

ARC grant restores fish passage in Lower Rouge River

As part of the Alliance of Rouge Communities' Road Dam Removal and Habitat Improvement Project, a \$1 million federal grant will be used to remove the Wayne Road Dam, located in the City of Wayne, and restore the fishery in the Lower Rouge River.

The two-year grant was awarded to the ARC by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which provides financial and technical assistance to remove dams and barriers, construct fish passage, clean up marine debris, restore coastal wetlands, and remove invasive in the region.

Removal of the dam will restore fish passage for migratory species such as salmon, walleye, northern and small mouth bass, while stabilizing and improving shoreline habitat. The project will also reconnect 22 miles of the Lower Rouge River with the Great Lakes.

The Wayne Road Dam was identified by the Michigan as a major impediment to restoring fish and wildlife habitat in the Rouge River's Lower Branch which flows through Canton, Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Dearborn Heights and Dearborn.

“Over the past twenty years, the restoration

of the Rouge River is simply unbelievable,” said James Ridgway, ARC Executive Director. “This project is yet another example of how the Rouge Communities can work miracles when they work together for the betterment of our river. The people of the City of Wayne and all of the residents of the Rouge Watershed are lucky to have the type of leadership willing to take the long view and continue to improve our quality of life, one project at a time.”

Partners working with the ARC on this project include Wayne County, the City of Wayne, Friends of the Rouge and the Rouge River Remedial Action Plan Advisory Council. The dam removal project is the latest in a series of projects conducted by local communities and Wayne County to improve water quality and restore habitat and recreational uses in the Rouge River's Lower Branch. Other projects include the Rouge Recreational Trail in Canton, five acres of native prairie being installed in Wayne County's Lower Rouge Parkway, the City of Dearborn's habitat restoration in Ford Field, and sewer separation projects

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to reduce the amount of untreated sewage going to the Rouge River.

The dam removal project is just one of eight projects funded with by NOAA grants to support habitat restoration throughout the Great Lakes areas of concern. NOAA's Restoration Center is also funding three shovel-ready projects and five engineering and design projects. This allows NOAA to support both current efforts to restore the Great Lakes as well as future projects that, once implemented, will have significant benefits to Great Lakes restoration.

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