

# Rouge River Gateway Ecosystem Restoration Project Wayne County, Michigan

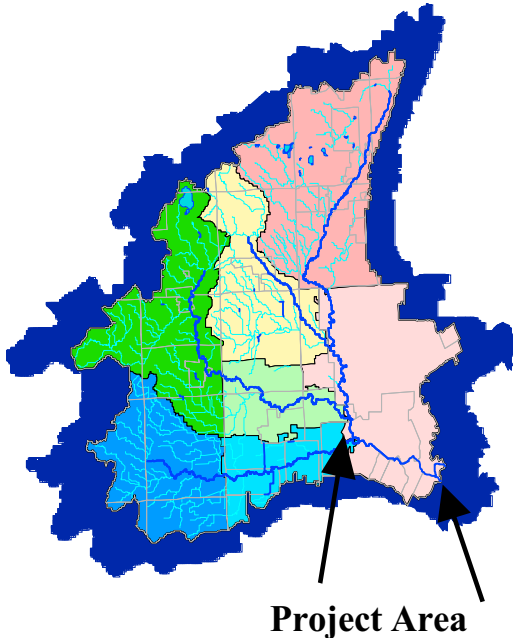
THE ROUGE RIVER PROJECT  
A WORLD CLASS EFFORT



BRINGING OUR RIVER BACK TO LIFE

*A publication of the Wayne County Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project*

**Information Date: March 2003**



**Project Area**

## The Rouge River Gateway Corridor

The Rouge River Gateway Corridor is one of the most important natural and cultural assets of southeast Michigan. It includes the river's final eight miles and five neighboring communities. This area has all the ingredients of a vibrant urban place: nature, culture, people, and economic strength.

Seventeen years ago, the Rouge was unquestionably the most polluted river in the state. Like many urban waterways, pollution, channelization, and industrial activity severed the Rouge from its people and the natural ecology.

Three counties, 48 Metro Detroit communities, and numerous stakeholders that make up the Rouge River watershed have made great strides in recent years to eliminate non-point source pollution, combined sewer overflows, and other causes of water quality / watershed impairment. Last year, the Rouge met the state water quality standard for dissolved oxygen (5 mg/liter) during dry weather, resulting in sightings of more diverse species of fish.



**Trout Caught in Johnson Creek**

Enthusiastic stakeholders, realizing the potential of an improving river environment, have combined forces to create a vision for sustainable development. The Rouge River Gateway Partnership, formed in 1999, represents Wayne County, five municipalities, cultural institutions, and private businesses. The *Detroit Free Press* (Dec. 5, 1999) described the effort as "...the most comprehensive partnership of government and private interests ever assembled to restore life to a damaged river and its urban surroundings." While attracting new investment

**Rouge River Gateway Partnership Members**

City of Allen Park  
City of Dearborn  
City of Detroit  
City of Melvindale  
DTE Energy  
Edward C. Levy Company  
Ford Motor Company  
Henry Ford Community College  
The Henry Ford  
Marathon Ashland Petroleum LLC  
Rouge Steel Company  
The University of Michigan – Dearborn  
Wayne County

is one goal of the Partnership, celebrating heritage, preserving natural habitats, promoting sustainability principles, and supporting recreational opportunities are also priorities.

Under the guidance of the Partnership, a master plan was developed that encourages people, ecology, and economy to coexist equitably and sustainably in the landscape. The plan includes projects that restore relationships between the Rouge and its natural and social systems. Ecosystems are strengthened by plans for greening of the Ford Rouge Center, restoration of an oxbow at The Henry Ford - Greenfield Village, bank stabilization at Henry Ford Community College, a state - funded Environmental Interpretive Center, and a fish ladder around an historic landmark dam at the Ford Fair Lane Estate on the University of Michigan - Dearborn campus.



**Oxbow restoration at Greenfield Village**



**Green Roof Installation at Ford's new Dearborn Truck Plant**



**New Environmental Interpretive Center on UM- Dearborn Campus**

The Army Corps of Engineers is studying models for partial removal of the concrete channel to create a new fish habitat and natural riverbanks. These efforts are aimed at restoring the Rouge to its previous life of 100 years ago – a clean river corridor that is home to diverse wildlife, indigenous plant species, and the public at large.

A public pathway and riverboat taxi are proposed for the entire eight-mile length of the Gateway Corridor, once riverbank naturalization is complete. A first phase of the pathway is anticipated to be under construction in 2003.

The path system will connect with fourteen miles of existing greenway through adjacent communities and become a critical link within a larger plan for Southeast Michigan. Interpretation of the area's rich history, best storm water management practices, and ecological restoration will occur along the river course. This multi-modal transportation network will reconnect thousands of urban residents to the river's natural beauty as well as adjacent cultural and educational attractions along the way.

The Rouge River Gateway Corridor is planned to be a magnet for community activity and a way for residents to better understand their role as stewards of this riparian ecosystem. It will function as a life-size model of sustainability principles.

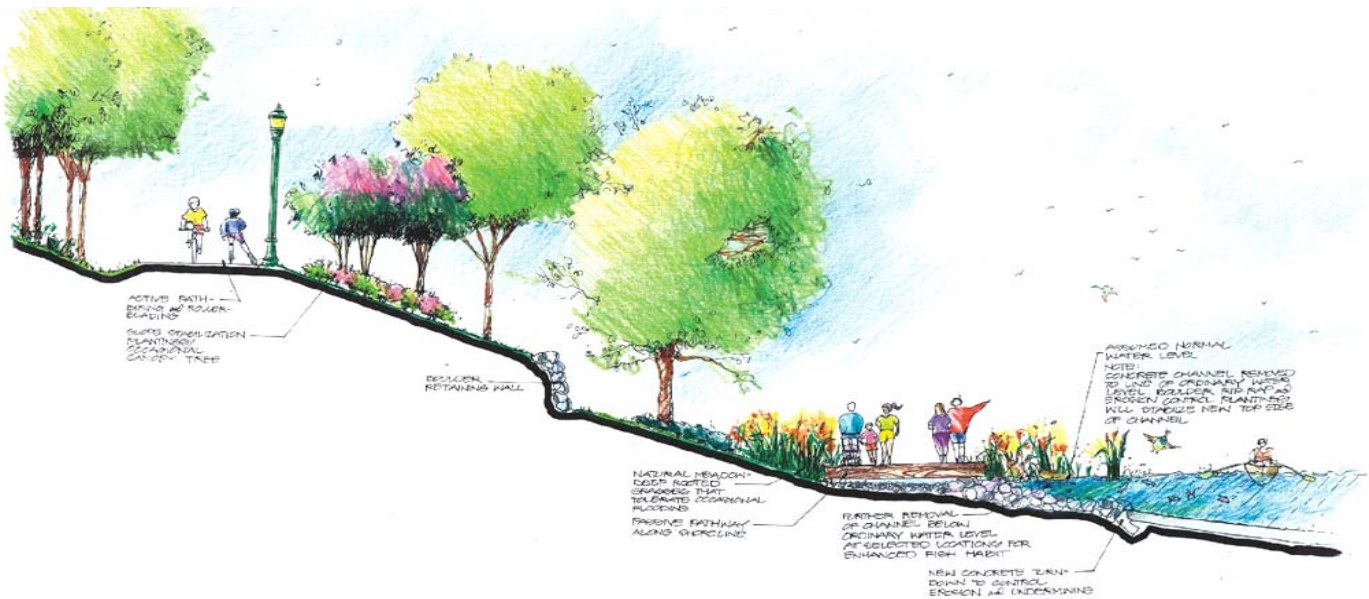
To obtain further information on the Rouge Project, including documents, maps and general information, visit us at

<http://www.rougeriver.com>



Channelized section of the Rouge River

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Proposed Natural Restoration of the River's Edge

