# Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program

**What is MiCorps?**

**What are your responsibilities as a grantee?**

**How to run a MiCorps Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Event**

# MiCorps Stream Monitoring Staff

- Paul Steen, psteen@hrwc.org
  - Stream Program Manager, HRWC
- Tamara Lipsey
  - EGLE Representative
- Jo Latimore
  - Program Administrator, MSU

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# Stream Program Components

- Getting involved with MiCorps (Now)
- Find, engage, train volunteers--- (10:30 Jason)
- Run a volunteer event
  - Event logistics (Coming up)
  - Collect macroinvertebrates (11:15 Paul)
  - Identify them (1:00, Tamara)
  - Monitor habitat (11:15 Paul)
- Manage Your Data and Results (Future conferences)
  - Share results with your volunteers, stakeholders
  - Use data to find areas in need of protection or restoration
  - Implement projects

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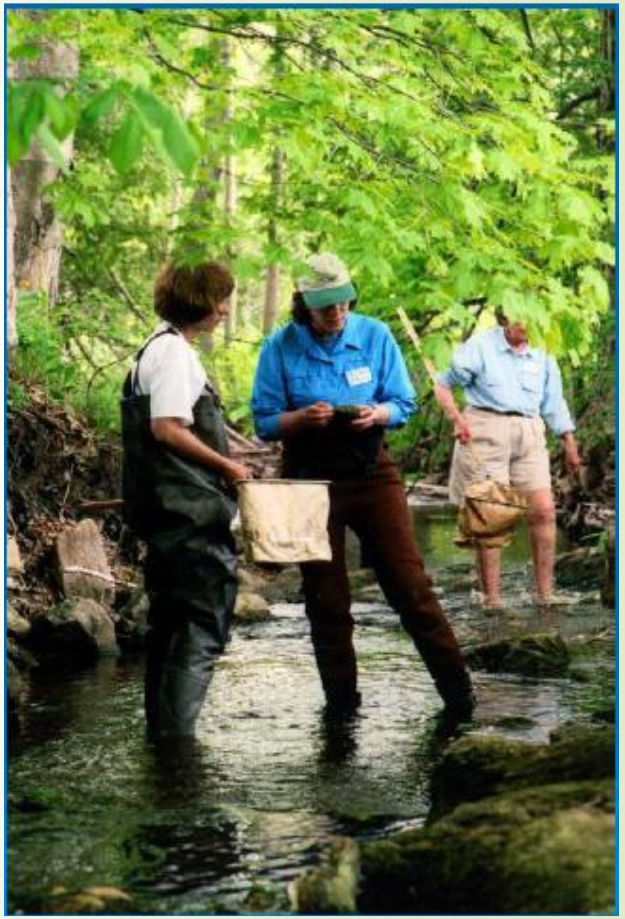
# Governor's Executive Order

- MiCorps established September 30, 2003
- Comprehensive statewide volunteer water quality monitoring network
- Pre-existing lake program and stream program
- First stream grants disbursed in 2005.
- Stream clean up grants officially added in 2021.



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# MiCorps Mission

- Network and expand volunteer water quality monitoring organizations statewide
- Collecting, share, and use reliable data
- Educate and inform the public about water quality issue
- Foster water resources stewardship to facilitate the preservation and protection of Michigan's water resources

Michigan Clean Water Corps

# MiCorps Overview

Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

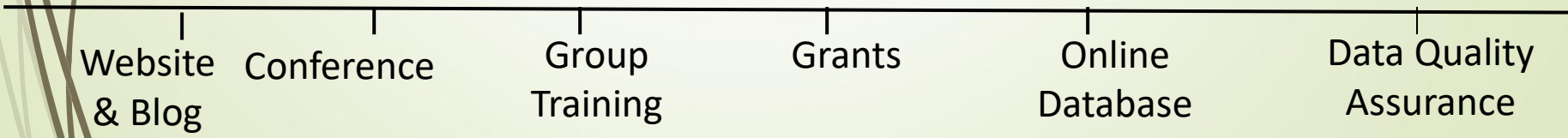
Contracted with:

Michigan State University
(Huron River Watershed Council,
Michigan Lakes and Streams Association)

To Oversee and administer:

MiCorps

3 Program Pillars
Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP)
Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program (VSCP)
Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP)



# MiCorps Membership

- ~300 Lake Association Groups or individual homeowners annually
- ~50 local governments who have gotten a Clean up grant in the past. (Consider this!)
- ~25 Groups working on stream monitoring

  Including:
  - Benzie County Conservation District
  - Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
  - Friends of the St. Clair River
  - Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
  - Clinton River Watershed Council

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# Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program

- A grant-based program for local groups to develop or enhance stream monitoring programs. Groups must be non-profits, academic, or local government.
  - $75,000 is available every year
    - Implementation grant: $20k, and 25% match required
    - Startup grant: $3k, no match required
    - Maintenance: $2k max, $1k average, possibly annual, 25% match
  - Implementation grants last 2 years
  - Start-up macro grants last 1 year.
  - Maintenance grants last 8 months, and are only for groups who have gotten previous implementation grants
  - Current financial audits required (<2 years old)

Michigan Clean Water Corps

# Admin Responsibilities

- Each grant type will have different reporting requirements to MiCorps…
- All grants are reimbursement based.
- Reports include financial and narrative pieces and are required to get reimbursed for your work.
- Details are found in your contracts, and you can always email me to ask.
  - Who do my reports go to? In what format?
  - Can I spend $ on this instead of that?
  - Do I need to submit a report if I don't need reimbursement?
  - How do I calculate volunteer labor as match funds?
  - Where is my check?
  - When can we start monitoring?

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# Quality Assurance Project Plans -QAPP

## What is a QAPP?

- Think of a QAPP as the guidebook for your future replacement.
  - It goes over your procedures and monitoring sites. A stranger should be able to read it and have a good idea of how you run your program.

## Who writes a QAPP?

- Groups with an implementation grant.
  - Prior to your first monitoring event
  - That means working on it July-August-September
- Revisions happen every 2 years
- Revisions are required to qualify for a maintenance grant

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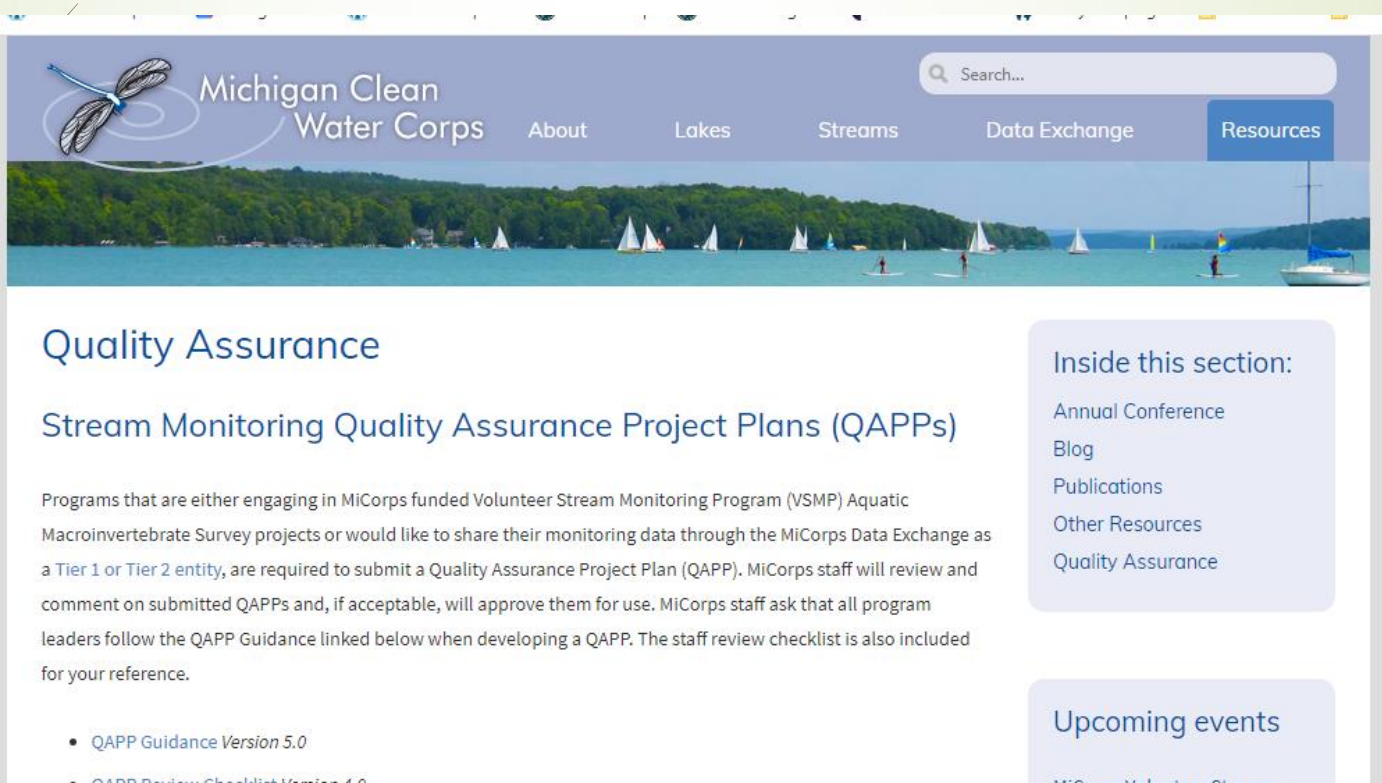
# Quality Assurance Project Plans -QAPP

- How can I write a QAPP?
- Less intimidating than it sounds.
  - Detailed Guidance Document
  - Many examples from other groups



# Data Management in MiCorps

1. You should create your own electronic database to be tailored to your needs (Excel, Access, etc). This is the primary place to store your monitoring data.

2. Implementation and Maintenance grants: You are required to enter your data into the MiCorps online database as a stipulation of the grant.

   This is to *share* your data. It should be secondary storage for you.

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# Example Event:
# A River Roundup with HRWC

- Visit other groups! See how they run their event!

# An example event:

Assuming non-COVID days!

HRWC's River Roundup

# Before the event…

- Publicity (1-6 weeks) and registration
- Check equipment quality and quantity
- Prepare datasheets, maps, and other paperwork
- Create teams of 4-6 people including at least 1 trained Collector and preferably a trained Leader
- Assign teams to 2 sites (~ 4 hour event with driving)

# Collector Training… 2-4 weeks prior.

- We use opportunity to teach them some stream and watershed ecology
- Teach them the procedures
- They practice in the water
- Collectors are asked to retrain every 3 years.  We have a retraining video now.

# Site assignment…

- Prior to the event, each team is assigned to 2 stream sites
- One site is “good”, the other is “poor”

- People are, in general, assigned to different locations each time

- Our preference is to achieve a commitment to the overall watershed and organization rather than a specific location.

# Day of the event:

- People gather and form into their pre-assigned teams
- Buckets of equipment are awaiting each team
- Volunteers are given directions and told about the organization
  - Note: Average volunteers are not trained beyond 10-15 minutes of explanation.
- Trained collectors get a refresher course (10 minutes) on procedures

# Off they go…

- Road directions and aerial maps are in each set of equipment
- Groups carpool to both sites, with trained leaders and collectors in charge
- Staff prepare for volunteers' return

# …and back they come about 3-5 hours later

Volunteers are asked to

- clean and put away equipment
- turn in their bugs and forms
- fill out an evaluation

# ID Day  (1-3 weeks after event)

- Volunteers sort macros into look alike groups as best as they can
- They are welcome to try their hand at identifying them
- Experts are there to give the official identification.

# Follow up

- Follow up with any problems or complaints
- Follow up publicity…demonstrate success!
- Keep volunteers, stakeholders, partners in the loop
  - any follow up
  - results and reports

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