

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Review of the Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan Sought by the Trustees for the 2002 Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill

The natural resource trustees for the 2002 Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill have announced the availability of their Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for public review and comment. The trustees request input from the public regarding their assessment of damages and proposed projects to compensate the public for lost resources and services resulting from the spill.

The trustees for the 2002 Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Department of the Attorney General. The trustees are acting on behalf of the public to plan and implement actions to restore, rehabilitate, replace or acquire the equivalent of the affected natural resources injured by the Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill.

On April 9 and April 12, 2002, a mixture of diesel fuel and used motor oil was discharged from the Baby Creek Outfall into the Rouge River near Dearborn, Michigan. These discharges resulted in the release of an estimated 322,820 gallons of the oil mixture. Oil was observed along three miles of the Rouge River, extending from the Dix Street Bridge to the Detroit River and along 17 miles of the Detroit River from its confluence with the Rouge River to western Lake Erie. The spill caused substantial impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitats. Federal and state authorities conducted extensive investigations, but were unable to identify and charge the person or company responsible for the spill. Upon finalization of the Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan, the trustees will request funding for the proposed restoration from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, which is managed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The trustees have proposed four projects to compensate the public for resources injured during the spill. The proposed projects are:

- ***Humbug Marsh Wetland Restoration / Monguagon Creek Habitat Improvements***
- ***Gibraltar Marsh Wetland Restoration***
- ***Lake Erie Metropark Great Lakes Marsh Restoration***
- ***Pointe Mouillee Wetland Restoration***

These projects will result in habitat improvements on over 1,400 acres of wetland marsh habitats within the Detroit River watershed. In addition, the trustees have proposed a 30-year period of project implementation and maintenance to ensure these projects achieve durable benefit.

The trustees are asking for public comment on the Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for the 2002 Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill. Comments may be submitted in writing or via e-mail to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the 30-day public comment period. The trustees will consider public comments in preparing and issuing a final Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for the 2002 Rouge River Mystery Oil Spill.

The Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan is available on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/es/ec/nrda/RougeRiver>.

Paper copies of the Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan are available by request.

Comment regarding the Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan may be submitted electronically or by mail directed to the contact noted below. Comments should be submitted no later than November 6, 2015.

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