

INTRODUCTION

The Natural River Act (Part 305, P.A. 451) authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to establish a system of "natural rivers" in the state to provide for their preservation, protection and enhancement. Section 30502 of the Natural River Act states, in part, that: "The commission, in the interest of the people of the state and future generations, may designate a river or portion thereof, as a natural river area for the purpose of preserving and enhancing its values for water conservation, its free flowing condition and its fish, wildlife, boating, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic and recreational values and uses.

Support for including the Pere Marquette River under the Natural River Act comes from a variety of organizations and interests. These include the Pere Marquette Watershed Council, property owners' associations, and numerous local governmental units. Because of this broad range of support, the Natural Resources Commission at its October 1977 meeting directed staff of the Division of Land Resource Programs to draft a natural river management plan for the Pere Marquette River system and adjoining lands.

This report: (1) provides a physical description of the river and its watershed as a whole; (2) reviews values of the river and factors affecting its future nature and use; and (3) provides a plan for the protection of the river's natural qualities.

This plan is the result of a joint effort between the Department of Natural Resources and the Pere Marquette Advisory Group. This advisory group was made up of representatives of riparian property owners, local governmental officials, the Pere Marquette Watershed Council, the U.S. Forest Service, and other governmental agencies, interested citizens and groups. This plan is the result of this joint effort and reflects the thoughts of these people interested in the use and protection of the many values of the river.

It is recommended that the mainstream of the Pere Marquette River and certain selected tributaries be designated as a "wild-scenic" river under authority Part 305, P.A. 451 of 1994. A "wild-scenic river" is of a wild character with wild or forested borders, in close proximity to human development. The wild aspect may be relatively broad or confined to a narrow ribbon.

PERE MARQUETTE RIVER LOCATION MAP



