



## Empowering Michigan's Volunteer Water Quality Monitors

First Annual Conference for Michigan's  
Clean Water Corps  
Volunteer Monitoring Program

October 29, 2005 ❖ Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center ❖ Higgins Lake, Michigan

### Conference Agenda

- 8:00 a.m. Registration and Poster Session** (*Education Building, upper level*)
- 10:00 a.m. Welcoming Remarks and Review of Agenda**  
Elwin Coll, Chair, MiCorps Steering Committee  
Ric Lawson, Manager, MiCorps support staff, Great Lakes Commission
- 10:30 a.m. Overview of MiCorps and Its Accomplishments During the First Year**  
Ralph Bednarz, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Ric Lawson, Great Lakes Commission  
*This session will present the mission and goals of the MiCorps program; review key program elements, including the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program, Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program, data exchange platform, informational resources and volunteer training; and discuss accomplishments during the program's first year and upcoming challenges and opportunities.*
- 11:15 a.m. Overview of Michigan's Surface Water Monitoring Program and Trends in Water Quality in Michigan's Lakes and Rivers**  
Gary Kohlhepp, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Ralph Bednarz, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
*Managers of Michigan's Surface Water Monitoring Program will review the program's structure and goals, explain how staff use volunteer monitoring data, highlight quality control requirements, and discuss trends in water quality in Michigan's lakes and rivers.*
- 11:45 a.m. Questions and Discussion**  
Facilitator: Ric Lawson
- 12:00 Noon Lunch** (*Administration Building, dining room*)  
*"Volunteers in Action," a slide show of volunteer monitors at work.*  
*Introduced by Pearl Bonnell, Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc.*

Thanks to the Michigan Clean Water Corps partners for supporting this conference:



**1:15 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

Four breakout sessions will be held concurrently and repeated once. Conference participants may attend two of the four breakout sessions.

**Session 1: Using the MiCorps Data Exchange Platform** (Education Building, lower level)

Ric Lawson and Anne Sturm, MiCorps staff, Great Lakes Commission

This session will train participants on how to use the MiCorps online data exchange platform to report volunteer monitoring data and compare data from other lakes and streams.

**Session 2: Funding, Grant Writing and Program Development for Volunteer Monitoring Programs** (Administration Building, lounge)

John Hummer, MiCorps staff, Great Lakes Commission  
Gary Kohlhepp, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Heidi Yaple, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

This session will review MiCorps and DEQ grant programs that support local monitoring efforts, highlight other funding options for volunteer monitoring programs, and provide tips on preparing successful grant applications.

**Session 3: Managing Volunteer Monitoring Data to Support Local Water Quality Protection Efforts** (Education Building, upper level)

Jo Latimore, Huron River Watershed Council  
Kevin Cronk, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council  
Robert Karner, Lake Biologist, Glen Lake Association

This session will provide instruction on how to effectively manage, interpret and apply volunteer monitoring data to support local management efforts. Case studies will showcase how river and lake organizations are using volunteer data in their programs.

**Session 4: Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Monitors** (Straights classroom)

Joan Martin, Huron River Watershed Council  
Howard Wandell, Michigan State University Extension  
Jack Minore, Flint River Watershed Coalition

This session will discuss how to successfully recruit and train volunteers, how to maintain their excitement and involvement, and how to structure volunteer activities. Case studies will showcase successful river and lake volunteer programs and explore why programs succeed or struggle in this area.

**2:15 p.m. Break** (Education Building, upper level)

**2:30 p.m. Repeat of Breakout Sessions**

**3:30 p.m. Panel Session and Open Forum: Opportunities for Engaging the Volunteer Monitoring Community in Protecting Michigan's Water Resources** (Education Building, upper level)

Jane Herbert, MiCorps Steering Committee, Michigan State University Extension  
Marilyn Shy, MiCorps Steering Committee, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts  
Ralph Bednarz, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

This open forum will provide an opportunity for conference participants to make recommendations for strengthening the MiCorps program and supporting and engaging Michigan's volunteer monitoring community. To stimulate discussion, representatives from the MiCorps Steering Community and DEQ will respond to the conference discussions and provide their recommendations, followed by open discussion.

**4:30 p.m. Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Elwin Coll  
Ric Lawson