

Rouge River Report Card

December 2005

A Publication of the Rouge Remedial Action Plan Advisory Council



Introduction

The Rouge River Report Card provides a brief description of current conditions and progress being made to protect and restore our Rouge River watershed, an Area of Concern (AOC). Eighteen indicators are judged to determine trends since 1999.

We hope this document generates thoughts, encourages discussion and invites participation in restoring our watershed.

Symbol Key:

	1999 Trends	2005 Trends
Losing Ground	1999	2005
Breaking Even	1999	2005
Making Progress	1999	2005
Insufficient Data	1999 ?	2005 ?

Indicator #1: Sanitary Sewer Overflow

Late 1990 sanitary sewer capacity and SSO problems have been addressed.

Primary Issues

- Aging infrastructure and suburban sprawl.
- Billions need to be invested over the next 30 years.
- Watershed communities are working together and have watershed management plans.



G. Nigro

Walnut Lake Pump Station - OCDC

Indicator #2: Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)

Phase 1 basins are exceeding expectations. All uncontrolled CSOs are scheduled to be addressed by 2014.

Primary Issues

- Seventy-seven (77) outfalls are now controlled and 80 must be addressed.
- Significant funding is needed to eliminate the remaining CSOs.
- Eighty (80) miles of the Rouge River are free of adverse impacts from uncontrolled CSOs.



Bill Craig

Dearborn Heights CSO Project

Indicator #3: Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff and streamflow are major challenges that must be addressed throughout the watershed.

Primary Issues

- Urbanization continues to increase stormwater runoff.
- Community masterplans should be revised to reflect watershed restoration goals.
- Full and consistent implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Initiatives (SWPPI) are needed in order to make the necessary improvements.



Wayne County DOE

Dye Testing

Indicator #4: Public Health—Bacteria

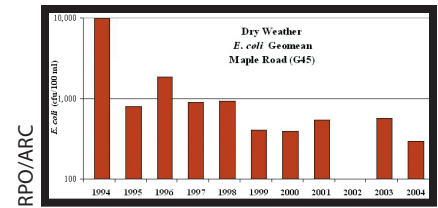
Although bacteria levels throughout the Rouge River watershed are too high for safe human contact, significant progress has been made.

Primary Issues

- Now have data proving the E. coli levels are decreasing.
- Sewage is still entering the Rouge River.
- Must continue efforts to control the impact of CSOs, SSOs and faulty septic systems.

1999

2005



E. coli Chart

Indicator #5: Public Health—Toxic Chemicals and Fish Consumption Advisories

Toxic chemicals, although present throughout much of the river, do not pose a public health threat. Fish consumption advisories have been eliminated for some fish species.

Primary Issues

- Need to increase stakeholder awareness and participation in reducing pollutants.
- Remaining pollution “hot spots” have yet to be eliminated.
- Hazardous waste collection efforts are increasing.

1999

2005



J. Zoumaris

Hazardous Waste Collection - Livonia

Indicator #6: Water Quality for Aquatic Life

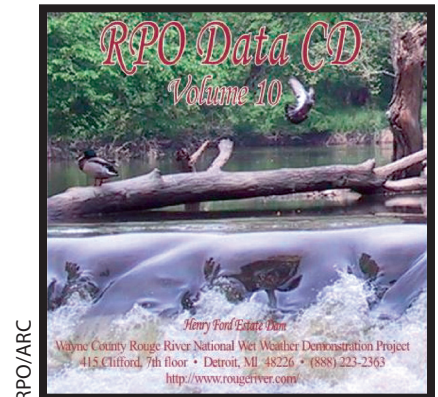
Although there have been improvements in dissolved oxygen, other water quality parameters important to aquatic life have not improved.

Primary Issues

- Development in upstream areas is threatening the historically good water quality in these streams.
- There are insufficient data of water quality parameters from headwater streams.
- Data show significant improvements in dissolved oxygen in downstream areas.

1999

2005



RPO/ARC

Indicator #7: Riparian Corridor

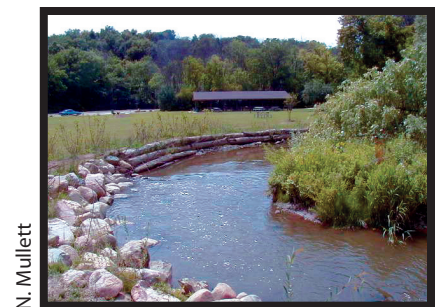
Continued protection, restoration and improved management of the riparian corridor is critical to the river restoration and protection efforts.

Primary Issues

- Urban, suburban and rural development continues to reduce riparian corridor.
- There is a lack of comprehensive land use inventories.
- Need continued investment in restoration and preservation projects.

1999

2005



N. Mullett

Middle Rouge River Stabilization

Indicator #8: Wetlands, Woodlands and Meadows

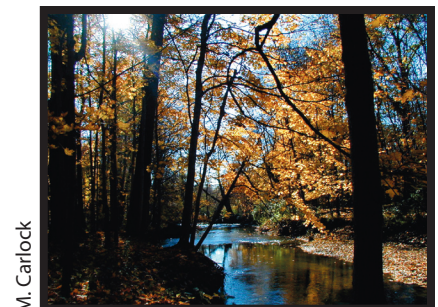
There has been a significant loss of wetlands, woodlands and meadows in the Rouge watershed.

Primary Issues

- There is a lack of comprehensive natural features inventory.
- Wetland mitigation is allowed outside of the watershed.
- Some communities are protecting their natural resources.

1999

2005



M. Carlock

Berberian Property - Southfield

Indicator #9: Wildlife

Many wildlife species make their home in the Rouge River watershed. Their continued presence, diversity, and abundance will be a strong indicator of success.

Primary Issues

- There is a lack of comprehensive wildlife species inventory.
- Habitat loss and fragmentation continues to increase.
- Species diversity continues to decline.
- Wildlife monitoring efforts need to expand.

1999
?

2005

FOTR



FOTR Frog and Toad Surveyors

Indicator #10: Fish

For such an urbanized river, more fish inhabit the Rouge River than people realize.

Primary Issues

- Although there have been significant investments in pollution control there is no funding or plans in place to assess the impact of those investments on the fish community.
- Flow fluctuations and fish passage barriers (dams) remain major concerns with restoration of fish communities.
- Expand water quality restoration and protection efforts .

1999

2005
?

J. Lawson



River Day Firefighters Park - Troy

Indicator #11: Benthos

Benthos are often the best indicator of water quality and the overall health of an aquatic system.

Primary Issues

- Increased development in headwaters of the Rouge.
- Channelization,excessivesedimentation,andhighstreamflowvelocities diminish habitat and benthos population.
- Continue efforts to stabilize streambanks.
- Expand benthic monitoring efforts.

1999

2005

FOTR



FOTR Benthic Monitoring

Indicator #12: Stream Flow and Adjacent Habitat

Expected improvements in water quality will be negated without significant reductions in flooding and stream velocities. Flow regime plays a crucial role in many aspects of a river's health.

Primary Issues

- Urbanization of watershed has resulted in reduction of wetlands and increase in impervious surfaces creating severe flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.
- Both wet and dry weather conditions continue to negatively effect stream conditions.

1999

2005

D. Ballnik



Ford Field Stabilization - Dearborn

Indicator #13: Public Understanding and Community Stewardship

Many residents of the watershed believe the Rouge River is an important part of the community and the environment in which they live.

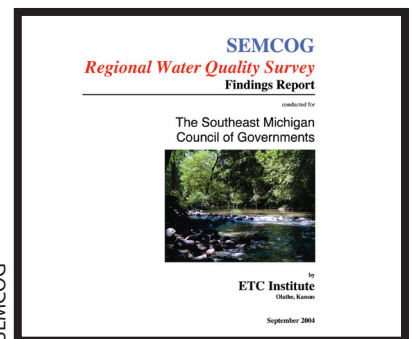
Primary Issues

- 2004 SEMCOG survey shows public wants a better river.
- Need to expand public education outreach programs.
- Attendanceslowlygaininginenvironmentalstewardshipprograms such as Rouge Rescue.

1999

2005

SEMCOG



Indicator #14: School-Based Environmental Education

Children hold the key to the future.

Primary Issues

- School administrative support is essential.
- Need watershed environmental education integrated into curriculum.
- Corporate and community support of environmental education is gaining momentum.

1999

2005



ECT, Inc.

Cranbrook Water Festival

Indicator #15: Recreational Use and Aesthetics

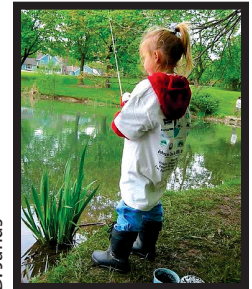
The Rouge River has the potential to become a tremendous recreational resource and "quality of life" community asset.

Primary Issues

- Outdoor recreational use is making a comeback.
- Community cleanup efforts and projects continue to improve aesthetics.
- Fishing opportunities are expanding.

1999

2005



D. Janus

JCPG Johnson Creek Day

Indicator #16: Restoration Projects

Rouge River restoration projects have been steadily increasing over the last several years.

Primary Issues

- Continued stakeholder investment is critical to make gains.
- A wide range of restoration projects have been demonstrated across the watershed.
- Public support and citizen involvement is building.

1999

2005



L. Comment

Quarton Lake Project - Oakland County

Indicator #17: Local Government Leadership

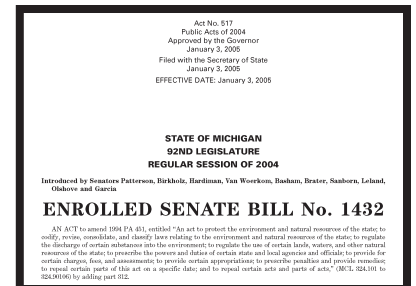
Collaboration by watershed communities has demonstrated strong leadership by local government representatives.

Primary Issues

- Need a united effort to secure necessary funding to fulfill permit obligations.
- Recent formation of Assembly of Rouge Communities (ARC).
- The success in getting Bill 1432 legislation signed into law.

1999

2005



Bill 1432 - Watershed Alliance

Indicator #18: Business and Institutional Stewardship

Stewardship continues to grow within the Rouge River watershed by businesses and institutions.

Primary Issues

- Imperative to continue and expand partnerships.
- Need to better recognize significant role that businesses are contributing to improvements.
- Collaborative efforts between business and educational institutions have proven successful.

1999

2005



FOTR

FOTR Sponsor T-shirt

Conclusion

Once, the biggest threat to the Rouge River was its bad reputation, now our efforts are changing the way we see and use our river. The majority of our land use decisions and practices continue to undermine efforts to reach restoration targets and goals. A major impediment to protection and restoration is funding.

The Rouge River RAP Advisory Council would like to recognize the many agencies, organizations, and individuals who contributed to the completion of this document.