



CITY COUNCIL REPORT

June 29, 2009

TO: John Szerlag, Acting City Manager

FROM: Brian P. Murphy, Asst. City Manager/Economic Development Services
Steven J. Vandette, City Engineer 

SUBJECT: 2009 Rouge Rescue/River Day Celebration

Background:

- Almost 40 years ago, in 1970, a group of volunteers gathered to pull garbage out of the Rouge River in the City of Southfield. They pulled out old tires, garbage cans, car parts, shopping carts and dumpsters full of refuse. Over the next decades, this event spread throughout the Rouge River Watershed, becoming one of the Rouge River's most visible successes.
- In the mid-1980's, Friends of the Rouge became the spearhead organization that coordinated Rouge Rescue across the watershed. Soon, the first Saturday in June became a celebration of the Rouge River.
- In 2009, there were 39 sites across the watershed, with activities ranging from refuse removal to nature walks.
- Here in Troy, we decided to spend some time at the Stage Nature Center, to address some beautification projects as well as tackle some streambank corrective measures.
- Over 150 volunteers showed up to the Nature Center on June 6th this year. We had groups from local churches, boy scouts, residents, high school students and even a large group from one of the City's Engineering consultants. Spalding DeDecker Associates, Inc., showed up ready to work!
- As a large group, we successfully:
 - Planted a 700 square foot rain garden
 - Installed 150-foot long buffer of native seed along the streambank
 - Removed 35 bags of garlic mustard (an invasive exotic plant that threatens our woodlands)
 - Maintained over a ½ mile of wood chip pathway
 - Removed woody debris from an estimated ¼ mile of the Rouge River
 - Performed light landscape care at the Nature Center
- Some special successes included:
 - Protecting a mother snapping turtle as she was laying her eggs
 - Meeting one of our residents who donated several bags of grass seed to the project, on a whim
 - Planting 2 Champion Black Willow trees, from the Champion Tree Program.
 - Improving the natural environment for the wildlife and ecology of our City.
- As this event was a community-based event, there are special thanks that need to be mentioned, especially the new Starbucks on the corner of Crooks and Big Beaver (donation of coffee for all the volunteers); and REI (assisting with the registration of many of the volunteers).
- Another special thank you must be said for the staff that worked numerous hours on this endeavor. Without their passion and diligence, this project could not have gone so well: Ron Hynd, Stacey Yankee, Parks and Recreation Dept. and Jennifer Lawson, Engineering Dept.

Rouge Rescue 2009

a celebration of our water resources

Why Do We Celebrate River Day?



What benefit can we expect?



Some feel-good stats:

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Rouge Rescue 2009

Special Happenings



Champion Tree Program



Special Thanks to:

Stacey Yankee, Nature Center
Ron Hynd, Parks and Rec
Ed Carpus, Parks and Rec
Jeff Biegler, Parks and Rec
Pam and Mike Brady, Resident Extraordinaires
Lance Oakley, Chef
P&R seasonal staff
Nature Center staff

