



Planning for the future of the lower Huron River

- The Huron River is the cleanest urban river in Michigan, and the only one in southeast Michigan to qualify as a State Scenic River
- Altered hydrology, sediment, and excess nutrients are the priority pollutants in the Huron River Watershed, including the lower Huron
- Individuals' actions make a significant difference in water quality



Where is the lower Huron River?

The lower Huron River begins at the French Landing Dam on Belleville Lake and flows for nearly 29 miles before entering western Lake Erie and the Great Lakes Basin. The lower Huron River and the land that drains to it is part of the 908-square-mile Huron River Watershed that spans portions of 7 counties in southeast Michigan. Add up of the all the land that drains into the same waterway and you have a *watershed*. Seventy-four square miles encompassing 14 communities in Wayne and Monroe counties drain to the lower Huron River and its tributary streams (map on back).

See the Plan at
www.lowerhuronriver.net



How can we plan for the River's future?

The *Lower Huron River Watershed Management Plan* (the Plan) lays the groundwork for a comprehensive, long-term effort to restore and protect the lower Huron River system. The Plan describes current conditions of natural resources and land use impacts, explores existing and future threats to the river system, and prescribes actions for its protection and restoration. **Bottom line: it is considerably more economical to prevent pollution than to clean-up pollution.**

Who formed the Watershed Plan?

A group of communities and agencies, under the guidance of the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC), developed the Plan as part of an effort to meet federal Clean Water Act regulations to obtain permits for sending polluted stormwater to lakes, rivers, and other surface waters. The Plan was completed in

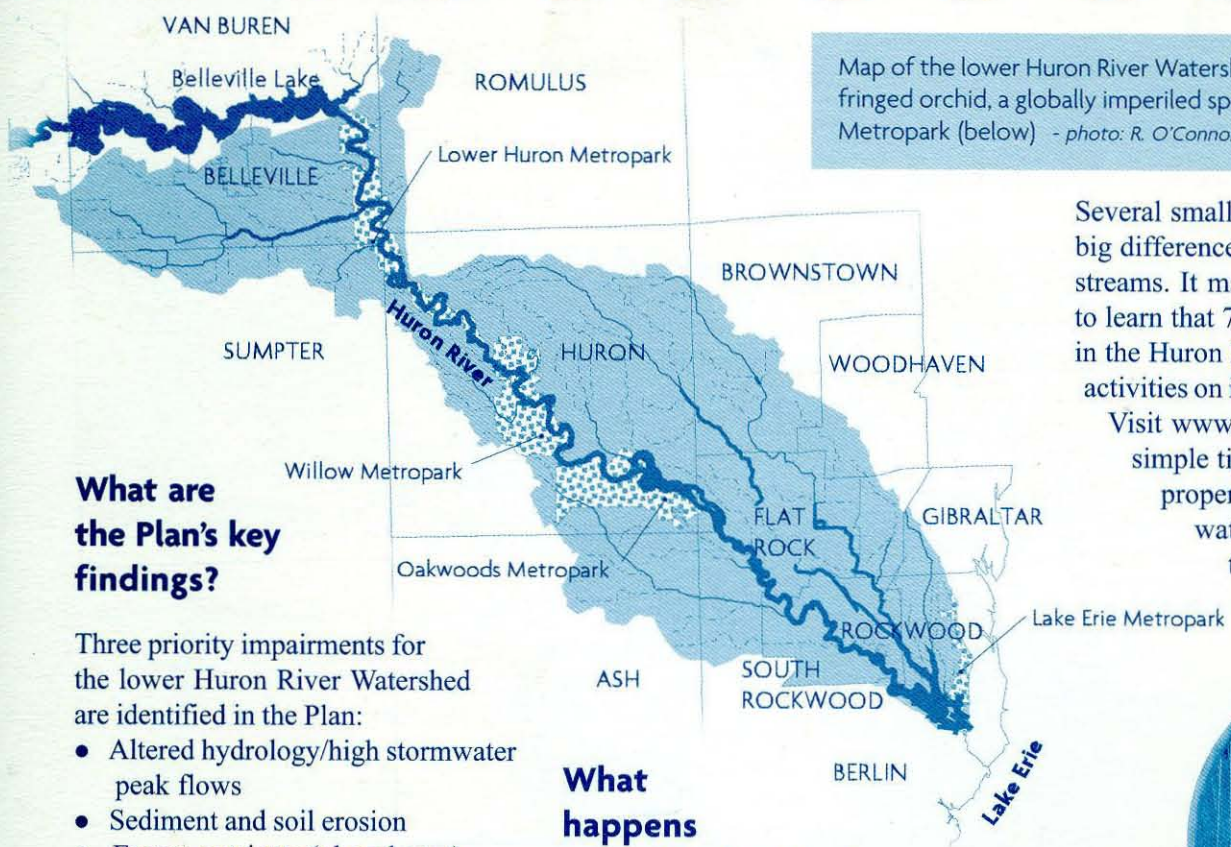
November, 2005 following a two-year planning process.

The following entities comprise the core members of the Lower Huron River Inter-Municipality Committee, which was responsible for the Plan's development:

- Charter Township of Berlin
- Charter Township of Brownstown
- City of Flat Rock
- City of Gibraltar
- Huron Township
- City of Rockwood
- City of Romulus
- Village of South Rockwood
- Sumpter Township
- Charter Township of Van Buren
- Charter County of Wayne
- City of Woodhaven
- Woodhaven-Brownstown School District

Other agencies in the watershed, as well as concerned residents, also participated in the planning process and their continued involvement is critical to the Plan's success.





Map of the lower Huron River Watershed (left); Eastern prairie-fringed orchid, a globally imperiled species, occurs at Lake Erie Metropark (below) - photo: R. O'Connor

What are the Plan's key findings?

- Three priority impairments for the lower Huron River Watershed are identified in the Plan:
- Altered hydrology/high stormwater peak flows
 - Sediment and soil erosion
 - Excess nutrients (phosphorus)

These impairments are forms of *nonpoint source pollution* (nonpoint source pollution is any form of pollution that cannot be traced back to a specific point or location). According to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency, nonpoint source pollution is the #1 cause of water pollution in the United States today; home sites, parking lots, septic systems, schools, roads, farms, and commercial areas all are nonpoint sources of pollution. As the watershed's natural areas and open spaces are replaced by new development, nonpoint source pollution becomes an increasingly larger threat to our waterways.

Sources and causes of these priority pollutants, as well as the rest of the pollutants in the watershed, are presented in the Plan. Goals and objectives are proposed to guide and assess the success of putting the Plan into action. Costs for implementing protective and restorative measures are estimated in the Plan, too.

What happens now with the Plan?

Actions for meeting the watershed goals are provided as a menu of best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs range from managerial practices (e.g., new/revised ordinances, studies/data collection, or public education programs) to structural practices (e.g., detention ponds and porous pavement) to vegetative practices (e.g., vegetated riparian buffers). The Plan shows which BMPs each community or agency has determined to implement either in the short-term (< 5 years) or long-term (> 5 years) based on cost, acceptability, and sustainability.

How can I help the lower Huron River?

The lower Huron River needs you! As a resident, you have many opportunities to act on behalf of your community's waterways. It takes informed citizens to understand how to preserve and enhance the living legacy of our waterways. It also takes informed citizens to support using local dollars to implement the plan.

Several small actions can make a big difference for the river and its streams. It may come as a surprise to learn that 75% of the pollutants in the Huron River are due to the activities on individual home sites. Visit www.hrwc.org to learn simple tips on proper car care, proper lawn care, on-site water retention, and how to reduce home toxics.



Interested in finding other river-minded people who share your interest in helping the Huron?
 Know of areas along the River or streams needing restoration?
 Want to know who's your community contact for implementing the Plan?

For more information . . .



Protecting the river since 1965

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