



CRWC

CLINTON RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

FROM CRWC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

What a year it has been! 2023 was truly a year of growth for the Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC), marked by innovative and fresh ideas that are laying the foundation for rich programming and robust partnerships as we enter 2024.

While CRWC continued to offer our program staples like Adopt-A-Stream, Stream Leaders, and the suite of Keeping-It-Clean opportunities, the organization also introduced innovative initiatives like Nourished By Nature and re-imagined cherished events like Crafts on the Clinton to connect with new audiences within the watershed.

As CRWC rebuilt its team and re-filled 4 positions in 2023, the staff dedicated time to strategically assess the organization's programs, expertise, and events and identified a path forward to maximize CRWC's impact in 2024 and beyond. A crucial aspect of this effort has involved collaborating on a revised strategy for communicating about CRWC's range of programs. CRWC's mission statement was the logical place to ground our work, and that mission shaped CRWC's four pillars: protect, enhance, celebrate, and engage.

In 2023, CRWC was hard at work exemplifying these pillars across the watershed.

PROTECT: CRWC refined the Weekly Clean program, more than doubling the amount of trash collected in 2022 and visiting more than 20 communities.

ENHANCE: CRWC removed the Bald Mountain Dam over Trout Creek, a tributary to Paint Creek, restoring 1.25 miles of fish passage and planting 1,400 native plants through ongoing habitat restoration.

CELEBRATE: CRWC collaborated with the City of Center Line through WaterTowns to install rain gardens at the City's DDA Parking lot at Stephens Road and Van Dyke Avenue, which are capable of capturing 34,000 gallons of water per rain event, reducing stormwater inputs into Bear Creek and providing pollinator habitat in a highly developed area.

ENGAGE: CRWC re-vamped its communications strategies, social media platforms, and publications (including the Annual Report you're reading now!). In 2023, CRWC launched an updated website that is better able to support CRWC's efforts by increasing accessibility to data sets, resources, and materials for all those who interact with us.

We tackled a great deal in 2023, and we have enthusiastically started 2024 with a team that's ready for the challenge of a new year. We could not do this important work without people like you - whose unwavering dedication to the Clinton River watershed and Lake St. Clair is evident in your support of this organization. Thank you.

As we look ahead into 2024, I am excited for the opportunities that lie before us.



Jennifer Hill
Executive Director
Clinton River Watershed Council

STAFF

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Mikela Dean *Watershed Ecologist*

Pronoye Kapali *Watershed Program Coordinator*

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YOUR HOME. YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR WATERSHED.

The Mission of the Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC) is to protect, enhance, and celebrate the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair.

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Progress by the Numbers

Adopt-A-Stream

490*
VOLUNTEERS

70
STONEFLY SEARCHERS

Keeping-It-Clean

820
VOLUNTEERS

9,268 LBS
DEBRIS COLLECTED

Stormwater Education

14
PRESENTATIONS

527*
ATTENDEES

River Day

16
EVENTS

700*
PARTICIPANTS

Water Festivals

308
PRESENTERS, TEACHERS,
CHAPERONES, AND VOLUNTEERS

1,705
STUDENTS

Stream Leaders

1,705
STUDENTS

17
MENTORS

24
TEACHERS

10

TRAININGS

49

UNIQUE SITES

57

CLEANUPS

15

SITES MONITORED

17

SCHOOLS



VOLUNTEERS PROTECT WATERS IN THE CLINTON

In 2023, our volunteers were instrumental in the protection, enhancement, and celebration of the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair. Every person who dedicated their time and talent to volunteer to collect trash, monitor water quality, and remove invasive species, amplifies CRWC's impact within southeast Michigan.

WEEKLY CLEAN IN ACTION

Each year, thousands of pounds of trash, litter, and debris find their way into green spaces within the Clinton River watershed before ultimately ending up in the lakes, streams, tributaries, and rivers that flow through our communities. This discarded material can prove detrimental to water quality, wildlife, and quality of life.

Litter, especially plastic items, can break down into smaller particles over time, forming microplastics. These tiny particles can persist in the environment for a long time, contributing to pollution and potential harm to organisms throughout the food chain. Litter can release toxins and chemicals into the soil, affecting its quality and fertility. When litter ends up in water bodies, it can lead to water pollution, disrupting aquatic ecosystems and potentially harming aquatic life. CRWC's Watershed Program Coordinator, Pronoye Kapali, emphasizes that wildlife is also impacted by litter, "Animals can mistake the trash as food or can get caught in anything from loose fishing wire to plastic bags."

CRWC provides ongoing volunteer opportunities that engage residents of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels in trash clean-ups through the Keeping-It-Clean program. CRWC Environmental Scientist, Lydia Nicholas says "When we remove trash from parks and dispose of it properly, we are removing potential contaminants and future microplastics, reducing their effects on the environment."

Over 32 weeks in 2023, 328 individual volunteers joined CRWC for Weekly Clean, an ongoing program within Keeping-It-Clean that consists of on-land cleanups. Each week, volunteers meet at a different location within the watershed to help improve water quality by removing trash. "The types of trash we see the most often tend to be fast food wrappers, cigarette butts, and fishing-related trash like worm containers, fishing lines, old lures, and bobbers," Lydia says. They emphasize that litter adds up quickly,

"Small pieces of trash tend to persist in the environment, especially because many people have the mindset of 'small pieces of trash don't matter,' so those little pieces can accumulate into a big problem. Small debris also quickly break down into even smaller pieces, creating more microplastics that are extremely hard to get rid of. Every little bit of trash matters!"

While small pieces of trash are the most common, that has not stopped Weekly Clean volunteers from pulling shopping carts, tires, rotting mattresses, and even the wooden trailer (pictured below) from green spaces along the Clinton. Occasionally, hidden gems, like the Slim Shady mix CD found in Beaver Creek, pique the interest of volunteers and CRWC staff.

CRWC volunteers collected more trash in 2023 than they did in previous years. Pronoye notes that "As the river flooded to new areas, it took up trash on land, and as the water receded, it took the trash with it, depositing it further downstream for our volunteers to find."

In total, 9,268 lbs. of trash and debris were removed as part of the Keeping-It-Clean suite of programs in 2023. 6,500 lbs. were collected through Weekly Clean alone (almost 4,000 lbs. more than in 2022).

Lydia credits this achievement to CRWC's volunteers, "We were able to engage more volunteers through Weekly Clean than we have in previous years, and many of those volunteers participated more than once."

CRWC offers thanks to everyone who volunteered to get their hands dirty to improve the health of the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair with us this past year. CRWC looks forward to continuing to provide residents, businesses, and communities with opportunities to continue to make a difference in 2024.





IDENTIFYING INVASIVE PLANTS

CRWC volunteers supported efforts to report and remove invasive species from the watershed. Invasive species are non-native species, species not naturally found in an area that were introduced through human activities, that cause harm to humans, the environment, or the economy. Invasive plants can out-compete native species, which in turn reduces resources needed by our native wildlife to survive.

It is important to know that not all non-native species are invasive, and plants must cause harm to be considered invasive. Invasive species can be transported by boats, fishing equipment, and by accidental release. Invasive species can spread to freshwater sources via stormwater too, by seedlings that get caught up in flood events.

CRWC Environmental Scientist, Lydia Nicholas, says “ Invasive species thrive on neglect, so when they’re not being actively managed, they can really disrupt an ecosystem.” Some of the most common invasive species in the Clinton River watershed are glossy buckthorn, common buckthorn, garlic mustard, phragmites, and multiflora rose.

This year, representatives from local businesses came out to Shadbush Nature Center and Murphy Park in Pontiac to help remove invasive species, and in June, CRWC volunteers pulled hundreds of pounds of non-native watercress from the banks of Avon Creek in just a few hours.

By participating in the management of invasive species, CRWC volunteers can help restore habitat and green spaces and prevent invasive plants from spreading elsewhere.

Lydia shares that many invasives are still widely available from retail stores, gardening centers, and greenhouses. They encourage residents to take care when planting. “Do your due diligence in researching what you’re planting! If you come across an invasive species in your ventures, report it to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) on their website, MISIN.msu.edu, or their app MISIN: Report Invasive Species.”

Thank you to each of the volunteers who helped CRWC monitor and remove invasive species this year.

RECOGNIZING TIM JOHNSTONE AS ONE OF CRWC'S VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

The Jerry Carvey Volunteer of the Year Award was created in 1998 in honor of Jerry Carvey, a long-time CRWC Board Member, who has donated countless hours to the council as a volunteer financial manager. He helped CRWC establish its 501(c)3 designation. Each year, CRWC recognizes at least one volunteer for their effort to enhance the watershed through acts of volunteerism.

This year, we are honored to recognize Tim Johnstone for his unwavering commitment to the Clinton River watershed. For several years, Tim has volunteered with CRWC, most often in Weekly Clean. He is almost always the first volunteer to go out and one of the last to return, except when he comes back to get another garbage bag because his is filled already. Tim never backs down from a challenge and will use any tool he can to get the job done. He once found a large rope that had been buried, so he came back to grab a knife so he could cut as much of it out of the ground as possible, then returned 20 minutes later with a 10 ft stretch of rope that was 2 inches in diameter.

In 2023 alone, Tim attended 19 cleanups and collected more than 340lbs of trash and debris at local parks, preventing it from entering lakes, rivers, and streams in the Clinton River watershed. Thank you, Tim, for your time, talent, bright attitude, and diligence.



ENHANCING WATER QUALITY & HABITAT THROUGHOUT THE WATERSHED

CRWC's field team spends the bulk of the year with boots on the ground and waders in the rivers, lakes, creeks, and streams that make up the Clinton River Watershed. They spend countless hours conducting ecological surveys, monitoring water quality, and analysing habitat to ensure that CRWC has the most up-to-date information on the current conditions of the watershed.

CATCHING CRAYFISH

In August of 2023, the CRWC team finished monitoring Red Swamp Crayfish for the year.

Red Swamp Crayfish are a large, aggressive invasive species of crayfish that create large burrows that disrupt streamside and aquatic habitats, causing significant erosion. They also outcompete native aquatic life for food while causing algae blooms through their eating habits, degrading the habitat further. The presence of Red Swamp Crayfish has been confirmed in both the Clinton River (2019 & 2023) and Rouge River (2017) watersheds.

CRWC staff members Lydia Nicholas and Mikela Dean led CRWC's effort, aided by Kaleigh Snoddy, Pronoye Kapali, and CRWC's summer interns, Emma Delie and Ray Gilbert. The team scouted over 30 potential sites, searching for locations that contained crayfish habitat characteristics but were also accessible. Some locations proved nearly impossible to survey due to high water levels, high plant density, and unstable stream conditions. Fifteen full surveys were successfully conducted, covering a range of aquatic environments. These included the Clinton River itself in four distinct areas, as well as three drains, three creeks (including Paint Creek in three separate locations), and three ponds.



Using dry dog food as bait, staff baited, set, and checked traps at identified sites. Each site was monitored over a three-day period. Overall, the survey spanned an impressive 3,375 meters, which is over two miles!

Officially, 150 traps were set across the sites, with each location intended to house ten traps. However, due to logistical constraints and unsuitable site conditions, an additional 20+ traps were temporarily placed across



various locations. This strategic trap deployment allowed for a more comprehensive examination of the Red Swamp Crayfish presence within the watershed.

The survey brought to light a diverse array of native crayfish species inhabiting the watershed's lakes, rivers, and streams. Among the 290 crayfish caught, CRWC staff identified several native species including Virile Crayfish, Big Water Crayfish, Devil Crayfish, Calico Crayfish, and Northern Clearwater Crayfish. Notably, a single Rusty Crayfish, categorized as an invasive species, was also identified. However, the debate regarding its invasive status within the watershed persists due to its historical presence in the Lake Erie basin and its distribution.

While the survey team celebrated the absence of Red Swamp Crayfish within their survey locations, a new population was discovered at Greystone Golf Club in Washington Township in mid-July. Another population within the Newland Drain in Shelby Township is under management by the Lake St. Clair Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (LSC CISMA).

Amidst the myriad findings and challenges, a whimsical note was struck by one of CRWC's staff members. Expressing both satisfaction and a hint of weariness, Nicholas stated "I never want to see another crayfish again, at least not until we do it all again next year." This sentiment echoes the commitment and dedication that define CRWC's tireless efforts to preserve the health and balance of the watershed.

This project is being conducted in partnership with Friends of the Rouge and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. In the 2024 field season, the second year of the grant period, CRWC will continue to develop a critical data set of Red Swamp Crayfish populations to inform solutions that will limit the spread of this troublesome invasive species.

REMOVING THE BALD MOUNTAIN POND DAM

Located in the Paint Creek subwatershed in the ecologically important upper reaches of the Clinton River, the Bald Mountain Pond Dam once served as a recreational stream crossing within the Bald Mountain Recreation Area. However, degrading conditions and safety concerns led to its abandonment as a pedestrian passageway across Trout Creek.

“In addition to its lost function, the Bald Mountain Pond Dam was identified as a barrier to fish passage and a restriction to natural flow, thermal regimes, and sediment transport—making it a primary target for removal,” says Mikela Dean, CRWC Watershed Ecologist.

After close collaboration with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on potential solutions, in 2021, CRWC was awarded a \$42,000 grant from MDNR and USFWS to address this issue. CRWC subsequently performed pre-dam removal stream monitoring, ecological surveys, and planned the dam removal process.

In January 2023, the Bald Mountain Pond Dam was successfully removed, restoring approximately 1.25-miles of fish passage within Trout Creek. In addition to enhanced connectivity for fish species, native mussel communities (including the state-threatened slippershell) are expected to benefit from this stream restoration project.

This project pairs with an earlier GLRI-funded dam removal effort to reconnect 16-miles of fish passage by CRWC on downstream Paint Creek, a coldwater-designated trout stream for which Trout Creek is a tributary. “In the larger scheme, both dam removal projects build on CRWC’s Clinton River Coldwater Conservation Project (CRCCP),” Mikela shares. CRCCP is a collaboration between CRWC, four Trout Unlimited Chapters, EGLE, MDNR, and local municipalities whose mission is to enhance and restore coldwater stream habitat within the watershed. Ultimately, these projects collectively work to benefit the health of the Clinton River watershed as a whole.

In the fall of 2023, CRWC furthered site restoration by planting more than 1,400 native plants and several trees with the aid of volunteers. These native herbaceous plants and trees will help stabilize the banks and enhance the riparian buffer zone along this section of Trout Creek.

Post-dam removal monitoring, ecological surveys, and road-stream crossing evaluations will continue and help quantify the benefits of the dam removal on Trout Creek and the greater Clinton River watershed.



SHELL-EBRATING SUCCESS

Each year, more than 300 volunteers work with CRWC to monitor water quality by sampling macroinvertebrate populations across the watershed through the Adopt-A-Stream program.

During Adopt-A-Stream in the spring of 2023, former intern and long-time volunteer, Taylor Haugen, found a giant floater mussel (*Pyganodon grandis*) in Plumbrook Drain.

Giant floater mussels are unionid mussels, which are unique because they require a fish host to complete their life cycle. Unionid larvae must attach to the gills or fins of a suitable fish host to survive into adulthood.

While the Clinton River is home to 21 of the 43 native species of unionid mussels, this find is particularly interesting because in a comprehensive 2004 mussel survey, no mussel species were found in Plumbrook Drain at all. Finding mussels and other similar wildlife in areas like Plumbrook Drain, which historically have not received high water quality scores, is an excellent indicator that health of waterways are improving.

RIFFLES IN PAINT CREEK

In July, CRWC staff worked alongside the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Michigan Trout Unlimited to install 61 logs in Paint Creek, a rare coldwater resource in southeast Michigan, to increase both the quality and quantity of trout and wildlife habitat in the upper reaches of the Clinton. This effort builds on past work by Vanguard to install instream habitat in additional sections of Paint Creek and is a wonderful example of how CRWC staff support and collaborate on critical habitat work being led by members of the Clinton River Coldwater Conservation Project (CRCCP) to enhance, restore, and create instream and streamside habitat in coldwater streams. CRWC staff were excited to be of service and play a small role in a complex project. This initiative is expected to enter its next phase and conclude in 2025, overall impacting more than a mile of Paint Creek. Thank you to Joe Bruce and the Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited for their leadership in this important work.

CELEBRATING THE WATERSHED

CRWC often shares that clean water and a healthy environment are essential for a strong economy and a high quality of life within a diverse watershed. An important piece of CRWC's work is celebrating the water resources that we strive to protect and recreating in the outdoors.

NOURISHED BY NATURE

A love for the outdoors permeates nearly every aspect of CRWC's work. Before signing on at an environmental organization with a mission to protect, enhance, and celebrate the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair, each of CRWC's staff members began their passion for the outdoors in a different way. Everything from camping with their families to trying kayaking with their friends, from swimming in local waterways to cycling in nearby parks, brought our team into the outdoors.

The Clinton River watershed hosts hiking, kayaking, camping, canoeing, swimming, fishing, boating, and cycling opportunities for all those who reside here. Before anyone chooses to volunteer to remove trash from a local park or tries to scoop macroinvertebrates out of icy waters in February, they find joy in nature.

However, it isn't simple for everyone to try outdoor activities. Barriers like lack of experience, cost of equipment, and access to expert training can prevent people from finding their way to outdoor hobbies.

Recognizing this, in 2023 CRWC wanted to share opportunities to test-drive the nature-based activities that the Clinton River watershed has to offer with residents. CRWC's goal was to remove as many barriers to entry as possible, and help residents have fun outside.

As a result of the generous support of the David W. Elliott Foundation and attendees of CRWC's 2023 Annual Meeting, the Clinton River Watershed Council was able to host three successful outdoor experience events and engaged a new audience of participants who have previously not had the opportunity to participate in these kinds of outdoor experiences.

Attendees had guided firsthand experiences viewing wildlife, learning about recreational resources, spending time with outdoor experts, exploring different habitats and landscapes, and making new memories.

URBAN BIRDING

The first event in the series took place in the City of Eastpointe with the focus of introducing residents to the joys of birding. CRWC partnered with the Detroit Zoo, the City of Eastpointe, Eastpointe Memorial Library, Macomb Audubon, Macomb County, and Urban Seed to make birding more accessible.

CRWC Watershed Program Coordinator, Pronoye Kapali, shared "This event provided an opportunity to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the natural world while learning about different bird species and their habitats. With the help of our partners, we were able to provide a beginner birding training session, expose participants to commonly

used and easily accessible birding apps, and provide a birding expert for three teams of residents on their guided birding hike around Eastpointe."

CRWC provided binoculars to each participant to use during the event and Michigan bird guides to take home. CRWC's team led participants through natural habitats, helped them spot and identify different bird species, and learn about their behaviors and habitats.



KAYAKING ADVENTURE

In June, CRWC focused on getting residents out on the water. Starting at Webber Paddle Park in New Baltimore, CRWC worked in partnership with Simple Adventures and Six Rivers Land Conservancy to host a kayaking adventure along the Salt River.

Safety instructions, kayaks, personal floatation devices, and paddles were provided for residents to use during the event by Simple Adventures. One resident summarized their experience by saying "The river is a peaceful space full of wildness. Nicely organized, friendly volunteers, kayaks were in very good condition, perfect duration, and great ice cream pause."

Pronoye said "Participants registered to learn the fundamentals of kayaking and paddling techniques and practiced these skills at a comfortable pace." Overall, this route was approximately 1.92 miles one way - 3.84 miles total.



PEDALS & PAINT

The final installment of Nourished by Nature took place at the Clinton River Watershed Council's office, where participants were encouraged to bring their bicycles or their walking shoes to explore the Clinton River Trail in Rochester Hills. Participants pedaled their way through a short cycling trip, where they explored the trail.

Following the cycling excursion, art supplies were provided so that participants could spend time in creativity and capture the inspiring landscapes of the Clinton River watershed on canvas in the Avon Nature Area prairie, surrounded by native wildflowers to inspire their paintings.

An attendee said "It was something different. It was well organized. The food was very good. The art instruction was informative. It was just easy fun." Another participant stated that the event "Provided an opportunity to do some exercise and also learn. I met nice people and had great food in a beautiful outdoor area."



REFLECTING ON THE SERIES AS A WHOLE

Residents appreciated the opportunity to explore the Clinton River watershed in ways that they never had before, partners were excited to be included in a fully funded event series, and each event filled up, illustrating the popularity among residents.

Pronoye explained, "One of the many goals of the Nourished by Nature series is not only to allow residents to experience new activities but also to motivate them to continue it on their own." In 2024, CRWC will continue the Nourished by Nature series with new activities.

RECOGNIZING ELIZABETH SCHULTZ WITH THE JOHANNA ROSKOPP LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Johanna Roskopp Leadership Award was created by the Board in 1995 to honor Johanna Roskopp, a longtime Board member, for her extraordinary contributions to protecting the Clinton River. This award recognizes individuals and organizations for their leadership and commitment to protecting the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair.

This year, we recognize Elizabeth Schultz, Nature Center Coordinator at the Burgess Shadbrush Nature Center. In her role, Elizabeth has become a valued partner, who takes it upon herself to encourage people to connect with the outdoors and enjoy the region's natural resources. We applaud Elizabeth's efforts to increase recreational access through an upcoming installation of a universally accessible kayak launch at River Bends Park. As a result of her leadership, CRWC and Burgess-Shadbrush Nature Center have created a partnership centered on the removal of the invasive shrub jet-bead, which has taken over native areas within River Bends Park. In conjunction with CRWC, Elizabeth has hosted several jet-bead pulls with more scheduled for 2024. Even now, native plants can be seen re-populating areas as jet bead is removed. Elizabeth is a joy to work with in promoting the stewardship of the watershed, and we look forward to continuing to partner with her and Burgess-Shadbrush Nature Center in the future!

THE WATERSHED'S BUSINESSES

In September, CRWC hosted its biggest fundraiser of the year, Crafts on the Clinton, in partnership with the City of Sterling Heights. This fun-filled evening featured beer and wine tasting while enjoying live music, delicious food, and art vendors on the banks of the Clinton River!

More than 280 people registered, making 2023 the largest Crafts on the Clinton to date.

Vendors, including Arbor Brewing Company, Bell's Brewing, Blake's Hard Cider, Griffin Claw Brewing Co. Rochester Mills Beer Co. Schramm's Mead, and more, provided a wide variety of craft beverages for participants to sample. Cole noted, "Clean water is a critical ingredient in more than just the brewing process, and the businesses that participate in Crafts on the Clinton definitely recognize that. We love to share the involvement of every group that participates and highlight their support of CRWC and local waters."

The enthusiastic response from attendees underscores the event's significance as more than a fundraiser, but also as a platform for raising awareness about the importance of the Clinton River, its watershed, and Lake St. Clair. CRWC looks forward to hosting Crafts on the Clinton again in 2024.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Through longstanding programs like WaterTowns, Adopt-A-Stream, Stream Leaders, and Keeping-It-Clean and environmental planning, ecological, and environmental policy expertise, CRWC provides a unique set of services to communities and counties within the watershed. CRWC continuously seeks to implement new projects that improve local water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.

REDUCING STORMWATER RUNOFF TO BEAR CREEK

CRWC often shares that stormwater is one of the biggest challenges facing the Clinton River and its watershed. The Clinton River watershed is the most populated in Michigan, and more than half of the surface area within the watershed is impervious or developed. When water falls during storms and other precipitation events, it moves over impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, roads, and sidewalks, where it can pick up pollutants and sediments and carry them into our local water systems, including rivers, lakes, and streams.

CRWC works with partners and communities to develop and implement solutions to manage stormwater more effectively.

In 2023, CRWC worked with partners including the City of Center Line, the City of Center Line DDA, Hutch Paving, AEW, and Drummond Carpenter PLLC to complete the final steps in a multi-year WaterTowns green infrastructure project in the City of Center Line.

Land use within the City of Center Line is similar to that of the overall watershed; it is mostly comprised of urbanized, impervious surfaces. Jeffery Schiffman, CRWC Watershed Planner, shares, “The combinations of high population density, expansiveness of impervious surfaces, and aging stormwater infrastructure has impacted water quality within the community and for those further downstream.”

To address these concerns, the parking lot was regraded, repaved, and water was redirected to flow into four catch basins, and in the spring of 2023, CRWC installed four rain gardens in the catch basins. The goal of this project was to improve water quality and minimize stormwater impacts by reducing flow alterations to Bear Creek and the Red

Run, as well as help guide future development toward implementing stormwater best management practices using green infrastructure.

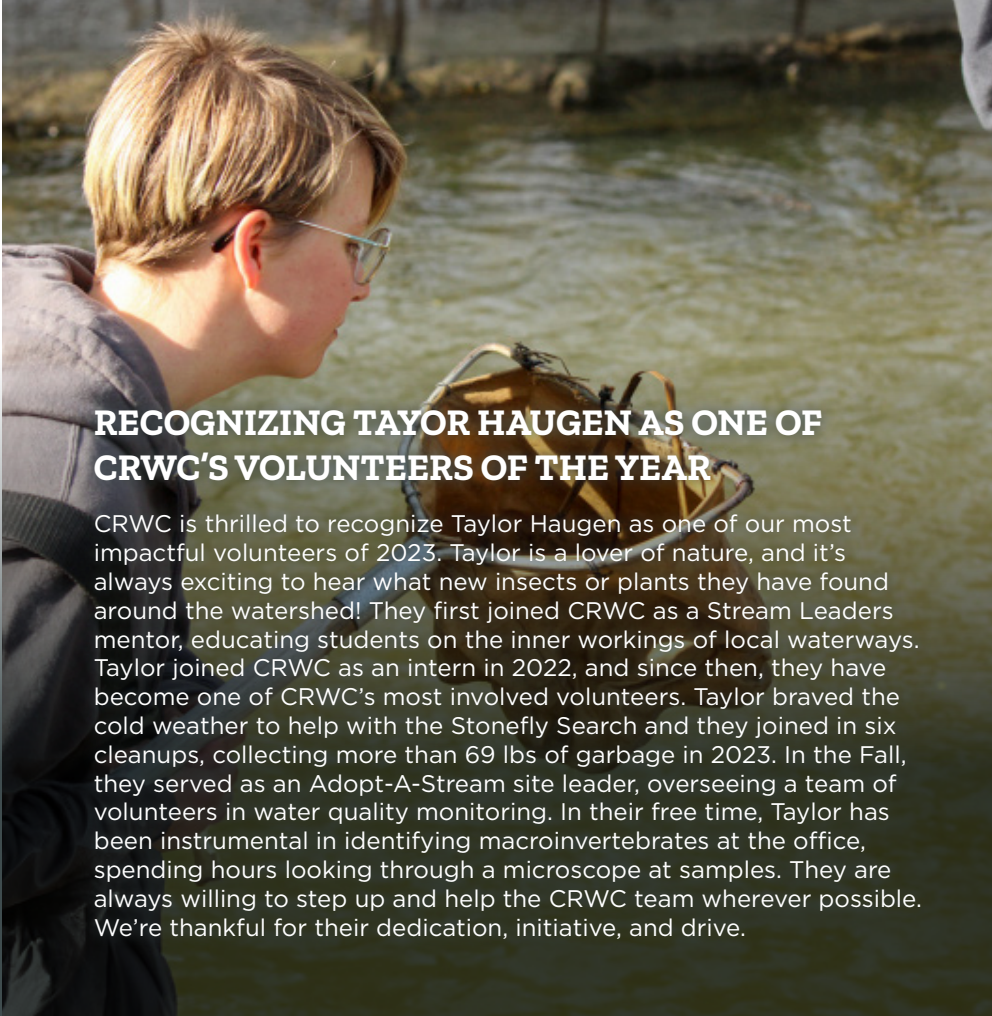
These rain gardens, also known as bioretention cells, use native plants and an underground chamber to help capture and utilize the water, preventing it from entering the storm sewer system. Capturing water on the landscape improves water quality, recharges groundwater, reduces flood risks, and protects rivers, lakes, and streams within the Clinton River watershed.

This project has the capacity to treat up to 34,000 gallons of stormwater runoff, capturing 99% of all rainfall events, while the flowering plants provide habitat for pollinators.

Center Line is committed to green stormwater infrastructure and has completed two other installations beyond this project. One installation was undertaken by a private business that installed a pervious paver parking area. The second project involved volunteers who created a rain garden at the City’s Recreation Center.

The collaborative efforts between CRWC, partners, and the City of Center Line represent a great success in managing stormwater within the watershed’s communities. The completion of this project underscores the importance of the proactive measures that communities can take to help improve water quality and contribute to the sustained health of rivers, lakes, and streams within the Clinton River watershed. In 2024, CRWC looks forward to continuing to work with communities to address stormwater and is excited to share steps that residents can take on their own properties to foster resilience and enhance the sustainability of local water resources for future generations.





RECOGNIZING TAYLOR HAUGEN AS ONE OF CRWC'S VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

CRWC is thrilled to recognize Taylor Haugen as one of our most impactful volunteers of 2023. Taylor is a lover of nature, and it's always exciting to hear what new insects or plants they have found around the watershed! They first joined CRWC as a Stream Leaders mentor, educating students on the inner workings of local waterways. Taylor joined CRWC as an intern in 2022, and since then, they have become one of CRWC's most involved volunteers. Taylor braved the cold weather to help with the Stonefly Search and they joined in six cleanups, collecting more than 69 lbs of garbage in 2023. In the Fall, they served as an Adopt-A-Stream site leader, overseeing a team of volunteers in water quality monitoring. In their free time, Taylor has been instrumental in identifying macroinvertebrates at the office, spending hours looking through a microscope at samples. They are always willing to step up and help the CRWC team wherever possible. We're thankful for their dedication, initiative, and drive.

MAKING A SPLASH ALONG THE CLINTON RIVER WATER TRAIL

The Clinton River flows through communities, forests, and wetlands, offering paddlers a diverse range of landscapes to explore. From nearly still waters to Class II-III rapids, the Clinton provides something for all skill levels, making it a paddling destination for beginners and seasoned adventurers alike.

The Clinton is subject to large rises and falls in water levels, which has the potential to quickly lead to dangerous situations. The lower section of the river, from Auburn Hills to the outlet into Lake St. Clair in Harrison Township, is the most urbanized section of the river that is drastically affected by stormwater runoff. This section is also the most technical due to a 300-foot change in gradient. While information on general paddling safety and best practices for those on the water exists, new and inexperienced paddlers may not know where to access that information.

This year, CRWC worked with communities to install 15 new safety signs at popular paddle launch points in the lower half of the Water Trail. The large 40 by 30-inch signs are incredibly visible and feature safety information, examples of safety markers to look for along the river, what to do in case of an emergency, and instructions for accessing an interactive online map. The signs were also translated into both Spanish and Arabic, the two languages spoken most in the watershed after English.

CRWC continues to work to increase the visibility of the Clinton River Water Trail and ensure the safety of all those who set out on the water. CRWC produced additional launch signs and 200 new safety markers that will be installed along the river in 2024.



WaterTowns® is a community-based placemaking initiative designed to help cities, towns, and villages in the watershed leverage assets of the Clinton River and Lake St. Clair to help improve water quality and alleviate climate change impacts by promoting and implementing green infrastructure and advancing water-oriented community and recreation opportunities.

In 2023, Warren became the 31st WaterTown and is planning to implement some exciting projects in the near future. Current WaterTowns include:

- Auburn Hills
- Berkley
- Center Line
- Chesterfield
- Clarkston
- Clinton Township
- Eastpointe
- Ferndale
- Harrison Township
- Huntington woods
- Huron Clinton Metropark Authority
- Independence Township
- Keego Harbor
- Macomb Township
- Madison Heights
- Mount Clemens
- New Baltimore
- Oak Park
- Oakland County
- Orion Township
- Pleasant Ridge
- Pontiac
- Rochester
- Rochester Hills
- Royal Oak
- Shelby Township
- St. Clair Shores
- Sterling Heights
- Troy
- Utica
- Village of Lake Orion
- Warren

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City of Grosse Pointe Farms
City of Grosse Pointe Park
City of Grosse Pointe Shores
City of Grosse Pointe Woods
City of Harper Woods
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City of Hazel Park
City of Huntington Woods

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City of Madison Heights
City of Mount Clemens
City of New Baltimore
Village of New Haven
Oakland County
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Village of Oxford
Oxford Township
City of Pleasant Ridge
City of Pontiac
Ray Township

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City of Rochester Hills
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Springfield Township
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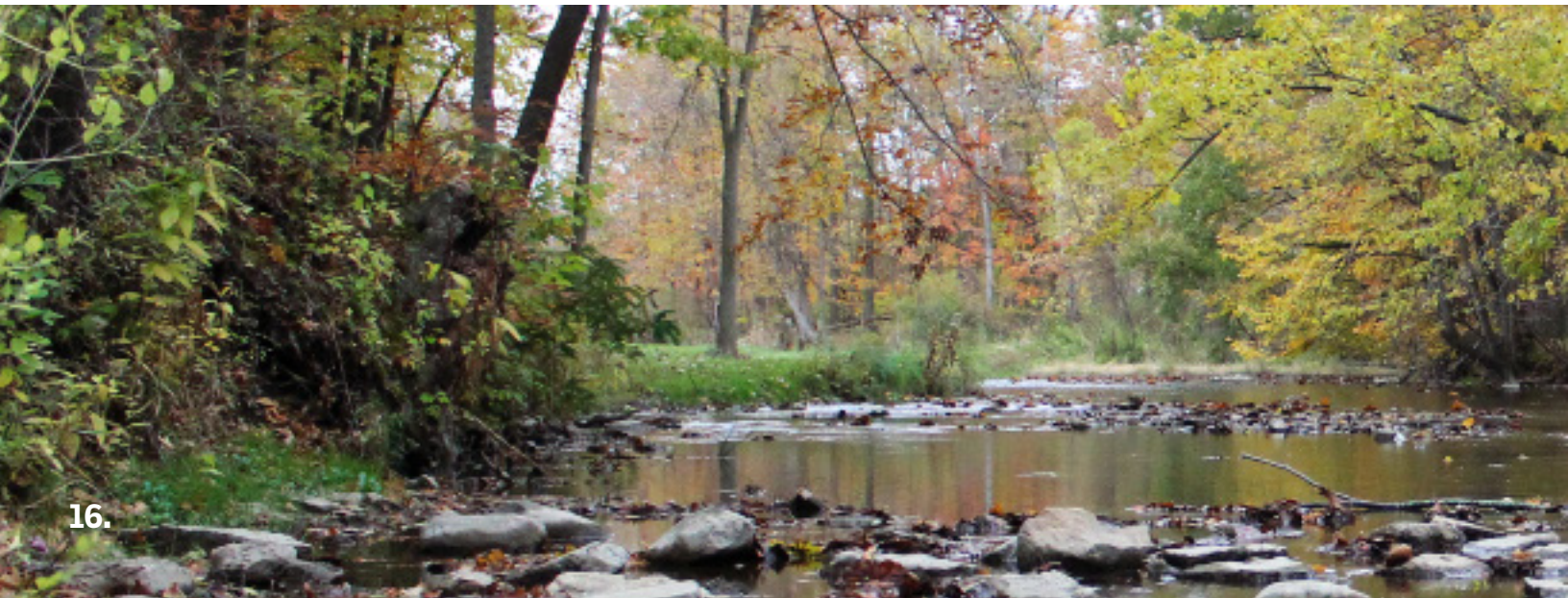
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By supporting the Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC) and other clean water initiatives, these groups are getting involved in the stewardship of the watershed.

Every sponsorship with CRWC helps provide individuals and communities with opportunities for hands-on learning, stream-side experiences, opportunities to volunteer, and access to recreation. We thank those who have made it a priority to support the health of the Clinton River watershed.

We extend a special note of thanks to our Premier Sponsors, Green For Life, Forvia, Giffels Webster, ITC Holdings, and Hubbell, Roth & Clark, and a huge THANK YOU to all of our program and event sponsors.





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FINANCIALS

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023



INCOME

\$305,704	42.9%	Grants
\$167,938	23.6%	Education Programs
\$99,418	14.0%	Memberships
\$28,891	4.1%	Contributions
\$8,750	1.2%	Stewardship programs
\$98,736	13.9%	Fundraising
\$2,834	0.4%	Other
\$712,271		TOTAL



EXPENSES

\$297,379	42.8%	Grants
\$217,433	31.3%	Education Programs
\$35,813	5.2%	Stewardship Programs
\$3,136	0.5%	Membership & Outreach
\$26,434	3.8%	Development & Marketing
\$69,910	10.1%	General Administration
\$44,931	6.5%	Fundraising
\$695,036		TOTAL



EVENT & PROGRAM CALENDAR

MARCH

Thursday, March 21, 2024 // Annual Meeting

APRIL

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 // Weekly Clean Begins

Saturday, April 20, 2024 // Nourished By Nature: Reptile & Amphibian Walk

Monday, April 22, 2024 // Earth Day

MAY

Saturday, May 4, 2024 // Adopt-A-Stream

Saturday, May 11, 2024 // Nourished By Nature: Birding

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 // Lake St. Clair Water Festival

Friday May 17, 2024 // Clinton River Water Festival

Friday May 31, 2024 // Stream Leaders Congress

JUNE

Saturday, June 8, 2024 // River Day

Saturday, June 22, 2024 // Nourished By Nature: Kayaking

JULY

Saturday, July 13, 2024 // Sprint & Splash

Friday, July 19, 2024 // Nourished By Nature: Painting In Nature

AUGUST

August 24, 2024 // Nourished By Nature: Fungal Foray

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 14, 2024 // Clinton Clean-Up

Friday September 20, 2024 // Crafts on the Clinton

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 5, 2024 // Adopt-A-Stream

NOVEMBER

Friday, November 15, 2024 // Stream Leaders Student Congress

Wednesday, November 20, 2024 // Final Weekly Clean





CLINTON RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

1115 W. Avon Road
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

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Get involved & make a splash!

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

Connect with us and never miss out on the most recent CRWC news, programs, and special events. Our newsletter will tell you all about volunteer opportunities, Area of Concern updates, fun recreational events, and so much more. Visit our website at CRWC.org and sign-up for our free newsletter to stay up-to-date on the Clinton River watershed!

DONATE

CRWC's programs and events would not be possible without the generous support from donors like you! Donations fund the programs, services and events that we offer our community, environment, and watershed. Help support the CRWC by donating online, mailing a check or by calling us at (248) 601-0606.

VOLUNTEER

We need you at the next CRWC event! There are volunteer opportunities for all ages, abilities, experience levels, and times of year. We welcome you to join an amazing team of local residents and families who want to help make their rivers, streams, and lakes even more beautiful.

BECOME A MEMBER

Join CRWC in protecting, enhancing, and celebrating the Clinton River, its watershed and Lake St. Clair by providing residents, schools, governments and businesses with programs, events and services to ensure a healthy watershed for us all.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO!

To learn more about becoming a CRWC Member, volunteering, becoming a sponsor and all other inquiries, visit our website or give us a call to speak with a friendly staff member who will be happy to assist you.

 1115 W Avon Road,
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
 (248) 601-0606  crwc.org
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 Clinton River Watershed Council
 @clintonriverwatershed