

Fort Wayne Spawning Reef Project



WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE RIVER?

You might see a marine construction crew out on the river offshore from Fort Wayne, a half mile upstream of Zug Island. They are creating a fish spawning reef – an area for fish to deposit and safely incubate their eggs. The project will restore degraded habitat and help bolster populations of a specific group of native fish, including lake sturgeon, walleye and lake whitefish.

SPAWNING REEF CONSTRUCTION

- The fish spawning reef is being constructed in a deep, fast flowing section of the Detroit River, approximately 250 feet from the shoreline of the Fort Wayne parade grounds, between the Ambassador Bridge and Zug Island.
- The spawning reef is essentially a bed of loose rock, 2 feet thick, covering 4 acres of river bottom, 32 feet underwater. The rock is 4-8 inch limestone from a quarry in southeast Michigan.
- A marine construction firm, Great Lakes Dock and Material, will place the rock on the river bottom using a crane mounted on a barge.
- Construction is expected to begin in early May and will take 3 – 4 weeks.

WILL THE PROJECT IMPROVE FISHING?

Eventually. The reef is designed to enhance the reproduction of specific types of fish such as lake sturgeon. Most of these fish will only spend time on the reefs during spawning season, and therefore, fishing directly above the reef is not expected to be exceptional. However, over time, the projects should improve fishing in the Detroit River. The project is part of a large effort to remediate the Detroit River and remove the river from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

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