



# ROUGE RIVER AOC HABITAT RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION IN WAYNE COUNTY PARKLAND

In partnership with:



\$4,992,090 in grant funds provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) through the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for design and implementation

## The Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration Implementation in Wayne County Parkland Project will:

- 122 acres of habitat restored/created.
- 42 acres of restored/created wetland, wet meadow & prairie.
- 80 acres of forested riparian restored.
- Eliminate 20 debris jams causing potential fish blockages and habitat degradation.

In 2019 Wayne County received grant funding from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to design the habitat restoration at five sites in Wayne County parklands within the Rouge River Watershed including Riverview Park, Sherwood Park, Bell Creek Park, Lola Valley Park and habitat restoration on the Lower Rouge River. Following this, in 2020, the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) received grant funding from the USEPA GLRI to do the implementation at the five sites in the Rouge River.

The Rouge River watershed is a designated Area of Concern (AOC) under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) and has three Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) associated with fish and wildlife habitat: Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations, Degradation of Benthos, and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. The Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC), the Public Advisory Council (PAC) for the Rouge AOC, in March 2016 approved a list of projects that need to be completed to remove the Rouge AOC habitat BUIs. As part of that list, habitat restoration at these five sites in the Wayne County park system were considered as having significant impact on the removal of the BUIs that include the restoration/creation of wetlands. The implementation of these activities will result in 122 acres of habitat restoration.

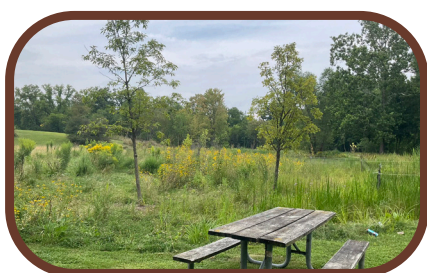
As water quality in the Rouge River continues to improve, this project will build on past efforts to restore some of the damage done during the last century. Tributaries of the Rouge River have suffered from loss and impairment of aquatic habitat and increased frequency and magnitude of flood flows, primarily due to increasing urbanization within the watershed. The flat river slope and the meandering channel can not pass the large flows associated with rain events. Upstream urbanization continues to exacerbate this problem as runoff from increased amounts of impervious surfaces culminates in flooding within the river system, bank erosion, and continued habitat degradation. This project will create habitat in the floodplain by restoring degraded areas and converting mowed areas to habitat. This will provide habitat for birds, amphibians, and pollinators while providing stormwater storage and filtration to aid in the reduction of damaging flood flows within the river itself.



Rouge River prior to rain event



Rouge River after rain event



Bell Creek Park wet meadow

## Bell Creek Habitat Restoration

Prior to implementation, most of Bell Creek Park was turf grass and routinely mowed and used for active recreation. However, a portion of the park is low lying and routinely floods. The project plan created 10 acres of wet meadow habitat in those low lying areas adjacent to the river and enhanced existing forested riparian habitat by controlling invasive species and planting native seed, shrub, and tree species to increase plant diversity.

## Lola Valley Park Habitat Restoration

Lola Valley Park is located along the floodplain and corridor of the Upper Rouge River. The project converted 9.6 acres of maintained lawn areas into created wet meadows and prairies. A diverse selection of native plants were installed, including emergent species in the bottom of depressions excavated along both sides of the River.



Lola Valley created wetland



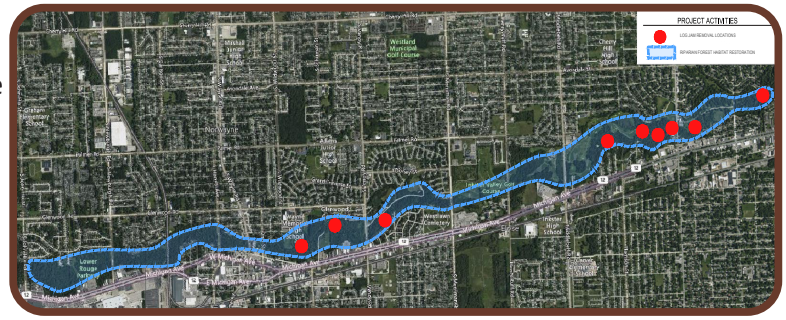
Lola Valley wet prairie

*This project is funded through grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (grant # GL-00E02432-0 & GL-00E02896-3)*



## Lower Rouge River Habitat Restoration

The Lower Rouge River Habitat Restoration project will improve fish and wildlife habitat along a six mile stretch of the Lower Rouge River. This project will create habitat for benthic organism colonization and fish habitat in the project area by removing 20 problematic instream debris jams. Problematic debris jams block fish movement, erode streambanks, and degrade habitat quality. Non-problematic log jams and large woody debris pieces will remain in place to conserve fish and wildlife habitat. The remaining wood will not only provide important fish habitat but will also provide loafing habitat for turtles and waterfowl. In addition, replanting native trees in open canopy areas of the forested corridor will significantly improve wildlife habitat within 80 acres of riparian forest along the Lower Rouge River.



Problematic debris jam removal locations

## Sherwood Park Habitat Restoration

Prior to implementation, most of Sherwood Park area was turf grass and routinely mowed. However, the park is low lying and routinely floods. The project converted 6.8 acres of the maintained lawn areas to wet meadow habitat and depression wetlands, restored with native plants providing an increase in habitat value at the site. Wetlands located north of Hines Drive were hydrologically reconnected to the habitat located south of Hines Drive which is next to the river. The reconnection used a culvert with a natural bottom to serve as a travel corridor under Hines Drive for small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The restored vegetated community contains a diverse selection of native forbs that provide food and habitat for pollinators.



Sherwood Park plantings



Riverview Park  
Before



Riverview Park  
Conceptual After

## Riverview Park Habitat Restoration

Much of Riverview is wooded, but a gravel public road and asphalt bike/walking path runs alongside the river throughout the area, causing habitat fragmentation. At this site, wetland restoration and lawn conversion to habitat is proposed creating or restoring 16.5 acres. To accomplish this, the road will be shortened, and the path will be moved to reduce habitat fragmentation. Native herbaceous plants will be established via seed and plugs. The turf grass will be killed with herbicide and tilled. The areas will then be planted with native seed and shrubs from containerized stock. Within the remaining forested area, invasives will be removed by cutting and herbicide application.

## About the Alliance of Rouge Communities

The ARC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization consisting of local municipalities, counties, educational institutions and stewardship groups working together to improve the Rouge River. Founded in 2005, the ARC is funded by membership dues from local governments and supported by grants. The ARC and its partners work cooperatively to meet water quality requirements mandated by the state's stormwater permit and to restore beneficial uses, such as canoeing, fishing and other recreational activities, to the Rouge River. That means better water quality for less cost to its members!

**For more information about this project and other ARC activities visit our website at: [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com)**

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