



Muskegon Lake Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration

NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program

A three-year fish and wildlife habitat restoration partnership project with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was completed on June 30, 2012. The project restored fish and wildlife habitat at three unique locations: **Ryerson Creek**, **Ruddiman Creek** and the **Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve**. The project was managed by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission with input from the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership, Jackson Hill, Glenside and Lakeside Neighborhood Associations, United Way of the Lakeshore, the City of Muskegon, Muskegon Environment and Research Education Society, and other stakeholders. Funding was through a NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program grant to the Great Lakes Commission and WMSRDC.

- The **Ryerson Creek** project, located near the City of Muskegon Farmers Market and the United Way of the Lakeshore, improved fish passage between Muskegon Lake and Smith Ryerson Park with the replacement of two submerged road/stream crossing culverts. The project “day-lighted” the creek and restored the adjacent floodplain wetlands and the riparian stream corridor. The City of Muskegon contributed funds, including grants from the Community Foundation for Muskegon County and the Fremont Foundation Ice Mountain Muskegon River Environmental Program.
- At **Ruddiman Creek**, the size of the mowed lawn was reduced and a native plant shoreline buffer was installed at McGraft Park. Large, woody structure was placed in the lagoon to improve fish habitat. Invasive plants were removed along the stream corridors.
- Work at the **Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve** focused on the control of phragmites, an invasive reed that had spread into the wetlands along Muskegon Lake and Muskegon River. More than eight acres of wetland were improved at the preserve.



In addition, WMSRDC is continuing to manage habitat restoration along the Muskegon Lake shoreline under the NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration and ARRA Program grant. That project will be complete by December 31, 2013. **The two programs, combined, have restored more than 16,000 feet of shoreline and improved 48 acres of shoreline wetland habitat.**

As a continuing measure to protect and preserve habitat biodiversity in the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern, WMSRDC worked with the US EPA Lake Michigan Watershed Academy to begin development of a biodiversity protection plan to help Muskegon and Bear Lake shoreline residents and landowners control invasive shoreline plants. Laketon Township and the Cities of Muskegon and North Muskegon are project partners.

