

**Rouge River Advisory Council (RRAC)
Draft Meeting Summary
September 10, 2021**



Attendees:

Attended?	Name	Attended?	Nam
Y	Ashley Allen, HRC	N	Karen Mondora, Farmington Hills
Y	Dan Ballnik, Chair	Y	Doug Moore, Livonia
N	John Bauman, MDNR Lake Erie Management	Y	Noel Mullett, Wayne County Dept. of Public
Y	Marty Boote, Alliance of Rouge Communities	Y	Rob Myllyoja, ECT
N	Cory Borton, Bloomfield Township	N	Tennille Newsome, ARC
Y	Bill Craig, Vice Chair and SPAC representative	N	Caitlin Nigrelli, Liaison to USEPA-GLNPO
Y	Annette DeMaria, ARC	Y	Chris O'Meara, ARC
N	Rose Ellison, EPA	Y	John O'Meara, ARC
Y	Jacy Garrison, Oakland County WRC Office	Y	Sally Petrella, Friends of the Rouge
N	Orin Gelderloos, U-M Dearborn	Y	Heather Rice, Washtenaw County WRC Office
N	Kevin Goodwin, EGLE	N	Brandy Siedlaczek, Southfield
N	Barb Goryca, Citizen	Y	Tyler Sonoga, Farmington Hills
Y	Katie Grantham, SEMCOG	Y	Jennifer Tewkesbury, Michigan EGLE
Y	Marie McCormick, Friends of the Rouge	Y	Dean Tuomari, Citizen

Introductions

Chris O'Meara started the meeting by calling off attendees and having them introduce themselves as there were many new attendees. Additional attendees included:

- Clayton Hayes with Wayne State University Libraries
- Erma Leaphart with Sierra Club/Healing Our Waters Great Lakes Coalition
- Karen Alofs with University of Michigan School of Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)
- Olivia Williams with University of Michigan
- Shawn Duke with Cardno
- Tricia Gabriel with Livonia

Approval of Meeting Summary

Dan sought approval of the meeting summary from May 3, 2021 and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

The meeting summary of the May 3, 2021 meeting was approved with no comments. The motion to approve the meeting summary was made by Bill Craig, RRAC and seconded by Heather Rice, Washtenaw County.

Old Business

Update on submitted grants:

Annette DeMaria reported an update on submitted grants for Northville Daylighting and Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA).

- GLWA: Annette report GLWA was awarded a small grant to develop investigational sampling work plan to identify illicit connections and other sewage sources. The ARC is supporting the effort to work with GLWA on the work plan. The contract was received yesterday and the project is in the early stages. GLWA is in the process of preparing a communication plan.
- Northville Daylighting: Annette reported the ARC was not awarded the project for the design work. The City of Northville and the developer and working to fund the design work and get the project started and hopes the ARC will be a partner in the design work.

New RRAC Members

Dan Ballnik introduced Erma Leaphart as a new RRAC member and was welcomed. Erma introduced herself and the groups she has worked with.

Bill Craig welcomed Erma as a member. Bill Craig stated the by-laws needed to be discussed later in the agenda so RRAC will know those who can be voted as a member. For now, Bill Craig would like to have Erma as a guest versus a member. Erma understood. Dan B. stated that will be covered under new business.

Rouge River Archive at Wayne State University

Clayton thanked the RRAC for letting him speak with the group. Clayton shared a PowerPoint presentation called The Rouge River Archives. Clayton has been with Wayne State University and the Rouge River Archives (RRA) for approximately 5 years. Clayton's presentation included History of the RRA, Finding RRA Materials, Requesting Materials and the Location of the RRA. The library catalog is located at elibrary.wayne.edu. Clayton's email is clayton.hayes@wayne.edu.

Jen T. stated the information will be a good source for the AOC to put in perspective for the public.

Annette asked Clayton if the reports from the wet weather demonstration project were in the system. Clayton was unsure. He seems to remember Barb including a top 10 list of projects. Marie McCormick believes the project is included. Clayton stated he would check on his work computer and get back with her. Annette asked if a sign in was required to access the archives, he stated no.

SPAC Report

Bill Craig reported that SPAC had a meeting via Teams on June 17, 2021. Bill also reported the meeting minutes from that meeting were provided to the RRAC members via email. Bill stated the key elements of the meeting:

- EGLE's current PAC support grants end February 28, 2022 with final reports due March 31, 2022.
- The next round of PAC support grants beginning in April 2022.
- 2021 AOC Conference will for September 29 and 30 was due to Covid for precaution and restrictions. There are hopes that it will return next year. John O'Meara stated the AOC Conference has been post-phoned to May 24-26, 2022 in Muskegon, MI.
- SPAC was going to have a piggyback SPAC meeting after the AOC conference. The next SPAC meeting will be September 30th via Teams.
- Bill Craig was recorded as the designated SPAC representative on RRAC for 2021-2023 term.
- The meeting included two presentations.
 - Assessing Equity and Environmental Justice in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
 - SPAC Environmental Justice Subcommittee had two meetings:
 - June 11th meeting had FOTR discuss their organization audit.
 - Bridging the Gap: Designing a Course of Action with Michigan Public Advisory Councils

PAC Subcommittee on UofM PAC Recommendation

Bill Craig reported the history of why the PAC subcommittee is being formed. There needs to be an agreeance of who will be included in the subcommittee. Dan B. will appoint a Chair to the subcommittee. Once formed, information will be sent out. Bill asked the RRAC members if anyone was interested in being included in the subcommittee. Marie McCormick suggested illuminating the group on ideas of the frequency of the meetings, length of the meeting and overall topics and layers of expertise that would be useful in the conversation. Jen said that this can focus on a roadmap for the PAC moving forward.

Jen Tewksbury reported the State worked with the Master students to help them do the work. They focused on interviewing the PAC's on what is going well and what can be improved. A report was

prepared and recommendations were sent out. The report was sent to the RRAC members previously but will be sent out again by Chris O'Meara.

Bill Craig stated he will be meeting with the other 3 members and confirm if they want to have a meeting before the September meeting. They are currently taking the steps. Marie suggested recommending a diversity of members like SEMCOG and Sierra Club. Katie Grantham with SEMCOG stated she is happy to help.

EGLE Update

Jen Tewkesbury reported the following:

- 2021 AOC Conference has been post-phoned until May 24, 2022, in Muskegon.
- EGLE is currently working remotely until October.
- The main channel work is in progress. The contractor and EGLE have prepared a press release. The contractor has been sampling the main channel (four miles). Landowner access requests have been sent out at a 23% response rate. EGLE had to go to the Attorneys General office and get a warrant so EGLE and the contractor could approach landowner properties. There are fact sheets prepared for the project for those who approach by boat. Next steps will be after data collection and a remedial design with the Great Lakes Legacy Act.

Marie asked Jen if she was included in the sampling trips and what the public's reaction was. Jen stated there wasn't much of a reaction. Jen stated they received a call from the Detroit News and they prepared a document on line. Jen stated there was a lot of interest.

Annette asked for an update on what Jon Allen is doing. Jen T. stated she does not know what that includes besides them receiving a grant to work on the corporate side of the river. EPA extended his grant for another year.

- The old channel project is ongoing. The project has gotten more complicated due to bank failures at the old channel near the edge of the river on Zug Island where DTE stockpiles material. Rose E. with EPA has been working with the ACOE.
- They had a meeting the other date on the concrete channel. The EPA has subcontracted to Jacobs to begin the design for the channel habitat enhancement. The ACOE has collected all the data and the hydrology studies has been completed. Public engagement is an important piece of the project. Jacobs is preparing the flier and will work with FOTR, ARC, Wayne County to reach out to the landowners.
- The EPA is working with AOCs to prioritize projects for funding.

EPA Update

Jen T. reported that Rose Ellison's efforts are currently handling the old main channel work in the Rouge. Jen T. is also working with Rose regarding the prioritizing of the projects. The EPA will be working remotely until November and likely extended through the new year.

Rouge AOC Grants Update

EGLE PAC Support Grant

John O'Meara reported the EGLE PAC support grant is ongoing.

- 2021 Fish Survey
Sally Petrella with FOTR has already completed 27 sites. The last survey was completed on September 3rd. A full report will follow.
- Rouge Story Map
John reported Annette has started the process and receiving the background data. Once this is set up other projects will be included and will be done by the end of the year.

- Concrete Channel

John reported this provides funds for both the ARC and FOTR to participate in progress updates and discussion. The first phase of the project is landowner engagement and whether or not they are interested. Each activity has more than one landowner per restoration site.

Wayne County EPA Habitat Grant – HFE–Fishway Implementation/Nankin Lake Restoration

HFE Fishway: John O'Meara reported the project is in vegetation establishment and maintenance period. It will be another year before water will flow through the fishway.

Nankin: John O'Meara reported the contractors contract was signed by Wayne County Commission and work should begin end of September/beginning of October. Activity will resume through the winter.

Marie asked what contractor was selected. John O. stated the contractor is ECK.

ARC Rouge AOC Habitat Restoration - Tamarack Creek/ Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery

Johnson Creek Fish Hatchery: John O'Meara reported the site is currently in vegetation monitoring phase. The project will have another year of maintenance.

Tamarack Creek: John O'Meara reported the project is in full construction and will be mainly completed by November. Next year will be vegetation maintenance.

Marie asked what contractor was selected for Tamarack. John O. stated the contractor is Anglin Civil.

WC/ARC - 5 Parks Restoration-Riverview, Lola, Bell Creek, Sherwood, Lower Rouge

John O'Meara reported the following:

- Lower Rouge reforestation FOTR will lead the effort in October. The log jam solicitations are due to the ARC 9/16 and will start next summer.
- Sherwood Park is ready to be bid (possible construction this year)
- Bell Creek Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the winter for 2022 construction
- Lola Valley Park will be ready for contractor advertising in the winter for 2022 construction
- Riverview (Levan Knoll) is scheduled for construction in 2023

John O'Meara mentioned the ARC and Wayne County are establishing an Inter-Agency Agreement for all sites within the Rouge in Wayne County so everything can be handled by the departments and Exec's Office to minimize the need to go through the Wayne County Commission each time.

ARC Seely Creek Habitat Restoration

John O'Meara reported that the agreement with WRC office has been set up and will be ready to bid next month with construction held off and invasive species starting 2021.

ARC Colonial and Venoy Habitat Restoration

John O'Meara reported both projects are ready and construction should begin this year (most likely 2022).

WC WRC – Johnson Creek Intercounty Drain Restoration Design

John O'Meara reported conceptual designs have been completed. There have been some public events help. FOTR is assisting in preparing information.

Heather Rice reported the coffee hours debrief from July 7 and there is information on therouge.org/johnson-creek.

ARC LTU Wetland Habitat Design

John O'Meara reported that this project is strictly a design grant. The field information has been collected. LTU and Don Carpenter are reviewing hydraulics.

ARC Phoenix, Wilcox, Inkster Design

John O'Meara reported this project for design was awarded. The QAPP is in process of being developed. Field data is currently being collected this fall.

Marie asked where information could be found. Chris stated she will send out a link on the RRAC's website. John O. stated that if you need information on Johnson Creek, you could find it through Washtenaw County.

Other Projects of Note

Rouge Watershed Potential Project Template

John O'Meara reported the template the ARC developed is available and has been sent out to ARC communities, FOTR and other ARC Cooperating Partners. John stressed to RRAC members to use the template and send to the ARC so an AOC funding table can be developed.

New Business

RRAC Membership

Bill Craig reported there is some question about RRAC membership and who is a member and who isn't. Erma came to the meeting wishing to become an RRAC member. Marie McCormick would like to be a Chair of the council. Dan Ballnik is interested in stepping down as Chair to Vice Chair. It came to the attention of figuring out who are the members of the Advisory Council and who has the rights to vote. Bill would like to have another meeting in the near future due to these interests.

John O. suggested that RRAC send the by-laws out to the group to review and understand them.

Dan B. suggested creating a nominating committee that could be handled by email. Dan suggested the next steps are sending out the by-laws. Chris O. stated if any changes needed to be made to the by-laws that 10 days of notice is required. Chris O. also noted officer terms starts in January.

Project to analyze Rouge fish data with UofM

Sally Petrella reported they have been collecting data about fish to find out where they are at what are there some areas that can be delisted. Paul and Karen Alofs (a professor at UofM SEAS) found a master student who would like to do that work. Sally introduced Karen and Olivia to share their information.

Karen Alofs introduced herself and shared her PowerPoint presentation for Evaluating Responses to Restoration by Fish Communities in the Rouge River explaining their process, prioritization, deliverables, etc. Olivia Williams also introduced herself to the RRAC members. They can be reached at kmalofs@umich.edu and wolivia@umich.edu.

Sally was looking for funding from the PAC, etc. Jen T. asked what funding they were looking for and Karen reported the project would be \$190,000 and that would include 3 semesters of Olivia's work, summer survey work and two staff from FOTR and any equipment. Karen will send a budget breakdown to Jen T. A letter of support may be required from the PAC. Sally Petrella stated she will send out more information. Sally asked if there was support from the PAC to continue to look into this project. Dan B. suggested Sally preparing a letter for Dan to sign.

Comments

Members

None to report.

General Public

None to report.

Review of Action Items

- Approved May 3, 2021 meeting summary.
- Volunteers for environmental justice representative.
- Karen Alofs to send budget for UM fish project to Jen T.
- Chris O. to send out link to where projects from RRAC site.
- Move forward with nominating committee and by-laws committee.
- Chris O. to send out by-laws to RRAC.
- Next Meeting November 2, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. and January 11, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Bill Craig made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Noel Mullet, Wayne County seconded the Motion. The meeting was adjourned.