

## Chapter 4 GOALS

---

The goals were developed from a review of the existing data on the Upper Rouge River, the *Rouge Report Card*, the *Rouge River 1999 Public Opinion Survey* (see Appendix D, available online at [www.rougeriver.com](http://www.rougeriver.com)), the requirements of the general storm water permit, the public responses to a written questionnaire distributed at public meetings, and the personal knowledge of the members/advisors of the Upper Rouge River SWAG.

The purpose of these goals is to establish a framework to guide long-term efforts to protect the existing values of the river and restore the impaired uses. The short-term objectives identify the conditions or activities that are expected to be completed within the next five years as interim steps in achieving the long-term goals, those that are expected to be realized beyond five years. The short-term objectives are measurable outcomes that can be used to monitor progress, and are selected based upon an analysis of the alternatives that are discussed in detail later in this plan. Goals are listed in order of priority. Specific actions proposed or already under way to achieve the goals and implement the methods to measure progress are covered in Chapter 7.

Two surveys were used to help identify residents' priority Rouge River watershed concerns. One survey, a random telephone interview of 400 residents of the watershed conducted in 1999 as part of the Rouge Project, asked residents to rank the major problems in the river. Nearly 90 percent of those responding indicated that protection of human health was the highest concern. Approximately 85 percent indicated that aesthetic problems related to the presence of trash and debris in the river was a major concern. Soil erosion was cited by 67 percent of the respondents as a priority concern. The loss of wildlife habitat was cited by over 60 percent of those surveyed, and nearly 50 percent indicated that flooding and other problems related to high river flows needed to be addressed.

The written survey distributed to residents of the Upper Subwatershed who attended a public information meeting held in Livonia in the summer of 2000 also indicated that managing the river to assure protection of public health was the highest priority concern. The residents that attended the meeting were predominantly owners of property adjacent to the Bell Branch and Tarabusi Creek within the City of Livonia. They also ranked excessive flows in the river and soil erosion as major concerns.

In addition to public health, aesthetic concerns, erosion, and flooding, citizens participating in the development of the *Rouge River RAP* also cited healthy fish and wildlife populations as a targeted goal.

Long-term and short-term objectives for each of the following five categories in priority order were established by the Upper Rouge River SWAG to guide actions to protect and restore the Upper Subwatershed.

- Protect public health
- Reduce excessive river flows
- Protect and restore the ecosystem for fish and wildlife
- Restore and maintain aesthetically appealing conditions
- Minimize upland soil erosion and related sedimentation

## 4.1 Protect Public Health

### Long Term Goal

Control sources of untreated sanitary waste entering the river to

- restore impaired water-related recreational uses;
- protect areas currently free of bacteria problems; and
- achieve Michigan water quality standards for partial- and total-body contact recreation during all times that human contact with the river water is reasonably expected to occur.

### Short Term Objectives

#### *Dry Weather Sources*

- Identify and eliminate all permanent illicit connections discharging to the river (e.g., sanitary waste and floor drains connected illegally to separate storm water systems)
- Identify and require correction of individual, failing OSDS (septic systems) that are directly contributing untreated human waste to the river
- Identify areas where widespread septic system failures represent a potential indirect source of pollution to the river or groundwater (i.e., areas that require the construction of new sanitary sewers)
- Vigorously enforce prohibitions on illegal discharge to separate storm sewers from transient sources stored within the subwatershed (e.g., waste-holding tanks in recreational vehicles, campers, and large boats)
- Conduct effective educational activities

#### *Wet Weather Sources*

- Finalize design and construction schedules to address remaining CSO discharges, consistent with the terms of state-issued permits and orders
- Identify SSO discharge points, frequency of discharge, and the source of the problem and develop alternative remedial actions to meet state and federal requirements, where appropriate and necessary

## 4.2 Reduce Excessive River Flows

### Long Term Goals

- Eliminate further increases in the frequency, volume, and velocity of flood flows following wet weather events by effectively controlling storm water runoff from new developments
- Protect wetlands and flood plains that provide water storage as well as other benefits to the river
- Require effective storm water management for all development projects, increase maintenance and retrofitting of existing detention facilities, and construct new off-channel storm water detention facilities, to the extent feasible and cost effective
- To the extent feasible and cost effective, create wetlands and restore flood plain areas to increase water storage and provide other benefits

### Short Term Objectives

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current design requirements for onsite storm water management in county, township, and city permit and site plan approval processes to assure effective control of the volume of storm water runoff
- Support regulatory efforts at the state level to protect wetlands
- Urge state regulators to consider all flow implications when new developments obtain state permits to fill or occupy a regulated flood plain or floodway that serves as a valuable water retention area
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness of the use of regional, off-channel, storm water detention facilities to reduce flood flows and velocities in current problem areas
- Provide information to riparian property owners on the best practices for minimizing stream bank erosion and flooding problems and woody debris management
- Evaluate legal options to fund long-term maintenance of river channels to prevent and remove obstructions that cause flooding and related problems
- Investigate funding mechanisms that would provide routine maintenance on storm water detention facilities that are not currently the responsibility of public agencies

## 4.3 Protect and Restore River Ecosystem for Fish and Wildlife

### Long Term Goals

- Protect fish and wildlife habitat within the river and on adjacent riparian lands to sustain the diversity of viable fish and wildlife populations within the subwatershed
- Enhance the diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife populations in the subwatershed comparable to that found in other southern Michigan river systems with similar physical characteristics

### Short Term Objectives

- Control sources of pollution that currently cause reduction of dissolved oxygen levels below the standard established to protect warmwater fish populations, including control of sources of untreated waste that are also responsible for elevated bacteria levels
- Encourage woody debris management and channel flow maintenance activities that protect or enhance essential fish and wildlife habitat
- Identify opportunities to create new fish and wildlife habitat in conjunction with other public or private water management projects within the subwatershed
- Implement public education and household hazardous waste pickup/drop-off programs to prevent disposal practices that result in harmful pollutants that impair fish and wildlife values and other protected uses
- Implement chemical use assessments by public agencies responsible for parkland, highway, and golf course maintenance to minimize the discharge of harmful chemicals and fertilizers to the river
- Provide information to homeowners on best management practices for lawn and garden care to reduce the use of chemicals that reach the river
- Provide general educational materials to residents, public agencies, and businesses on how their activities can affect the quality of the river

## 4.4 Restore and Maintain Aesthetically Appealing Conditions

### Long Term Goal

Assure that the Upper Rouge River is an asset to area residents that

- enhances the value of riparian properties;
- provides a pleasant, appealing setting in the public and private areas adjacent to the river; and
- supports a wide range of quality outdoor recreational experiences.

### Short Term Objectives

- Develop and distribute public information/educational materials that will encourage public stewardship of the river
- Support efforts by Friends of the Rouge and other nonprofit and governmental organizations that sponsor removal of litter and trash within and along the course of river
- Provide information and fund enhanced public facilities that encourage (a) expanded use of parklands adjacent to the river and (b) “ownership” of the river
- Encourage and facilitate neighborhood organizations/businesses that are interested in volunteer projects to improve the appearance, public uses, and/or quality of the river, consistent with the goals of this plan
- Support education projects in area schools that focus on the importance of resident-based river stewardship

## 4.5 Minimize Upland Soil Erosion and Related Sedimentation

### Long Term Goal

Reduce the quantity of eroded soils entering the river via construction sites to help control sedimentation that (a) affects the survival and abundance of aquatic organisms in the river and (b) limits the capacity of storm sewer systems serving the Upper Subwatershed.

### Short Term Objectives

- Maintain and/or enhance routine cleaning of public roadways to minimize the quantity of debris, sand, and silt entering the storm water systems and discharging to the river
- Where appropriate, incorporate grassy swales or other best management design features to reduce sediment loading from road surfaces to storm water systems
- Maintain and improve training of local public officials responsible for administering soil erosion and sedimentation control permits to assure effective enforcement of requirements and application of best technical prevention practices
- Provide adequate state-sponsored training opportunities for local officials on techniques to effectively control soil erosion at construction sites
- Insist that the state permit-by-rule requirements—which stipulate that certified operators must be onsite to supervise soil erosion control activities during construction—are rigorously enforced
- Maintain and enhance catch basin and/or media filter cleaning to remove accumulated sediments before sediments enter the storm sewer and are discharged to the river
- Educate private developers and public officials on the need for appropriate soil erosion controls at construction sites
- Inform citizens about the affects of soil erosion and provide information for reporting of erosion problems at construction sites to appropriate public officials