

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2024 the ARC celebrated the completion of the GLRI-funded Johnson Creek - Fish Hatchery Park Habitat Restoration in the City of Northville and Northville Township.



***Congresswoman Dingell and Senator Stabenow plant trees with Crawford White, USEPA GLNPO and Northville Township Supervisor, Mark J. Abbo***



***Senator Stabenow with restored Johnson Creek in the background***



***ARC display materials at celebration***



***Crawford White, USEPA GLNPO***

**March 2025**

# ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2024 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES

### ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### **FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS**

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including notetaking and tallying of votes at the meeting), preparation of E-votes, and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties.

[Full ARC meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported two (2) Executive Committee meetings including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, preparation of E-votes, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

[ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, budget amendments, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated a Finance Committee meeting on October 29, 2024, and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding budget amendments and the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the November Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities by staff, consultants, contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2024 Activities included:

- ◆ The 2023 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in March 2024.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2024 Activities included:

- ARC Staff attended the following EPA webinars: March 28, 2024 – New EPA Davis-Bacon Grant Term and Condition Webinar, April 30, 2024 – Fair Share Objectives; October 9, 2024 - 2 CFR Part 200 updates; October 30, 2024 - EPA Grant Terms and Conditions for Fiscal Year 2025 Webinar
- ARC Staff attended the River Network webinar Unlocking Resources: Leveraging Federal Funding through Nonprofit-Municipality Collaboration on April 23, 2024
- ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.
- ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting.
- ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2023 Single Audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2025 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 4% increase in dues along with a revised 8-Year Plan for 2024-2031
- ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills.

## OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

## GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

2024 Activities included:

- ARC Staff provided project information for EPA's website on various ARC restoration projects.
- ARC Staff attended Great Lakes Days in Washington, D.C. on March 5-7, 2024.
- ARC Staff attended the Great Lakes Commission meeting on October 8-10, 2024.



ARC Staff attending Great Lakes Days in Washington, DC

- ARC Staff held a grand opening for the Fish Hatchery Park AOC restoration project in Northville Township on September 6, 2024. The event was attended by Senator Stabenow, Congresswoman Dingell, Wayne County Commissioner Marecki, Crawford White from EPA GLNPO and several other City of Northville and Township elected officials. The event was covered by WWJ radio, WXYZ and WDIV television.



### STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)

- ARC Staff attended SPAC meetings on January 29 and June 5.
- ARC Staff attended SPAC Habitat Subcommittee meetings in 2024 on March 21 and July 22.
- ARC Staff supported RRAC at their 2024 meetings including January 16, 2024, April 30, 2024, July 16, 2024, and October 15, 2024.



### ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION

2024 Activities included:

- ARC Staff participated in the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by SEMCOG. The campaign provides a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging encourages water resource stewardship, encourages adoption of best management practices, and supports long-term investment in infrastructure.
- ARC Staff participated in the NFWF-NCRF Partner Meeting #1 on October 16, 2024. Topics included the Project Overview and Regulatory Context for Nature Based Solutions for Urban Flooding in Southeast Michigan. Meeting #2: Refine Project Vision and Review Financial and Other Incentives for the Creation of Nature-Based Solutions to Flooding on November 21, 2024.
- ARC Staff attended the Utilizing the One Water Campaign in Your Community webinar on May 22, 2024.
- ARC Staff participated in SEMCOG's Partners for Clean Water meetings on February 2, May 1 and September 12, 2024.
- ARC Staff participated in SEMCOG's stakeholder meeting for the Regional Resilience Framework on April 4, 2024.
- ARC Staff participated in the GLWA Watershed Hub work group and full group meetings to advance water quality monitoring in the region on February 28, April 24, June 26, October 16, and December 4, 2024
- ARC Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group with meetings on February 5, May 1 and September 1, 2024.
- ARC Staff presented a poster paper on the HFE Fishway project at the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration (NCER) on April 15-18 in Alberquerque, New Mexico.
- ARC Staff participated in the Healing Our Waters (HOW) conference on September 26-27, 2024, in Chicago, Illinois.

Senator Stabenow and Congresswoman Dingell attending the Fish Hatchery Park grand opening

- The ARC received the following awards for their restoration projects: SEMCOG Regional Showcase Award – Henry Ford Estate (HFE) Fishway Project; National Recreation and Park Association 2024 Innovation in Conservation Award HFE Fishway, Wayne County Parks & Recreation; APWA Michigan Chapter 2024 Project of the Year Award – HFE Fishway; Keep Michigan Beautiful Presidents Award - Colonial and Venoy Parks Project.
- ARC Staff attended meetings on the Central Michigan University’s Climate Resilience Project on February 16 and October 31, 2024. ARC Staff forwarded the Central Michigan University’s collaborative project Building Predictive Capacity to Enhance Stormwater Infrastructure and Flood Resilience to ARC members to see if they were interested in participating. The ARC also provided a letter of support for the project.
- ARC Staff collaborated with the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds to share best practices for permit compliance and to discuss opportunities for collaboration of some activities to reduce costs to both organizations.
- ARC Staff attended the Erb Family Foundation meeting to review their grantmaking priorities for the next decade in November 2024.
- ARC Staff participated in the Multi-Regional IDEP/TMDL workgroup on September 19, October 17, November 21 and December 19, 2024.
- ARC Staff shared GLWA’s Southeast Michigan Flood Risk Management Study public scoping workshops with ARC members.
- ARC Staff attended the MWEA 2024 Watershed & Stormwater Seminar on December 10, 2024 and participated in the “Shed Talks” on behalf of the Rouge River Watershed.
- ARC Staff promoted the Friends of the Detroit River’s AOC Community Forums that were held in 2024.
- ARC Staff shared the International Joint Commission’s 2024 Great Lakes Regional Poll about our shared waters with ARC Members.
- ARC Staff attended EGLE’s Extreme Storm Emergency Preparedness webinar on April 9, 2024.
- ARC Staff promoted the Friends of the Rouge Winter Stonefly Search (1/20/24), Spring Bug Hunt (4/20/24) and Fall Bug Hunt (10/12/24) on the ARC website and Facebook.
- In February 2024, the ARC was included in a letter coordinated by Michigan Environmental Council and partners in support of match funding for contaminated sediment remediation in southeast Michigan.
- The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science released the Southeast Michigan Report Cards on April 16, 2024, in partnership with the Erb Family Foundation, Friends of the Rouge, Friends of the Detroit River, River Raisin Watershed Council, Clinton River Watershed Council, and the Huron River Watershed Council. The watershed report cards include one for each of the 5 river watersheds in Southeast Michigan as well as a report card for the overall region.
- ARC Staff attended a webinar on the Rouge Report Card on May 3, 2024.
- ARC Staff promoted EGLE’s Drinking Water Week from May 5-11, 2024.
- ARC Staff renewed the ARC as part of the group membership with the Center for Watershed Protection.



2024 APWA Project of the year award

## **MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS**

2024 Activities included:

- ◆ The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded various emails from residents to community representatives for follow-up.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities and Rouge Rescue events on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Oakland County's 20<sup>th</sup> annual Kids' Clean Water Calendar Contest.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted the Rouge River Water Festival held at the Cranbrook Institute of Science.
- ◆ ARC Staff took calls from a Plymouth resident about becoming a member of the ARC and explained to them how membership works and encouraged them to attend the RRAC meetings.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded to Wayne County a concern the ARC received from OHM during a field investigation for an infrastructure project that had suspicious signs of a potential illicit discharge on the Lower Rouge.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a call from a citizen regarding potential illegal dumping in Plymouth and forwarded the concern the City of Plymouth.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded the Oakland County request to members for volunteer guides for the Rouge River Water Festival at Cranbrook from September 17-20, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a call from a citizen regarding a detention/treatment pond in Northville Township and forwarded their concern to the Township.
- ◆ ARC Staff met with new representatives from West Bloomfield Twp. to review their ARC benefits on June 7, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded a citizen concern to Farmington Hills regarding a blockage in the river.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded a U-M students request for participation in a story with BridgeDetroit and the Detroit River Story Lab at U-M around the environmental effect of freighters on the Detroit River to Friends of the Detroit River.

## **PURSUING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2024 on behalf of the ARC:

- ◆ EPA Environmental Justice Underserved Communities – The ARC received an EPA grant in August in the amount of \$797,648 for design of the Inkster Park EJ components. The grant is for amenities, which include, kayak launch/portage, a new bridge, trails/boardwalks, public river/fishing access.
- ◆ EPA Inkster Restoration Implementation – The ARC received an EPA grant in August 2024 in the amount of \$3,500,000 for the implementation of the habitat restoration design developed by the ARC under its EPA design grant for Wilcox/Inkster/Phoenix. The project will restore and enhance 14 acres of habitat and 500 feet of stream, which includes wetland, wet meadow and riparian areas that will benefit fish and wildlife habitat and populations in the Rouge River AOC at Inkster Park.
- ◆ EPA Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration Perrin Design - The ARC received an EPA grant in October 2024 in the amount of \$400,000 for design of habitat at Perrin Park in the Wayne County Park system and includes 4 acres of habitat and 700 feet of stream, including wetland/wet meadows, riparian areas, and forests. The grant began November 2024 and goes through June 2026.
- ◆ USDA FY24 Forest Service GLRI Forest Restoration Grant – The ARC submitted an application that included trees for ARC Members (1,880 trees in 17 member communities, 11 underserved), FOTR Community outreach and stewardship training. (grant amount \$299,500, award pending)

- ◆ EGLE FY25 Watershed Council Grant – The ARC submitted an application for public education design of materials in Spanish and Arabic for underserved communities, printing of educational materials, and preparation of grant applications (grant amount \$28,700, award pending)

Additional grant activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff encouraged the members to submit project ideas that can potentially be used as stream mitigation sites by developers.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared a letter of support for the Friends of the Rouge EGLE Nonpoint Source Program’s Watershed Management Planning Grant to develop a technical update to the Rouge River Watershed Management Plan for Johnson Creek.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared a letter of support for the grant “Building Community and Coastal Resilience through Green Stormwater Infrastructure across Southeast Michigan” submitted by the following organizations: Huron River Watershed Council, Friends of the Rouge River, Clinton River Watershed Council, and the Friends of the Detroit River.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared a letter of support for Wayne County Parks NFWF grant application for funding to conduct invasive species removal in previous GLRI funded projects in their parks.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared a letter of support for the City of Inkster’s TAP grant application for the Greenway Trail Phase III.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a request from the City of Detroit for the ARC to act as the fiduciary for a Rouge Habitat Restoration project located in the City of Detroit. EPA is in the process of moving this AOC project forward and the City requested and feels based on the ARC’s background, that they would be better served if the ARC took the lead on the grant. The request was forwarded to the ARC Executive Committee and the Full ARC and a reply was prepared to the City of Detroit saying that the ARC would serve as the fiduciary with the assurance that time to manage the grant would be included in the grant application.
- ◆ ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC’s status in the Federal government’s System for Award Management (SAM), Grants.gov and with the DUNS number. These are required to be current and renewed annually to apply for federal grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC’s application for various grant applications throughout 2024.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ◆ ARC Staff attended the information webinar on March 26, 2024, hosted by the River Network for an upcoming learning session where you can hear from the Environmental Protection Network (EPN) on EPA’s Community Change Grants Program (CCGP).
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the EGLE webinar on June 12, 2024, on Michigan’s Environmental Justice Impact Grants and the Michigan Justice40 Accelerator
- ◆ ARC Staff attended EPA’s National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Call on July 16, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended EGLE’s FY25 Watershed Council Grant webinar on October 29, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund grant webinar on September 5, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Forest Service’s informational webinar on July 11, 2024, regarding phytoremediation for Healthy Watersheds for future GLRI grant applications.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended a training webinar on EPA’s EJSCREEN 2.3, EPA’s Environmental Justice Mapping Tool on July 10, 2024.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for two (2) Technical Committee meetings on March 5, 2024, and October 24, 2024. Topics in March included IDEP findings, investigation assistance needs from communities, SEMCOGs post construction reporting tool, and permit progress reporting. In addition, the [ECT work plan for IDEP investigations](#) was approved by the Technical Committee. Topics of the October meeting included review of the revised collaborative plans, need for updated outfalls and points of discharge, IDEP investigation recap, training updates, and review of the 2025 budget recommendations.

### IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties.

ARC Staff conducted investigations in Oakland County in the cities of Beverly Hills, Birmingham and Novi. ARC Staff assisted Wayne County with investigations in Livonia. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and summarized in the [2024 ARC IDEP Summary](#).

Wayne County Department of Public Services, Environmental Services Division (ESD) conducted advanced investigations in the cities of Plymouth and Livonia and are detailed in the [2024 Wayne County IDEP Summary](#).

The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioners Office conducted their alternative procedure for ongoing monitoring of all open and enclosed County designated drains for illicit discharges. These activities occurred within the Rouge watershed communities within the Clinton-Oakland Sanitary Disposal System, the George W. Kuhn Sanitary Disposal System and the Evergreen-Farmington Sanitary Disposal System and are detailed in the [2024 Oakland County IDEP Summary](#).

### OUTFALL DRY WEATHER SCREENING

Outfall dry weather screening efforts have begun in compliance with the Collaborative IDEP requirements that are anticipated to be approved by EGLE. To support screening all ARC community outfalls, ARC staff have compiled updated outfall data provided by ARC communities and developed a screening protocol to be used to screen outfalls. This will allow for consistency and collaboration among ARC communities to achieve the goal of dry weather screening all outfalls with maximum efficiency. By using GIS to collect outfall screening data, we will be able to easily manage data and ensure that all outfalls are screened in a consistent manner. In 2024, the ARC began dry weather screening outfalls and 46 outfalls have been screened. Screening occurred in the cities of Plymouth, Birmingham, Inkster, Livonia, Garden City and Westland.

### ROUGE RIVER WATERSHED INVESTIGATIONAL SAMPLING

In the fall of 2023, the ARC received funding from the Erb Family Foundation to perform investigational *E.coli* sampling to identify where sanitary sewage is entering the Rouge River and provide training to municipal staff on how to comply with their stormwater permit. In 2024, ARC staff prepared a sampling

plan, secured lab services, recorded rainfall data and collected instream grab samples at 37 sites. Sampling was performed weekly for 20 consecutive weeks within the Middle, Upper, and Main branches of the Rouge River.

Concurrently, the WCDPS collected instream grab samples at 7 sites within the Lower Branch. This sampling was performed for 17 weeks. The sampling began in May and was completed in mid-September. A total of 859 individual *E.coli* samples were taken regardless of weather conditions. Working collaboratively with WCDPS-ESD, geometric means were calculated from sampling data from each of the 44 sites and partitioned based on dry and wet-weather conditions. These findings indicated significant increases in *E. coli* levels during wet weather, as well as certain areas where the geometric mean for *E. coli* was over 1,000 MPN/100mL during dry weather.

### **IDEP TRAINING**

ARC Staff coordinated with SEMCOG to provide and encourage ARC member participation in regional IDEP and Pollution Prevention Good Housekeeping training courses sponsored by SEMCOG. The IDEP Alert Observer training held on October 8, 2024, was attended by 47 people. The IDEP Investigator training held on October 8, 2024, was attended by 32 people. The IDEP Alert Observer training held October 9, 2024, was attended by 50 people. The IDEP Investigator training held on October 9, 2024, was attended by 42 people. An additional IDEP Investigator training was held on November 13, 2024 and was attended by 20 people. A Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping Webinar was held on October 10, 2024, and was attended by 74 people. In addition, a Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping site visit in Farmington Hills was held on October 16, 2024, and was attended by 25 people.

### **TMDL IMPLEMENTATION**

Revisions were made to the ARC Collaborative TMDL Plan in response to EGLE comments and negotiations with EGLE.

### **MS4 PERMIT**

2024 Activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff met with EGLE to review Collaborative Plan comments on January 11, 2024.
- ◆ In 2024, ARC Staff revised the next permit's (2024-2031) [Collaborative Public Participation Plan](#), [Collaborative Public Education Plan](#), [Collaborative IDEP Plan](#) and [Collaborative TMDL Plan](#) and submitted to EGLE.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared a template for the annual Alternative Compliance Report that was due for Post Construction Stormwater Control. ARC Staff shared with permittees a webinar link and encouraged them to use the tool developed by SEMCOG, in collaboration with member agencies, to aid in reporting and tracking post-construction activities.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with member communities on permit questions.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with EGLE throughout the year on member community permits.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended Multi-Regional IDEP/TMDL Collaboration meetings on February 26, August 7 and December 19, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff supported communities during EGLE permit audits and audit follow-up including Livonia, Redford Township, Southfield, Northville Township, City of Wayne, Garden City, Inkster, Melvindale, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, and Birmingham.

- ARC Staff shared information regarding the Stormwater Utility Act and how to voice support. The Stormwater Utility Act (Michigan Senate Bill 660) was recently voted out of committee and will head to a vote on the floor of the Michigan State Senate.
- ARC Staff met with SEMCOG regarding the MS4 Permit on April 29, 2024.
- ARC Staff reminded ARC Members that the Collaborative IDEP plan requires the ARC to maintain an up-to-date GIS map of stormwater infrastructure and requested that all collaborative plan participants provide the ARC with updated GIS data every year, if there are any updates to their systems.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for two (2) PIE Committee meetings on March 5 and October 24, 2024. Topics included, seasonal poster distribution, education materials in the communities, reviewing the topic for the article and ad graphic, mechanism to report pollution complaints or illicit discharges, review of the revised 8-year plan and the 2025 budget recommendations. ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS

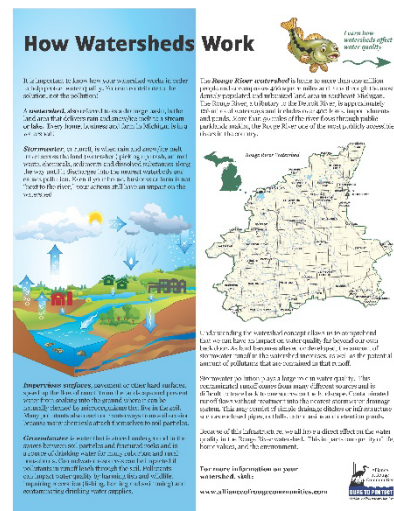
ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2024. More than 24,617 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. Several giveaways were restocked in 2024 including fertilizer clips, pet waste containers and jar openers. In addition, brochures including the detention pond manual and the ARC’s general brochure were restocked. ARC Staff surveyed ARC Members prior to creating new public education items to determine the topic. New items in 2024 included a social media graphic and newsletter article which focused on how the public can all reduce flooding in the Rouge River. Distribution details are included in the [PIE Materials Distribution Report](#). Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2024.

#### When it Comes to Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing!

This tri-fold brochure focuses on changing chemical use to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. It provides information on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. The brochure also provides valuable links to southeast Michigan County’s HHW collection events. A total of 1,090 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for Clean Water Brochure

The Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure educates the public about healthy habits for clean water. The brochure has been distributed to members, realtors,



How Watersheds Work brochure

and homeowners' associations within the Rouge River watershed. A total of 1,004 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### How Watersheds Work/How Water Quality Works

This brochure focuses on what a watershed is, how it works, and its relationship to water quality. It also explains the sources that degrade water quality and provides changes the public can make to reduce the impact they have on water quality. A total of 4,740 copies were distributed to ARC members.

#### Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries, or other buildings that the public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the public at community events. A total of 280 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### Have a Business in the Rouge River Watershed?

This flyer educates business owners that are in the Rouge River watershed on best management practices that can be incorporated to protect water quality inside, outside and under their business. A total of 450 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities and includes more information on some of the ARC's restoration activities. ARC Staff restocked the brochure in 2024 ordering 1,500 copies. A total of 3,260 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure describes the ARC, member benefits, projects, and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

#### Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office Environmental Team. A total of 449 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

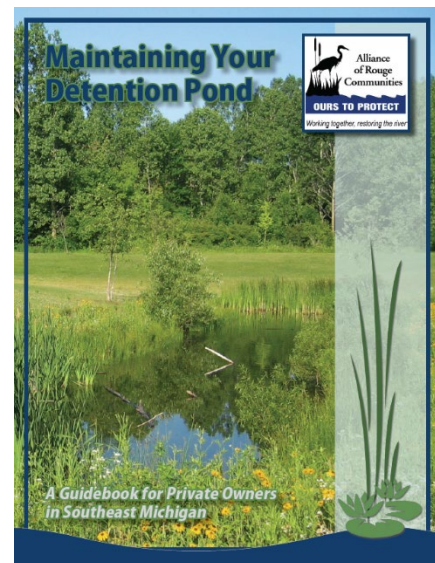
A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds. ARC Staff restocked the manuals in 2024 ordering 2,000 copies. A total of 265 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

#### Black-Eyed Susan Seeds and Tip Card

Black-eyed Susan seed packets are distributed to the general public along with a tip card which educates them on the benefits of native plants. 30 seed packets were distributed in 2024.

#### Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees. A total of 1,270 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.



Detention Pond Maintenance manual

### Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. A total of 2,040 copies were distributed in 2024.

### Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public. ARC Staff restocked the bookmarks in 2024 ordering 5,000 copies. A total of 1,450 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

### Additional Rouge Grant and SEMCOG Printed Pieces

The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continues to distribute those when requested. A total of 1,015 copies were sent filling requests in 2024.

## **ARC BANNERS**

As part of the Collaborative PEP the ARC committed to creating static display banners throughout the permit cycle. Below are the banners that have been previously created and continue to be rotated throughout the watershed (see [Banner Report](#)) where ARC member communities sign up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 2 weeks at a time. In 2024 the ARC’s banners were displayed at 69 community locations.

- ◆ *ARC General Banners (2 sets)* - focuses on the connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality.
- ◆ *Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing* - focuses on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. It also provides links to southeast Michigan County’s HHW collection events.
- ◆ *Business Owners – Have a Business in the Rouge River Watershed* – educates business owners that are in the Rouge River watershed on best management practices that can be incorporated to protect water quality inside, outside and under their business.
- ◆ *How Watersheds Work/How Water Quality Works* - focuses on what a watershed is, how it works, and its relationship to water quality. It also explains the sources that degrade water quality and provides changes the public can make to reduce the impact they have on water quality.



**Banners displayed in Livonia with corresponding brochures**

2024 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC staff ordered a separate brochure display that travels with each banner. The brochure display includes the corresponding brochure to match the banner and then also has the ARC general brochure that the public can take with them.
- ◆ ARC Staff coordinated an email and mailing that went out to all libraries in the Rouge Watershed in September 2024, offering copies of the ARC’s seasonal posters and attended Cranbrook’s Environmental Education Outreach event. Through these outreach events to teachers and libraries 124 posters were distributed in 2024.

### **COMMUNITY ARTICLE /AD GRAPHIC**

ARC Staff have created articles that ARC members can use in their community newsletters or magazines along with an ad graphic on the same topic that can be used on websites and social media. Previously created articles and ad graphics have been posted to the ARC’s website and Facebook account. The previously created articles/ad graphic topics include:

- ◆ *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!*
- ◆ *What Is a Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?*
- ◆ *When it comes to household chemicals – change is a good thing!*
- ◆ *Let’s all dispose of fats, oils & grease (FOG) properly.*
- ◆ *Business owners – protect water quality inside, outside & under your building!*
- ◆ *Water quality solutions*

2024 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2024 titled *We Can All Reduce Flooding in The Rouge River* and can be found on the [ARC’s website](#).

### **GIVEAWAYS**

#### *Pet Waste Containers*

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message “*In the Bag, Not the River*”. A total of 3,364 were distributed to communities in 2024.

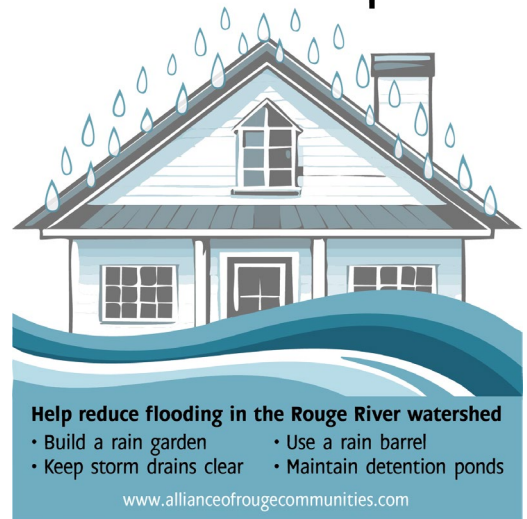
#### *Fertilizer Clips*

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: “Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly.” A total of 2,012 clips were distributed to communities in 2024.

#### *Jar Opener*

The message on the jar opener includes “If you live here (state of Michigan), you live in a watershed” and lists several activities that the public can do to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. A total of 1,655 were distributed to ARC members for giveaways in their facilities that the public visit in 2024.

## **Slow Rainfall to Help Us All!**



**Ad graphic created in 2024.**

## **ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

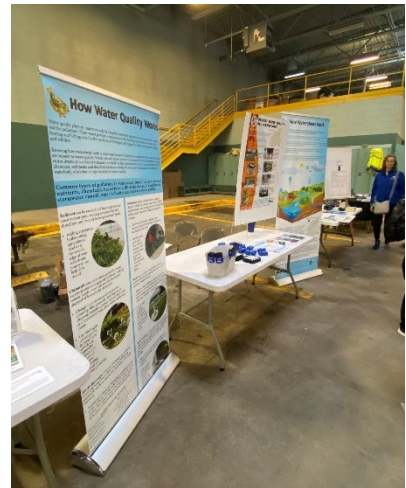
ARC Staff continued adding additional information and content to the ARC's website at [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com), providing more information for the general public on what they can do to help protect water quality and promotes the ARC's restoration activities in the watershed. The website continues to provide ARC members valuable information to assist with meeting their stormwater permits while providing educational information on protecting the Rouge River Watershed. There was an increase in visitors in 2024 with more than 11,200 views.

ARC Staff initiated a [Facebook account](#) for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities. ARC Staff added 39 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC member communities to Like and Share the ARC's posts. The ARC's Facebook account had 595 followers, and 504 total page likes with a page reach of more than 22,500 during 2024. ARC Staff also responded to 12 public comments and questions received on the ARC Facebook account or forwarded them to ARC member representatives for follow-up. ARC Staff also responded to 17 emails received through the ARC's website or forwarded them to the appropriate ARC member representative for follow-up.

Details on the traffic and posts on the ARC's website and Facebook can be found in the [Electronic Media Report](#).

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

The 2024 PIE outreach activities included presentations, supporting Friends of the Rouge monitoring events and promoting various watershed events. The detailed report is provided in the [Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report](#). The ARC also promoted Cooperating Partners events including Friends of the Rouge.



**ARC display at Birmingham Open House**

Additional 2024 Activities included:

- ◆ The ARC supported and promoted two Friends of the Rouge monitoring events in 2024 including the Winter Stonefly Search and the Spring Bug Hunt
- ◆ ARC Staff received an email from a volunteer on a city committee in Edwardsville, Illinois was stated they are in the early stages of a project for waterway signage in their area and requested information on how the ARC completed their road sign campaign. ARC Staff summarized our campaign and provided the image files for their use along with vendor contacts for the sign production.
- ◆ The ARC received an email from a Northwest Detroit resident inquiring about purchasing the "Ours to Protect" road signs. ARC Staff had 3 extra road signs and offered them at no charge and delivered the signs to the resident.
- ◆ ARC Staff hosted a table at Cranbrook Institute of Science's Environmental Education Outreach Expo on August 12, 2024,



**ARC display at Cranbrook's Environmental Education Outreach Expo.**

with the goal of bringing teachers from across the Metro Detroit area to explore environmental education outreach programs, field trips, and/or resources available to them and their classrooms.

- ◆ ARC Staff hosted a booth at Cranbrook Institute of Science's Spring into Science event on March 28, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended and hosted a booth at the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's office Annual Regional Stormwater Summit on October 4, 2024.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided public education items for an Earth Day event in Heritage Park in Farmington Hills and included handouts, pet waste containers, fertilizer clips and jar openers.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared EGLE's 2024 SepticSmart Week: Know Your Septic System! Webinar that was held on September 16, 2024, with members.
- ◆ The ARC used Near Perfect Media in 2024 to promote the Fish Hatchery Park grand opening event on September 6 that was attended by Senator Stabenow and Congresswoman Dingell. Near Perfect Media is contracted to promote ARC activities, events and restoration projects through TV coverage and news/magazine articles benefiting the ARC's mission and all the ARC member communities.



**ARC booth at Regional Stormwater Summit**



Alliance  
of Rouge  
Communities

**OURS TO PROTECT**

*Working together, restoring the river*

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



*John Gundry, Wayne County Parks, speaking at Wilcox Lake HOW tour*



*Melanie Foose, EGLE, speaking at HFE Fishway at HOW tour*



*ARC booth at Cranbrook's Spring into Science event*



*IDEP televising in Wayne*

March 2026

Submitted by:



2001 Commonwealth Blvd., Suite 300  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

# ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2025 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES

### ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### **FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS**

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including notetaking and tallying of votes at the meeting), preparation of E-votes, and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties.

[Full ARC meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported two (2) Executive Committee meetings and (2) special meetings with EGLE including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, preparation of E-votes, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

[ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, budget amendments, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated a Finance Committee meeting on November 13, 2025, and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding budget amendments and the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the November Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities by staff, consultants, contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ The 2024 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in March 2025.

- ◆ ARC Staff developed an Interagency Agreement (IAA) between the ARC and Northville Township for the Township's SEMCOG grant.
- ◆ ARC Staff coordinated and held a meeting with Oakland Community College to discuss the college joining the ARC on July 10, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff developed a Services Agreement between the ARC and Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) for the Section 205(j) grant that FOTR received for the Johnson Creek Land Conservation Project.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff attended the following EPA webinars: March 11, 2025 – EPA Grants Competition Process, March 12, 2025 – EPA Grants Closeout Process, May 21, 2025 – Complying with EPA Grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the webinar What's New in ASAP.gov held on May 22, 2025 and the How to Make a Payment Request on May 28, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Wayne County Supplier Portal Virtual Training on September 29, 2025, as it relates to the ARC's grant funded projects that include amenities work for which Wayne County is reimbursing the ARC.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ◆ ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2024 Single Audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2026 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 5% increase in dues along with a revised 8-Year Plan for 2024-2031.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills.

## **OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE**

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

## GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff provided project information for EPA’s website on various ARC restoration projects.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended Great Lakes Days in Washington, D.C. on March 4-6, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Great Lakes Commission meeting on October 29-30, 2025, in Duluth, Minnesota.
- ◆ On January 8, 2025, ARC Staff attended a discussion with Administrator Debra Shore on EPA Region 5’s environmental progress and suggestions for priorities and focus areas for the future.
- ◆ The ARC was asked by EPA to host EPA Region V Administrator Vogel, Teresa Seidel EPA Great Lakes Program Office Director, and Melanie Foose, EGLE on a visit to the “Rouge” in the fall of 2025. In addition, students from The Henry Ford Academy attended. The tour included stops at the Oxbow at The Henry Ford, the Rouge River Concrete Channel, and the Fishway project sites.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended and presented posters of the ARC’s work at the EPA Area of Concern Cross-Agency Partnership Summit on September 16-18, 2025, in Toledo, Ohio.
- ◆ ARC staff attended Representative Dingell’s Town Hall meeting, March 20, 2025.



ARC Staff attending Great Lakes Days in Washington, DC



EPA Region V Administrator Vogel with The Henry Ford Academy students along the Rouge River concrete channel

## STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff attended SPAC meetings on February 26 and October 22.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended and chaired SPAC Habitat Subcommittee meetings in 2025 on February 6 and August 12.

## ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by SEMCOG. The campaign provides a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging encourages water resource stewardship, encourages adoption of best management practices, and supports long-term investment in infrastructure.
- ◆ ARC Staff and SEMCOG met March 14, 2025, to coordinate 2025 One Water Campaign activities.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the WSU/MSU/UM NFWF - Integrating Nature Based Solutions into a Comprehensive Stormwater Strategy for Southeast Michigan (NFWF-NBS Project) meetings held on January 31, March 21, May 22, October 3, and December 5, 2025. Topics included examining existing data-based decision making for implementing NBS; example NBS project in Southeast Michigan including a site tour/presentation by ARC staff of the Rouge Fishway; Review of draft

tools for developing NBS; Discuss proposed process and supporting tools and review related concurrent NBS/flood control projects; and, Discussion on mechanisms for broad-scale implementation of NBS in Southeast Michigan.

- ◆ ARC Staff attended the One Water Partnership meeting on June 26, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended EGLE’s Community Engagement: Some Partnerships Basics workshop on February 10, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued to participate in SEMCOG’s Partners for Clean Water meetings on January 28, February 25, June 24 and October 28, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in other SEMCOG regional water/environmental restoration meetings including a Materials Management Planning meeting March 5, the SEMCOG General Assembly March 20, iFlood outreach coordination May 16, a SEMCOG Planning Assistance Grant Program workshop held on August 6, and SEMCOG’s regional Flooding Task Force meetings on September 18 and December 2, 2025. ARC Staff met with Don Carpenter on May 29 to discuss SEMCOG’s Flooding & Infrastructure Resilience Project for Southeast Michigan. They were interested in meeting with Rouge River Watershed stakeholders to provide an update on the initial regional nature-based solutions analysis and get feedback on potential locations to expand to the feasibility assessment. ARC Staff also shared this information with targeted member community sites to gauge interest in establishing iFlood gages to support the project.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued to participate in the GLWA Watershed Hub work group and full group meetings to advance water quality monitoring and MS4 compliance collaboration in the region on January 22, March 5, April 23, June 4, August 27 and October 22, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Healing Our Waters (HOW) conference on September 25-25, 2025, in Rochester, New York.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Great Lakes Stormwater Collaborative - Soil Decomposition and Amendment Webinar on August 28, 2025. Speakers described and encouraged institutionalizing new urban soil health practices to restore infiltration capacity lost due to the legacy of compacted disturbed soils in our urban and suburban areas.
- ◆ ARC received the following awards for their restoration projects: Keep Michigan Beautiful Presidents Award – Colonial & Venoy Park Restoration. ARC Staff also gave a presentation on the ARC’s Colonial & Venoy restoration project at the Keep Michigan Beautiful luncheon on April 8, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff and Wayne County gave a presentation titled Wayne County DPS and ARC Investigational Sampling Report 2024 at the GLWA Watershed Hub Webinar on April 23, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended meetings on the Central Michigan University’s MI Climate Resilient Watershed Project on January 20 and April 24, 2025. The ARC is a project partner and ARC Staff coordinated with CMU project staff to include the ARC logo on the project website and outreach materials. ARC Staff also assisted with promoting use of the iFlood online citizen science reporting tool and the project’s Adopt a Gage deployment and training efforts.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Great Lakes Commission webinar on June 18, 2025, titled Realizing Resilience: Coordinating efforts from across the Great Lakes Basin.



Keep Michigan Beautiful Award for Colonial & Venoy Park Restoration Project

- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Multi-Regional IDEP/TMDL workgroup on February 13, February 20, March 6, April 3, April 17, May 1, May 29, July 10, July 17 and August 21, 2025. This year’s effort included working with the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center (GLELC) and the Multi-Regional partners to research and sift through the alignment of federal and state laws, regulations, permit conditions and state guidance with the definitions of maximum extent practicable, technical feasibility and financial capacity. A memo report was generated and submitted to EGLE from SEMCOG and MWEA on behalf of the Multi-Regional Group requesting re-establishment of a “MS4 Stakeholder Workgroup to ensure MEP determinations reflect both state water quality goals while considering practical limitations and financial feasibility”.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the MWEA 2025 Watershed & Stormwater Seminar on December 16, 2025, and participated in MWEA’s Watershed and Stormwater Committee meetings held virtually February 12, May 7 and September 24.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted the Friends of the Rouge Winter Stonefly Search (1/25/25), Spring Bug Hunt (4/12/25) and Fall Bug Hunt (10/11/25) on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff renewed the ARC as part of the group membership with the Center for Watershed Protection.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared with members WEF’s biennial 2025 National MS4 Needs Assessment Survey.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared with members the SEMCOG University: Resilience Tools held on March 12, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff presented the highlights of the restoration work completed at Fish Hatchery Park at the Friends of the Rouge’s fish demonstration at Fish Hatchery Park on September 11, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Oakland County Regional Stormwater Summit on October 10, 2025, with a tabletop display promoting the ARC and offering public educational materials and messaging.

## MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded various emails from residents to community representatives for follow-up.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities and Rouge Rescue events on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff held a coordination meeting with Bloomfield Township on October 22, 2025, to brief the Township’s new Public Services Director regarding ARC activities and benefits of membership.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted Wayne County Parks in preparing an application for the mParks Foundation Award for recognition for outstanding communities and parks and recreation. The GLRI restoration projects in Bell, Lola, Sherwood, Venoy, and Colonial Park were submitted. Wayne County Parks did not receive the award.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with Canton Township on their no-mow zones by providing the ARC logo.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Oakland County’s 21<sup>st</sup> annual Kids’ Clean Water Calendar Contest.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted the Rouge River Water Festival held at the Cranbrook Institute of Science.
- ◆ ARC staff provided perspective and quote for a Detroit News article on the limited space available in disposal facilities (specifically Confined Disposal Facilities – CDFs) in the Great Lakes and how it affects contaminated sediment removal work that needs to be done along the river.
- ◆ The ARC received an email from a student at Canton High School looking for ways to complete a capstone project in their biomedical science class around the Wilcox and Phoenix Lake Restoration project. ARC staff responded with some options for them to discuss with their teacher. In the end they decided to do something else.

- ◆ The ARC received an email from an intern creating a Youth water Exploration Program as a Water Activist with the Michigan League of conservation Voters. They were looking for a place to host the program and ARC Staff suggested that they contact Friends of the Rouge for assistance.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in a zoom call with a reporter from WXYZ to talk about the Inkster Park Design project on October 30, 2025. ARC Staff followed up the call with information on the project, including a link the ARC's website and contacts for both the City of Inkster and Wayne County Parks
- ◆ The ARC received an email from a Plymouth resident asking about the water quality of Wilcox Lake after the restoration. The email was forwarded to Wayne County for response.
- ◆ The ARC received an email from a senior at Dartmouth College conducting qualitative research for their geography thesis on Rust Belt river restoration and place identity. The ARC suggested that they contact Friends of the Rouge.
- ◆ The ARC received an email from a person interested in any plans or studies related to containment or remediation of water leaching from Zug Island. The ARC responded, saying that unfortunately we do not have any information on the issue.
- ◆ The ARC received an email and had a call with the Michigan Environmental Council regarding state level legislative policy around GSI they were developing.
- ◆ ARC Staff spoke to a resident near the Bell Creek restoration site to answer some questions they had about the site.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a message on Facebook regarding the restoration efforts at Bell Creek regarding phragmites growing in the project site. The comment was forwarded to Wayne County Parks.
- ◆ The ARC staff talked with a citizen working on a story for the Plymouth Library Journalism program about the Wilcox Lake restoration project in August 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided the artwork for the Ours to Protect watershed road sign to the City of Novi so that they could replace some of their damaged signs.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared EGLE's 2025 SepticSmart Week: Know Your Septic System! Webinar that was held on September 15, 2025, with members.
- ◆ ARC staff talked to citizens regarding damaged Rouge River watershed road signs in two communities and had them contact Oakland County, the City of Southfield and the City of Farmington Hills.

### **PURSUING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2025 on behalf of the ARC:

- ◆ EPA Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration Merriman Implementation - The ARC received an EPA grant in July 2025 in the amount of \$1,202,670 for implementation of habitat at Merriman Park in the Wayne County Park system and will restore/create approximately 5 acres of wetland/wet prairie/riparian habitat that will improve habitat conditions for wildlife, particularly native avian, herpetofauna, aquatic macroinvertebrates, and pollinator species. The grant began July 2025 and goes through December 2028.
- ◆ EPA Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration Wallaceville - The ARC developed a pre-grant application for an EPA grant in November 2025 in the amount of \$4,454,280 for implementation of habitat at Wallaceville Park in the Wayne County Park system. EPA and the ARC are in the process of determining the final scope of the grant. It is hoped that the grant will restore/create approximately 25.7 acres of wetland/wet prairie/riparian habitat that will improve habitat conditions for wildlife, particularly native avian, herpetofauna, aquatic macroinvertebrates, and pollinator species. Final determination of scope will occur in early 2026.

- ◆ Rouge River Area of Concern – Patton Park Restoration Design - - The ARC received an EPA grant in August 2025 in the amount of \$300,000 for design of at Patton Park in the City of Detroit. The project will design approximately 7 acres of wetland/wet meadow/prairie woodland habitat. The grant began August 2025 and goes through December 2026.
- ◆ Healing Our Waters (HOW) Rouge AOC Tour- The received a grant from HOW in June 2025 in the amount of \$9,970 for organizing and conducting tours for the HFE Fishway and Wilcox Restoration projects to interested parties and state/federal congressional representatives.
- ◆ Building Capacity for Subwatershed Plan Development – the ARC submitted an application to EGLE’s Watershed Council Grant in December, 2025, in the amount of \$40,000. The grant would initiate the conversion of the existing HUC-8 scale RRWMP into branch HUC-10 or subwatershed HUC-12 scale plans to guide watershed restoration and protection and to maintain eligibility for federal funding. Award pending.
- ◆ Rouge River AOC PAC Support – The ARC submitted a grant to EGLE in October, 2025, in the amount of \$115,000 on behalf of the Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC), Activities included general business activities, conduct macroinvertebrate/fish monitoring, and host three outreach public meetings. Award pending.

Additional grant activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff encouraged the members to submit project ideas using the [“Rouge River Watershed Potential Project Template”](#) that is available on the ARC website.
- ◆ ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC’s status in the Federal government’s System for Award Management (SAM) and Grants.gov. These are required to be current and renewed annually to apply for federal grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC’s application for various grant applications throughout 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Water Watchers – Grant Writing Training presented by Fresh Water Future on January 9, 2025.
- ◆ U of M Letter of Support and Collaboration for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - National Coastal Resilience Fund– Proposal: "Implementing a Framework for the Integration of NbS-Based Coastal Hazard Mitigation Projects with Community Engagement and Co-Design at Scale in SE Michigan."
- ◆ ARC is a project partner in the Johnson Creek Land Conservation Project that Friends of the Rouge was awarded in 2025 through the EGLE’s Non-Point Source (205j) Planning Grant Program. ARC Staff participated in the project team kick-off meeting October 22 as well as Stakeholder Coordination meetings held November 19 and December 17, 2025.
- ◆ ARC is a project partner in the Northville Township Legacy Park Blue/Green Corridor Plan Project that the Township was awarded in 2025 through SEMCOG’s Planning Assistance Grant Program. ARC Staff performed field reconnaissance, held a coordination/kick-off meeting with the Township and began the development of project concepts for the Corridor Plan.
- ◆ The ARC prepared a letter of support on January 31, 2025, for the City of Inkster’s TAP grant application for the Greenway Trail Phase III project.
- ◆ ARC Staff supported FOTR with a pre-proposal for road crossing culvert survey and monitoring within the Johnson Creek subwatershed to the MDNR’s Fisheries Habitat Grant Program.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in working meetings with Wayne County to support the development an EGLE grant for the administrative costs to prepare, implement and maintain a materials management plan (MMP) for Wayne County. Pursuit of the grant remains under consideration by the County.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants or attended an informational webinar and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ◆ ARC Staff held a coordination meeting with Farmington Hills, Southfield regarding potential grant project application(s) to SEMCOG Planning Assistance Grant Program within the Pebble Creek or Main Branch of the Rouge River.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the MDNR Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grant webinar on January 24, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund grant webinar on September 18, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the EGLE training on applying for the PAC support grant through their new EGX system on July 10, 2025.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Sustain our Great Lakes webinar on January 23, 2025.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for two (2) Technical Committee meetings on March 6, 2025, and November 4, 2025. Topics in March included IDEP findings, investigation assistance and data needs from communities, multi-regional MS4 collaboration, GLWA watershed hub work group, CMU's MI Resilient Watershed Project, and WSU/MSU/UofM nature-based solutions project. In addition, the [ECT work plan for IDEP investigations](#) and the [Wayne County IDEP investigations work plan](#) were approved by the Technical Committee. Topics of the November meeting included review of the revised collaborative plans, summary of outfall screening, need for updated outfall and points of discharge GIS data, IDEP investigation recap, training updates, and review of the 2025 budget recommendations.

### INVESTIGATIONAL SAMPLING - OUTFALL DRY WEATHER SCREENING

Utilizing the instream monitoring and data analysis performed in 2024, ARC staff continued the Erb Family Foundation funded Rouge River Investigational Sampling to target and perform outfall screening of 1,061 outfalls within 19 of the ARC communities. These efforts were primarily concentrated in the Rouge Valley Sewage Disposal System area. ARC staff prioritized screening outfalls located directly upstream of sample points that were found to have dry weather geometric means above 1,000 MPN/100mL during the instream sampling that was conducted in 2024. Of these outfalls, 1,021 were categorized as Category D, meaning they did not show signs of illicit discharges. The remaining 38 outfalls were found to have elevated *E. coli* levels and further assessment was initiated to identify the source of the elevated *E.coli*. and if an illicit connection from the sanitary sewer system might be present.

### INVESTIGATIONAL SAMPLING - IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties. When outfall screening identified outfalls with *E. coli* levels above 1,000 MPN/100mL, follow-up investigations were initiated. The first step for these investigations was to screen samples for human DNA. Of the 32 outfalls screened for human DNA, 7 were found to have elevated human DNA and were prioritized for further investigations. There were 6 sites that had elevated *E. coli*

levels that were not screened for human DNA. This was due to ongoing investigations being carried out by the City of Plymouth at 3 of these sites. Follow up screening for human DNA is planned for the other 3 sites. In addition, follow-up investigative work was completed at 4 sites that had previously been under investigation. See Table 1 for a list of sites that had follow-up investigations performed in 2025. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and summarized in the [2025 ARC IDEP Summary Report](#), [2025 Oakland County IDEP Summary Report](#), and the [2025 Wayne County IDEP Summary Report](#).

**Table 1**

Permittee	Outfall ID	Status	Result
Birmingham	BH32	Completed	No human source found; urban wildlife suspected
Livonia	U2008221	Completed	Surfactant source addressed
	U2008170	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
	L1619	Completed	No human source found; urban wildlife suspected
	2680	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
Farmington	R	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
Wayne	36	Ongoing	Sewage source identified, correction in process
	47	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
	51	Closed	Investigating possible sewage source
	65	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
Northville	NV45	Ongoing	Follow-up visit found no flow, will re-screen
Plymouth	PY8	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
	PY5	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source
	PY4	Ongoing	Investigating possible sewage source

## **IDEP TRAINING**

ARC Staff coordinated with SEMCOG to provide and encourage ARC member participation in regional IDEP and Pollution Prevention Good Housekeeping training courses sponsored by SEMCOG. The IDEP Alert Observer training held in Oakland County on November 5, 2025, was attended by 35 people. The IDEP Investigator training held in Oakland County on November 5, 2025, was attended by 25 people. The IDEP Alert Observer training held in Wayne County on November 12, 2025, was attended by 65 people. The IDEP Investigator training held in Wayne County on November 12, 2025, was attended by 54 people. A Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping Webinar was held on November 13, 2025, and was attended by 50 people.

ARC Staff created training material and presented a training event that included classroom and site visit experience for ARC member field staff to learn how to screen outfalls. Approximately 15 attendees from four communities participated in the training, which was held in Livonia on March 13, 2025. The goal of this training is for some of the larger ARC communities with capacity to assist in the ARC Staff's efforts to screen all outfalls in the watershed.

## **TMDL IMPLEMENTATION**

Weather conditions were monitored and documented throughout the year to identify opportunities meeting the criteria for wet weather sampling. Wet weather sampling could only be performed within

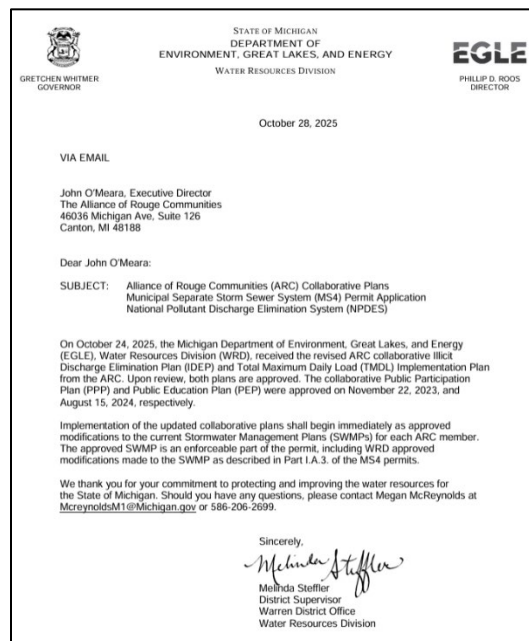
the first hour of runoff coming from a rain event which was preceded by 48 hours of dry weather conditions. Due to the short laboratory hold time of 6 hours for *E. coli* and the limitations of operating laboratory hours, rain events that began between 4 p.m. and 4 a.m., or during a weekend or holiday could not be sampled.

A total of 11 samples were collected from outfalls during 2 wet weather events in 2025. Elevated *E. coli* was identified at 7 of these sites. Human DNA was screened at 5 of them and only one of these sites was found to have elevated human DNA levels.

## MS4 PERMIT

2025 Activities include:

- ARC Staff met with the ARC Executive Committee and EGLE to review Collaborative Plan comments and to finalize revisions and negotiate EGLE approval on August 14, 2025.
- ARC Staff held coordination meeting with the EGLE Rouge River Watershed permit coordinator on August 28, 2025, to discuss Rouge collaborative TMDL final revisions.
- In October 2025, the ARC's collaborative plans for the new permit (2024-2031) were approved by EGLE [Collaborative Public Participation Plan](#), [Collaborative Public Education Plan](#), [Collaborative IDEP Plan](#) and [Collaborative TMDL Plan](#).
- EGLE issued their [approval letter](#) to the ARC Executive Director on October 28, 2025, noting that implementation of the updated collaborative plans (including PPP and PEP previously approved) shall begin immediately as approved modifications to the current Stormwater Management Plans (SWMPs) for each ARC member.
- ARC staff held a coordination meeting with the EGLE Rouge River Watershed permit coordinator on November 14, 2025, to discuss alternative approaches to member facility inspection compliance dye testing.
- ARC Staff communicated with member communities on permit questions.
- ARC Staff communicated with EGLE throughout the year on member community permits.
- ARC Staff shared a template for the annual Alternative Compliance Report that was due for Post Construction Stormwater Control. ARC Staff shared with permittees a webinar link and encouraged them to use the tool developed by SEMCOG, in collaboration with member agencies, to aid in reporting and tracking post-construction activities.
- ARC Staff participated in the Multi-Regional IDEP/TMDL workgroup on February 13, February 20, March 6, April 3, April 17, May 1, May 29, July 10, July 17 and August 21, 2025. This year's effort included working with the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center (GLELC) and the Multi-Regional partners to research and assess the alignment of federal and state laws, regulations, permit conditions and state guidance with the definitions of maximum extent practicable, technical feasibility and financial capacity. A memo report was generated and submitted to EGLE from SEMCOG and MWEA on behalf of the Multi-Regional Group requesting re-establishment of



EGLE permit approval letter

a “MS4 Stakeholder Workgroup to ensure MEP determinations reflect both state water quality goals while considering practical limitations and financial feasibility”.

- ◆ ARC Staff responded to an email from Romulus regarding the Collaborative TMDL Plan and their participation in the plan or reasons to develop their own.
- ◆ ARC Staff supported communities during EGLE permit audits and audit follow-up including Livonia, Redford Township, Plymouth, Dearborn Heights, Novi, Oak Park, Inkster, Lathrup Village and Northville.
- ◆ ARC Staff reminded ARC Members that the Collaborative IDEP Plan (IDEP #1) requires the ARC to maintain an up-to-date GIS map of stormwater infrastructure and requested that all collaborative plan participants provide the ARC with updated GIS data every year, if there are any updates to their systems. Updated information was received from communities which had changes to their GIS data and added to the ARC GIS database.
- ◆ ARC Staff reminded ARC Members that the Collaborative IDEP plan (IDEP #5) requires the ARC to maintain an up-to-date list of contacts for coordinated pollution complaint response. Updated information was received and included in the ARC’s internal records.
- ◆ ARC Staff held coordination meetings with Wayne County Environmental Services Division staff on January 29, February 21 and on March 14 & 25, 2025 to discuss IDEP reporting and implementation as well as potential collaboration for materials management planning.
- ◆ ARC Staff held coordination meetings with Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner staff February 19 and July 11, 2025, to discuss IDEP reporting and implementation as well as OC’s alternative TMDL plan.
- ◆ ARC Staff held a meeting with City of Romulus stormwater consultant regarding the potential for the City to participate in the ARC’s collaborative IDEP and TMDL plans.
- ◆ ARC Staff shared SEMCOGs MS4 Stakeholder Group Survey and encouraged members to participate in the survey. This survey was an initial first step in re-establishment of an MS4 Stakeholder group/process.
- ◆ The ARC shared with ARC Members Oakland County’s Stormwater Standards and Soil Erosion Control Manual updates workshop held on March 18, 2025.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING FACILITATION**

Staff support was provided for two (2) PIE Committee meetings on March 6 and November 4, 2025. Topics included seasonal poster distribution, education materials in the communities, reviewing the topic for the article and ad graphic, mechanism to report pollution complaints or illicit discharges, review of the 2026 budget recommendations. ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS**

ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2025. More than 7,400 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. In 2025, the fertilizer clips were restocked and 3,000 new Michigan native pollinator mix seed packet were stocked. ARC Staff surveyed ARC Members prior to creating new public education items to determine the topic. New items in 2025 included a social media graphic,

newsletter article and static display banner which focused on how the public is the eyes and ears in their community for illegal dumping in the Rouge River. ARC Staff coordinated an automatic mailing of the ARC’s seasonal posters that went out to all community centers, recreation centers and senior centers in the Rouge Watershed in October 2025. Two brochures were developed in 2025 for construction contractors and plumbers/carpet cleaners/power washers doing work in the Rouge River Watershed. Other brochures were updated and restocked. Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2025. Distribution details are included in the [PIE Materials Distribution Report](#).

**What to Know if you Are a Contractor in the Rouge River Watershed**

This four-page brochure was developed in 2025 with printing and distribution to ARC members in the beginning of 2026. The brochure educates construction contractors about their role in protecting water quality in the Rouge River. It also provides an introduction on permits and best management practices.

**When it Comes to Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing!**

This tri-fold brochure focuses on changing chemical use to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. It provides information on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. The brochure also provides valuable links to southeast Michigan County’s HHW collection events. A total of 510 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

**How Watersheds Work/How Water Quality Works**

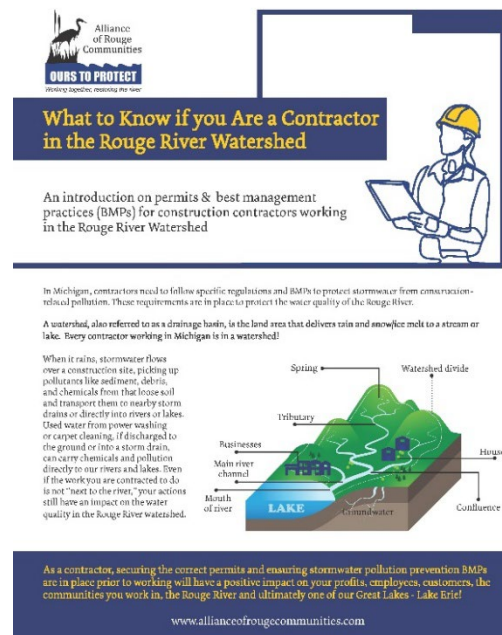
This brochure focuses on what a watershed is, how it works, and its relationship to water quality. It also explains the sources that degrade water quality and encourages changes the public can make to reduce the impact they have on water quality. In 2025, this brochure was restocked with 4,000 copies ordered. A total of 250 copies were distributed to ARC members.

**Have a Business in the Rouge River Watershed?**

This flyer educates business owners that are in the Rouge River watershed on best management practices that can be incorporated to protect water quality inside, outside and under their business. A total of 100 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

**Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for Clean Water Brochure**

The Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure educates the public about healthy habits for clean water. The brochure has been distributed to members, realtors, and homeowners’ associations within the Rouge River watershed. A total of 500 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.



**Construction contractor brochure developed in 2025**

### What to Know if you Are a Plumber, Carpet Cleaner or Power Washer in the Rouge River Watershed

This two-page flyer was developed in 2025 with printing and distribution to ARC members in the beginning of 2026. The brochure educates contractors about their role in protecting water quality in the Rouge River. It also provides an introduction on permits and best management practices.

### Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries, or other buildings that the public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the public at community events. In 2025, ARC staff distributed 512 posters to community centers, recreation centers and senior centers in the Rouge Watershed. An additional 282 copies were sent filling member requests in 2025.

### ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities and includes more information on some of the ARC's restoration activities. A total of 445 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

### ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure describes the ARC, member benefits, projects, and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

### Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office Environmental Team. In 2025 this brochure was updated to reflect current information and 5,000 copies were ordered. A total of 130 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

### Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds. A total of 209 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

### Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees. A total of 50 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

**Carpet Cleaners, Power Washers & Plumbers**  
IMPORTANT: Contact ECT, the county, and the local authority for complete requirements, regulations, and discharge guidance as this brochure is informational and does not cover all requirements.  
MORE INFORMATION: Visit allianceofcommunities.com for more information or scan the QR code for more information and links to county and state websites for contractors working in the Rouge River Watershed.

**Carpet Cleaners**  
In Michigan, carpet cleaning wastewater must be disposed of into the sanitary sewer system, not into a storm drain. Storm drains empty into local rivers and lakes without treatment, and carpet cleaning waste contains pollutants that can harm aquatic life. Improper disposal can lead to fines and environmental damage.

**BMPs**

- Inspect site to determine disposal options.
- Contain all solvents and line controls to prevent spills.
- Filter all wastewater before discharging to sanitary sewer to remove solids.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for all chemicals.
- Train employees on proper disposal procedures.
- Discharge wastewater into an indoor drain that leads to a sanitary sewer. If a sanitary sewer is not available, collect the wastewater in a vehicle tank and dispose of it properly at your facility or designated wastewater disposal site.
- Discharge to the ground may be an option if a groundwater discharge permit is obtained.

**Power Washers**  
Power washers in Michigan need to prevent contaminated wash water from flowing into streets, ditches, or storm drains. Storm drains empty to local rivers and lakes without treatment, and power washing runoff can contain pollutants that harm water quality. Contact ECT and the local authority to determine if a wastewater or groundwater discharge permit is needed.

**BMPs**

- Before starting, sweep, mop, or use absorbents to remove debris, grease and dirt to reduce the amount of contamination to wash water.
- Use containment equipment like berms and mats, drain covers and plugs, absorbent materials, or wet vacuums.
- If using plain water, discharge to an indoor sanitary sewer drain or sink with property owner's and local sewer authority's approval.
- If wash water contains hazardous materials like oil, chemicals, or heavy metals, it must be treated as hazardous waste and require proper disposal and may require a wastewater management plan and discharge permit with ECT or the local authority.

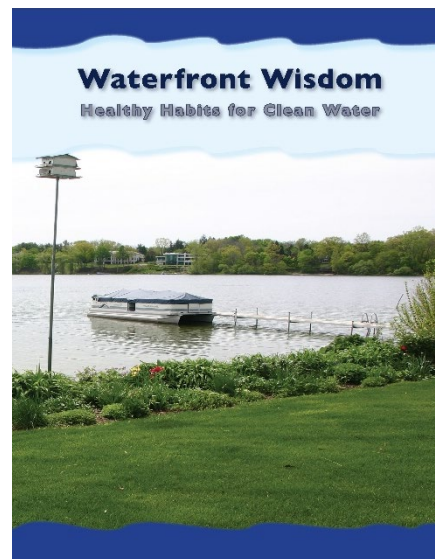
**Plumbers**  
Plumbers working in Michigan must follow specific plumbing codes, obtain the correct permits, prepare pollution prevention plans when needed, and use appropriate techniques to prevent pollution and manage drainage. Coordination with the State and local authority is necessary to prevent environmental contamination and protect water quality.

**BMPs**

- Follow Michigan's code for pipe materials, slope, and depth when working on storm drainage systems to ensure adequate flow and to prevent back-ups and flooding.
- Dispose of waste materials and chemicals properly to ensure they don't enter the storm drain.
- Implement erosion and sediment control measures like silt fences on construction sites.
- When providing downspout extensions, direct roof runoff away from paved areas and toward landscaped areas.
- Become knowledgeable about advanced techniques that provide sustainable drainage solutions when working with French drains, dry wells, or permeable pavers.

www.allianceofrougecommunities.com

### **New flyer geared toward carpet cleaners, power washers and plumbers**



**Waterfront Wisdom content updated in 2025**

### Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. A total of 510 copies were distributed in 2025.

### Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public. A total of 825 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

### Additional Rouge Grant and SEMCOG Printed Pieces

The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continues to distribute those when requested. A total of 100 copies were sent filling requests in 2025.

## GIVEAWAYS

### OneWater Michigan Native Pollinator Mix

In collaboration with the OneWater campaign, the ARC received 3,000 native pollinator seed packets that will be distributed to ARC members beginning in 2026. The seed packet was revised to include the ARC's logo.

### Pet Waste Containers

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message “*In the Bag, Not the River*”. A total of 1,486 were distributed to communities in 2025.

### Fertilizer Clips

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: “Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly.” A total of 1,266 clips were distributed to communities in 2025. In 2025, this item was restocked with 2,000 additional clips ordered.

### Jar Opener

The message on the jar opener includes “If you live here (state of Michigan), you live in a watershed” and lists several activities that the public can do to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. A total of 155 were distributed to ARC members for giveaways in their facilities that the public visit in 2025.

## ARC BANNERS

As part of the Collaborative PEP the ARC committed to creating static display banners throughout the permit cycle. In 2025 a new banner was created encouraging the public to be the eyes and ears in their community when it comes to illegal dumping. Below are the banners that have been previously created and continue to be rotated throughout the watershed (see [Banner Report](#)) where ARC member communities sign up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 2 weeks at a time. In 2025, the ARC's banners were displayed at 48 community locations.

- ◆ **ARC General Banners (2 sets)** - focuses on the connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides,



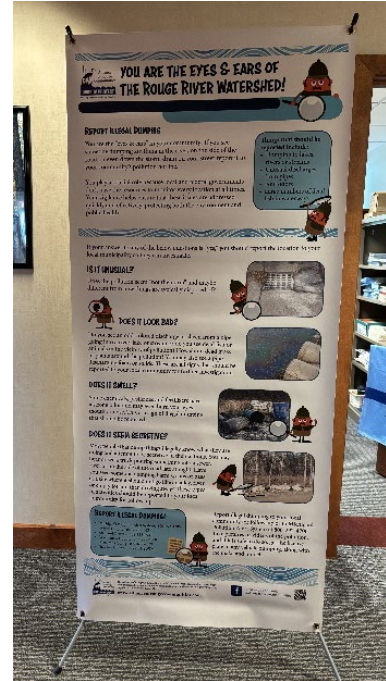
**OneWater Michigan native pollinator seed mix packets**

and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality.

- ◆ *Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing* - focuses on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. It also provides links to southeast Michigan County’s HHW collection events.
- ◆ *Business Owners – Have a Business in the Rouge River Watershed* – educates business owners that are in the Rouge River watershed on best management practices that can be incorporated to protect water quality inside, outside and under their business.
- ◆ *How Watersheds Work/How Water Quality Works* - focuses on what a watershed is, how it works, and its relationship to water quality. It also explains the sources that degrade water quality and encourages changes the public can make to reduce the impact they have on water quality.

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ Due to wear and tear one of the ARC’s General Banner sets was replaced.
- ◆ A new banner was created in 2025 called *You are the Eyes & Ears of the Rouge River Watershed!* – this banner educates the public that they are the eyes and ears in their community when it comes to illegal dumping. It also explains what they need to do and when it needs to be reported.



Eyes and Eras banner created in 2025

**COMMUNITY ARTICLE /AD GRAPHIC**

ARC Staff have created articles that ARC members can use in their community newsletters or magazines along with an ad graphic on the same topic that can be used on websites and social media. Previously created articles and ad graphics have been posted to the ARC’s website and Facebook account. The previously created articles/ad graphic topics include:

- ◆ *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!*
- ◆ *What Is a Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?*
- ◆ *When it comes to household chemicals – change is a good thing!*
- ◆ *Let’s all dispose of fats, oils & grease (FOG) properly.*
- ◆ *Business owners – protect water quality inside, outside & under your building!*
- ◆ *Water quality solutions*
- ◆ *We Can All Reduce Flooding in The Rouge River*

2025 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2025 titled *Report Illegal Dumping in the Rouge River Watershed* and can be found on the [ARC’s website](#).



Ad graphic created in 2025.

## **ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

ARC Staff continued adding additional information and content to the ARC's website at [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com), providing more information for the general public and businesses on what they can do to help protect water quality and promoting the ARC's restoration activities in the watershed. The website continues to provide ARC members valuable information to assist with meeting their stormwater permits while providing educational information on protecting the Rouge River Watershed. There was an increase in visitors in 2025 with more than 13,700 views.

ARC Staff initiated a [Facebook account](#) for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities. ARC Staff added 43 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC member communities to Like and Share the ARC's posts. The ARC's Facebook account had 644 followers, and more than 1,800 total page likes with a page reach of more than 54,900 during 2025. ARC Staff also responded to 7 public comments and questions received on the ARC Facebook account and website or forwarded them to ARC member representatives for follow-up.

Details on the traffic and posts on the ARC's website and Facebook can be found in the [Electronic Media Report](#).

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

The 2025 PIE outreach activities included presentations, supporting Friends of the Rouge monitoring events and promoting various watershed events. The detailed report is provided in the [Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report](#). The ARC also promoted Cooperating Partners events including Friends of the Rouge.

Additional 2025 Activities included:

- ◆ The ARC hosted a Stewards of the Rouge workshop at the Livonia DPW on October 22, 2025. The ARC had a table with public education items along with the ARC banners.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted the Friends of the Rouge Winter Stonefly Search (1/25/25), Spring Bug Hunt (4/12/25) and Fall Bug Hunt (10/11/25) on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ The ARC promoted public meetings for the Inkster Design project.

- The ARC promoted the Rouge River Concrete Channel Restoration project and had a table with public education items along with the ARC banners at the public meeting held on October 1, 2025.
- The ARC used Near Perfect Media to promote the ARC’s HOW-funded bus tour that was held on August 21, 2025. The tour included stops at the Henry Ford Estate Fishway and Wilcox Lake. Near Perfect Media is contracted to promote ARC activities, events and restoration projects through TV coverage and news/magazine articles benefiting the ARC’s mission and all the ARC member communities.
- ARC Staff hosted a booth at Cranbrook Institute of Science’s Spring into Science event on March 27, 2025.
- ARC Staff attended and hosted a booth at the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office Annual Regional Stormwater Summit on October 10, 2025.
- ARC staff planned and coordinated information sessions with RRAC at the following Wayne County Parks Naturalist Programming events: Lola Valley Wetlands Restoration walk May 15, 2025, the Rouge Fishway walk on May 29, 2025, the Nankin Mills Bugtopia event on July 19, 2025, that also included the ARC’s public education display and giveaways and the Wilcox Lake Restoration event on August 21, 2025.



**ARC booth at the Spring into Science event at Cranbrook Institute of Science**



**HOW tour at Wilcox Lake**



**Wilcox Lake information session in partnership with Plymouth Public Library and Wayne County Parks**