

Rare minnow turns up in Rouge

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

A recent survey of the Rouge River found a surprise catch. Joe Derek, Farmington Hills naturalist and two men with the North American Native Fishes Association recently discovered an endangered red side dace. The description of the minnow was confirmed by a University of Michigan zoology professor to be a rare fish that usually doesn't swim this far north. "It means our water quality is pretty good," said Derek. "It's kind of exciting." He said the group and he were surveying the Rouge for fish to see which species to add to the Nature Center aquarium. The fish was photographed, videotaped and put back in the Rouge, Derek said. Because the fish is endangered in Michigan, the fish cannot be permanently captured, Derek said. The minnow is rare in Michigan, but not in warmer states such as Ohio, where it is not considered endangered. Leo S. Long and Bob Muller of the North American Native Fishes Association were on hand to do the survey of the Rouge. "If there's one there's definitely more," Long said. "We only checked a small area." Long said the metro area is the northern limit for the minnow which grows up to 4.5-inches long and has red sides. Its characteristics also



CORRESPONDENT | TIM TURNER

Joe Derek, Farmington Hills naturalist and two men with the North American Native Fishes Association recently discovered this endangered red side dace in the Rouge River in Farmington Hills.



Local and state naturalists used nets to get an idea what's swimming in the Rouge River.

include a pointed nose and large mouth along with gold-colored stripes.

"I think it's possible but we may have seen it around here about 10-12 years ago," said Long.

Environmental coordinator hired by Farmington Hills

BY PAUL R. PACE
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Tracy Slintak grew up traveling the country during summers with her parents, who had the time because they were teachers.

That love of visiting the outdoors grew into her professional life as an adult. Slintak's experience with environmental study and jobs makes her a worthy choice as the city of Farmington Hills' new environmental coordinator.

Keeping the environment from being damaged and protecting citizens' health and well-being is all part of her focus, she said.

The 37-year-old admitted looking out for everything from the West Nile virus to figuring out which method residents should use for lawn care is a heavy responsibility.

"People here in Farmington Hills don't know we have two separate sewer systems," she said. "One is for what goes through your house and the other is in the street and ditches which ends up in the rivers. It doesn't get treated."

She said studies show what most residents do every day is more damaging to the environment than industry.

"Our daily lives have a huge impact on the rivers and lakes," she said.

Slintak brings with her a wealth of environmental knowledge, both through her education and previous work experience. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in ecosystems from Eastern Michigan University and is working toward her master's degree at EMU in geography with a concentration in urban and regional planning.

Prior to working in Farmington Hills, Slintak was employed as the environmental specialist for Troy's engineering department.

Previously, she was an environmental scientist in Hillsborough County in Florida and also worked as a naturalist for the Huron-Clinton Metroparks while attending college.

While Hills city officials are questioning what they can do about homeowners using fertilizers that could damage the waterways, she said mandating lawn care is difficult.

"A lot of people don't read the instructions," she said of spreading fertilizers and pesticides. "They tend to put three to four times the amount they need and the excess washes off (in the rivers and streams)."



ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL | OBSERVER

Farmington Hills new environmentalist, Tracy Slintak, stands in hiking boots and skirt in the Rouge River.

So is the answer mandating how people treat their lawns?

Such an ordinance would be difficult to enforce, Slintak said. A better approach just may be suggested ways to treat lawns with less harmful methods, she said. "It's something we'll be working on."

Either way, the Ypsilanti resident said she's happy to be working in Farmington Hills.

"I think it's a great place to be," she said. "The people here are open to ideas. The homeowners want to protect their property values."

Keeping the natural aesthetic of the community adds to that goal, she said.

"It's up to us to keep (the creeks and rivers) nice and not pass the problem to other communities," she said.

She and her husband, Martin, have two children, Julia, 11 and Kristopher, 6.

Slintak will also act as a liaison between the city and various environmental agencies.

She is chairwoman of the Michigan Storm Water/Floodplain Association and is the first certified floodplain manager in Michigan.

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U of M Grad

The following Farmington/Farmington Hills residents recently earned degrees from the University of

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GAME PLAN SEPTEMBER 19TH - SEPTEMBER 22ND

Thursday September 19	Friday September 20	Saturday September 21
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Ribbon cutting ceremony 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. View the work of Jackie DeCormier, the artist behind the picturesque watercolor that's become the centerpiece of The Village's advertising campaign. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Children's activities throughout the center include moonwalk, sand art, spin art and a tattoo parlor. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Clowns 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Charlie, the singing hot dog man from Tiger Stadium 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Face painting - Magician 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Caricature 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Clown 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Musical entertainment "The Sun Messengers"	11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Charlie, the singing hot dog man from Tiger Stadium Children's activities throughout the center include moonwalk, sand art, spin art and a tattoo parlor. 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Clowns 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Face painting - Magician 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Caricature 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Musical entertainment "Ten Angels" 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Tattoo Artist 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Musical entertainment "Ten Angels"	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Children's activities throughout the center include hand waxing, bead table, candle art, sand art, spin art and a tattoo parlor. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Clowns 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Caricature 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Caricature 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Face painting - Yo Yo demonstrations & contests 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Musical entertainment "Marcus Belgrave Group" 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Charlie, the singing hot dog man from Tiger Stadium 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Musical entertainment "Rochester Symphony Orchestra String Quintet"

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