

STREAM HABITAT ASSESSMENT



I. Stream, Team, Location Information

Site ID: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Name(s): _____

II. Stream and Riparian Habitat

A. General Information						Notes and Observations: Give further explanation when needed.	
<i>Circle one or more answers as appropriate</i>							
1	Average Stream Width (ft)	< 10	10-25	25-50	>50		
2	Average Stream Depth (ft)	<1	1-3	>3	>5		
3	Has this stream been channelized? (Stream shape constrained through human activity- look for signs of dredging, armored banks, straightened channels)	Yes, currently	Yes, sometime in the past	No	Don't know		
4	Estimate of current stream flow	Dry or Intermittent	Stagnant	Low	Medium		High
5	Highest water mark (in feet above the current level)	<1	1-3	3-5	5-10		>10
6	Which of these habitat types are present?	Riffles	Deep Pools	Large woody debris	Large rocks		Undercut bank
		Overhanging vegetation	Rooted Aquatic Plants	Other:	Other:		Other:
7	Estimate of turbidity	Clear	Slightly Turbid (can partially see to bottom)		Turbid (cannot see to bottom)		
8	Is there a sheen or oil slick visible on the surface of the water?	No	Yes				
9	If yes to #8, does the sheen break up when poked with a stick?	Yes (sheen is most likely natural)		No (sheen could be artificial)			
10	Is there foam present on the surface of the water?	No	Yes				
11	Is yes to #10, does the foam feel gritty or soapy?	Gritty (foam is most likely natural)		Soapy (foam could be artificial)			
The following are optional measurements not currently funded by MiCorps							
8	Water Temperature						
9	Dissolved Oxygen						
10	pH						
11	Water Velocity						



II. Stream and Riparian Habitat (continued)

B. Streambed Substrate		
Estimate percent of stream bed composed of the following substrate.		
If group will take transects and pebble counts (in Section IV), check this box and record the measured percentages. <input type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Substrate type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Boulder	>10" diameter	
Cobble	2.5 - 10" diameter	
Gravel	0.1 - 2.5" diameter	
Sand	coarse grain	
Fines: Silt/Detritus/Muck	fine grain/organic matter	
Hardpan/Bedrock	solid clay/rock surface	
Artificial	man-made	
Other (specify)		

C. Bank stability and erosion.			
Summarize the extent of erosion along <u>each bank separately</u> on a scale of 1 through 10, by circling a value below. Left/right banks are identified by looking downstream.			
Excellent	Good	Marginal	Poor
Banks Stable. No evidence of erosion or bank failure. Little potential for problems during floods. < 5% of bank affected.	Moderately stable. Small areas of erosion. Slight potential for problems in extreme floods. 5-30% of bank in reach has areas of erosion.	Moderately unstable. Erosional areas occur frequently and are somewhat large. High erosion potential during floods. 30-60% of banks in reach are eroded.	Unstable. Many eroded areas. > 60% banks eroded. Raw areas frequent along straight sections and bends. Bank sloughing obvious.
LEFT BANK 10 - 9	LEFT BANK 8 - 7 - 6	LEFT BANK 5 - 4 - 3	LEFT BANK 2 - 1 - 0
RIGHT BANK 10 - 9	RIGHT BANK 8 - 7 - 6	RIGHT BANK 5 - 4 - 3	RIGHT BANK 2 - 1 - 0

You may wish to take photos of unstable or eroded banks for your records. Record date and location.

Comments:

II. Stream and Riparian Habitat (continued)

D. Plant Community			
Estimate the percentage of the stream covered by overhanging vegetation _____ %			
Using the given scale, estimate the relative abundance of the following:			
<i>Plants in the stream:</i>		<i>Plants on the bank/riparian zone:</i>	
Algae on Surfaces of Rocks or Plants	Filamentous Algae (Streamers)	Shrubs	Trees
Macrophytes (Standing, Floating Plants)	0= Absent 1= Rare 2= Common 3= Abundant 4= Dominant	Grasses	0= Absent 1= Rare 2= Common 3= Abundant 4= Dominant
Identified species (optional)		Identified species (optional)	

E. Riparian Zone			
The riparian zone is the vegetated area that surrounds the stream. Right/Left banks are identified by looking downstream.			
<i>1. Left Bank</i>			
Circle those land-use types that you can see from this stream reach.			
Wetlands	Forest	Residential Lawn	Park
Construction	Commercial	Industrial	Highways
		Shrub, Old Field	Agriculture
		Golf Course	Other _____
<i>2. Right Bank</i>			
Circle those land-use types that you can see from this stream reach.			
Wetlands	Forest	Residential Lawn	Park
Construction	Commercial	Industrial	Highways
		Shrub, Old Field	Agriculture
		Golf Course	Other _____
3. Summarize the size and quality of the riparian zone along each bank separately on a scale of 1 through 10, by circling a value below.			
Excellent	Good	Marginal	Poor
Width of riparian zone >150 feet, dominated by vegetation, including trees, understory shrubs, or non-woody macrophytes or wetlands; vegetative disruption through grazing or mowing minimal or not evident; almost all plants allowed to grow naturally.	Width of riparian zone 75-150 feet; human activities have impacted zone only minimally.	Width of riparian zone 10-75 feet; human activities have impacted zone a great deal.	Width of riparian zone ,10 feet; little or no riparian vegetation due to human activities.
LEFT BANK 10 - 9	LEFT BANK 8 - 7 - 6	LEFT BANK 5 - 4 - 3	LEFT BANK 2 - 1 - 0
RIGHT BANK 10 - 9	RIGHT BANK 8 - 7 - 6	RIGHT BANK 5 - 4 - 3	RIGHT BANK 2 - 1 - 0

MiCorps Site ID#: _____

Date: _____



III. Sources of Degradation

1. In what ways is this stream degraded, if any?

2. Does a team need to come out and collect trash?

3. Based on what you can see from this location, what are the potential causes and level of severity of this degradation? Only judge what you can see from the site.

(Severity: S – slight; M – moderate; H – high) (Indicate all that apply)									
Crop Related Sources	S	M	H	Land Disposal	S	M	H		
Grazing Related Sources	S	M	H	On-site Wastewater Systems	S	M	H		
Intensive Animal Feeding Operations	S	M	H	Silviculture (Forestry)	S	M	H		
Highway/Road/Bridge Maintenance and Runoff	S	M	H	Resource Extraction (Mining)	S	M	H		
Channelization	S	M	H	Recreational/Tourism Activities (general)	S	M	H		
Dredging	S	M	H	• Golf Courses	S	M	H		
Removal of Riparian Vegetation	S	M	H	• Marinas/Recreational Boating (water releases)	S	M	H		
Bank and Shoreline Erosion/Modification/Destruction	S	M	H	• Marinas/Recreational Boating (bank or shoreline erosion)	S	M	H		
Flow Regulation/ Modification (Hydrology)	S	M	H	Debris in Water	S	M	H		
Invasive Species	S	M	H	Industrial Point Source	S	M	H		
Construction: Highway, Road, Bridge, Culvert	S	M	H	Municipal Point Source	S	M	H		
Construction: Land Development	S	M	H	Natural Sources	S	M	H		
Urban Runoff	S	M	H	Source(s) Unknown	S	M	H		

Additional comments:

MiCorps Site ID#: _____

Date: _____



IV. Optional quantitative measurements

A. Transects and Pebble Counts

To take quantitative stream habitat measurements, conduct 5-10 transects of your stream reach. Required equipment: tape measure long enough to stretch across the stream, and graduated rod or stick to measure water depth. Data sheet is on the next page.

Directions:

- 1) Determine stream width.
- 2) Use the rod to measure depth (D) and substrate (S) at more than 10 but less than 20 regular intervals along the entire transect. (For streams less than 10 feet wide, measure every ½ foot, for streams about 10 feet wide, measure every foot, etc.)
- 3) At every depth measurement, identify the single piece of substrate that the rod lands on (can be arbitrary).
- 4) For every measurement, enter the reading on the tape measure, the depth, and the substrate on the data sheet on the next page.

Data use: The depth and tape measure reading can be used to produce stream cross-section profiles. The pebble count can be used to give a more accurate percentage breakdown of the stream substrate than simply making an eyeball estimate (see Section II-B).

B. Bank Height

Vertical banks higher than 3 feet are usually unstable, while banks less than 1 foot, especially with overhang, provide good habitat for fish. While doing the transects, measure the bank heights and record the angle of the bank (right, acute, or obtuse) as indicated on the data sheet. Left/right banks are identified by looking downstream.

Data use: Calculate the percentage of banks with right, obtuse, and acute angles. Right angles indicate higher erosive potential, while acute angles improve the habitat structure of a stream.

V. Final Check

This data sheet was checked for completeness by: _____

Name of person who entered data into data exchange: _____

Date of data entry: _____

VI. Credits

This habitat assessment was created for the MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program from a combination of habitat assessments from the Huron River Watershed Council, the Friends of the Rouge River, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Version 1.0, June 2009.

MiCorps Site ID#: _____

Date: _____



STREAM TRANSECT DATASHEET

B: Boulder -- more than 10"
 C: Cobble -- 2.5 - 10"
 G: Gravel -- 0.1 - 2.5"
 S: Sand -- fine particles, gritty

F: Fines: Silt/Detritus/Muck
 H: Hardpan/Bedrock
 A: Artificial
 O: Other (specify)

T= Reading on tape
 D = Depth
 S = Substrate

Stream Width	EXAMPLE 13.3 feet			Transect #			Transect #			Transect#		
	T	D	S	T	D	S	T	D	S	T	D	S
Beginning Water's Edge	1.5											
1	2.5	0.4	G									
2	3.5	0.4	G									
3	4.5	0.4	G									
4	5.5	0.2	C									
5	6.5	0	S									
6	7.5	0.6	S									
7	8.5	0.7	G									
8	9.5	0.7	G									
9	10.5	0.6	C									
10	11.5	0.7	B									
11	12.5	0.4	G									
12	13.5	0.3	F									
13	14.5	0.2	F									
14												
15												
16												
17												
18												
19												
Ending Water's Edge	14.8											
Bank Side	L	R		L	R		L	R		L	R	
Bank Height	1.7 feet	0.5 feet										
Does the bank have an undercut?	N	Y										
If so, how wide is it?		1 ft										
Bank Angles: Sketch												

Sketch examples:



Undercut
(Acute)

Obtuse

Right