

### III. CULTURAL RESOURCES AND EXISTING USES

#### A. POPULATION AND ECONOMY

The human population of the three county area that encompasses the watershed is 23, 100. The density of this area is 10 people per square mile, although the Fox River watershed is less densely populated. This is far less than the statewide average of 156 people per square mile. The population of this area has shown a slight decrease since 1970. Seney is the only town in the watershed, and has a population of 174 permanent residents. During the summer this increases to about 800. The nearby towns of Newberry, Munising, and Manistique have populations of approximately 2,000 , 3,000 and 4,000 respectively.

The economy of the Fox River watershed relies primarily on forest products and recreation/tourism. Services such as retail merchants, education, and government also contribute to the area economy, along with agriculture. In 1985, the area labor force had an unemployment rate of about 17 percent, compared to a statewide rate of 10 percent. Per capita income for the region was about \$9,300 compared to \$12,600 statewide.

#### B. TRANSPORTATION AND AREA GOVERNMENT

Two state highways intersect at Seney. M-77 runs north-south from Grand Marries to Blaney Park. The more heavily used M-28 runs east-west along the entire northern half of the Upper Peninsula. These two highways are the only paved roads in the watershed.

Numerous two tracks and gravel roads of varying quality crisscross the region. The Fox River Road (County Road P450) follows the Mainstream from Seney upstream, and is the best maintained secondary road. Although numerous logging roads exist in the river basin, particularly near the Alger-Schoolcraft county line, nearly all of these are dirt roads and many are not accessible except by truck or four wheel drive vehicle. Ten bridges cross the Mainstream and larger tributaries, with several of these in remote areas of the upper watershed. These roads are usually not plowed in winter, and so are inaccessible by automobile.

Many sections of land in the watershed contain no roads at all. The effort involved in gaining access to these parts of the river has maintained the isolation of the area, and contributes to the solitude and enjoyment of using the river.

Commercial airline service is available at Marquette, Escanaba, and Sault St. Marie. Small airports are located at Newberry, Blaney Park, and Manistique. The Soo Line Railroad passes through the basin, but offers no passenger service.

The watershed is located within parts of three counties—Alger, Luce, and Schoolcraft. The area includes six administrative townships (12 geographic). The Fox River Mainstream flows through the Village of Seney.

C. OWNERSHIP AND LAND USE

Approximately 70 percent of the lands adjacent to the Fox River system (riparian land) are in public ownership. The remaining lands are mainly corporate owned (Cliffs Forest Products and Champion Realty) or are in parcels of 40 acres or more.

The upper reaches of the Mainstream are privately owned to about ½ mile below the confluence with the West Branch; the extreme headwaters and the lower mile of the West Branch are privately owned; the Little Fox is entirely surrounded by publicly owned land and the Mainstream from just below the West Branch to its confluence with the Manistique River passes through only about four miles of privately owned land. The Village of Seney encompasses less than 40 acres. In the vicinity of the town, the River flows through less than ½ mile of privately owned land.

The upper mile or so of the East Branch is privately owned, as is about two miles between the East Branch Spreads and M-28. Between M-28 and the confluence with the Mainstream, the East Branch passes through about five miles of land owned by Champion Realty, and another mile or so owned in smaller parcels by several private landowners. Much of this land is low and swampy, and has little potential for future development. Some of this land is important for deer yarding and other wildlife, however. The table below illustrates public and private ownership along the Mainstream and tributaries.

FOX RIVER-RIPARIAN OWNERSHIP

Stream	Length		Miles		# of Owners
	Miles	State	Private		
Mainstream	35	23 (66%)	12 (34%)		*14
East Branch	36	22 (60%)	14 (40%)		12
West Branch	9	7 (81%)	2 (19%)		4
Little Fox	10	10 (100%)	0 (0%)		0
Tributaries	68	46 (68%)	22 (32%)		10
Total	158	108 (68%)	50 (31%)	*40	

\*Plus Village of Seney

Approximately 60 percent of the entire Fox River watershed is in public ownership. Almost of all this public land is part of the Lake Superior State Forest. The remainder is part of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge or owned by Seney Township. Much of the private ownership is in the upper watershed, where numerous lakes are found. A considerable portion of this private land is owned by Cliffs Forest Products.

Land use patterns in the watershed have followed a typical pattern. The heavily timbered virgin forest of pine was logged off. Although some of this logged land

was held by the timber companies, much of it was either sold to the State or reverted to the State through nonpayment of taxes. Agriculture never gained a strong foothold in this region due to unsuitable soils and a short growing season.

#### D. RECREATION

There are four rustic campgrounds located along the Fox River or its tributary lakes and streams:

1. The Stanley Lake State Forest Campground is located on the Stanley Lake flooding on the upper Little Fox (ten sites).
2. The Fox River State Forest Campground is on the Mainstream five miles northwest of Seney (six sites).
3. The Seney Township Campground is also on the Mainstream and is located just north of Seney. Electricity is available (fifteen sites).
4. The East Branch Fox River State Forest Campground is on the East Branch at Kings Pond (sixteen sites).

Public access sites to the River are numerous, but mostly undeveloped.



Boat access to the East Branch occurs at this dead channel (left) along M-28. Several oxbows (former channels) can be seen at the upper right.

Fishing for brook trout during the spring and summer months is the most popular recreational pursuit. One canoe livery operates in the area, but most of the use is on the Manistique River, which is considered a more enjoyable float. Hunting for grouse and woodcock in the fall is good. Winter activities have increased in recent years and includes cross country skiing and snowmobiling. Bird watching occurs in the nearby Seney National Wildlife Refuge throughout the year.

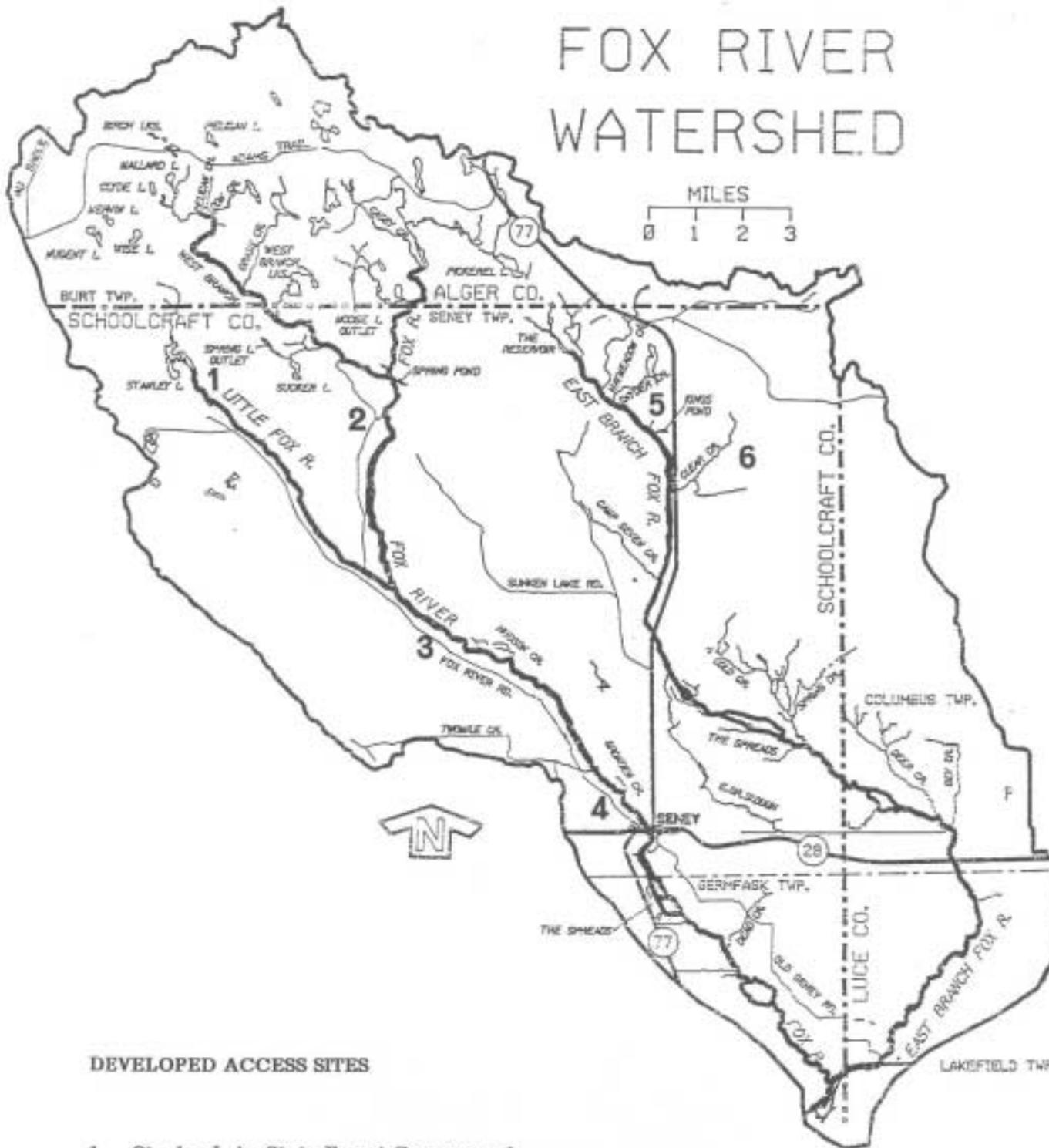
## E. ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

No archaeological surveys have been conducted in the Fox River watershed. The most likely area for prehistoric sites would be around the numerous small lakes in Alger County.

The more recent history of the area is colorful and closely associated with the logging industry. Seney, the only village located on the river, was once a wide open mill town reputed to have 21 saloons along one street. Logs for the mills arrived at Seney both by rail and by river. The remains of eight old logging dams can be found on the upper fox and its tributaries. Logs were also floated from this region to Manistique via the Fox-Manistique river system. Much of the lumber used to rebuild Chicago after the fire came from Manistique and Thompson on the north shore of Lake Michigan. At one time, the Chicago Lumbering Company and the Weston Lumber Company owned over 70 percent of the acreage in Schoolcraft County. The original town of Seney burned in 1891 and burned again about the time the timber industry died. Several major logging companies operated in the area, with timbering activities particularly heavy in the Kingston Plains region. Evidence of these camps exist in some areas, but no systematic studies have been done to date.

When Ernest Hemmingway's Nick Adams stepped off the train in Seney that summer day in 1919 and wandered down to the railroad bridge to look at the trout swimming in the clear, brown-stained waters of the "Big Two Hearted River", he was probably looking at the Mainstream of the Fox. Hemmingway merely borrowed the more romantic name of a river similar in character and located 25 miles to the northeast. As luck would have it, the Two Hearted was immortalized while the river Hemmingway actually fished flowed on in relative obscurity. This obscurity may be one reason the Fox is cherished by the relatively few anglers who now fish its waters.

# FOX RIVER WATERSHED



## DEVELOPED ACCESS SITES

1. Stanley Lake State Forest Campground
2. Fox River Public Access Site
3. Fox River State Forest Campground
4. Seney Township Campground
5. East Branch Fox River State Forest Campground
6. Clear Creek Public Access Site

