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PRESS RELEASE

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Alliance of Rouge Communities receives \$1 million to restore fish passage in the Lower Rouge River

A major environmental project in the City of Wayne is another step toward the full restoration of the Rouge River.

The Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) has received a \$1 million federal grant to remove the Wayne Road Dam in the City of Wayne and restore the fishery in the Lower Rouge River. The two-year grant was awarded to the ARC by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which provides financial and technical assistance to remove dams and barriers, construct fish passage, clean up marine debris, restore coastal wetlands, and remove invasive species in the region.

The Wayne Road Dam Removal and Habitat Improvement Project will restore fish passage for migratory species such as salmon, walleye, northern pike and small mouth bass, while stabilizing and improving shoreline habitat. The project will also reconnect 22 miles of the Lower Rouge River with the Great Lakes. The Wayne Road Dam was identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as a major impediment to restoring fish and wildlife habitat in the Rouge River's Lower Branch. The Lower Branch of the Rouge River begins in Superior Township and flows through such communities as Canton Township, Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Dearborn Heights and Dearborn.

"Over the past twenty years, the restoration of the Rouge River is simply unbelievable," said James Ridgway, ARC Executive Director. "This project is yet another example of how the Rouge Communities can work miracles when they work together for the betterment of our river. The people of the City of Wayne and all of the residents of the Rouge Watershed are lucky to have the type of leadership willing to take the long view and continue to improve our quality of life, one project at a time."

Partners working with the ARC on this project are Wayne County, the City of Wayne, Friends of the Rouge and the Rouge RAP Advisory Council. The Wayne Road Dam project is the latest in a series of projects conducted by local communities and Wayne County to improve water quality and restore habitat and recreational uses in the Rouge River's Lower Branch. Those projects include the Rouge Recreational Trail in Canton Township, five acres of native prairie being installed in Wayne County's Lower Rouge Parkway, and the City of Dearborn's habitat restoration in Ford Field and sewer separation projects to reduce the amount of untreated sewage going to the Rouge River.

The Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC), a 501(c)(3) voluntary public watershed entity currently comprised of 35 municipal governments, Wayne, Oakland and Washtenaw counties and Henry Ford Community College. The purpose of the ARC is to provide an institutional mechanism to encourage watershed-wide cooperation and mutual support to meet water quality permit requirements and more importantly, to restore beneficial uses of the Rouge River to the area residents.

The ARC grant is one of eight projects funded with \$5 million in NOAA grants to support habitat restoration throughout the Great Lakes Areas of Concern. NOAA's Restoration Center is funding three shovel-ready projects and five engineering and design projects. This allows NOAA to support both current efforts to restore the Great Lakes as well as future projects that, once implemented, will have significant benefits to Great Lakes restoration.