



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

National Advocacy Center
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July 10, 2012

Robert Perciasepe
Deputy Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004

David Hayes
Deputy Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Deputy Administrator Perciasepe and Deputy Secretary Hayes:

I am writing you as signatories to the Urban Waters Federal Partnership in support of recognizing Grand Rapids' urban river restoration project under the Partnership. This project would restore the namesake rapids to downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, providing significant economic, social and environmental benefits.

Restoring the urban stretch of the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids will bridge the economic rejuvenation on the River's eastern shore to the historically underserved community on the western side of the river. It will increase river access for a variety of urban users in a way designed to promote an ethic of stewardship. It will promote recreational uses of the river such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking and rowing in the heart of downtown. And, it will address long-term sediment pollution problems caused by hydromodification, enhancing spawning habitat for Lake Sturgeon and mussel habitats. Improvements to the Grand River will also benefit Lake Michigan since the Grand River is the longest river in Michigan and a major tributary to the Lake.

Fast Company magazine has called Grand Rapids "America's Greenest City," pointing out that it has more LEED-certified buildings per capita than any other U.S. city. In 2007 Grand Rapids met its goal of purchasing 20% of the City's municipal electric power needs from renewable energy sources and set a new goal of utilizing 100% renewable energy from Michigan sources by 2020 and replacing fleet vehicles with alternative fueled vehicles by 2015. As a consequence of these and other initiatives, Grand Rapids was the 2012 US Conference of Mayors' "Climate Protection Award Winner for Large Cities."

Restoring the namesake rapids and river in downtown Grand Rapids is a key component of the "Green Grand Rapids" amendments to the City's master plan. It will be the catalyst for additional restoration projects linking the urban reaches of the Grand River with rural stretches upstream and downstream to Lake Michigan. National Wildlife Federation is pleased to support recognition of this project by the Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

July 10, 2012
Page 2

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry J. Schweiger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry J. Schweiger
President & CEO