

# the SOURCE

Going with the flow  
By MATT DECEMBER  
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Adam Rhein and Gordon Rumschlag, both juniors at the Romeo Engineering and Technology Center, perform a biological assessment of a portion of the Clinton River Watershed in Washington Township by collecting insects from a stream near Inwood Road on May 19. The assessment was part of the Clinton River Watershed Council's Stream Leader water monitoring program.  
**Source photo by Matt December**

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The students were joined by mentors from Washington Township, Giffels-Webster and the Clinton River Watershed Council to provide them with a better understanding of data analysis and water-quality monitoring.

"The goal is to get the students doing scientific research in their own communities and hopefully, through their research, they gain an understanding of how humans impact their environment," said Michele Arquette-Palermo, director of education and stewardship with the Clinton River Watershed Council.

Arquette-Palermo said students perform several different forms of analysis including testing levels of phosphate and nitrate in the water, a physical assessment of the stream and its surroundings, and a biological assessment where they collect insects from the stream.

“If we go in and do an assessment and a majority of the bugs that we find don’t tolerate pollution, that tells us the story of the stream, especially if we have the chemistry to back it up,” Arquette-Palermo said.

Gryspeerd said the program offers students a real-life glimpse at topics that they have been studying all year long.

“This is a good culminating experience for them as they are finishing up their chemistry year,” she said. “The students enjoy getting out here and applying what they are learning in class.”

The final portion of the project takes place in the classroom as students will tally all collected data and perform additional tests on water samples before sending final results to the Clinton River Watershed Council.

The Stream Leaders program is an effort to keep local students and educators actively engaged in protecting and studying natural resources like the Clinton River.

This year more than 3,000 students participated in the program across Macomb, Oakland, Saint Clair and Lapeer counties.

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