

Grand Marais Gazette

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EPA Habitat Restoration Project

In 1815, the Detroit River shoreline included coastal wetlands up to a mile wide. Since then, shoreline hardening, industrial pollution, combined sewer overflow contamination, and deep shipping channel excavation has destroyed all but a few acres of this former, wildlife-rich environment. This loss of natural habitat resulted in the Detroit River being named an “**Area of Concern**” (AOC) (one of 43) under the **1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement** between the U.S. and Canada.

The **Detroit River AOC** was originally plagued with 11 significantly damaged areas (impairments), the result of 200 years of degradation. Here the “loss of fish and wildlife habitat” and “degradation of fish and wildlife populations” was most notable.

Friends of the Detroit River (FDR) serves as fiduciary for the Detroit River Public Advisory Council (PAC), a group of local stakeholders working to identify remedies to the environmental problems in the river.

In 2014, the PAC published a guidance document to remove fish and wildlife related impairments by implementing 14 habitat restoration projects. The **Detroit Upper Riverfront Parks Restoration**, a **\$6M project** that includes waterways that surround **Mariner and Riverfront-Lakewood East Parks** is the only remaining project. Working with a variety of community partners, a draft habitat restoration plan has been developed and while initially the EPA was going to directly manage the project, it is now on-hold, but hoping to be advanced by FDR which is in negotiations to become the fiduciary and project manager.

Join us on **Tuesday, August 18, 5-8 pm** at the **AB Ford Community Center, 100 Lenox** - to learn more.



Community Meeting

Tuesday, August 18

5:00 - 8:00 pm

In collaboration with the Detroit Building Authority

Alfred Brush Ford Community Center
100 Lenox

5:00 - 6:30 - DBA Flood Protection Announcement

6:30 - 8:00 - WATER Project News & Updates

Refreshments will be served.



Learn about DBA Flood Protection Project

Join us on **Tuesday, August 18, 5-8 pm** at **AB Ford Community Center, 100 Lenox** as the Detroit Building Authority (DBA) leads off a community meeting. Kayana Sessoms, newly hired Project Manager will be introduced to the community through a brief meet and greet while Ms. Sessoms will also provide an overview of the Flood Protection Project and proposed timeframes.

Meet DBA Project Manager

Kayana Sessoms brings more than 15 years as a community development professional to her new post at the DBA. Her decade and a half experience has included over seven years as Department of Neighborhoods District 3 Manager. With a commitment to advancing neighborhood-focused initiatives she has worked closely with east side communities to support resident engagement, cross-departmental coordination, and place-based improvement efforts.



[See K. Sessoms, page 5](#)

Shoreline Report Update

Reported in the February Gazette, volunteer efforts documenting the condition of over 290 parcels along Jefferson-Chalmers' eastern shore is ready to review. First of its kind data collected is proving critical to developing solutions for removal of the FEMA floodplain without canal closures.

The Assessment found:

- 70% traditional steel seawall
- 18% Revetment
- 12% Natural Shoreline

In addition:

- 42% "Good" Condition - no repairs needed
- 26% "Okay" Condition - minor repairs needed
- 32% "Bad" Condition - major repairs needed

The final report has new information on **ownership** based on property tax records as of October 10, 2025:

- 58% Owner Occupied
- 30% to 40% Generate income
- 63% Residential – Improved
- 28% Residential – Vacant
- 9% Commercial

Recommendations include:

- DBA's \$20 Million in CDBG-DR funds needs to include studying shoreline resilience; restoration, repair, replacement as a viable approach.
- City needs to convene State and Federal level agencies to vet the study
- City needs to begin the process to develop a comprehensive financing plan that may include philanthropic sources targeted to create a mix of grants and lending.



Shoreline Program Update

According to **Amy Amador, HRD**, The Residential Seawall program will be finalizing properties for the program and going out to bid with the goal of construction to begin in the fall.



An 8' x 10' Banner on the Alter Bridge Celebrates the Flotilla Sponsors

Crowds Gather to Make Flotilla HUGE Success



On June 13, hundreds of people gathered at **Riverfront Lakewood East Park** to attend the **Flotilla & Cookout** hosted by the **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project**. Participants heard from organizers about the threat to our canals and joined in a rally to oppose any canal closures. Many took to the canals in their kayaks, paddleboards and canoes to demonstrate in favor of open canals. Detroit River Sports kindly donated kayak rentals and guides for others who wanted to participate.



The **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project** provided and prepared hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and water for everyone who attended. The event was a great success in bringing together our community.

The Flotilla & Cookout received favorable news coverage from WDIV, WXYZ and Planet Detroit. Thanks to all of the friends, family and neighbors who took time to come out and celebrate our canals. Special thanks goes to our sponsors whose generous contributions made this event possible. See the insert for the list of sponsors and more photos from the event. As our **Open Canals Always** movement progresses, we welcome your continued support via monetary contributions, purchasing a lawn sign and/or signing the change.org petition.



Make a Contribution

Purchase a Lawn Sign



Sign the Change.org petition

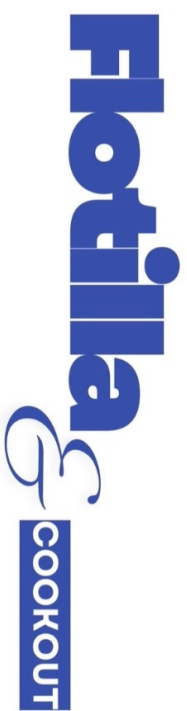
Jefferson-Chalmers **WATER** Project
Water Access, Technology, Education & Recreation

Keep Sewage out of Basements & Canals • Keep Stormwater out of the System • Keep Great Lakes out of the Neighborhood

Flotilla

2026 & COOKOUT





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Jefferson-Chalmers **WATER Project**
Water Access, Technology, Education and Recreation

Keep Detroit out of Detroit's & Coast's - Keep Detroit out of the State's - Keep Detroit out of the Neighborhood

www.jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org

K. Sessoms

An aerial photograph of a commercial site with a proposed development overlaid. The site is bounded by Peach Street to the north, Greenway Street to the west, and Main Street to the east. A large paved area at the top contains a "STOP SIGN & WAY STOP". The central part of the site features a building complex consisting of a "47'-8\"/>

Councilwoman Latisha Johnson's staff confirmed that the matter would not be addressed until after Council's June 11 Planning & Economic

The controversial project's approval has caused contention between City Council (and their staff) and the community. And, according to **Toinu Reeves**, "It's approval and the failure to follow the process and schedule communicated to the community set a dangerous precedent regarding public notice and transparency."

Kayanna is mom to a toddler who is a budding paleontologist and dinosaur enthusiast.

Meet The WATER Project Leaders

A portrait of Dr. Tanya L. Williams, a Black woman with long, dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with a small pendant. The background is a blurred office setting with windows.

As a staunch advocate for the community, Blake has effectively and passionately spoken on behalf of **The WATER Project** and Jefferson-Chalmers

info@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org

Important Dates

WATER Project Community Meeting

August 18, 5-8 PM
AB Ford Community Ctr.
100 Lenox Conner
Avenue

...

DBA Flood Protection Project Introductory Meeting

Tuesday, August 18
5-8 pm

AB Ford Community Center
100 Lenox

...

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WATER Project Community Meetings

November 17, 6-8 PM
Location TBD

...

Jefferson-Chalmers
Farmer's Market

www.jcfm48215.org

2nd and 4th Sunday

June to October 12

735 Emerson

(across from Dickerson Manor)

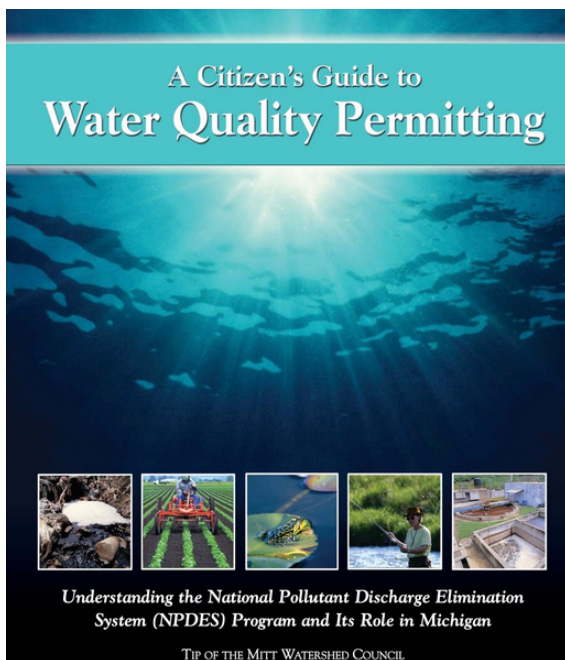
Permit to Discharge Combined Sewage into Fox Creek Moves Forward

Before the eastside of Detroit and Grosse Pointes were developed over 100 years ago, Fox Creek's natural watershed ran east just north of Jefferson to the Milk River as both were part of the same steam system. The **Fox Creek Enclosure** now

contains combined storm and sewage from Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe and Grosse Pointe Park and in heavy rains the **Fox Creek Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO)** discharges at **Outfall 80**, located at East Jefferson and Ashland.

A **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** permit, issued by the Michigan Dept. of **Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE)** allows for these discharges. The current permit expired in **October 2022** and sources within EGLE suggested a new one should be issued shortly.

There will be a limited amount of time to mobilize for participation in the public comment process which we hope will include a public hearing.



Join us on **August 18, 5-8 pm** at the **AB Ford Community Center, 100 Lenox** as **Nick Schroeck**, Dean and Professor of Law, UD/Mercy School of Law and **Erma Leaphart**, local water expert and advocate and former staff at the Sierra Club will explain more about the importance of permit and the process as well as take questions from the audience.

The WATER Project met with senior executives from EGLE in 2024 to advocate for improved notification and monitoring.

See the Permit and more about NPDES on **page 3** of **The WATER Project** website.

GLWA has been working on the Fox Creek Gates for over two years and inquires to the agency regarding details of the work have gone unanswered.

Thanks to this Issue's Contributors: Mary Bohling, Kayann Sessoms, Maria Stapulionis, Graham Jones, Blake Granuum, Traci Rubin, Jay C. Juergensen, Toinu Reeves, **Amy Amador**, and Daniel Piepszowski.

The **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project** is working to find resilient and sustainable solutions to water resource and climate challenges in our community as we seek to create a vibrant place where people live, work, play, recreate and find refuge. **The WATER Project** is **501c3**, charitable organization

Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project
Water Access, Technology, Education & Recreation

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