

Project Fact Sheet: Alger Waters Stream Team Monitoring Project, MiCorps grant #VSM 2013-03

Grant award amount: \$14,083

Matching funds: \$25,663.67

Project total: \$39,746.67

Project duration: June 2013 through June 2013

Applicant: Alger Conservation District, 101 Court Street, Munising, MI 49862

Contact: Teri Grout, Executive Director, 906-387-2222

Project location: Alger County, Michigan.



Project partners: City of Munising; Au Train Township; Superior Central Schools; The Forestland Group, LLC; Greenstone Mapping; MSU Agricultural Experiment Station; Rock River Township; Superior Watershed Partnership; Marquette County Conservation District; Burt Township and Burt Township Schools; North Star/Polaris Charter Schools; Northern Michigan University.

Project summary and goals: The goals of this project were: To educate adults and youth about threats to our waters; to recruit citizens, students, and new partners into a cohesive effort to identify threats to and monitor the health of our streams; to acquire useful data by monitoring selected threatened watersheds and to make that data available to local governments and stakeholders; to incorporate that data into the Alger Conservation District's watershed protection and prioritization effort; and to seek ways to sustain the volunteer monitoring program after the grant by training and motivating volunteers and seeking new partnerships and funding.

Project accomplishments: Over 60 different volunteers participated in the project. Volunteers were recruited through extensive outreach in the local media, annual newsletters, social and web media and community events such as the county fair, farmers' markets, and home/outdoor shows. Volunteers were trained through a combination of in-class ID sessions utilizing Northern Michigan University resource and staff as well as retired aquatics professionals, and outdoor ID and practice sessions. Streams were monitored as outlined below and data was entered into MiCorps Data Exchange. Several key volunteers, including high school teachers and retired resource professionals, were recruited and trained for long-term maintenance of the monitoring program.

Monitoring activities: A total of 11 sites in five watersheds across Alger County were monitored in fall 2013, spring and fall 2014 and spring 2015. These watersheds were: the Anna River in the Munising Bay watershed near Munising (3 sites); Baker Creek, a tributary of the Sucker River near Grand Marais (two sites); Slapneck Creek, a tributary of the Au Train River near Chatham (two sites); Werner Creek, a tributary of the West Branch of the Whitefish River (two sites); and Dexter Creek, a tributary of the East Branch of the Whitefish River (two sites). These sites were selected based on potential threats to the watersheds, including non-point source contamination from agricultural sources, degraded gravel road-stream crossings, historical logging operations, and recreational use, and potential contamination from County-designated brownfield sites.

Significant measurable results: Data acquired at the eleven sites indicated very little if any degradation at any site. Many sensitive macroinvertebrate species were at least present at sites and at most sites ranked as 'common'. These results provide a baseline against which to compare future monitoring results and serve as an early warning system against any future stream health issues.

Photos of monitoring activities with descriptive captions



Top left: Volunteer Lora Loope examines macroinvertebrates at an ID training at Rock River Township Hall, Chatham. Top right: Volunteers from Northern Michigan University and the local community collect samples at Werner Creek. Center: Alger CD Executive Director Teri Grout conducts in-stream training at Baker Creek. Bottom: Burt Township high school students, under the direction of trained teachers and Alger CD staff, pick out and identify macroinvertebrates at Baker Creek near Grand Marais.