



Making a Difference in the Macatawa Watershed

The Macatawa Watershed Project would not be what it is today without the participation of volunteers. Our volunteer needs have changed over the years, and we currently offer four different types of volunteer activities from spring through fall. They include river cleanups, stream monitoring (macroinvertebrates and habitat), Smallenburg Park rain garden maintenance, and road-stream crossing inventories. Additional volunteers work with Project Clarity to take water quality measurements around Lake Macatawa, including temperature, water clarity and color. Last year alone we had over 100 volunteers participate in these programs. All that work would not be possible without the help of volunteers!

The MACC has also worked with volunteer interns the past several years. This has included a couple high school students, but mostly college students pursuing careers in natural resource fields. These “volunteers” spend many hours with the MACC, helping with community outreach, volunteer management, data entry, mapping, and more. While completing a lot of work for the MACC, they are also learning new and valuable skills they can take with them into the workforce.

Why does the MACC use volunteers?

There are many reasons why we choose to offer volunteer programs. As previously mentioned, volunteers do a lot of work for us that staff alone just does not have the time to do. Volunteers help gather valuable data that informs our future management decisions. We also see outreach to volunteers as a way to help spread our messages about the watershed and water quality issues. Our volunteers learn about the issues facing the watershed and help tell the story to others. Volunteer events also offer us an opportunity to get to know community members and build relationships.

Why do people volunteer with the MACC?

There are many reasons why people decide to volunteer. Some like giving back to the community where they live or making a difference to the people around them. Others volunteer so they can learn new skills or build on their existing knowledge. Here are a couple reasons cited by MACC volunteers.

I want hands-on things to do in the natural world that clearly benefit my community, but I'm not necessarily in a position to organize something like that. I appreciate the MACC taking the lead.

-Peter Boogaart

Sign me up!

If you're inspired to volunteer with the MACC, contact Kelly (kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688) and ask to be added to our volunteer list. The calendar inside includes some volunteer events that are already scheduled this spring and early summer. You can also visit our website to learn more about these volunteer programs: www.the-macc.org



I enjoy getting out in the stream and meeting new people from the community with shared interest in water resources.

-Dana Burd

About the MACC

Steve Bulthuis

Executive Director

Elisa Hoekwater

Transportation Manager

Kelly Goward

Watershed Project Manager

Rob Vink

Agricultural Technician

Carolyn Ulstad

Program Assistant

The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) was formed in 1993. It is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Holland, Michigan, urbanized area and is required by federal legislation to provide coordinated transportation planning. The MACC's transportation program is funded by planning funds from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and local dues. Other programs of the MACC include the Macatawa Watershed Project that works to improve area water quality and the Clean Air Action Program that promotes voluntary actions on Clean Air Action! Days.



**Macatawa Area
Coordinating Council**

A Cooperative Effort Among Units of Government

301 Douglas Ave

Holland MI 49424

616-395-2688

www.the-macc.org

Calendar of Events

April 15, 2-4pm: Save MI Hemlock Rally: Hemlock Crossing County Park). See back page for more information.

April 24, 6:30-8pm: Living Sustainably Along the Lakeshore—Fly Fishing (Herrick District Library): Local author Jon Osborn and local illustrator Joe Van Faasen will be speaking to Michigan's fishing heritage. Book sales and signing follow the event. Free event and no RSVP required.

April 26, 1:30-3pm: Watershed Advisory Committee (Howard Miller Library): All are welcome to attend and learn more about the work being done in the Macatawa Watershed. RSVPs are appreciated to kgoward@the-macc.org

May 13-19: Green Commute Week: Visit www.the-macc.org and click on the "Green Commute" tab to learn more.

May 24, 7:30-9am: Project Clarity Community Update (Boatwerks Restaurant): Join us in celebrating 5 years since we broke ground on the first water quality project. Breakfast will be hosted by the DeVos and Brooks Families. \$20/person. Registration is required and limited: outdoordiscoverycenter.org or 616-393-9453.

Volunteer Activities

April 27, 1-4:30pm: Road-Stream Crossing Inventories (MACC Office, 301 Douglas Ave, Holland): No experience necessary. Conditions may include steep slopes and be wet and/or muddy. All equipment and refreshments will be provided. Ages 18 and up only. RSVP to kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688.

April 28, 1-4pm: Spring River Cleanup (Dunton Park): Help clean the Macatawa River! See article inside for more information.

May 18, 1-4:30pm: Road-Stream Crossing Inventories (Fillmore Township Hall, 4219 52nd St, Holland). See April 27 above for more information.

May 25, 8:30am-noon: Smallenburg Park Workday: Pull weeds and invasive species and remove trash from the rain gardens at Smallenburg Park. Hand tools and refreshments provided. Conditions may be wet and/or muddy. RSVP appreciated to kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688.

June 2, 9am-1pm: Macroinvertebrate Monitoring (ODCMG): Investigate aquatic insects that live in area streams. No experience necessary. Lunch will be provided. See article inside for more information. RSVP required to kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688.

Lawn Care & Landscaping Partner Program

2018 Lawn Care & Landscaping Macatawa Watershed Partners

- ◆ AAA Lawn Care, Inc.
- ◆ Advantage Landscape & Turf Management
- ◆ Aesthetic Gardener, LLC
- ◆ Blue Ridge Landscaping ,Inc.
- ◆ Carefree Lawn Service
- ◆ Complete Lawn & Landscaping Services
- ◆ Creative Property Solutions
- ◆ Dale's Mowing Service
- ◆ Evergreen Landscaping
- ◆ Hollandia Gardens Landscape & Design
- ◆ Integrity Landscape Management, LLC
- ◆ Israels Property Services, LLC
- ◆ Landscape Design Services, Inc.
- ◆ North Town Landscape and Lawn Care
- ◆ Perma Green Lawn Care, Inc.
- ◆ Specialized Turf Services
- ◆ Top Cut Lawn Care Services
- ◆ TruGreen (Grand Haven Location)

Visit the MACC website or call our office for company contact information.



**Do you work for a lawn care or landscaping company
that would like to partner with the Macatawa
Watershed?**

**Contact Carolyn Ulstad at 616-395-2688 to learn how to
become a Macatawa Watershed Partner.**

**To be a Macatawa Watershed Partner, a lawn care
or landscaping company must agree to the
following:**

1. The company observes the Michigan Fertilizer Act in regards to the use of fertilizers and best practices that must be used when applying fertilizers.
 - a. Refrain from using phosphorus except under conditions allowed, including when a soil test indicates the need or when starting a new lawn from seed or sod.
 - b. Do not apply fertilizer within 15 feet of a surface water unless there is a 10 foot wide vegetated buffer or a spreader guard, deflector shield or drop spreader is used.
 - c. Fertilizer spreaders must be cleaned in a way that does not allow wash water to discharge into surface waters.
2. Prior to applying fertilizer, the size of the lawn is measured to ensure the correct amount of fertilizer is applied.
3. Grass is cut no shorter than three inches.
4. All grass clippings and fertilizer are swept or blown off of impervious surfaces back into lawns to prevent runoff to storm drains. Every attempt is made to keep grass clippings from directly entering surface water bodies such as drains, streams and lakes.
5. Mulching is preferred, but if grass clippings are taken off site, they are stored and composted properly in an area that is not susceptible to runoff.
6. The company makes customers aware of best management practices for water quality (*i.e.* native plant use, waterfront landscaping).
7. The company makes an effort to be aware of potential non-native invasive plant species, monitor for them and make clients aware when they are present on their property.
8. In the case that the resident participates in the maintenance of their lawn, a schedule for watering and mowing is provided by the company.
9. The company must maintain current certifications and/or licenses with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Preventing Litter

While trash is not a primary cause of water quality issues in Lake Macatawa, it is certainly present. Trash is very mobile in water, moving through the Great Lakes and into the ocean where it can wash up on beaches or become part of large floating islands of trash known as gyres. The most concerning type of trash is plastic. It can be found floating on water surfaces, suspended throughout the water column and in the sediments of most water bodies. A recent research project by Hope College students found pieces of plastic in all sediment samples they examined from Lake Macatawa!



So why is plastic pollution such a concern? Small pieces of floating plastic look a lot like food to birds and fish. When they eat plastic, it may end up filling their stomachs where it cannot be processed, leading to starvation. Other aquatic animals can become entangled in larger pieces of plastic, which may lead to suffocation or drowning. Plastic can also alter habitats, reducing light and oxygen, to the point where they can no longer sustain aquatic life. Plastics are very good at attracting and transporting other chemical pollutants (dioxin, lead, mercury, etc.) already

in the water, which can lead to unsafe, high levels where plastic pollution accumulates. Plastic pollution can also harm humans as well in areas where they may interfere with navigation, impede recreational and commercial fishing, threaten health and safety, and impact tourism.

So what can we do? The best way to address pollution is to prevent it in the first place. The MACC will be working with community partners over the next couple years to promote litter prevention in the Macatawa River and Lake Macatawa. We will be adding items like fishing line recycling tubes at waterfront parks. These will help promote proper recycling and/or disposal of items that might otherwise be tossed in the lake or left on the ground where wind or rain can deliver it to the water. Litter prevention is a simple way that everyone can do their part to help keep Lake Macatawa clean!

Spring River Cleanup

Help us remove trash from Lake Macatawa! While prevention is key, we also try to remove what we can with the help of volunteers. River cleanup is not a small task, but many hands working together for an afternoon can make a big difference! We hope you can join us! Can't make it this spring? Our fall event is scheduled for September 29. More details will be available later this summer.

April 28, 1:00-4:00pm

Dunton Park (290 Howard Ave, Holland)

Teams will set out on foot or in boats to collect trash around the banks of the Lake Macatawa. Anyone under 16 years old must be with an adult. A limited number of seats are available in kayaks. All boats, paddles and life vests will be provided. Volunteers will be coordinated for trash pickup near the boat launch at the east end of the park. You can register at outdoordiscovery.org or 393-9453.



Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping

The MACC assists local communities with stormwater management. Certain communities that own or operate storm sewer systems are required to have a permit from the State of Michigan to discharge their stormwater into waters of the state, including Lake Macatawa. These communities in the Macatawa Watershed are the Cities of Holland and Zeeland, the Counties of Ottawa and Allegan, and both the Allegan and Ottawa County Road Commissions.

One of the permit requirements is that each community has a plan to follow good housekeeping practices to prevent stormwater pollution at their facilities. This includes everything from City Hall to parks to police and fire stations. MACC staff evaluates each facility for the potential to generate stormwater pollution and recommends good practices to follow to prevent pollution. For example, spill kits should be readily available so that a spill or leak from a vehicle can be quickly cleaned up before it reaches a storm drain.

A second permit requirement is public education. The permit provides a list of topics that communities can choose to address. One topic that our communities elected to address is to promote pollution prevention activities to commercial, industrial and institutional entities. They include retail shopping centers, business parks, industrial complexes, hospitals, schools, and small businesses. This topic is important to our communities since these private land uses account for a lot of the impervious surfaces that generate stormwater. Improving the quality of stormwater and thereby protecting Lake Macatawa requires the participation of all landowners. Many of the same pollution prevention and good housekeeping principals followed by our public landowners can be applied to private land.



Spill kit in the City of Holland

MACC staff developed a series of simple tip sheets for commercial/industrial landowners to address issues related to parking lots, lawns and landscaping, vehicles, dumpsters, and power washing (samples below). These tip sheets are currently available on our website (www.the-macc.org). We are in the process of putting the tip sheets into a booklet format that will include a little more detail about the recommended actions. In addition, MACC staff are available to perform property assessments and make specific recommendations for preventing stormwater pollution. Contact Kelly for more information or to set up an appointment for a property assessment: kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688.

MACATAWA WATERSHED

PARKING LOTS

COMMERCIAL POLLUTION PREVENTION TIP SHEET



STORMWATER

Impermeable surfaces like parking lots, collect pollution from cars and people, like oil, gasoline, trash, and grass clippings. Rain water carries pollution into storm drains that empty into a lake or stream. Parking lot pollution can be reduced and prevented.

BEST PRACTICES

- Clean up spills
- Keep grass clippings on the lawn
- Use salt sparingly
- Do not stockpile snow on impermeable surfaces
- Regularly sweep or vacuum
- Do not allow charity car washes or use car wash kits to protect storm drains

www.the-macc.org

MACATAWA WATERSHED

LAWNS & LANDSCAPING

COMMERCIAL POLLUTION PREVENTION TIP SHEET



STORMWATER

Turf grass has very short root systems that restrict rain moving into the soil. Turf grass can act like impervious surfaces and generate runoff. Excess or improperly timed fertilizer can become water pollution.

BEST PRACTICES

- Return clippings to the lawn as fertilizer
- Soil test and apply only fertilizer that is needed
- Plant trees and shrubs
- Convert turf to native plants or add rain gardens

www.the-macc.org

Agricultural Happenings

By Rob Vink, MACC Agricultural Technician

Winter is always thought of being a slower time of year for farmers. However, with regular maintenance on equipment and machinery coupled with a number of supplier meeting and shows, winter seems to be almost as busy as the rest of the year. This past February the Project Clarity Agricultural Luncheon was hosted at Zeeland Farm Services (pictured below). David Brandt, Ohio farmer, was the keynote speaker and drew a crowd of more than 70. Attendees included staff from local agricultural retailers, Conservation Districts, local government officials, and of course farmers. Dave runs a diverse farming operation in Ohio, south of Columbus. He no-tills and integrates multi-species cover crops into all of his cropping rotations. Dave spoke specifically to our farmers about using multi-species cover crops and the benefits they have for soil health. Dave provided our local growers with a number of ideas and things that have worked in his operation. Many of his techniques are not widely employed in our watershed and have left our growers asking good questions and getting them to start thinking outside the box.



As winter winds down we will be working to plan several grassed waterways in the watershed. There are several smaller scale projects being planned and one that includes four water and sediment control basins or WASCObS plus a grassed waterway. This project collects water from over 200 acres of farmland and will temporarily hold water to settle out sediment before releasing it to the nearest stream. There are also several grant opportunities that we are looking into for implementing projects that use new technologies for phosphorus reduction. Plans are currently underway to lay the groundwork to submit proposals for those grant funds.

Cover crops and gypsum are again the most popular topic of discussion when making the rounds talking to farmers. We expect to fund a number of acres on existing contracts this spring and are hopeful that more new acres will be added. Finding farmers to participate in residue management is again our most challenging program to sell. Residue management most commonly refers to no-till farming and gives us our best return in terms of sediment and phosphorus reductions. Questions on any of the practices or programs mentioned can be directed to MACC Agricultural Technician, Rob Vink.

MACROINVERTEBRATE MONITORING

JUNE 2 - 9AM-1PM
OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER MACATAWA GREENWAY
4214 56TH ST, HOLLAND

Volunteers will meet for brief training, then we will form teams and carpool to the stream locations. Volunteers will work in the stream and on the streambank. Equipment will be provided, but volunteers should be prepared to be wet and/or muddy. Insect collections will be brought back to the center for identification. Lunch will also be provided. This activity is for ages 10 and up. Your RSVP is required to kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688. Please include any dietary restrictions.

PROJECT CLARITY COMMUNITY UPDATE

**MAY 24 - 7:30AM
BOATWERKS RESTAURANT
216 VAN RAALTE AVE, HOLLAND**

Just ahead of the unofficial start to summer, join us for an update on the health of the Macatawa Watershed. The Project Clarity team will provide updates on their research in the watershed and will provide expert analysis for all your questions on the health of Lake Macatawa. We'll also recap the projects that have been completed over the past five years and outline our team's vision for Project Clarity through 2020.

**\$20 PER PERSON
REGISTER ONLINE AT OUTDOORDISCOVERY.ORG
OR CALL 616-393-9453**

Restoration Work Continues

*Contributed by Dan Callam, Greenway Manager
Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway*

The Outdoor Discovery Center and our Project Clarity partners were recently awarded a \$251K grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to help address water quality issues in the Macatawa Watershed. The funds will go toward restoring nearly a quarter mile of Peters Creek in Zeeland Township, identified as one of the highest contributors of sediment and nutrients in the watershed. Additionally, we will work to implement best management practices in the upper reaches of several tributaries to the Macatawa River, helping to further reduce pollutants and detain stormwater. We are happy to continue working with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council and Niswander Environmental on these projects and will be working with state and local DEQ staff on the stream project as well. Look for our stream project to commence this fall into next spring. Project Clarity will continue to seek sources of funding to match local dollars for projects around the watershed.



A section of Peters Creek in Poppen Woods, a property owned by the Outdoor Discovery Center. This shows streambank erosion typical within the stretch that will be restored with the DEQ funding.

Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

301 Douglas Ave.

Holland, MI, 49424

Spring 2018

Save MI Hemlocks Rally

Sunday, April 15— 2:00-4:00 PM

Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing

8115 West Olive Rd, West Olive MI

- Progress updates and local success stories
- What you can do and how to be a Hemlock Hero
- What's next locally and statewide

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided. Public welcome, bring a friend!

Learn more at www.savemihemlocks.org

Contact Us

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info@the-macc.org

www.the-macc.org

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