

The Upper Manistee River Access Action Plan

June 6, 2006



This report culminates three years of study by the committee and the implementation of a user survey conducted by Michigan State University. Minutes from the Upper Manistee River Access Committee meetings are available for viewing at the MDNR Grayling Field Office.

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Background

The Upper Manistee River system is a resource of national significance. The river and its adjoining lands are highly valued for the abundant and diverse fishery, scenic beauty, many miles of boatable waters, excellent game and non-game wildlife populations, camping, hiking and other recreational opportunities, and outstanding opportunities for private residential development. As a result of these unique characteristics, the river has been experiencing increasing pressure from recreational users and development interests. In an effort to protect this pristine river resource, the Upper Manistee River was designated as a “Natural River” in 2003. A Natural Rivers Management Plan was developed which guides development and recreational use along the river. For example, motor vehicle use is prohibited within 400 feet of the river’s edge unless it is on a designated public road, access road to a designated recreational site, or a trail designated as “open”. Native vegetation buffers are to be maintained along the river’s edge and dispersed camping is not permitted within 75 feet of the water’s edge for walk in and canoe tent camping, but no closer than 175 feet for vehicle camping.

User pressure on the Upper Manistee River has increased dramatically over the past several years, resulting in problems ranging from rowdy behavior to trespassing on private lands. Many complain that there is a lack of clearly identified public access points along the river. Numerous informal access points have been created by users, resulting in resource damage, safety problems, and user conflicts. The lack of clearly identified public access points contributes to the trespass problem along this stretch of the river and causes frustration for recreational users and adjacent private landowners. A lack of sanitation facilities for river users generates many complaints. Inadequate maintenance and poor spacing of access sites have resulted in development of non-designated access points, resulting in safety problems. River quality is also being threatened in many of these locations. Poorly controlled access is resulting in increased erosion and sedimentation, and denuding of streamside vegetation.

Proper management of public access sites is critical for the protection of the river corridor while simultaneously providing the public with opportunities for quality recreational experiences. The upper portion of the Manistee River traverses many different types of ownership, including three counties, three State Forest Management Units, multiple townships, and over 600 privately-owned parcels. In August of 1999, a group of concerned parties assembled to discuss access problems along the Upper Manistee River. This resulted in the creation of the Upper Manistee River Access Committee, a multidisciplinary committee made up of representatives ranging from resource managers to concerned community members and river users. The committee tasked themselves to identify and address access problems along the Upper Manistee River corridor. A listing of committee members is found in Appendix A. The original Upper Manistee River Access Committee was prepared to finalize recommendations and draft a report in 2002 when the committee lost a majority of its members to retirements and moves. In recognition of the importance of this committee, the Department of Natural Resources formally reinstated the committee in December of 2004, charging the committee with writing up the recommendations in a report format and to release this information to the public via a public meeting.

Problem

Increasing use of the Upper Manistee River corridor has resulted in the development of numerous informal access points, contributing to resource degradation, user conflicts, safety problems, user frustration, and trespasses.

Mission of the Upper Manistee River Access Committee

To develop a management plan that protects the Upper Manistee River's natural beauty and water quality while providing for a system of well-identified access sites to meet user needs.

To meet this mission, the committee was tasked with the following activities:

- 1) Complete a comprehensive inventory of access points along the Upper Manistee River corridor, specifically from M-66 north to the headwaters above Mancelona Road.
- 2) Identify resource impacts and conflicts occurring at access points and develop recommendations to minimize these impacts and use conflicts resulting from informally developed access points along the river.
- 3) Develop a management plan identifying problems and recommending solutions to improve access while meeting American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and protecting the river.
- 4) Hold a public meeting to review management plan recommendations and collect input.

The Process

Committee members were tasked to develop a management plan that protects the quality and natural beauty of the river while providing sensible opportunities for access and recreation along the river corridor. The first step towards the management plan was to identify and inventory formal and informal access points along the upper stretches of the river, specifically from Smithville north to the headwaters above Mancelona Road. Each site was assigned a unique alpha-numeric identifier. Committee members visited each site and observations were recorded using an inventory form designed by the committee. A sample of the inventory form and data collected is displayed in Appendix B. Inventory data sheets for all sites are maintained at the Grayling and Kalkaska DNR Field Offices. This data can be obtained by contacting the FMFM Unit Manager of each respective unit.

During the inventory process, the lack of information relative to type and intensity of use on various sites became clearly evident. It was difficult to evaluate sites without first ascertaining the amount and type of use that occurs at each site. In response to the lack of information, the MDNR Fisheries, Parks and Recreation, and Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Divisions jointly funded a survey to obtain an accurate assessment of the intensity and type of use in the project area. The survey was commissioned with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Resources of Michigan State University. This study entitled "Upper Manistee River Recreation Use and Access Site Assessment" was completed in February 2002, and provided valuable site analysis information to the committee. Conclusions from the study helped guide committee members in formulating recommendations for specific sites. A summary of the study conclusions along with complete details of the river assessment are located in Appendix C. In addition, a companion study was funded by the USDA Forest Service and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station to perform a survey of landowners along the upper section of the Manistee River. A copy of this analysis, entitled "Upper Manistee River Shoreline

Owner Characteristics, Management Preferences and Perceptions of Environmental Change” is located in Appendix D.

Committee members also identified legitimate uses of the river and determined access needs for these various user groups. This involved interviewing various users such as canoe liveries and riverboat guides to determine what type of access site was needed to accommodate a specific use. Canoe liveries require an access site that will permit easy launching of a canoe. Whereas carrying a canoe down a slope or down steps is acceptable for some users, commercial liveries typically need some sites to allow for easy launching of multiple canoes to accommodate novice or older users, and a site that would provide sufficient parking and space for vehicles with trailers to access and turn around. Riverboats tend to be larger and heavier and are not as portable as canoes. Riverboat users require wider launch sites with a minimum width of ten to twelve feet. Riverboat users typically are unable to maneuver on as much slope as canoes due to the size and weight of the boat. Ideally riverboats should have a stabilized launch site that will allow the boat to be trailered to the water’s edge.

Float times of different uses were evaluated to determine the spacing needed between access sites to accommodate different uses. Interviews with river guides revealed riverboat users required access sites to be no further than nine hours of float time apart, and that it was preferred access sites only be 4 hours apart to accommodate use. Paddlers require access sites be no further apart than 8 hours of float time, and they preferred sites be located within two hours of each other. Next, the committee determined what the angler and recreational canoe float times were between the various access points identified along the river. These float times are displayed in Table 1. The minimum and preferred float times needed for the various uses were compared with the actual float times between existing sites to determine gaps and access site needs along the river.

Finally committee members realized there are no standards for design and development of river access sites. Whereas the DNR Parks and Recreation Division classification system was appropriate for lake access, these standards did not adequately reflect river access needs. Thus, the committee determined they needed to develop their own definitions and descriptions for various classes of river access sites. The committee first identified needs of various user groups via discussions with various users, such as riverboat guides, canoe liveries, and fishermen. Then, using the current Parks and Recreation Bureau lake access classification system as a starting point, the committee developed a classification system suitable for river use, which is listed in Table 2.

Committee members used survey results coupled with site information and float times to develop an extensive database to allow for evaluation of individual sites. More than seventy informal access points were identified along the river corridor, both on public and private lands. GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) locations were taken at many of the public sites. This information was used to develop a comprehensive Geographical Information System map of all public sites to allow the committee to evaluate sites relative to one another. The committee reviewed information on the many access points and identified sites to evaluate and make recommendations on. A summary of these sites is located in Table 3. A collection of site inventory data sheets and recommendations is available for review at the Kalkaska and Grayling DNR Field Offices.

The committee reviewed the database for each access point in the study area. Considerations regarding current type and intensity of use; current and potential erosion conditions; location relative to the spacing and timing of various uses (i.e.; see Table 1); needs for that area of the river; ownership of access site; access trail type and condition; ADA conformity potential; compliance with natural rivers standards; parking capacity; soil type; topographic considerations; and number of visitor days were the major factors used in determining the disposition of the site. The committee made a recommendation as to whether each site should remain open as a designated access point for the public or if it should be closed. If a site were to remain open, a designation as to the type of access site it should conform to was recommended. If it were to be closed, comments were made as how to best close the site. A list of specific recommendations for each site was compiled and is located in Table 3. Sites identified to be managed for public access use are located on the enclosed site map located in Appendix E at the end of this document.

Table 1: Usage, Timing, & Spacing of Various Access Points

ANGLER FLOAT TIMES* (All float times are +/- 30 minutes)

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Float time</u>
Cameron Bridge (A-50-R)	Co. Rd. 612 (C-01-L)	3-4 hrs.
Co. Rd. 612 (C-01-L)	Longs (C-01-L)	6-7 hrs.
Longs (C-01-L)	M-72 (C-70-R)	<u>4-5 hrs.</u>

SUB-TOTAL 13-16 hrs.

<u>River left</u>	M-72 Campground (C-70-R)	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	8 hrs.
	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	Lease M-35/King Rd. (E-55-L)	11-13 hrs.
	Lease M-35/King Rd. (E-55-L)	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	<u>3-5 hrs.</u>

Same Stretch **SUB-TOTAL** 22-26 hrs.

(M-72 to CCC)	M-72 Campground (C-70-R)	Hole in the Wall (D-10-R)	8 hrs.
	Hole in the Wall (D-10-R)	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	6 hrs.
<u>River right</u>	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	<u>8-12 hrs.</u>

SUB-TOTAL 22-26 hrs.

<u>River right and left</u>	M-72 Campground (C-70-R)	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	8 hrs.
	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	6 hrs.
	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	Lease M-35/King Rd. (E-55-L)	5-7 hrs.
	Lease M-35/King Rd. (E-55-L)	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	3-5 hrs.

SUB-TOTAL 22-26 hrs.

CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	4 Mile Bend (F-10-L)	1 hr.
4 Mile Bend (F-10-L)	3 Mile Bend (F-20-L)	3 hrs.
3 Mile Bend (F-20-L)	West Sharon Road (F-30-L)	<u>4-6 hrs.</u>

SUB-TOTAL 8-10 hrs.

West Sharon Road (F-30-L)	Sand Banks (G-10-L)	8 hrs.
Sand Banks (G-10-L)	Smithville Ramp (H-10-R)	<u>4-6 hrs.</u>
SUB-TOTAL		<u>12-14 hrs.</u>

GRAND TOTAL 99-120 hrs.

Table 1 continued: Usage, Timing, & Spacing of Various Access Points

CANOEING & KAYAKING FLOAT TIMES* (All times are +/- 30 minutes)

	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Float time</u>
	DeWard (A-20-L)	Cameron Bridge (A-50-R)	1 ½ hrs.
	Cameron Bridge (A-50-R)	Co. Rd. 612 (C-01-L)	1 ½ hrs.
	Co. Rd. 612 (C-01-L)	Longs (C-01-L)	2 hrs.
	Longs (C-01-L)	M-72 (C-70-R)	<u>2 hrs.</u>
	SUB-TOTAL		7 hrs.
<u>River left</u>	M-72 Campground (C-70-R)	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	2 hrs.
	Z-Landing (D-20-L)	Lease M-35/King Rd (E-55-L)	3 hrs.
	Lease M-35 (E-55-L)	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	<u>1 hr.</u>
	SUB-TOTAL		6 hrs.
<u>Same Stretch</u> (M-72 to CCC)	M-72 Campground (C-70-R)	Hole in the Wall (D-10-R)	1 ½ hrs.
	Hole in the Wall (D-10-R)	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	2 hrs.
	Yellow Trees (D-70-R)	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	<u>2 ½ hrs.</u>
	SUB-TOTAL		6 hrs.
<u>River right</u>	CCC Bridge (F-01-L)	3 Mile Bend (F-20-L)	2 hrs.
	3 Mile Bend (F-20-L)	West Sharon Road (F-30-L)	<u>2 hrs.</u>
	SUB-TOTAL		4 hrs.
	West Sharon Road (F-30-L)	Sand Banks (G-10-L)	3 hrs.
	Sand Banks (G-10-L)	Smithville Ramp (H-10-R)	<u>2 hrs.</u>
	SUB-TOTAL		5 hrs.
	GRAND TOTAL		22 hrs.

*Angler Float times were compiled using a consensus from information collected from the following River Guides and users: Roger Wisniewski, Chuck Hawkins, Ed McCoy, Dave Leonard, and Jon Kestner. Canoe float times were compiled using a consensus from information collected from the following sources: Canoeing Michigan River's Guidebook by Jerry Dennis and Craig Date, and published times by Shelhaven Canoe Livery.

Table 2: River Access Site Classifications as Used by the Committee

RIVER ACCESS TYPE and DEFINITION

*Note, all public access sites need to be ADA accessible

Type I - DNR designated signed access with concrete or other compacted surface suitable for launching any size watercraft from a trailer. Toilet provided.



Example of Type I launch



ADA accessible toilet

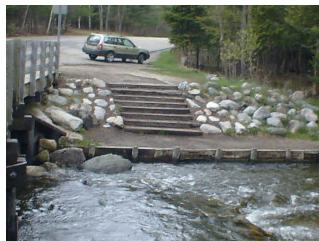
Type II - DNR designated signed access with concrete or other compacted surface suitable for trailer launch of small watercraft. Toilet provided.

Type III - DNR designated signed access with compacted surface to allow trailers to approach river with small watercraft but not necessarily directly launch. Toilet optional.

Type IV - DNR designated signed access with armored slide to accommodate canoes or small watercraft. Toilet optional.



Example of a Type II Launch



Example of Type III site.



Example of Type IV site

Type V - DNR designated signed trail access suitable for wade angling and portaged canoe/small watercraft. No toilet.

Type VI - Not signed and not maintained access located on public ownership. Typically an identifiable trail leads to site.



Type V designated access site.



Type VI- an informal access point

Table 3: INDIVIDUAL ACCESS POINT INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (See Report for priority and time frames for completion of recommendations)

SITE #	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF USE	ACCESS POINT DESIGNATION	TO BE SIGNED	WORK NEEDED	OWNER	IN MSU STUDY
Upper Manistee Access from Mancelona Road to M-72							
Section A: Mancelona Road to Cameron Bridge Road							
A-01-R	Mancelona Road	WA	Type VI	no	no	public	yes
A-02-L	DeWard North	WA	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
A-03-L	DeWard Sand Trap 1	gated closed	No-mgt access only	yes	yes	public	no
A-04-L	DeWard Norway	WA	Type VI	yes	yes	public	no
A-05-L	DeWard Turn Around	WA	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
A-10-L	DeWard Sand Trap 2	WA	No-mgt access only	yes	no	public	yes
A-20-L	DeWard Wildlife View	WA	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
A-25-L	DeWard Middle Steps	WA, SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
A-26-R	DeWard Oxbow	WA	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
A-28-L	DeWard Sand Trap 3	WA	No-mgt access only	yes	yes	public	no
A-30-L	DeWard Lower Steps	WA, SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
A-40-R	DeWard Sand Trap 4	WA	No-mgt access only	yes	no	public	no
A-50-R	Cameron Bridge	WA, SWC	YES/Non DNR	no	no	county rd r-o-w/ pvt	yes
Section B: Cameron Bridge Road to County Road 612							
B-10-L	County Road 612 NE	WA	YES/Non DNR	no	no	county rd r-o-w/ pvt	yes
Section C: County Road 612 to M-72							
C-01-L	County Road 612 SE	WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-10-L	Goose Creek Trail Camp	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-20-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-25-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-30-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-35-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-40-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-50-R	Upper Manistee SFC	CAMP,WA,SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	Yes
C-53-L	Sand Trap	NONE	No-mgt access only	No	no	Public	No
C-55-L	Logger's Landing	WA, SWC	Type V	Yes	Yes	Public	No
C-60-L	Long's Canoe Livery	WA, SWC	Yes -PVT	No	Yes	Private	Yes
C-70-R	Manistee Bridge SFC/M-72	WA, SWC	Type V	yes	No	Public	Yes
C-80-L	Shelhaven Canoe Livery	Canoe	Yes -PVT	no	No	Private	yes
Upper Manistee Access from M-72 to CCC Bridge							
Section D: M-72 to Yellow Trees							
D-01-L	Ray's Canoe Livery	WA, SWC	YES-PVT	no	no	private	yes
D-05-L	Tamarack Circle	WA	NO	no	no	private	no
D-10-R	Hole in the Wall	WA, SWC	Type IV	yes	yes	public	yes
D-20-L	Z-Landing	WA, SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
D-30-L	Hole in the Fence	WA, SWC	Type IV	yes	yes	public	yes
D-40-R	Blocked Trail Cedar Posts	camp, WA	Type VI	no	yes	public	no
D-50-L	Tree Farm Walk In	WA	Type VI	no	no	public	no
D-60-R	Livingston House	WA	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
D-70-R	Yellow Trees Landing	Camp,WA,SWC	Type III	yes	yes	public	yes
WA = wade angling SWC = small water craft CAMP = camping							

Table 3: INDIVIDUAL ACCESS POINT INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (See report for priority and time frames for completion of recommendations)

SITE #	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF USE	ACCESS POINT DESIGNATION	TO BE SIGNED	WORK NEEDED	OWNER	IN MSU STUDY
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Upper Manistee Access from M -72 to Below M -66

Section E: Yellow Trees to CCC Bridge

E-10-L	Bronson Camp	none	no	no	yes	private	no
E-15-L	Portage Creek Tubes	WA	Type VI	no	yes	public	yes
E-20-L	Portage Creek Mouth	WA	Type VI	yes	yes	public	no
E-30-R	Roger's Landing	WA, SWC	No	no	no	public	no
E-35-L	King's Trout Ranch	WA,SWC	no	no	no	private	no
E-40-L	King Rd. #1 Broadmanor	closed	no	no	no	private	yes
E-50-L	King Rd #2	close-barrier	no	no	yes	public	yes
E-55-L	Lease M-35	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	no
E-60-L	King Rd #3 red cabin	WA,SWC	no	no	yes	lease	yes
E-65-L	King Rd #4 sign	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
E-70-L	King Rd #2 Clark	WA,SWC	no	no	no	lease	yes
E-80-L	King Rd #5	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
E-90-L	King Rd. #6	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
E-100-L	King Rd #7 Glaspie	WA,SWC	no	no	yes	private	yes
E-110-L	King Rd #1 Potts	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
E-120-R	Uper CCC SFC	WA,SWC	Type IV	yes	no	public	yes

Section F: CCC Bridge to Sharon Road

F-01-L	Lower CCC SFC	WA,CAMP, SWC	Type III	yes	no	public	yes
F-02-R	Sunset Trail	WA,CAMP, SWC	no	no	yes	public	no
F-05-R	Webers	SWC	no	no	no	private	no
F-10-L	Four Mile Bend	WA,SWC	Type IV	yes	yes	public	yes
F-15-L	Mother's	WA	no	no	no	private	no
F-20-L	Three Mile Bend	WA,SWC	Type IV	yes	yes	public	yes
F-25-L	North Sharon	closed	no	no	no	private	no
F-30-L	West Sharon	WA,SWC, temp	Yes/Relocate	no	yes	public	yes

Section G: Sharon to M-66

G-03-L	Dutch John-Tin Can	WA,SWC	no	no	no	private	no
G-05-L	North Sand Banks	WA,SWC	Type V	yes	yes	public	yes
G-10-L	Sand Banks	WA,SWC	Type III	yes	no	public	yes
G-20-L	Smith Campground	Camp, WA, SWC	no	no	no	private	no

Section H: Below M -66

H-01-L	Smithville Livery	Camp, WA, SWC	YES-PVT	no	no	private	yes
H-10-R	Smithville Ramp	WC, launch	Type II	yes	yes	public	yes
H-20-R	MDNR Smithville	Camp, WA, SWC	no	no	no	public	yes

WA = wade angling

SWC = small water craft

CAMP = camping

Committee Recommendations

Recommendations were made regarding site designation and type of site. A summary of recommendations are contained in Table 3. Funding will need to be secured before many of these recommendations can be implemented. The committee prioritized various site needs in an attempt to guide funding decisions. Recommendations are as follows:

Immediate critical needs :

- **West Sharon Road Access (F-30-L)** – User safety due to traffic and a lack of parking space has been a problem at this site, as emphasized by both the Kalkaska County Sheriff and Kalkaska County Road Commission. This site may be closed at any time by the county due to safety concerns. An alternative Type III Site must be developed within one mile of the existing site to accommodate the major demand received at the site. After field review, it was determined the best alternative location would be west of the river and north of West Sharon Road on state land. Further analysis for site suitability and design is needed.
- **Goose Creek Campground Renovation (C-10-L)** –A separate analysis was performed by the Grayling Forest Management Unit examining user conflicts and resource degradation at the site. The following needs were identified: stabilize river banks; reroute the campground road away from the river; provide a separate access site away from the campground to accommodate heavy demand; eliminate the ford/river crossing for the horse trail; relocate the group horse camp to minimize use conflicts and impacts on the river; and renovate current campground area. A detailed proposal is available from the Grayling Forest Management Unit (FMU). Funding has been obtained to hire a contractor to perform a feasibility study and to develop cost estimates of the various management options for the area during fiscal year 2005-2006. Once detailed plans and cost estimates are obtained, grant funding will be pursued to complete the renovations.

Priority measures that need to be addressed within five years :

- **King Road Sites (E-40-L thru E-110-L)** – King Road contains several informal sites in close proximity to each other. Some sites pose erosion potential and parking problems. Portions of King Road may need to be re-engineered to minimize erosion problems into the river. Some sites need to be improved or closed to reduce safety hazards and to reduce user impacts on the river. We need to identify the boundaries of some sites to reduce the likelihood of users trespassing on adjacent private property. Finally, the public need directional signage to allow them to identify sites they can legitimately use.

Each site was visited and evaluated in relation to the other sites around it. The committee recognized the need to move King Road further away from the river where possible to decrease traffic and user congestion, improve user safety, and to reduce erosion from unauthorized access points. The committee also recognized that this activity lies under the jurisdiction of the Kalkaska County Road Commission and is a costly project. Thus, recommendations were made keeping in mind movement of the road may not occur in the near future. Individual site recommendations range from closing of some sites to improving signage, creating parking areas, and improving launch opportunity for designated areas. Signage needs to be improved for the overall area to direct users to authorized sites to minimize trespass and uncontrolled use. In addition it is recommended we use maps or brochures to communicate where one can legally access the river in this area.

- **Portage Creek Road** : Ideally the portion of this county road in the vicinity of Z landing and Hole in the Fence should be relocated away from the river to provide safe access along the river. Due to physical constraints and the fact that moving the road is a major undertaking under the jurisdiction of the Kankaska County Road Commission, other alternatives were considered. The road should be posted with “no parking” signs to eliminate safety hazard of cars parking along this road. Alternative parking areas need to be developed at Hole in the Fence so the public can gain safe access to the river here. Also barricading or eliminating the canoe slide at nearby Z-Landing and making Z-Landing a Type V access site will be incorporated into this recommendation.
- **Livingston Property Management Plan (D-30-L, D-40-R, D-50-L, D-60-R)** - This key parcel of public land contains several informal access points and has over 5000 feet of frontage on both sides of the river. There is a need to allow for controlled access on the property. A management plan for access sites including removal of the buildings is required to properly establish as well as limit access. The house site has been identified to be developed as a Type V access site (i.e; foot access only) with a parking area to be developed away from the road but outside the 175 foot Natural River vegetation buffer along the river once the buildings are removed
- **North Sand Banks (G-05)** – This site will be allowed to revert back to a Type VI site (i.e; foot access only) by keeping the road blocked and no signage.
- **Yellow Tree’s Landing (D-70-R)** –This is one of the heaviest used sites. Parking needs to be expanded, the access road needs improvement, and the launch facility needs to be upgraded. This site should be renovated to be a Type III site.
- **Deward Management Area Renovation (A-01-R, A-02-L, A-03-L, A-04-L, A-05L, A-10-L, A-20-L, A-25-L, A-26- R, A-30-L, A-40-R, A-45-R, A-50R)** – The DeWard Tract contains multiple access points, some are designated for public access and others were only created to allow access for certain management activities (i.e; dredging a sand trap, harvesting timber). All sites lack proper signing. A review of each access point was performed during the summer of 2002 and recommendations have been written in attempt to pursue funding to make improvements. Most improvements will involve installing a signing system for the open and designated sites, maintaining the access roads, and better delineate parking areas.
- **M-35/King Trout Ranch Sites (E-55-L) and (E-35-L):** A need was identified to develop additional boat access between Yellow Trees and CCC Bridge. Options include M-35 or purchase of a new site at the King Trout Ranch private property. The site at King Trout Ranch is preferred for development. The Department has submitted a Land Trust Fund application for acquisition of this site. If unable to acquire and develop this new site, then it is recommended M-35 be developed into a type IV ADA accessible site, to include an armored slide. No matter which option is followed stream bank restoration will be completed as needed at the M-35 access site along with additional signage and barricading to prohibit camping within the 75 foot (for tent camping) and 175 foot (for vehicle camping) Natural River vegetation buffer.

Other Recommendations :

Recommendations were made on other sites along the river corridor. These recommendations range from closures of some sites to site upgrades. Many sites require

identification and demarcation of property boundaries to discourage trespass on adjacent private property. Many stairways and fencing need repair. Some have minor erosion sites that need to be addressed. Finally American With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines need to be instituted for many sites. Some of these improvements will require significant funding. Others can be completed utilizing existing or volunteer workforce. Individual site recommendations are outlined on each site's inventory sheet under the comment section. These site inventory records are located at the local DNR Field Office.

What's Next?:

With an initial plan and recommendations in place, the Committee feels it should progress into Phase II for the project. Phase II should involve the following activities:

1. Finalize recommendations to include public input.
2. Distribute copies of the plan and educate MDNR Divisions and the community regarding the plan so they can implement individual site recommendations.
3. Identify potential funding sources and assist Divisions where needed with pursuing funding to implement site recommendations. This may involve competing for traditional funding sources as well as pursuing non-traditional sources such as applying for grants and pursuing support from private entities as well as local units of government.
4. Pursue installation of appropriate signage for designated sites.
5. Develop a site monitoring and maintenance schedule for all sites.
6. Develop an interactive computer database to allow the public to access individual access site information and to allow site managers to better track and manage sites.

(Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Unit Supervisors who have jurisdiction over the sites will coordinate implementation of the recommendations)

Conclusion:

The site inventory and study results will serve as an important baseline showing current use of the upper section of the Manistee River. The baseline can be used in the future to measure changes in use. The Committee has formulated site specific recommendations. Most of these recommendations cannot be pursued without additional sources of funding. The next step is to have the Department pursue funding to allow recommendations to be completed. A variety of funding will need to be pursued ranging from grant funding and developing of community partnerships to budgeting for maintenance of facilities within traditional DNR budgets. Note, any recommendations involving acquisition of privately owned lands would be accomplished on a willing buyer – willing seller basis.

Credits:

This report was developed in concert with the following agencies and interest groups:

Fly Fishing Federation
Grayling Township, Crawford County
Huron Pines RC&D
Kalkaska County Road Commission
Kalkaska County Sheriff
Mackinaw Trail Flyfishers of Cadillac
Michigan Department of Natural Resources: Fisheries Division
Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division
Law Enforcement Division
Natural Rivers
Parks and Recreation Bureau
Wildlife Division

Michigan National Guard, Grayling
Michigan State Police, Kalkaska Post
MUCC
Riverboat Guides Association
The Upper Manistee River Association
The Upper Manistee River Restoration Committee/ Huron Pines RC&D

River Use Assessment:

Dr. Charles Nelson, Michigan State University, Department of Parks and Recreation & Tourism Resources

Funding provided by:

Forest Mineral & Fire Management Division, MDNR
Parks and Recreation Bureau, MDNR
Fisheries Division, MDNR

Assistance and Secretarial Services:

Huron Pines RC&D

Appendix A: Directory For The Upper Manistee River Access Committee

Members of the Upper Manistee River Access Committee appointed as of December 2004:

Chair: Robin Pearson, NE District Recreation Specialist, FMFM

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Jim Powers, Upper Manistee River Assn.

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Invited Participants:

Ed McCoy, Michigan River Guides Association
Terry Warrington, Trout Unlimited
Jim Webber, Manistee River riparian landowner
Todd Tompkins, Shel-Haven Canoe Livery
Jack Martell, Property Owner

**Members of the Upper Manistee River Access Committee from 1999-2003:
(i.e.; participated on a regular basis)**

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(moved 2002, to be replaced by Ron Joyce)

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Participants in the Committee Process

(i.e.; attended occasional meetings for information and/or submitted input)

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Trout Unlimited:

George Mason Chapter:

See James Powers, UMRA

Kalkaska County:

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1049 Island Lake Road
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Jerome Cannon, Kalkaska County
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Springfield Township
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Fife Lake, MI 49633
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Dean Sandell, Recreation Specialist
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OTHER:

Tony and Kate Petrella

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Jodi Kaiser
MUCC
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(616) 258-2732

(property owner, UMRA, TU, FFF)
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Ultimate Outfitters
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Cherry Capital Paddle America Club
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Jack Martell
(property owner)
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Fife Lake, MI 49633

Appendix B: Site Inventory Data

Upper Manistee River Access Point Information Sheet: Site No. A-02-L Site Name DeWard North rev 4/22/02

County Otsego T 29 N R 4 W Section 19 Subdivision SW SW GPS Coordinates _____

Ownership: (circle one) State of Michigan Federal Private Other _____

If private, list name and address of land owner: _____

Designated Primary Use: (circle one) Angler SF Campground Parks & Rec. Access Site Other _____

Approach Directions: 7.7 miles west of Old US 27 on CR-38 (Mancelona Rd.) to Manistee River Rd.; go 1.0 mile due south on drive west to southwest .3 miles to river.

Is Designated Parking Available? Yes No (circle one) Capacity of parking lot? # cars: potential for 2-4 cars
trailers: _____ Length of trailer/boat that can be accommodated: _____ Turn around available? Yes No (circle one)

Distance from Parking lot to a designated county road: 1,000 feet Distance from parking lot to edge of river: 25 feet

Public access: walk-in only canoe launch McKenzie Driftboat AuSable Riverboat launch
(circle appropriate uses) (3 ft beam, 24"-36" depth) (3 ft beam, 12"-14" depth)

Does site meet current ADA standards? (circle one) Yes No If no, why not? undesignated site, site could be constructed to meet ADA, terrain allows for ADA development.

Maintenance equipment accessibility: Trail width to river: NA Type of trail: sand gravel hard surface other: _____

Barriers present at site: posts gate berm other: none

Facilities Present: Drinking Water: # pumps _____ Sanitation facilities: _____
Campsites: # _____ Fee Charged: _____

Physical Characteristics of Site: Soils: (circle one) sand gravel clay loam muck

Vegetation on site: _____

% Slope: 2% Slope length or bank height: 3 ft T & E Species Present: _____

Special Regulations for Site: (circle choices) Angling DeWard Other: coldwater angling regulations for type 2 streams eff. 4/00.

Comments: Located on trail road that is access road for private property (Petrella + 2 others). Site is well used as evidenced by wear and old campfire pit. Per local landowner, lots of camping activity is in area. Road is plowed in winter. This site offers one of few opportunities in north stretch of river in DeWard.

Data collected by: Thiel, Pearson, Kutkhun Date: 4/19/02

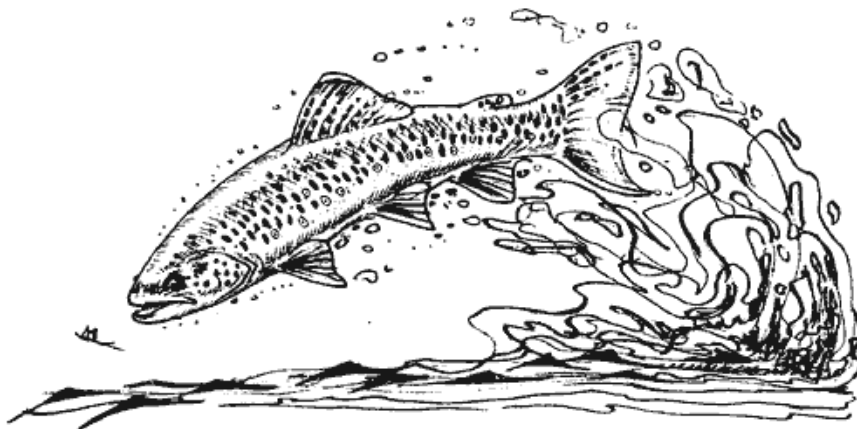
Recommendations: Recommend designate as Type 5 access site. Need directional arrows leading to site. Need to install barrier posts to keep cars away from river's edge and to designate a 3-4 car parking area. Need to remove dead white pine located on edge of bank, as is a hazard. Old terrace stabilization on bank is deteriorating, need to reinforce stabilization. Also need to barricade great lakes pipeline corridor where road crosses. Need to prohibit camping along this road as it is within 100 feet of river- will need Director's Order for this.



Maps & Pictures:

**Appendix C: Upper Manistee River Recreation Use
and Access Site Assessment**

**UPPER MANISTEE RIVER
RECREATION USE AND ACCESS
SITE ASSESSMENT**



By

**Charles Nelson, Associate Professor
Brian Valentine, Graduate Student
Joel Lynch, Research Specialist
Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism
Resources
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824**

February 25, 2002

Due to the length of this report, a summary has only been included. A full copy of this report can be obtained by contacting

*The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Mineral and Fire Management Division
Gaylord Operations Service Center
1732 West M-32
Gaylord, MI 49735
Attention: Robin Pearson*

UPPER MANISTEE RIVER RECREATION USE AND ACCESS SITE ASSESSMENT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By

Charles Nelson, Associate Professor

Brian Valentine, Graduate Student

Joel Lynch, Research Specialist

Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824

February 25, 2002

Introduction

The Upper Manistee River is one of northern Lower Michigan's most important watercourses. It provides vital fish and wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. From Mancelona Road in southwestern Otsego County to M66 in southwestern Kalkaska County, public access is provided for recreationists at more than 40 points and there are 627 distinct private shoreline owners. To better understand daytime recreational use on the river during late spring and summer and to obtain an independent evaluation of current access sites, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources contracted with scientists from the Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources at Michigan State University. Additional funding was obtained from the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station.

Methods

To assess river use generated from public access points, vehicles were counted and a self-administered survey was distributed to vehicle drivers on selected days at 43 public access points during daylight hours from April 28 – September 3, 2001. Results were then extrapolated to account for all days and sites during the study period. For use generated from private shoreline ownerships, all shoreline owners were identified through county assessment records and were sent a mail questionnaire asking about river use generated directly from their property during April 28 – September 3, 2001. Access sites were evaluated by site visits in fall 2001 and a photographic record created at that time.

Results

Amount of Use

It is estimated that the 43 public access points accommodated 39,447 vehicles during daylight hours from April 28 – September 3, 2001. Sixty percent of estimated vehicles were present on weekend days (Saturday and Sunday) and 40% on weekdays. Occupants of those vehicles accounted for 1,027,957 estimated daylight recreation hours on the Upper Manistee. Users of the four riverside state forest campgrounds (Upper Manistee, Goose Creek Trail Camp, Manistee River Bridge, CCC Bridge) and at the Smithville Commercial Campground accounted for over half the total recreation hours generated from public access points. The shoreline owners and their guests generated an additional 203,725 river recreation hours from their property. In total, daylight recreation on the Upper Manistee amounted to 1,231,682 user hours. This does not account for nighttime fishing or nighttime campground activities.

Type of Use

For public access point users, 72% of campers and 61% of non-campers used some type of watercraft and 52% of campers and 56% of non-campers fished on the day they were surveyed. When asked about the main activity of their sample day visit, 37% of campers replied camping, 31% watercraft use (canoe, kayak or tube) and 28% fishing. For non-campers, 50% cited fishing and 43% watercraft use (canoe, kayak or tube). For shoreline owners and their guests, 82% used some type of watercraft during the study period,

77% observed nature and 76% fished. When asked about the most important activity for shoreline owners and their guests when river access was gained through their property, 39% cited fishing, 27% watercraft use and 20% nature observation.

Public Access Visitor Spending in Local Area

For daytime public access point visitors originating outside of Otsego, Crawford and Kalkaska counties, campers reported spending average of \$102.99 within 20 miles of where they were surveyed within the previous 24 hours and non-campers reported spending an average of \$94.20. Ninety two percent of campers and 80% of day visitors spent something in the local area in the 24 hours prior to being surveyed. Extrapolated across the estimated number of daytime public access point visits from April 28 – September 3, 2001, this amounts to \$3,492,720 in local spending by visitors to the area using Upper Manistee River public access points.

Public Access Visitor Satisfaction and Perceived Trends in Environmental Quality

Eighty nine percent of public access point visitors were satisfied with their experience on the day they were surveyed, 5% were neutral and 6% were dissatisfied. Those that were satisfied cited the scenic nature of the river, good fishing, easy river access, good maintenance of access point (especially campground) facilities, minimal litter and support for quality fishing regulations as their rationale. Those who were neutral or dissatisfied about their experience noted poor fishing, poor maintenance at access points, noise, crowding, litter and development along the river corridor. When asked if the quality of the overall river environment had improved since they began using the river, 31% of campers and 36% of non-campers felt it had improved, 52% of campers and 40% of non-campers felt it was similar and 17% of campers and 24% of non-campers rated it as worse. The average camper had been visiting the river since 1984, the average non-camper since 1987.

Public Access Point Assessment

On the whole, the authors judged the access points to provide reasonable environmental protections and safe, appropriate public access. Many sites kept vehicles more than 100 feet from the river for parking, provided canoe slides, had well maintained wooden stairs and visible but not obtrusive erosion control and fish habitat structures. However, certain access points needed significant improvement. The W. Sharon Road access point was judged unsafe due to the need for vehicles trailering boats to back across this paved road on a curve with limited sight lines. In addition, there was minimal parking at the site with that too close to the river. Access for this area should be relocated to a site with adequate launching and parking, off this main county road. At Goose Creek Trail Camp State Forest Campground and at the North Sandbanks Access, roads parallel the river and are often within ten feet of it. This provides an environmental and safety hazard. Such roads should be closed and erosion control measures be redoubled in these areas. Finally, the Deward area provides quality walk-in fishing. Unfortunately, access roads and parking areas are poorly signed and the use of rusty guardrails to channel visitors is out of keeping with the management philosophy. Quality signs should replace tattered paper ones, guard rails should be painted and gradually replaced with natural vegetation and access sites clearly noted on Geronimo's Trail.

Conclusion

The Upper Manistee River is a popular site for recreation . This generates enjoyment for most and significant local spending by visitors. However, it also challenges managers to maintain and enhance environmental quality, limit conflicts among different users and promote public safety. While tradeoffs are inevitable, maintaining the productive capability of the environment is paramount to providing all other benefits.

Appendix D: Upper Manistee River Shoreline Owner Characteristics, Management Preferences and Perceptions of Environmental Change

Due to the length of this report, only a portion of the report has only been included. A full copy of this report can be obtained by contacting

*The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Mineral and Fire Management Division
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Attention: Robin Pearson*

Problem Statement

This study will examine the property ownership, demographic characteristics, perceptions, opinions and behaviors of shoreline landowners concerning the namesake river of the Manistee National Forest. Shoreline owners include those with principal homes, second homes or vacant land with or without temporary structures. The study is a companion another upper Manistee River study that focused on summer recreational use of the river by public access site visitors and shoreline owners and their guests who accessed the river from private lands (Nelson and Valentine 2002). Funding for this current study was provided by the North Central Experiment Station of the USDA Forest Service and by the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station.

The priorities of riparian landowners for selected management issues (e.g., water quality, fish populations, and ecosystem health) and actions by resource agencies (e.g., watershed planning, access site management, and erosion control) may be different than those who visit the corridor only through public access points or commercial venues such as canoe liveries. Riparian landowners also provide numerous gateways beyond the control of resource managers for those in their social world such as relatives and friends (Nelson and Smith 1998, Smith 1999).

Perceptions of environmental change by shoreline owners are also important as landowners influence the environment through their behaviors and those of their guests and are also sensitive to change because of the length of their tenancy, their financial investment and their attachment to place. Management priorities and perceptions of environmental change may differ based on the owner's characteristics such as their length of ownership in the riparian zone, their uses of the waterway and the current and planned future status of their ownership.

In planning for and implementing management of the Manistee River, resource managers will benefit from better understanding landowners in their placement and design decisions concerning public access, crafting fisheries regulations and management, and in prioritizing limited financial and personnel resources in coping with a wide range of management needs. The Upper Manistee River Restoration Committee and the parent Upper Manistee River Association, in cooperation with the MDNR, are eager to understand how shoreline owner perceptions of environmental quality trends match the resource restoration and enhancement measures taken over the past 15 years. In particular, there have been major efforts in erosion control, fish habitat restoration and enhancement and fish population monitoring.

Understanding the future plans of property owners including conversion of second homes to primary ones and development and splits of vacant property will provide resource managers and local government officials timely information to maintain environmental quality, assess development of supporting infrastructure and provide appropriate recreational access for the future (Public Sector Consultants 2001, Stynes et al. 1997). Managers of the Manistee National Forest will significantly benefit from understanding shoreline owners in the headwaters of one of the forest's key rivers and how they perceive resource manager performance. This methodology could readily be used downstream within the Manistee National Forest in future years to establish an information baseline comparable to that in place for the Pere Marquette River (Nelson and Smith 1998).

Management Implications of Results

The data clearly reveals that occupancy of shoreline ownerships will undergo major changes in the next five years. More than 100 properties are likely to be converted from second homes and vacant lands to permanent homes. Viewed another way, there is likely to be a 75% increase in primary homes over the next five years. This will have implications for public infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and public services, such as police, fire protection, ambulance and education. It is also likely to impact the environment with increased amounts of sewage needing to be treated in private septic systems, increased amounts of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides used on streamside property and clearing of streamside woody vegetation to promote a view and more convenient river access for property owners.

Social impacts are less predictable, but certainly possible. These may include additional interactions with public access site visitors and managers if the access site is adjacent to the principal home that would have been less frequent in a seasonal home or on adjacent vacant land. It is also likely to lead to additional public access site use, especially for watercraft launching, as shoreline owners, along with family and guests,

launch canoes, kayaks, tubes, drift boats and other water craft to float downstream for takeout at their property.

Property owners place high importance on and are supportive of continued improvement in water quality, fish populations, the appearance of the shoreline and a reduction in litter and trespassing. As the number of permanent residents in the corridor increases, accomplishing this improvement will become increasingly challenging. Increasing pressure will be placed on water quality through additional inputs of nutrients and other household, lawn related chemicals. The appearance of the shoreline will be less natural unless conscious steps are made to enhance the natural appearance of developed and developing properties. Litter and trespassing are likely to be visible to more property owners, as more will be living rather than visiting their river corridor lands. Curiously, fish populations may improve based on the strong landowner support for fish habitat restoration and enhancement, limited harvest and “flies only” fishing regulations and the cohesiveness of stakeholders and government agencies concerning fisheries management on the river as expressed through the already active fish habitat restoration and enhancement efforts.

Efforts of government and their partners related to the environment have been visible to and appreciated by shoreline owners. This is especially true of efforts to control erosion, restore and enhance fish habitat and to maintain public access sites. They are more pessimistic about the near future than about the recent past. Many see significant difficulties in maintaining or improving the overall environmental condition in the near future.

Shoreline owners are also active in making their interests known to government, with more than half contacting one or more governmental agencies about Manistee River issues. These preferences about specific management issues suggest that there is support for the current level of restricted fishing regulations, the amount of public access and the maintenance of those access sites, although many suggest maintenance could be improved. Landowners also support fish habitat restoration and enhancement, as well as stocking, to enhance fish populations. Finally they are supportive of additional enforcement of existing regulations to control illegal operation of watercraft by those under the influence of alcohol and the littering and trespass that often accompanies such behavior.

In summary, it will become increasingly important to manage this valued watershed in an ecosystem fashion rather than as a number of disparate pieces with different funding sources such as state access sites, local zoning authorities, fisheries, roads, etc. To maintain the quality of this ecosystem will also require the cooperation of the many stakeholders including individual landowners, associations of landowners, governmental units, businesses, non-profits and recreational visitors. This study provides a clear picture of the trends, concerns and policy preferences of individual shoreline landowners and will be useful in charting a course of sustainable development for the upper Manistee.

Appendix E: Access Point Maps of the Upper Manistee River

These maps are not to be used as a guide to public access sites!

Upper Manistee River Access Project Area

