

WHITE RIVER NATURAL RIVER PLAN

NEWAYGO, OCEANA AND MUSKEGON COUNTIES

June 1975



FISHERIES DIVISION

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
Revised March 12, 2002

Natural River Plan

WHITE RIVER
(Newaygo, Oceana and Muskegon Counties)

White River Planning Group
Cooperating with the Department of Natural Resources
Office of Planning Services

Revised May 1, 1975

Plan approved and river designated
As a Country-Scenic River by the
Natural Resources Commission
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PREFACE

Part 305, Natural Rivers, of P.A. 451 of 1994 authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to establish a system of "natural" rivers in the state and to provide for their preservation, protection and enhancement. As a result of this charge, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has studied the White River and its tributaries for possible inclusion in the natural rivers system. The river system and adjacent lands were investigated to determine: (1) aesthetic and historic values, (2) free-flowing condition--now and prospectively, (3) water quality, (4) fish, plant and wildlife resources, and (5) ecological values. The river ranked high in such values and will be proposed for inclusion in the Michigan natural rivers system. A preliminary river management plan has been prepared with the participation of concerned public officials, property owners and citizens and will be presented to the public at hearings in the area. After public hearings, the Natural Resources Commission may designate the river or portions of it as either a Wilderness, Wild Scenic or Country-Scenic River.

This report is the preliminary river plan for the White River, which is tentatively proposed as a Country-Scenic River. Briefly, the Country-Scenic River is a stream in an agricultural setting with narrow bands of woods or pastoral borders. Farms and other developments may be visible from the river and it may be readily accessible by road. It may have undergone some impounding and its waters should meet established water quality standards. The plan provides: (1) a physical description of the river, surrounding lands and nearby structures, (2) reviews values of the river and factors affecting its future nature and use, and (3) provides a plan for its management so as to preserve, protect and enhance the natural qualities of the river area.

THE STUDY AREA

A. General Description

The White River is located in Newaygo, Oceana and Muskegon counties, in west central lower Michigan. It rises from the extensive Oxford Swamp in north central Newaygo County and flows in a southwesterly direction into White Lake then Lake Michigan, near the towns of Whitehall and Montague. The White River system drains a surface area of approximately 300,000 acres and includes about 253 linear miles of streams.

This river system represents the southern most major trout stream in the Lake Michigan drainage. Except for the areas around Hesperia and White Cloud, much of the White River, especially the lower reaches are wild in nature, scenic, remote and crossed by few bridges.

B. Physiography and Soils

Moraines, outwash plains and till plains are the major surface formations in the watershed. The topography is level to gently rolling along stream borders and slightly hilly in the uplands.