



Riparian Corridor Project Profile



Detroit Wildflower Plantings

Background

The Rouge River flows through Detroit from its border with Southfield to its border with Dearborn Heights and eventually to the Detroit River. Between Southfield and Dearborn Heights, nearly all of the Rouge River's distance is forested and in a natural state. This portion of the Rouge River suffers from flooding and soil erosion during storm events.

Two large parks make up a majority of this acreage. Rouge Park has 455 acres covered in turf grass. Eliza Howell Park has 150 acres in turf grass. These areas have shallow rooted grass, which allows most of the storm water to drain directly into the river with little or no infiltration. Native prairie grasses and wildflowers are deep rooted, encourage infiltration and assists the soil in storage of storm water runoff. The City of Detroit and Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) began discussing the benefits of replacing areas of sod with native plants



Eliza Howell Park wildflower project area, before (left) and after (right). (Pictures - Sally Petrella)

Project Overview

The project involved killing off the existing turf grass and seed bank on 15 acres of Rouge Park and 2.75 acres of Eliza Howell Park. This was done with two applications of Roundup. Then the areas were shallow tilled and reseeded with the native plant species. Occasional mowing and spot spraying for invasive species is the only maintenance procedures needed.

A list of the over 30 species used is available upon request. The species mix was specific to match the habitat of the planted area. A wetland mix was used in a seasonal wetland. A "tall" species mix was used in a meadow.

The Rouge Program Office provided a grant to fund the plantings, which were done by the Michigan Wildflower Farm in Portland

Methods Used

Native Plantings

Materials Used

Roundup
Tractor
Tow behind sprayer
Tow behind disc
Tow behind seeded
Consultant Services



Over 30 native plant species were used in the project. Just over 17 acres were converted from turf grass to prairie/wetland. (Pictures - S. Petrella)



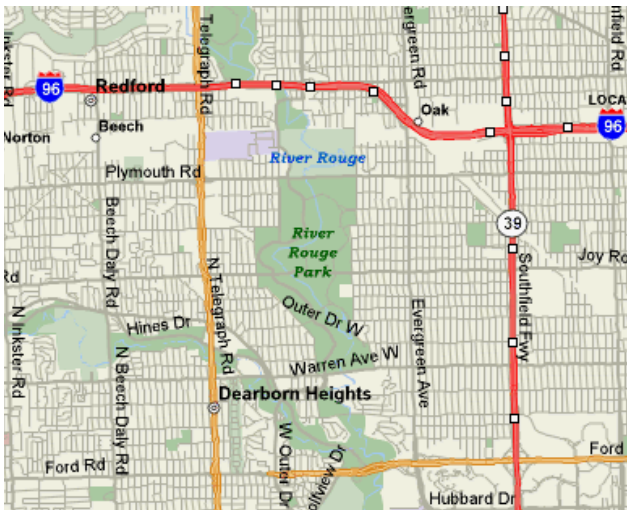
The prairie at Rouge Park after the first growth in June of 2002. (Pictures - S. Petrella)

Cost
\$50,000.00

Permits
None



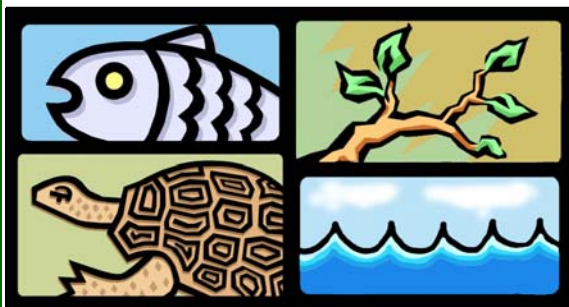
Signage of the areas provided an educational component for the public as well as delineation of the areas to park staff. (Pictures - S. Petrella)



Partners

City of Detroit
Wayne County
Hamilton Anderson Associates

Friends of the Rouge
Michigan Wildflower Farm
ECT, Inc



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Text and photos provided by Dennis Sawinska, Assistant Forester, Rouge Park, City of Detroit. For more information on this project, please contact Mr. Sawinska at (313) 852-4532

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