

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Tremming together, rectaming the rive

Grand Opening of the Rouge River Oxbow at The Henry Ford – October 18, 2019



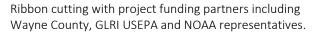






Oxbow Grand Opening held during the ARC hosted Great Lakes Restoration Celebration held on October 18, 2019 at The Henry Ford. Speakers included Senator Debbie Stabenow and Wayne County Executive Warren Evans. Activities included a ribbon cutting and fish stocking.







Charter school students assisting in the fish stocking during the Oxbow grand opening.



Funding for this project relates directly to the RRAC List of <u>Rouge River AOC</u> <u>Projects Needed to Remove the Habitat BUIs</u> developed with grant funding from the Areas of Concern Program through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE).

April 2020





ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2019 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the primary activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES

ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and tallying of votes at the meeting), and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties.

<u>Full ARC meeting summaries</u> can be found on the ARC's website.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported four (4) Executive Committee meetings including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries can be found on the ARC's website.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated meeting and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the November Executive Committee meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities, staff, consultants and contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2019 Activities included:

- The 2018 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in March 2019.
- ARC Staff initiated a bylaws change to the number of Executive Committee meetings from a set number of meetings to meet regularly as needed.



FINANCIAL SERVICES

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.
- ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures
 Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting. ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2018 audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2020 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 2% increase.
- ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills.

OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

2019 Activities included:

- The ARC hosted the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners (MACDC) Southeast District meeting on May 23, 2019. The meeting was held at Henry Ford College's campus and included a presentation and tour by ARC Staff to The Henry Ford Oxbow.
- ARC Staff received a request from the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program for information on the ARC's 2008 Household Hazardous Waste brochure. The ARC provided it with a request to credit the ARC.
- ARC Staff received a request and provided data in May 2019 from EGLE's Water Resources Division for ambient water quality data (chemical, biological, or physical) that has been obtained from 1/1/17 through 12/31/18.



ARC Staff Oxbow presentation during the ARC hosted MACDC Southeast District meeting held at Henry Ford College

• The ARC hosted (for the third time) the Great Lakes Restoration Celebration on October 18, 2019 at The Henry Ford. The Henry Ford donated the space, ECT sponsored the continental



breakfast and SEMCOG sponsored the printing of the restoration project book that was distributed at the event. All ARC members were invited to this free event which promoted and celebrated the grant funded restoration activities in Southeast Michigan and was attended by federal, state and local units of government along with those watershed groups (including the ARC) conducting the restoration activities. Included in the day's activities was the grand opening of the Rouge Oxbow at The Henry Ford. A book highlighting restoration projects in Southeast Michigan was handed out. The day's events were attended by more than 125 federal, state and local agencies, elected officials and watershed groups. Highlighted by the following speakers:

- o The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, The United States Senate
- o The Honorable Warren C. Evans, Wayne County Executive
- o Christopher Korleski, Director, U. S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO)
- Teresa Seidel Director, Water Resources Division, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Julie Sims, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Neil Hawkins, President and COO, Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
- ▲ ARC Staff participated in the Earth Day Celebration in Farmington Hills on April 22, 2019.
- ARC Staff participated in the Clinton River Watershed Michigan Water School workshop on February 27-28, 2019.
- ARC Staff participated in the planning team for the Rouge River Watershed Michigan Water School workshop on September 26-27, 2019.
- ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ARC Staff participated in the Farmington Farmers Market and Earth Day Event on April 22, 2019.
- ARC Staff participated in the Cranbrook Institute of Science Spring into Science event on April 2, 2019 and April 4, 2019.
- ARC Staff attended the 7th Annual Stormwater Summit coordinated by Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office on October 4, 2019.
- ARC Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group.



ARC display at Farmington Hills Earth Day event

- ARC Staff reviewed Ohio's MS4 permit to better understand how other states are implementing the regulations.
- ARC Staff prepared a paper that summarized the current dissolve oxygen conditions in the Rouge for the Western Lake Erie Indicator Project and attended the State of the Strait Conference held in November.
- Participated in an interview with Fox 2 News for a feature story in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Rouge River fire.
- Presented to the Wildlife Habitat Council's regional forum on June 26, 2019. This included a summary of the ARC's achievements including opportunities to partner.
- Met with Clinton River Watershed Council regarding their stormwater public education program to see if what lessons could be transferred to the Rouge.



• Participated in the Lower Rouge Water Trail Committee to establish a water trial on the Lower Branch between Canton and Detroit.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff prepared a press release for Wayne County on the Rouge Oxbow.
- ARC Staff promoted the Wayne County Development Summit on May 7, 2019 regarding the changes to the Wayne County stormwater ordinance and permit process.
- ARC Members and ARC Staff attended Senators Stabenow and Peters press conference on the reauthorization of the GLRI Act on August 22, 2019.
- ARC Staff coordinated with Wayne County to promote an outreach meeting on their revised stormwater standards on November 14, 2019.
- ARC Staff attended the EPA event held on Belle Isle with EPA Administrator Wheeler and Region V Chief of Staff Kurt Thiede (now the Region V Adminstrator), to announce the release of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)Action Plan III and nearly \$11 million in grants on October 22, 2019
- ARC Staff participated in a conference call, on October 17, 2019, with Senator Stabenow's legislative Washington staff on potential funding for the Rouge under WRDA



Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield and ARC Staff at Stabenow/Peters press conference

♦ The ARC Executive Director testified at the October 29, 2019 meeting on House Bill 4691 (Stormwater Utility Act) which was being read at the House Regulatory Reform Committee to offer the ARC's support of the bill. All ARC members were encouraged to attend the hearing to support the bill or contact ARC Staff to fill out a "card of support" on a community's behalf.

STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)

2019 Activities included:

 ARC Staff attended the 2019 Great Lakes AOC Conference on September 10-11 in Cleveland Ohio.

ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION

2019 Activities included:

• ARC Staff participated in meetings for the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by Cranbrook with support from SEMCOG and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). The campaign resulted in a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging sought to foster water resource stewardship, encourage citizens to adopt best management practices and support long-term investment in infrastructure. As part of the campaign, Cranbrook developed a logo and brand and coordinate the distribution of materials to the local media. ARC Staff provided input on the public education



- topics that are a priority for the ARC as part of the stormwater permit. It is anticipated that the campaign will help the ARC implement the public education plan.
- ARC Staff participated in GLWA's wastewater master plan watershed committee. Input was provided on water quality monitoring locations for the Rouge.

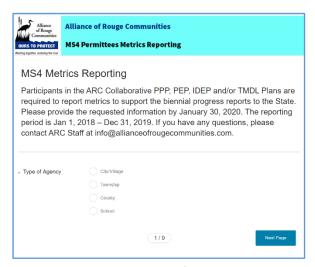
MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff coordinated and met with Schoolcraft College on their request to join the ARC.
- ARC Staff invited SEMCOG to become an ARC Cooperating Partner.
- ARC Staff responded to Mike Balow, citizen, on his concerns with the conditions at Wilcox Lake in Plymouth.
- ARC Staff met with Canton Township, Bloom field Hills and Novi to discuss the benefits on ARC membership.
- ARC Staff attended a webinar titled "Updates to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination

System (NPDES) and Groundwater Permit Application Forms in MiWaters" on May 2, 2019.

- ARC Staff received an inquiry from John Schmittroth to be a primary contributor of a book and to take over the project. ARC Staff offered to provide any insight on the 20-year+ efforts to restore the Rouge River but responded that we were not interested in taking over the project.
- ARC Staff prepared an online portal to gather information from ARC members participating in the collaborative plans for the Stormwater Permit Bi-Annual Progress Reports.
- The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.



Collaborative Plan data portal for MS4 permittees

PURSUING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

2019 Activities include:

- ARC Staff attended a webinar on May 2, 2019 presented by the U. S. Forest Service regarding the 2019 U. S. Forested Service GLRI request for grant applications. The ARC has received several grants through this program to mitigate the Emerald Ash Borer impacts in the watershed.
- ARC Staff coordinated and attended a tour with Sheela Johnson, USDA Forest Service of the 2017 Forest Service grant locations in the Rouge River Watershed on November 14, 2019. ARC communities visited included Plymouth, Westland and Novi.
- ♦ In September 2019 ARC Staff received a data request from the Forest Service for a report they are producing detailing outcomes of Forest Service GLRI grants. ARC Staff researched and provided supporting data for reports on the grants that the ARC received in 2012, 2015 and 2017 in the form of spreadsheets, shapefiles with attribute tables, or other tabular formats, for the Forest Service to do consistent analysis.



- ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC's status in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) and on Grants.gov. Both are required to be current and renewed annually in order to apply for federal grants.
- ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC's application for various grant applications throughout 2019.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ARC staff reviewed and forwarded to ARC members for consideration the grant opportunity from SEMCOG for Water Infrastructure Asset Management Data
- ◆ The ARC provided fiduciary services for Friends of the Rouge's Michigan's Volunteer River, Stream and Creek Cleanup Program (\$4,500) which funded the 2019 Rouge Rescue River Cleanup. (awarded to the ARC but managed by FOTR).
- The ARC, as a grant partner, provided support to the Friends of the Detroit River (FDR) on their NOAA Partnership grant for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration in the Detroit and Rouge River AOC. (awarded to FDR)
- The ARC staff supported Wayne County on a USEPA Direct Funding (\$770,000) grant for the design of parks habitat restoration including restoration of wetlands at Wayne County's Riverview Park, Sherwood Park, Bell Creek Park, Lola Valley Park, and habitat restoration on the Lower Rouge River. (awarded to Wayne County)

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2019 on behalf of the ARC:

- GLRI USDA-Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry grant (\$134,500) was prepared for the Restoring Tree Canopy in the Rouge River AOC. (not awarded)
- ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding (\$3,308,139) grant to the ARC for the implementation of two Rouge AOC habitat restoration projects:
 Tamarack Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration and Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery Park Restoration. (awarded to the ARC)
- ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding (\$815,000) for the Seeley Creek Habitat Restoration. (awarded to the ARC)

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for one (1) Technical Committee meeting on January 21, 2019. Topics included the ARC's Collaborative IDEP, the 2018 outfall screening results, Michigan Water School training and 2018 IDEP findings. In addition, the work plans for IDEP investigations in Oakland County and Wayne County were approved by the Technical Committee.

IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties.

OAKLAND COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

ARC Staff conducted investigations in the cities of Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Novi, Northville and Farmington Hills. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and



summarized in the <u>2019 OC Category A and B Outfall Investigation Summary</u> and the <u>2019 Category C</u> <u>Outfall Resampling Summary</u>.

WAYNE COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Wayne County Department of Public Services, Water Quality Management Division (WQMD) conducted advanced investigations in the cities of Plymouth, Westland and Livonia and are detailed in the 2019 Wayne County IDEP Services Report.

IDEP TRAINING

ARC Staff promoted and assisted with the Partners for Clean Water Regional IDEP Training Workshops that were held on October 23 and 24 in 2019. The <u>IDEP Training Report</u> provides the attendance.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE

MEETING FACILITATION

No meetings were held in 2019, however, ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS

ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2019. Several items were restocked in 2019 including fertilizer clips, pet waste containers, seasonal posters and various printed material. More than 11,237 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. The quantity distributed are included in the PIE Materials Distribution Report. Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2019.

<u>Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for</u> Clean Water Brochure

The ARC printed 7,000 copies of this new brochure which was developed and printed in 2019 and is geared toward best practices and activities that homeowners can do in their house, in their yard, at their business, with their vehicles and in their community to protect water quality.

ARC Banners

To meet the activities in the Collaborative PEP, ARC staff designed 3 sets of 3 educational banners with varying messages that will meet the Collaborative PEP. Topics included: The connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and



Page taken from the new Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure.



disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality. ARC member communities signed up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 1-2 weeks at a time.

2019 Activities include:

• The Banner Report provides the details of where the ARC Banners have been during 2019.

Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries or other buildings that the general public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the general public at community events.

Community Article /Ad Graphic

ARC Staff promoted the previously created ad graphic titled *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!* On the ARC Facebook account. The ad included a make-at-home recipe for brine.

2019 Activities included:

ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2019 titled What Is A Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?



New ad graphic available to ARC members to use in newsletters and social media

Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public. Bookmarks were also distributed at member public events and the Great Lakes Restoration event.

Pet Waste Containers

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message "In the Bag, Not the River".

Fertilizer Clips

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: "Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly" to distribute at public events.

ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities. ARC Public Education Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and they were also distributed as part of seedling giveaways.

ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure explains the ARC, member benefits, projects and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

Kneeling Pads

A garden kneeling pad with the slogan "Plant it for the Rouge River!" that promotes the use of native trees and plants. The kneeling pad has the slogan, ARC logo and website on one side and has a list 10 suggested native trees and plants to use in your yard to help protect water quality.



Key Chains

A boat float key chain with the slogan "Prevent Invasive Species in the Rouge River!" with the message to wash your boat & remove plants & aquatic animals after every use. The keychain also includes the ARC logo and website address.

Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office Environmental Team.

Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds.

Black-Eyed Susan Seeds and Tip Card

Black-eyed Susan seed packets are distributed to the general public along with a tip card which educates them on the benefits of native plants.

Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees.

Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and also as part of seedling giveaways at additional events.

<u>Additional Rouge Grant and SEM</u>COG Printed Pieces

The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continue to distribute those when requested.

ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

ARC Staff initiated a <u>Facebook account</u> for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities.

2019 Activities included:

- ARC added 51 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC Member Communities to Like and Share the ARC's posts.
- The ARC's Facebook account had 119 followers and 86 total page likes.
- Details on the posts on the ARC's website and Facebook can be found in the <u>Electronic Media</u> <u>Report</u>.
- ARC staff promoted a P2/GH video created by Farmington Hills being promoted regionally for southeast Michigan winter maintenance and at the APWA national snow conference.
- ARC Staff added the Oakland County's Phase II Biennial Stormwater Report to the ARC's website.
- ARC Staff added reporting documents from Wayne and Oakland County along with ARC reports.
- ARC Staff created new sections on the ARC website on septic system maintenance and watershed education.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



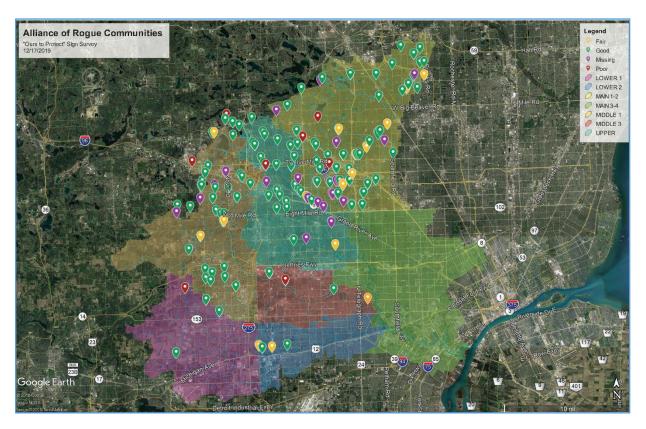
The 2019 PIE outreach activities including workshops, workdays and presentations and Friends of the Rouge's annual report are provided in the <u>Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report</u>.

2019 Activities included:

• ARC Staff presented a webinar on septic system maintenance on November 4, 2019. The recorded webinar was made available on the ARC's Facebook page and website.

WATERSHED SIGNAGE

ARC Staff began surveying the watershed signage ("entering the Rouge River watershed – Ours to Protect") to determine locations, condition and need for additional signage. The rest of the watershed will be surveyed in 2020 with suggestions for repair or new sign placement.



Draft map of the surveys completed in 2019 showing the locations and condition of the "ours to protect" signage