

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)  
Draft Meeting Summary  
February 2, 2017**

**Attendees:**

Attended?	Name	Attended?	Names
Y	Dan Ballnik, Chair	N	Karen Mondora, Farmington Hills
Y	John Beisel, Farmington Hills	Y	Noel Mullett, Wayne County Dept. of Public Services
Y	Marty Boote, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC)	Y	Rob Myllyoja, Stantec
Y	Cory Borton, Hubbell Roth and Clark, Inc.	Y	Chris O'Meara, ARC
Y	Jeff Braunscheidel, MDNR	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	Y	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
N	Annette DeMaria, ARC	Y	Heather Rice, Washtenaw County Water Resource Commissioners Office
N	Rose Ellison, EPA Representative	N	Devan Rosturfer, SEMCOG
Y	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioners Office	Y	Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	Y	Jennifer Tewkesbury, MDEQ Coordinator
N	Kevin Goodwin, MDEQ	Y	Dean Tuomari, Citizen
N	Barb Goryca, Dearborn citizen		
N	Amy Mangus, SEMCOG		

**Introductions**

Introductions were completed.

**Meeting Summary**

The meeting summary from September 14, 2016 was reviewed and approved with one correction by the Council.

**Old Business**

D. Ballnik sent an email to MDEQ regarding the delisting criteria.

There was discussion on the need for a letter supporting the collaborative efforts for IDEP that the ARC has submitted for Rouge communities. A. DeMaria will draft a body paragraph for review.

**SPAC Report**

B. Craig reported that he attended the Great Lakes Restoration event at The Henry Ford. He reported that the AOCs represented at the event included Maumee, Ohio, Detroit, Saginaw, Raisin, St. Clair, Rouge and Clinton River. The event was well attended by federal, state and local elected officials and watershed groups implementing the projects in the area. The projects celebrated at the event were documented in a book which a copy can be requested by emailing Chris O'Meara (comeara@ectinc.com) or can be downloaded at:

<http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/gltrevent.html>

B. Craig reported that he attended the SPAC Fall Business Meeting on October 27-28, 2016 in Kalamazoo. There was discussion on the Michigan Water Strategy, Eat Safe Fish program, GLNPO

program, GLRI funding, the next AOC conference, SPAC program and an update on the Rouge River AOC. There was also a site visit to the Otsego Twp. Dam site restoration.

B. Craig informed the group that he will be attending the 2017 Conference for the Great Lakes AOC Program is set for March 29-30, 2017 in Grand Rapids. He asked that anyone let him know if they are interested in attending.

### **MDEQ Update**

J. Tewkesbury stated that she attended the federal partners meeting. She stated that they were pleased with the Rouge project list and they discussed some of the projects that would be next in line for possible funding.

She stated that the USACE is looking at the concrete channel restoration. They are looking at performing a feasibility study which would be the first step in getting it moving. There was talk about doing some of this under the Economy Act. Paul Powell of the Detroit District is heading this up and it would be in phases and would require additional sampling.

There has been discussions in Lansing about the need for more data on the Main Rouge River. There are data gaps for a four mile stretch. They think they have a non-federal sponsor for the sediment cleanup. A feasibility study and investigation is still needed in hopes of advancing the removal.

### **EPA Update**

R. Ellison was not in attendance, however, J. Tewkesbury reported that R. Ellison continues to work on the old channel.

### **Existing Grants Update**

#### 2016 GLC PAC support Grant - FOTR Fish Community Survey

S. Petrella, FOTR, gave a presentation summarizing the fish survey that was funded in part with the PAC Support grant that RRAC received in 2016. The data collected with the fish survey may support the possible delisting of the fish BUI. The presentation compared the current survey to the 1998 MDNR survey. There were 26 sites surveyed with 7 new natives found. S. Petrella noted that both of Rouge Park and Eliza Howell Park's sensitive species went down. There was discussion about S. Petrella and B. Mueller present at the next Full ARC meeting to present the findings of the survey.

J. Tewkesbury suggested that FOTR contact the Office of the Great Lakes as they have a fish group which may have some funding available beyond the PAC grant. S. Petrella also passed out the criteria for delisting the BUI for Degradation of Benthos. There was discussion about the fact that the delisting talks mainly about game fish. J. Tewkesbury stressed the fact that they will not only look at game fish but also native fish to the Rouge River. The habitat work should focus on the areas that need improvement and bring back the fish species that are sensitive to water quality and not just game fish. It is important to have this type of fish data so it can support and determine what activities are appropriate for the watershed. It is important to educate the public on the variety of fish species found and growing in the Rouge River.

B. Craig discussed how we should show the progress to the communities and public, maybe update the report card to show the improvement.

### 2016 GLC PAC support Grant - Habitat Project Descriptions

J. O'Meara informed the group that they make continued progress on the habitat project descriptions. M. Boote handed out and reviewed a document showing the next 6 priority ranked projects. These are the project descriptions that are being flushed out more including defining budgets and activities needed to complete the project. This is being completed to show that these next 6 projects are ready to go if a federal agencies has extra budget and wants to fund delisting projects identified by RRAC.

Jeff Braunscheidel mentioned the Michigan Aquatic habitat Grant Program as another potential source of project funding. Marty mentioned that the Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery Park project had previously been submitted under that grant program on behalf of Northville, but not funded.

It was also noted that the Fordson Island and the Lower Rouge projects need more site walks to be able to describe the projects better. J. Tewkesbury supported this saying that the more details in the projects the better chance of getting funded.

J. O'Meara stated that we have one more RRAC meeting scheduled for May under this current PAC grant.

### Wayne County Invasives

N. Mullett stated that Wayne County was awarded a one-year extension on the GLRI-funded invasives species grant. He noted that Farmington Hills has dropped out because their project was only receiving \$13,000 and they decided to just do it themselves. This will leave some money left which they hope to put it towards some additional invasive species treatment. N. Mullett stated that the next coordination will be planned for February or March.

### Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – HFE Fishway Implementation

J. O'Meara stated that the permit process is moving forward. It was noted that 250 trees will need to come out, however, 300-400 trees will be planted. It was agreed that educating the public on this was high priority. J. O'Meara stated that the National Park Service found no historical impact on the project location.

### Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – Oxbow Phase 3 Implementation

N. Mullett stated that the subgrant agreement with the ARC is being processed.

### Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – Nankin Lake Restoration

N. Mullett stated that he expects the request for bid on the design for Nankin out this quarter.

These three projects will go through 2019. The Oxbow and HFE work is expected to start early fall with construction out for bid this late spring.

### FDR – NOAA Habitat Partnership Grant

J. O'Meara explained that this is a funding mechanism if money becomes available or if EPA has extra to fund some projects. The initial grant funds are going to Detroit River AOC projects totaling \$14M through 2018. Then funding will go to an additional Detroit River project and then can start to fund Rouge River projects.

### **2017 GLC PAC Support Grant**

J. O'Meara reviewed the new grant which ARC Staff feel will be best to focus on the continued facilitation of the RRAC along with additional development of other projects on the habitat project list. In addition he anticipates to continue funding for Friends of the Rouge to do more fish community surveys. He anticipates that work could start in the spring and go through spring of 2018 and anticipate the budget being around \$30K. J. Tewkesbury recommended that all activities be broken down with budgets. The group supported the proposal and J. O'Meara stated he would work with Sally to develop the scope and costs.

### **Johnson Intercounty Drain Restoration**

R. Myllyoja reviewed the status of this proposed project. He stated that they have met with NOAA and there is no funding available at this point for the design. The Johnson Creek Protection group visited some of the sites. He stated that the lead is expected to be the Inter County Drain Board for the 3 mile project. J. Tewkesbury recommended that if the project could be broken up into phases it might be easier to get funded. She stressed the need for a clear scope and metrics to promote the project along with a clear statement of who would take the lead whether it is the county or the board.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Comments**

#### Members

B. Craig informed the group that the State is asking its partners to disseminate the Water Strategy document that the Office of the Great Lakes produced. C. O'Meara stated that RRAC would put it on the website.

B. Craig also requested that the Eat Safe Fish brochures and signs be added to the RRAC website as well.

J. Garrison asked the group if anyone knew how to get an unnamed tributary named as they have a school requesting to name the river after someone. It was suggested that she contact the state because it would be a water of the state and possibly petitioning property owners.

S. Petrella informed the group that FOTR has a new Executive Director, Marie McCormack.

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting by B. Craig and supported by N. Mullett. The motion passed.