

Water Pollution of Michigan

The State of Michigan has over 36,000 miles of rivers that flow throughout the state.¹ With all the lakes surrounding our borders, the populous living within those natural borders of Michigan can do serious harm to the various bodies of water. Pollution is one of the leading causes of destruction to an ecosystem. With an infrastructure that is failing, the side effects of storm run off, sewage run off, and trash particles taking a negative effect on the lakes ecosystems. With over 70% of the combined sewers in the United States being in the great lakes region, that puts the water sources at a higher risk of being polluted with little help and regulation by the humans causing the harm.²

Pollution and destruction of ecosystems are very significant to any Michigander. Michigan takes pride in the lakes, rivers, and other water sources within the state to attract tourist across the nation and world to visit our beautiful beaches and witness what Mother Nature has created in the state. In 2009, the Michigan Tourist Industry brought in over 110 million people to the state to visit various waterways and other attractions in the state of Michigan with over 15.12 billion dollars in spending.³ With pollution, waterways would have to close due to regulations and thus Michigan would hurt economically and environmentally. Pollution is not just a small issue, it is a huge importance to the state of Michigan in regards to tourism, economics, and health overall as a state. With unhealthy waterways, it will only hurt the local residents living in this beautiful state.

Michigan is known throughout the country as the Great Lakes state, yet little attention is put on how the water gets to those lakes and how the conditions of the rivers are in regards to being clean and healthy. Rivers connect one lake to another or city from the east side of the state to the shores of lake Michigan. The pollution that occurs in one region of water shed will spread to the other ecosystems along the way as it travels in the water to the final destination. One of the largest rivers in the state of Michigan is the Grand River, while a bunch of little rivers or watersheds connect to the Grand River, one in particular caught my attention. The Red Cedar River, which runs through East Lansing on the campus of Michigan State University, is one of the little rivers that connect to the Grand River running all the way till it reaches Lake Michigan in Grand Haven, Michigan. Michigan State University, also known as MSU, takes pride in being on the “banks of the red cedar” as quote in the school’s fight song.⁴ Michigan residents know that MSU is located on the Red Cedar and with any college campus, comes pollution.

In my research paper, I will be discussing the various impacts the Michigan State University has left on the condition and health of the Red Cedar River. Thousands of students call the campus their home from August till late April or Early May, some year round. What the activities of these students and the general operations of the university itself has done harm to the Red Cedar. My paper will expose these activities and operations to show the environmental impact on this great body of water that ultimately leads to Lake Michigan. With Climate Change on the minds of many Americans, maybe Michiganders and even Spartans at Michigan State University should look more locally and see what impact they leave on their local ecosystem and how it directly effects them and indirectly many other Michiganders. Pollution is a serious issue on waterways, especially those that universities take pride in.

¹ http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364_52259_31442---,00.html

² <http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/great-lakes.asp>

³ http://www.michigan.org/lib/files/Industry/Industry_Research/2009_Michigan_visitorprofile.pdf

⁴ <http://www.msuspartans.com/trads/msu-traditions.html>