: \$2484.00

Volunteers participating: 30

Volunteer hours: 120

Stream Miles Cleaned: 21

Amount of Trash removed: 7 tires, old washing machine, lots of trash, barrel, and piece to kids play equipment amounting to several hundred pounds all in all

Types of Garbage Removed: household trash, clothing, debris, aerosol cans, tires, barrel



trash cleaned from St. Joseph river in Three Rivers



pulling a washer out of the fawn river in sturgis