

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)
Draft Meeting Summary
May 3, 2021**



Attendees:

Attended?	Nam	Attended?	Name
Y	Ashley Allen, HRC	N	Karen Mondora, Farmington Hills
N	Dan Ballnik, Chair	Y	Doug Moore, Livonia
N	John Bauman, MDNR Lake Erie Management Unit	N	Noel Mullett, Wayne County Dept. of Public Services
N	Marty Boote, Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC)	N	Rob Myllyoja, ECT
N	Cory Borton, Bloomfield Township	Y	Tennille Newsome, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	N	Caitlin Nigrelli, Liaison to USEPA-GLNPO
Y	Annette DeMaria, ARC	Y	Chris O'Meara, ARC
N	Rose Ellison, EPA	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County WRC Office	N	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	Y	Heather Rice, Washtenaw County WRC Office
N	Kevin Goodwin, EGLE	Y	Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield
N	Barb Goryca, Citizen	Y	Tyler Sonoga, Farmington Hills
Y	Katie Grantham, SEMCOG	Y	Jennifer Tewkesbury, Michigan EGLE
		Y	Dean Tuomari, Citizen

Introductions

Bill Craig started the meeting as Dan was unable to attend. Tennille Newsome completed roll call.

Approval of Meeting Summary

Bill Craig went through the Action Items from the January 12, 2021 meeting summary and confirmed the following actions have been completed.

- RRAC members to send Chris O'Meara comments on suggested amendment or other ideas they have for the PAC Support Grant amendment.
- Potential Project template will be added on RRAC and ARC websites.
- Chris O'Meara to send out the links for the Friends of Detroit River and Lake St. Clair for the story maps.

The meeting summary of the January 12, 2021 meeting was approved with no comments. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Jacy Garrison, Oakland County and seconded by Dean Tuomari.

Old Business

Bill Craig suggested putting the following projects under Old Business as placeholders:

- Washtenaw County to send out the information for the stream walk for Johnson Creek Inter-County Drain project when available. This will be included under the Grant project updates for the project.
- City of Northville Daylighting project.

SPAC Report

Bill Craig reported that SPAC had a meeting via Zoom on March 4, 2021. Bill Craig reported the following key elements of the meeting:

- An EGLE update was given at the meeting on teleworking and funding/budget.
- Information on the PAC grants ending on February 28, 2022 was given at the meeting.

- Melanie Foose, AOC Coordinator is the new SPAC liaison to assist Rick Hobrla.
- An EPA update was given at the meeting. Bill also reported there is \$330 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding for FY2021.
- EPA has a priority on Environmental Justice, Greater Inclusion and Diversity. EPA had a slide presentation and is attached to the SPAC meeting minutes.
- EGLE Office of Environmental Justice Public Advocate, Regina had a slide presentation as well regarding her job responsibilities and description of support services.
- 2021 AOC Conference will hopefully be held in-person September 29 and 30.
- PAC reports from AOCs were updated was given at the meeting and no BUIs were delisted.
- The SEAS project is ongoing and turned in their final report to SPAC.
- Next SPAC meeting via Zoom will be June 17. The March 4, 2021 meeting summary was attached and will be posted to the RRAC website.

PAC Subcommittee on UofM PAC Recommendation

Bill Craig reported there was a report from the team on April 20 as the project was completed and their professor was able to grade them so they could graduate. This subcommittee will not have real business until the final report/power point is received. Jen Tewkesbury reported the students presented their final report to EGLE and will send it out to the group.

EGLE Update

Jen Tewkesbury reported the following:

- The old channel project is ongoing. The EPA/ACOE is currently working on contract changes. A couple of weeks ago there was a bank failure at the old channel near the edge of the river on Zug Island. There are now questions going around about the stability of the banks and how stable they are and whether or not more engineering needs to be done.
- The main channel work is in progress and the contractor will start sampling the main channel (four miles). The contractor just sent out notices to the land owners to advise of monitoring and will hopefully receive approval. This should be completed by end of summer and data gaps should be filled by fall. Next steps will be for the EPA to begin a feasibility study and remedial design with the Great Lakes Legacy Act.
- The concrete channel is moving forward and will be awarded through EPA contractor to start design.

Jen also reported the following:

- EGLE staff will continue working remote until July 12.
- 2021 AOC Conference will be held in Muskegon and hopes to be in-person.

Annette DeMaria asked Jen if field work had been completed at the old channel remediation work. Jen confirmed all sampling, walls, etc. are complete. Contract changes are in progress and dredging has not been started.

EPA Update

Jen T. reported that Rose Ellison's efforts are currently handling the old and main channel work in the Rouge.

Rouge AOC Grants Update

EGLE PAC Support Grant

Jen reported the EGLE PAC support grant amendment was approved and ready to start design.

John O'Meara reported the EGLE PAC support grant is ongoing. The amendment included support for:

- Concrete channel from FOTR with stakeholder involvement
- AOC Habitat Projects-GIS maps for digital mapping of habitat projects and other projects preparation and will be added to the ARC's budget.

John O'Meara also reported that dates for the remaining RRAC meetings for the rest of the year will be sent out to the group for scheduling.

- 2021 Fish Survey
John O'Meara reported Sally Petrella with FOTR has been setting up the fish survey for the summer. Sally has developed a draft list of sites and will begin in June/July.
- LTU Wetland Habitat Design
John O'Meara reported the habitat project description has been completed.
- Fire Fighters Park – Sprague Drain
John O'Meara reported the Sprague Drain has been completed and advised Rose that it would be of interest to have that project in FY22 monies.

Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – Oxbow/HFE–Fishway Implementation/Nankin Lake Restoration
Oxbow: John O'Meara reported the project is complete.

HFE Fishway: John O'Meara reported the project is in vegetation establishment and maintenance period. The ARC continues to ask organizations, social media and public to “respect” the area and let public know getting the vegetation established is a priority of the project.

Bill Craig would like to comment for the record that a recommendation of a chain link fence positioned to protect the fishway would be helpful as an obstacle. He does not believe the problem will go away. He mentioned other fishways are protected and believes signs won't matter.

Nankin: John O'Meara reported EPA gave Wayne County the additional funds to complete the project as designed and meet the metrics. It is currently in process with Wayne County Commission as well as the contactors contract. John anticipates late June the project will be awarded.

Bill Craig asked if soil samples have been found to be acceptable. John O'Meara confirmed that all sampling has been completed at the pre-investigation stage. All material will be dewatered and hauled to a landfill.

ARC Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration - Tamarack Creek/ Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery

Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery: John O'Meara reported the site is currently in vegetation establishment phase.

Tamarack Creek: John O'Meara reported the pre-construction meeting with contractor was held last Friday and the project will begin in June and will be mainly completed by November. Next year will be vegetation maintenance.

WC/ARC - 5 Parks Restoration-Riverview, Lola, Bell Creek, Sherwood, Lower Rouge

John O'Meara reported the following:

- Lower Rouge is in the process of being ready to bid
- Sherwood Park is in the process of being ready to bid
- Bell Creek Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the fall for 2022 construction

- Lola Valley Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the fall for 2022 construction
- Riverview (Levan Knoll) is scheduled for construction in 2023

John O’Meara mentioned the ARC and Wayne County are establishing an agreement for all sites within the Rouge in Wayne County so everything can be handled by the departments and Exec’s Office to minimize the need to go through the Wayne County Commission each time.

ARC Seely Creek Habitat Restoration

John O’Meara reported that the permit public comment period ended. The project only received one comment and it was from MDNR Fisheries supporting the work. Construction is scheduled in late summer of 2021.

ARC Colonial and Venoy Habitat Restoration

John O’Meara reported both projects are ready and construction is scheduled in late summer 2021.

WC WRC – Johnson Creek Intercounty Drain Restoration Design

John O’Meara reported the QAPP has been approved by EPA. The initial field investigation work has been completed. Next steps for the project are vegetation and wetland assessments along the corridor. A site walk through is to be scheduled possibly June/July. Heather Rice reported she added the RRAC email to the public notice list.

Bill Craig asked if this project would be in Wayne County. John O’Meara confirmed most of the project is in Wayne County.

LTU Wetland Habitat Design

John O’Meara reported that EPA has notified the ARC that they will receive (anticipated May 2021) a GLRI grant to design a wetland system on Lawrence Technological University’s campus. The design will be developed in collaboration with LTU.

Other Projects of Note

John O’Meara reported the funding list of the AOC projects that do not have a specific part of funding designated has been updated and is on the RRAC website.

Annette DeMaria reported on the following grants that were submitted:

EGLE NPS Middle Rouge River Daylighting Design (\$40,000)

Annette DeMaria reported on the project and thank Bill for the letter of support. The ARC submitted a grant application for a design daylighting approximately 1,100 feet of river that is currently enclosed under the Northville Downs Racetrack property. Objectives are to develop a conceptual design for public review, feasibility study and renderings for the daylighting that has the buy-in of the City, public and developer. These items will be used to secure grant funding for future daylighting of the river. The grant is for \$40,000 with matching funds from the developer and the City.

Jen Tewkesbury confirmed the ACOE with doing a walkthrough site visit with the City of Northville this Friday.

Bill mentioned he was impressed on the meetings they held to date. Bill also mentioned the project was driven by their Mayor.

EGLE NPS Johnson Creek Subwatershed Action Plan (\$60,000 - \$54,000 Grant/\$6,000 match)

Development of a Johnson Creek Subwatershed Action Plan will address the issue of increased impervious surfaces and altered hydrology and provide a subwatershed level assessment of current conditions and restoration opportunities by assessing wetlands, AOP barriers, vegetative practices, stormwater retrofits and stream restoration needs.

Rouge Watershed Potential Project Template

John O'Meara reported the template the ARC developed is available and has been sent out to ARC communities, FOTR and other ARC Cooperating Partners. John stressed to RRAC members to use the template and send to the ARC so an AOC funding table can be developed.

New Business

None to report.

Comments

Members

Bill Craig mentioned he would like to hear comments from other members. He also mentioned the RRAC is a cooperating partner with the ARC and he attended the ARC's April 27 meeting and it reminded him of an RRAC meeting and the value of learning the additional programs, policies, funding information, etc. Bill also wanted to mention that many of the members are doing multiple duties with RRAC, ARC, etc.

Bill Craig expressed concern with the ARC's 2% increase in dues and that he was worried that it would reduce the involvement of the communities. Annette DeMaria reported that the ARC's dues 2% increase was suggested by and voted in by the members. Annette mentioned the ARC went 10-12 years without an increase and that the members felt that it was necessary with the new permit requiring additional monitoring. The ARC members wanted to plan for that monitoring and felt doing a slow increase would allow the monies to be gathered over several years so that when it was time to do the monitoring the ARC would have the money to pay for it.

Bill Craig recognized the passing of Jack Bails. He mentioned that the Michigan Outdoor magazine had a nice article on Jack.

General Public

There was a discussion on how to get more general public to be interested and attend the RRAC meetings. Chris O'Meara suggested using the ARC's Facebook announcing RRAC's meeting to get more of the general public involved.

Jen Tewkesbury mentioned there will be an environmental justice subcommittee for the SPAC that Melanie Foose is heading.

Bill Craig mentioned he is going to meeting with Marie with FOTR and see if that can get a representative from the Sierra Club who is their rain garden club partner.

Review of Action Items

- Send out meeting schedule through January 2022.

Dean Tuomari made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Jacy Garrison, Oakland County seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned.