

Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP)

- Purpose:** The Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps), a network of volunteer monitoring programs in Michigan, provides grants under the VSMP to support volunteer monitoring of habitat and aquatic macroinvertebrates in wadable streams and rivers within Michigan. MiCorps staff provides training and support to grant recipients to ensure that they are collecting high-quality data and running successful programs. Data collected through these volunteer water quality monitoring programs are used to support local activities and the Michigan DEQ's efforts to protect and manage the state's water resources.
- Eligibility:** Local units of government and nonprofit entities are eligible to receive funding under this program.
- Funding:** Each year, approximately \$50,000 is made available to recipients under the VSMP full and start-up grant programs through a competitive grant application process. Funding for this program is provided by the Michigan DEQ under the Clean Michigan Initiative. A local match (25%) is required for full grants; no match is required for start-up grants.
- Start-up Grants:** Beginning with the 2007 grant cycle, MiCorps has set aside a portion of the annual VSMP funding as "seed money" for newly forming volunteer monitoring groups each year. Under this initiative, applicants may apply for a one year start-up grant to receive a small amount of funding, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per grant, to allow them to begin the process of starting a monitoring program. Start-up groups are given full access to MiCorps training and MiCorps staff expertise, and are expected to submit an application for a full grant the next year.
- Program Administration:** The Michigan DEQ established the VSMP in 1998 and contracted with the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) to administer it as part of MiCorps beginning in 2004. The GLC also partners with the Huron River Watershed Council and other MiCorps partners in implementing the program. Annually, typically around mid-January, a Grant Application Package (GAP) is issued for the VSMP grants with applications due roughly 30 days later. Awards are usually announced in May. Please visit the project website at www.micorps.net/streamgrants.html for more information on the 2014 grant cycle.
- Past Projects:** Since 2005, a total of 35 full grants and 19 start-up grants have been awarded under the VSMP, totaling more than \$435,000 in grant funding to award recipients. A total of five groups received grants under the VSMP during the 2013 grant cycle, including four full grants and one start-up grant. From a programmatic perspective, over 500 stream sites, each of which is 300 feet long, are being sampled by groups that have received VSMP funding since the program's inception.
- More Information:** Additional information on the VSMP is available online at www.micorps.net/streamgrants.html or by emailing Dr. Paul Steen, Huron River Watershed Council, at psteen@hrwc.org, or Bill Dimond, Michigan DEQ, at dimondw@michigan.gov.

