

PRELIMINARY DESIGNATION OF RIVER AREA

A. Analysis of Alternatives for Use of the River

A number of potential use and management alternatives exist for the Jordan River. Without land use guidance, increased future development, especially in the lower ten miles, will probably occur and could destroy the natural character of the stream and adjoining shorelands. In the future, even the state-owned land in the upper portion of the valley could be seriously damaged by over-use.

One alternative might call for closure of roads on state lands in the upper valley to protect the wilderness character of the river. Over time this could result in a reversion to a wilderness-like setting. On the downstream privately-owned stretches of the Jordan River, strict zoning, acquisition, easements or other measures could be undertaken to prevent any further development or use of the riverbanks. Such measures seem extreme under the circumstances, and could, if strictly implemented, deprive many from enjoying the natural beauty of the river and valley.

Another, perhaps more rational approach is to consider the Jordan River for designation under the Natural Rivers Program. A long-range management plan, as authorized by the Natural Rivers Act, permits management which preserves existing natural values and allows certain other compatible uses.

B. Proposed Designation:

The Jordan River, uninterrupted by dams as it flows for 33 miles through the beautiful Jordan River Valley, has extremely high water quality, stable flow, and an excellent trout fishery. Its forested borders and the deep upper valley are well known for their scenic beauty and wildlife values. The headwaters and nearly 15 miles of the upper portion of the stream flow through state-owned land in the Jordan River State Forest. Because of their unique natural characteristics the Jordan River and its tributaries, from its source in Section 22, T31N, R5W, in Antrim County, to Rogers Bridge in Charlevoix County, qualify for inclusion under Michigan's Natural Rivers System.

The Natural Rivers Task Force recommends that the mainstream and tributaries of the Jordan River, described above, be designated by the Natural Resources Commission as a Natural River under Part 305, P.A. 451 of 1994. Because of the near-natural setting of the river and the type and proximity of development, it is recommended that it be classified and managed as a wild-scenic river. Deer Creek and other tributaries entering the Jordan River below Rogers Bridge are not included in the recommended designation.

C. River Management Zone:

The River Management Zone shall include 400 feet of land on each side of and parallel to the river and its tributaries. Private ownership within this area is approximately 3,700 acres in about 160 individual ownerships. Of state-owned lands, about 3,800 acres are in the River Management Zone. Under certain circumstances on state-owned lands, this

zone may be extended beyond 400 feet in order to achieve or protect the wild-scenic character of the river.