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RIVER RAISIN DOCUMENTARY FILM WINS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

(MONROE, MI) - The City of Monroe's Commission on the Environment and Water Quality (COTE) and River Raisin Area of Concern's mini documentary film, *River Raisin Legacy Project*, has won Gold in the 2021 dotCOMM Awards. The dotCOMM Awards is an international competition honoring excellence in web creativity and digital communication.

The River Raisin documentary film premiered at the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival in New York City in 2019 and was subsequently shown at the 2020 Thunder Bay International Film Festival in Alpena, Michigan and the Nature Track Film Festival in Los Olivos, California. The film details the extensive remediation, restoration and revitalization efforts over the past three decades. This effort, called the River Raisin Legacy Project, illustrates the cleanup work, habitat restoration, remediation and recreational enhancements among many other projects and activities.

The eleven-minute video documents the recent work on the River Raisin to delist it as an Area of Concern (AOC), which includes removal of dams, installation of fish passages, removal of contaminated toxic hotspots and reinvigoration of the natural environment. It features interviews with Jon Allan, Director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes (OGL) 2012 - 2019, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Marc Tuchman, Manager, Great Lakes Remediation and Restoration Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA); Scott Cieniawski, Section Supervisor, U. S. EPA - Great Lakes National Program Office; Michelle Selzer, Lake Erie Coordinator, MOGL; as well as local citizens Dan Stefanski and Richard Micka - longtime champions of the River Raisin come-back, members of the River Raisin Public Advisory Council and COTE.

Through past grants, the COTE/City of Monroe and its partners have removed dams and created passages permitting fish to migrate, for the first time in over 80 years, a twenty-three mile stretch of the River Raisin. The documentary showcases the relentless efforts of volunteers, staff and key stakeholders to restore the ecology and natural beauty, as well as the cultural and recreational value of this regional asset including fishing, kayaking, wildlife viewing and more.

Mayor Robert E. Clark: "The City of Monroe is thankful to the EPA, EGLE, and the many stakeholders for their years of partnership and commitment in addressing the River Raisin Area of Concern. Through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding, all remedial action steps have been completed and the River Raisin has entered the Ecosystem Recovery Phase of monitoring to confirm use restoration. I want to congratulate the COTE and the River Raisin Public Advisory Council on their positive hard work, exemplary outreach, and stewardship of our community's great natural resource. The River Raisin Legacy Project has resulted in substantial remediation, restoration, and revitalization of the River Raisin and its habitat to benefit our waterfront community and visitors."

The film is a powerful visual outreach tool that enhances existing educational outreach material and initiatives COTE has released. It also showcases the positive statement of Monroe's hard work on a

federally identified issue. It is the hope of COTE that the film can serve as a model and inspiration to other AOCs and citizens, as well as local and regional stakeholders.

Rick Hobrla, Manager of EGLE's Great Lakes Management: "The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) congratulates the City of Monroe's Commission on the Environment and Water Quality for winning the 2021 dotCOMM award for their film The River Raisin Legacy Project. It is an educational and inspiring tale of the environmental challenges and successes in the River Raisin and EGLE was proud to lend our support." With the assistance of many local, state and federal partners, the legacy of the River Raisin will continue as a positive contribution for our children and future generations.

This project was funded by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration initiative.

For more information on the City of Monroe's Commission on the Environment and Water Quality, or the River Raisin Legacy Project, please visit the City's web site: www.monroemi.gov.

To view the mini documentary, please visit our [Youtube page](#).

About the City of Monroe

Incorporated in 1817, the City of Monroe is a community that has a shared vision that seeks to balance the opportunities of economic development with the stewardship that is required for historic preservation. With a population of 20,733, Monroe is located about 17-miles north of Toledo, Ohio and about 35-miles south of Detroit. The City of Monroe is Michigan's third oldest community, and is also the county seat of Monroe County.

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Above Left: River Raisin Legacy Project mini documentary film poster



Above Right: 2021 Gold dotCOMM Award