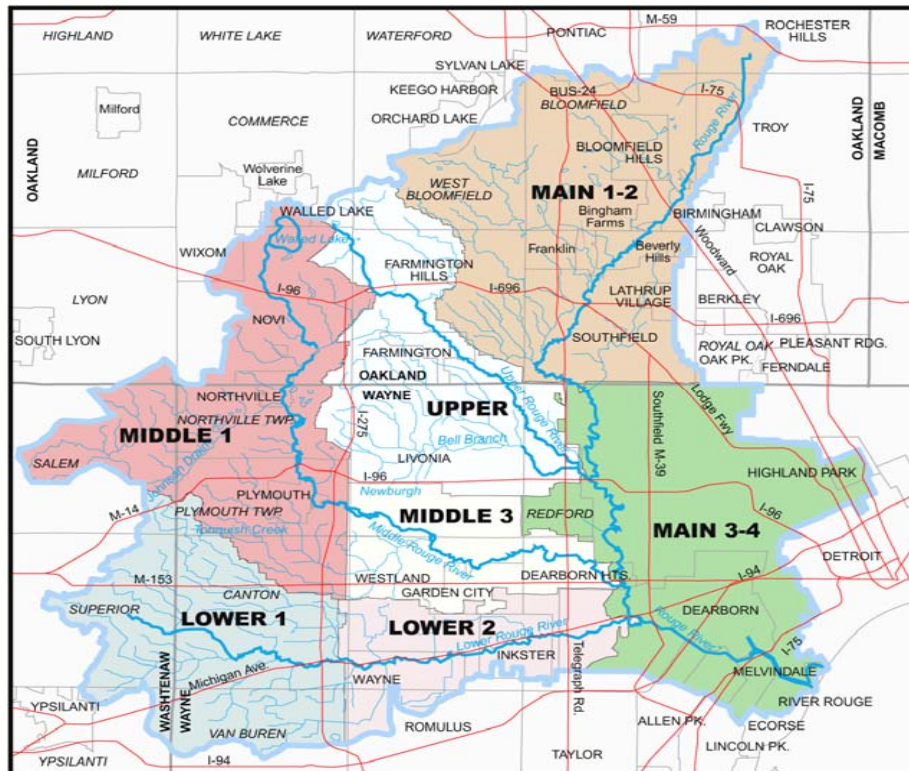


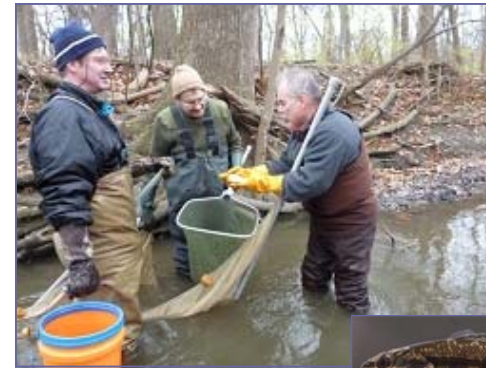
## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE

Friends of the Rouge was created in 1986 in response to a demonstrated need to restore the Rouge River. The mission of the organization is to promote restoration and stewardship of the Rouge River watershed through education, citizen involvement and other collaborative efforts, for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the people, plants, and animals of the watershed.

Rouge Rescue is FOTR's oldest and largest event in which thousands of volunteers clean and improve the river every year in June. The Rouge Education Project was created in 1987 to engage K-12 students in real-life science through water quality monitoring. In 1998, the Public Involvement Programs were added to provide the general public the opportunity to participate in volunteer monitoring and hands-on projects to restore the Rouge.



# FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS 2012-2013



**Friends  
of the  
ROUGE**

Promoting restoration and stewardship of the Rouge River ecosystem through education, citizen involvement and other collaborative efforts, for the purpose of improving the quality of life of the people, plants and animals of the watershed.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Michael G. Darga, President  
Cynthia Jones, Vice-President  
Susan Thompson, Secretary  
Alex Roehling, Treasurer

### **DIRECTORS**

Fenelon Ashley	Mike McNulty
Lisa Austin	Carla Rigsby
Adam Cloutier	Brandy Siedlaczek
Drew Hoffman	Bill Stone
Chester Marvin	Steve Weis
Sharon Oliver-Merchant	

## **MAJOR DONORS/GRANTS**

(OVER \$5,000)

Alliance of Rouge Communities  
DENSO International America  
Erb Family Foundation  
General Motors  
ITC  
Masco Corporation Foundation  
Robert Bosch Corporation  
Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project  
Sierra Club  
Verizon Foundation

### **FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE STAFF**

Karen Hanna, Operations Director  
Sally Petrella, Volunteer Monitoring Program Manager  
Cyndi Ross, River Restoration Program Manager  
Cassie Bradley, Rouge Education Project Program Manager  
Erin Cassady, Rouge Education Project Assistant Program Manager

## **2012 - 2013 Membership Update**

261 TOTAL MEMBERS

Dues totaling \$ 18,278 for the 2012 - 2013 fiscal year

### **From our President**

On behalf of the Friends of the Rouge staff and Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our members, volunteers, donors, partners, contributors, and Rouge River community leaders for their continued support and dedication.

Much progress has been made in our continued efforts to fulfill our mission and, once again, we are fortunate to have volunteers, sponsors, and stakeholders who believe in Friends of the Rouge and our mission. Since 1986, Rouge Rescue has involved more than 53,000 volunteers in caring for the river; since 1987, over 27,000 students have participated in hands-on water quality monitoring of the Rouge River with the Rouge Education Project; since 1998, from 200-600 people monitor Rouge wetlands for frogs and toads every year; bug hunt data shows improving scores in the Johnson Creek as well as the Middle 1 and Middle 3 subwatersheds since 2001; log perch were documented in the Lower branch for the first time in 2012 (Like all darters, they are considered indicator fish that need high levels of dissolved oxygen); and FOTR's two padding trips were sold out in 2012 and initial planning for a Water Trail has begun. Wayne residents continue to open up the river for canoeing and are so focused on the river that they planned first annual Rouge-a-palooza event to celebrate and connect citizens to the river:

We have been very fortunate to have continued support from the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project, the Alliance of Rouge Communities, and the Erb Family Foundation. Major program sponsors included: Aristeo Construction, CDM Smith, Cequent, DTE Energy, the Dearborn Garden Club, DENSO International America, Draw-Tite, ECT, Inc., General Motors, Hubbell, Roth & Clark, ITC, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Marine Pollution Control, Marathon Petroleum Company, Masco Corporation Foundation, Michigan Association of Environmental Professionals, NEFCO, Quicken Loans, Robert Bosch Corporation, Sierra Club, Southfield Community Foundation, TI Automotive, Trees, Inc., Verizon Foundation, Wade-Trim, and Waste Management. We thank our partners; University of Michigan Dearborn, Wayne County Department of Environment, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and our many volunteers who continue to assist us with our programs and provide valuable support and insight.

We would like to extend special thanks to our Best Friends of the Rouge Awardees who have provided outstanding support for our programs: The Environmental Protection Agency; Robert Muller; and John Berger, the recipient of our Julie Rose Frentrup Outstanding Volunteer award. A special thanks also to all of our volunteers, who help in making Friends of the Rouge the special organization that it is.

As we enter our 28th year, we look forward to being a part of the many exciting projects happening within the Rouge River watershed. We thank you for your support and look forward to continued success.

## Benthic Macroinvertebrate Monitoring

**Benthic Macroinvertebrate Monitoring** is a method of tracking stream health by assessing the type and abundance of aquatic insects, clams, snails, etc. that live in the streambed. FOTR data is used by the state and local communities. Funding was provided by the Erb Family Foundation and the Alliance of Rouge Communities.

Volunteers participate in FOTR's monitoring at group sampling events held in the spring and fall (**Bug Hunts**) and a **Winter Stonefly Search**. Experienced volunteers are trained as team leaders to lead at individual sites. Wayne County participates in the program by sampling additional sites.

The **2012 Fall Bug Hunt** brought out a record number of volunteers for one event - 123, who sampled 31 sites. An additional 18 sites were sampled by Wayne County and one by Schoolcraft College for a total of 57 sites. Most sites scored in the Fair (29) range. Of the 53 sites that have been sampled for three years or more, two sites had above average scores and seven had below average scores.



Team from HFCC samples Walled Lake sites.  
Photo credit: Adam Cloutier



The **2012 Winter Stonefly Search** brought out 75 volunteers who sampled 26 sites. Wayne County sampled an additional nine sites and Schoolcraft College one. Ten of the 36 sites had stoneflies. Most of the stoneflies were slender winter stoneflies (Capniidae). Broadback (Taeniopteryx) and Perlodid stoneflies were found at two Johnson Creek sites.

The **2013 Spring Bug Hunt** had to be postponed a week due to high water but still had 89 volunteers who sampled 36 sites. Sixteen sites were sampled by Wayne County, and one by Schoolcraft College for a total of 53 sites. Most sites had Fair (31) scores. In comparison to past years, seven sites scored above average and two below.

Trend analysis was done for the fall data. Johnson Creek, the Middle 1, the Middle 3 and the Main1/2 subwatersheds showed a positive trend in scores. Additionally, a free-living caddisfly species (*Rhyacophila lobifera*) was confirmed through the UM-D genetics lab and could be the first official record of this species for the state.

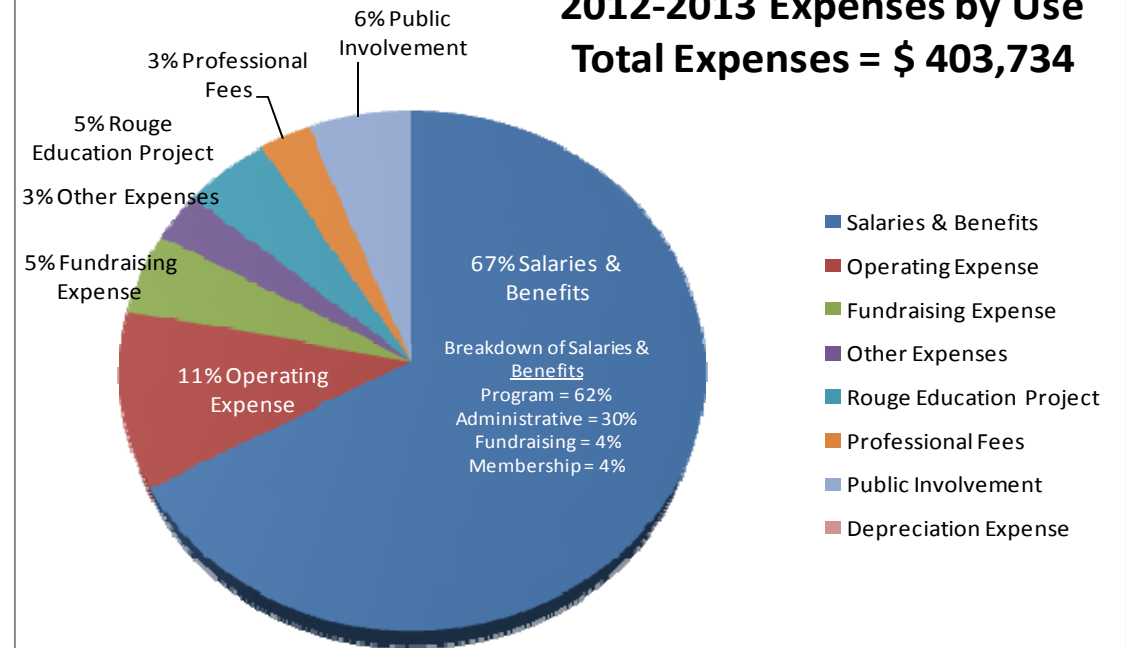
### Fish Monitoring

In 2012, FOTR got involved in fish surveys when UM-D student Robert Muller and Kristina Blott conducted a fish survey as interns for FOTR. Fish work is now supported through a UM Water Center grant to investigate fish community response to restoration activities in the lower Rouge. The project is a partnership between UM-D, UM-Ann Arbor and FOTR. UM-D students are conducting geomorphological surveys, fish surveys and other inventories and the data will be examined along with FOTR's benthic macroinvertebrate data. The project will continue through early 2015. In the initial surveys, a sensitive fish - the logperch - was found on the lower branch for the first time.

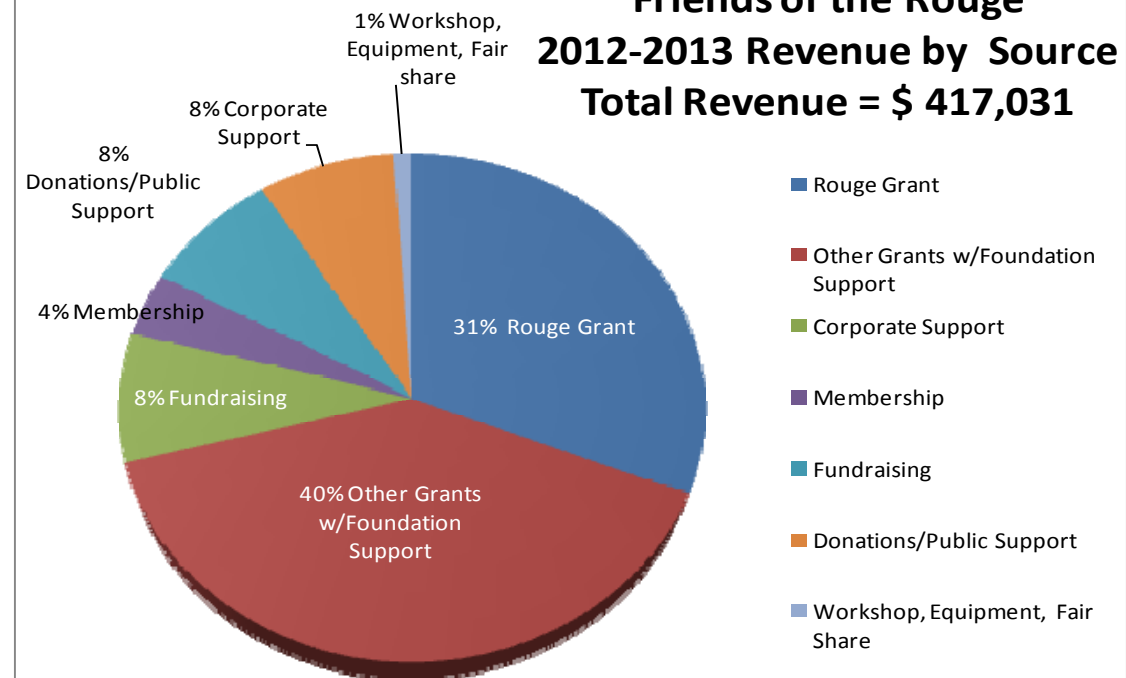


Seining the Lower Rouge.

## Friends of the Rouge 2012-2013 Expenses by Use Total Expenses = \$ 403,734



## Friends of the Rouge 2012-2013 Revenue by Source Total Revenue = \$ 417,031



## FUNDRAISING

### *Friends of the Rouge 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ROUGE CRUISE*

FOTR hosted its fifth annual Rouge Cruise dinner cruise and tour of the Rouge River aboard the Diamond Belle on August 6, 2013. The cruise was narrated by Dr. Orin Gelderloos, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at University of Michigan-Dearborn, and by U.S. EPA Environmental Scientist and Remedial Action Plan Liaison, Rose Ellison. This tour was a unique opportunity for its 150+ participants to travel up the mouth of the Rouge River and hear about the history of the river, the effects of industrialization, and the efforts being made to restore and protect this treasured resource. This year's sponsors were ECT, ITC, and Marine Pollution Control.



### *Friends of the Rouge 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ROUND FORE THE ROUGE Golf Outing Fundraiser*



This year's event was held on May 13, 2013 and attracted 74 golfers onto the course at the Dearborn Country Club. The event sponsors this year were: CDM Smith, Wade Trim, NEFCO, HRC, Giffels-Webster, MJ Electric, Utility Lines Construction, Trees Inc, and Marine Pollution Control. We can't thank our sponsors enough and appreciate all those who participated and added to the success of our outing. A special thanks to Tim O'Brien, and the staff at the Dearborn Country Club and Pro Shop for their patience and generosity.

### *Friends of the Rouge 3rd Annual RUN FOR THE ROUGE*

One hundred and two runners and walkers helped support FOTR on Saturday, September 29, 2012. Ten hard working volunteers helped register, guide and provide refreshments for the runners. First place male went to Philip Hoard, first place female was Jessika Williams. A big thank you to all the sponsors and volunteers! Sponsors this year included: ITC, CB, Inc. Sitework Services, ECT, Canton Township, Utility Lines Construction Services, Inc., Total Runner, McNeely & Lincoln Associates, Inc. Aaron Contracting, Kappen Tree Service, Road ID and Wayne County Parks. Refreshments were donated by Absopure and Avalon International Breads.



## VOLUNTEER MONITORING

Friends of the Rouge now offers three opportunities for volunteers to become involved in **Volunteer Monitoring**: a watershed-wide **Rouge Frog & Toad Survey**, the **Benthic Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Program** and **Fish Surveys**. All three programs engage volunteers in collecting biological data while raising awareness about the watershed.

### Frog & Toad Survey

The **Frog & Toad Survey** is a listening survey in which volunteers track frog and toad presence through calling surveys. Volunteers are assigned blocks where they keep track of what species are calling. **Training Workshops** take place annually in February and March in locations throughout the watershed. In 2012, four workshops were held in Northville Township, Canton Township, Farmington Hills, and Bloomfield Township and 213 people attended. A total of 364 volunteers signed up to survey 325 blocks. Data was received for 188 blocks and volunteers contributed over 2,068 hours.



Red-backed salamander

To help volunteers practice identifying frog and toad calls, one Group Listen was held. On April 17, 2013, 11 volunteers came out to West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve despite the cold rain. In addition to identifying calling frogs, participants were able to see two different types of salamanders (red-backed and blue-spotted).

The Frog & Toad Survey is funded through the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project.

### Rouge Water Trail

Paddling on the Rouge River grows in popularity every year. Rental canoes are available on Newburgh Lake on summer weekends. FOTR continues to offer two fall paddles that both had record participants.



The hard work continues to open a Water Trail in Wayne. In October 2012, 36 volunteers from the Detroit Zoo assisted in removing shopping carts, bicycles, etc. In August, 14 hard working volunteers opened logjams from west of Newburgh to Wayne Rd. Over 4 miles of river were opened.

Next year, FOTR is beginning an Asset and Needs Inventory in partnership with Riverside Kayak Connections and others. The Inventory will identify potential launches and rest stops as well as available amenities. As this is completed, FOTR will be applying for funding to support the development of the launches, amenities, maps, signage and promotion.



## River Restoration

The **River Restoration Program** teaches watershed residents how to care for the land to improve water quality and wildlife habitat through hands-on projects and other educational events.

**Projects:** During the 2012-2013 fiscal year Friends of the Rouge completed 10 restoration projects involving 105 volunteers in replacing over 4,500 sq. ft. of mowed lawn with deep-rooted native wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs. An additional 6,000 sq. ft. grow zone was weeded and mulched. Volunteers assisted with the installation of 6 residential rain gardens in Detroit; 2 streambank stabilization projects/buffer plantings in Northville and Farmington Hills; a native plant demonstration garden in Redford; and a grow zone maintenance project in Livonia.



Volunteers plant a rain garden on Stahelin Street in Northwest Detroit.



Coir logs and native vegetation was installed to stabilize eroding streambank in Northville's Historical Mill Race Village

**Educational Events:** Five educational workshops were coordinated in 2012-2013 and were attended by 158 individuals. Four Naturalizing the Home Garden workshops were held in partnership with the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC). The workshops were developed to empower homeowners to install native gardens to reduce the impact of stormwater on the Rouge River. Experts were available to assist homeowners with selecting native plants and designing native gardens. One Rain Garden Workshop was held in Northville Twp. Attendees learned about the value of rain gardens and instructions on creating a garden of their own.

Date	Workshop	City	Attendance	Funded by
2/26/2013	Naturalizing the Home Garden: A Native Design Workshop for Beginners	Canton	26	ARC
3/12/2013	Naturalizing the Home Garden: A Native Design Workshop for Beginners	Bloomfield Hills	26	ARC
4/9/2013	Naturalizing the Home Garden: A Native Design Workshop for Beginners	Dearborn	31	ARC
4/24/2013	Naturalizing the Home Garden: A Native Design Workshop for Beginners	Farmington Hills	37	ARC
8/20/2013	Rain Garden Workshop	Northville Twp	38	MAEP

## ROUGE EDUCATION PROJECT

The **Rouge Education Project (REP)** works with teachers and students (K-12) throughout Metro Detroit by incorporating academic goals and objectives directly related to the Rouge River watershed into schools' curricula. While there is a strong focus on science, teachers also are encouraged to extend REP-related lessons across different disciplines (*e.g.*, arts, geography, math, creative writing). The lessons covered are then translated into place-based learning during field trips (1 spring, 1 fall) that allow students, teachers, and interested parents to conduct hands-on water quality monitoring in the Rouge River.



Students from Mary Helen Guest Elementary School in Walled Lake prepare to conduct chemical tests—Spring, 2013.



Students from Troy High School measure dissolved oxygen—Spring, 2013.

The success of Monitoring Day(s) is largely due to volunteer support. On field days, students and teachers are teamed up with a College Student Assistant (CSA). CSAs are recruited from local colleges and universities and are thoroughly trained in physical, chemical, and biological monitoring techniques, and then use their training to support field monitoring activities for the school with which they are paired. This year, the REP paired 27 CSAs from seven local colleges with participating schools throughout the watershed. In addition to CSAs, support and partnerships are formed

through sponsorship opportunities that include coordination of corporate volunteers teamed with the schools that they support. Arch Environmental Group, General Motors Corporation (Romulus and Hamtramck), Henniges Automotive, and MWH Americas, Inc. each provided volunteers to assist schools on Monitoring Days in 2012-2013. Both the CSA and Corporate Volunteer programs successfully met the needs of the participating REP schools.

In addition to federal funds, the REP applies for annual foundation grants and runs an Adopt-a-School (AaS) sponsorship campaign, which encourages local businesses to donate funds to "adopt" one or more of the participating schools. This year, the program brought in nearly \$35,000 in small grants and AaS sponsorships, which directly supported roughly half of our participating schools. Overall, 31 schools and nearly 2,500 students participated, including four schools that were newly recruited to the program.

## REP, cont. — “Voyage in Time”

In addition to continuing the “Rouge in the Classroom” lessons, piloted in 2010, the REP introduced interactive, historical story-telling sessions in 2013. The lessons, titled *Voyage in Time*, were conducted by FOTR partner Jeff Vallender. Using history to help students connect to the outdoors, lessons were offered to four of our participating schools, both in the classroom and during their field monitoring days. Students learned about the history and colonization of the Rouge River watershed, and were able to see what a campsite from the 1760s might have looked like. We hope to continue these lessons in the 2013-2014 school year!

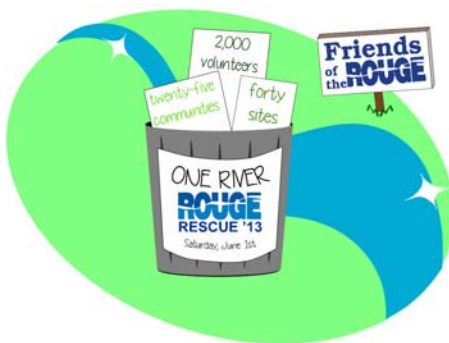


Students from Steppingstone School in Farmington Hills examine an animal pelt as they learn about the history of the Rouge —Spring, 2013

## RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

Friends of the Rouge’s **River Restoration Program** encompasses both Rouge Rescue and River Restoration. Both programs offer opportunities for volunteers to become involved in river clean up and stewardship projects that include native plantings, invasive plant removal projects, stream bank stabilization projects and woody debris management. The River Restoration Program also includes educational events and workshops.

## Rouge Rescue



Each June, Friends of the Rouge, in partnership with Rouge communities and other organizations, brings volunteers together from across the watershed to work toward the common goal of improving the Rouge River through **Rouge Rescue**.

This past spring, over 1,700 volunteers worked to remove 82 cubic yards of trash from 120 acres of public parkland and river valleys that wind through watershed neighborhoods. Work occurred at 39 work sites in 20 Metro Detroit communities.

The bulk of the trash removed was comprised of paper, wrappers, styrofoam, balls, bottles and cans. These everyday items are carried to the river by wind and water. Large items pulled from the river consisted of 31 tires, 27 shopping carts, 4 mattresses, bicycles, a Lazy Boy chair, a hot tub, a car and household appliances.

## Rouge Rescue, cont.

Volunteers also worked to control the spread of invasive plants in the region and removed over 8,000 cubic yards of invasive plants!

A few wide-spread invasive plants in our area are garlic mustard, honeysuckle and buckthorn.

These non-indigenous plants have advantages over our native vegetation. They often produce an abundance of seed, have longer growing seasons, or alter the soil to prevent other species from thriving. Their removal is necessary to preserve the health

of the ecosystem and to maintain quality habitat for wildlife.



Volunteers planting a rain garden at the Northville Twp Fire Station were real troopers—the heavy rain before planting day made for a soggy work site.



The amount of trash removed during Rouge Rescue would fill 250 55-gallon drums. The invasive plant material removed would fill a whopping 25,250 drums!

A detailed report of the event and the work completed at each site is available on the website ([www.therouge.org](http://www.therouge.org)).



ABOVE— DENSO associates along with volunteers from the public celebrate their work of removing nearly 30 cubic yards of invasive plants from the Berberian Woods section of the Valley Woods Nature Preserve in Southfield.



LEFT— Volunteers in Wayne including Marine Pollution Control employees remove trash and manage log jams to open a canoe route on the Lower Rouge.

The River Restoration Program is funded, in part, by grants from the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project, the Erb Foundation, the Alliance of Rouge Communities, the Sierra Club, the Michigan Association of Environmental Professionals and by corporate sponsorships and in-kind gifts.