



Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration at Merriman Hollow Park

In partnership with:



Approximately \$1.2M in grant funds provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) through the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for implementation at Merriman Hollow Park. Design of this project was completed under a previous GLRI grant.

The Merriman Hollow Park Habitat Restoration will:

- Remove invasive plants
- Convert mowed lawn to wetland/wet prairie
- Provide various emergent habitats within newly created wetland
- Incorporate native plants and shrubs with native wildflower and grass seed into designated areas

Merriman Hollow Park sits adjacent to the Rouge River in Westland. Part of the Wayne County Parks system, you can find it along Hines Drive, just west of Merriman Road. In 2023, the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) received grant funding from the USEPA GLRI to design wetland/wet prairie habitat at Merriman Hollow Park within the Rouge River Watershed. In 2025, the ARC received additional GLRI grant funds to implement the habitat restoration.

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 Wayne County's Merriman Hollow Park was considered as having a significant impact on the removal of the BUIs.

Conditions Prior to Restoration at Merriman Hollow

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 cannot pass the large flows associated with more frequent extreme 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.

Existing Conditions at Merriman Hollow Park



Existing swales adjacent to the river will be restored with native vegetation by seeding and planting.



Large swath of riparian woody invasive species will be managed and maintained for the duration of the project.



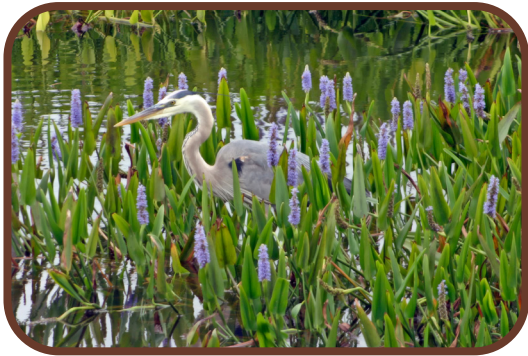
Mowed turf adjacent to Hines Drive will be transformed to wet prairie by converting turf to native seeding and plantings.

Anticipated activities at Merriman Hollow Park:

- Create/restore 3.0 acres of wetlands
- Create 1.0 acres of wet meadow/prairie
- Restore 1.0 acres of riparian habitat
- Treat/remove 1.5 acres of non-native/invasive understory woody species and shrub-layer herbaceous species

Native Plants You Can Expect to Find After Restoration!

Pickerel Weed

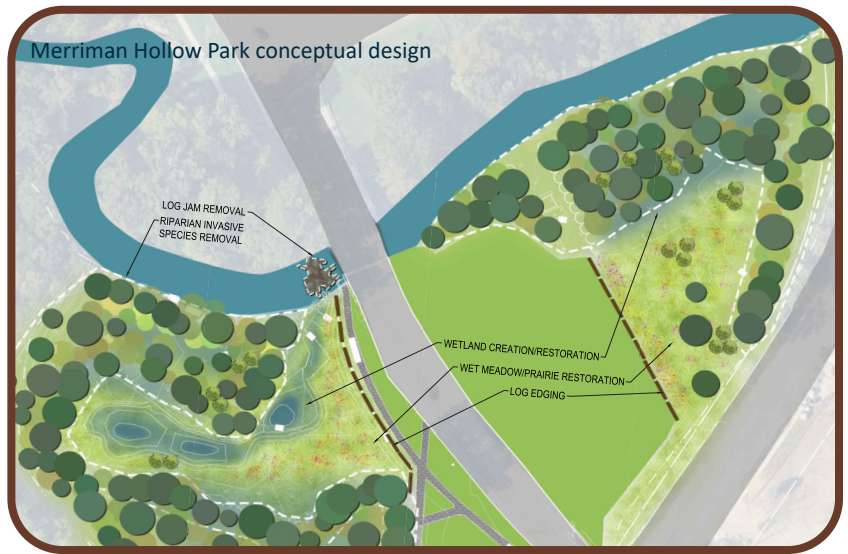


Pickerelweed features striking violet flowers and arrowhead-shaped leaves, thriving in shallow water or muddy soil. It is commonly found along the marshy edges of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams throughout much of the Midwest, Eastern, and Southeastern United States. Pickerelweed provides an important food source for many aquatic and terrestrial animals. Ducks and muskrats feed on its fruits, while deer, geese consume its leaves, roots, and stems.

Little Bluestem

In gardens and natural landscapes, Little Bluestem is admired for its blue-green foliage during summer. After the first frost, the grass transforms into striking shades of brown, copper, and crimson that persist through winter. Its fluffy white seed heads add texture and visual appeal late in the season.

Little Bluestem is highly beneficial for wildlife. It serves as a larval host plant for several skipper butterfly species, while many other insects including grasshoppers, prairie walkingsticks, leaf-mining beetles, thrips, spittlebugs, and leafhoppers feed on it as well. Songbirds eat its seeds, and the dense clumps provide valuable overwintering shelter and habitat for insects and birds.



American Hazelnut

American Hazelnut is eye-catching when its hazelnuts begin to develop, as seen in the photos. The young nuts have a unique appearance and texture that resembles a sticky wonton wrapper. This species spreads through underground rhizomes, forming colonies over time. Luna Moth larvae also rely on American Hazelnut as one of the few hardwood host plants that support them.



Luna Moth



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

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