

Rouge 'friends' gird for big cleanup

By Teri Benes
staff writer

Facing a two-month deadline, the newly formed "Friends of the Rouge River" has already vowed to put the drive toward a June 7 cleanup program into overdrive.

"You are the ones that are going to play a critical role here," said James Murray, member of the state Water Resources Commission. The Rouge group met Thursday night in Livonia.

Washtenaw County's drain commissioner, Murray was one of the 11 directors elected to represent the diverse group of residents from Wayne, Oakland and Washtenaw counties.

A SELF-STYLED citizens advocacy group, Friends of the Rouge in coming weeks will plan a joint cleanup work day and celebration

event for June 7.

In addition, recreational activities will be hosted that afternoon by area parks and recreation departments.

Volunteer efforts will include removing logs and debris, picking up litter, painting and repairing rest stations, docks and bridges, accord-

ing to a staff report from the South Michigan Council of Governments, a participating agency.

The SEMCOG report also advised that cleanup sites for volunteers be carefully selected taking into consideration locations near combined sewer overflow points, where raw

sewage is routed.

RESPONDING TO concerns about health risks from polluted waters, Murray told the group of about 35 Thursday that the Wayne County Health Department has drafted a health advisory report. He said the

department assured organizers that "the river is not that dangerous if you don't breathe it in or swallow it."

"It was encouraging to us," Murray added. "The risks are very minor. As long as you follow prudent health practices, there should be no risk at all."

That means people with an open wound or cut should avoid water contact because of possible bacterial infections.

Overall, added a SEMCOG source, short-term contact with Rouge water should not be hazardous.

ORGANIZERS intend to raise

money for the cleanup effort. They expect to announce tomorrow the inclusion of a major corporate spon-

Murray confirmed last week that the sponsorship has enabled the group to pay for the full-time services of the director of the Rouge River Watershed Council, Bruce Monson, who previously worked 20 hours a week. Other "consulting" services will be made available with the grant money.

Divorce counseling sessions set

The Oakland County Circuit Court is sponsoring a series of family counseling workshops on Mondays 7-9 p.m. April 7-May 5.

The sessions, offered at no charge, take place at the First United Methodist Church, 1589 Maple Road, Birmingham.

Dates and topics are:

• April 7 — "Legal Aspects of

Divorce," presented by attorney Ron Bookholder, remarks by Circuit Judge Robert Anderson.

• April 14 — "Surviving the Break-up" with clinical social worker Russ Rude; Circuit Judge Francis X. O'Brien available for questions.

• April 21 — "Financial Planning Around Divorce" with attorney Hanley Gurwin; Circuit court

administrator Jean Young to answer questions.

• April 28 — Psychologist James Kora on "Children and Divorce — Parents are Forever," Circuit Judge Gene Schnetz to answer questions.

• May 5 — "What the Friend of the Court Can Do For You," by court personnel.

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