



FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

GRANTEE NAME: Van Buren County Road Commission

PROJECT NAME: Paw Paw River Watershed Road/Stream Crossing Inventory

PROJECT #: VSM2015 - 09

PERIOD COVERED: March 2016 – October 2016

PARTNERS:

VBCRC – Van Buren County Road Commission

VBCD – Van Buren Conservation District

VBCDC – Van Buren County Drain Commission

SWMPC – Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

TRC – Two Rivers Coalition

Volunteers – residents and citizens of Van Buren County

GOALS:

The overall goals of this project was to improve road stream crossings to:

- reduce flooding, erosion and sediment deposition
- improve the physical and biological conditions to better reflect natural conditions and enhance habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms and
- improve the safety of roads where culverts are failing or not sized properly

This was accomplished by forming a partnership that develop a volunteer inventory process for road stream crossings in the Paw Paw River Watershed which was extended into the Black River Watershed in Van Buren County. The inventory process utilized the MiCorps Road Stream Crossing and Culvert Inventory protocol and Road Soft database. Partners and Volunteers were properly trained by attending MiCorps conference sessions and hosting two local training session, one of which was attended and taught by Patrick Ertel of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Site locations were mapped and labeled where Van Buren County roads crossed main rivers, creeks and drains. Four inventory kits with equipment and materials were developed and made available to volunteers. The total goal for completed road stream crossing and culvert inventory was two hundred (200) sites, the goal was met and exceeded by over one hundred and fifty percent (150%). The crossings will be prioritized for replacement and repair to meet the project goals. Additionally, educational efforts and project promotion was used to inform municipal officials, other road agencies and general public in Southwest Michigan about sediment being a priority pollutant and the impacts of road/stream crossings.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Major Task: Grant Administration and Closeout

1. Submit quarterly status reports and financials status reports to Dr. Paul Steen within 30 days of the closing of each quarter of the grant period.
 - Grant Contract was signed later than anticipated so quarterly reports were not submitted. Final grant report will be submitted in its entirety.

1. Upon grant closing, submit a final report, release of claims letter, fact sheet, final financial status report, and electronic versions of all deliverable products.
 - Partners gathered information, educational pieces and gave input on success of all major tasks for final report. A list of all final document attachments for the Final Progress Report can be found at the conclusion of this document.
1. Track volunteer time and other in-kind contributions for reporting
 - Time/Site/Travel Log Sheets that were used throughout the project. The sheets kept track of Date, Volunteer Name, Map Locations that were successfully inventoried, Hours Volunteers worked and Mileage Volunteers donated to participate in the Road Stream Crossing Project. *Time/Travel Logs attached.*

Major Task: Training

1. Attend a full-day training session led by MiCorps staff and partners
 - VBCD, Colleen Forestieri and TRC, Kevin Haight had previously attend the full-day training session led by MiCorps. Both individuals had a good grasp of what the Road Stream Monitoring/Culvert Inventory entailed.
2. Participate in the annual MiCorps Conference during the tenure of the grant
 - VBCD, AJ Brucks and TRC, Kevin Haight attended the November 4-6, 2015 Annual MiCorps Conference and attended the sessions that were represented and geared towards the Road Stream Crossing Inventory Programs. Brucks and Haight were able to meet with MDNR's Patrick Ertel, discuss the project and talk about the timeframe for the project in Van Buren County.
3. Host local training event for volunteers
 - March 31, 2016 –Road Stream Crossing Inventory Training was held at the Road Commission in Lawrence. Patrick Ertel from MDNR attended and helped train volunteers for the day. Members from VBCRC, VBCD, VBCDC, and SWMPC all attended along with resident volunteers. Inside classroom *training took place in the AM and outside culvert inventory practice took place at four (4) locations in the afternoon.* Twelve (12) partners (VBCRC, VBCD, VBCDC, SWMPC, TRC) and volunteers attended this training with the MDNR. *Photos attached.*
 - May 11, 2016 –Road Stream Crossing Inventory Training for volunteers that were not able to attend the March 31st training along with three VBCRC summer interns was held at the Road Commission. Both inside classroom and outside inventory practice took place throughout the day. Eleven (11) partners (VBCRC, VBCD, TRC) and volunteers attended this training. *Photos attached.*
5. Provide oversight on-going oversight of volunteers with quality control checks by Road Commission staff

- VBCRC hired Rachael Whise, a Civil Engineering Senior at Michigan Tech University for a summer intern. Whise participated in the group training as well as two other summer interns and three VBCRC full time staff. Whise was the lead intern who partnered with volunteers out in the field throughout the project. VBCRC oversaw Whise's time, activities and was day to day support on quality control checks.

Major Task: Volunteer Recruitment and Management

1. Develop press releases, e-newsletters, social media posts
 - VBCD prepared outreach letters that were emailed to TRC, past volunteers, municipality boards, and local schools systems to describe project and call for participation. Facebook posts were developed and posted on VBCD, TRC and SWMPC pages as well as the SWM Business Forum and other followers of those partnering agencies. *Outreach letter and Facebook examples attached.*
7. Contact other conservation organizations to encourage promotion to members
 - TRC was a large supporter of sharing the information to their members through Facebook and email outreach.
8. Utilize volunteer.com to manage volunteers
 - Volunteer.com was not used. VBCRC, Whise used a website, <http://whenisgood.net/sq95gng>, for volunteers to fill out "When is Good" for them to participate. Volunteers could mark down date, times, area of the County they preferred and if they had a partner volunteer to work with or if they wanted to help Whise in the field. Whise sent an email the volunteer list with the link to this website every two weeks. Partners would share the email to additional contacts and encouraged new participation.

Major Task: Conduct Inventory

1. Purchase supplies and assemble volunteer kits with necessary equipment and house at VBCD and VBCRC for volunteers to access when needed
 - VBCRC, VBCD and VBCDC gathered and compiled equipment, purchased supplies, developed materials to put in the kits and assembled four (4) inventory kits. Two (2) were available at the VBCD and two (2) were available at the VBCRC. *Developed materials attached.*
10. Update, create and print detailed maps with inventory sites
 - VBCD created GIS maps with marked locations and separated them by townships and labeled them for the Paw Paw River Watershed. VBCD and VBCRC used plat book maps, highlighted rivers, creeks and drains and labeled locations in the remaining Paw Paw River Watershed and Black River Watershed. Sited locations were highlighted as they were completed by Whise at the VBCRC and volunteers. *Maps attached.*
11. Assign volunteer teams to specific sites and provide map.

- VBCRC Whise worked with volunteers on when they signed up. Volunteers would meet Whise at the VBCRC, kits would be ready and maps would be provided for which area and locations would be concentrated on.
12. Assess as many road/stream crossings as grant funds can support using the provided standard operating procedure. Each volunteer team in the field will have at least one person who attended the training.
 - Majority of volunteers partnered with Whise, VBCRC's intern, throughout the project. Very seldom did volunteers go out without Whise assisting. The standard operating procedure was used at every location. *Excel sheet with completed and not completed sites with tabs indicated specific townships/villages/cities attached.*
 13. Enter all road/stream crossing data into the online database
 - Road stream crossing data was entered at the site after inventory was collected. A laptop was provided by the VBCRC. Volunteers that went out without Whise filled out the data sheets and provided them to Whise to enter at a later date. *Examples of Road Soft reports attached.*
 14. Follow up with volunteer teams to ensure completion of assigned sites
 - VBCRC's Intern was assigned to ensure the completion of data entered that was collected by volunteers. Majority of volunteers partnered with Whise which ensured that data was collected properly and data entry was complete.

Major Task: Evaluation of Program Reporting & Expansion

1. Evaluate project progress (Measurable Results/Products Completed)
 - # of trained volunteers: Nineteen (19) different partners and volunteers were properly trained (there were four partners/volunteers that attended both trainings). *Partner/Volunteer Training participation sheets attached.*
 - # of inventory volunteers: Fourteen (14) different volunteers participated and joined VBCRC summer intern during in-field inventory. *Volunteer Time/Travel Logs attached.*
 - # of sites inventoried: Three hundred seventeen (317) bridges and culverts were evaluated and inventoried out of six hundred thirty-five (635) mapped in Van Buren County. The mapped sites are road crossings over main rivers, creeks and drains. Fifty percent (50%) to total mapped sites were finished and one hundred fifty-eight percent (158%) over the grant goal of two hundred (200) sites were completed. Sites that had actual found bridges and culverts were entered into Road Soft database. *Excel sheet of completed/not completed inventoried sites are attached.*
 - # of repairs/replacements scheduled or completed: Zero (0) at this time but the VBCRC is very pleased with the success of the program and inventoried list of culverts and conditions.
 - # of surrounding watersheds/counties contacted and participating: SWMPC is working with TRC and Berrien Conservation District on a project in Ox Creek. This group plans to continue the inventory in the Paw Paw River



FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

Watershed on the Berrien County side. Other surrounding Conservation District have talked to VBCD about participating in the MiCorps grant program for this project.

20. Solicit feedback from volunteers and make program improvements
 - Program ran very smooth due to the VBCRC Intern Whise. Volunteers enjoyed working with her and learned a lot while they were out in the field. Program inventory success was possible because of the time, dedication and availability of an intern with the partnership of volunteers.
21. Write, distribute and post news releases, newsletter articles and social media posts
 - Throughout the project updates, successes and volunteer recruitment discussions took place. TRC gave updates at their monthly meetings. VBCD gave updates at monthly board meetings, VBCD Foundation meetings and Township, Village and City Board meetings that were attended.
 - As the project comes to an end, there are a few more townships that need to be inventoried in Van Buren County. A press release will be written with final results and outcomes of the project. This information will also be shared with Van Buren County Municipalities.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

There are many environmental benefits that will come from this project. The data from the crossings will be used to prioritize the replacement and repair fo culverts/roads to meet the project goals by the Van Buren County Road Commission. Any erosion problems can be evaluated by the Van Buren Conservation District and used for further sediment runoff project grants. Invasive Species that were identified will be reported in the MISIN database and put into the strategic plan of the local SW x SW Corner CISMA and any locations of large dumping or debris will be added to the annual River Rescue cleanup.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED:


- The VBCRC and VBCD would like continue working towards finishing all the Road Stream Crossings/Culvert inventory in both the Paw Paw River and Black River Watersheds that cover the entire Van Buren County. The VBCD plans to continue recruiting volunteer to finish culvert inventory throughout the County. Partners of this grant are in full support of helping the SWMPC continue efforts in future grants that cover other counties in Southwest Michigan by allowing equipment to be utilized, discussing success of this project and sharing outreach materials.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

- There were no problems noted with the project. Partners were pleasantly pleased with the outcomes and success of the project.



FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

Signed: 
Title: Larry Hummel, Van Buren County Road Commission

Date: October 7, 2016

Attachments in addition to Final Status Report:

- a. Release of Claims
- b. Final Financial Report (with supporting Match documents)
- c. Project Fact Sheet
- d. Volunteer Hour/Travel Logs
- e. Partner/Volunteer Training sign-in sheets
- f. Photos from Training Events
- g. Examples of Emails to volunteers, schools, municipalities
- h. Facebook Post Examples
- i. Equipment/Supply Kit Materials
- j. Maps of Site Locations with highlighted sites that were completed during project
- k. Examples of data entered into Road Soft Database
- l. Excel spread sheet showing completed/not completed sites and tabs with listed by township/village/city locations