



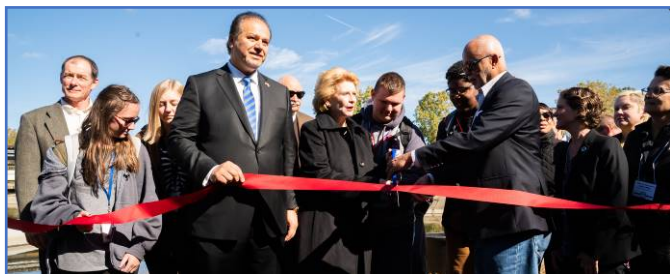
Working together, restoring the river

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## Grand Opening of the Rouge River Oxbow at The Henry Ford – October 18, 2019



Oxbow Grand Opening held during the ARC hosted Great Lakes Restoration Celebration held on October 18, 2019 at The Henry Ford. Speakers included Senator Debbie Stabenow and Wayne County Executive Warren Evans. Activities included a ribbon cutting and fish stocking.



Ribbon cutting with project funding partners including Wayne County, GLRI USEPA and NOAA representatives.



Charter school students assisting in the fish stocking during the Oxbow grand opening.



Funding for this project relates directly to the RRAC List of *Rouge River AOC Projects Needed to Remove the Habitat BUIs* developed with grant funding from the Areas of Concern Program through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE).

April 2020

Submitted by:



2200 Commonwealth Blvd., Suite 300  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

# **ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

The 2019 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the primary activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES**

### **ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION**

#### **FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS**

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and tallying of votes at the meeting), and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties.

[Full ARC meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported four (4) Executive Committee meetings including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

[ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated meeting and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the November Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities, staff, consultants and contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2019 Activities included:

- ◆ The 2018 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in March 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff initiated a bylaws change to the number of Executive Committee meetings from a set number of meetings to meet regularly as needed.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2019 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC's Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ◆ ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting. ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2018 audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2020 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 2% increase.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills.

## OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

2019 Activities included:

- ◆ The ARC hosted the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners (MACDC) Southeast District meeting on May 23, 2019. The meeting was held at Henry Ford College's campus and included a presentation and tour by ARC Staff to The Henry Ford Oxbow.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a request from the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program for information on the ARC's 2008 Household Hazardous Waste brochure. The ARC provided it with a request to credit the ARC.
- ◆ ARC Staff received a request and provided data in May 2019 from EGLE's Water Resources Division for ambient water quality data (chemical, biological, or physical) that has been obtained from 1/1/17 through 12/31/18.
- ◆ The ARC hosted (for the third time) the Great Lakes Restoration Celebration on October 18, 2019 at The Henry Ford. The Henry Ford donated the space, ECT sponsored the continental



**ARC Staff Oxbow presentation during the ARC hosted MACDC Southeast District meeting held at Henry Ford College**



breakfast and SEMCOG sponsored the printing of the restoration project book that was distributed at the event. All ARC members were invited to this free event which promoted and celebrated the grant funded restoration activities in Southeast Michigan and was attended by federal, state and local units of government along with those watershed groups (including the ARC) conducting the restoration activities. Included in the day's activities was the grand opening of the Rouge Oxbow at The Henry Ford. A [book highlighting restoration projects](#) in Southeast Michigan was handed out. The day's events were attended by more than 125 federal, state and local agencies, elected officials and watershed groups. Highlighted by the following speakers:

- The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, The United States Senate
- The Honorable Warren C. Evans, Wayne County Executive
- Christopher Korleski, Director, U. S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO)
- Teresa Seidel – Director, Water Resources Division, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Julie Sims, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Neil Hawkins, President and COO, Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Earth Day Celebration in Farmington Hills on April 22, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Clinton River Watershed Michigan Water School workshop on February 27-28, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the planning team for the Rouge River Watershed Michigan Water School workshop on September 26-27, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Farmington Farmers Market and Earth Day Event on April 22, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Cranbrook Institute of Science Spring into Science event on April 2, 2019 and April 4, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Stormwater Summit coordinated by Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office on October 4, 2019.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group.
- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed Ohio's MS4 permit to better understand how other states are implementing the regulations.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared a paper that summarized the current dissolve oxygen conditions in the Rouge for the Western Lake Erie Indicator Project and attended the State of the Strait Conference held in November.
- ◆ Participated in an interview with Fox 2 News for a feature story in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Rouge River fire.
- ◆ Presented to the Wildlife Habitat Council's regional forum on June 26, 2019. This included a summary of the ARC's achievements including opportunities to partner.
- ◆ Met with Clinton River Watershed Council regarding their stormwater public education program to see if what lessons could be transferred to the Rouge.



**ARC display at Farmington Hills Earth Day event**

- Participated in the Lower Rouge Water Trail Committee to establish a water trail on the Lower Branch between Canton and Detroit.

## GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff prepared a press release for Wayne County on the Rouge Oxbow.
- ARC Staff promoted the Wayne County Development Summit on May 7, 2019 regarding the changes to the Wayne County stormwater ordinance and permit process.
- ARC Members and ARC Staff attended Senators Stabenow and Peters press conference on the reauthorization of the GLRI Act on August 22, 2019.
- ARC Staff coordinated with Wayne County to promote an outreach meeting on their revised stormwater standards on November 14, 2019.
- ARC Staff attended the EPA event held on Belle Isle with EPA Administrator Wheeler and Region V Chief of Staff Kurt Thiede (now the Region V Administrator), to announce the release of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Action Plan III and nearly \$11 million in grants on October 22, 2019
- ARC Staff participated in a conference call, on October 17, 2019, with Senator Stabenow's legislative Washington staff on potential funding for the Rouge under WRDA
- The ARC Executive Director testified at the October 29, 2019 meeting on House Bill 4691 (Stormwater Utility Act) which was being read at the House Regulatory Reform Committee to offer the ARC's support of the bill. All ARC members were encouraged to attend the hearing to support the bill or contact ARC Staff to fill out a "card of support" on a community's behalf.



**Brandy Siedlaczek,  
Southfield and ARC Staff  
at Stabenow/Peters press  
conference**

## STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff attended the 2019 Great Lakes AOC Conference on September 10-11 in Cleveland Ohio.

## ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff participated in meetings for the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by Cranbrook with support from SEMCOG and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). The campaign resulted in a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging sought to foster water resource stewardship, encourage citizens to adopt best management practices and support long-term investment in infrastructure. As part of the campaign, Cranbrook developed a logo and brand and coordinate the distribution of materials to the local media. ARC Staff provided input on the public education

topics that are a priority for the ARC as part of the stormwater permit. It is anticipated that the campaign will help the ARC implement the public education plan.

- ARC Staff participated in GLWA's wastewater master plan watershed committee. Input was provided on water quality monitoring locations for the Rouge.

## MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff coordinated and met with Schoolcraft College on their request to join the ARC.
- ARC Staff invited SEMCOG to become an ARC Cooperating Partner.
- ARC Staff responded to Mike Balow, citizen, on his concerns with the conditions at Wilcox Lake in Plymouth.
- ARC Staff met with Canton Township, Bloomfield Hills and Novi to discuss the benefits on ARC membership.
- ARC Staff attended a webinar titled "Updates to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Groundwater Permit Application Forms in MiWaters" on May 2, 2019.
- ARC Staff received an inquiry from John Schmittroth to be a primary contributor of a book and to take over the project. ARC Staff offered to provide any insight on the 20-year+ efforts to restore the Rouge River but responded that we were not interested in taking over the project.
- ARC Staff prepared an online portal to gather information from ARC members participating in the collaborative plans for the Stormwater Permit Bi-Annual Progress Reports.
- The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

Collaborative Plan data portal for MS4 permittees

## PURSUEING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

2019 Activities include:

- ARC Staff attended a webinar on May 2, 2019 presented by the U. S. Forest Service regarding the 2019 U. S. Forested Service GLRI request for grant applications. The ARC has received several grants through this program to mitigate the Emerald Ash Borer impacts in the watershed.
- ARC Staff coordinated and attended a tour with Sheela Johnson, USDA Forest Service of the 2017 Forest Service grant locations in the Rouge River Watershed on November 14, 2019. ARC communities visited included Plymouth, Westland and Novi.
- In September 2019 ARC Staff received a data request from the Forest Service for a report they are producing detailing outcomes of Forest Service GLRI grants. ARC Staff researched and provided supporting data for reports on the grants that the ARC received in 2012, 2015 and 2017 in the form of spreadsheets, shapefiles with attribute tables, or other tabular formats, for the Forest Service to do consistent analysis.

- ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC's status in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) and on Grants.gov. Both are required to be current and renewed annually in order to apply for federal grants.
- ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC's application for various grant applications throughout 2019.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ARC staff reviewed and forwarded to ARC members for consideration the grant opportunity from SEMCOG for Water Infrastructure Asset Management Data
- The ARC provided fiduciary services for Friends of the Rouge's Michigan's Volunteer River, Stream and Creek Cleanup Program (\$4,500) which funded the 2019 Rouge Rescue River Cleanup. (awarded to the ARC but managed by FOTR).
- The ARC, as a grant partner, provided support to the Friends of the Detroit River (FDR) on their NOAA Partnership grant for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration in the Detroit and Rouge River AOC. (awarded to FDR)
- The ARC staff supported Wayne County on a USEPA Direct Funding (\$770,000) grant for the design of parks habitat restoration including restoration of wetlands at Wayne County's Riverview Park, Sherwood Park, Bell Creek Park, Lola Valley Park, and habitat restoration on the Lower Rouge River. (awarded to Wayne County)

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2019 on behalf of the ARC:

- GLRI USDA-Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry grant (\$134,500) was prepared for the Restoring Tree Canopy in the Rouge River AOC. (not awarded)
- ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding (\$3,308,139) grant to the ARC for the implementation of two Rouge AOC habitat restoration projects: Tamarack Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration and Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery Park Restoration. (awarded to the ARC)
- ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding (\$815,000) for the Seeley Creek Habitat Restoration. (awarded to the ARC)

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for one (1) Technical Committee meeting on January 21, 2019. Topics included the ARC's Collaborative IDEP, the 2018 outfall screening results, Michigan Water School training and 2018 IDEP findings. In addition, the work plans for IDEP investigations in [Oakland County](#) and [Wayne County](#) were approved by the Technical Committee.

### IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties.

### OAKLAND COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

ARC Staff conducted investigations in the cities of Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Novi, Northville and Farmington Hills. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and



summarized in the [2019 OC Category A and B Outfall Investigation Summary](#) and the [2019 Category C Outfall Resampling Summary](#).

## WAYNE COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Wayne County Department of Public Services, Water Quality Management Division (WQMD) conducted advanced investigations in the cities of Plymouth, Westland and Livonia and are detailed in the [2019 Wayne County IDEP Services Report](#).

## IDEP TRAINING

ARC Staff promoted and assisted with the Partners for Clean Water Regional IDEP Training Workshops that were held on October 23 and 24 in 2019. The [IDEP Training Report](#) provides the attendance.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

No meetings were held in 2019, however, ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS

ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2019. Several items were restocked in 2019 including fertilizer clips, pet waste containers, seasonal posters and various printed material. More than 11,237 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. The quantity distributed are included in the [PIE Materials Distribution Report](#). Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2019.

### [Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for Clean Water Brochure](#)

The ARC printed 7,000 copies of this new brochure which was developed and printed in 2019 and is geared toward best practices and activities that homeowners can do in their house, in their yard, at their business, with their vehicles and in their community to protect water quality.

### [ARC Banners](#)

To meet the activities in the Collaborative PEP, ARC staff designed 3 sets of 3 educational banners with varying messages that will meet the Collaborative PEP. Topics included: The connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and

**Watershed Wisdom — Healthy Habits In Your Home**

**What are the benefits of healthy habits?**

Practicing good habits in your home not only protects water quality, reduces costs to you, and the community. Healthy habits promote recycling which reduces the burden on our landfill. Healthy habits prevent the use of toxic and severe poisons and reduce the need for emergency treatment costs.

**Adopt these healthy habits!**

**Fats, Oils & Grease (FOG)**  
Don't pour fats, oils and grease washed down a sink, drain or into the sewer. FOG blocks pipes and causes pollution problems. Instead, that problem is caused by pouring or dumping greasy or oily food waste into a container or jar so that it can cool before throwing it in the trash. You can also use a paper towel or rag to remove grease, grease from dishes and pans prior to washing them. The greasy dishes and pans can be used for other purposes or thrown away with the trash. Do not pour grease down the sink or into the sewer. It is the best way to keep your pipes clear.

**Don't pour grease into a container and toss it in the trash.**

**Toilets**  
Never put "flushable" wipes down a drain or toilet. Even though they say "flushable," they don't flush down. They can cause blockages in the sewer system which is costly and can cause sewage backup through floor drains and toilets.

**Household Hazardous Waste & Recycling**  
Check your community website for the local household hazardous waste event to dispose of things like chemicals, batteries, paint, and aerosols. You can also bring old computers, televisions, microwaves, and other electronics to the local electronics recycling center.

**County Hazardous Waste Information**

COUNTY	HAZARDOUS WASTE
WAYNE	Wayne County Hazardous Waste
MACQUIN	Macquinn County Hazardous Waste
MACQUIN	Macquinn County Hazardous Waste
MACQUIN	Macquinn County Hazardous Waste
MACQUIN	Macquinn County Hazardous Waste

For more information visit: [www.allianceofroutecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofroutecommunities.com)

Page taken from the new Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure.



disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality. ARC member communities signed up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 1-2 weeks at a time.

2019 Activities include:

- ◆ The [Banner Report](#) provides the details of where the ARC Banners have been during 2019.

#### Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries or other buildings that the general public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the general public at community events.

#### Community Article /Ad Graphic

ARC Staff promoted the previously created ad graphic titled *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!* On the ARC Facebook account. The ad included a make-at-home recipe for brine.

2019 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2019 titled [What Is A Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?](#)



**New ad graphic available to ARC members to use in newsletters and social media**

#### Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public. Bookmarks were also distributed at member public events and the Great Lakes Restoration event.

#### Pet Waste Containers

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message “*In the Bag, Not the River*”.

#### Fertilizer Clips

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: “*Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly*” to distribute at public events.

#### ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities. ARC Public Education Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and they were also distributed as part of seedling giveaways.

#### ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure explains the ARC, member benefits, projects and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

#### Kneeling Pads

A garden kneeling pad with the slogan “Plant it for the Rouge River!” that promotes the use of native trees and plants. The kneeling pad has the slogan, ARC logo and website on one side and has a list 10 suggested native trees and plants to use in your yard to help protect water quality.

### Key Chains

A boat float key chain with the slogan “Prevent Invasive Species in the Rouge River!” with the message to wash your boat & remove plants & aquatic animals after every use. The keychain also includes the ARC logo and website address.

### Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office Environmental Team.

### Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds.

### Black-Eyed Susan Seeds and Tip Card

Black-eyed Susan seed packets are distributed to the general public along with a tip card which educates them on the benefits of native plants.

### Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees.

### Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and also as part of seedling giveaways at additional events.

### Additional Rouge Grant and SEMCOG Printed Pieces

The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continue to distribute those when requested.

## **ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

ARC Staff initiated a [Facebook account](#) for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities.

2019 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC added 51 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC Member Communities to Like and Share the ARC’s posts.
- ◆ The ARC’s Facebook account had 119 followers and 86 total page likes.
- ◆ Details on the posts on the ARC’s website and Facebook can be found in the [Electronic Media Report](#).
- ◆ ARC staff promoted a P2/GH video created by Farmington Hills being promoted regionally for southeast Michigan winter maintenance and at the APWA national snow conference.
- ◆ ARC Staff added the Oakland County’s Phase II Biennial Stormwater Report to the ARC’s website.
- ◆ ARC Staff added reporting documents from Wayne and Oakland County along with ARC reports.
- ◆ ARC Staff created new sections on the ARC website on septic system maintenance and watershed education.

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

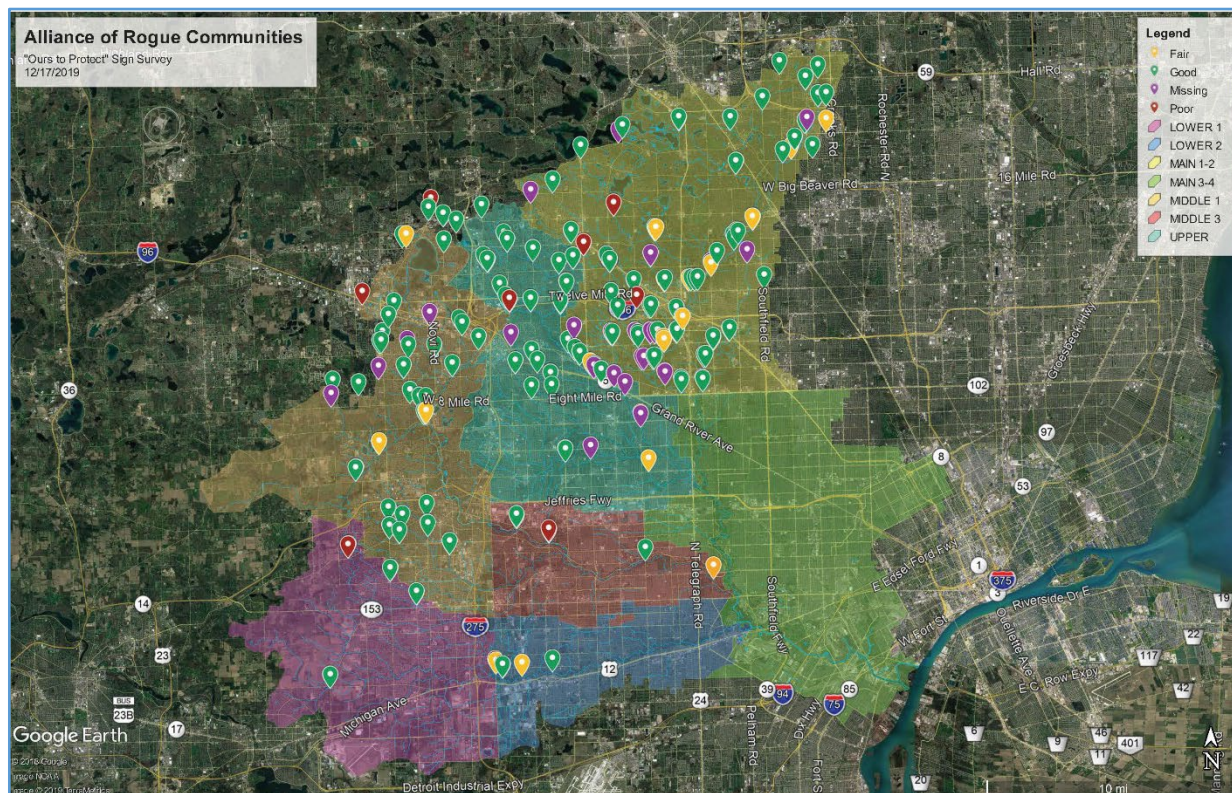
The 2019 PIE outreach activities including workshops, workdays and presentations and Friends of the Rouge’s annual report are provided in the [Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report](#).

2019 Activities included:

- ARC Staff presented a webinar on septic system maintenance on November 4, 2019. The recorded webinar was made available on the ARC’s Facebook page and website.

### **WATERSHED SIGNAGE**

ARC Staff began surveying the watershed signage (“entering the Rouge River watershed – Ours to Protect”) to determine locations, condition and need for additional signage. The rest of the watershed will be surveyed in 2020 with suggestions for repair or new sign placement.



**Draft map of the surveys completed in 2019 showing the locations and condition of the “ours to protect” signage**





Working together, restoring the river

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

[www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com)

HOME Our Watershed For Members About Us Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)

SEARCH

## Rouge River – Ours to Protect!

The Rouge River Watershed is home to more than one million people and encompasses 466 square miles, running through the most densely populated and urbanized land area in southeast Michigan. The Rouge River is a tributary to the Detroit River and its four branches total approximately 126 miles of waterways and include over 400 lakes, impoundments and ponds. More than 50 miles of the river flows through public parklands, making the Rouge River one of the most publicly accessible rivers in the country.

The purpose of the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) is to encourage watershed-wide cooperation and support to restore beneficial uses of the Rouge River to the area residents while meeting water quality permit requirements!

[ARC Member Information](#)

### Working Together, Restoring the River

**About Our Watershed**  
Find out what a watershed is, if you live in one and what you can do to protect it.

**Get Involved**  
Attend workshops, volunteer activities & learn what's happening in the Rouge River!

**In The News**  
Articles and videos highlight ARC member and partner activities and projects.

**Businesses in The Rouge River**  
Cost-saving information for business-owners to assure you are not polluting the Rouge River.

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)**  
Learn how the RRAC activities are helping the Rouge River Watershed!

**Become a Steward of The Rouge River**  
Your actions at home, in your yard, in your community and at work affect the Rouge River!

### Restoration Projects in the Rouge River Watershed

The ARC and the Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC), along with U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Michigan Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and our local members developed a formal list of specific projects that needed to be completed in the watershed in order to remove the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) to begin moving towards delisting the Rouge River as an Area of Concern (AOC). This work resulted in the development of a Rouge AOC Habitat List that was approved by EGLE and EPA in 2018. The ARC, with RRAC support, has been actively applying for funding to implement many of the projects, with several of them complete and highlighted below.

**Seeley Creek Habitat Restoration**  
— [View project info](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI Grant GL-00E02700)

**Rouge River AOC PAC Support**  
— [View project info](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI/Michigan EGLE GL-00E02481, Project #2020-2505)

**Rouge River AOC Habitat Colonial & Venoy Restoration**  
— [View project info](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI Grant GL-00E02810)

**Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration Design & Implementation Tamarack Creek/Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery**  
— [View project info for Tamarack Creek Restoration](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI Grant GL-00E02344-2 & GL-00E02478)  
— [View project info for Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI Grant GL-00E02344-2 & GL-00E02478)

**Henry Ford Estate Fishway**  
— [View project info](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI Grant GL-00E02040-1)

**Rouge River AOC Habitat Restoration Design Implementation Wayne County Parkland**  
— [View project info](#) (Funded by a USEPA GLRI/Michigan EGLE GL-00E02432-0 & GL-00E02096-0)

**Completed Projects in the Rouge River Watershed**  
— [Odow Restoration at The Henry Ford](#)  
— [Wayne Rd. Dam Removal & River Restoration](#)  
— [Danvers Dam Removal & River Restoration](#)  
— [Transforming the Rouge from Mowed Down to Grown Up](#)  
— [Restoring Tree Canopies in the Rouge River AOC](#)

### More Helpful Information

**Community Stormwater Management Plans**  
Review and comment on your community's stormwater management plans. Find links to each community participating in the ARC Collaborative Plans.  
[Learn More »](#)

**Rouge-Friendly Lawn Maintenance**  
Get tips to keep your yard healthy, create habitat for pollinators and even save some money!  
[Learn More »](#)

**Maintaining your Septic System**  
Important information and videos for homeowners that have a septic system on their property. Find out how to maintain your system and how to tell if it is failing.  
[Learn More »](#)

**Green Infrastructure & What it Means to You**  
What is green infrastructure? Incorporate it into your yard and learn how your yard or community can benefit from it.  
[Learn More »](#)

**Application & Disposal of Chemicals**  
Learn about preferred cleaning materials and procedures for car, pavement and power washing. Find out how to apply and dispose of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.  
[Learn More »](#)

**Household Hazardous Waste & Illegal Dumping**  
Report illegal dumping and learn how you can dispose of household hazardous waste properly.  
[Learn More about HHW »](#)  
[Learn More about illegal dumping »](#)

In 2020 the ARC's website was rebuilt to include information to educate the public on how they can help protect water quality in the Rouge River Watershed.

Many new topics were added to meet requirements outlined in the ARC's Collaborative PEP.

In addition to the new topics, the member information was updated and information on the ARC's restoration projects was showcased.

ARC member communities are encouraged to add a link to the ARC's website on their community sites to meet their MS4 permit requirements.

March 2021

Submitted by:



2200 Commonwealth Blvd., Suite 300  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105



# ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2020 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES

### ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### **FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS**

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including notetaking and tallying of votes at the meeting), preparation of E-votes, and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties. In addition to the Full ARC meetings, officer elections were held in 2020.

[Full ARC meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported two (2) Executive Committee meetings including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, preparation of E-votes, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

[ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, budget amendments, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated two (2) Finance Committee meetings on March 5 and September 10 and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding budget amendments and the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the September Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities by staff, consultants, contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2020 Activities included:

- The 2019 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in April 2020.

- ◆ ARC Staff developed the “Procedures for Payables/Receivables During Covid-19” in April 2020 to adhere to social distancing guidelines and reduce the in-person review of payables/receivables.
- ◆ ARC Staff met with Kate Richardson, Novi, who was taking over the Treasurer position from Jill Rickard who left Northville Township in early 2020. ARC staff prepared a transition package and reviewed the ARC Treasurer duties.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC’s Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2020 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC’s Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ◆ ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting. ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2019 Single Audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ◆ ARC staff drafted a revision to the Accounting Procedures Manual adding language required by new federal guidelines for nonprofits which was approved by the Full ARC.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2021 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 2% increase in dues.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC’s bills.

## **OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE**

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

## **GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

2020 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff attended Great Lakes Day in Washington D.C. on March 4-5, 2020.
- ◆ ARC staff planned and facilitated a press event on July 29, 2020 where USEPA Regional Administrator Thiede announced at Riverview Park in Livonia that the ARC was



**USEPA Regional Administrator Thiede announcing \$4.2 Million grant to the ARC for restoration of 5 Wayne County parks.**

awarded a \$4.2 Million grant from U.S. EPA Region 5 (Great Lakes Region) to restore 122 acres in 5 Wayne County Parks to beneficial use in the Rouge River AOC. ARC Staff created new project boards and handouts explaining the scope of the restoration activities in the 5 Wayne County Parks. ARC Staff also gave a tour to those attending.

- ◆ ARC Staff attended a virtual celebration on December 9, 2020 hosted by U.S. EPA to highlight the accomplishments of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) over the last ten years.

### **STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)**

ARC Staff did not attend any SPAC meetings in 2020 due to COVID-19.

### **ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION**

2020 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff participated in meetings for the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by Cranbrook with support from SEMCOG and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). The campaign resulted in a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging sought to foster water resource stewardship, encourage citizens to adopt best management practices and support long-term investment in infrastructure. 2020 activities focused on the Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week along with the public education materials that were made available to communities.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with GLWA on assistance with the Lower Rouge E. coli issue.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in an interview with Huron River Watershed Council regarding the ARC's needs for water quality monitoring.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in GLWA Watershed Hub work group and full group meetings.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group.
- ◆ Participated in Wayne County Parks' Connecting the Rouge study and stakeholder meeting which will identify a trail network that will extend from Northville to Detroit with connections to Canton, east and west Dearborn, and other regional trail initiatives including the Iron Belle Trail and the Joe Louis Greenway.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the planning meetings for the 2020 Water Week activities.
- ◆ ARC Staff presented virtually at the Ohio Stormwater Conference where the operations and successes of the ARC were discussed.

### **MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS**

2020 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff coordinated and met with new ARC Representatives in Redford Townships to discuss the benefits to ARC membership and answer any questions they may have. ARC Staff created a Stormwater 101 presentation to use when meeting with new members.
- ◆ ARC Staff met with Oakland County Road Commission on the potential benefits of being an ARC member and how they could participate in the Collaborative TMDL Plan.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded an email received from the Director of The Conservancy Initiative in Northville Twp. regarding landfill impact on Johnson Creek to the Northville Township ARC Representative.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in an interview with UM students on green infrastructure efforts in the watershed.
- ◆ ARC Staff had discussions with Jon Allen (EGLE consultant) on the Lower Rouge River Main Channel sediment sampling work plan previously prepared by the ARC.

- ◆ ARC Staff responded to a reporter's inquiry regarding the high E. coli levels in the Rouge River.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted Northville Township in preparing information on the water quality and importance of the Johnson Creek as they prepared a detailed response/statement to EGLE regarding the Arbor Hills Landfill discharge application.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted with the preparation of an EPA press release regarding the GLRI funding the ARC received for the Colonial Park and Venoy Dorsey Park project.
- ◆ The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities and Rouge Rescue events on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted the Water Environment Federation Stormwater Institute (SWI) MS4 permittee survey to identify information and resources needed to run an effective and efficient stormwater program.
- ◆ ARC Staff informed ARC members that a fish consumption advisory sign was available at no cost through the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided information to the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds on the process and benefits of becoming a 501(c)(3) organization.
- ◆ ARC Staff spoke to the City of Novi on potential Middle Rouge projects.
- ◆ ARC Staff responded to Diane Andreassi from Today Publications on a story she was preparing regarding the Johnson Creek project in Northville.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided updated water quality DO/E. coli information to HRC/EGLE for the WEF Collections System conference titled "60 Years of Progress in CSO Control in Michigan."
- ◆ ARC Staff provided information for the Michigan Chapter of APWA Project of the Year Award - Environment \$1M-5M for the Rouge River Oxbow Phase 3 project.
- ◆ ARC Staff responded to a call from Silvia Eichen with Michigan Green Industry Association regarding potential speakers for future events regarding storm water management for municipalities and counties.

### **PURSuing GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2020 on behalf of the ARC:

- ◆ GLRI USDA-Forest Service grant for Reducing Runoff in the Rouge River AOC. (awarded to the ARC \$261,780).
- ◆ EGLE AOC GLRI Grant for Rouge River AOC PAC Support (awarded to the ARC \$75,000).
- ◆ ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding grant to the ARC for the habitat restoration implementation of five Wayne County parks: Riverview, Lola Valley, Sherwood, Bell Creek and Lower Rouge River. (awarded to the ARC \$4,222,090)
- ◆ ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding for habitat restoration at Colonial & Venoy Parks. (awarded to the ARC \$1,834,000).
- ◆ National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes 2020 Pre-proposal was submitted for the Bell Creek Habitat Restoration Project in Livonia. (pending at time of report \$210,000).

Additional grant activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff attended a webinar on May 12, 2020 presented by the U. S. Forest Service regarding the 2020 U. S. Forested Service GLRI request for grant applications. The ARC has received several grants through this program to mitigate the Emerald Ash Borer impacts in the watershed.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in an EEO/Kickoff conference call with the USDA Forest Service on the newly awarded grant.



- ◆ ARC Staff prepared various letters of support for partners applying for grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC's status in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM), Grants.gov and with the DUNS number. These are required to be current and renewed annually in order to apply for federal grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC's application for various grant applications throughout 2020.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended a webinar on December 8, 2020 regarding the application process for the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed the Pebble Creek Watershed Management Plan in preparation for a potential 319 grant application and created maps of the critical areas in Pebble Creek to support it. ARC Staff communicated with EGLE on the minimum stormwater design standards for 319 projects in MS4 areas. ARC Staff led a video call with the local communities to identify a green infrastructure project in Pebble Creek that would be eligible for Section 319 funding. An application was not submitted because there were no public properties within the critical areas and an interested private property owner could not be identified.
- ◆ ARC Staff discussed a potential creek daylighting project with Plymouth.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for one (1) Technical Committee meeting on March 6, 2020. Topics included the ARC's Collaborative IDEP progress report, 2020 IDEP findings, and investigation priorities from communities. In addition, the work plans for IDEP investigations in [Oakland County](#) and [Wayne County](#) were approved by the Technical Committee.

### IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties.

#### **OAKLAND COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS**

ARC Staff conducted investigations in the cities of Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Novi, Northville, Inkster and Farmington Hills. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and summarized in the [2020 IDEP Investigation Summary](#).

#### **WAYNE COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS**

Wayne County Department of Public Services, Environmental Services Division (ESD) conducted advanced investigations in the cities of Plymouth, Wayne, Westland, Inkster and Livonia and are detailed in the [2020 Wayne County IDEP Services Report](#).

## **IDEP TRAINING**

ARC Staff promoted and assisted SEMCOG to hold two training webinars held on November 10, 2020. The IDEP Alert Observer training was attended by 180 people from 48 public entities with 112 of the 180 attendees from ARC communities. The Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping training was attended by 148 people with 84 attendees from ARC communities. ARC Staff also updated the IDEP Investigator training slides in cooperation with Wayne County.

## **MS4 PERMIT**

2020 Activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff responded to Van Buren Twp. on how other communities were handling the IDEP Ordinance requirement under the MS4 application.
- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed Northville Twp.'s draft public notice permit and provided comments and shared those comments with other townships.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with EGLE throughout the year on member community permits.
- ◆ ARC Staff had communication with EGLE on the Oakland County Road Commission's permit application.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided guidance to permittees on how to submit their MS4 progress reports in MiWaters.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted several permittees with completing their MS4 progress reports.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared and provided the Collaborative IDEP Plan Progress Report for inclusion in the permittees' progress reports.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted communities with their EGLE desktop audits.
- ◆ Created a metric tracking template for use by the Townships for the new permit.
- ◆ ARC staff compiled Stormwater Mgt Plans for several communities and posted them to the ARC's website to meet the public notice requirement of the PPP.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the Wayne County Post Construction standards webinar.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING FACILITATION**

No meetings were held in 2020, however, ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS**

ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2020. Several items were restocked in 2020 including pet waste containers, seasonal posters, kneeling pads and various printed material. ARC Staff developed and sent a survey to members to gauge their interest on a new public education topic and from the top choice (household chemicals) a tri-fold brochure, 2 new banners, ad graphic and newsletter article were developed in 2020. Despite COVID-19, more than 5,000 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. Distribution details are included in the [PIE Materials Distribution Report](#). Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2020.

### When it Comes to Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing!

In 2020 the ARC created a new tri-fold brochure which focuses on changing habits to help protect water quality in the Rouge River including changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. The brochure also provides valuable links to southeast Michigan County's HHW collection events. 5,000 copies were printed in December of 2020 with distribution of 100 brochures to each ARC Member community in January 2021.

### Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for Clean Water Brochure

The Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure educates the public about healthy habits for clean water. The brochure was distributed to members, realtors and homeowners' associations within the Rouge River watershed. A focus in 2020 was approaching realtors in the watershed in recruit them to handout this brochure to new homeowners. A total of 524 copies were sent filling requests in 2020.

### Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing Banners

In 2020 the ARC created 2 new banners that address ways for people to change their habits with chemicals. These banners go along with the theme of the new brochure which focuses on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. It also provides links to southeast Michigan County's HHW collection events. These banners will be offered to ARC member communities beginning in 2021 to be displayed in their facilities that are visited by the general public.

### ARC Banners

To meet the activities in the Collaborative PEP the ARC created 3 sets of educational banners with varying messages. Topics included: The connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality. ARC member communities signed up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 2 weeks at a time.

Because of COVID-19, banners were not rotating in the watershed until the fourth quarter of 2020. 2020 Activities include:

- ◆ The [Banner Report](#) provides the details of where the ARC Banners have been during 2020.
- ◆ ARC Staff designed two new static display banners in 2020 that will be printed in 2021 and rotated throughout the watershed. The topic of the banners is changing your habits with chemicals to help protect water quality in the Rouge River.



**ARC's retractable banners displayed in West Bloomfield Twp.**

### Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries or other buildings that the general public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the general public at community events.

### Community Article /Ad Graphic

ARC Staff promoted previously created articles/ad graphics titled *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!* And *What Is a Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?* on the ARC's website and Facebook account.

2020 Activities included:

- ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2020 titled [When it Comes to Household Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing!](#)



**When it comes to household chemicals, changing your habits can help protect water quality in the Rouge River!**

- **Change to a chemical alternative**  
There are many natural options that work just as well!
- **Change the way you use chemicals**  
Follow directions - a little usually goes a long way!
- **Change how you dispose of chemicals**  
Never dump down a storm drain - take them to a Household Hazardous Waste collection event.

To learn more changes you can make, visit:  
[www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com)



**New ad graphic available to ARC members to use in newsletters and social media**

### Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public. Bookmarks were also distributed to members and the EPA GLRI award event in Wayne County.

### Pet Waste Containers

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message “*In the Bag, Not the River*”. The ARC restocked these in 2020 through our partnership with the One Water Campaign.

### Fertilizer Clips

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: “Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly.”

### ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities. ARC Public Education Brochures were also distributed at member public events and the EPA GLRI award event.

### ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure explains the ARC, member benefits, projects and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

### Kneeling Pads

A garden kneeling pad with the slogan “Plant it for the Rouge River!” that promotes the use of native trees and plants. The kneeling pad has the slogan, ARC logo and website on one side and has a list 10 suggested native trees and plants to use in your yard to help protect water quality. These were restocked in 2020, however, due to COVID-19 they were not distributed at ARC Member events.



**Village of Beverly Hills December Newsletter with ARC article on watersheds**



### Key Chains

A boat float key chain with the slogan “Prevent Invasive Species in the Rouge River!” with the message to wash your boat & remove plants & aquatic animals after every use. The keychain also includes the ARC logo and website address. These were restocked in 2020, however, due to COVID-19 they were not distributed at ARC Member events.

### Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office Environmental Team.

### Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds.

### Black-Eyed Susan Seeds and Tip Card

Black-eyed Susan seed packets are distributed to the general public along with a tip card which educates them on the benefits of native plants.

### Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees.

### Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

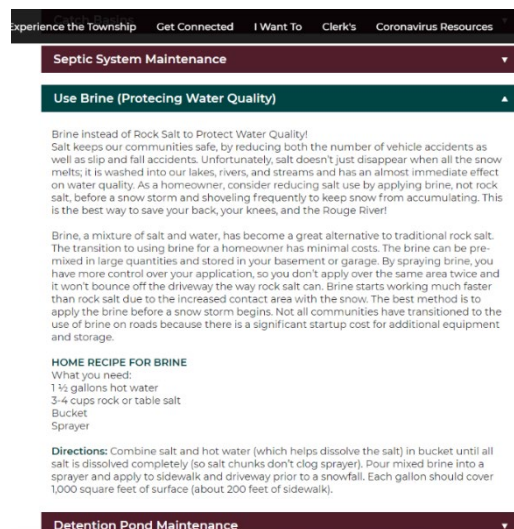
The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and also as part of seedling giveaways at additional events.

### Additional Rouge Grant and SEMCOG Printed Pieces

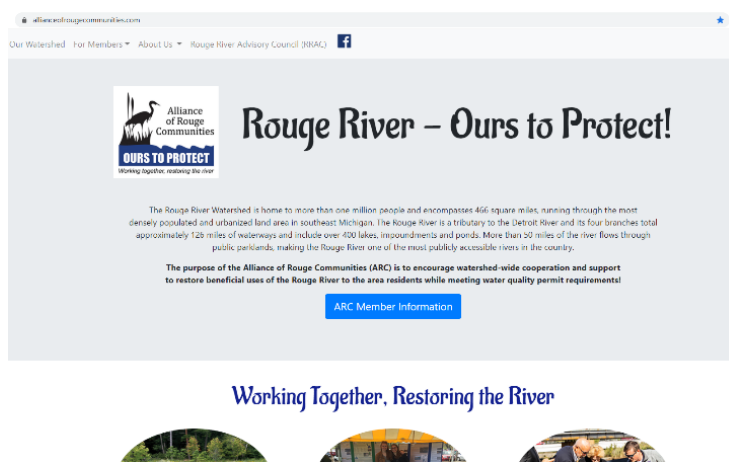
The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continue to distribute those when requested.

### ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

ARC Staff completed a total update to the ARC’s website at [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com), initiating a website that provides more information for the general public on what they can do to help protect water quality and promotes the ARC’s restoration activities in the watershed. The new website continues to provide ARC members valuable information to assist with meeting their stormwater permits while providing educational information on the Rouge River Watershed. The ARC website had 3,225 visitors in 2020.



Northville Twp. website with ARC article on using brine to protect water quality.



New website topics developed in 2020 include:

#### MICHIGAN WATERSHEDS

- Review all of Michigan's watersheds
- Wayne County watershed information
- Oakland County watershed information
- Michigan Lakes and Streams Association Watershed Information

#### ROUGE FRIENDLY BUSINESS PRACTICES

- Facility management
- Pollution prevention
- Proper storage
- Educating employees

#### ARC BROCHURES

- Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners - Healthy Habits for Clean Water
- Protect the Rouge River - Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease Properly
- Rouge Waterfront Wisdom - Healthy Habits for Clean Water
- Value of Trees
- Maintaining Your Detention Pond - A Guidebook for Private Owners in Southeast Michigan
- Rouge Growing Green - Naturalizing the Home Garden

#### OTHER RESOURCES

- USGS Water Science School
- EPA Basic Information and Frequently Asked Watershed Questions
- EPA How's My Waterway?
- EPA P2 Resources for Businesses
- Community stormwater management plan review
- Summaries of ARC restoration projects

#### THINGS YOU CAN DO

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Protect water quality in your watershed   | • Rouge-friendly lawn maintenance  |
| • Proper use and disposal of chemicals      | • Incorporate green infrastructure   |
| • Household hazardous waste/Illegal dumping | • Maintaining your septic system   |
| • Recognize illegal dumping & report it     | • Protect water quality in your watershed in the winter, spring, summer and fall |
| • Application & Disposal of chemicals       |  |

ARC Staff initiated a [Facebook account](#) for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities. ARC Staff added 70 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC member communities to Like and Share the ARC's posts. The ARC's Facebook account had 134 followers and 127 total page likes at the end of 2020.

Details on the traffic and posts on the ARC's website and Facebook can be found in the [Electronic Media Report](#).

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

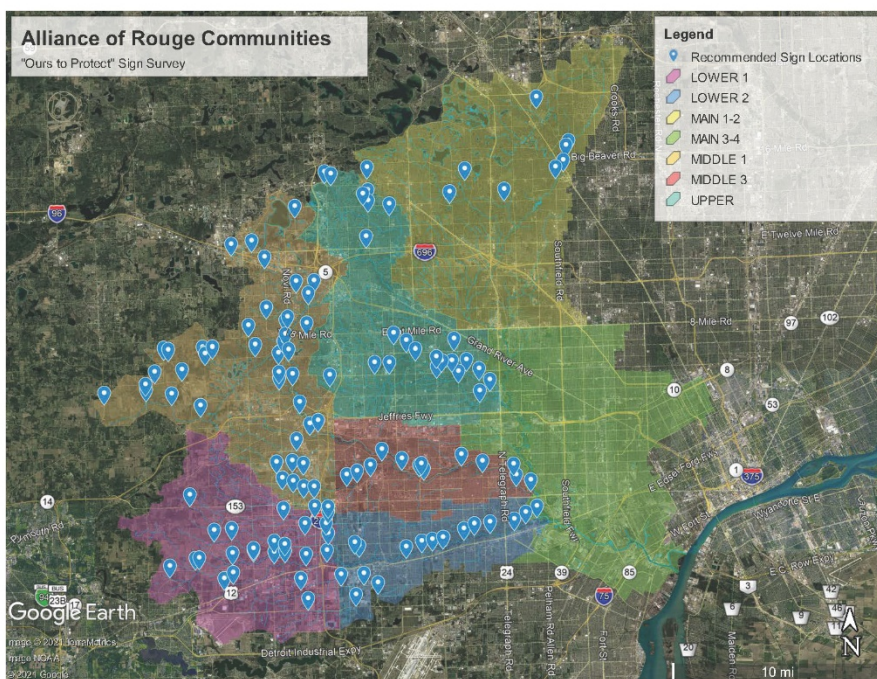
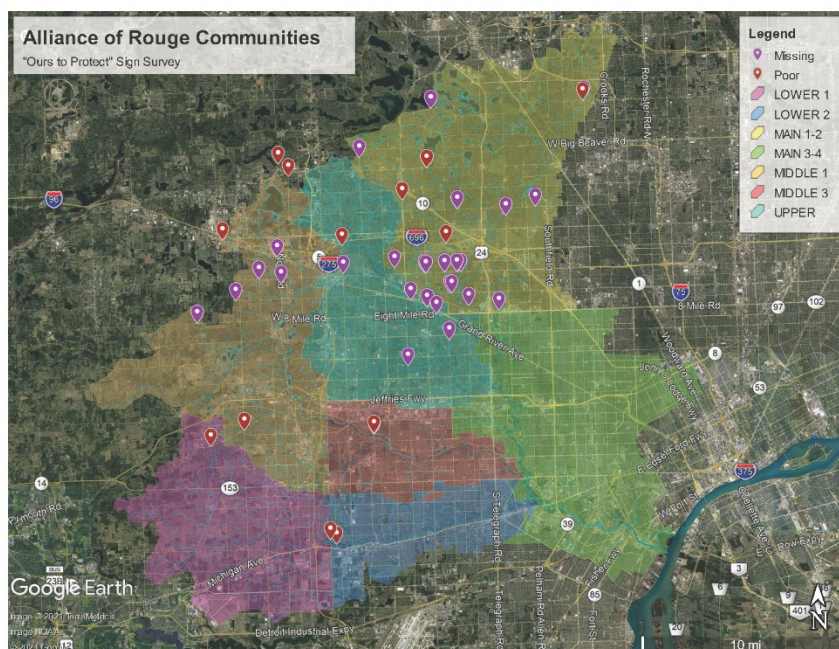
The 2020 PIE outreach activities including workshops, workdays and presentations and Friends of the Rouge's annual report are provided in the [Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report](#).

2020 Activities included:

- ARC Staff presented the free webinar [“Stewards of the Rouge - How You can Protect Water Quality!”](#) on October 29, 2020. The recorded webinar was made available on the ARC's Facebook page and website.

## WATERSHED SIGNAGE

ARC Staff continued surveying the watershed signage (“entering the Rouge River watershed – Ours to Protect”) to determine locations, condition and need for additional signage with suggestions for repair or new sign placement. In 2020, ARC Staff created a Google Earth layer with 130 suggested locations for new signage at stream crossings.



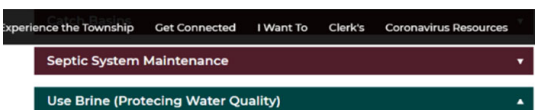
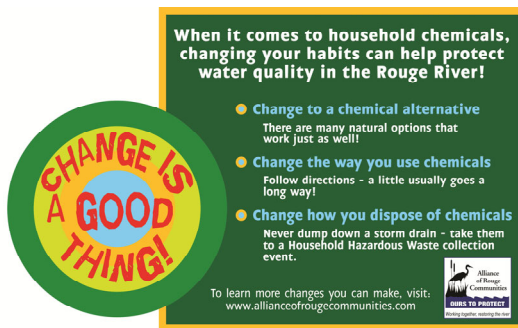
Draft maps of the surveys completed in 2020 showing 1) signs that are in poor condition or missing and 2) suggested locations for new signage at stream crossings.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2021 the ARC produced its fourth article and ad graphic for use in community newsletters and on social media and websites.

- Let's all dispose of fats, oils & grease (FOG) properly – new in 2021
- Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!
- What Is a Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?
- When it comes to household chemicals – change is a good thing!



**Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!**  
Salt keeps our communities safe, by reducing both the number of vehicle accidents as well as slip and fall accidents. Unfortunately, salt doesn't just disappear when all the snow melts; it is washed into our lakes, rivers, and streams and has an almost immediate effect on water quality. As a homeowner, consider reducing salt use by applying brine, not rock salt, before a snow storm and shoveling frequently to keep snow from accumulating. This is the best way to save your back, your knees, and the Rouge River!

Brine, a mixture of salt and water, has become a great alternative to traditional rock salt. The transition to using brine for a homeowner has minimal costs. The brine can be pre-mixed in large quantities and stored in your basement or garage. By spraying brine, you have more control over your application, so you don't apply over the same area twice and it won't bounce off the driveway the way rock salt can. Brine starts working much faster than rock salt due to the increased contact area with the snow. The best method is to apply the brine before a snow storm begins. Not all communities have transitioned to the use of brine on roads because there is a significant startup cost for additional equipment and storage.

#### HOME RECIPE FOR BRINE

What you need:  
1 1/2 gallons hot water  
3-4 cups rock or table salt  
Bucket  
Sprayer

**Directions:** Combine salt and hot water (which helps dissolve the salt) in bucket until all salt is dissolved completely (so salt chunks don't clog sprayer). Pour mixed brine into a sprayer and apply to sidewalk and driveway prior to a snowfall. Each gallon should cover 1,000 square feet of surface (about 200 feet of sidewalk).

#### Detention Pond Maintenance

Northville Twp. website

## Public Services

### Yard Waste Pick up

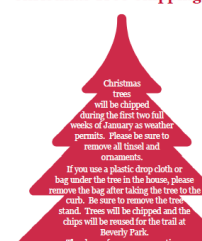
The last days for yard waste pick up are Monday, December 14 and Tuesday, December 15 (depending on your pick up day). Please have all yard waste in the proper containers and at the curb by 7:00 a.m. on your collection day.

Yard waste must be separate from trash and recyclables.

Yard waste containers must weigh less than 50 pounds.

Visit [www.socra.org](http://www.socra.org) for more trash, recycling, and yard waste guidelines.

### Christmas Tree Chipping



### What is a Watershed?

Have you ever been asked if you live in a watershed? Only to realize you aren't sure, because you don't really know what a watershed is. This is not uncommon. The term watershed is not historically well known; however, it is starting to make its way into our conversations. Why? Let's start with defining what a watershed is.

A watershed, also referred to as a drainage basin, is the land area that delivers rain and snow/ice melt to a stream or lake. Watersheds are divided by a ridge of high land which serves to separate two (or more) areas drained by different river systems. So, do you live in a watershed? Absolutely! Everyone who lives in Michigan, lives in a watershed!

So why is this important to know? No matter where you are at any given time, you are in a watershed, and your actions directly impact the health of that watershed. Additionally, the health of that watershed impacts you, everyone around you, and even the communities downstream.

When rain and snow/ice melt travel across the land (watershed) and through storm drains, it is called stormwater or runoff. As this runoff travels it picks up trash, contaminants, sediments and dissolved substances along the way until it discharges into the nearest water body. Small streams join to form rivers and flow across sloping land, eventually flowing into a lake. These bodies of water impacted by runoff provide recreational opportunities, habitat for wildlife, and even drinking water for communities. By keeping our cars from leaking, litter off the streets, and properly disposing of animal and chemical wastes we are being good stewards by protecting not only the health of our watershed but also ourselves and everything downstream.

To get more information on how you can protect water quality and to figure out which watershed you live and work in visit [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/watershed.html](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/watershed.html).

*The Villager*  
Beverly Hills community newsletter



For more information visit:  
[allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://allianceofrougecommunities.com)

March 2022

Submitted by:

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# ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2021 Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) Executive Director's Annual Report summarizes the activities conducted by the ARC from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, including products and outcomes from routine administration and meetings of the ARC and all its committees. It also includes results from ARC Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) activities and public education activities, including workshops and developed products.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES

### ARC MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### **FULL ALLIANCE MEETINGS**

ARC Staff supported two (2) Full ARC meetings including preparation of the agenda (under the direction of the Chair), distribution of the materials prior to meetings, facilitation of the meetings (including notetaking and tallying of votes at the meeting), preparation of E-votes, and preparation/distribution of meeting summaries to members and other interested parties

[Full ARC meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee discusses and approves items in advance of full ARC meetings including development and amendments to budgets and contracts. ARC Staff supported three (3) Executive Committee meetings including (under the direction of the ARC Officers) preparation of the agenda, distribution of the materials prior to the meetings, preparation of E-votes, facilitation of the meetings (including note-taking and documenting recommendations considered and actions taken), and meeting summary preparation and distribution. This subtask also included ongoing support services for the committee outside of the regular meetings.

[ARC Executive Committee meeting summaries](#) can be found on the ARC's website.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Finance Committee, supported by ARC Staff, developed and administered the annual budget and work plan. ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, budget amendments, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC's bills. ARC Staff facilitated two (2) Finance Committee meetings on April 12 and September 15 and prepared the agenda, distributed materials regarding budget amendments and the annual budget recommendations for review prior to the September Executive Committee meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided administrative oversight of the ARC day-to-day activities by staff, consultants, contractors, and external relationships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to meet the goals of the ARC.

2021 Activities included:

- 💧 The 2020 ARC annual report was completed and submitted to the ARC in March 2021.

- ◆ ARC Staff developed the “Policy for Communication with Limited English Proficiency” in April 2021 to ensure reasonable steps are taken to allow persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our activities and programs.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared an IAA between the ARC and Wayne County for all current and future ARC AOC grants on Wayne County property. This allows the WC Commission to approve one agreement for all grant projects instead of each agreement having to go back through the WC process and Commission approval. The ARC will be the owner in the construction contracts with contractors, with WC as a 3rd party to them. This allows WC to be able to administer the contract if needed.
- ◆ ARC Staff met with Rebecca Runkel, Novi, who was taking over the Treasurer position from Kate Richardson who left Novi in 2021. ARC staff prepared a transition package and reviewed the ARC Treasurer duties.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

ARC Staff provided accounting services in accordance with the ARC’s Accounting Procedures Manual including processing of payables and receivables.

2021 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff researched and coordinated a request to join the MITN Purchasing Group so that the ARC could post bids on MITN. This greatly reduced the effort for ARC Staff to request bids for the ARC’s grant-funded restoration projects. ARC Staff completed the onboarding paperwork, provided information for a vendor letter and press release. ARC Staff attended onboarding training along with posting and awarding training.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended a webinar on the transition of SAM using Unique Entity ID instead of a DUNS number.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided monthly reports for the ARC Treasurer and ARC members from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided necessary staff to meet the separation of financial duties and responsibilities documented in the ARC’s Accounting Procedures Manual so that no Executive Director Staff member has sole control over cash receipts, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, mail or other accounting functions.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained separate general ledger accounts as required by funding source regulations.
- ◆ ARC Staff maintained financial records and files as required by the ARC Accounting Procedures Manual including grants and vendor contracts.
- ◆ ARC Staff submitted all required information for grant reimbursement requests and grant reporting.
- ◆ ARC Staff assisted and provided information for the 2020 Single Audit, financial statement and taxes.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with both the Finance and Executive Committee to develop the 2022 ARC Budgeting Package which included a 2% increase in dues.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared monthly financial reports, mailed dues invoices to members, collected dues, submitted various grant reimbursement requests and paid the ARC’s bills.

## **OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE**

ARC Staff promoted the ARC as the advocate for the Rouge River Watershed, served as the primary spokesperson for the ARC, responded to requests for information and sought opportunities to promote ARC awareness. ARC Staff served as the ARC primary liaison to the general public, all members, including both formal and informal interaction with government officials, legislators and staff on a regular basis.

## **GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

2021 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff organized a presentation by EGLE on the Clean Water Plan Wastewater Fund.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the virtual AOC Conference on September 29-30, 2021.
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the virtual Great Lakes Day in Washington on March 3, 2021
- ◆ ARC Staff attended the virtual Great Lakes Commission Semiannual Meeting on May 11-12, 2021.

## **STATEWIDE PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)**

ARC Staff attended SPAC meetings on March 4, 2021, June 17, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

## **ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION**

2021 Activities included:

- ◆ ARC Staff participated in meetings for the One Water Public Education Campaign that is being led by Cranbrook with support from SEMCOG and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). The campaign resulted in a regional public education strategy, led by local stakeholders, that provides common water resource messaging in southeast Michigan focused on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water. The messaging fosters water resource stewardship, encourage citizens to adopt best management practices and support long-term investment in infrastructure. 2021 activities focused on the Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week along with the public education materials that were made available to communities. In addition, a video clip was prepared for all organizations involved in the One Water campaign including the ARC. ARC Staff drafted the video script and suggested watershed locations to showcase some of the ARC's projects and to explain the work that the communities are doing to restore the Rouge River. The [video can be viewed here](#).
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in a meeting on a possible Rouge River Forum lead by UM-Dearborn to develop a plan to obtain the match dollars needed to remediate the sediment in the Rouge and Detroit Rivers.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with GLWA on providing E. coli analysis assistance for IDEP investigations and using the Perrin Drain as test site for continuous E. coli monitoring.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the GLWA Watershed Hub work group and full group meetings to advance water quality monitoring in the region. The ED gave a presentation on the proposed investigational sampling framework.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water work group.
- ◆ ARC Staff collaborated with consultants from the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds to share best practices for permit compliance and to discuss opportunities for collaboration of some activities to reduce costs to both organizations.
- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Lower Rouge Water Trail planning meetings.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued communication with Northville, EGLE and the developer regarding the daylighting of the Middle Rouge River under Northville Downs.

- ◆ ARC Staff participated in the Oakland County Stormwater Standards webinar.
- ◆ The ED began attending FOTR Board meetings to improve collaboration between the ARC and FOTR.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided content for the book titled *Rouge River Revived* at the request of John Hartig. Content was provided for a chapter titled Rouge River Restoration: Revival of an Urban River.
- ◆ ARC Staff organized a presentation by Wayne State University on the Rouge River Archives (RRA), a civil and environmental engineering special collection in the WSU libraries. It is a searchable archive in the library catalog and items can be requested to view.

## MEMBER AND GENERAL PUBLIC REQUESTS

2021 Activities included:

- ◆ The ED reviewed the draft wastewater collection systems permit and provided comments to SEMCOG to forward to EGLE.
- ◆ ARC Staff was interviewed by a reporter regarding the Middle Rouge Daylighting project.
- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed and discussed the draft MS4 permits with Inkster, Farmington Hills, Dearborn Heights, Canton, Wayne, Orchard Lake and Livonia.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with Walled Lake regarding their audit.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with Livonia, Novi, Van Buren and Oakland County regarding post construction standards. Reviewed post construction stormwater management requirements and searched for example ordinances.
- ◆ ARC Staff established a relationship with Dave Szlag at Oakland University on providing E. coli and DNA analysis to support IDEP work.
- ◆ The ARC did not receive any FOIA requests from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded various emails from residents to community representatives for follow-up.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Friends of the Rouge volunteer and monitoring activities and Rouge Rescue events on the ARC website and Facebook.
- ◆ ARC Staff responded to a member community's question regarding pesticide application requirements in the stormwater permit.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided photos and information on the ARC's retractable banners to Southfield for them to promote the banners being displayed in their community through social media.
- ◆ ARC Staff responded to a member community that had a gas station pump out their sump tanks that and filled with storm water and included oils and gas onto the ground. ARC Staff provided them the link to the ARC's website page that addresses healthy habits for businesses and provided a PDF of the "In Your Business" page from the Watershed Wisdom brochure.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided web links to electronic copies of brochures to communities to send out to residents, these included topics on maintaining your detention pond and watershed wisdom for homeowners.
- ◆ ARC Staff worked with Wayne County to get a copy of the Wayne County orthophotos that were completed in 2020.
- ◆ ARC Staff provided the City of Wayne the conceptual concept ideas for the GLRI funded restoration of Phoenix and Wilcox Lakes.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Oakland County's virtual Regional Stormwater Summit that was held on October 29, 2021.
- ◆ ARC Staff forwarded a resident question regarding the USDA Forest Service tree planting project. A Plymouth resident request some of the trees be planted in Riverside Park, which for this grant there were no trees being planted in the part. The information was passed along to the Plymouth representative for possible placement of future trees.
- ◆ ARC Staff promoted Oakland County's 17<sup>th</sup> annual Kids' Clean Water Calendar Contest.



## **PURSUING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Executive Director staff applied for the following grants in 2021 on behalf of the ARC:

- ◆ February 2021 – EGLE Nonpoint Source Grant for Middle Rouge River Daylighting Design (not awarded, \$40,000).
- ◆ November 2021 - EGLE Watershed Council Support Grant for Middle Rouge River Daylighting Design (re-submitted under new grant program, pending at time of report \$40,000).
- ◆ ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding grant to the ARC for the habitat restoration design at Lawrence Technological University (LTU). (awarded to the ARC \$125,000)
- ◆ ARC Staff developed grant and support information for a USEPA Direct Funding for habitat restoration design at Wilcox Lake, Phoenix Lake and Inkster Park. (awarded to the ARC \$785,100).
- ◆ National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes 2021 Pre-proposal was submitted invasive species treatment at Newburgh Lake Grow Zones. (not awarded \$100,000).
- ◆ EGLE Nonpoint Source Program grant for Johnson Creek Subwatershed Action Plan. (not awarded \$54,000)

Additional grant activities include:

- ◆ ARC Staff provided a letter of support and grant support to the GLWA for an EGLE Watershed Council Support Grant for Collaborative Development of an Investigational Water Quality Sampling Work Plan for Southeast Michigan. (Awarded to GLWA \$40,000).
- ◆ ARC Staff provided Rouge information and assistance on the Friends of the Detroit River's application for a NOAA Partnership grant.
- ◆ ARC Staff prepared various letters of support for partners applying for grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff updated information to maintain the ARC's status in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM), Grants.gov and with the DUNS number. These are required to be current and renewed annually in order to apply for federal grants.
- ◆ ARC Staff researched and surveyed ARC Members seeking their input in determining the scope of the ARC's application for various grant applications throughout 2021.
- ◆ ARC Staff communicated with EGLE on the 205j funding opportunity.
- ◆ ARC Staff developed a template for entities to submit potential projects and is available on the ARC and RRAC websites. It can be filled out (even if all you know is the name of the project and location) and sent to ARC staff who will incorporate it into a growing list of other projects that the ARC will use when looking at funding opportunities. The template is set up to answer the information as you would submit it to a grant agency for funding.

ARC Staff reviewed the following grants and either assisted an ARC Member in preparing it, forwarded them to individual communities to consider applying for or recommended that the ARC not apply:

- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed the EGLE Nonpoint Source Program funding opportunity for a possible project but did not submit.
- ◆ ARC Staff continued researching grants for the Middle Rouge daylighting project in Northville.
- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund opportunity for a possible project but did not submit.
- ◆ ARC Staff reviewed the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Restoration funding opportunity for a possible project but did not submit.

- ARC Staff reviewed the USDA Forest Service Cooperative Weed Management Areas funding opportunity for a possible project but did not submit.
- ARC Staff reviewed the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resilience Fund opportunity for a possible project but did not submit.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### MEETING FACILITATION

Staff support was provided for one (1) Technical Committee meeting on February 25, 2021. Topics included the ARC's Collaborative IDEP plan, adopting the county stormwater standards, IDEP findings, and investigation priorities from communities. In addition, the work plans for IDEP investigations in [Oakland County](#) and [Wayne County](#) were approved by the Technical Committee.

### IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Consistent with the Rouge River Collaborative IDEP Plan, illicit discharge investigations were conducted in Oakland and Wayne counties.

#### **OAKLAND COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS**

ARC Staff conducted investigations for Oakland County in the cities of Beverly Hills and Northville. The written findings of each investigation were provided to each community and summarized in the [2021 IDEP Investigation Summary](#).

#### **WAYNE COUNTY IDEP FIELD INVESTIGATIONS**

Wayne County Department of Public Services, Environmental Services Division (ESD) conducted advanced investigations in the cities of Plymouth, Dearborn, Inkster and Livonia and are detailed in the [2021 Wayne County IDEP Services Report](#).

### IDEP TRAINING

ARC Staff promoted and assisted SEMCOG with three virtual training. The IDEP Alert Observer training held on October 27, 2021, was attended by 239 people with 137 of the attendees from ARC communities. The Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping training held on October 28, 2021, was attended by 110 people with 52 attendees from ARC communities. The IDEP Investigator training held on October 27, 2021, was attended by 173 people with 115 of the attendees from ARC communities. ARC Staff also updated the Investigator training slide presentation and presented at the SEMCOG training.

### MS4 PERMIT

2021 Activities include:

- ARC Staff held a virtual meeting on October 28, 2021, to discuss the status of adopting the county stormwater standards for the Rouge River watershed communities (with a focus on Cities and Villages).
- ARC Staff communicated with EGLE throughout the year on member community permits.
- ARC Staff provided guidance to permittees on how to submit reports in MiWaters.

- ARC Staff provided a checklist for adopting post construction stormwater management requirements to permittees along with an ordinance example.
- ARC staff compiled Stormwater Mgt Plans for several communities and posted them to the ARC's website to meet the public notice requirement of the PPP.
- ARC staff prepared a report on the status of the post construction ordinances per community.
- ARC Staff worked with communities to prepare extension requests and developed a template letter that permittees can use to request additional time to adopt the county standards and update other sections of code to comply with the MS4 permit requirements.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION (PIE) COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING FACILITATION**

No meetings were held in 2021, however, ARC Staff supported the PIE Committee with regular email communications regarding PIE activities including scope and budget changes and review of new public education materials and messages.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS**

ARC Staff made various public education materials available to ARC members through the ARC website during 2021. Several items were restocked in 2021 including pet waste containers, seasonal posters, kneeling pads and various printed material. ARC Staff surveyed ARC Members prior to creating new public education items to determine the topic. New items in 2021 included a new social media graphic and newsletter article which focused on proper disposal of fats, oils & grease (FOG). New giveaways were designed in 2021 and included vehicle magnets and recycled tire jar openers focusing on the Rouge River watershed and how we can help protect the water quality. These items will begin being distributed to members in early 2022. Despite COVID-19, more than 11,900 items were distributed to member communities and at various community events and workshops. Distribution details are included in the [PIE Materials Distribution Report](#). Listed below are descriptions of the public education items and any specific activities in 2021.

#### **When it Comes to Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing!**

This tri-fold brochure focuses on changing chemical use to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. It provides information on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. The brochure also provides valuable links to southeast Michigan County's HHW collection events. A total of 4,297 copies were sent filling requests in 2021.

#### **Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners – Healthy Habits for Clean Water Brochure**

The Watershed Wisdom for Homeowners brochure educates the public about healthy habits for clean water. The brochure has been distributed to members, realtors and homeowners' associations within the Rouge River watershed. A total of 885 copies were sent filling requests in 2021.

### Chemicals – Change is a Good Thing Banners

The 2 banners designed in 2020 were made available to ARC communities to display in their facilities in 2021. The new banners address ways for people to change their habits with chemicals. These banners go along with the theme of the chemical brochure created in 2020 which focuses on changing to a chemical alternative, changing how you use chemicals and changing how you dispose of chemicals. It also provides links to southeast Michigan County's HHW collection events.

### ARC Banners

To meet the activities in the Collaborative PEP the ARC created 3 sets of educational banners with varying messages. Topics included: The connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have; the importance of pollution prevention and watershed restoration and stewardship; reporting illicit discharges; promoting proper disposal practices; identify and promote facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes; septic system maintenance; proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter and animal; benefits of green infrastructure; and methods for managing riparian lands to protect water quality. ARC member communities signed up to host the banners at one of their facilities for 2 weeks at a time.



**Chemical banner being displayed on Schoolcraft Colleges campus.**

Because of COVID-19, displaying banners were limited in the watershed.

2021 Activities include:

- The [Banner Report](#) provides the details of where the ARC Banners have been during 2021.
- ARC Staff printed the chemical banners in 2021 and began rotating them throughout the watershed during the second quarter of 2021.

### Protect Water Quality All Season Long! Posters

ARC members posted these in support of their permit requirements in facilities, libraries or other buildings that the general public frequent. Posters are also distributed to the general public at community events. A total of 68 copies were sent filling requests in 2021.

### Community Article /Ad Graphic

ARC Staff have created articles that ARC members can use in their community newsletters or magazines along with ad graphic on the same topic that can be used on website and social media. Previously created articles and ad graphics have been posted to the ARC's website and Facebook account. The previously created articles/ad graphic topics include:

- *Brine Instead of Rock Salt to Protect Water Quality!*
- *What Is a Watershed & What Does It Have to Do with Me?*
- *When it comes to household chemicals – change is a good thing!*





2021 Activities included:

- ARC staff created a new article and ad graphic in 2021 titled [Let's all dispose of fats, oils & grease \(FOG\) properly.](#)

### Bookmarks

The bookmarks publicize the ARC and promote Rouge Friendly tips to the public.

### Pet Waste Containers

Pet waste containers promote clean water with the message “*In the Bag, Not the River*”. The ARC restocked these in 2021 through our partnership with the One Water Campaign.

### Fertilizer Clips

Fertilizer clips with the ARC logo and the phrase: “Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly.”

### Jar Opener

A jar opener made of recycled tires was designed in late 2021 with distribution to the ARC member communities beginning in early 2022. The message on the jar opener includes “If you live here (state of Michigan), you live in a watershed” and lists several activities that the public can do to help protect water quality in the Rouge River. 5,000 jar openers were ordered and will be distributed to ARC members for giveaways in their facilities that the public visit.



### Community Vehicle Magnets

A vehicle magnet was designed in late 2021 for communities to use on their fleet vehicles with distribution beginning in early 2022. The message on the magnet includes “If you live here (state of Michigan), you live in a watershed” to help educate people that we all live in a watershed. After surveying ARC members, a limited number of communities allow magnets on their vehicles, however there was enough interest to order 500 of them.



### ARC Public Education Brochure

This flyer is used to educate the public about the ARC and its activities.

### ARC Member Brochure

The ARC Member Brochure was distributed to ARC member communities with their membership invoices. The brochure explains the ARC, member benefits, projects and committees. It is also distributed to other interested communities and organizations wanting to learn about the ARC.

### Kneeling Pads

A garden kneeling pad with the slogan “Plant it for the Rouge River!” that promotes the use of native trees and plants. The kneeling pad has the slogan, ARC logo and website on one side and has a list 10 suggested native trees and plants to use in your yard to help protect water quality

### Key Chains

A boat float key chain with the slogan “Prevent Invasive Species in the Rouge River!” with the message to wash your boat & remove plants & aquatic animals after every use. The keychain also includes the ARC logo and website address.

### Waterfront Wisdom Brochure

A booklet for riparian homeowners in the Rouge River Watershed. The publication was originally published by the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office Environmental Team.

### Detention Pond Maintenance Manuals

A guidebook for private owners in southeast Michigan to educate them on the maintenance of detention ponds.

### Black-Eyed Susan Seeds and Tip Card

Black-eyed Susan seed packets are distributed to the general public along with a tip card which educates them on the benefits of native plants.

### Value of Trees

The Value of Trees tip card educates the general public on the benefits of planting native trees.

### Protect the Rouge River at Home – Dispose of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Properly

The FOG brochure educates the public on the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease in the house. Brochures were also distributed at member public events, the Great Lakes Restoration event and also as part of seedling giveaways at additional events.

### Additional Rouge Grant and SEMCOG Printed Pieces

The ARC has a limited supply of SEMCOG printed material and continue to distribute those when requested.

## **ARC WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

ARC Staff continued adding additional information and content to the ARC’s website at [www.allianceofrougecommunities.com](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com), providing more information for the general public on what they can do to help protect water quality and promotes the ARC’s restoration activities in the watershed. The website continues to provide ARC members valuable information to assist with meeting their stormwater permits while providing educational information on the Rouge River Watershed. The ARC website had 3,679 visitors in 2021. The ARC’s new page on the Rouge River Watershed was the second highest for visitors after the home page with almost 400 visitors.

ARC Staff initiated a [Facebook account](#) for the ARC at the beginning of 2016. Facebook posts included educational messages and photos to educate the public on ways to protect the Rouge River along with promoting ARC and partner events and volunteer opportunities. ARC Staff added 53 posts to the ARC Facebook and encouraged ARC member communities to Like and Share the ARC’s posts. The ARC’s Facebook account had 238 followers and 214 total page likes at the end of 2021.

Details on the traffic and posts on the ARC’s website and Facebook can be found in the [Electronic Media Report](#).

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

The 2021 PIE outreach activities including workshops, workdays and presentations and promoting various Friends of the Rouge events. The detailed report is provided in the [Promoted & Hosted Workshop-Volunteer Report](#). The ARC also promoted Cooperating Partners events including Friends of the Rouge.

### **ARC One Water Video**

In 2021 ARC Staff provided content for a video created through SEMCOG's One Water campaign. The six minute [video can be viewed here](#) and was promoted on the ARC's Facebook where it received more than 2,000 views.



ARC Executive Director, Annette DeMaria, from the ARC's One Water video at the Oxbow at The Henry Ford.

Additional 2021 Activities included:

- 💧 ARC Staff presented the free webinar "[Septic System Maintenance](#)" on November 17, 2021. The recorded webinar was made available on the ARC's website. The webinar was attended by 17 people. The surveys received were positive and most said they would be changing how they maintain their septic system after attending the webinar.
- 💧 ARC Staff coordinated the locations for FOTR rain barrel sales in Beverly Hills, Redford Twp. and Livonia in 2021. The ARC also provided free giveaways to be handed out at the events including pet waste containers and garden kneeling pads.

## **WATERSHED SIGNAGE**

ARC Staff finalized maps of the watershed signage ("entering the Rouge River watershed – Ours to Protect") to show locations, condition and need for additional signage with suggestions for repair or new sign placement. The maps were shared with the ARC Members in anticipation of future decisions for new signage locations and repairs