



Patton Park Habitat Restoration Design Rouge River AOC

In partnership with:



\$300,000 in grant funds provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) through the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for design at Patton Park

The Patton Park Habitat Restoration Design will:

- Create 7 acres of habitat restoration/enhancement
- Restore the relic wetlands
- Replace turf grass areas with native vegetation
- Treat 2.5 acres of invasive species

In 2025 the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) received grant funding from the USEPA GLRI to design habitat restoration at Patton Park within the Rouge River Watershed. As part of the effort to remove Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) associated with fish and wildlife habitat in the Rouge River Areas of Concern (AOC), the Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC), the Public Advisory Council (PAC) and other partners worked together to make this project happen.

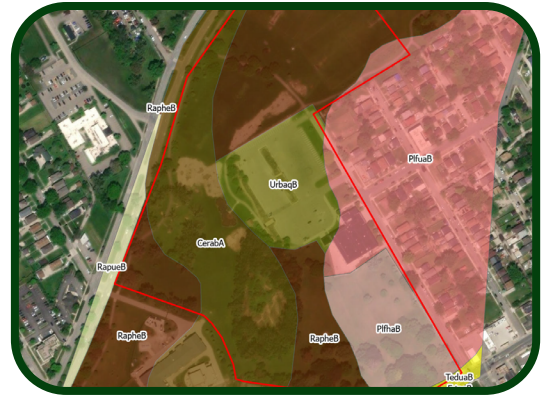
Existing Conditions



Existing wetland that was formerly a pond, and once part of the Baby Creek system



Existing wetland is dominated by Common Reed — a common wetland invasive species



USGS Soil map indicates the presence of remnant hydric soils along the historic Baby Creek floodplain

Anticipated Project Activities

- Removal of invasive plants
- Convert mowed lawn to wetland and/or wet prairie
- Grade site to provide various emergent habitats within the wetland
- Incorporate native plants and shrubs as well as seeding native wildflowers and grasses into designated areas



Pickerel Weed



Culver's Root



Butterfly Weed



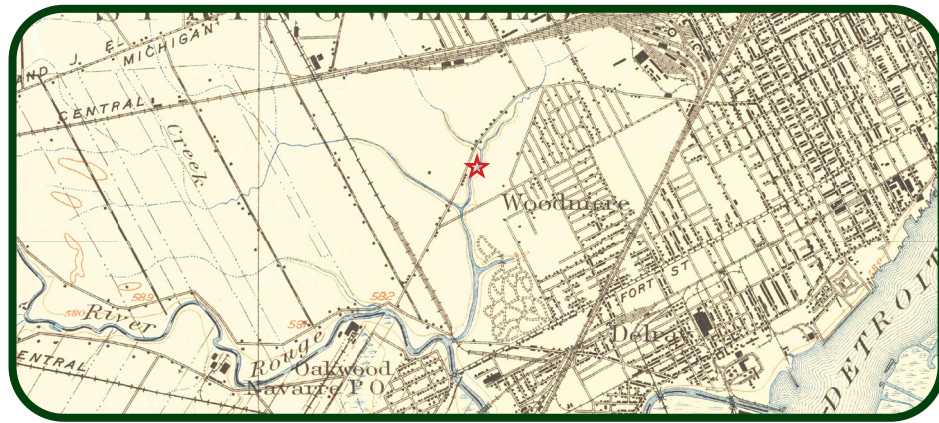
Patton Park Concept Map

History of the Patton Park

Patton Park is an 84-acre park located on the southwest side of Detroit along the border with Dearborn, Michigan. Originally known as Baby Creek Park, it was named after Baby Creek that flowed freely through the site before emptying into the Rouge River. Located near the Rouge Plant, Baby Creek Park was once used as a meeting spot for early automotive labor movements in the 1930s during the Great Depression⁴, highlighting its cultural importance at the time. Following World War II, the park was renamed Patton Park in honor of George S. Patton¹.

In the mid-1960s, however, the creek was placed into underground tunnels as part of the construction of Detroit's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) system². Around the same time, a state-of-the-art recreation center was built, and a pond was created nearby. The pond quickly became a popular destination for swimming and fishing³.

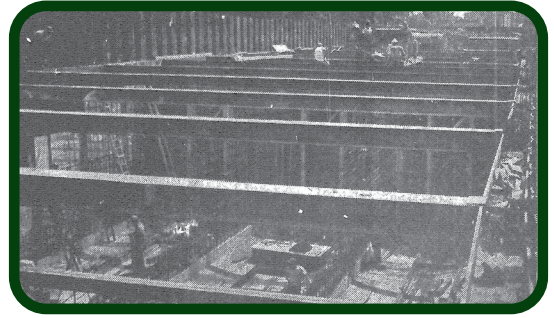
By the mid-1970s, the closing of automotive plants led to population decrease in the area¹. The pond was partially filled, and it was eventually overtaken by invasive common reed (Phragmites). Today, a small remnant stream survives as a pond within Woodmere Cemetery, located just south of the park, serving as a reminder of the waterway that once shaped the area's character.



Historic Map of Baby Creek in 1905⁵



Labor movements during the Great Depression, some of which were held in Baby Creek Park (Patton Park today)⁶



The construction of the CSO in the 1960s²



The swimming pond next to the recreation center in the 1960s³



Serving as Ecological Stepping Stones

Patton Park is located within five miles of the Detroit River, a key migration corridor within the Mississippi Flyway used by millions of birds each year. By restoring riparian and upland habitats, the park can provide critical resting and feeding areas for migratory birds, creating valuable wildlife habitat, in other words, "Ecological Stepping Stones", within a heavily urbanized and industrialized landscape.

1. Wikipedia contributors, (2026, May 20). *Patton Park (Detroit)*. In Wikipedia.
2. Dearborn Historical Museum, (2021, July 27), 60 years ago today, the *Dearborn Guide* published this image of Baby Creek. Facebook.
3. City of Detroit General Services Department (2023), *Patton Park Plan*.
4. MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership, *Baby Creek/Patton Park*. Website.
5. USGS MAP, *Detroit Michigan*, Edition of December 1905, reprinted Aug 1915
6. Walter P. Reuther Library, *Demonstrators fill the streets en route to the Ford Motor Company River Rouge Plant during the Ford Hunger March*. Website.

Visit our website at: www.allianceofrougecommunities.com

This project is funded through a grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (grant number GL-00E006008)

