

For Immediate Release
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MRWA project approved for funding from MiCorps

BIG RAPIDS – The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) recently received notification from the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) that its project proposal for volunteer stream monitoring was approved for funding. Funding for this project includes almost \$8,200 from MiCorps and a matching \$8,200 from the Wege Foundation.

This project, the Muskegon River Water Monitoring Program, will train volunteers and provide the necessary equipment to conduct water monitoring in the Muskegon River Watershed. The four targeted project areas include the Tamarack Creek Sub-watershed in southern Mecosta and northern Montcalm Counties; the Ryan Creek/Mitchell Creek Sub-watershed in Mecosta County; the Clam River Sub-watershed in Clare, Missaukee and Wexford counties; and the West Branch Muskegon River Sub-watershed located in Roscommon and Missaukee counties.

Volunteers will be trained in benthic invertebrate evaluation, habitat classification and other data-collecting information including dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature and turbidity. Volunteers will collect and record this information in the spring and fall of each year and return their data sheets to the MRWA which will record their information in a database to generate reports that will be forwarded to MiCorps for use as a screening tool to identify sites requiring a more detailed assessment. This data will also be available to local government offices and other organizations to assist them in developing better local ordinances and formulating protective and restorative projects.

Training sessions will be conducted by Ferris State University biology faculty member, Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck, who has a strong background and deep interest in aquatic and terrestrial ecology.

MiCorps was created through an executive order by Governor Jennifer Granholm to assist the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in collecting and sharing water quality data for use in water resources management and protection programs.

The MRWA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is “to preserve, protect and enhance the natural, historic and cultural resources of the Muskegon River Watershed through educational and scientific initiatives while supporting positive economic development, agricultural and quality of life initiatives of organizations working in the river watershed.” Ferris partners with the MRWA through an agreement that provides the organization with office space on campus.

Persons interested in becoming part of this project as a volunteer should contact Terry Stilson at 231-591-2324 or e-mail her at mrwa@ferris.edu.