



PEOPLE AND THE ROUGE GREEN CORRIDOR | 12,000 BC — 1830s TIMELINE

12,000 BC — Paleo-Indians arrive in Oakland County. The first small bands of nomadic people arrived in Oakland County following the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier. As Native American cultures developed, they used the Rouge River for drinking, bathing, a source of food, and as a transportation route.

1618 — Europeans Arrive. French explorer, Etienne Brule, landed at the narrows of Sault Ste. Marie, thought to be the first European to have reached Michigan. He found well established tribes of Native Americans. Trading posts were started along the Rouge.

July 24, 1701 — Detroit Begins. Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, French commander of the Fort at Mackinac, landed in Detroit to establish a trading post called Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit.

1760 — British rule of Detroit ends and French begins.

1775 — Revolutionary War begins.

September 3, 1783 — Britain cedes Michigan to the United States. This occurred through the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War. However, it was legally recognized that the land that made up Michigan belonged to the native tribes until it was ceded to the United States by treaty.

November 17, 1807 — Treaty of Detroit. An area of land approximating the southeast quarter of the lower peninsula of Michigan was ceded to the United States by the Ottawa, Chippewa, Wyandot, and Potawatomi nations for \$10,000 in money, goods, and domestic animals, as well as hunting rights on U.S. lands.

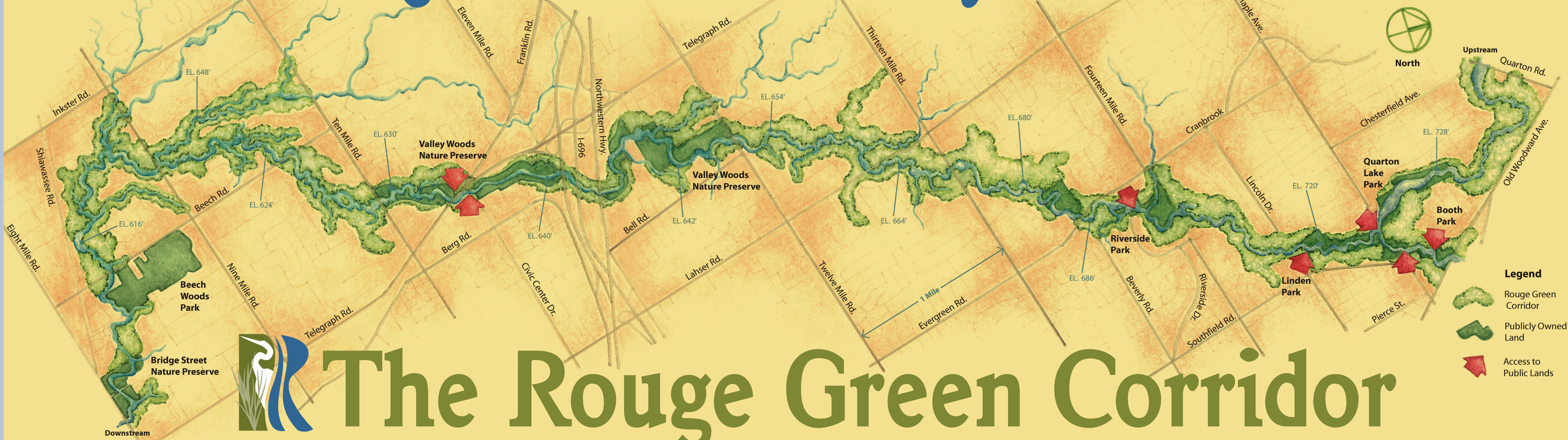
1807 — Tonquish and Seginswin Reservations established. In the Treaty of Detroit, Potawatomi negotiated reserving the main Native American villages in the Rouge Green Corridor, called Tonquish and Seginswin, for their own use. It is likely that the Seginswin village persisted, because the Potawatomi had an agricultural base, and this village was described as hilly to level with ash, sugar maple, oak and beech. However, the Tonquish village may have been abandoned, as it was described as brushy, wet, or swampy with stands of poor oak.

January 12, 1819 — Oakland County established. Governor Lewis Cass issued a proclamation that laid out the boundaries of the County, establishing Pontiac as the County seat in 1820.

1820's — Lumbering and Farming. The opening of lands to European settlement was greatly expanded through the efforts of General Lewis Cass, Governor of the Michigan Territory from 1813 — 1831. The lands were used for lumbering and farming. Farms produced wheat, Indian corn, oats, and potatoes, as well as livestock products such as wool and butter. Sheep were washed in the Rouge before sheering.



Discovering Your Community's Natural Asset



The Rouge Green Corridor

- Legend**
- Rouge Green Corridor
 - Publicly Owned Land
 - Access to Public Lands

Introducing the Rouge Green Corridor

Meandering through the southeast corner of Oakland County, the main branch of the Rouge River paints a green band through neighborhoods and business districts. This urban river, with clear water flowing over smooth rocks and past shady wooded banks, has changed since the time of European settlement, but still provides a haven for wildlife and people to enjoy.

Over the past 15 years, efforts at improving the river's water quality have paid off, inspiring your community to give it a new name — the Rouge Green Corridor. This segment of the Rouge River, and its tributaries, runs through Birmingham, Beverly Hills, and Southfield. To introduce you to this valuable natural resource, this poster describes the Corridor's history, and how it's changed over time, and gives you an opportunity to find out for yourself the beauty of the Rouge Green Corridor through a self-guided tour.

This endeavor is part of a larger program called Stormwater Phase II of the Clean Water Act. The Act requires certain municipalities to minimize stormwater pollutants in surface waters like the Rouge River. To accomplish this, the communities have joined forces and developed a Watershed Management Plan for this portion of the Rouge River, called The Main 1-2 Subwatershed Management Plan. One goal of the Plan is to increase awareness of the river's value in our lives. Another goal is to maximize each community's assets related to the river. The Watershed Management Plan is available for review in your community's office.

How the Rouge Green Corridor Was Formed

Fourteen thousand years ago, the Ice Age precursor of the Rouge River flowed to the southwest, draining the front of a continental ice sheet and associated glacial ridges. Around 13,800 years ago, the ice melted back and branches of this glacial river system broke across the ridges to the southeast to form the Rouge watershed. For the next 1,500 years, these early branches of the Rouge in Oakland County emptied into a series of vast glacial lakes that were formed by advances and retreats of the glacial ice.

The illustration of the Rouge Green Corridor shows some of the land forms of the modern river valley. Ravines and bluffs were formed when the ancient glacial lake levels dropped. Other land forms, such as the widened segments of the river valley and terraces, were created in response to rising lake levels. Today's river shows a meandering pattern. Some of the loops have been abandoned by the river, creating a distinctive u-shaped land form called an oxbow.



The Rouge Green Corridor is a part of the Rouge River Watershed, which covers 467 square miles in southeast Michigan and is home to nearly 1.5 million people in 48 communities.

The Way it Was

Before the land in the watershed was transformed by human development, rivers and streams received most of their water from groundwater. When it rained, the water was first intercepted by trees and vegetation. If it rained hard enough, excess water soaked into the ground, making it available to the plants. A relatively small amount of rain that hit hard surfaces, such as rocks or clay soils, became surface flow or runoff and ran directly into low areas like wetlands or tributaries. Any excess water in the soil was filtered by the soil particles as it worked its way to the groundwater, where underground connections directed it to streams and rivers. Streams received a slow constant flow of clean, cold water from groundwater and spring-fed lakes, even during dry spells. Because these conditions lasted over thousands and thousands of years, aquatic plants and animals became adapted to them.

The Way it is Today

As the land was cleared for agriculture, and then later for homes, businesses, roads, and parking areas, a good deal of the porous soils were covered up by impermeable surfaces, or hard surfaces that water can't penetrate. Instead of soaking into the ground, much of the water became surface flow or runoff. Instead of a slow, constant flow of cold, clean water, our rivers receive high volumes of water over a short period of time — or flashy flows. As the water moves over hard surfaces, it picks up pollutants from cars or chemicals spread on the grass. Pavement in the summer also heats the water, making it unsuitable for certain aquatic species. The force of large volumes of stormwater piped directly to streams scours and erodes the banks of the stream, dislodging bank vegetation and degrading wildlife habitat.

The Rouge Green Corridor has not been impacted by urbanization as some other stretches of the Rouge. The main reason for this is that the existing vegetation along the river corridor was left in place as the area developed.

Discovering Your River – A Self-Guided Tour

This self-guided tour identifies several locations for you to enjoy in the Rouge Green Corridor. The tour is designed to highlight special features along the corridor that everyone in the family can enjoy. Each point has something unique to offer, so be sure to visit as many sites as you can. You'll learn a lot about this hidden treasure, and have fun in the process!

Points along the tour described below have access to trails. Whether it's a paved or woodchip trail, remember to stay on the path. Keep your dog on a leash and be a good river steward by picking up after your pet. Enjoy!

Valley Woods Nature Preserve in Southfield

Where to park: Park at the Historic Burgh Park at the northeast corner of Berg Road and Civic Center Drive. Walk west along Civic Center Drive to Valley Woods Nature Preserve. You can access the park by a ramp behind the McDonnell Tower Senior Center (North side of Civic Center Drive) or by steps at the river (South side of Civic Center Drive).

What to do: Hike north along the river, crossing over to the west side on a pedestrian bridge. This is a lovely natural area with easy hiking for all ages on the grass trail with some riverside benches along the way. The trail ends at the freeway (I-696) overpass. Return on the same trail. This is approximately a 5 mile hike.

What to see: Look for soft-shell turtles resting on the banks. Ducks and heron are often in the river, loafing on logs or fishing in the shallows. Springtime brings in migratory birds such as the belted kingfisher, the downy woodpecker and the indigo bunting among many others.



Linden and Booth Parks in Birmingham

Where to park: North Old Woodward at Booth Park: pick up the Rouge woodchip trail at the southwest corner of the park. You can also park at the Chester Parking Structure located at the corner of Chester and Maple. Walk west to the Rouge River and pick up the woodchip trail to Linden Park. You can also cross Maple Road at Southfield and pick up the woodchip trail just west of the Museum. This will take you to Booth Park.

What to do: The woodchip trail meanders along the river and woodland areas for approximately 1.25 miles.

What to see: In the spring, look for several species of migrating birds, such as warblers (22 species!), tree swallows, and spotted sandpipers. Look for the many species of wildlife and native plants. Also view two types of stream bank stabilization methods to reduce erosion. The methods include "hard engineering" (stone and boulders) and soft engineering (logs and vegetation) in Booth Park.

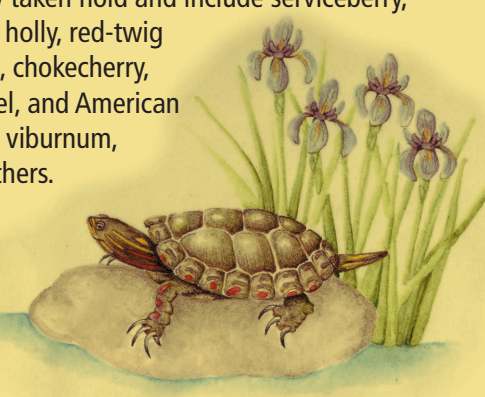


Riverside Park in Beverly Hills

Where to park: Limited parking is available at this park, which is located on Riverside Drive just east of Evergreen Road.

What to do: Visitors are welcome to enjoy the small park during the daylight hours. There are two picnic tables and a grill available that overlook the Mill Pond, which was established over a century ago.

What to see: The park offers habitat and viewing opportunities for many species of birds, including herons, hawks, woodpeckers and hummingbirds. Carp can often be seen at the surface of the water, along with turtles sunning themselves and a variety of other small aquatic creatures. Recent plantings of native shrubs have now taken hold and include serviceberry, Michigan holly, red-twig dogwood, chokecherry, witchhazel, and American cranberry viburnum, among others.



To learn more about the Rouge Green Corridor's history and natural assets, visit www.oakgov.com/community/community-development/environmental-stewardship and click on the "Rouge Green Corridor" link.

1937-2000s TIMELINE

September 23, 1957 — Village of Westwood is incorporated. The community was chartered as the Village of Beverly Hills in 1959.

1964 — Detroit becomes provider of wastewater treatment for the six-county metropolitan area.

1972 — Federal Water Pollution Control Act. This act required all municipal wastewater treatment facilities to provide primary and secondary treatment of plant discharges. After being amended in 1977, it became known as the Clean Water Act. It protects waters from pollutants as well as sets water quality standards.

1977 — U.S. EPA filed a lawsuit to stop pollution at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Plant. By 1983, Detroit had spent \$500 million to fix the problems in sewerage discharges.

1983 — Judge John Feikens begins watershed approach to cleaning up the Rouge. Communities realized that in addition to pollution from combined sewer overflows, a major source of pollution to the Rouge River was stormwater runoff from rapidly developing areas. Judge John Feikens, a Federal District Judge in Detroit, used the EPA's 1977 lawsuit to begin a series of formal orders and regular hearings to bring together three counties and 48 communities to cooperate on a plan to restore the 126 miles of the Rouge River.

1989 — 1994 Rouge River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) drafted and amended. A 136-page report (RAP) was created to outline the considerable progress that had been made in addressing water pollution sources in the Rouge, and outlined additional steps needed to restore uses, such as fishing and swimming, that were still impaired by pollution.

Late 1990's — Rouge River Subwatersheds begin planning. Communities within the Rouge River watershed organized themselves into subwatershed groups to address water quality issues. One of these groups, the Rouge River Main 1-2 Subwatershed Advisory Group, formed to coordinate the protection and restoration of this subwatershed. The Rouge Green Corridor is part of the Main 1-2 Subwatershed.

2000 — Oakland County's population is almost 1.2 million people.

2001 — Main 1-2 Rouge River Subwatershed Management Plan completed. A major goal of this plan is to involve the public in reducing the amount of pollutants that reach the river.

2004 — Main 1-2 Rouge River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) amended. The Rouge RAP was amended to summarize existing watershed conditions, as well as current restoration and protection efforts.

2005 and Beyond — Residents adopt the Rouge Green Corridor and protect it for future generations.

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2020 — First dam built on the Rouge River in Southfield (now Beverly Hills). The dam was built on the site of the former mill. The dam was built to generate electricity and to provide a water supply for the mill. The dam was built by the Michigan Electric and Power Company.

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Today and Tomorrow

Challenges, Opportunities, and Actions to Enhance the Rouge Green Corridor as a Community Asset

Current Challenges and Opportunities



What is a "Native" plant?
 "Native" plants are plants that grew in the Rouge Green Corridor before European settlement. They have survived here for thousands of years and are uniquely adapted to the climate, soil, and water conditions of this area. Wildlife indigenous to this area has co-evolved with native plants, depending on these specific plant species for their survival. A "non-native" plant is one that was brought to this area by European settlers, and later by plant and garden enthusiasts. Many of these species don't cause any problems. But some, called "exotic invasive plants," escape into the wild, taking over natural areas and out-competing the native plants. The most common invasive plants in the Rouge Green Corridor are common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). These invasive plants rob wildlife of the food and habitat benefits of the native plants they depend on.



What is Non-Point Source Water Pollution?
 In general, water pollution is considered to come from two sources: "point sources" are readily-identifiable sources, such as an industry discharge pipe. "Non-point sources" are sources of pollutants that are not easily identifiable, such as those carried by stormwater runoff. Non-point source water pollution is created when rain falls to the ground on an impervious surface (roof or parking lot), and picks up pollutants (sediment, oil, motor fluids, fertilizers, etc.) as it travels along the surface on its way to a lake or river. The biggest source of water pollution today is stormwater runoff.



What is a CSO?
 A CSO (Combined Sewer Overflows) occurs during large rain events when the capacity of the combined storm and sewer system is exceeded. The CSO retention treatment captures excess flow and stores it until it can be conveyed to the Detroit Waste Water Treatment plant. During a very large rain event when there is a discharge into the river from the CSO basin, the effluent is screened, settled and disinfected.

The Plant-River Partnership

Areas where land and water meet are often rich in plant and wildlife diversity. The woodlands that grow next to the Rouge play a significant role in protecting the river. Plant roots hold the stream bank in place and help limit soil erosion. Leaves that fall into the water provide food and shelter for aquatic organisms. Branches and trunks that fall across the water provide loafing logs for ducks and turtles. Finally, large trees and shrubs growing near the water's edge shade the water, keeping it cool and hospitable for all the aquatic creatures. Plants along the river act as a riparian buffer. The wider this buffer is, the more it can do to protect the river from problems associated with stormwater runoff from parking lots, rooftops, and lawns.

Riparian buffers that contain native plants have added ecological value because they are critical sources of food, shelter, and nesting material for wildlife. Native plants still have a strong presence in the Rouge Green Corridor as was documented during a plant inventory by botanists in 2004. The natural areas inventoried along the corridor vary widely in size and condition. Larger, undisturbed sites have high-quality native plant communities, including species such as American beech, sugar maple, bitternut hickory, red oak, ironwood, trillium, and jack-in-the-pulpit.

An Ark of Biodiversity

Many terrestrial (lives on land) and aquatic (lives in water) wildlife call the Rouge Green Corridor home. In fact, the Rouge Green Corridor is considered a refuge or ark for future re-colonization of the rest of the Main Branch of the Rouge River. There are two reasons for this: 1) There is a fairly intact vegetated riparian buffer that provides important protection for the aquatic community; and 2) The water is of fairly high quality, with high dissolved oxygen concentrations and low to moderate nutrient concentrations (which is also due to the riparian buffer). Continued improvements in water quality, and the restoration of riparian buffers will help enable the diverse array of plant and animal species found within the Rouge Green Corridor to re-colonize other areas along the Rouge River.

Recent inventories of the Corridor by biologists show that the river and its adjacent wooded uplands support five kinds of turtles, two kinds of non-poisonous snakes, eight species of frogs, and seventeen species of mammals. Aquatic invertebrates or macroinvertebrates found within the Rouge Green Corridor include flathead and small minnow mayflies, net spinner caddisflies, and several types of beetles. Another exciting find is that the Corridor has the largest and most diverse population of freshwater mussels within the entire Rouge River watershed.

Urbanization and Water Quality

Over the years, the Rouge Green Corridor has been impacted by the stresses of urbanization. As land use shifted from agriculture to suburban and urban development, the Corridor was used for combined and sanitary sewer overflows, limited industrial discharges, and stormwater discharge. These uses caused problems, such as odors, non-point source water pollution and high flow variability. In 1992, the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project ("Rouge Project"), funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, began to address the causes of these issues, and implement solutions. As part of this project, a monitoring program was begun to assess current conditions, identify primary pollutant sources, and track long-term trends.

The Rouge Project regularly monitors bacteria levels. Rouge communities have completed several tasks to reduce bacteria levels in the Rouge Green Corridor, including the construction of retention treatment basins to control Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). After installation of the basins in the Rouge Green Corridor the E. coli readings were cut by approximately 50%.

Like us, fish and aquatic animals need oxygen to breathe, but underwater! Dissolved oxygen can be reduced in water bodies when aquatic plants grow out of control because too many nutrients (such as phosphorus from lawn fertilizers or nutrients from human waste) have been added to the water. As the plants die, their decomposition ties up the dissolved oxygen, making it unavailable to fish. Dissolved oxygen monitoring has shown significant improvement since 1994, meeting State water quality standards more than 80% of the time.

What is Nature Telling Us?

Another way to monitor water quality is to look at the species of fish, macroinvertebrates, and frogs and toads that live in and near a watercourse. Fish were sampled in the Rouge Green Corridor by Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in 1995. They found a higher diversity of fish in the Rouge Green Corridor than in other sampling locations within the Rouge. Survey results also show some environmentally sensitive species, indicating good water quality and habitat conditions.

Rights and Responsibilities of Riverfront Property Owners

The rights of riparian land owners and the waters of Michigan are protected and regulated by a number of laws. However, land owner responsibilities are generally less well defined. Be sure to read through the "River Stewardship 101" section to be well-versed on how you can be a responsible river front property owner.

General Guide to Waterfront Laws

Much of the general concepts for Michigan's water use laws developed through court cases and rulings given over the past 200 years. The State Legislature also has passed comprehensive laws, such as the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994, P.A. 451 which includes Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, and Part 303, Wetlands Protection. Both regulate certain uses of riparian areas. The Oakland County Drain Commissioner also has jurisdiction over certain drainage ways within Oakland County to minimize flooding and ensure conveyance of stormwater.

Jurisdictional Boundaries

There are several general concepts that form the basis for Michigan's riparian laws. Several are explained here:

A riparian land owner (or Riparian) is one who owns land or property abutting water. The Riparian also owns the submerged lands adjacent to his or her property to the center of the lake or stream. However, a Riparian does not own the water, or in most cases, the fish. These are held in public trust for the benefit of all the people. The surface of a lake, whether open or frozen, is shared equally by all riparian property owners that abut the lake. They may fish or boat on any part of it.

The Oakland County Drain Commissioner is given jurisdiction by municipalities to establish drainage districts and implement drain projects. Application is made by a community for both tasks. Once an application is made, it is evaluated by the Drain Commissioner's office and either accepted or denied. Natural drainage ways may be designated as a County Drain, and this designation may only cover portions of a natural stream, as opposed to the entire length of the stream. A drain also can be an underground pipe, retention pond, ditch or swale that conveys stormwater.

In general, the State of Michigan has jurisdiction over "navigable" waters, fish, and water-oriented construction operations, such as marinas, docks, canals, bridges, dredging, filling, and impoundments. The State uses the definition of navigable waters to determine if a lake or stream is public (navigable) or private (non-navigable). The definition of navigable has been developed through a series of judicial decisions, but there is significant uncertainty regarding the public or private character of most of the State's streams. Many streams are designated public or private after some type of litigation has been settled over the use of the stream by someone other than the riparian land owner.



Rights of Passage Within a Watercourse

If a stream is navigable, the public has the right to wade up a stream and fish but cannot trespass on the uplands. However, if the stream is obstructed or in case of an emergency, the fisherman can make reasonable use of the upland to go around the obstruction or get help. An abutting property owner may not create obstructions to keep the public from wading, swimming or fishing a navigable stream. If the stream is not navigable, the public cannot wade up the stream, or access the stream by boat. Hunting, on the other hand, is a right that goes with land ownership and permission from the landowner is required.

Drawing Water for Irrigation

As indicated earlier, riparian land owners do not own waters adjacent to their lands, but do have the right to reasonable use of the water for their own purposes, including irrigation. However, the landowner cannot impair the water as it passes along or decrease the benefits of the water for other riparian landowners. Non-riparian owners are not entitled to similar water use rights, and extraction of water for their own purposes is considered trespassing against the rights of the riparian owner. Further, a riparian landowner cannot permit a non-riparian landowner to withdraw water.

Footbridges

The Inland Lakes and Streams laws do not allow property owners to structurally interfere with the natural flow of a stream, nor construct anything within the bottomland of a stream without a permit from the MDEQ. In addition, the Oakland County Drain Commissioner, who is charged with ensuring drainage of stormwater throughout Oakland County, prefers that homeowners refrain from constructing footbridges because of the possibility of debris collecting under these small bridges and obstructing the flow of the stream.

So, have your travels through the Rouge Green Corridor gotten you excited about the river in your community? If so, there are many things you can do that will help the Rouge Green Corridor continue to improve. Since stormwater — regardless of where it falls in the watershed — could end up in the river, we all have riverfront property, and our activities in the watershed impact the river. The chart below explains how residents and businesses can help the Rouge.

Help Keep Pollution Out Of Storm Drains	Follow Healthy Lawn Care Practices	Carefully Store And Dispose Of Cleaners, Chemicals, And Oils	Clean Up After Your Pet & Don't Feed Waterfowl	Practice Good Car/Mechanical Equipment Care	Choose Earth-Friendly Landscaping	Manage Woody Debris	Establish and Maintain Riparian Buffer Zones	Stabilize Stream Banks	Support and Participate in Local Environmental Groups
Storm drains and roadside ditches empty into our lakes and streams without treatment. Follow these tips to keep pollutants out of storm drains: 1) Sweep extra fertilizer, grass clippings or dirt back onto your lawn. Don't hose down hard surfaces. 2) Keep grass clippings, leaves, trash, and fertilizers away from storm drains. 3) Never dump ANYTHING down a storm drain, such as motor oil, pet waste, or dirty or soapy water. Remember: Only Rain in the Drain! 4) Label storm drains in your neighborhood. That lets residents know they flow directly to our lakes and streams. 5) Build a rain garden to reduce the amount of stormwater. Call 248-288-5150 for a rain garden information packet.	Chemicals washed off of lawn enter our lakes and streams through storm drains and roadside ditches. Fertilizers cause algae blooms which kill fish. What can you do? Follow these tips to maintain a green, river-friendly lawn: 1) Maintain lawns at 3" or taller. Taller grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds. 2) Recycle clippings into the lawn, reducing your need to fertilize. 3) Test your soil to determine what type of fertilizer you need if any. 4) Use slow-release fertilizers following package directions. 5) Water your lawn lightly and frequently. 6) Avoid "weed & feed" products. This spreads pesticides where they are not needed. 7) Keep chemical applications at least 25 feet away from the edge of a lake, stream, storm drain, or roadside ditch.	Cleaners, chemicals and oils pollute our waterways if washed or dumped into storm drains or roadside ditches. Be sure you: 1) Only purchase the amount you need. If using less toxic alternatives like vinegar for washing windows. 2) Keep unused products in their original containers with label intact. Store in a cool, dry place away from kids, pets, and wildlife. 3) NEVER dump motor oil or other toxic materials down a storm drain, in a sink, or on the ground. Contact your community for local disposal sites. The State of Michigan has specific laws regulating use and storage of toxic chemicals for many business applications. Often, double containment, and a spill response plan are required to obtain the necessary permits. However, businesses also use many unregulated products that, if washed into a storm drain, road ditch, or floor drain could be harmful to the environment. Follow the tips above to ensure that all materials are used, stored, and disposed of properly.	Animal waste washed into a storm drain or road side ditch has harmful bacteria that can make our lakes unsafe for swimming. Whether on your lawn or on a walk, pick up after your pet promptly and dispose of it in the trash or toilet where it can be treated. Lake or stream side pet owners should follow the tips above diligently. Who wants to swim in your pee poop?! Also refrain from feeding ducks and geese. This causes the birds to become dependent on humans, creating unnaturally high populations and more waste. Bacteria in the waste pollute our parks, lakes, and your yard! Businesses that have lake or riverfront property may provide space for employees to enjoy the view. Encourage your employees to refrain from feeding ducks and geese. This practice increases their populations, and in turn, the wastes that are left on your lawn and in the water. See the column titled Establish and Maintain Riparian Buffer Zones.	There are over four million vehicles in Southeast Michigan alone! Taking good care of your car or vehicle fleet keeps dirty wash water and fluids out of our storm drains and road side ditches. Follow these simple steps: 1) Take the car to the car wash. They treat their dirty wash water. If you wash your own or company's car, do it on the grass so the soapy water doesn't drain into the storm drain, floor drain or roadside ditch. Also use less soap, or just plain water. 2) Keep the car properly tuned. If possible, take it to a shop where they can recycle used fluids and oil and clean up accidental spills. 3) If you change the fluids or oil, label the waste container and take it to a business that accepts used vehicle fluids. Residents can take it to their community household hazardous waste collection day. Use kitty litter to soak up any spills, and throw it in the trash.	How we plant and care for our yards can help water quality. Consider the following: 1) Use a wide variety of plants to control pests and minimize the need for pesticides. 2) Select plants that are suitable for the soils and site conditions. 3) Select plants native to Michigan. Once established, native species need less water and are more disease resistant. 4) Keep leaves, grass clippings and other yard debris away from storm drains/roadside ditches, streams or lakes. Compost or set out for collection. 5) Keep low areas free of yard debris to allow standing water to soak into the ground. Better yet, plant a rain garden! 6) Shred leaves and use as mulch. 7) Minimize impervious surfaces and encourage infiltration of rain water into your yard. For businesses, hire a lawn care service that is aware of its impact on the river. Instruct them to follow the practices outlined above. This will save them time and your business money!	Logjams used to be considered a problem. Now, common thought is that properly managed logjams are an important part of a river system's natural processes. The Drain Commissioner only manages logjams in legally defined County Drains. Before taking action on a logjam, call the Friends of the Rouge (313-792-9900) or the Wayne County Department of Environment (888-223-2363). They can assist you in assessing the situation and the best course of action to take. They can also tell you if a permit from the MDEQ is required. Here are tips about logjams: 1) Leave most logjams in place to slow river flow, reduce erosion and preserve and maintain existing habitat. 2) Use logjams as a natural screen for collecting urban litter which can be removed on a regular basis. 3) Use woody material from logjams for stream bank protection and habitat creation. Even though you may not live right on the river, you could assist a local community group in managing woody debris (logjams) on public property. Contact your community offices for more information.	Riparian buffers are areas next to a stream or lake planted in trees, shrubs and flowers. The plants' deep root systems hold the stream bank in place, protecting it from erosion. The buffer also helps to slow surface runoff. This allows the buffer plants to take up fertilizers or other pollutants, keeping them out of the stream or lake. When planting buffers, make it as wide as possible (ideally 25-30 feet wide, but as little as 5 feet wide can be beneficial). Select a variety of species well suited to the conditions. Also maximize the use of native plants, and use earth-friendly landscaping practices. A narrow path through the buffer to the water's edge allows access and encourages your neighbors or employees to visit your beautiful waterside garden. Your gardening expertise (or interest) could be used to assist your community in planning and installing a riparian buffer on public property. Contact your community offices for more information! Any event sure to practice earth-friendly landscaping in your yard.	Stream bank erosion happens when stormwater flows scour the sides of the stream, dislodging vegetation and removing the stream bank. This degrades in-stream habitat and eats away at upland property. Stabilizing stream banks can be done with many engineered techniques. However, bio-engineered methods (methods that include vegetation) not only stabilize the stream bank, but provide habitat and aesthetic benefits as well. Designs should be based on the volume and speed of flow at the sites, and the slope and stability of stream banks. Note that a permit from the MDEQ is required for any stream bank stabilization work. Your community may have a volunteer opportunity available for you if you're interested in getting dirty! To be involved in a stream bank stabilization project, call your community offices or the Friends of the Rouge (313-792-9900).	There are many local groups that work to protect the Rouge Green Corridor. These groups are non-profit and depend on volunteers and donations to continue their efforts. Consider calling one of the groups listed below and getting involved to improve the Rouge Green Corridor! Friends of the Rouge (313-792-9900) Oakland Land Conservancy (248-601-2816) Oakland Audubon Society (248-647-2473) East Michigan Environmental Action Council (248-258-5188) Business or corporate memberships in many non-profit groups provide critical funding and opportunities for employees to give back to their communities. Supporting a local non-profit also gives the business a positive public image, and other non-tangible benefits to the business as an organization. The groups listed above work in your company's back yard and would benefit from any financial and volunteer contributions a Rouge Green Corridor business could make!



What Waters Are Considered Navigable (or Public)?

A navigable inland stream is (1) any stream declared navigable by the Michigan Supreme Courts; (2) any stream included within the navigable waters of the United States by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; (3) any stream which floated logs during the lumbering days, or a stream which it generally appears by nature, notwithstanding there may be times when it becomes too dry or shallow for that purpose; (4) any stream having an average flow of approximately 41 cubic feet per second, an average width of some 30 feet, an average depth of about one foot, capacity of storage during spring seasonal periods of high water limited to loose logs, ties and similar products, used for fishing by the public for an extended period of time, and stocked with fish by the State; (5) any stream which has been or is susceptible to navigation by boats for the purposes of commerce or travel; (6) all streams meandered by the General Land Office Survey in the mid 1800's. Note that the Michigan Supreme Court designated the Rouge River navigable from its mouth to 15 miles upstream from the mouth.

Navigable is not whether a boat can be used in a lake or stream, but is based on the "floating log" test, which was a very useful tool during logging days in Michigan. If a log can float down a waterway, then it is considered navigable, and useable for commerce, travel, and trade. Navigable waters are considered public, which brings with it rights for public use. Even though we don't use rivers to float logs to market any more, this standard is still used as the legal test to define public waters.



Resources

Environmental Stewardship in Oakland County
 Contact: Oakland County Planning
 248-858-0720

www.oakgov.com/community/community-development/environmental-stewardship

24-Hour Environmental Hotline for surface water pollution
 Contact: Oakland County Drain Commissioner
 248-858-0931 www.oakgov.com/drain

Rouge Rescue/River Day, Annual Frog & Toad Survey, Annual Bug Hunt — Benthic Macroinvertebrate Sampling
 Contact: Friends of the Rouge
 313-792-9900 www.therouge.org

Healthy Lawn Care, Composting & Soil Health, Rain Gardens, Naturescaping & Native Plants
 Contact: Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA)
 248-288-5150 www.socwa.org

Invasive Plant Removal & Stewardship Workdays
 Contact: Your Municipal Offices
 For more information about how you can protect water quality see: https://www.semccog.org/about/semccog/what-you-can-do/one-water/

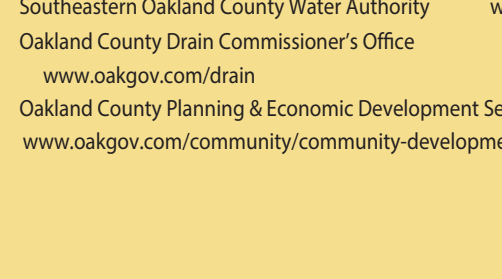
Web Links for more information on water resource preservation and natural area stewardship:
 Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project
 www.rougeenviro.com

Center for Watershed Protection www.cwp.org
 The Stewardship Network www.stewardshipnetwork.org
 Wild Ones Native Plants, Natural Landscapes www.for-wild.org

PROJECT PARTNERS
 City of Birmingham www.bhamgov.org/
 City of Southfield www.cityofsouthfield.com
 Village of Beverly Hills www.villagebeverlyhills.com
 Friends of the Rouge www.therouge.org
 Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority www.socwa.org
 Oakland County Drain Commissioner's Office
 www.oakgov.com/drain
 Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services
 www.oakgov.com/community/community-development

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Keep an eye out for this new Rouge Green Corridor logo in your area and help get the word out about this community asset.



Rouge Green Corridor