



Explorer

Fall 2016

10th Annual Macatawa River Cleanup

The Fall Macatawa River Cleanup was held on Saturday, September 24th at Window on the Waterfront. This year marks the 10th anniversary of river cleanups organized by the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council and the Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway (ODCMG). Nearly 40 volunteers at this event collected enough trash to fill over 10 trash bags. One shopping cart was also found and ironically a city trash bin itself had also become trash. Because of the 10th anniversary, staff secured grant funds to help with the costs of the cleanup. Funds from the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) helped cover the costs of new gloves, trash bags, trash grabbers, snacks, water, and appreciation gifts. The MACC and ODCMG would like to thank the GLC, the many people that helped spread the word about the cleanup and our fantastic group of volunteers that took time out of their weekends to help make our community a better and cleaner place. Thank you all so much!



One family came across a shopping cart stuck in the marsh.



Pictured here are many of the volunteers that participated in this fall's River Cleanup along the shores of the Macatawa River near Holland's Window on the Waterfront park. We loved having so many eager kids participate this year!

About the MACC

Steve Bulthuis

Executive Director

Elisa Hoekwater

Transportation Manager

Kelly Goward

Watershed Project Manager

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

Annual Watershed Meeting

December 15, 2016, 10am - Noon

This meeting will feature research presentations from Hope College's Advanced Environmental Seminar students, new watershed research from a Grand Valley graduate student, a monitoring update from Grand Valley, an update on Project Clarity, and the presentation of the Macatawa Watershed Stakeholder of the Year Award. Refreshments will be provided. The meeting will be held at Holland City Hall, 370 South River Ave, Holland. Please RSVP to kgoward@the-macc.org or 616-395-2688.

October 21 & 22, 5-8pm: Treats and Trails

Bring out the entire family for a safe and fun walk along the trails of the ODC Nature Preserve (4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423). There will be wildlife encounters, face painting, games, and lots of candy. Children are encouraged to wear their costumes. All ODC Nature Preserve trails are wheelchair, stroller and wagon-friendly. *No RSVP required.* Fee: \$5 per vehicle

October 27, 1:30-3pm – Watershed Advisory Committee

Meeting: This meeting will feature the final report of the West Michigan Watershed Funding Study. And other updates This meeting is open to the public and will be held at the Howard Miller Library in Zeeland. Contact the MACC office for more information. *No RSVP required.*

October 27, 5:30-7:30pm – Unplug, Upcycle, and Upgrade

The Holland-Hope College Sustainability Institute will be hosting this community event outside at the ODC Nature Preserve (4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423). Vendors will share information about community initiatives while leading an "upcycle" craft at their table. Dress up, at 7pm there will be an award for the best "upcycled costume" for anyone 14 years and younger. Email Michelle Gibbs at gibbsm@hope.edu for more info!

November 15, 6:30-8:00pm – Living Sustainably Along the Lakeshore - "I didn't know I could recycle that!"

Join other members of our community at the Herrick District Library in Holland to learn more about recycling in our area.

Road/Stream Crossing Inventory Update

As reported in our last newsletter, this past spring the MACC was awarded a grant from MiCorps to help fund the inventory of 55 road-stream crossings within the Macatawa Watershed. The 55 locations were chosen based on a past inventory project from 2008 that used a more simplified bank erosion hazard index. Sites that were identified at that time as being moderate or severe for erosion were prioritized to inventory again this year to see if they have continued to degrade or if improvement projects have been completed. Of those 55 locations, we are near our completion with only 10 more sites to inventory before the end of the grant in May 2017. This is an accomplishment that we couldn't have completed without our 20 hard-working volunteers. Thank you all so much for your efforts!

Over the winter months we will analyze the data gathered, prioritize sites that may need additional visits and look at other locations in our area that may also benefit from this same inventory process. In the end, the data collected from the sites will help make decisions on where improvements are needed and which sites should take top priority. If you are interested in participating in the inventory next season, contact Carolyn Ulstad at culstad@the-macc.org and ask to be placed on our volunteer list.



South Branch Macatawa River at 138th in Fillmore Twp.



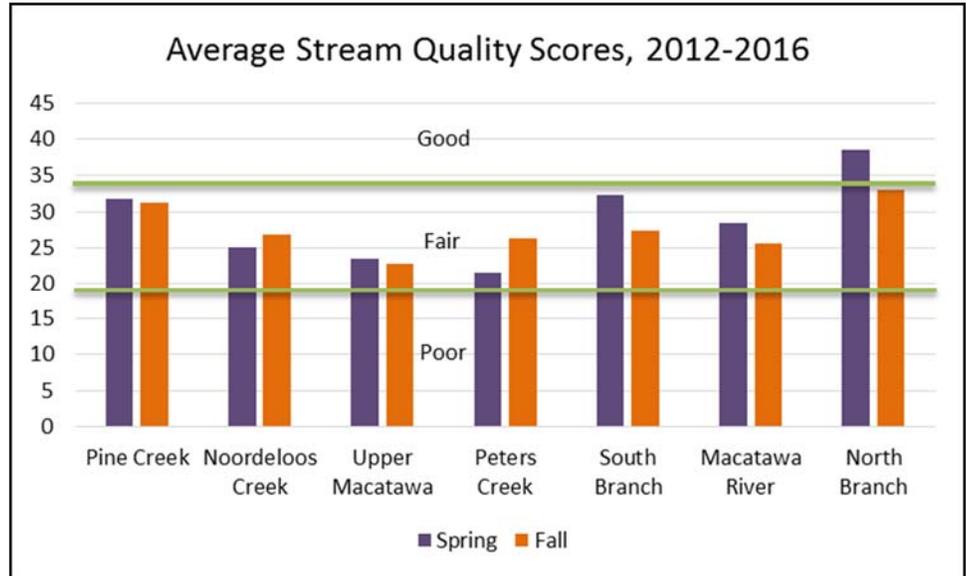
Noordeloos Creek crossing at 104th Avenue in Holland Township



Inspecting a culvert on Lakewood Blvd in Park Township

Volunteer Stream Monitoring

The MACC in partnership with the ODCMG, has been operating a volunteer stream monitoring program since the summer of 2012. Every year in the Spring and Fall, seven stream locations in our watershed are sampled for macroinvertebrates (a.k.a. “water bugs”) The bugs give us an idea of how healthy the water is based on what can live and thrive in each stream habitat. All data collected is publically available online at www.micorps.net. Our hope is that over many years of collection, enough data will be available to see overall trends in stream health. If you would like to help out with future stream monitoring events, contact Carolyn Ulstad at culstad@the-macc.org and be asked to be placed on the MACC’s volunteer list.



Fall cleanup - Household Hazardous Waste

By Carolyn Ulstad, MACC Program Assistant

The days are getting shorter, the air is becoming brisk and fresh, and everything *pumpkin* related is in full swing. Yes, Autumn is officially here and maybe like me you’ve started getting in the mood for some fall cleaning around the house. Some of the projects I had put off during the summer heat are now bearable with the cooler days. While cleaning and organizing, you may have come across that pile of old paint in the basement or chemicals and oil in the garage. These materials tend to accumulate dust rather quickly since many of us don’t automatically know where or how to dispose of them once they are of no use to us. Any product that is toxic, poisonous, flammable, corrosive, or reactive is considered to be hazardous and it’s very important that the item is disposed of properly to avoid accidental poisoning and environmental pollution.

If you live in Ottawa County, the Department of Public Health offers free disposal of household hazardous waste at any of their four Resource Recovery Service Centers. Fire extinguishers and 20 pound propane tanks are also accepted at all four centers. Hours vary by location, visit www.miottawa.org for hours or call 616-393-5645.

For all of you that live in Allegan County, contact the Health Department at 269-686-4559 to make an appointment for drop-off. Appointments are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays during regular business hours at the Allegan County Service Center located in Allegan Township, 3255 122nd Ave, Suite 200, Allegan.

When detoxing your home, remember to look into non-toxic alternatives. Many alternatives to products like household cleaners can be found by searching the internet and can typically be made with ingredients you already have.

Welcome to fall and happy cleaning to you all!



Project Clarity Update

Contributed by Dan Callam, Greenway Manager, ODCMG

The success of the Project Clarity fundraising campaign thus far has hinged on the buy-in and generous gifts from across the greater Holland/Zeeland community. We have been thrilled with the support we have received, and we would not have been able to complete the number of projects we have to date without this support. As a measure of our thanks and in an effort to further engage local residents and visitors, a series of kiosks are being constructed in area parks and natural areas. These kiosks (pictured at left below), being constructed by CL Construction and with panels created by the Outdoor Discovery Center (example at right below), will feature interpretive information about our watershed, as well as updated monitoring information about the health of the watershed. The ODC will update these signs annually, featuring updated water quality indices from the Annis Water Resources Institute. We hope these will provide helpful information about the health of our waters, as well as stand as a measure of our appreciation, for years to come!



Cover Crops: the Super Hero of the Soil

The fall harvest is upon us. This is a critical time in the watershed as soil that has been protected by growing crops all summer is suddenly exposed to rainfall again. The impacts of raindrops start the process of erosion, the wearing away of soil particles, that can carry soil off a farm field and into nearby streams and lakes where it impairs water quality. But fear not, for our local farmers are taking steps to protect the soil from erosion! Many farmers are choosing to plant cover crops to protect the soil during the fall and winter months. A cover crop can be planted prior to harvest with specialized equipment or following harvest if it's early enough to allow the cover crop to grow. A cover crop is not harvested but does have to be killed prior to planting the next year's crop so it does not compete for nutrients and water. Not only do cover crops fight erosion, but they can also scavenge nutrients, build healthier soil, fight weeds, and some can even feed animals. Cover crops require an extra investment of time and money from the farmer, so maybe the farmer is the real super hero in this story. Both Project Clarity through private funding and the MACC through grant funding, have been able to help farmers offset the cost of planting cover crops on over 3,000 acres in the last few years. So as you drive around the countryside this fall, look for green growth in harvested fields and catch a glimpse of a real life super hero in action: silently protecting the soil and improving the Macatawa Watershed.



Rye cover crop interseeded between corn, fall 2015

Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

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Fall Leaf Pickup 101

- Storm drains in our watershed lead to streams that connect to Lake Macatawa. To reduce the chance of excess nutrients reaching the lake and creating algae, avoid piling leaves near drains.
- Leaves that are piled too close to a storm drain can build up in the catch basin and lead to street flooding.
- If you live in an area where your city collects fall yard waste from the street, never place piles near utility poles, guy wires, fire hydrants, mailboxes or other obstructions that would prevent equipment from accessing your pile.
- Never allow children to play in leaves that are piled on the road.



Contact Us

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