

What's YOUR New Year's Resolution?

Assessing the health of the creeks and rivers in the Clinton River watershed is a pretty big task. The land that drains into the Clinton covers 760 square miles and includes over 1,000 miles of streams in addition to the 80-mile-long main branch. **We live in the most populous watershed in Michigan—all 1.4 million of us— and we're still growing!** As our population grows, the potential for complex water quality issues in our watershed also increases.

The Clinton exhibits many characteristics of an urban watershed. When it rains, water running off of our yards and paved surfaces (roads, sidewalks, rooftops and parking lots) enters our waterways, carrying with it dirt, fertilizers, pesticides, oils, metals and other pollutants. The sheer volume of water entering the river during storm events causes significant erosion and sediment problems.

In order to protect our own health, recreation opportunities and the overall health of the watershed, **we need to understand the impacts stormwater and the pollutants it carries have on our waterways.** As highlighted in our cover story, municipalities, county agencies and nonprofit conservation groups are hard at work developing and implementing plans that will help maintain and improve the health our waterways.

We can't do it alone. Government agencies don't have the staff or funds to continuously monitor each body of water. That's where you can help...by getting involved as an Adopt-A-Stream volunteer.

Adopt-a-Stream is a volunteer-based program that empowers community members to protect local streams and rivers by monitoring their health.

Volunteers are teamed up in Stream Teams, are assigned sites, given equipment, data sheets and protocols, and are sent out to gather information on streamside habitat and macroinvertebrate populations.

Twice a year (in May and October), Stream Teams visit their adopted sites and collect data, including physical information (such as extent of stream bank erosion and surrounding land use) and chemical information (such as water temperature and pH). They collect and identify macroinvertebrates (commonly known as "bugs") that live in the streambed and surrounding vegetation. Different bugs need specific conditions in which to survive and reproduce. Some are very pollution sensitive while others can tolerate highly polluted water. A stream's health can be determined by the number and types of bugs that live in it. The data are used by CRWC, municipalities and the state to assess the health of our streams and rivers and make decisions regarding their protection and restoration.

Become an Adopt-A-Stream VOLUNTEER...

Citizen involvement in water quality monitoring activities has resulted in positive change across the nation, the state, and right here in the Clinton River watershed. For example, water quality data collected by volunteers for the Clinton River Coldwater Conservation Project has been used to select locations for trout habitat restoration, and students in our Stream Leaders program have helped identify and resolve soil erosion problems.

How do I Get Involved?

Three different types of Adopt-A-Stream volunteers are needed: Team Coordinators, Team Participants and Bank Erosion Specialists.

- ? **Team Coordinators** are the glue that holds a Stream Team together. They set monitoring dates with their team, coordinate equipment reservations and provide CRWC with their team's data (forms and website or electronic spreadsheets are provided). Coordinators also ensure that their teams follow monitoring protocols and accurately identify macroinvertebrates to the order level. Team Coordinators must attend two training sessions, commit to a minimum of two seasons as a Coordinator, and attend May and October monitoring days.
- ? **Team Participants** help make the monitoring experience a success by providing the collective time and energy needed to monitor a site. Monitoring as a team also makes the experience fun! Team Participants are also asked to attend both training sessions and participate in May and October monitoring days.
- ? **Bank Erosion Specialists** are needed to help CRWC pilot a new erosion monitoring technique across the watershed. Eroding stream banks are a major source of sediment and human activities can accelerate bank erosion rates. The Bank Erosion Hazard Index (BEHI) is a method for assessing stream bank erosion potential. It assigns point values to several aspects of bank condition and provides an overall score that can be used to inventory stream bank condition over large areas and prioritize restoration efforts. Sites will be selected and monitoring equipment will be put in place prior to volunteer participation. More information about BEHI training will be available later in the spring.

...and help your community make informed decisions and improve water quality in the watershed!

What do I do next?

1. **Register for and attend 2 training sessions (Parts I and II).** Part I is an overview of the program and macroinvertebrate identification. Part II is a "streamside" training where you will practice the monitoring protocols. You can choose to attend the training sessions in the subwatershed in which you live, or the sessions that best fit your schedule.
2. **Select your adoption site** (CRWC will have a site list at trainings). Ideally, you should sign up for a site in the subwatershed in which you live. Teams of 3-5 individuals are recommended. Youth are welcome to participate, but an adult Team Coordinator must ensure that protocols are followed correctly.
3. **Decide if you want to be a Team Coordinator or a Team Participant.**
4. **Have fun monitoring!** Monitoring can take place anytime during the months of May and October. Monitoring takes approximately 3 hours, depending on the number of team members present.



How do I benefit?

In addition to knowing you are a part of a very important monitoring process, CRWC offers a variety of volunteer resources and recognition opportunities. Volunteers receive training certificates and recognition in our publications, and are invited to join CRWC's mailing list and e-mail listserve to receive regular updates on water quality topics. Volunteers are invited to participate in other CRWC events and attend an annual Adopt-a-Stream Celebration. Volunteers who offer their support for one year or more will receive anniversary certificates, recognition gifts and opportunities to participate in advanced training.

If you are interested in becoming an Adopt-a-Stream volunteer, contact Tracie Beasley at 248-601-0606 or tracie@crwc.org. We will send you information on the training requirements and responsibilities.

SPRING 2005 TRAINING SCHEDULE

Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer Training Part I

Learn about our watershed and how our everyday actions influence its health. Learn how water quality monitoring can help track the health of our watershed. Review monitoring protocols and practice identifying macroinvertebrates found in our rivers and streams to the taxonomic level of order (i.e. *Plecoptera* or stoneflies). *This training will be held indoors.*

- ? **Section 1: Clinton Main Subwatershed**—Saturday, March 5, 9:30 am—12:00 pm, Rochester Hills Environmental Education Center, 1115 West Avon Road, Rochester Hills.
- ? **Section 2: Stony/Paint Subwatershed**—Thursday, March 10, 6:30—9:00 pm, Old Oakland Township Hall, 4393 Collins Road, Oakland Township.
- ? **Section 3: Red Run Subwatershed**—Saturday, March 12, 9:30 am—12:00 pm, Center Line Parks and Recreation Center, 25355 Lawrence Blvd., Center Line.
- ? **Section 4: Clinton River East Subwatershed**—Saturday, March 19, 9:30 am—12:00 pm, Clinton-Macomb Public Library, 40900 Romeo Plank Road, Clinton Township.
- ? **Section 5: Lake St. Clair Subwatershed**—Saturday, March 19, 1:30—4:00 pm, St. Clair Shores Public Library, 22500 Eleven Mile Road, St. Clair Shores.
- ? **Section 6: Upper Clinton Subwatershed**—Sunday, April 3, 1:30—4:00 pm (don't forget to move your clock ahead 1 hour), Independence Township Public Library, 6495 Clarkston Road, Clarkston.

Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer Training Part II

Plan to get your boots wet! We'll head streamside to review all of the monitoring protocols. Team up with other participants to fine-tune your skills and master the art of capturing bugs in preparation for our May monitoring. *This training will be held outside so dress appropriately. We will meet at the locations listed below and drive/carpool to at least one additional site.*

- ? **Section A: Clinton River East Subwatershed**—Saturday, April 23, 9:00 am—12:00 pm, Shadbrush Nature Center, 4101 River Bends Drive Shelby Township, MI
- ? **Section B: Upper Clinton Subwatershed**—Saturday, April 23, 1:00—4:00 pm, Clarkston United Methodist Church, 6600 Waldon Road, Clarkston.
- ? **Section C: Lake St. Clair Subwatershed**—Saturday, April 30, 9:00 am—12:00 pm, Milk River near Jefferson Avenue Bridge across from Edsel Ford house, 1100 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores.
- ? **Section D: Clinton Main Subwatershed**—Sunday, May 1, 1:00—4:00 pm, Rochester Hills Environmental Education Center, 1115 W. Avon Road, Rochester Hills.
- ? **Section E: Red Run Subwatershed**—Saturday, May 7, 9:00 am—12:00 pm, Joseph J. Delia Park, 3001 18 Mile Road, Sterling Heights.
- ? **Section F: Stony/Paint Subwatershed**—Saturday, May 7, 1:00—4:00 pm, Paint Creek Cider Mill Parking Lot, 4480 Orion Road, Oakland Township.