

Dirty water

Rouge makes state pollution list

By WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

Maybe someday the Rouge River will rank among Michigan's cleanest. But not today.

The Rouge, running through Wayne and Oakland counties, ranks among Michigan's most hazardous sites on a newly-released state Department of Natural Resources list. The ranking puts the Rouge alongside waste dumps, landfills and manufacturing sites in its threat to the environment.

With a pollution index score of 43, the Rouge tied for 22nd place

among 3,296 Michigan sites polluted by toxic waste.

The entire river was ranked out just specific sites.

"It's all pretty polluted," DNR environmental quality analyst Seg Norberg said.

The now-closed G and H Landfill in Shelby Township, near Rochester, tied with the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay as Michigan's most toxic site. Each received a pollution index score of 48.

Differences in point total are "somewhat significant" Norberg said, though they don't necessarily

indicate the level of pollution at each site.

"It could be more of a threat to nearby plant life or there could be a school nearby," he said, indicating how sites were ranked.

The Rouge contains substantial traces of heavy metals, pesticides and PCBs, according to previous DNR evaluations.

Swimming is prohibited throughout the river. All but a few small stretches are also closed for boating and fishing.

The DNR list was issued almost simultaneously with the seventh annual Rouge Rescue, a volunteer effort designed to clear debris from the river.

People remain enthusiastic about restoring the Rouge, said event coordinator Carol Weibe.

"We've had some people attend all seven, while each year we pick up new people as well," she said.

Though industrial discharges were once the primary source of Rouge pollution, experts now list combined sewer overflows as the primary culprit.

Combined sewers are old, out-moded systems that dump storm water and human waste into the river during periods heavy rainfall. They are being eliminated through a \$300 million multi-community sewer replacement project, expected to begin in 1997.

The DNR list shows just how poorly Michigan waterways have been treated.

Portage Creek, near Kalamazoo, Manistiquette River slips, in Schoolcraft County, were also included on the list.

Wayne County's highest ranked site included the Petroleum Specialties plant, Flat Rock and Marathon Refinery Weathering Pit, Detroit.

The Rose Township Dump was the only Oakland site in the top one percent on the list.

All four sites, including the Rouge, ranked in the top one percent.

The list is drafted every November under the 1982 Environmental Response Act.

GOP women host candidates

The Birmingham Republican Women's Club and the Bloomfield Republican Women's Club are sponsoring a "Candidates' Night" beginning at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 17 at Bloomfield Township Hall, 4290 Telegraph Road.

All area candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, state representative, Oakland County ex-

ecutive, sheriff, clerk, treasurer, drain commissioner, county board and township officers are invited to attend.

After coffee, each candidate will give a short speech followed by a question and answer period. All interested voters are invited. Call 626-2654 or 355-5662 for more information.

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It's been proven that the child who reads during the summer months is a better reader when school begins. If you'd like your children to read more or improve their reading skills, tear this page out of your hometown newspaper. Show them Rex and Rita Saurus™, who are challenging them (along with you) to join the Family Reading Challenge 1992.

All they need to do is read at least three books and three newspaper articles between June 15 and August 28 and then discuss them with you, their parent or guardian.

There's no better place to find interesting news than in your hometown newspaper.

If they are in grades one through eight and successfully complete the Family Reading Challenge, they'll receive a "Readers Are Leaders" bumper sticker and qualify for a drawing on September 2, 1992 for either a \$50 shopping spree in the Birmingham or Novi Borders Book Shop or one of twenty-five \$10 gift certificates.

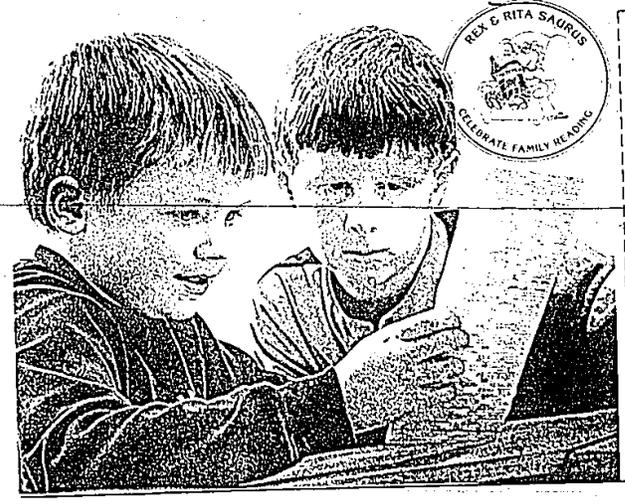
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FAMILY READING CHALLENGE 1992 ENTRY FORM

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1. You must be in grades 1 through 8 to enter.
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