

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)**  
**Draft Meeting Summary**  
**January 21, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. via Teams**



**List of Attendees:**

**Voting Members:**

Marie McCormick, Chair - *Present*  
Dan Ballnik, Vice Chair - *Present*  
Bill Craig, Holliday Nature Preserve Association - *Present*  
Jacy Garrison, Oakland County - *Present*  
Erma Leaphart, Sierra Club - *Present*  
Trisha Gabriel, Livonia - *Present*  
John O'Meara, ECT - *Present*  
Lauren Eaton, Friends of the Rouge - *Present*  
Sally Petrella, Friends of Rouge Park - *Present*  
Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield - *Present*  
Tyler Sonoga, Farmington Hills - *Present*  
Dean Tuomari, Citizen - *Present*  
Shawn Duke, Stantec - *Present*  
Donna Kashian, Wayne State - *Present*  
John Gundry, Wayne County Parks - *Present*  
Sue Thompson, Wayne DPS - *Present*  
Don Carpenter, LTU - *Absent*

**Others Present:**

Chris O'Meara, ARC  
Tennille Newsome, ARC  
Ashley Allen, HRC  
Noel Mullett, ARC  
Sam Davis, FOTR  
Patrick Cullen, Wayne DPS  
Ashley Flintoff, FOTR  
Greg Bajuk, HRC  
Julie Carter, EPA  
Chris Raschke, Dearborn  
Stephanie Petriello, OCWRC

**Introductions**

Marie McCormick called the meeting to order and completed roll call by calling on attendees listed in the Teams meeting. Attendees gave their names, affiliations and whether or not a voting member. There were 15 voting members present. Introductions were completed.

**Approval of Meeting Summary**

Marie McCormick reviewed the meeting summary from October 15, 2024. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield and seconded by Bill Craig, Holliday Nature Preserve and passed unanimously by voting members. Bill Craig stated the meeting summary was excellent.

**Old Business**

**RRAC Outreach Subcommittee**

Marie McCormick discussed the formation of the Outreach Habitat Tour Subcommittee, listing the members who expressed interest: Bill Craig, Dan Ballnik, Shawn Duke, Erma Leaphart, John Gundry, and Noel Mullett. Bill Craig stated Dan Ballnik communicated and discussed the first steps and coordination with Matt Richardson and John Gundry with Wayne County Parks. John Gundry stated the Recreation Department would be available for combined tours.

Marie stated selecting a point of contact to organize meetings and keep the group in the loop would be helpful. Noel Mullett volunteered to organize meetings, etc.

Marie asked if there was any discussion, there was none.

**EGLE Update**

Jen Tewkesbury was unable to attend today's meeting to give an EGLE update.

## **EPA Update**

Julie Carter reported the following:

- Q2 for briefing on projects: Patton Park materials design had been prepared
- Q3 for briefings on projects: Wallaceville wetland and Merriman wetlands and grow zones
- EPA operating under a CR until March 14<sup>th</sup>

Marie asked if there were any questions. There were none.

## **Rouge AOC Grants Update**

### Status of Projects

John O'Meara reported the following:

- There is not much change since the October 2024 meeting
- Most projects are close to the end of completion and will be in monitoring and maintenance on some of the sites
- Wallaceville and Merriman are moving forward with design and hope implementation funding will be received
- The Rouge Concrete Channel work with EPA and ACOE as one project is 7 individual projects and is in the process with data collection beginning late Spring.

John informed the RRAC that the [Rouge AOC habitat list](#) approved by EGLE and EPA in 2018 was updated to reflect projects that are now in process or completed. John said it would be sent to the group with the meeting summary and that the list can be viewed on the ARC/RRAC website.

John O'Meara asked if there were any questions to let him know.

Marie stated that she and her community/neighborhood was excited about the Wilcox and Phoenix Lake projects and they are excited and happy with the work that has been done and thanked John for the work. Marie noticed this fall that invasive work was done on the peninsula and additional work would be done and asked John if it was the area across from the Speedway. John O. stated yes, and there are other treatments that need to be done. Marie asked if John knew when that would be done because they plan on planning another volunteer event there and don't want to be in the contractor's way. John O. suggested him and Marie talk offline to discuss.

Sally Petrella stated the list has amazing projects that were accomplished. Sally asked if the Wallaceville project design will be done in Spring and how will it be shared with the community for input. John O. stated once the design is complete, the intent is to get information out to the neighborhood and plan to have a Wayne County Parks/public meeting later this Spring.

Bill Craig had a question on the Fishway. He asked if the reason it wasn't on the list was because it was complete. John O. stated yes. Bill Craig asked about the success of livestakes at the Fishway, and John O. clarified that it is normal for about 50% of livestakes to die.

Erma Leaphart asked in regard to the habitat tours they are going to plan if there was a list of projects and addresses listed somewhere. John O. advised Erma to go to the RRAC website and there is a map and projects list and each project has its own web page through the Alliance of Rouge Communities website <https://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/rrac.html>. He did say that an actual location address can be tricky as a lot of them are in parks and don't have a specific address. He stated Noel should be able to help identify locations when the time comes.

Ashley Flintoff asked if they could get more information on the Fire Fighter Park project. John O. stated that project is stream restoration and it went out to bid in December. EPA provided an acknowledgement

of additional funds to pay for construction and are in the process of getting contractors under contract with construction beginning this Spring.

Marie asked if there were any other questions, there were none.

## **PAC Business**

### **Voting Members**

Renewal of Terms (2025-2027): Erma Leaphart, John O'Meara, Sally Petrella, Dean Tuomari, Shawn Duke  
Marie McCormick stated that Erma, John O., Sally, Dean and Shawn's voting member renewals terms are up. She mentioned they all have expressed interest in serving another term.

Marie called for a motion for Erma Leaphart, John O'Meara, Sally Petrella, Dean Tuomari and Shawn Duke to renew their voting member terms for 2025-2027. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Trisha Gabriel, Livonia and seconded by Bill Craig, Holliday Nature Preserve Association and passed unanimously by voting members.

Marie introduced Sue Thompson with Wayne County who is requesting to be a voting member. Sue has worked with Wayne County DPS for 34 years and does water quality monitoring. She is a member of the Alliance of Rouge Communities and is on the board of Friends of the Rouge. Sue will be serving as a voting member of Wayne County DPS. Marie asked if there were any questions or comments. There was none.

Marie called for a motion for Sue Thompson to be a voting member of the RRAC. The motion to approve Sue Thompson as a voting member was made by Sally Petrella, Friends of Rouge Park and seconded by Bill Craig, Holliday Nature Preserve Association and passed unanimously by voting members.

### **PAC Support Grant Status Update**

#### **Update on Recruitment Package (FOTR)**

Lauren Eaton reported the team is continuing to work on the draft recruitment package following:

- **Asset Map Presentation:** Sam Davis shared her screen of the draft asset map, explaining that it shows the representation from voting members within the Rouge watershed and helps identify gaps in representation. This will help with areas where there are upcoming or established habitat projects.

Julie Carter added in the chat that Sam could do gradations in a few different colors instead of gray scale to show the different representations, etc.

Erma Leapheart stated the map was great and suggested that showing political boundaries would be helpful as she doesn't recognize the boundaries on the current asset map. Sam stated she could add the political boundaries and would also add in the municipality's names.

Chris O'Meara stated she had just updated the ARC's list of projects and will get that to Sam as SEMCOG's could be a little outdated.

- **Feedback Request:** Sam sought feedback on how to accurately represent communities and organizations, especially for voting members from businesses and academia. Marie stated figuring out the goal of the map is what needs to be decided and bringing in a more diverse representation in the watershed.
- **Representation Challenges:** Sam discussed the challenges of representing voting members from businesses and universities, as their influence and representation are not confined to specific boundaries.
- **Functionality Aspect:** John O. suggested considering the functionality aspect of representation, noting that businesses and universities bring different perspectives to the table.

Sam stated if anyone had questions and wanted to talk offline to get with her. Marie would like to have a feedback opportunity for members and non-members to review the recruitment package.

#### EJ-DEI Work (FOTR)

Sam Davis reported they are working with the contractor, Morgain MacDonald to schedule the final trainings. Marie suggested Sam get with Chris O'Meara to get a poll sent out.

#### **SPAC Report**

##### **SPAC Meeting**

Erma Leaphart reported the following highlights of the SPAC meeting.

- Erma mentioned a summary of the meeting was in the last meeting minutes
- AOC Conference: The next conference will be held September 16-18, 2025 in Toledo, OH; Ben Klein with GLNPO is the contact.
- Community Engagement Training sessions will be held in two parts: First part on February 10<sup>th</sup> 1-3:30pm and the second part on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1-3:30pm. Marie asked if they were virtual or in person. Erma stated virtual and they will be led by Diane Doberneck at Michigan State University.

Marie thanked Erma and Lauren for the update.

##### **SPAC Habitat Subcommittee**

John O'Meara reported the next meeting is in process of being scheduled. *Update: SPAC Habitat Subcommittee meeting will be February 6, 2025 at 10:00am.*

Marie thanked John for the update.

##### **SPAC EJ-DEI Subcommittee**

Erma Leaphart reported the following:

- Finalized and approved Goal#2 where they encourage each PAC to develop and maintain a list of 4-5 items of relevant programs, events, restoration work, etc. that can be described as a DEI related initiative.
- Samantha Todaro is a new AOC coordinator and asking people to share with her what it means to be part of a PAC. Marie asked if that would be sent directly to her, Erma stated yes. Marie asked if there was a form that could be sent to Chris O'Meara to send to the group. Erma stated she would check with Samantha and report back.

#### **Other Related Watershed Projects**

##### **Other Related Projects**

Chris Raschke wanted to discuss the Colson Palmer stormwater project. There was an inspection done and the sonar report was complete. The next step will be an RFP for design and construction management for the headwall will go out this week.

Shawn Duke stated they are working with Oakland County Parks on a large floodplain project that is at the former Beechwoods Golf Course in Southfield and will take up a lot of flood capacity and native habitat. One of the primary goals is for passive recreation and will have nice walking spaces and trails for the public to enjoy. Design is in process and construction should start late 2025 or early 2026.

Bill Craig mentioned Wayne County Parks has a grant project for the Holliday Nature Preserve that includes invasive species management which will help with the habitat BUI.

Marie McCormick stated the Northville Downs project is continuing with a big part of that is daylighting of ¼ mile of the Rouge River. The moving of the water flow from the culvert into new waterbed is planned for summer 2025.

Marie asked if there were any other projects. There were none.

## **New Business**

### Detroit River Community Forums (Friends of the Detroit River)

Marie McCormick discussed the Detroit River Community Forums as a model for engaging the community in AOC work and the potential for similar forums for the Rouge River. Ashley Flintoff stated McKenzi Waliczek gave a brief presentation at the DEI-J subcommittee meeting of what they would like to see in the future and what could be done.

John O'Meara stated he helped Friends of the Detroit River organize it. John stated going forward is that a different crowd could be at each event.

Marie asked what funding Friends of the Detroit River used. John O. stated he would check with McKenzi Waliczek to confirm.

Erma stated she attended one of the meetings that was in Detroit and was surprised because there was quite a few people and lots of new faces. She stated McKenzi had a nice display and presentation for outreach. Erma stated it was worth doing.

### Future Meetings

Marie McCormick reported

- RRAC: April 15, 2025 (hybrid-Chris O. will advise where the physical location will be), July 15, 2025 (virtual), October 21, 2025 (hybrid)

Marie stated if you are able to assist with hosting a meeting to let her and Chris O. know.

## **Comments**

### Members

None.

### General Public

None.

## **Review of Action Items**

- Approved the October 15, 2024 meeting summary
- Noel Mullett to organize and coordinate meetings for the RRAC Outreach Habitat Tour Subcommittee
- ARC staff to send out update of overall RRAC project list
- Approved the voting member renewal terms for Erma Leaphart, John O'Meara, Sally Petrella, Dean Tuomari, Shawn Duke
- Approved new voting member Sue Thompson
- FOTR to schedule EJDEI training dates
- Erma to provide contact for Samantha for AOC personal testimonies of being part of a PAC
- John O. to check with Friends of the Detroit River regarding funding of their forum
- Chris O. to check who has interest to host next hybrid RRAC meeting
- Lauren/Sam to provide drafts of the recruitment package before next RRAC meeting

Bill Craig made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Dan Ballnik seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned.



# ROUGE RIVER AREA OF CONCERN (AOC) PROJECTS NEEDED TO REMOVE THE HABITAT BUIIS

Prepared by the Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)

February 25, 2016 (updated 1/25)

Contact: [rrac@allianceofrougecommunities.com](mailto:rrac@allianceofrougecommunities.com)

Website: <http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/rrac.html>

BRANCH	MAP ID	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT STATUS
MAIN	A	Valley Woods Wetland Restoration	COMPLETE
	H	Eliza Howell & River Rouge Parks Habitat Improvements	COMPLETE
	B	Danvers Pond Dam Removal and Stream Restoration	COMPLETE
	C	Rouge Oxbow Restoration	COMPLETE
	D	Carpenter Lake Restoration	COMPLETE
	E	Kingfisher Bluff Restoration	COMPLETE
	F	Fordson Island Marine Debris Removal	COMPLETE
	1	Fordson Island and Upland Habitat Restoration (Phase 1 & 2)	NOT STARTED
	2	Patton Park Wetland Restoration	NOT STARTED
	N	Rouge Oxbow Restoration Phase 3	COMPLETE
	O	Henry Ford Estate Dam Fish Passageway	COMPLETE
	P	Tamarack Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration	COMPLETE
	4	LTU Wetland Restoration	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
	10	Fire Fighters Park Sprague Stream Improvements	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
UPPER	I	Lola Valley Park Habitat Improvements	COMPLETE
	Q	Lola Valley Park Wetlands	COMPLETE
	R	Bell Creek Park Wetlands	COMPLETE
	S	Seeley Creek Restoration	COMPLETE
MIDDLE	J	Newburgh Lake Restoration	COMPLETE
	K	Wayne County Parks Property Habitat Improvements	COMPLETE
	11	Merriman Hollow Wetland & Grow Zone	DESIGN IN PROGRESS
	13	Perrin Park Wetlands & Reforestation	DESIGN IN PROGRESS
	12	Wallaceville West Wetland	DESIGN IN PROGRESS
	T	Nankin Lake Restoration	COMPLETE
	U	Riverview Park Wetlands	COMPLETE
	5	Wilcox Lake Habitat Improvements	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
	6	Phoenix Lake Habitat Improvements	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
	V	Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery Park Habitat	COMPLETE
	W	Sherwood Park Wetland	COMPLETE
	7	Johnson Intercounty Drain Restoration	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
LOWER	L	Inkster CSO Basin Habitat Improvements	COMPLETE
	M	Venoy Park Habitat Improvements	COMPLETE
	G	Wayne Road Dam Removal and Stream Restoration	COMPLETE
	8	Inkster Park Wetlands & Fish Habitat Structures	IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS
	X	Venoy Wetlands & Fish Habitat Structures	COMPLETE
	Y	Colonial Park Wetland & Reforestation	COMPLETE
	Z	Lower Rouge River Habitat Restoration	COMPLETE
VARIOUS BRANCHES	3	Various Grow Zone Retrofits	
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	9	Concrete Channel Modifications/Enhancements with Oakwood Commons Oxbow and Michigan Ave./Evergreen Rd. Stormwater Treatment and Habitat Restoration	DESIGN IN PROGRESS



# ROUGE RIVER AOC PROJECT LOCATION MAP



## KEY



### - PROJECTS NOT STARTED:

1. Fordson Island and Upland Habitat Restoration (1 & 2)

2. Patton Park Wetland Restoration

3. Various Grow Zones Retrofits



### - PROJECTS IN PROGRESS:

4. LTU Wetland Restoration

5. Wilcox Lake Habitat Improvements

6. Phoenix Lake Habitat Improvements

7. Johnson Intercounty Drain Restoration

8. Inkster Park Wetlands & Fish Habitat Structures

9. Concrete Channel Modifications/Enhancements with Oakwood

Commons Oxbow & Michigan Ave./Evergreen Rd. Stormwater Treatment & Habitat Restoration

10. Fire Fighters Park Sprague Stream Improvements

11. Merriman Hollow Wetland & Grow Zone

12. Wallaceville West Wetland

13. Perrin Park Wetlands & Reforestation

### - COMPLETED PROJECTS:

A. Valley Woods Wetland Restoration

B. Danvers Pond Dam Removal and Stream Restoration

C. Rouge Oxbow Restoration

D. Carpenter Lake Restoration

E. Kingfisher Bluff Restoration

F. Fordson Island Oxbow Debris removal and Habitat Restoration Project

G. Wayne Road Dam Removal and Stream Restoration

H. Eliza Howell & River Rouge Parks Habitat Improvements

I. Lola Valley Park Habitat Improvements

J. Newburgh Lake Restoration

K. Wayne County Parks Property Habitat Improvements

L. Inkster CSO Basin Habitat Improvements

M. Venoy Park Habitat Improvements

N. Rouge Oxbow Phase 3

O. Henry Ford Estate Dam Fish Passageway

P. Tamarack Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration

Q. Lola Valley Park Wetlands

R. Bell Creek Park Wetlands

S. Seeley Creek Restoration

T. Nankin Lake Restoration

U. Riverview Park Wetlands

V. Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery Park Habitat

W. Sherwood Park Wetlands

X. Venoy Wetlands & Fish Habitat Structures

Y. Colonial Park Wetland & Reforestation

Z. Lower Rouge River Habitat Restoration

