Goal: Improve water quality in the River and restore impaired uses

The Lower 2 Rouge River Subwatershed Advisory Group established long-term goals for its watershed management plan. Long-term goals were identified to establish a framework to guide long-term efforts to protect the existing value of the river and restore the impaired uses. Under each goal, short-term objectives were developed to identify the conditions or activities that were expected to be completed within five years, as interim steps in achieving the long-term goals. The long-term goals are listed below, along with highlighted successes. The complete list of short-term objectives can be found at www.rougeriver.com.

The Lower 2 communities participate in the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC), which was formed in 2003 to enable Rouge Watershed communities to better understand management strategies implemented by the Great Lakes Bay Watershed Program (GLBWP) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

The City of Dearborn has completed its first Round Catch Basin Program and conducted a pilot bayou cleaning program in 2006 with grant funding from the Rouge River Basin Coalition (RRBC). The pilot bayou cleaning program successfully removed sediment and pollutants from a bayou in the Dearborn Heights neighborhood.

The city of Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Garden City, Inkster, Romulus, Wayne, Wayne County, Westland, and the Southeast Partners for Clean Water, and was funded in part by the Rouge Project.

Phase II Storm Water Regulations and how individual actions can protect our water resources.

The City of Westland conducted a forensic analysis of the Newburgh Bridge, which is a major road bridge over the Lower Rouge River. The analysis identified areas with potential for degradation and erosion, and recommended a remediation plan.

The City of Dearborn implements its Right of Way Grading Program, which includes grading and maintenance of roads and sidewalks to improve drainage and reduce runoff.

Recent dry-weather water quality monitoring in the Lower 2 subwatershed shows that the river is not always suitable for recreational activities, including swimming and wading. Dry-weather flows are generally better for aquatic life and insects in the river. The flow rate during storm events can exceed seven-year flood, which can significantly degrade fish habitats.

The City of Dearborn conducts several storm water best management practices (BMP) including river restoration projects, a stream sewer project, and the use of phosphorus filters on city-owned property.

Wavy mats, water quality complaints extensively throughout the County.

The City of Dearborn hosts a "Keeping it Clean" workshop for municipal maintenance staff, which promotes the importance of the green infrastructure improvements implemented in the federal government’s Rebuilding America’s Infrastructure Act (RAIA). The workshop was presented by the Southfield-Michigan Council of Governments (EMOCOG) and the Southfield Ford, and was funded in part by the Ripared Project.

The City of Dearborn participates in the Ford Field Bridge Remediation and Reuse Project, which is designed to restore the Oldbridge Bridge and improve flood management in the Lower Rouge River area.

The City of Dearborn participates in the Dearborn, Inkster, Wayne and Dearborn Heights watershed management program, which includesiovate storm drain marking, tree planting, and storm drain stenciling.

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The Lower 2 Rouge River Subwatershed is located entirely in Wayne County and has a drainage area of 21,024 acres, or 32.85 square miles. This subwatershed includes portions of the cities of Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Garden City, Inkster, Romulus, Wayne, and Westland. The largest land use category is residential housing. The Lower 2 Subwatershed is almost completely built out with only 3% urban open space left in the subwatershed. An estimated 32% of the subwatershed is covered by impervious surfaces such as roads, rooftops and parking lots. The high percentage of impervious surfaces in the Lower 2 Subwatershed delivers runoff much more quickly to the Lower Rouge River which results in high peak flows, much higher velocities and an unstable stream channel.

Recreation areas in the Lower 2 subwatershed include: Wayne County's Lower Rouge Parkway which runs through Wayne, Inkster, Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, Inkster Valley Golf Course, Inkster Valley Constructed Wetlands, Dearborn Hills Golf Course and Ford Field in Dearborn.

As part of the subwatershed management planning process, long-term goals and short-term objectives were established in the Lower 2 Rouge River Subwatershed Management Plan. The long-term goals of the Lower 2 Rouge River Subwatershed Management Plan are:

1. Improve water quality in the Rouge River and restore impaired uses.
2. Remove sources of pollution that threaten public health.
3. Educate the public regarding their impact on the river and the river's potential as a community asset.
4. Enhance and preserve fish and wildlife habitat, especially next to the river, compatible with land uses.
5. Minimize the amount of soil erosion and sedimentation.
6. Reduce water volumes and velocities during storm events.

The subwatershed management planning process and subwatershed projects that fulfilled Subwatershed Advisory Group goals couldn’t have been completed without partnerships between the communities, the counties, non-profit organizations, stewardship groups, citizens and local schools, colleges and universities.

Some photos provided by: Friends of the Rouge, Wayne County Department of Environment, the Cities of Wayne and Westland, Lillian Dean, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).