

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fox River, located in Michigan's east-central Upper Peninsula, is held in high esteem by anglers for its brook trout fishery. The river is also valued by other recreationists and area property owners who use and appreciate this natural resource.

This report provides a description of the physical characteristics of the river and its watershed. It also reviews cultural features of the watershed, and factors affecting its future nature and use.

The third section of the report outlines a plan for the protection of the Fox River system, its related natural qualities, and associated human values. Under authority of the Natural River Act (Part 305, P.A. 451 of 1994), the Natural Resources Commission is authorized to establish a system of designated "natural rivers" in the State to provide for their protection and wise use. The Plan recommends that the Fox River Mainstream, East Branch, and selected tributaries be designated as a "wild-scenic river". A "wild-scenic" river is of a 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 ribbon. Through state land and program management, and local and state zoning, the Fox River Natural River Plan will serve as a basis for "preserving and enhancing (the rivers) values for water conservation, its free flowing condition and its fish, wildlife, boating, scenic, aesthetic, flood plain, ecologic, historic and recreational values and uses".