



**MEETING NOTES**  
**ALLIANCE OF ROUGE COMMUNITIES**

June 27, 2007  
Novi Civic Center  
45175 W. Ten Mile Rd.  
Novi, Michigan

*Working together, restoring the river*

Allen Park  
Auburn Hills  
Beverly Hills  
Bingham Farms  
Birmingham  
Bloomfield Hills  
Bloomfield Twp.  
Canton Twp.  
Commerce Twp.  
Dearborn  
Dearborn Heights  
Farmington  
Farmington Hills  
Franklin  
Garden City  
Inkster  
Lathrup Village  
Livonia  
Melvindale  
Northville  
Northville Twp.  
Novi  
Oak Park  
Oakland County  
Orchard Lake Village  
Plymouth  
Plymouth Twp.  
Pontiac  
Redford Twp.  
Rochester Hills  
Romulus  
Southfield  
Superior Twp.  
Troy  
Van Buren Twp.  
Walled Lake  
Washtenaw County  
Wayne  
Wayne County  
Wayne County Airport Authority  
West Bloomfield Twp.  
Westland  
Wixom  
Ypsilanti Twp.

**1. Welcome – Kurt Giberson, ARC Chair**

- a. **Roll Call /Determination of Quorum** - Roll call was taken. The 26 members listed below were in attendance and sufficient for a quorum.

**The following were in attendance:**

Birmingham	Lathrup Village	Redford Twp.	Wayne County
Bloomfield Twp.	Livonia	Rochester Hills	Wayne County Airport Authority
Canton Twp.	Northville Twp.	Southfield	West Bloomfield Twp.
Dearborn	Novi	Troy	Westland
Farmington	Oak Park	Van Buren Twp.	Ypsilanti Twp.
Farmington Hills	Oakland County	Walled Lake	Wayne
Garden City	Plymouth Twp.	Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner	Washtenaw County Road Commission

**The following were not in attendance:**

Allen Park	Dearborn Heights	Plymouth	Village of Beverly Hills
Auburn Hills	Inkster	Pontiac	Village of Franklin
Bingham Farms	Melvindale	Romulus	Village of Orchard Lake
Bloomfield Hills	Northville	Superior Twp.	Wixom
Commerce Twp.			

- b. **Approval of March 1, 2007 Meeting Minutes.** - A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes, it was seconded, and passed unanimously.

**2. Rouge River TMDL**

Christine Alexander, Kevin Goodwin and John Suppnick from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality presented three powerpoint presentations regarding Rouge River E. coli, Rouge River biota and Johnson Creek dissolved oxygen Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). A copy of the powerpoint presentations are attached to the minutes. Each speaker presented and then took questions at the end of their presentation. The following is a summary of the questions received from the audience along with the MDEQ response.

a. **Rouge River E. coli – Christine Alexander**

**Question:** Will the MDEQ issue a response to comments made during the public comment period?

**Answer:** Yes, a comment/response document or letter will be prepared by the MDEQ.

**Question:** What are the plans to continue monitoring?

**Answer:** Monitoring will be limited until water quality improvements are implemented and progress is made. Monitoring is on a rotating watershed 5-year schedule and 2010 will be the earliest timeframe for MDEQ monitoring again, but this depends on the MDEQ's budget.

**Question:** Will you do (monitor) all sites again?

**Answer:** There were a relatively large number of sites sampled to develop the TMDL. It is unlikely that this number of sites would be sampled again in the near future.

**Question:** Will you sample for E. coli or pathogens?

**Answer:** E. coli will remain the standard.

**Question:** In regards to slide six of the E. coli slide show. The MDEQ feels that their priority is to hold people under their permit. Jim Ridgway noted that there have been many lawsuits when the non-point sources component of the formula (LAs) were not addressed sufficiently.

$$LC = \Sigma WLA_s + \Sigma LA_s + MOS$$

WLA = Point source allocation loading;

LA = Nonpoint source allocation loading;

MOS = margin of safety

Jim Ridgway asked the MDEQ about the LA component. Specifically, there is a need to clarify who exactly is responsible for this number. The communities should not be held to a higher standard because the regulatory agencies fail to monitor and enforce against non-regulated discharges.

**Answer:** There are no numeric limits for the nonpoint source component at this time – it might happen some day – meaning *all of the reductions are expected to come from the point sources which includes the MS4 communities.*

**Question:** How will these TMDLs affect our current storm water permits?

**Answer:** The MDEQ does not have plans to put numerical limits in the storm water Phase II permits.

**Overall Comments from MDEQ:** It is clear that the E. coli levels are improving and that ongoing activities in the Rouge River Watershed have demonstrated an improvement. The goal should be to continue on a similar path of actions. Use dry weather data to help prioritize IDEP activities. New sampling plans should be prioritized based on existing data.

**b. Rouge River Biota TMDL – Kevin Goodwin**

**Question:** Regarding slide 19 of Rouge River Biota TMDL presentation, it shows 22% reduction, what if you don't have agriculture?

**Answer:** There are other breakdowns for counties. The report used SEMCOG data. It's not an issue from a nonpoint standard.

**Question:** Regarding slide 12 of the presentation, you used 2 reports that are over 10 years old. Did you look at other data like Wayne County or Friends of the Rouge volunteer monitoring?

**Answer:** Yes, and they were still comparable – where the other reports showed hot spots the volunteer samples showed hot spots. We also collect in-stream sediment data, runoff and other things we need to look at, maybe we can work together.

**Question:** Where can you get the draft TDML reports?

**Answer:** We will forward the link on the MDEQ's website to the ARC members.

**Question:** Have you collected in-stream sediment data and how does this compare to the Land Use and Event Mean Concentration loadings?

**Answer:** Loads were from the lands use data which was provided by Purdue University and is outdated. Loads were not from streambank erosion estimates.

**Additional Comment:** Studies have shown that streambank erosion can account for 40% of sediment load in a stream.

**Question:** If land use runoff was corrected, if flow can't be controlled, how can we meet the standards?

**Answer:** TSS needs to be addressed, mitigating how the water gets to the stream. Addressing flows is important. Loads were from land use.

**Question:** Do you have examples of TMDLs lowering numbers?

**Answer:** It is too early in the TMDL process to see big changes.

**Question:** With the 15% reduction, if a watershed is making progress – just have them continue on?

**Answer:** Yes, keep going.

**Question:** Do you consider discharge a pollutant?

**Answer:** Flow volume is not a pollutant according to the Clean Water Act. We need to address flow management BMPs. Vermont is working with the EPA on flow.

**Additional Comment:** Are the numbers included in the TMDL goals or permit limits? The ARC is concerned that communities that are doing the most work are being asked to do more than those that have chosen to ignore the regulations.

c. **Johnson Creek Dissolved Oxygen TMDL – John Suppnick**

**Question:** Regarding the Rouge as an AOC – to delist do you have to meet TMDL to be off the 303 list?

**Answer:** The Rouge cannot be delisted until the 303 are met. They are trying to work that out between the two programs and need to continue to get them to agree on standards of designated use.

**Question:** Regarding the original permit data, do these need to be reduced by 80%?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Where is the land use data from?

**Answer:** From a Purdue database dated 1998ish.

**Question:** When the model runs with 0 loads from everyone else do they meet the standard?

**Answer:** The headwaters need to be clean. Levels of loads are attributed to the contributing agency.

**Question:** Are permits available in TMDL?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** How does this area affect the permittees? Are there specific reductions for those communities' storm water permits?

**Answer:** It is not expected to have permit limits, rely on BMPs. It is not targeted specifically, but by a watershed.

**Question:** There is low flow and suspended solids located in Salem Twp. Has the Department of Agriculture done anything in helping reach these goals?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Has the County Extension participated?

**Answer:** No

**Audience Comment:** There is low flow – the people want to pump out of the creek to water their lawn – they see the agriculture is doing the same thing. They should be responsible.

**Question:** Are the TMDLs driven by cold water fish? Would it be different in warm water?

**Answer:** Yes, but we can't change that.

**Question:** Is the designated use legitimate? Trout are present in lower reach, can you look at use attainability?

**Answer:** No, probably not. Is Johnson Creek appropriately designated a trout stream, fisheries said yes.

**Question:** Did you look at permitted non-point and non-permit to see how realistic an 80% would be attainable?

**Answer:** No, look at individual BMPs.

### **3. Permit Reapplication**

J. Ridgway stated that the permit package is not available yet. SEMCOG has a coordinated response. From the discussions to date, the communities contend that the proposed permit is not a cost-effective way to improve water quality but rather it has degenerated into a bureaucratic check list. The existing permit deadlines won't match the availability of the next permit requirements.

### **4. Watershed Plan Updates**

K. Karll stated that the plan updates are due October 1, 2007. There may be a lag time to comment before you apply and it may be a simple form by MDEQ. We are hoping to see the new permit within the next month to comment on. MDEQ is still drafting the new permit and permit application so the timing of the new permit may not coincide with the permit reapplication date, so the MDEQ is hoping to have permittees submit a simple form indicating their intent to apply for the new permit once it's made available.

The MDEQ made a decision on terminated permits and will make a list available. The ARC should stay with a permit that is flexible. A copy of the list of terminated permits is attached to these minutes.

The ARC sent a letter to the MDEQ on behalf of all the SWAGs indicating that none of the Rouge Watershed Plans will be updated at this time. The SWAGs are supportive of evaluating the use of some portion of the monitoring budget to update the watershed plans over the next year.

## **5. Rouge Round VIII Subgrant Awards**

K. Cave reviewed the attached memo recommending projects to receive funding under the Rouge VIII Subgrant Program of the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project. K. Cave stated that there were more projects than money available. K. Cave reminded everyone that this is a short amount of time to give out money. December 2008 is the end date, get those IAAs signed and get projects started. K. Cave stated that they are working with the EPA to get the date moved out.

K. Cave also informed the ARC that there should be funds available to support the ARC in 2008.

## **6. Standing Committee Reports**

### **a. Organizational Committee (Kurt Giberson, Dearborn)**

**Progress Report** - K. Giberson stated that the committee has drafted a policy regarding dues for counties. The draft will go to the Executive Committee for review and then to the full ARC. This will allow us to finalize the bylaws.

### **b. Public Involvement and Education Committee (PIE) (Chair Jennifer Lawson, Troy)**

**Progress Report** – J. Lawson reported that the committee's next meeting will be in Beverly Hills on July 12, 2007. J. Lawson informed the ARC that the next round of Rouge posters for the Lower 1 and Lower 2 are close to being ready for review. J. Lawson also stated that Canton Township prepared a video regarding the ARC which all members will receive upon leaving the meeting.

## **7. Summary of Actions of Full Alliance**

- a. Adoption of March 1, 2007 minutes

## **8. Adjourn**

**Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Bureau  
Meeting Attendance Sheet**

**Subject:** Rouge River (*E. coli*, and Biota) and Johnson Creek (Dissolved Oxygen)  
TMDL Stakeholder meeting

**Date:** June 27, 2007

**Meeting Place:** Novi Civic Center, Novi, Michigan

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