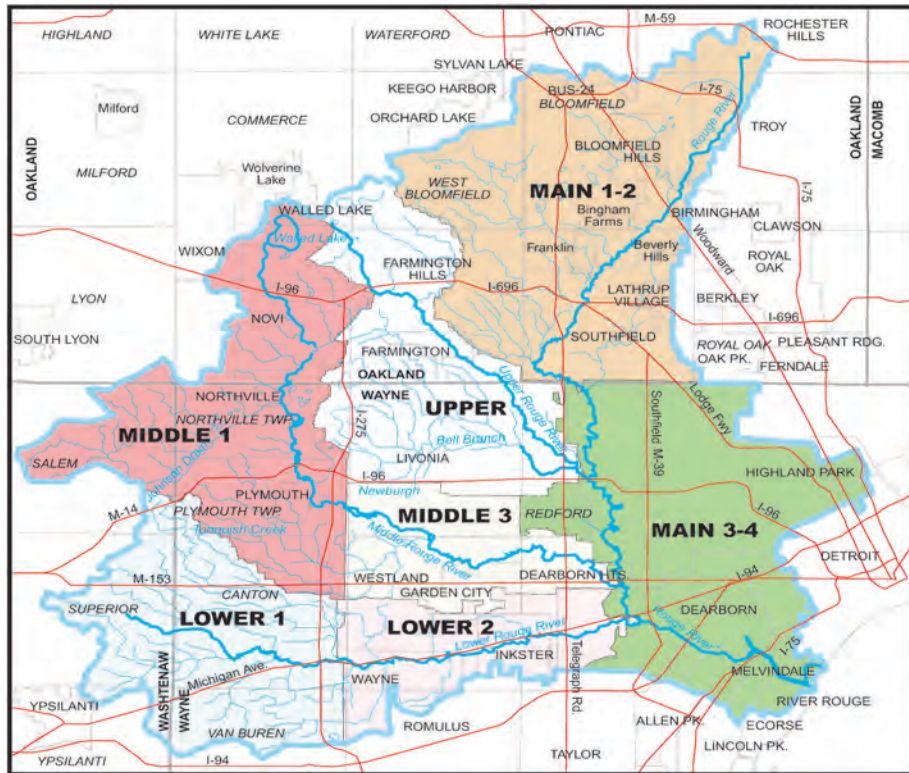


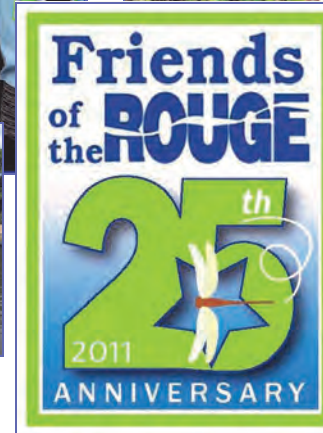
## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FRIENDS OF THE ROUGE

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 2010-2011



**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**

Heidi McKenzie, President  
Michael Darga, Vice-President  
Sue Thompson, Secretary  
Alex Roehling, Treasurer

### **DIRECTORS**

Fenelon Ashley	Sharon Oliver-Merchant
Kurt Heise	Mike McNulty
Cynthia Jones	Brandy Siedlaczek
Claire Lannoye	Robert Townsend
Chester Marvin	Steve Weis
Anne Naszradi	

## **MAJOR DONORS/GRANTS**

(OVER \$5,000)

Alliance of Rouge Communities	Great Lakes Guardians
Americana Foundation	ITC
DENSO International America	Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project
Erb Family Foundation	

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

Karen Hanna, Operations Director  
Sally Petrella, Volunteer Monitoring Program Manager  
Cyndi Ross, River Restoration Program Manager  
Mathew Halliday, Volunteer Monitoring Support  
Emily Hughes, Rouge Education Project Program Manager  
Aimee Kalisz, REP Assistant Program Manager  
Abby Wicks, Environmental Support Intern

## **2010 - 2011 Membership Update**

249 TOTAL MEMBERS

Dues totaling \$15,260 for the 2010 - 2011 fiscal year

Thank You!

We, the Friends of the Rouge staff and Board of Directors, 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.

As we look back on our 25th year, we are reminded that we are not alone in our efforts to restore and protect the Rouge River watershed. As we established new partnerships and strengthened old ones, we recognized that our efforts over the past 25 years have inspired ideas and fueled many consequent successes. While our programs highlight and educate citizens about our fragile waterway and diminishing natural areas, they instill an appreciation for the Rouge River and its potential for improvement. We remain steadfast in our mission to promote restoration and stewardship of the Rouge River through educational and volunteer opportunities and we realize that we are fortunate to have individuals living and working in this watershed who are dedicated to our mission and who share our pride in the success that we have so far realized and the faith that these successes will continue. We are grateful for local foundations, organizations, and corporations who realize that clean, healthy water enhances the quality of our lives. The work we do would not be possible without your support.

Our Rouge Boat Tour was a great success again this year and our Rouge Brew continued its popularity. An unwelcomed storm threatened our Annual Golf Outing this year but we are grateful to those who patiently braved the weather and persevered. We are proud to continue to support and, in some cases, lead efforts to establish and enhance recreational routes for paddlers, runners, and walkers. We are fortunate to have stakeholders who are dedicated to preserving this natural resource and making it available for residents, visitors of all ages and abilities, and for future generations.

We have been very fortunate to have continued support from the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project, the Alliance of Rouge Communities, the Erb Family Foundation, DENSO International America, Great Lakes Guardians, and ITC. 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 all of our Best Friends of the Rouge Awardees who have provided outstanding support for our programs: Atlas Specialty Bags, Detroit Country Day Middle School, ITC, and the first recipient of our *Julie Rose Frentrup Outstanding Volunteer Best Friend of the Rouge* award, Carl VanAartsen. Thanks also to our office volunteers, John Colby and Kay Smith, we truly appreciate your time and devotion!

As we enter our 26<sup>th</sup> year, we look forward to the many exciting projects happening within the Rouge River watershed that Friends of the Rouge is fortunate enough to be a part of. 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. ("bugs") that live in the streambed. FOTR data is used by the state and local communities. Funding is provided by the Erb Family Foundation.

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 **2010 Fall Bug Hunt** brought out 69 FOTR volunteers. Forty-seven sites were sampled: 26 by FOTR volunteers and 21 by Wayne County. Most sites scored in the Fair range Of the 31 sites that have been sampled for three years or more, one site had above average scores and three had below average scores.

The **2011 Winter Stonefly Search** was very difficult this year due to an unusually long cold winter. Despite the cold, 95 volunteers came out on January 22 and sampled 25 sites and Wayne County sampled an additional four sites for a total of 29. Only five sites had stoneflies compared to last year's 20. It is presumed that the cold weather made them difficult to find and delayed maturation. The 2012 Search is being moved a week later.



Lepidostomatid caddisfly larvae

The **2011 Spring Bug Hunt** was also difficult but this was due to a very wet spring. The Spring Bug Hunt brought out 93 volunteers who sampled 30 sites and an additional 17 sites were sampled by Wayne County. Most sites had Fair scores. In comparison to past years, three sites scored above average and one below. Two new insect families were identified — Lepidostomatid caddisfly and spreadwinged damselfly.

Trend analysis was done for the spring and fall data. In the fall, Johnson Creek and the Middle 3 showed a positive trend in scores. In the spring, the Main 1-2 subwatershed and all of the Middle and Lower subwatersheds showed a positive trend. No subwatershed had significant negative trends.

Mussel surveys were conducted in the Middle Rouge in August. Six species were identified, one more than in the 2001-02 surveys. Live mussels were still found below the Newburgh Lake Dam within a large infestation of non-native zebra mussels. FOTR will offer a mussel class in Sept 2011.

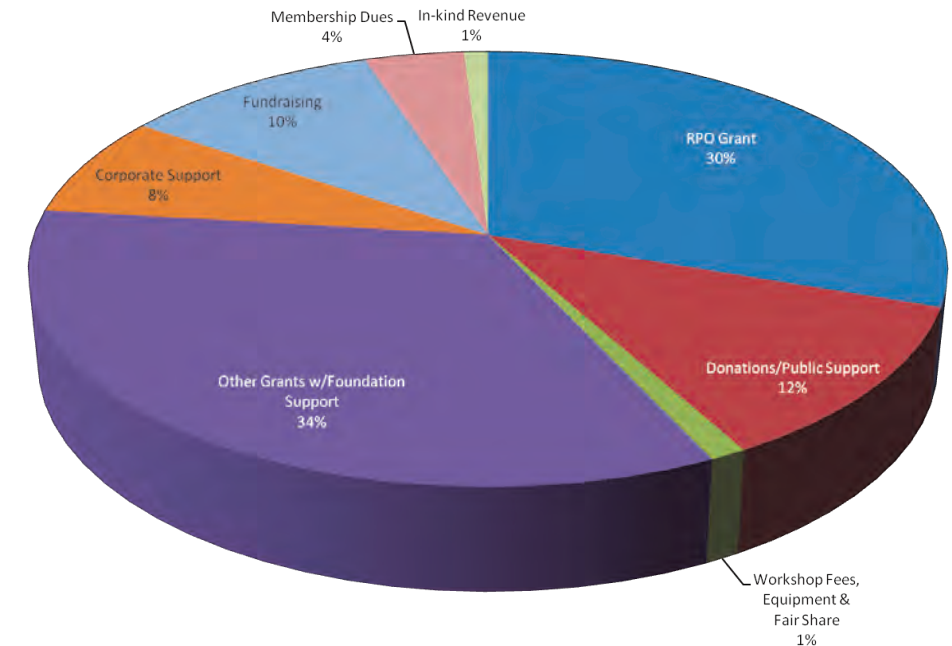


Stonefly searchers had to break through thick ice to reach the stream.



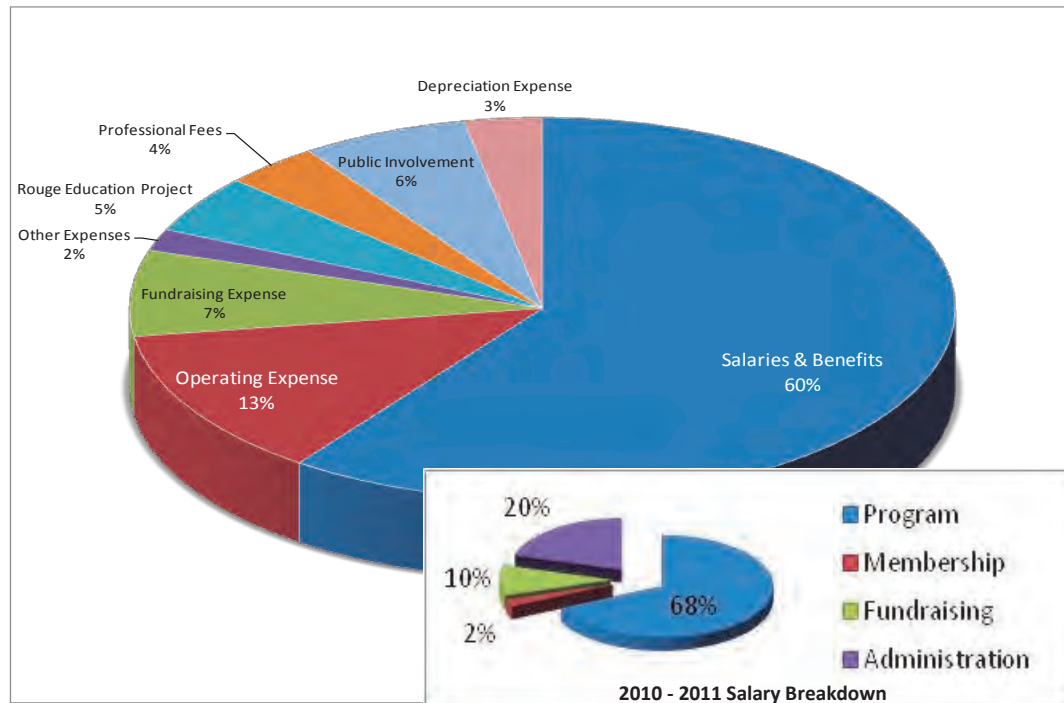
Zebra mussels cover a native mussel.

## FOTR 2010 - 2011 REVENUES BY SOURCE



**TOTAL REVENUES - \$ 401,703**

## FOTR 2010 - 2011 EXPENSES BY USE



**TOTAL EXPENSES—\$ 403,734**

## VOLUNTEER MONITORING

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

### Frog & Toad Survey



**Frog & Toad Survey Training Workshops** take place annually in February and March in locations throughout the watershed. In 2011, four workshops were held in Plymouth Township, Canton Township, Farmington Hills and Bloomfield Township and 213 people attended. A total of 365 volunteers signed up in 248 teams to survey 372 blocks. Data was received for 158 blocks and volunteers contributed over 2,112 hours of time.



Meteorologist Lori Pinson interviews two new frog surveyors after she signs up to survey.

To help volunteers practice identifying frog and toad calls, one Group Listen was held. On April 14, 2011, 24 volunteers came out to West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve. The walk was held in conjunction with the Detroit Audubon Society and West Bloomfield Township.

The Frog & Toad Survey is funded through the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project, Rouge communities and the Erb Family Foundation.

## FORDSON ISLAND OXBOW RESTORATION AND DEBRIS REMOVAL



Ever since FOTR discovered twelve abandoned boats in the Rouge River during the annual kayak trip, we have been working to get these hulks removed. A project of this magnitude requires partners. FOTR partnered with the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority and Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision and applied for a GLRI/NOAA Grant which was awarded in 2010.

The vessel removal was done in spring and summer 2011 with the assistance of Faust Corp, Marine Pollution Control and Waste Management. FOTR oversaw the pre and post monitoring which included working with the MDEQ on a fish survey, doing the benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring and the photo monitoring. FOTR also helped with community outreach which included a community meeting and a public cleanup day in which 29 volunteers removed debris and two additional boats.

A total of 20 boats were removed. Future plans include invasive species work, dredging of the channel and work to make this a nature park as an oasis of green space in the midst of industry.





## 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.

Stormwater continues to be a major threat to the health of the Rouge River. Restoring the land with native vegetation will help reduce the impact stormwater has on the river. The River Restoration Program encourages watershed residents to “reduce and reuse” rainwater by installing rain gardens and rain barrels and to “replace” lawn grass with native vegetation to encourage infiltration.

### Projects:

In the past year, Friends of the Rouge coordinated five restoration projects. Three of the projects were new native plantings, one project expanded an existing planting and one project involved volunteers in removing invasive shrubs.

Date	Project	City	Project Location	Size (Sq Ft)
9/18/2010	Bloomfield Twp Native Demonstration Garden	Bloomfield Hills	Municipal Complex	300
10/3/2010	Redford CSO Basin Rain Garden Workday	Redford	Lola Drive at Puritan	400
10/10/2010	10.10.10 Invasive Plant Removal Workday	Beverly Hills	Riverside Park	43,560
10/24/2010	Newburg United Methodist Church Buffer Planting	Livonia	Ann Arbor Trail at Levan	500
8/27/2011	GRDC Native Landscape	Detroit	North Rosedale Gardens Neighborhood	1,000

### Educational Events:

Friends of the Rouge coordinated the following educational events in 2010-2011:

- A Grow Zone Maintenance Roundtable discussion in Dearborn on 11/11/10, funded by the Alliance of Rouge Communities
- An Eco-friendly Gardening Workshop in Southfield on 4/13/11, funded by the Alliance of Rouge Communities (36 attended)
- A presentation on Native Gardening for Farmington Hills on 4/27/11 (20 attended)
- A presentation on the Restoration of the Rouge River and Fox Run’s Connection to the River in Novi on 7/11/11 (~200 attended)



Volunteers spread compost and plant a 1,000 sq ft native landscape in Detroit’s Rosedale community

### Other Events:

FOTR organized a native plant sale at the Farmington Hills Green Expo event on 6/18/11. Remaining plants were available for purchase at the FOTR 25th Anniversary Celebration in Dearborn on 6/25/10 and during the ARC Rain Barrel Sale in Southfield on 7/11/11.

## ROUGE EDUCATION PROJECT

The **Rouge Education Project (REP)** works with teachers and students (K-12) by incorporating academic goals and objectives directly related to the Rouge River watershed into the schools’ science curriculum. The lessons covered are then translated into place-based learning during field trips that allow students, teachers and interested parents to conduct water monitoring tests. On Monitoring Day, the students and teachers are teamed up with a trained College Student Assistant (CSA). Corporate support and partnerships are formed through sponsorship opportunities that include coordination of sponsor volunteers teamed with the schools they support. Federal funds and corporate sponsorships funded 37 schools and over 2,000 students in 2010-2011. The REP team recruited 5 new schools into the project during the 2010-2011 school year.



Fifth Grade Students from Birmingham Covington School in Bloomfield sorting aquatic insects at Linden Park

College Student Assistants play an important role in making the REP a success. CSAs are trained for up to 23 hours in techniques of Physical, Chemical and Biological monitoring. CSAs use their training to support monitoring activities with the school they are paired with. This year the REP paired 14 CSAs with participant schools from throughout the watershed. These CSAs were recruited from seven local colleges and universities. The CSA program successfully met the needs of the participating REP schools this year.



Fifth Grade Students from Brace Lederle K-8 School in Southfield identifying bugs collected at Douglas Evans Nature Preserve

The 2010-2011 Adopt-a-School program brought in over \$40,700 in corporation and grant support. This funding directly supported 33 schools’ participation in the REP. DENSO International America, General Motors Corporation, and Henniges Automotive each provided corporate volunteers to assist schools on Monitoring Day.



## REP "Rouge in the Classroom" Pilot

During the 2010-2011 school year, the REP piloted an in-class lesson program called "Rouge in the Classroom." This program is open to participating REP schools.

Rouge in the Classroom offers hands on activities for students in grades 4-8, centered around learning about watersheds, macroinvertebrates and different types of pollution. The pilot had three Oakland County schools participate. The program will continue into the 2011-2012 school year.

Schools outside of the REP can request a lesson for their students but are asked to pay a speaker fee.



Students from Pierce Elementary School in Birmingham participate in the *Do you know YOUR watershed?* activity

## RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

Friends of the Rouge's **River Restoration Program** encompasses both Rouge Rescue and Restoration Projects. 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 year marked the 25th anniversary of **Rouge Rescue**. We reflected on the past as we continued to work for a cleaner Rouge River in the future. Nearly 50,000 volunteers removed 46,300 cubic yards of debris over the past 25 years. The focus of the event has evolved to include river restoration activities like invasive plant removal, native plantings and education activities for children. Work on log jams has shifted away from removal towards managing wood in the stream to reduce localized erosion and maintain habitat and structure in the river.



## Rouge Rescue, cont.

In 2011, 1,550+ volunteers participated in clean up and stewardship projects at 39 worksites in 25 communities across the Rouge River watershed. A summary of the work completed is listed below. 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)).

Twenty-four sites worked to clean up trash from the river and surrounding natural areas. Twenty-two sites worked to remove invasive plants, such as garlic mustard, dame's rocket, phragmites, buckthorn and honeysuckle. Sixteen sites helped restore the watershed by planting native vegetation. Eleven work sites managed log jams. Thirteen sites conducted educational activities.



Volunteers weed the native plant grow zone in Parkland Park in Dearborn Heights



Pulling garlic mustard is a family affair at the Berberian Woods Nature Preserve in South-

**Trash Removal:** 146 cubic yards of trash were removed, including 21 tires, 5 shopping carts, 3 bicycles, one large appliance and one piece of furniture. Aristeo Construction donated their services and equipment to remove an old truck from Eliza Howell Park in Detroit.

**Invasive Plant Removal:** 339 cubic yards of invasive plants were removed to restore the river corridor

and maintain biodiversity in parks and preserves across the watershed.



Volunteers from Denso International America participated at three work sites this year and held a garlic mustard cook-off the week before Rouge Rescue in anticipation of removing this invasive plant

**Native Plantings:** 700 native wildflowers and grasses and 211 trees were planted to help reduce pollution caused by rain water and to provide wildlife habitat.

**Funding:** The River Restoration Programs are funded, in part, by grants from the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project and the Erb Foundation and by corporate sponsorships and in-kind gifts.



Hoover Elementary students plant a native garden near the banks of the Lower Rouge at Goudy Park in Wayne