

Historical Marker - S704C - The Detroit River / Detriot River Recovery (Marker ID#:S704C)



Front - Title/Description

The Detroit River

People have long been drawn to the Detroit River for settlement and commerce. Archaeological evidence suggests Native Americans lived along the river as early as A.D. 750. French exploration and the growth of Detroit during the 18th century led to exploitation of the river's resources, including lake whitefish, sturgeon, and other species; its use for transporting commercial goods; and, during the 19th century, the production of power for industry. By the early 1900s raw sewage pollution resulted in typhoid fever and cholera outbreaks. A massive duck kill caused by oil during the winter of 1948 led to protests by conservation and sportsmen's groups and ultimately tougher state water pollution laws.

Significant Date:

Native People and the French (< 1760)

Registry Year: 2006 **Erected Date:** 2007

Marker Location

Address: 5437 W. Jefferson Ave.

City: Trenton

State: MI **ZipCode:** 48183

County: Wayne

Township: Brownstown

Lat: 42.11630668 / **Long:** -83.19077253

Web URL:

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Detriot River Recovery

Despite state anti-pollution laws passed in 1948, by the 1960s phosphorus fouled the Detroit River and nearby Lake Erie. Faced with declining fish populations and unhealthy waters, Michigan set strict limits on phosphates in laundry detergent. The 1970 discovery of industrial mercury in the river encouraged passage of the U.S. Clean Water Act and the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, both signed in 1972. Pollution control and prevention measures resulted in increased reproduction among sturgeon and whitefish in the Detroit River and the return of peregrine falcons and bald eagles along its banks. The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, created in 2001, was a milestone in the river's recovery.