

Community Endeavor

This program heavily emphasizes local input, setting it far apart from typical land management measures

- Impacts on the waterway will occur in a manner that meets the needs of that specific waterway.
- Impacts on local citizens occur in a manner that is directly informed by those citizens.



THE PROCESS



The steps of this local protection measure are best thought of in two segments.

CONSIDERATION:

A local group, such as a river association, approaches the DNR about designation and demonstrates support for the program. The DNR notifies townships on designation interest and facilitates the formation of an advisory committee made of residents and local government volunteers. The committee asks for feedback from the public, studies pre-existing uses, local values, and stakeholder concerns, and drafts a plan. Public comment sessions provide feedback that is implemented onto a rewrite of the plan, and the DNR submits a final version to the Natural Resource Commission and Director of the DNR for approval.

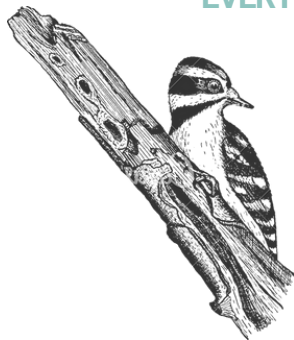
STANDARDS SET BY LOCAL COMMITTEE:

- Building setback minimum
- Septic field setback
- Natural vegetation strip width
- Miles zoned by local government
- Miles zoned by state government

Current existing structures are protected

POST-DESIGNATION:

Once a river is designated, those living or who own property on designated sections and within 400 feet of the river, are guided by zoning rules while constructing on or managing land. Landowners apply for permits to make alterations within the 400 foot zoning district. A Zoning Review Board (ZRB) is created for the river to review major variances and public projects. The board is comprised of county representatives, township residents, local DNR fish biologist, and local Conservation District staff.



EVERYONE IS DOWNSTREAM OF SOMEONE ELSE. OUR IMPACTS ARE NOT LIMITED TO OUR PROPERTY, NOR TO OUR SPECIES.

Provided by the Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council



To learn more about the Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council, visit:

LMWCC.ORG

To learn more about Michigan's Natural Rivers, consider attending a local River Zoning Board Meeting for neighboring Natural Rivers.

Find out more at:

www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/natural-rivers

or email

DNR-NaturalRivers@michigan.gov



The Natural Rivers Program

The health of the **Little Manistee River** is essential to our economy and way of life. Its beauty and productivity draw millions in revenue to our region via the success of the steelhead egg capture, angler tourism, and paddlers, to name a few. Subsequently, our area is seeing an influx of new builds and recreational use. Destruction of the river's buffer zone will deplete the river's health, as well as the stunning views and world-class fishery that create the tourism our economy rests upon. Wild steelhead egg collections on this river support steelhead populations throughout all of Michigan and across the Midwest.



The Little Manistee River is on the edge of an exciting opportunity. Some residents and river users want our "little" river to be considered for state-level recognition. LMWCC would like to see how much interest there is on this topic. If received, this recognition would be accompanied by a protection status that preserves our incredible river from the impacts of unchecked development.

THE NATURAL RIVERS PROGRAM (NRP)

NRP is a direct response to the ongoing, increasing human impact on rivers that is raising concern among river users. The NRP, in effect since 1970, is the best measure to protect rivers in their natural state. This could create guidelines for future development on State and private land. Thus far, it has been used to protect 16 Michigan rivers for the enjoyment of future generations.

- BETSIE RIVER
- PINE RIVER
- WHITE RIVER
- UPPER MANISTEE RIVER
- PERE MARQUETTE RIVER



These nearby waterways are protected for our benefit and that of future generations because of their Natural River designation.



WE ARE THE RIVER'S KEEPER

There is a saying, "We protect the things we love." No one can place insurance on a river, but a community can act as insurance on its behalf to create a structure that invites careful, limited impact on the Little Manistee River without entirely preventing commercial and private development.



In all of our human history, our voices have been the only ones capable of describing the immeasurable qualities of natural places to those who cannot hear it. Local residents and landowners have an opportunity to lead a river-centric approach to land management in the area. Some may even consider this an obligation. We have the chance to formally demonstrate how good of a neighbor, a steward, we really are to the Little Manistee.

When a natural place has no voice to tell its story, the people who value it have an obligation to tell that story

Our voices alone can share that this place is special, and ought to stay that way.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Standards apply to land use within 400' of the river's edge (called a Zoning District)
- River Zoning Boards are chosen by the community: a local group of people from the zoning district
- **Permits** are required for new construction or alterations in the Zoning District and are evaluated by the Zoning Administrator
- **Variance** applications are necessary when a non-conforming use is desired by the landowner. These are reviewed and decided by the River Zoning Board.

THE NRP AND THE PROPERTY OWNER

A common concern is that ordinances are too constricting. **Evidence shows that approval ratings for permits and variances are very high.**

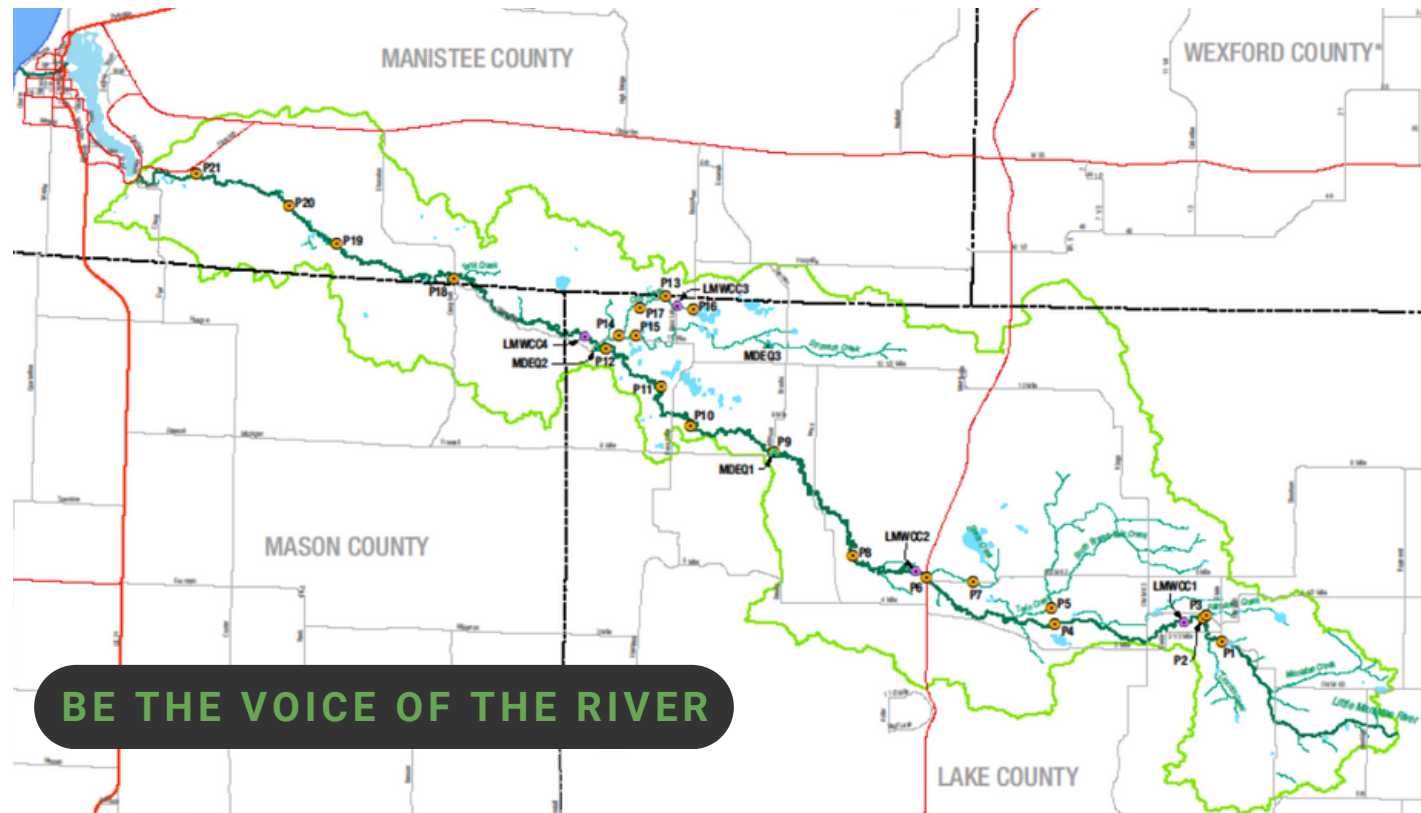
A FEW WAYS THE NRP HELPS:

- Reduce erosion through structure setbacks from shorelines
- Keep the water cold enough for trout and filter runoff using buffers of wild plant growth along the river's edge
- Maintain rural beauty for all river users through height limits on structures
- New development is required to be considerate of its impact on the waterway

WHY THE NRP? A CASE FOR THE LITTLE MANISTEE

The Natural Rivers Program sets a state standard for protection of the pristine nature of land within a 400'-wide corridor along designated Natural Rivers and important tributaries.

- The NRP recognizes the needs of current landowners and communities while meeting its primary function to preserve and protect the health and beauty of the river. In doing so, it maintains (and may even increase) property value by ensuring that land is maintained according to effective environmental standards, and your home or cabin are protected from high water events.
- River protection standards are customizable. While some standards are common to all Natural Rivers, **no two designated Natural Rivers' standards are the same.** Specifics are honed through input of the community and interested property owners.



BE THE VOICE OF THE RIVER