

Kalamazoo River Monitoring program (KRMP)
Kalamazoo River Guardians
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Project goals:

1. Establish a volunteer water quality monitoring program that will connect students and citizens of Kalamazoo with the Kalamazoo River Watershed.
2. The Kalamazoo River Monitoring program (KRMP) will help educate the public about our local water issues and create a greater number of committed clean water stewards.
3. We hope to reach new community members each year always growing the number of citizens interested in the health of our watershed.
4. The end goal is to improve and alleviate human impact on our watershed.

Project objectives:

1. Core partners will hold quarterly planning and action meetings. Our next meeting will be held in June 2012 and will continue quarterly. These will be organized by the project manager and project director.
 - a. Organize events – project director
 - b. Form task oriented committees – all partners
 - c. Formulate and assign tasks for marketing and education plan – all partners
 - d. Assign tasks for volunteer recruitment – all partners
 - e. Evaluation – all partners
2. Expansion – project manager and project director, all partners
 - a. Current events, conference, festival, other community event opportunity updates – all partners
 - b. Data reads and action needed – all partners
3. Attend the 8 hour MiCorps training session in June – project director
4. Marketing development June/July 2012
 - a. Create a Facebook page – project director
 - b. KNC website additions
 - c. KNC newsletter
 - d. Kalamazoo Gazette
5. Marketing and Volunteer Recruitment, (completed by project director and core partners) July –August
 - a. News releases
 - b. WMU/K class involvement organization
 - c. KNC/KWRC Membership mailing
 - d. Facebook
 - e. Phone and emails – August/Sept 2012

6. Develop Quality Assurance Project Plan (QUAPP) – project manager and project director, July 2012
7. Submit QUAPP to Paul Steen project director – Late July 2012
 - a. No less than 30 days prior.
 - b. Must be approved prior to first event
8. Arrange “side by side” sampling session with MiCorps staff member – August
9. Gather and purchase materials for events and trainings – project director Early August
10. Kalamazoo River Watershed Festival Booth – August 2012
11. Leader Training – project director - late August 2012
 - a. Invite partners who will function as initial leaders
 - i. Core partners
 - ii. Merrill Park Resident
 - iii. Pfizer employees
 - b. Plan and organize as a real monitoring event. Learn through practice. Planning (early August)
 - c. Train
 - d. Evaluate
12. Solidify volunteers – project director – Late August
 - i. Phone calls, emails
 - ii. Mailings
13. KRMP volunteer monitoring event September – project manager and project director – 2012
 - a. Plan for supplies (MiCorps materials), contact lists, food, and I.D. space – Early August
 - b. Gather, print, prepare River education materials and safety guidelines, and evaluations for each volunteer
 - c. Solidify all logistics
 - d. Hold event –Get to know, educate/train, sample, I.D., connect with folks
 - e. Evaluate all parties
 - f. Thank
14. Submit quarterly progress Report and financials – project director– October 2012
15. Data entry – project director – late October or upon habitat assessment completion
16. Attend annual MiCorps Conference – project manager and project director
17. Core partner reflection – all partners– November 2012
18. Planning forward – all partners– December 2012-January 2013
19. Submit quarterly progress report and financial report – project director – January 2013
20. Explore new avenues for public outreach and education (conferences, festivals, other events or media outreach)
21. Volunteer Recruitment for spring event – project director – February/March 2013
 - a. Contact past volunteers

- i. Inquire about returning volunteers and recruit leaders.
 - b. Follow 4a. – 4e. to recruit new volunteers March, April 2013
 - c. Solidify by end of march
- 22. Habitat Assessment – March
 - a. Gather interested volunteers and College students (2 or 3)
 - b. Coordinate materials and assessment date
 - c. Visit each site, perform assessment
 - d. Enter data
- 23. Leader Training – project director – April 2013
- 24. Submit Quarterly progress report and financial report – project director – April 2013
- 25. Second monitoring event – April/May 2013
- 26. Evaluate – project manager and project director
- 27. Data Entry – project director May-2013
- 28. Research additional sources of funding planning for sustainability – all partners
- 29. Kalamazoo River Water Shed Festival Booth - August 2013
- 30. Repeat steps 19, 20 and 22 thru 26 for 3rd event in September of 2013 and Spring of 2014
- 31. Attend Annual MiCorps Conference and give a short 20-30 minute presentation on the Kalamazoo River Monitoring Program Oct. 2013
- 32. Submit Quarterly Progress Reports in July 2013, October 2013, January 2014, April 2014, and July of 2014
- 33. 4th KRMP monitoring event repeat steps 19, 20 and 22 thru 26 – April/May 2014
- 34. Program sustainability meeting KNC and all partners – May 2014
- Submit final report, release of claims letter, fact sheet, final financial status report, and close grant by July 2014.
- 35. Evaluate program
- 36. Plan for next event!

Summary of Objectives and Goals:

In nearly all objectives listed above, the Kalamazoo River Guardian water monitoring program is a success. The organization of grant tasks by work plan and timeline divided the project into manageable steps and I will touch on a few of the highlights both in the successes of the project

First, we held 3 events: Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Spring 2014. At each event, we had between 15 and 18 participants. Some returned, but we saw new faces each time. We reached out to the public by way of flyers distributed at college campuses, KNC's facebook page, and word of mouth. People generally had a great time and enjoyed the day.

The first Fall event was very cold and rainy and while most people were brave about it, there were a few that got wet and cold and left early. With this in mind, we decided to try

a later spring event on May 31, 2014. It was a beautiful day and people really enjoyed sitting on the river/stream banks and working through their samples. We will continue to sample later in May in the future, in the interest of keeping volunteers somewhat comfortable and coming back!

6 sites were monitored in the first events and we added another site for our last event. A landowner in Comstock Township was interested in sampling her creek and adding her data to the database. We discussed the protocol with her and Kyle Bibby, project director, served as the team leader at her site.

We look forward to continuing to spread the word about the MiCorps project. I am working with an elementary school teacher in Plainwell, to involve her students in a sampling event in Fall 2014.

Our success is partly due to working under the umbrella of KNC. The Facebook page and marketing team helped to get the word out to many people and the name recognition of KNC helped to make a good first impression. Our team leaders were also wonderful. We did experience one team leader moving to a new position, but he arranged for his replacement to continue his duties. Each leader was very knowledgeable and pitched in on the event days to explain macroinvert ID or give an account of the state of the water in the Kalamazoo River Watershed.

One lesson learned was that no matter what the weather report, people still arrived without proper gear. We learned to bring extra raincoats and waders and send email reminders to bring a change of clothes the day before the event.

One failure did involve the high water events in Spring 2013. After rescheduling twice, we decided to postpone the event until Fall that year. Flooding continued in the Kalamazoo River until later in the summer, so the decision was a good one in terms of safety, but we did miss out on that data. Looking back, smaller creeks could have been sampled safely. In the future, if high water impedes an event, we will evaluate smaller creeks and sample those that can be accessed safely. We will hold a Fall 2014 event to make up for that missed event in Spring 2013 and we plan to continue this work indefinitely.

Also, we did remove Trout Run from our sampling set. Dr. Girdler does lead teams of students in sampling the creek in the spring and fall. There are up to 20 students in the creek at a time and in that large group they have a hard time staying within the 300 ft and time limit, so we decided to keep this data out of the MiCorps database. We do still talk about the MiCorps program and encourage the students to join an event. We had 4 students join us at the last event.

Partners:

Each partner helped determine which sites to sample during the grant start up period.

Kalamazoo River Watershed Council: Jeff Spoelstra then Steve Hamilton, team leaders and experts on Kzoo River (Kalamazoo River at D. Avenue)

Binney Girdler, professor at Kalamazoo College, team leader and macro invert ID (Arcadia Creek and Trout Run)

Denny Stelzer, scientist at Pfizer Inc., team leader and macro invert ID

Steve Kohler, professor at Western Michigan University, team leader and macro invert ID

Products completed:

3 monitoring events (1 pending)

Kalamazoo River Guardians logo and marketing plan

Volunteer and team leader database

Data from each event entered in MiCorps database

Training completed and presentation at MiCorps conference

Project sustainability:

The Kalamazoo Nature Center is committed to supporting this project by dedicating staff time to events and marketing.

We will continue to add sites where we can and we will continue to reach out to new volunteers whenever possible.