

Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy

Gibraltar Bay Shoreline Reconstruction Project



This was the second phase of the shoreline rehabilitation along the Detroit River at the Grosse Ile Nature Area. This innovative project recreated 907 feet of natural shoreline from a riprap covered, phragmites choked shore using cutting edge soft engineering techniques and native ecosystem restoration. The project was completed in 2005, which will mean that the Conservancy has restored almost a quarter mile of Detroit River shoreline. Nativescape used state of the art soft engineering techniques and local natural community types to cost-effectively reduce erosion, stabilize shoreline, enhance wildlife habitat, and improve aesthetics. Grant funding and support sources included the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Great Lakes Commission, the Grosse Ile Nature Conservancy, Grosse Ile Schools, Sea Grant, and the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority.

Nativescape developed the engineering and landscape plans, applied for the necessary permits with MDEQ and USACE, coordinated construction, and developed establishment and long-term monitoring using local school groups and university students. Local seed from native Michigan plant community types were harvested and plants were grown specifically for this project. Volunteers were used along with contractors to provide educational opportunities and to off set costs.

Commenting on the project, Congressman John Dingell noted, “It is through partnerships like this that we are building the only International Wildlife Refuge in North America. This soft engineering project at the Grosse Ile Nature Area demonstrates how innovative collaboration can recreate a natural shoreline in the Refuge, protect wildlife habitats and native populations, and enhance quality of life and community pride in our region. The Conservancy, MAC, and its funding partners are to be congratulated”. Both projects won an Environmental Achievement Award in 2004 from the Environmental Management Association in the Detroit area.

Reference

Doug Thiel, President
Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy
(734) 324-6208
thield@basf.com