Rouge River Water Trail

25 miles along Lower Rouge from Canton to the Detroit River
Welcome to Friends of the Rouge

Located in Southeast Michigan, the Rouge River watershed is the most urbanized watershed in the state, home to more than 1.35 million people in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Friends of the Rouge has been working to promote restoration and stewardship of the Rouge River watershed for 30 years. We invite you to join us and get involved in our programs and projects.

Our Work

- Rouge Rescue
- River Restoration
- Rouge Education Project
- Volunteer Monitoring
- Bug Hunts
- Frog & Toad Survey
- Fish Monitoring
- Rouge River Water Trail
Rouge River Water Trail

- Friends of Rouge River
- Wayne County Parks
- Michigan Dept. Environmental Quality
- City of Wayne
- City of Dearborn
- City of Canton
- Detroit Parks and Recreation
- Detroit Heritage River Water Trail
- Heavner Canoe Rental
- Riverside Kayak Connection
- National Park Service
- And others……..
Enjoy your paddle!

This publication is provided only as a general guide. It is a graphic rendition of what paddlers might experience on the Rouge River. Conditions on the river are subject to constant change. Do not rely on this guide as a navigational tool or to identify all hazards. Paddle times depicted on featured trip maps are approximate and can vary based on skill level, energy level and weather conditions. Remember that kayaking and canoeing have inherent risks and you are solely responsible for your own safety.

The majority of the Lower branch of the Rouge River shown on this map is public land, owned and managed by Wayne County Parks and other municipalities.

For more information, please visit: www.therouge.org

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Friends of the Rouge
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

wayne county parks
The Industrial Rouge
Melvindale to River Rouge

This route highlights the unique industrial history of the Rouge River. See the massive Ford Rouge Center (Ford Rouge Plant), pass under multiple suspension bridges, glimpse diverse wildlife and possibly pass a freighter or two. The two hour trip begins at the Riverfront Park浆boat launch in Melvindale and ends on the Detroit River at the Belanger Park Boat Launch in the City of River Rouge. Sea kayaks are recommended due to wind and open water. Hazards include freighters, boat traffic, poor water quality and limited take-out sites due to industrial operations and armored banks. Riverwalk Kayak Connection offers an annual trip in partnership with Friends of the Rouge every September and run some trips by appointment.

Wayne Paddle
Commerce Court to Groy Park

The Lower Branch route highlights the Rustopia forests protected within Wayne County Parkland. Towering cottonwoods and cedars greet you as you maneuver the narrow river, flanks of the Rouge volunteers keep out stretch of river open to removing log jams and fallen trees. Great blue herons and wood ducks are plentiful and you may glimpse an occasional mink or deer. The two hour trip starts behind 3900 Commerce Court off Michigan Avenue and ends at County Park in downtown Wayne. Hazards include occasional log jams or fallen trees, and shallow spots, especially during low water. Canoe and kayak rentals and shuttle service can be arranged with Heberman Canoe Rental. Paddlers can find dining, shopping or other entertainment within walking distance in Wayne. The Michigan Avenue SMART bus can be used as a shuttle.

Dearborn Paddle
In and around Ford Field

Ford Field in Dearborn offers an area launch into the river that connects to the lower branch. Paddlers can head out into the Lower branch and paddle upstream and back. Headind downstream is a little more adventurous. A stretch of fast moving, shallow water starting at the covered bridge is manageable but must be walked on the return. The river is wooded and natural. Work is being done to open log jams for paddling to the confluence with the Main branch where one can paddle up to the Historic Ford Estate waterfall or down along the concrete channel. Hazards include log jams and the waterfall. Canoe and kayak rentals and shuttle service can be arranged with Heberman Canoe Rental. Paddlers looking to combine their trip with dining, shopping or other entertainment will find Dearborn to be easily walkable, or can use the Michigan Avenue SMART bus as a shuttle.
Rouge River Water Trail

Rouge Kayak Tour

When: Sat, September 17, 9am – 12pm
Where: Belanger Park Dr, River Rouge, MI 48218, United States (map)

Description: Kayak with FOTR and Riverside Kayak Connection from Melvindale to Belanger Park and see how the production of the automobile impacted the Rouge River. Contact RKC to sign up early as this fills up quickly 734-285-2925, $50 kayak rental, $30 shuttle, both include lunch. Meet shuttle at Belanger Park at 9am to leave cars there; drop off boats prior at Melvindale.http://www.riversidekayak.com/industrial-rouge-tour.html