

RiverUp!

An aerial photograph of a silver aluminum canoe on a river. Two people are inside the canoe, both wearing blue life jackets and paddling. The person in the front is wearing a white shirt and a blue life jacket. The person in the back is wearing a blue shirt and a blue life jacket. The water is dark blue with ripples and a large, dark, circular eddy or hole in the water to the right of the canoe. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

A HURON RIVER RENAISSANCE

Turning our communities
toward the river to transform
the Huron River corridor
into a premier destination in
Michigan and the Great Lakes.

6 THE VISION OF RIVERUP!

Learn about the ambitious renaissance underway for Michigan's Huron River. Sparked by the conservation ethic of the "Dean of the House", Congressman John Dingell's charge to the environmental and business communities to restore the river and revitalize our communities is being answered by a powerhouse coalition.



8 CLEAN UP!

Good news! The Huron River is the cleanest urban river in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. But urban rivers have their challenges and that's where the unique public-private partnership of RiverUp! can step in to improve the ecological health of the river by remediating legacy pollution sites, returning some of the river's natural flow regime and restoring natural shorelines.

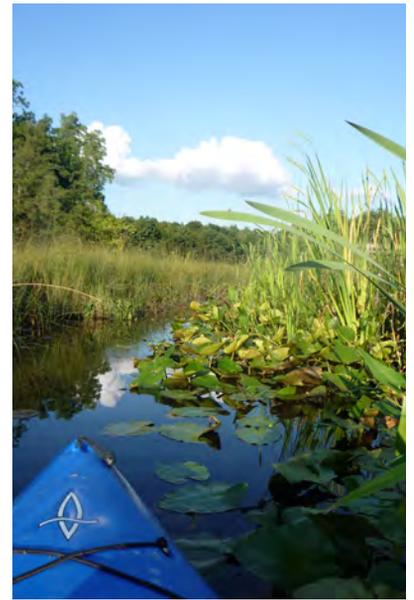


12 FIX UP!

The Huron River is one of the most popular paddling and fly-fishing rivers in the state, and home to the busiest livery in Michigan. Investing in river recreation will generate positive economic impacts for our river towns, bring more residents and tourists to the Huron, and help make this river a Great Lakes destination.

18 BUILD UP!

A Huron River that's cleaner and more enjoyable to fish, swim, and paddle demands river communities that embrace their spot on a Michigan natural treasure. Transforming the river corridor in our communities means linking them via trails (be they water, land or art), natural areas and vital downtowns. We're starting with Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, and building from there all along the river.



22 RIVER UP!

RiverUp! is the signature placemaking initiative for the Huron River and its communities. Through this effort, we are working to assist communities to maximize the Huron River as a signature community asset to attract residents, visitors, and businesses.



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LAURA RUBIN



LISA WOZNIAK



ANDY BUCHSBAUM



ELIZABETH RIGGS

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) is partnering with the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Office (NWF), the Michigan League of Conservation Voters and the Wolfpack to spark a river renaissance, known as RiverUp! RiverUp! is a plan for the Huron River's future - a strategy to realize the goal of a vibrant, robust and fully restored river as a destination for residents and tourists.

The Huron River watershed is a natural treasure. The Huron River meanders through remnant forests, agricultural areas, and a complex series of wetlands, lakes, and urban environments before flowing into the western basin of Lake Erie. The watershed (908 mi²) is home to a half million people, supplies drinking water to over 150,000 people, supports one of Michigan's finest smallmouth bass fisheries, and is the only designated Scenic River in southeastern Michigan. The watershed contains two-thirds of this area's public recreation lands, and is home to numerous threatened and endangered plant and animal species and habitat types. All of this speaks highly to the health and the fragility of this special area, and the need for additional stakeholder involvement.

RiverUp! presents a unique opportunity to leverage numerous groups' strengths and resources to advance the considerable work that's already being done for the Huron. HRWC works creatively and cooperatively to tackle river protection. HRWC monitors the Huron River, its tributaries, lakes, and groundwater, and directs multiple programs addressing pollution prevention and abatement, wetland and floodplain protection, citizen education, and natural resource and landuse planning. The Michigan League of Conservation Voters works to influence better legislation at the State level and NWF provides the context for the issues and the impact on the Great Lakes. NWF also brings a coalition of 60 business and community leaders and organizations to the project, the Wolfpack. The respective staff and board expertise and know-how results in a very effective partnership that gets things done.

We are proud of the progress made on numerous RiverUp! projects up and down the river. These efforts include clean-ups of contaminated properties, land and water trail development, portage improvements, economic development opportunities such as restaurants, liveries, and redevelopment, and public outreach & marketing. This progress is made possible through diverse partnerships with business leaders, downtown development authorities, recreational enthusiasts, state and local legislators, local government planners and staff, artists, and historians. We hope you will find inspiration in this vision and an area where you can get involved.

See you on the river,
Laura, Lisa, Andy, and Elizabeth

Congressman John D. Dingell sounded the clarion call to create a Huron River renaissance, and some great organizational minds, as well as experts in river ecology and sustainability, have risen to the occasion. People like Dr. Thomas Buhr, John Carver, Steve Hamp, Jerry Jung and Mariam Noland.

Our rivers provide so many benefits to our communities. I am happy to be a part of cleaning up Southeast Michigan waterways and pleased to see partnerships of communities and organizations developing plans and projects to enhance the quality of living for our residents by preserving the natural benefits our waterways provide.

The RiverUp! Project will ensure the Huron River can be enjoyed for many generations to come by investing in recreation, improving the ecological health of the Huron River, and making the river part of a community experience all the way from Milford to Flat Rock.



CONGRESSMAN
JOHN DINGELL



JERRY JUNG

Chairman of the board of the Michigan Department of Transportation and a supporter of RiverUp!

Some people see projects such as the restoration of the Huron River as being at odds with economic development. The opposite is true, talented employees drive economic growth and these are the same people who want their families to live in a clean attractive environment with plentiful recreational opportunities.



MARIAM C. NOLAND
President, Community Foundation
for Southeast Michigan

The public-private partnership working to make the Huron River a destination for all, both residents and tourists, brings together real commitment and the ability to get things done.

RiverUp! is all about communities celebrating what we share and wish to significantly improve—our beloved Huron River.



STEVE HAMP
Former President, The Henry Ford
Currently, Principle, Hamp Advisors



DR. THOMAS BUHR
Anglers of the Au Sable and river
conservation expert with over fifty years
experience on the Huron

I think this river is as important as the Au Sable or the coastal waters of our country. I am delighted to see that we are taking the next step to nurture and value this river.

Terrific to see Ann Arbor becoming more aware that A River Runs Through It!



JOHN CARVER
Co-founder of NWF's President's Council,
Michigan LCV and the Wolfpack

THE VISION OF RIVERUP!

The initiative to rejuvenate the Huron River and its communities began when Congressman John Dingell sounded the call to spark a river renaissance.

In the not-too-distant past, Congressman Dingell and conservation leaders gathered on the observation deck of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Huron River. That day, the Congressman issued a challenge to the business and environmental communities to restore the river and revitalize our cities.

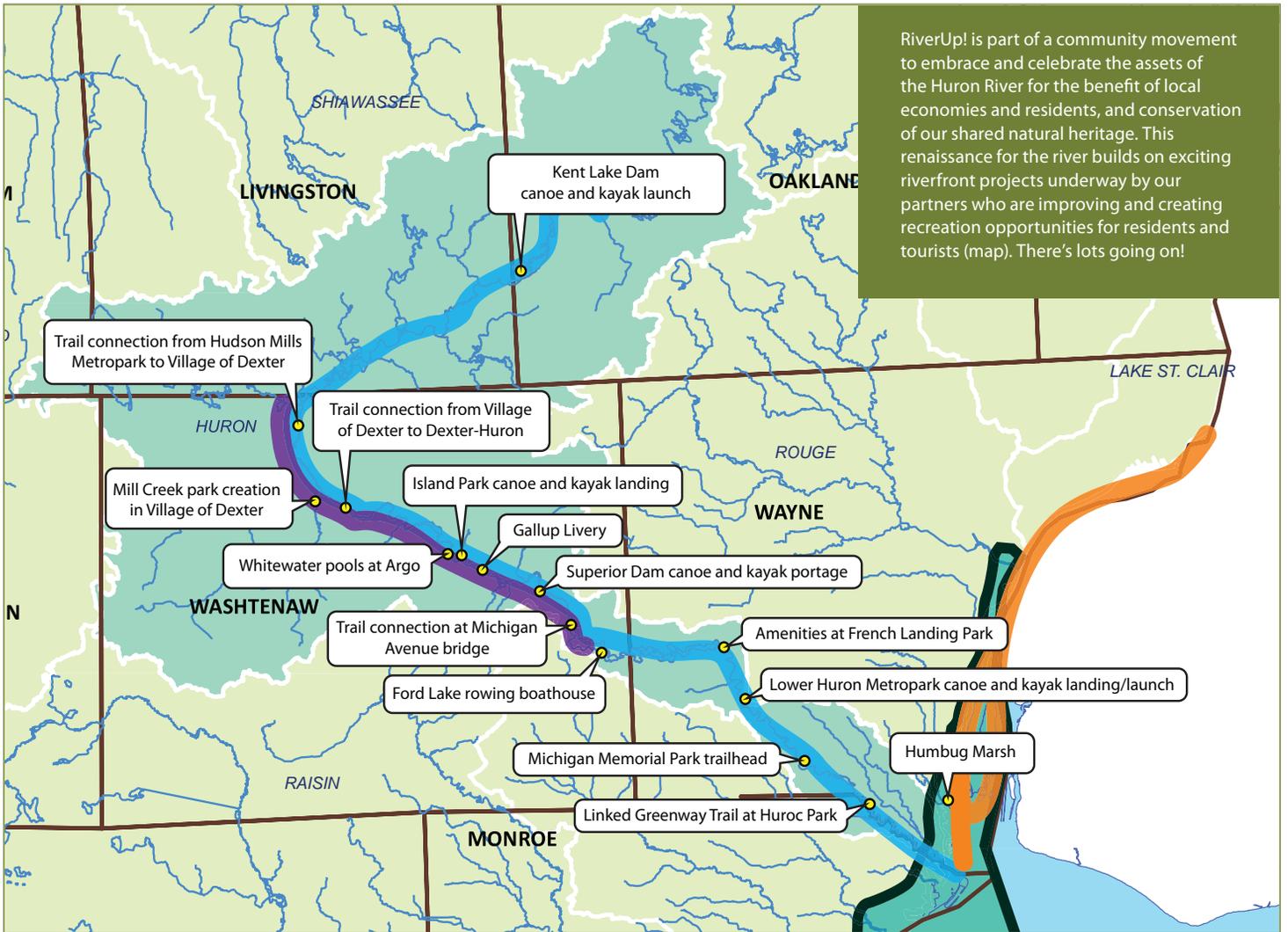
Historically, the river was used primarily for transportation, industry and waste disposal. Unsurprisingly, communities along the Huron literally turned away from it. Now it's time to do the hard work of restoring the river. We need to look toward this incredible asset and reestablish it as the indispensable and irreplaceable center of our communities' lives.

Cognizant of the need to act, and responding to Congressman Dingell's call for the development and implementation of a substantive plan for the Huron River's future, a core group of community and business leaders formulated a strategy to realize the goal of a vibrant, robust and fully restored river—a destination for both nearby residents and vacationing tourists. Ambitious yet achievable, it has broad implications, from rural agricultural communities to urban manufacturing centers. RiverUp! was conceived.

The goal of RiverUp! is the renaissance of the 104-mile Huron River healthy and restored, a destination for both residents and tourists on vacation. The river communities encompass vibrant towns like Milford, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Flat Rock, and rural agricultural communities as well as urban manufacturing centers. This breadth and diversity can be a source of great strength and sustainability.

The long-term plan encompasses three broad objectives: Fix Up! Invest in recreation infrastructure. Clean Up! Improve the ecological health of the Huron River. Build Up! Transform the Huron River corridor by turning the face of our communities toward the river and making the Huron River a premier destination for people throughout Michigan, the Great Lakes, and across the country.

RiverUp! is part of a community movement to embrace and celebrate the assets of the Huron River for the benefit of local economies and residents, and conservation of our shared natural heritage. This renaissance for the river builds on exciting riverfront projects underway by our partners who are improving and creating recreation opportunities for residents and tourists (map). There's lots going on!



■ Watershed Boundary
 ■ Huron River Water Trail
 ■ Border to Border Trail
 ■ Detroit Heritage Water Trail
 ■ Detroit River Int. Wildlife Refuge

3 Facets of RiverUp!



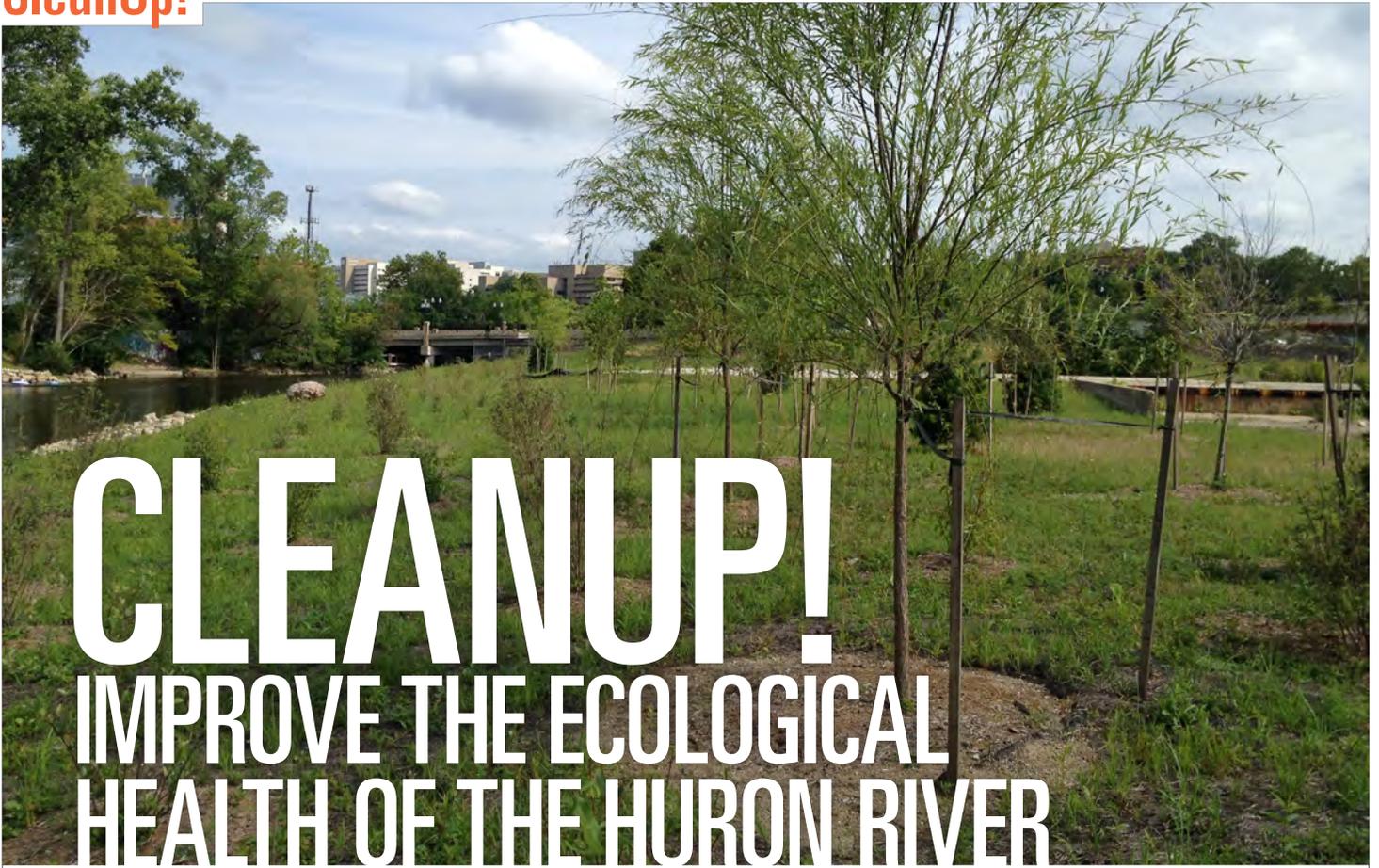
FixUp!
Invest in River Recreation



CleanUp!
Improve the Ecological Health of the Huron River



BuildUp!
Transform the Huron River Corridor



ALL of our hopes and aspirations for the Huron River depend on its ecological health. For RiverUp!, that means cleaning up historically contaminated areas and pollution hotspots and restoring more natural shorelines and river flows. Remediating legacy pollution sites requires public-private partnerships and creative funding mechanisms. A return to natural shorelines and river flows results from better management of dams, removal of some dams, and clearing impediments to free-flowing water. A more natural flow to the river along its 100+ miles improves viewsheds, waterfront parks, wildlife corridors and, ultimately, human interaction with the river itself.

Accomplishments

RiverUp! has engaged the imaginations of community and business leaders and residents in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti through the re-envisioning of two industrial riverfront properties.



DTE ENERGY BROADWAY STREET REMEDIATION, ANN ARBOR

Photo courtesy of DTE Energy



Photo by HRWC

Reuse and redevelopment of key properties

DTE Energy property turns a page

We celebrate the progress of this important effort led by DTE Energy and the City of Ann Arbor to clean up this highly visible location on the banks of the Huron River. RiverUp! and the Wolfpack helped to move forward the remediation of the former coal gasification factory on the DTE Energy property and advocate for a post-clean-up vision that revitalizes this part of the city and improves the ecology of the river corridor. DTE Energy, in partnership with RiverUp!, developed a clean-up strategy with costs and are exploring a post-cleanup vision for the property. The possibilities for a public-private partnership are many and a popular vision is that of a park and river-friendly commercial establishments.

Ypsilanti's river corridor poised for a renaissance

RiverUp! is assisting in the revitalization of Ypsilanti where city meets river. A partnership of the City, Washtenaw County, the local business community, and Wolfpack is leading the efforts of RiverUp! to reclaim a clean urban river and make it a driver of local economic development and recreation opportunities. Recent and expected redevelopment of existing sites along the Huron River creates an opportunity to tie riverbank stabilization with redevelopment, such as at Riverside park. City leaders are pursuing development of a River Preservation District and RiverUp! is helping them get there with trail linkages between city parks and to neighboring park and trail systems. These efforts tie into the planned Eastside Recreation Center at Michigan Avenue next to the river that will connect to the Border to Border trail, further turning the city to face the river. An engineering feasibility study of bypass options of I-94 at the Huron River was funded through RiverUp! to find the best option to connect existing nonmotorized transportation between the City and Township.

Restore river flows

The Michigan section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) recently gave the state's dam infrastructure a "D" grade. This outdated network includes abandoned dams, dams that no longer serve their intended purpose, and dams that pose safety hazards and alter stream flows. Under HRWC's leadership, Michigan river and conservation groups came together to discuss how to create a better dam program in Michigan. The recommendations are summarized in a report "Re*Envisioning Dam Management in Michigan" available at www.hrwc.org/restoringriverflows. Following release of the report, HRWC partnered with a team of state environmental and conservation organizations to reach out to DNR and DEQ leaders, the governor, department division officials and key staff to build support for implementing key recommendations. A statewide dam inventory and prioritization model is being developed along with education materials for small dam owners and Michigan residents.

More recently, Huron River dam operators formed a network that meets regularly to achieve the following three objectives:

1. Gain a better understanding of the issues associated with managing multiple dams in a watershed currently and with weather extremes.
2. Get to know their upstream and downstream neighbors. What issues, challenges and constraints are dam operators facing throughout the watershed?
3. Identify data and information wants and needs. Determine how the Dam Operators Network can share information and address issues through better coordinated communications.

The Network is facilitated and supported by HRWC and provides an outlet for discussions on impacts of extreme weather to dam operations and consistent dam safety measures.



HUBBLE DAM

Photo by HRWC

Up Next

RiverUp! will continue to work with our partners on the properties in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. RiverUp! will advocate for a post-cleanup concept for the area that will turn Ann Arbor to face the Huron River through river-based recreation, cultural events, and local commerce.

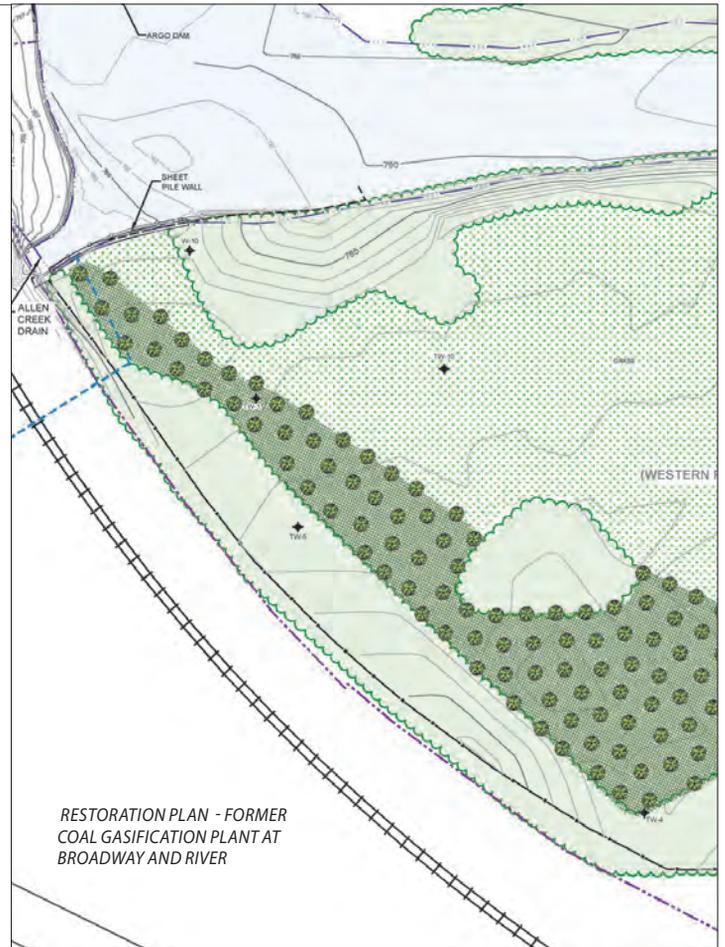
In Ypsilanti, RiverUp! will work with local business, the City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, and Friends of the Border to Border Trail to move forward the elements necessary for revitalizing the riverfront parks in the City.

- Secure public and private funds to make improvements at Peninsular Dam Park, Riverside Park, Frog Island Park, Waterworks Park
- Make a win-win for the township and city by combining compost operations at the new township facility, and making room at Waterworks Park for playing fields and community priorities from design charrettes
- Support partners connecting non-motorized trails through the City

Restoring fisheries habitat in the river

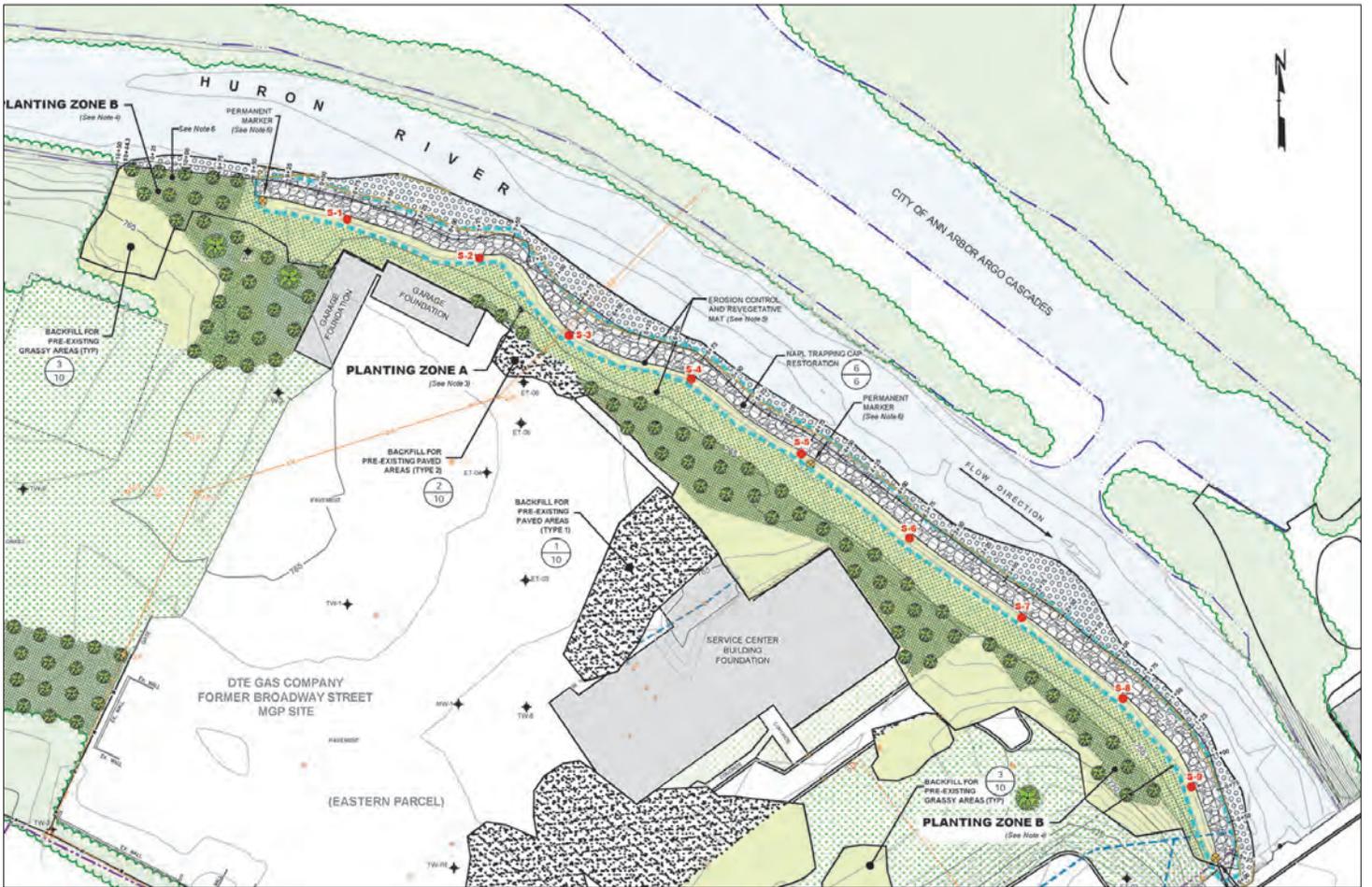
Human impacts on the river's habitat have reduced the habitat diversity and bass population from Ann Arbor, through Ypsilanti, and downstream to Lake Erie. Loss of riparian and instream habitat is a common problem not only in southeast Michigan but also throughout the Great Lakes region, as encroaching urban areas alter water routing and normal river flow patterns. Some of the consequences of stream urbanization include stream straightening, an increase in the frequency of flashy stream flows, a loss of woody debris, loss of pool habitat, and increase of shallow flat water runs. This increase of homogenous habitat conditions limit fish and macroinvertebrate diversity since different types of organisms have different habitat needs to live and thrive.

The Huron River in Ypsilanti is void of habitat and flow variation. The biological community is certainly affected by this homogeneity; macroinvertebrate and fish diversity and abundance is low. The Michigan DNR conducted a fish survey through this section in 2001 and found cool-water and warm-water fish, including smallmouth bass, but none of them were legal sized. In their report following the survey, the Michigan DNR recommend installing boulders and woody debris to provide cover and resting habitat, which are largely absent from the reach.



RiverUp! proposes to develop a design plan and install habitat best practices to a 3,500 ft section of the Huron River as it flows through Ypsilanti. This section of the river is in a very public area as it abuts Ypsilanti's two most popular parks. About 30 structures would be installed into the river with the grant funds. These thirty structures would not fulfill the entire design plan; rather, the overarching plan is to secure other funding and eventually install other structures.

The proposed structures will provide a complex diversity of flow & habitat conditions that are currently lacking in order to promote healthy smallmouth bass and macroinvertebrate populations. The woody debris structures will be installed to minimize stream bank erosion and reduce riparian degradation, while boulder clusters provide cover and a diversity of water velocity which would increase the diversity of the river's substrate.



Courtesy of DTE Energy

Restore river flows

Providing essential river flows to the fishery and other river life must be planned for in an era of water withdrawals, water diversions, and extreme weather conditions. With guidance from RiverUp! and HRWC, a graduate team at the University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources & Environment, researched the flows of the Huron River to determine the natural flow regime for the river's mainstem and identify the impacts of dams. Their 18-month study provides HRWC and other land and water managers with guidelines for dam operation that supports the fishery and recreation and recommendations for further study. Future work on environmental flows will entail prioritizing the team's recommendations and moving forward on implementation.

Additionally work planned in this area includes the following tasks:

- Develop the case for dam removal at Peninsular Paper Dam and Woods Creek
- Support dam owners in preparing dam removal plans
- Assist in best practices for reservoir maintenance – Barton, Gallup



ARGO CASCADES
A POPULAR ATTRACTION
IN A FORMER MILL RACE

Photo by SEMCOG



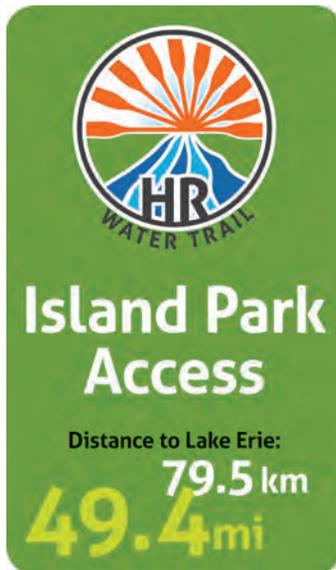
Huron River
WATER TRAIL

INVEST IN RECREATION

Canoeing, kayaking, biking, walking, swimming, birdwatching and fishing are just a few of the pursuits people enjoy along the Huron. The Huron long has been a place for recreation, but much can be done to increase access to the riverfront for passive use and improve access and passages for paddlers. City, county and metropolitan agencies have developed extensive park systems that provide access and venues for these activities and plans are in the works for more, such as additional greenways to provide trails for walkers and bicyclists. RiverUp! enhances these projects and creates additional ones from Milford to Flat Rock.

Accomplishments

The Huron River Water Trail is taking shape! The reaction from river users and our partners has been encouraging as the Huron River Watershed Council and RiverUp! lead the formation of the Water Trail and plan for its sustainability and maintenance. From construction projects that fix up dam portages to new way-finding signs to the waterproof map book for paddlers and online trip planning tool, we're generating buzz in our own backyard and around the country for the quality of the Water Trail through this partnership.



TRAIL MARKER ON THE HURON RIVER WATER TRAIL

THE GOALS OF THE HURON RIVER WATER TRAIL ARE TO

- Stimulate local economies
- Improve recreational access and opportunities
- Encourage physical activity
- Improve community pride and encourage partnerships and collaboration
- Make rivers and communities healthier
- Highlight cultural and historical significance



Photo by HRWC

Water Trail Renovations

Superior Dam Portage, Superior Township and City of Ann Arbor - Completed

RiverUp! cut its proverbial teeth on the neglected portage of the Superior Dam near river mile 43 in 2012. In August 2012, the portage was re-opened with new features such as a low dock for canoe and kayak take-out, a graded gravel path, and new sheltered launch area in quiet waters. A rustic black willow bench ties the site together. Way-finding signs sporting the Huron River Water Trail and RiverUp! logos debuted at the site, as well.

The portage improvements are the result of the generous support of Thomas Buhr and John Carver, with cooperation from St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, City of Ann Arbor, and Superior Township. SmithGroupJJR designed the project and Michigan Hardscape, LLC was the construction contractor.

Island Park Canoe and Kayak Access, City of Ann Arbor - Completed

Water Trail users now enjoy better access to the amenities at Island Park with the completion of a new launch and landing for canoes and kayaks. The Island Park trailhead for the Huron River Water Trail is situated at river mile 49.4, arguably the most popular section of the river between Argo and Gallup liveries. The new launch and landing replaces the eroded and undersized (and unofficial) landing just upstream near the footbridge that had become the taking out spot for paddlers. Way-finding signage direct river users to the improved access.

RiverUp! staff and project consultant SmithGroupJJR worked with the City of Ann Arbor liveries manager and parks planner to design and implement the project. Island Park is situated along the popular Argo to Gallup paddle trip. Michigan Hardscape LLC served as the construction contractor. This project was made possible through the generous support of Marguerite Smith, and the initial investment by City of Ann Arbor to leverage other donations.

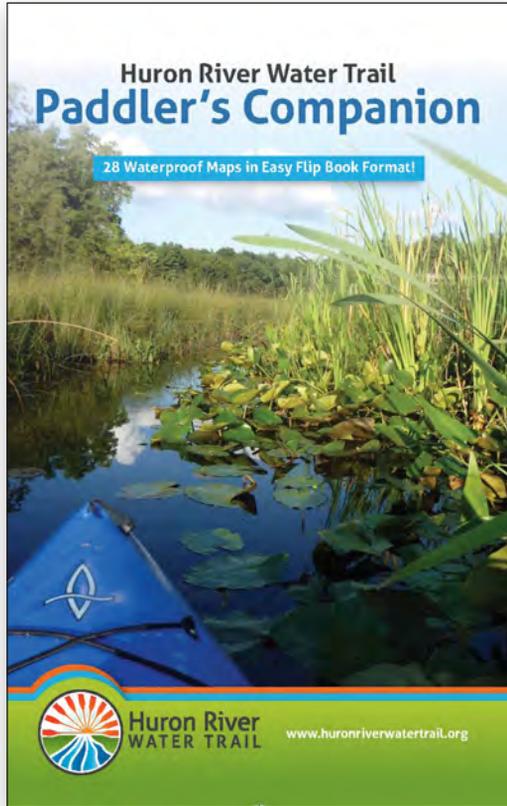
The Vision of the Huron River Water Trail:

The Huron River Water Trail reconnects individuals, families, and communities to the river and to the river's recreational, economic, ecological, historic, and cultural values. The water trail is a focal point for recreational activities while boosting local economies and adding a richness and breadth to historical and cultural events along the river.

Partner-led Projects

RiverUp! partners the City of Ann Arbor and the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) each completed several important "FixUp!" projects under their jurisdiction. Ann Arbor unveiled an expanded and improved Gallup livery in spring 2013 with an all-abilities launch, expanded docks for canoes and kayaks, and improved access for livery vans using pervious pavers to improve stormwater runoff conditions. The City also debuted the Argo Cascades for its first full season in 2012 where kayakers try the drop pools in the old mill race of the Argo Dam. This riverside attraction has drawn returning river users and many new users who enjoy kayaking and tubing. A canoe portage was added that circumvents the Cascades, as the design of the pools does not allow canoe passage.

HCMA improved fishing access and non-motorized boat access at several Metroparks including in Lower Huron Metropark. Water trail signs/maps were installed at several launch sites including Hudson Mills, Delhi, Dexter-Huron, Lower Huron, Willow and Oakwood Metropark. Launch improvements were made to Lower Huron and Willow were made in previous years and the West Delhi launch site in 2013. The Metroparks plan to make improvements to three launch locations at Hudson Mills and Huron Meadows in 2014.



Blueprint for Water Trail Planning and Maintenance

An inventory of water trail infrastructure has been developed to track the condition of access sites, signage, portages, camping spots, lodging, and amenities that include bathrooms, parking, picnic tables, and lockers. While some of the 32 access points and 14 portages need little improvement, others are unsafe or difficult to access. The infrastructure inventory for the Huron River Water Trail (HRWT) is a work in progress and many other projects will be tackled in the next few years. A complete inventory can be requested by contacting eriggs@hrwc.org.

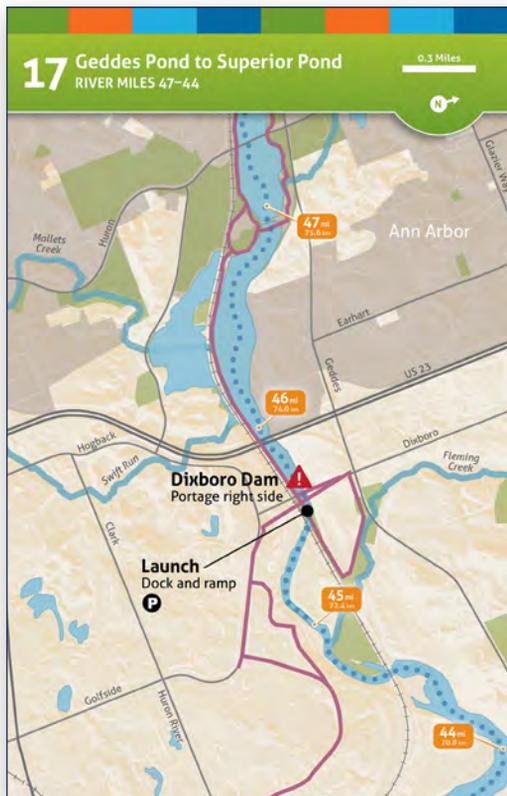
Water Trail Marketing, Outreach and Educational Materials

The Huron River Water Trail brand is growing through a marketing and public outreach and education campaign that presents the Huron River corridor as a premier destination in Michigan and the Great Lakes. Planning a trip on the river has never been easier with the availability of a waterproof map book and the online trip planning tools at www.huronriverwatertrail.org. These information resources are backed by eye-catching way-finding signage along the trail that greets trail users and gives them checkpoints. At dozens of festivals and public events from Lansing to the Detroit River, current and potential trail users are learning about recreation on the Huron River. Finally, ads in target publications and partnerships with Pure Michigan and the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau expand the reach to surrounding states and with new audiences.

Paddler's Companion

The Paddler's Companion, a flipbook of waterproof maps of the Water Trail, debuted in 2013 to terrific response from paddlers, liveries, outfitters, and anyone else who enjoys time on the Huron. This professionally designed guide features:

- 28 Beautiful Color Maps in an Easy Flip Book Format
- Durable, Waterproof Pages with Spiral Ring Binding
- Index Map Pages to All 104 River Miles
- Map Key details Amenities, Hazards, and More
- Trail Facts
- River Etiquette and Safety Information
- Information for Launches, Liveries and Links to other Water Trails
- Distances between Access Points
- QR Code to Access Online Resources



- Stunning Images from Locally Noted Photographers

The Paddler’s Companion is designed to be the essential guide for a trip on the river. It is available for purchase at a dozen Southeast Michigan retail partners, online at www.huronriverwatertrail.org, and at the Watershed Council offices in Ann Arbor.

www.huronriverwatertrail.org

The new online tool offers a nearly complete Water Trail experience . . . minus the water. Are you looking for a lazy float on flat water or a chance to try your whitewater skills? Flat water, flowing river, portages, and other trail features are all mapped with recommended trips to last a few hours to a few days. Investigate the distance, time, level of difficulty, highlights, and more for each recommended trip. The site features

- Clean, user-friendly interactive trip planning maps
- Extensive trail amenities – where to grab a sandwich? where to pitch a tent? what activities are happening in the Trail Towns?
- Real-time weather and stream flow information
- Outfitters with canoe and kayak rentals

The website complements the Paddler’s Companion.

Our Team Grows

RiverUp! has added a Construction Manager and Trail Towns Coordinator to the team. The Trail Towns Coordinator develops and guides teams in each river town composed of local business and community development representatives, Water Trail partners, river recreationists, and recreation outfitters, for communities to market themselves as destinations for trail users.

The Construction Manager is responsible for planning and construction of multiple projects to make river recreation safer and easier at riverside trailheads and at portages.

Our talented and experienced team are up to the task of turning the river communities to face and embrace the river.

Up Next

RiverUp! has been working with the planning, architecture, and engineering consultants at SmithGroupJJR, Ann Arbor, and community partners to complete designs for renovations of dam portages on the Huron River, as well as improving access points to the Water Trail. Projects shown as “In Process” indicate that site designs have been conceived and local approvals secured while projects shown as “Planning” indicate site designs and costs are forthcoming



THESE TRAIL MARKERS APPEAR AT ACCESS POINTS AND AT SELECT ROAD CROSSINGS FROM PROUD LAKE RECREATION AREA TO LAKE ERIE. DISTANCES ARE MARKED IN MILES AND KILOMETERS SHOWING THE DISTANCE FROM LAKE ERIE, WHERE THE HURON RIVER FLOWS INTO THE GREAT LAKE.

Water Trail Renovations

Portage Improvements at Barton Dam, City of Ann Arbor – In Process

Paddlers will be thrilled by the installation of a metal boat slide on which they can place canoes and kayaks and walk alongside them while portaging this dam. The steep slope of the portage will be circumvented with the guide rails of the boat slide that can be used in either direction. Way-finding signage bearing the Water Trail logo and project sponsors is part of the project, as well. Partner: City of Ann Arbor; Post Family Foundation.

Portage Improvements at Flat Rock Dam, City of Flat Rock – In Process

This notoriously difficult portage has been reviewed several times in recent history to find better access for paddlers than the current path through locked gates at Flat Rock Metals. A site review sponsored by RiverUp! identified options on river left and river right with an eye toward resolving access and safety at this most downstream dam. With funding from RiverUp!, drawings for the river right portage option were presented to the City of Flat Rock, Flat Rock Metals (the landowner), and other stakeholders. Partners: City of Flat Rock; Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority; Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative; Flat Rock Metals.



Photo by HRWC

SHELTERED LAUNCH AT SUPERIOR DAM PORTAGE



Photo by HRWC

SUPERIOR DAM PORTAGE LAUNCH COMPLETED



Photo by HRWC

ISLAND PARK IMPROVEMENT FOR CANOE AND KAYAK ACCESS

Portage Improvements at Flook Dam, Dexter Township – Planning

This previously well-designed and maintained portage needs attention. A timber staircase and landing are in disrepair and the rocky landing is difficult for canoes and kayaks to access. Hazards such as old roller system for canoes, a pile of limestone rock at the put-in, and potentially hazardous water currents make this site challenging and unsafe. The RiverUp! team is working with the dam owner to review the current conditions and make a plan for renovations. Partner: Washtenaw County.

Portage Improvements at Ford Lake Dam and Powerhouse, Ypsilanti Township – In Process

The Ford Lake Dam and powerhouse were built in the 1930s by Henry Ford to supply electricity to the Ypsilanti Ford Motor Plant for the purpose of manufacturing automobile parts. In 1969, the Ford Motor Company transferred the dam and powerhouse along with about 1,000 acres of land to the City and Township of Ypsilanti. Ownership of the property remains with the Township and it currently manages the property, including the dam and powerhouse, which are National Historic Landmarks.

A site review of this location shows that the current portage needs renovations in order to make it safer and easier to use. Designs are complete for a new current portage located on the north side of the river. Upon evaluation of the site, the preferred alternative for the renovated portage entails creating a landing on the north bank with an improved footpath in the County Road right-of-way that connects to North Hydro Park, and a creating a launch to the river in the park. Partners: Ypsilanti Charter Township and Washtenaw County Road Commission.

Portage Improvements at French Landing Dam, Van Buren Township - Planning

A site review of this location shows that the current portage (river right) is difficult, not well-marked and exposes paddlers to unsafe current. Options for moving the portage to river left are being pursued with the local government and private property owners. Moving the portage would take advantage of the local park where a take-out is in place, along with services such as parking, bathrooms, and picnic tables. Access to private property is being considered. Partners: Van Buren Charter Township, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.

Canoe and Kayak Launch Improvement at Frog Island, Ypsilanti – Planning

RiverUp! has developed a concept plan with local partners to provide an easy access point to the Huron River and a convenient place to take a break while paddling. Commercial and cultural destinations are within a short walk of this 5-acre park. The concept plan envisions a gently sloped, gravel river access that can accommodate multiple boats, ADA access, and improved parking. Improvements would include demolition of the existing concrete wall and steps at the river to improve views to and from the area. Partner: City of Ypsilanti.

Portage Improvements at Peninsular Paper Dam, Ypsilanti – In Process

The park features a 5-acre wooded area on the eastern shore of the Huron River, west of LeForge Road that anchors the northern end of Ypsilanti's riverfront park system. The dam provided power to the Peninsular Paper company which was built on the south side of the river in 1867. The shell of the generator house remains as an architectural element on the north side of the river in the park.

This site needs a safer, well-marked portage for paddlers to portage the dam and to prevent additional bank erosion. The existing take-out is a floating platform that is in disrepair and requires full replacement. A poorly defined path leads paddlers down the portage to steps and landing that are in disrepair. Moreover, the site lacks any information or education signage about the river, the community or the heritage of the area. This renovation provides for a new prefabricated floating platform, a mulch path to the downstream launch, and RiverUp!/Water Trail signage. Warning signage about the dam and safety buoys also will be included for the put-in area. Partner: City of Ypsilanti

Marketing, Public Outreach, and Educational Materials

Our future work continues the marketing, public outreach and educational materials that has been started and builds upon it with the following activities:

Install consistent dam safety measures such as floating buoys upstream and downstream of Huron River dams, and signage that describes the flow conditions above and below dams. This information will be used on the Water Trail website and in other publications.

Updates to www.huronriverwatertrail.org with river trip video and dam portage how-to short films

Second edition and printing of the **Paddler's Companion**

A stand-alone booth for the Huron River Water Trail for use at the dozens of festivals, events, fairs, and symposia attended by the RiverUp! team, Water Trail partners and volunteers.

Targeted media relationships and ad placement for local, regional, and broader markets. A marketing consultant will help RiverUp! determine the most effective ways to spend our limited resources and bring people to the river for memorable and life-enhancing experiences.



FORD LAKE DAM PORTAGE

Photo by HRWC



ALL ABILITIES ACCESS AT GALLUP PARK

Photo courtesy of City of Ann Arbor



COMMUNITY LEADERS LEARN ABOUT PORTAGE UPGRADES AT SUPERIOR DAM

Photo by HRWC



Photo by Marc Akemann

BUILDUP!

TURNING OUR COMMUNITIES TO FACE THE RIVER

In order to transform the Huron River corridor into a destination, communities along the river need to face toward the riverfront and not away from it. It's imperative that public and private institutions physically face the Huron and make it an essential part of the community. One way of achieving this vision is to develop the Huron River corridor into the Huron River Water Trail (see FixUp! section). Imagine spending several days staying at B & Bs, dining at waterfront restaurants, visiting local museums and attending music festivals and art fairs. When combined with a robust higher education environment, including a world-class university, the rich talent pool it attracts could be a powerful stimulus to our regional economy.

Our Goal: The Huron River is the "Main Street" of our river towns where residents and visitors recreate, live, gather, commute, do business, and treasure their riverfront locations.

Accomplishments

RiverUp! is part of a community movement to embrace and celebrate the assets of the Huron River for the benefit of local economies and residents, and conservation of our shared natural heritage. This renaissance for the river builds on exciting riverfront projects underway by our partners who are improving and creating recreation opportunities for residents and tourists. There's lots going on!

It Pays to RiverUp!

What is the current impact of the river to local economies? And how much can we expect that impact to increase if RiverUp! is fully implemented? We are closer to answering those questions with research and analysis conducted by Washtenaw County, Office of Economic and Community Development. Their "Huron River Water Trail Economic Impact Analysis" prepared for the Huron River Watershed Council and RiverUp! shows that investing in freshwater resources pays.

An excerpt from the report's Executive Summary highlights the key points:

Using a 2006 economic impact study prepared for the Outdoor Industry Foundation and a 2009 Michigan State University use study of the Border-to-Border Trail (B2B) in Washtenaw County, this report offers a rough estimate of 103,000 annual visitors to the Huron River Water Trail, which translates to almost \$50 million in regional economic growth. Through multiple access points in high density population centers, Washtenaw County currently realizes the majority of the river's recreation economy, generating \$33 million in revenue.

As the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) and other partners driving the vision of a vibrant Huron River look to maximize their efforts, this report recommends that they continue to develop the regional outdoor recreation tourism infrastructure. Rather than creating new markets, the Huron River Water Trail can better benefit existing businesses by presenting them with an opportunity to provide additional food, lodging, and outfitting services to paddlers drawn to the area from as far away as Fort Wayne, Indiana and Akron, Ohio.

Refining the analysis and expanding it to the economies of Oakland, Livingston, Monroe, and Wayne counties are the next steps. Contact eriggs@hrwc.org for the full report.

Building Trail Towns

What is a Trail Town?

A Trail Town is a destination along the Huron River Water Trail. Trail users can venture off the trail to enjoy the scenery, services, and heritage of a community with its own character and charm. It is a place where trail users can find amenities such as restaurants and shops. Just as hiking trails connect people to the land, Water Trails help people discover rivers, connecting urban and rural communities with the outdoors.



Photo by Marc Akemann

DEXTER MILL CREEK PARK BOARDWALK

Our objective -- The five largest river communities embrace their position as river towns by incorporating river-based recreation and economies in their vision and planning documents, DDAs, budgets, and otherwise integrated into the communities.

- Village of Milford, Oakland County
- Village of Dexter, Washtenaw County
- City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
- City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County
- City of Flat Rock, Wayne County

In addition to these five communities, RiverUp! is supporting smaller communities that are ready to engage in the Trail Town process.

The RiverUp! is engaging the communities in the following elements of the Trail Towns process:

- Develop a Trail Town team consisting of community leaders. Establish consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among various groups that have a stake in the local trail system and the downtown.
- Develop strategies and recommendations for new ideas and spark discussions on how to better utilize the HRWT to expand on and complement existing efforts
- Develop a resource strategy to implement Trail Towns
- River stewardship events/opportunities to build citizen engagement

The Huron River is on the vanguard of promoting Trail Town development in Michigan, and in the Great Lakes. So far, the response from the communities has been very enthusiastic!

Automotive Heritage Trail District

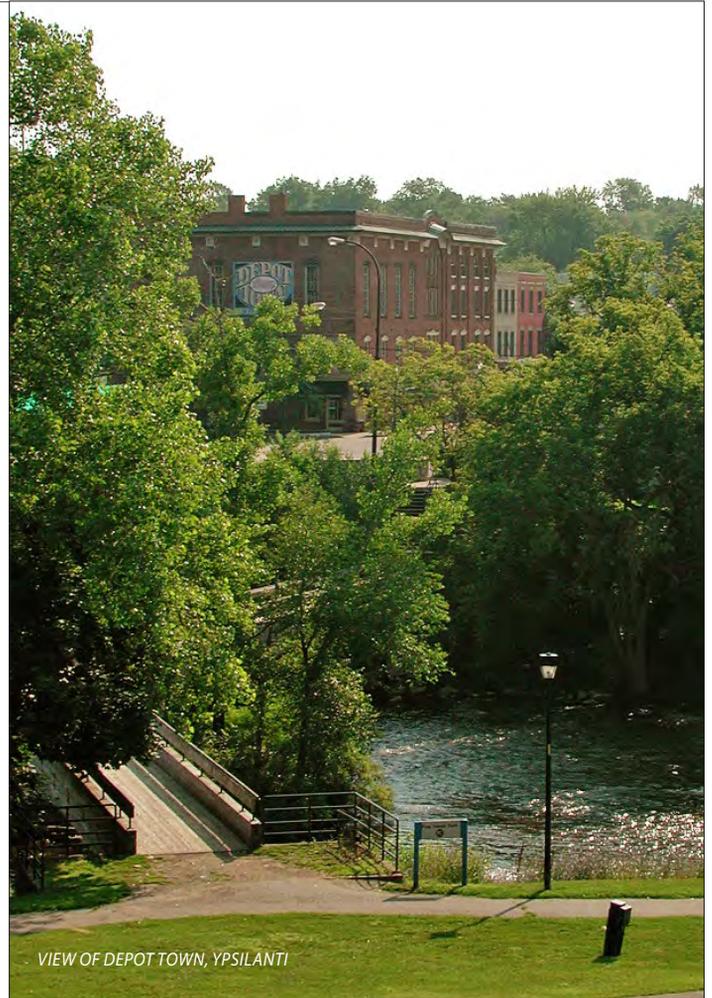
Branding opportunities exist for each section of the Huron River Water Trail with themes that may be drawn from natural features, cultural heritage, or other place-based aspects. The section of the river through Ypsilanti provides the opportunity to improve awareness of and access to historical automotive sites and the labor movement associated with the era of auto production. RiverUp! facilitated local stakeholders in creation of the master plan for this district.

Henry Ford's Village Industry concept was realized along the Huron River in the 1930s upon completion of dam projects such as the Ford Lake Dam and Powerhouse that required flooding of the river to form Ford Lake. The landscape and the surrounding communities were forever changed. Using hydropower produced at the dam, automobile manufacturing factories sprang up along the lake and the Huron River in the City of Ypsilanti to meet Americans' growing demand for automobiles.

Goals of the District and Master Plan are the following:

1. Improve awareness of and access to historic automotive sites and the role of labor movement – identify sites and develop an interpretive program
2. Enhance recreational tourism via Border to Border Trail and Huron River Water Trail – enhance visibility and stimulate interest in the regional resources
3. Transform the river into a destination – develop content and a promotional message
4. Provide safe canoe and kayak access/portages – evaluated existing and proposed canoe/kayak facilities
5. Community development through Trail Towns to realize the economic potential of trails to stimulate local economies.

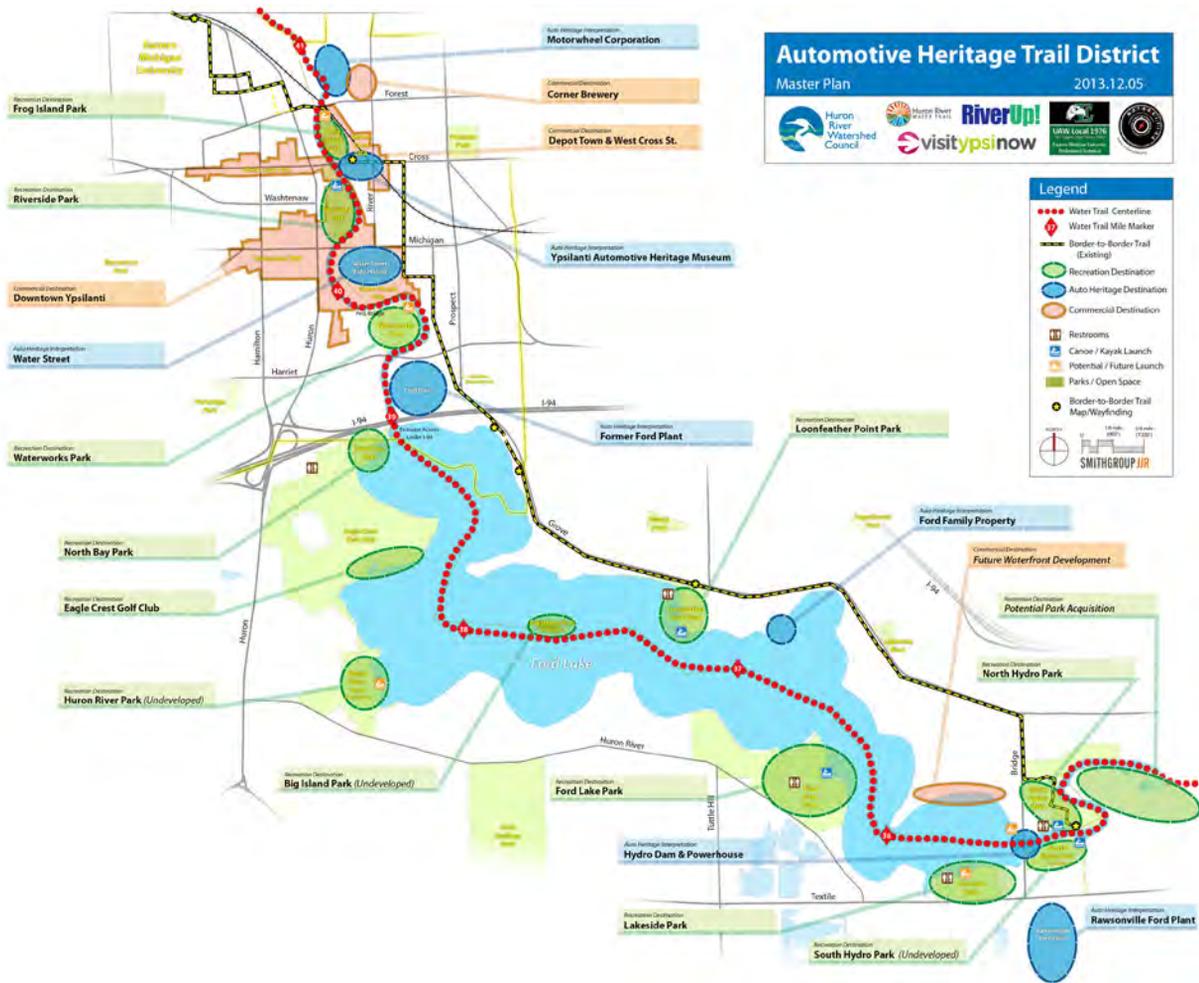
The focus of the Master Plan is on trail users of the Water Trail and the Border-to-Border Trail. RiverUp! and SmithGroupJJR facilitated the stakeholders and produced the Master Plan for the Automotive Heritage Trail District in Ypsilanti. The report describes the primary automotive, recreational, and commercial destinations within the limits of the trail district as identified through collaborations with numerous stakeholders. The stakeholders were the City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti DDA, Ypsilanti Area CVB, Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, MotorCities National Heritage Area, the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum, Eastern Michigan University/UAW 1976, and representatives from the offices of Congressman John Dingell (MI-12), State Senator Rebekah Warren and State Representative David Rutledge.



Connecting Blueways and Greenways

All along the Huron, river towns are investing in parks that touch the river. The park improvements demonstrate our region's commitment to connecting residents and visitors to the river and maintaining green infrastructure that offers unique recreation opportunities and protects river health. The map on page 7 shows the many park improvements happening or slated for the near future.

Downtown Development Authorities of in Milford, Dexter, and Flat Rock stated their commitment to making the river a featured highlight of their plans and through serving as keystone communities for the Huron River Water Trail. In Dexter, the community is building on the 2008 reconnection of Mill Creek to the Huron River from the removal of the Mill Pond dam; the creation of Dexter's "central park" at Mill Creek Park will serve as a popular gateway to the village for both residents and tourists. Natural and man-made whitewater features in Dexter and Ann Arbor, respectively, are bringing kayakers to the Huron River from all over the Lower Peninsula and Northwest Ohio. Finally, the post-cleanup vision for the former coal gasification property in Ann Arbor includes a public park with paddling access and a riverfront restaurant.



Up Next

A good deal of our future work in this area will be focused on facilitating Trail Towns development and coordination across the target communities. Specific tasks are as follows:

- Develop trail business ambassadors with existing businesses
- Identify new business potential
- Identify projects needing funding and develop grant proposals
- Track progress of Water Trail development
- Demonstrate trail elements in Flat Rock such as complete way-finding signage, lockers for canoes and kayaks

Implementing the priority actions of the Master Plan for the Automotive Heritage Trail District will be another focus. The Master Plan documents seven auto heritage, four commercial, and 14 recreational destinations within the limits of the Automotive Heritage Trail District. The priority action items identified by the stakeholders are the following:

Complete site designs for improved Huron River Water Trail access at two locations

Fill in the gaps in the non-motorized trail on the north side of Ford Lake

Develop content/images and advance a grant application for five interpretive signs that match the existing MotorCities signs

Develop a marketing brochure that can be distributed throughout the convention and visitors bureau network

Bringing more paddlers and other river enthusiasts to the Huron River via the Water Trail is expected to generate positive economic impacts for river communities. Participation in paddlesports is growing according to the Outdoor Recreation Industry. Great Lakes residents comprise 20.5% of canoeists and 14% of kayakers. The Huron River already is one of the most popular rivers in Michigan for paddling and home to the largest livery in the state, Ann Arbor. Spending for equipment, restaurants and lodging is typical as paddlers take advantage of day or overnight trips. Case studies in Wisconsin and Michigan show local businesses benefit from water trails, with paddlers spending over \$1.2 million on one river in rural southwest Wisconsin alone.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

From its launch to today, RiverUp!
is generating buzz for the river
and its communities.

Pure Michigan, RiverUp! Style

The people, projects, and spirit of RiverUp! have been featured on television, radio, in photo essay, and in print and digital media. Through partnerships with Convention and Visitors Bureaus, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Pure Michigan campaign, and other business and tourism interests, the buzz is growing and reaching new audiences in Michigan and farther afield. Here's just a sample of what others are saying about this renaissance for the Huron River.

Blueways and Greenways:

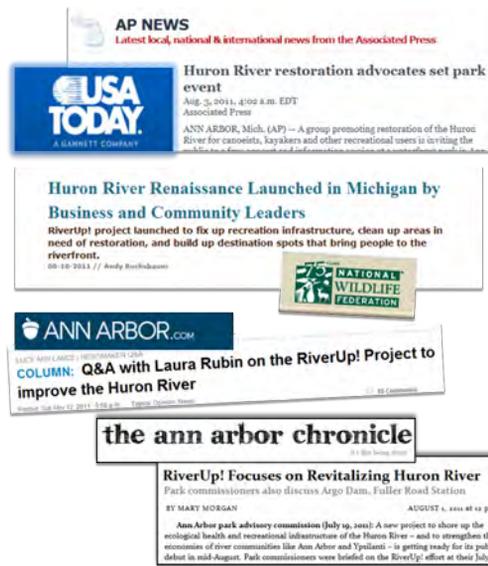
concentrate media has featured RiverUp! multiple times through their speakers' series, a photo essay, feature article on the Huron River Water Trail, and in blogs. Tom Woiwode, director of the Greenways Initiative for the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan and a supporter of RiverUp!, blogged on RiverUp! and its unique take on making this region a part of the blue economy.

The Blue Economy on Public Radio's "Stateside":

John Austin is director of the Michigan Economic Center, in affiliation with the Prima Civitas Foundation, and a supporter of RiverUp!. He spoke with Michigan Public Radio's Cynthia Canty about his desire to get us all thinking about the "blue economy," the one that is based on the Great Lakes and water-related industry.

Crain's Detroit Business:

The feature "All About Water: Michigan's Blue Economy" highlighted efforts in Southeastern Michigan to maximize waterways for community development including RiverUp! in the blog on Placemaking H2O: Building a Sense of Place with Southeast Michigan's Water Assets.



Ready for Our Close-up:

In partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Huron River Water Trail was featured on "New Day Cleveland", a daytime program of Fox 8 Cleveland, as part of the "Road Trip: Ann Arbor" show.

Up Next

Moving forward, we strive to keep the positive attention coming by marketing to customers, investors, new businesses, and visitors with a RiverUp! promotion strategy. In addition, we'll seek to forge the positive image of RiverUp! through ads, retail promotions, special events, and a marketing campaign featuring three short films that capture RiverUp!. We'll continue to develop and build upon relationships with CVBs, DDAs, and the Pure Michigan campaign of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Furthermore, our program staff will present at regional, statewide, and national conferences to share and support high visibility events and promotions in the Trail Towns. And, finally, RiverUp! seeks designation from the National Park Service as a National Water Trail, which would bring more resources and a higher profile to our efforts.

Acknowledgements

We have the good fortune to live in splendid communities. Ann Arbor and its environs are abundant with natural amenities of breathtaking beauty—none more so than the Huron River, the jewel in nature’s crown that runs through our very backyards. Yet we stand at a critical point in the life of this incredible resource. We can be indifferent, taking for granted that a healthy Huron will always be there, meandering along its hundred-mile length through five counties. Or we can seize the opportunity to ensure that the Huron River is ready to enjoy today, for our grandchildren and beyond. Call it our river renaissance.

We acknowledge the following individuals and organizations that have answered the call to RiverUp!:

Supporters

Organizations

Ann Arbor State Bank
The Austin Memorial Foundation*
Buhr Foundation
Chelsea State Bank
Comerica Bank
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Excelda Manufacturing, Inc.
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HOW CAN YOU HELP?

THE ANN ARBOR YMCA YOUTH VOLUNTEER CORPS
HELPED CLEAN UP ON THE HURON RIVER WATER TRAIL

RiverUp! will not happen overnight. We have no illusions about the breadth and scope of this endeavor. 17th century angler Isaac Walton wrote, "Rivers are made for wise people to contemplate and for fools to pass without consideration." Let us be wise in our stewardship of this precious resource. Please join us in this effort, and help carry toward fruition a project vital to us all.

Financial support for future project planning and implementation, branding and marketing, and related events will be valuable to the success of RiverUp!.

Many hands are needed to turn around a river and its communities. Get involved with RiverUp! through one of the volunteer opportunities

Contact RiverUp! Manager Elizabeth Riggs, eriggs@hrwc.org, 734.769.5123 x608 to discuss project needs and your interests. Donations also can be made online at www.riveruphuron.org or www.huronriverwatertrail.org.



Photo courtesy of HCMA

THE HURON RIVER IS A POPULAR DESTINATION FOR RECREATIONAL ANGLERS

VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN STREAMBANK STABILIZATION ALONG THE RIVER (FORD LAKE) IN YPSILANTI

RiverUp! is coordinated by the Huron River Watershed Council, the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Office, and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters.





Huron River by Barbara Eckstein

In 1965 the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) was formed and has been working creatively and cooperatively to tackle a wide variety of issues facing the basin. HRWC was instrumental in the passage of several of Michigan’s wetland and water quality protection statutes, and in passage of State Natural River designation for the Huron. Today, HRWC runs the State’s premier volunteer monitoring program, implements an award-winning mass-media watershed education strategy, reduces pollution new and old, and directs numerous watershed management plans for protection and restoration efforts.

HRWC is partnering with the National Wildlife Federation’s Great Lakes Office, and Michigan League of Conservation Voters, and the Wolfpack to spark a river renaissance, known as RiverUp! **RiverUp! is a plan for the Huron River’s future--a strategy to realize the goal of a vibrant, robust and fully restored river – a destination for residents and tourists.**

