

# LOWER KALAMAZOO RIVER NATURAL RIVER PLAN

ALLEGAN COUNTY

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FISHERIES DIVISION

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
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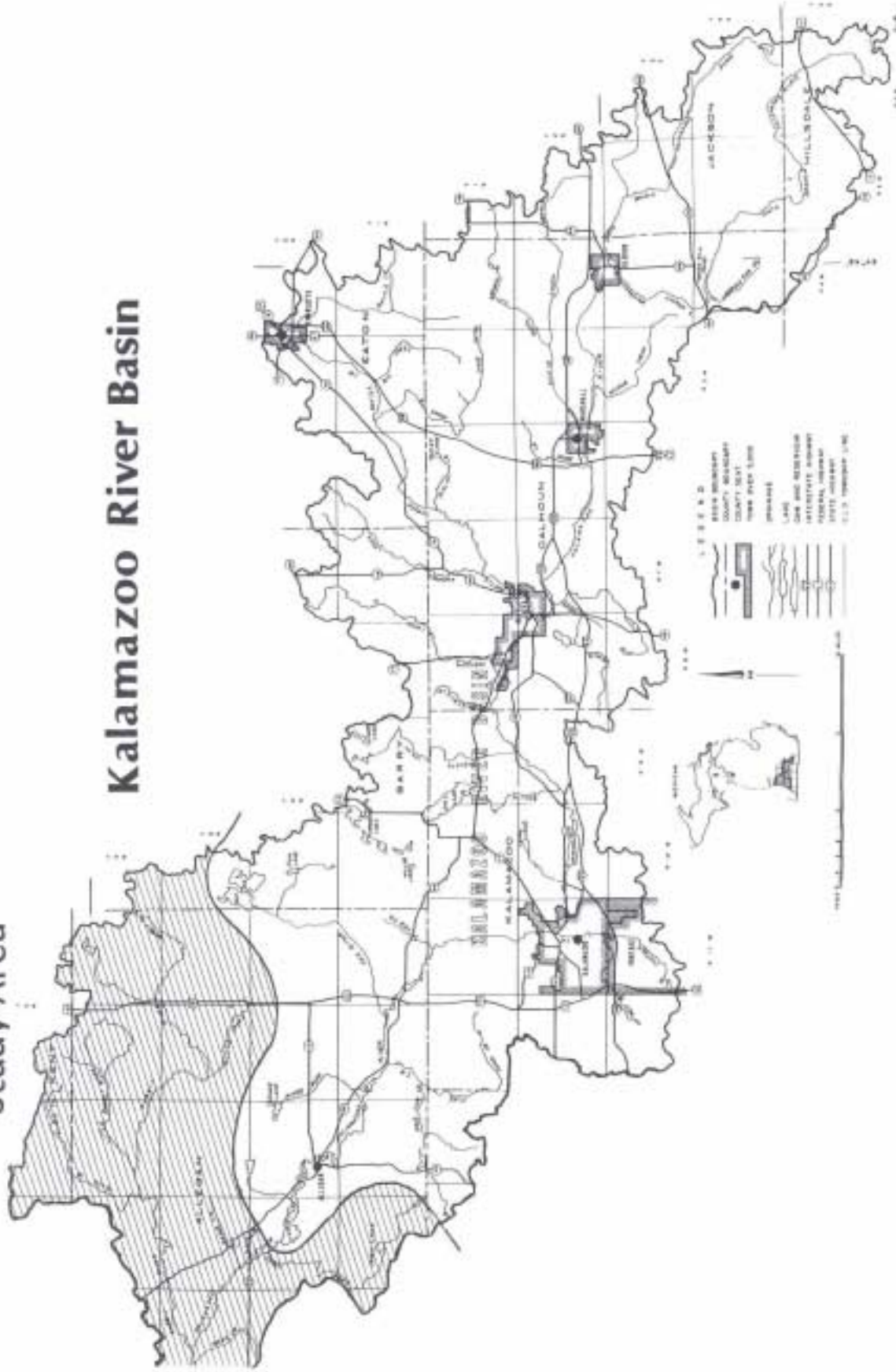


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Study Area

# Kalamazoo River Basin



## PREFACE

The Kalamazoo River is an important physical feature of the landscape in southwestern Michigan flowing through wooded areas, agricultural and rural areas affected little by existing development, and through villages and cities. In an area of intensifying potential population growth, economic development and changing land uses, the lower Kalamazoo represents a unique and special resource providing the region's inhabitants with numerous benefits. In addition to supplying water for municipal, industrial, residential and agricultural uses, the river possesses significant natural values, in terms of fish, wildlife, vegetation and aesthetics. The river environment offers a myriad of recreational opportunities to the region's inhabitants.

The Natural River Act (Part 305 of P.A. 451 of 1994) authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to establish a system of "natural rivers" in the state to provide for their preservation, protection and enhancement. Section 3 of the Natural River Act states, in part, that: "The commission, in the interests 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, flood plain, ecologic, historic and recreational values and uses."

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Kalamazoo River Advisory Group (representing riparian property owners, the Kalamazoo River Preservation Association, Kalamazoo-Black-Macatawa-Paw Paw Rivers Basin Citizen's Advisory Group, and other interested citizens) have studied the lower Kalamazoo River and recommend that a portion of the river from Calkins Bridge Dam (Lake Allegan), down to just below the Hacklander public access site, Allegan County, be designated a "wild-scenic" river. A "wild-scenic" river is one of 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 band.

This report (1) provides a physical description of the river and the watershed as a whole; (2) reviews values of the river and factors affecting its future nature and use; (3) provides a plan for the protection of the river's natural qualities and to guide its future use; and (4) provides a policy guide for adoption and administration of local zoning ordinances and state administrative rules. The plan is the result of joint efforts of the Department of Natural Resources and the Kalamazoo River Advisory Group, and reflects the thoughts of a broad representation of people interested in use and protection of the many values of the lower Kalamazoo River.