

ANNUAL REPORT

The mission of Friends of the Rouge is to promote 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 for the people, plants, and animals of the watershed.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past year, 2016, was a celebratory year for Friends of the Rouge and we thank you, our membership and sponsors, for 30 years of continued support and efforts to restore the watershed. We look forward to the opportunities that 2017 will bring and continuing to do our part in serving the Rouge River watershed.

The 2016 fiscal year was another busy year for Friends of the Rouge full of change and progress. We continued to provide public involvement and education programs that support our mission of promoting restoration and stewardship of the Rouge River watershed by involving people of all ages in hands-on opportunities to make a difference.

2016 was also a year of marked change. At the 2016 Annual Meeting, the membership voted to approve a merger of Friends of the Rouge with the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC). At about the same time, our former Executive Director, Aimee LaLonde-Norman, left FOTR to pursue other professional opportunities. We thank Aimee for her guidance and leadership during her years with us. The board spent much of the remainder of the year searching for Aimee's replacement, Marie McCormick, who began work with us in early 2017. With Marie now on board, FOTR and the ARC are resuming the process of joining both organizations together.

While the upcoming changes are being plotted out and implemented, FOTR will continue with its mission to protect the Rouge River Watershed.

Finally, I also thank the staff team for their commitment to FOTR and their professionalism during 2016 while we searched for Marie. Without them we would not be able to provide the services that we do.

Thank you for being a "Friend of the Rouge."

Muhil

Michael G. Darga | President, Board of Directors









2016 Fundraisers and Anniversary Events

ROUGE CRUISE

- August 9, 2016
- ▶ 119 voyagers

Thank you to our Rouge Cruise 2016 Sponsors!

ITC Holdings Environmental Consulting & Technology Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc. TSP Services, Inc.

Over \$11.500 raised!

2016 CHARITY PARTNER DETROIT FREE PRESS MARATHON "RUN FOR A REASON"

- Doctober 16, 2016
- ▶ 13 runners
- ▶ 12 volunteers
- ▶ 121 runner sponsors
- Over \$4.700 raised!

GIVE DETROIT CHARITY CHALLENGE 2016

- ▶ 62 donations
- Over \$3,300 raised

GIVE A PENNY TO THE ROUGE 2016

Almost \$2,000 raised!

30TH ANNIVERSARY VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

- August 26, 2016
- Over 100 volunteers attended

LETTERS FROM THE RIVER 2016

- > Sent to 3,000 households
- Over \$550 raised!



RESCUE'16





FOTR's 30th annual Rouge Rescue

Rouge Rescue continued to engage citizens, communities, and supporters across the Rouge River watershed to restore, clean, protect, and appreciate the river that connects them—the Rouge River. FOTR celebrated 30 years of Rouge Rescue in 2016. The event attracted nearly 1,100 people from 63 communities across the region. People participated from beyond the 47 communities in the Rouge watershed. Two people came from as far as Kissimmee, Florida!

Twenty-eight work sites were held in 17 communities. Most sites worked on May 21 (18), while four worked on May 7, two worked on May 14, one worked on May 30, and three worked on June 4.

Volunteers worked to clean, restore and enhance local parks and natural areas along the Rouge River during Rouge Rescue. Forty-five cubic yards of trash were cleaned up. A small number of tires (7), shopping carts (2) and other large items (1 appliance) were found this year.

The majority of the work involved controlling invasive plant species. Volunteers hand pulled or cut 148 cubic yards of garlic mustard, dame's rocket, buckthorn, honeysuckle and other invasives from 15 acres at 17 work sites to improve the quality of habitat and ecology of the river corridor.

Restoration projects included a native plant bio-swale garden at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills, native buffer plantings at the Merriman Hollow Recreation Area in Hines Park and Mill Race Village in Northville, a rain garden planting in Northville Community Park, tree planting in Northville, enhancing a bio-swale in Novi and the creation of a pollinator meadow in Superior Township. These restoration projects will reduce the impact of rainwater and help improve the health of the Rouge River for generations to come.

Recreation opportunities were improved as volunteers maintained trails along the Rouge and managed log jams for canoe passage. People even had the opportunity to test the waters and put a canoe in the river in Dearborn, thanks to Heavner Canoe Livery. A full report of the 2016 Rouge Rescue activities is available on the FOTR website. •

River Restoration Program

Follow along over the next three pages to learn more about the many exciting opportunities offered within our River Restoration Program!



Collaborative Invasive Species Control

Friends of the Rouge is implementing part of a GLRI funded project to control invasive plant species with Wayne County Dept. of Public Services, the Student Conservation Association, Friends of the Detroit River and others to establish and begin implementing an effective, efficient and environmentally sound program to manage invasive species across the Rouge River and Detroit River watersheds. Friends of the Rouge engaged volunteers and youth employed by the Student Conservation Association in mapping, monitoring and controlling invasive plant species in the Rouge River watershed. A Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant from the US EPA in the amount of \$653,756 to Wayne County Department of Public Services supports this project to control invasive plants.

Friends of the Rouge staff and volunteers performed 83 monitoring and control exercises in the 2016 field season that resulted in:

- Engaging 727 people in removing invasive plants throughout the Rouge River system during Rouge Rescue and other volunteer workdays
- 30 Student Conservation Association (SCA) youth trained to identify and control common invasive species
- 24 youth employed by the SCA and 3 FOTR interns working to cut and treat buckthorn shrubs in Rouge Park in Detroit and Bell Creek Park in Redford Twp. for 6 weeks during July and August
- 8,180 cubic yards of invasive plants removed from 18+ acres of land along the Rouge River
- 2,780 volunteer hours invested in completing this work

FOTR also worked to educate people about the threat and impact invasive species have on the ecology and economy of the region. This was achieved through focused articles published in the FOTR e-newsletter, titled Battle of the Plants, as well as displaying invasive plant posters and educational material developed by project partners at Rouge Rescue work sites.

Battle of the Plants was published in nine e-newsletters that were e-mailed to 9800 contacts between the April and November 2016. The articles included photos, identification information, control techniques and links to more information for an invasive plant species while in bloom. Articles also included information and a photo of a native plant in bloom and encouraged its use in residential landscapes.

Growing Sustainable Water Solutions

Growing Sustainable Water Solutions is collaboration between Keep Growing Detroit, the Sierra Club, and Friends of the Rouge to strengthen relationships between groups working at the nexus of food, water, and the environment in Detroit to expand the community's capacity to implement water conservation and management projects. Bringing together the urban agriculture and conservation communities created new opportunities to develop water catchment systems that provide a more reliable and realistic water source for urban growers and green infrastructure to reduce the impact of storm water on the city and environment.

Under this larger project, Friends of the Rouge and the Sierra Club work to protect and improve the Rouge River and Detroit River through the Rain Gardens to the Rescue (RGttR) program. The RGttR program engages the Detroit community in managing stormwater to improve water quality by creating rain gardens designed to keep rainwater from flowing in to the combined sewer system (CSO). The rain gardens are planted with native flowers grown in Detroit by Keep Growing Detroit.

Participants in the Rain Gardens to the Rescue Program attend a series of workshops to learn about stormwater issues and rain gardens as a low cost solution. They also learn how to design

and create rain gardens in the workshops and through hands-on garden installations. After completing the workshop series, participants receive a rain garden of their own and recruit neighbors, friends and family to assist with the installation of their gardens. Participants also help two or more classmates install their rain gardens. Rain Gardens to the Rescue graduates are rain garden ambassadors in the community and share what they learned and help friends and neighbors create rain gardens.

In 2016, work was conducted in Detroit's east side neighborhoods. Nineteen (19) residents attended the workshops and installed fourteen (14) rain gardens. Ninety-one (91) volunteers helped plant the rain gardens. Ten (10) of the gardens were located in residential front yards, two (2) were installed in Alfred Brush Ford Park, one was installed at Grace Church of the Nazarene, and one was created on a vacant lot. The gardens will capture as much as 4,100 gallons of rainwater per rain event, which will help protect local water resources and public health as well as reduce the cost of treating the large volume of stormwater mixed with wastewater.

A BUS TOUR was organized on July 9. The tour connected 17 rain gardeners from 2015 and 2016 and showcased both new and established rain gardens. Gardeners shared their experience of having and maintaining rain gardens. This gave people an opportunity to learn how the gardens change over time.









Rain Garden Education and Installation

Friends of the Rouge was awarded a MDEQ Nonpoint Source Program grant to teach residents in the Johnson and Tonquish Creeks about stormwater pollution and how individuals and municipalities can reduce stormwater runoff and improve the Rouge River by installing rain gardens on their property. Rain gardens and bio-swales are designed to retain and infiltrate rainwater where it falls and accumulates on roof tops, roads, driveways and parking lots. Native flowers and grasses in rain gardens filter sediment and take in nutrients as rainwater flows through the gardens.

Marketing and outreach material will be developed after the completion of a public survey of residents in Northville Twp., Plymouth, Plymouth Twp., Salem Twp. and part of Canton Twp. and Westland. Rain garden workshops will be held in 2017 and 2018 and demonstration gardens will be installed this fall and next year. •



Volunteer Monitoring

BUG HUNTS (BENTHIC MACROINVERTEBRATE MONITORING) track stream health by assessing the type and abundance of aquatic insects, clams, snails, etc. that live in the streambed. Volunteers participate in FOTR's monitoring at Bug Hunts held in the spring and fall 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. FOTR data is used by the state and local communities. This year's findings are as follows:

	2016 WINTER STONEFLY	2016 SPRING BUG HUNT	2016 FALL BUG HUNT
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	92	102	89
BUG HUNT SITES SAMPLED	26	32	25
ADDITIONAL SITES SAMPLED	12	21	19
TOTAL SITES SAMPLED	28	53	44

2016 Winter Stonefly Search: Thirteen teams participated and stoneflies were found at ten of the 38 sites (26%). Nine sites had slender winter stoneflies (Capniidae) and two sites had Perlodid stoneflies. Additional sites were sampled by Wayne County, Schoolcraft College, and Susan Thompson.

2016 Spring Bug Hunt: Most sites (57%) had Fair (29) scores. Trend analysis showed Johnson Creek, the Middle 1 and Middle 3 subwatersheds with positive trends in scores and no trend for other subwatersheds. Additional sites were sampled by Wayne County, Susan Thompson, Schoolcraft College, and Wayne State students.

2016 Fall Bug Hunt: Most sites scored in the Fair (28) range. Of the 44 sites that have been sampled for three years or more, 70% were stable, 11% were improving, and 18% were declining. Long term trends show improving scores for the Middle 3 subwatershed and Johnson Creek and declining scores

in the Main and Upper branches. Additional sites were sampled by Wayne County, Susan Thompson, Schoolcraft College, and FOTR staff.

Sue Thompson found a large spidery looking dragonfly nymph in the Middle branch that is a new species record for the Rouge River. The royal river cruiser (Macromia taeniolata) was identified in Wayne County in 2001 but had not been found in the Rouge despite extensive work in the watershed by Julie Craves and Darrin O'Brien. To document this new finding, Julie assisted us in submitting a specimen to the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.

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. One training workshops was held with 83 attendees. A total of 155 volunteers, including 107 veteran surveyors signed up to collect data. Data was received for 95 survey blocks. An average of 3.8 species was heard per block. Every species was calling in a higher percentage of blocks than average except northern leopard frogs which were calling in an average number of blocks. The Lower 1 subwatershed had the highest diversity with an average of 4.5 species calling per block.

	2016 SPRING FISH SURVEYS	2016 SUMMER FISH SURVEYS	2016 FALL FISH SURVEYS	TOTALS
# OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	230	165	195	590
SITES SAMPLED	24	16	25	65
SAMPLING DAYS	9	6	19	34

FISH MONITORING FOTR monitored sixty-five sites on 34 survey days with volunteers contributing 590 hours of time. In the spring, we continued to track the movement of the round goby on the Lower and Middle Rouge. We also worked with West Bloomfield Township to sample Morris Lake at the top of the Franklin branch. There we identified some rare species like grass pickerel, mimic shiners and lowa darters. In the fall we continued the goby work. This invasive fish has made its way up the Lower Branch from the Detroit River all the way to Beck Road and into Fowler Creek and is also now expanding its invasion of the Middle branch. Most likely introduced into the Middle branch through bait, we found gobies from Newburgh Lake all the way to Hines Drive near Ford Road. In the fall, we filled in gaps in our data, mainly in the Main and Upper Rouge. The Statewide Public Advisory Council for the Rouge River Area of Concern provided support for us to sample an additional 25 sites to fill in gaps in our data as well as to compile and map all of the new and past data. We were troubled to find the round goby moving up the Main branch from the confluence with the Middle, all the way to Rouge Park in Detroit. We also found several new species.

Since we began surveying for fish in 2011, we have identified 61 species including eight new native species and two non-native species and have identified over 35,000 individual fish. In 2017, we will continue this work and are also creating a booklet and presentation on the findings. •







Rouge Education Project

The Rouge Education Project (REP) is a school-based environmental education program involving elementary, middle, and high schools from across southeastern Michigan. Students perform hands-on scientific exploration of the Rouge River to determine overall stream health; including the evaluation of chemical, biological, and physical parameters of water quality,. Students are further encouraged to take action to restore and protect the river based on their results. This comprehensive student-led water quality monitoring program model was the first of its kind and is nationally recognized.



Students from Smith Middle School in Troy...

Throughout 2016, the REP worked with a total of 2,510 students and 78 teachers from 28 schools throughout Metro-Detroit. Monitoring events went off without a hitch thanks to the REP's amazing dedicated teachers and a small army of volunteers. Eighteen of these trained volunteers, the REP Assistants, along with 14 corporate volunteers, assisted schools during their monitoring event(s), as well as 174 parent and other volunteers. One of the teachers recruited his son and two other adults to help because they had participated in the REP as students at Garden City High School in previous years!

This was also the first year the REP distributed a custom watershed map and Rouge Rescue poster to participating schools. The watershed map marks the schools participating in spring monitoring and their sampling sites, and the Rouge Rescue posters promote the clean-up event within the school.

Another notable event included putting together a hands-on monitoring event for teachers participating in the Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition Summer Institute. The SEMIS Coalition

connects local organizations with teachers to promote place-based education. Participating teachers got to experience all aspects of a monitoring event, and will consider adding the experience to their classrooms.

Throughout the fall, a volunteer updated the REP Guide provided to teachers and volunteers. This guide contains instructions and background information to help teachers execute the REP. The guide was in dire need of streamlining and re-branding, and the REP is so grateful to Tracy for her many hours of hard work.

The REP is excited to bring on five new schools and bring back one other for spring 2017. New Teacher Orientation was held in November 2016 with help of some fantastic presenters. The REP looks forward to creating new resources for teachers and to provide opportunities for students to develop their own restoration projects as a part of Rouge Rescue. •

"Ronald Brown Academy has brought the REP to students in grades three through six. Every year the students learn about becoming stewards of the environment, but it isn't until the final culminating field trip to the testing site that they truly believe they can be citizen scientists and make a difference. Throughout the day you can see the changes in the students. Nervous at first, they are quiet and unsure about going to the edge of the river. Once testing starts, they start to jump in and put their knowledge to use. Our most ADHD students have stood in line for 30 minutes waiting for a chance to put on a pair of waders. Our quietest students have mastered the macroinvertebrate keys and have become leaders at the sampling station, and our students who have difficulties focusing and keeping on track in a classroom have had to be pulled away from searching for organisms in water samples. Since we only started a few years ago, I haven't had the pleasure of students returning to talk about what the sampling day has meant to them or if it has lead them to an environmental career. but I can tell it makes a difference by the way the students come back to school and talk about the experience with their friends and other teachers."

> —Jennifer Edwards Ronald Brown Academy









FISCAL YEAR 2016

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2016

TOTAL REVENUES = \$378,705

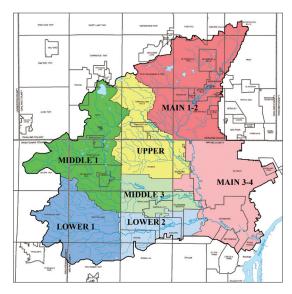


Revenues listed by source for time period of January 1 - December 31, 2016

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$402,154



Expenses listed by use for time period of January 1 - December 31, 2016



Rouge River facts:

- The Rouge drains approximately 467 square miles of land in the counties of Oakland, Wayne and Washtenaw in southeast Michigan
- Four major branches with 126 river miles: Main, Upper, Middle, and Lower
- Contains over 400 lakes, impoundments, and ponds in 48 municipalities
- Inhabited by 1.35–1.5 million people
- Land use: more than 50% urbanized, less than 25% remaining undeveloped

2016 PARTNERS

AISIN

Alliance of Rouge Communities

Arch Environmental Group

Avalon International Bakery

Bloomfield Township

Botsford Commons Senior Community

Canton Township

Christ Episcopal Church, Dearborn

City of Birmingham

City of Dearborn

City of Detroit

City of Farmington

City of Farmington Hills

City of Livonia

City of Northville

City of Novi

City of Plymouth

City of Southfield

City of Troy

City of Wayne

City of Westland

Clinton River Watershed Council

Cranbrook Institute of Science

Dearborn Heights Watershed Stewards

Commission

DENSO International America

Detroit Audubon Society

Detroit Country Day Schools

Detroit Public Library, Hubbard Branch

Earth Share of Michigan

EL Johnson Nature Center

Environmental Interpretive Center

Environmental Protection Agency

Farmington Hills Nature Center

Ford Fund/Model Teams

Ford Motor Company

Friends of Eliza Howell Park

Friends of Maybury Park

Friends of Rouge Park

Friends of the Detroit River

General Motors-Romulus & Hamtramck

Heavner Canoe Rental/Jeff Vallender

Henry Ford College

Henry Ford Estate-Fair Lane

Holliday Nature Preserve Association

Hoover Elementary School

Huron River Watershed Council

Keep Growing Detroit

Liberty Street Brewing Company

Michigan Department of Environmental

Michigan Department of Natural

Resources

MWH Americas, Inc.

Northville Historical Society

Northville Township

Oakland Community College

Oakland County Water Resources

Commission

Plymouth Township

Quicken Loans

Redford Aldersgate United Methodist

Church, Detroit Campus

Riverside Kayak Connection

Robert Bosch, LLC

Salem Township

Schoolcraft College

Sierra Club Great Lakes Program Southeast Michigan Council of

Governments (SEMCOG)

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy,

Superior Land Conservancy

Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition

St. Paul of the Cross Retreat &

Conference Center

Stage Nature Center

Stahelin Street Tigers Block Club

Student Conservation Association

Superior Township

Total Runner/David Howell

University of Michigan Water Center

University of Michigan-Dearborn

Village of Beverly Hills

Village of Bingham Farms

Village of Franklin

Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation

Commission

Wayne County Commissioner Terry

Marecki

Wayne County Department of Public

Services

Wayne County Parks

Wayne County Regional Educational

Service Agency (RESA)

West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation

Wildlife Habitat Council

Women's National Farm & Garden

Association

Workman Elementary School

Paddling on the Rouge River

Friends of the Rouge staff and Riverside Kayak Connection took Crain's reporters and their camera crew on a kayak trip down the industrial channel of the Rouge River on June 8, 2016. The paddle started in Melvindale and the trip was concluded at Belanger Park in River Rouge. An article was published detailing their adventure in Crain's Detroit Business on June 10, 2016, titled Rouge River displays mankind's industrial might, mistakes and new hope.

An expedition team explored a route from Hannan Road to Goudy Park on June 25, 2016.

Public Paddling Trips included:

- Industrial Rouge Kayak Trip on September 18, 2016 with 29 paddlers
- Lower branch canoe trip on October 8, 2016 with 33 paddlers and the dedication of a new canoe launch in Goudy Park
- Full Moon Paddle on October 14, 2016

2016 SPONSORS & GRANTORS

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Bosch Community Fund Erb Family Foundation ITC Holdings

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DENSO International America, Inc. General Motors Foundation

STEWARD

Consumers Energy Foundation Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) Pure Oakland Water Robert Bosch, LLC

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AISIN World Corporation of America AK Steel Corporation Marine Pollution Control Norfolk Southern Foundation University of Michigan

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Alliance of Rouge Communities Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Keep Growing Detroit Wayne County Department of Public Services—WMD





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Fitzpatrick Family (Barbara) Gelderloos Family

REDSIDE DACE

Cloutier Family Sano Family Zikowski Family

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DRAGONFLY

Bordman Family Brady Family Bydlowski Family Campbell Family Chumbley/Shogan Family Cicero Family Craves/O'Brien Family Cromer Family (Julie) Dasch Family Deutsch Family Dilgard Family

Durivage/Leduc Family Dyer/Engel Family Every Family Farley Family Fiems/Lukianoff Family Fotiu/Cassady Family Frady Family Fullmer Family Fusaro Family Gabrys Family Gasaway Family Grasinski Family Hall Family (Donna) Hanna/Lisica Family Harrison Family Hickey Family Hitz Family Hoag Family Hollingsworth Family Hurst Family Jagger Family Jereckos Family Johnson Family (Barry) Kortesoja Family LaLonde-Norman Family Lane/Ourchane Family Laundroche Family Leeper/LeFeuvre Family Lipka Family Malicki Family Marvin Family McEwen Family McNulty Family (Tom) McSurely Family Morlan Family Moylan Family Ms. Marguerite Barrett O'Connell/Miller Family Sampson Family Shopinski/King Family Shwayder/Ergas Family Skidmore Family Smith Family (David) Tafelski Family Tluczek Family Totaro Family Touzeau/Cook Family Townley Family Waligorski Family Walker Family Zell Family

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