

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Michigan Volunteer Stream Monitoring Grant Awards for 2008

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and The Great Lakes Commission (GLC) are pleased to announce that four organizations have been chosen to receive volunteer water quality monitoring grants to be awarded under the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) program.

Through Executive Order No. 2003-15, the MiCorps program was established by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm to involve and assist the state's volunteer water quality organizations in water quality assessments, protection, and stewardship of lakes and rivers.

The four volunteer organizations sharing nearly \$50,000 in grant funds to support their monitoring work, beginning in 2008, are:

- * Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve - Monitoring the Upper Au Sable River watershed in Roscommon, Crawford, Otsego, and Oscoda Counties.
- * Huron Pines - Monitoring the Pine River and Van Etten Creek in Alcona and Iosco Counties.
- * Friends of the St. Clair River - Monitoring tributaries of the St. Clair River in St. Clair County.
- * The Nature Conservancy in partnership with the Livingston County Drain Commissioner's Office - Monitoring the Shiawassee River watershed in Shiawassee and Livingston Counties.

The grants, awarded through the MiCorps' Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program, provide training and support for the volunteer groups to help them collect quality data on the state's water resources. The data are used to support the DEQ's efforts to protect and manage the state's water resources.

DEQ Director Steven E. Chester wants the volunteers to know their efforts, time, talents, and stewardship are much appreciated because volunteer involvement makes a difference in overall efforts to protect our water resources. "Volunteers serve as the frontline of defense in resource protection and an early warning system that assists the DEQ in fulfilling its charge in assuring that water quality is met throughout Michigan."

Jo Latimore, MiCorps Program Manager at the Huron River Watershed Council, which administers the program along with the GLC, in partnership with the DEQ stated, "These volunteers will join an expanding network of committed citizens who are working hard to monitor water quality in Michigan to help protect our state's valuable resources. We are proud of our volunteers who continue to inspire us with their enthusiasm and dedication."

Much of the work involves monitoring stream-dwelling populations of insects, worms, mollusks, crustaceans, and other creatures, some of which are highly sensitive to changes in water quality and provide food for fish

and other organisms. The volunteers will also assess the quality of local stream habitat.

The DEQ established the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program in 1998 and contracted with the GLC to administer it as part of the MiCorps in the fall of 2004. Through this year, nearly \$450,000 in monitoring grants has been awarded for volunteer stream monitoring.

For more information, visit the MiCorps Web site at www.micorps.net. You can also contact Matt Doss of the GLC at mdoss@glc.org, or Jack Wuycheck of the DEQ at 517335-3176 or by e-mail at wuycheckj@michigan.gov

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