United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

**Eastern
Region**

March 2008

Pere Marquette National Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forests
Lake and Mason Counties, Michigan**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Printed on recycled paper

Decision Notice and
Finding of No Significant Impact

Pere Marquette Wild and Scenic River
Comprehensive River Management Plan

USDA Forest Service
Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forests
Lake and Mason Counties, Michigan

Background

Congress enacted and President Johnson signed into law the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, 1968; amended PL 95-625, 1978) to provide for a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (WSR). Eligible rivers must be free-flowing and have one or more "outstandingly remarkable" scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values. A river area is classified, designated, and managed as wild, scenic, or recreation, depending upon the level of development, access, and water quality at the time of designation. On November 10, 1978, a 66.4 mile segment of the main stream of the Pere Marquette, between the junction of the Middle and Little South Branches east of Baldwin and the Old Highway 31 Bridge, was classified as a National Scenic River and management responsibilities were delegated to the USDA Forest Service (PL 95-625).

Rivers in the Wild and Scenic River system must be managed to protect and enhance the "outstandingly remarkable values" (ORV) but not limit other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that the managing agency, or agencies, develop a comprehensive river management plan (CRMP) to provide for the protection of river values and provide programmatic direction. Currently, the Pere Marquette corridor is managed under the 1983 Pere Marquette National Scenic River Management Plan, as amended in 1990. See Appendix A for a map of the river corridor.

This decision updates the amended 1983 CRMP for the Pere Marquette National Scenic River. The goal of protection and enhancement of the river's ORVs, water quality, and free flowing conditions, is the foundation upon which management actions and direction in the CRMP are based. The CRMP includes standards and guidelines, recreation use capacities, recommended land and facilities development, and a resource monitoring system.

Decision and Rationale for the Decision

Decision

Based upon my review of the five alternatives analyzed in the October 2007 Environmental Assessment (EA Chapter 2, pgs. 23-70), I have decided to implement **Alternative 5 (Selected Alternative)** with one modification. The modification moves

night closures (of Forest Service access sites except designated campsites) from a management action to the Monitoring Plan under “Management Actions Triggered if Conditions are not Met” (EA Chapter 2, pgs. 45 and 57, and Appendix H Monitoring Plan, pg. 222). If monitoring finds that the current level of management is not protecting or enhancing the ORVs, more restrictive measures, such as night closures, may be instituted by the Forest Service.

The Selected Alternative serves as the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the Pere Marquette National Scenic River, which this decision approves. The CRMP describes the desired conditions for the river-related values, along with the necessary management standards and guidelines designed to maintain or move resource conditions toward those desired conditions. It also includes a list of actions that may be undertaken within the Wild and Scenic River corridor, and a monitoring framework. A **summary** of the management actions included in the selected alternative is listed below. A complete review of the CRMP or the EA is recommended so that all actions associated with the Selected Alternative are understood.

The following actions can be implemented without additional analysis.

- The Forest Service and DNR will work towards unified management of the facilities and lands within the river corridor. This may be accomplished using a variety of processes, including but not limited to, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), land exchange (about 1,300 acres of State land would become part of the National Forest System within the river corridor), or the lease of State access sites by the Forest Service (FSM 2354.03 (5)).
- The Forest Service ensures that tribal members be allowed unimpeded access to the Pere Marquette for all 1836 Treaty rights including tribal regulated hunting, fishing, and gathering activities.
- Update the Pere Marquette Sign Plan.
- Develop tools and products for use with the public to educate visitors on river use ethics.
- Enforce all existing rules and laws with special emphasis on violations related to litter, trash dumping, open fires on Forest Service land outside of designated campgrounds, operating watercraft under the influence, camping, and illegal parking.
- Delineation of parking with signs and/or wheel stops will occur at all sites. Work with counties to address parking concerns adjacent to all developed sites, except Rosebush Bend, by restricting parking on county roads within 400 yards of developed access site year round.
- Development and implementation of a web-based watercraft permit acquisition system.
- Summer watercraft permits will be pooled during the week (Monday through Friday, except holidays). The total number of summer watercraft permits available will not change.
- Restrictions will be placed on the number of spring and fall visitors through parking availability (660 spaces). Additional fall visitor restrictions include limits

on fall watercraft use; a daily maximum of 150 watercraft permits will be available.

- Definitions of what constitutes a watercraft will be changed to: one permit equals 1 canoe or, 1 drift boat or, 1 inner tube or, 2 solo kayaks, or 1 of any other type of watercraft EXCEPT rafts. Tandem kayaks will require one permit. Two permits are required for one raft.
- Riparian landowner watercraft permits, one per tax parcel, will be issued annually and have an annual use report requirement. The permit will be transferable between watercraft owned by the landowner.
- No change to the current commercial watercraft permits for fishing on the Pere Marquette River.
- The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classification will change for the river segment between Lower Branch Bridge and Walhalla from Semi Primitive Motorized to Roaded Natural.
- Implement the Monitoring Plan (EA Appendix H and CRMP Chapter 5).

The following actions will require additional site-specific analysis which includes opportunities for the public to provide input and comments.

- Restroom facilities will be provided or improved at Elk, Logmark, and Maple Leaf.
- Facilities will be improved or defined at Jorgenson's and 40th Street.
- The Gleason's Landing boat slide will be removed and replaced with a back-down launch. In addition, an overflow parking area that serves both Gleason's Landing and Jorgensen's will be constructed.
- Angler trails are proposed at Bowman Bridge.
- Seasonal overflow parking will be constructed adjacent to Wingleton Road (Rainbow Rapids) for vehicles with boat trailers only.
- Angler boat access with parking for approximately ten vehicles will be provided at Lower Branch Bridge.
- Parking at Maple Leaf at the two existing lots will be enlarged.
- Indian Bridge will be modified to accommodate drift boat passage.
- The Forest Service Recreation Enhancement Fee Program will be expanded to include all developed sites under Forest Service management except for walk-in and canoe-in only sites.

Rationale

Section 3(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that "…the Federal agency charged with the administration of each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall prepare a comprehensive management plan…to provide for the protection of the river values. The plan shall address resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and other management practices necessary or desirable to achieve the purposes of this Act." The CRMP for the Pere Marquette River was last updated in 1990. Since that time, use, regulations, and development pressure

within the corridor has changed necessitating an update of the management plan (EA Chapter 1, pgs. 16-20).

In reaching my decision, I began by reviewing the purpose and need for the project (EA Chapter 1, pgs. 2-3) and all of the alternatives presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA). I then weighed the effects analyses of the alternatives analyzed in detail and the public comments received on the EA. Using this as my guide I selected the modified Alternative 5 because it protects and enhances the river's outstandingly remarkable values of recreation, fisheries, scenery, and heritage resources while providing for recreational opportunities within the river corridor, as well as protects free flow and water quality. It best responds to the Key Issues of River Access and Facilities and Recreation Use and Capacity; the Analysis Issues of Shoreline Appearance and Aquatic and Riparian Habitat; and the Management Issues of Law Enforcement, Unified Management, Improved Signing, Information and Education, Land Exchange and Acquisition, and Maintenance of Existing Facilities used to compare and analyze the alternatives (EA Chapter 2, Table 10, pgs. 65-70).

A monitoring plan is part of this decision (EA Appendix H, pgs. 217-228 and CRMP Chapter 5). Monitoring will allow the Forest Service to determine if the plan is being implemented, if desired conditions are being achieved and maintained, if standards and guidelines are being followed, and if ORVs are being protected and enhanced. If monitoring indicates the level of management is not effective in protecting and enhancing free-flow, water quality, and ORVs, then more restrictive actions can be instituted by the agency. The Forest Service may issue closure orders due to resource damage without environmental analysis. Documentation as to the need for change and the action would be placed in the project file.

In addition, the following measures are within the range of alternatives developed and evaluated. As a result of new information and monitoring conducted over the life of the CRMP, a new decision may be issued and include one or more of the following restrictions:

- Require walk-in anglers to obtain a river corridor use permit.
- Adjust the watercraft permit system by :

  Changing the number of watercraft permits allocated per section or per day.

  Adding additional restrictions such as group size limits or additional boat launch restrictions (metered launches).

  Requiring public watercraft permits over a longer season of use.

  Issuing watercraft permits based on a lottery system.
- Restrict the number of walk-in anglers.
- Add a required designated campsite permit.
- Close access sites, trails, and streambank areas to recreation use.
- Implement seasonal night closures of Forest Service access sites (except designated campsites) during the Fall fishing season.

Any new decisions would require an analysis that would include public participation.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the Selected Alternative, I considered four other alternatives. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in Tables 7-10 of the EA on pages 49-60 and 65-70.

Alternative 1 – No Action, Continuation of the amended 1983 Pere Marquette CRMP Under Alternative 1, management of the Pere Marquette National Scenic River and its corridor would continue under the amended 1983 Pere Marquette CRMP. There would be no change from current direction. I did not select this alternative because it is not responsive to changed conditions of use and development within the corridor. Continued management under this alternative could result in an impact to the river's ORVs. A complete discussion of this Alternative can be found in the EA on pages 23-32.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

The Proposed Action, Alternative 2, would provide a balance between recreation use and demands and the protection and enhancement of river resources. This alternative was identified as the preferred alternative during the 30-day comment period on the May 2007 pre-decisional EA. In response to public comments a fifth alternative was developed. Many of the actions identified in Alternative 2 were included in the new alternative. See pages 23-27 and 33-38 of the EA for a complete discussion of this alternative.

Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3 river resource protection would be emphasized with minimal change to existing facilities and expansion of the watercraft management system into the spring and fall seasons. Existing facilities would be maintained and improvements would be limited to what is necessary for the protection of river resources. The boat slide at Gleason's Landing would be removed and use of Bowman Bridge access for retrieving and launching boats would be required. Available parking spaces would remain the same as current conditions with approximately 600 spaces within the river corridor (Forks to Old US 31 Bridge). Parking concerns adjacent to all developed Forest Service sites, except Rosebush Bend, are addressed by restricting parking on county roads within 400 yards of the developed access site year round.

Alternative 3 would provide visitor control during fall and spring seasons by controlling available parking and requiring a watercraft permit on weekends and holidays during these peak use seasons. Visitor use would also be reduced since no facility construction would be implemented and any reconstruction would be scaled and sited to reduce visitor impacts to the ORVs. Developed access and recreation sites, except designated campsites, would be closed from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. during the fall season. No parking, launching, or boat retrieval would be allowed during these hours. Snowplowing of river access sites would not occur.

Riparian landowners would be required to obtain a watercraft permit for each use like the general public. Alternative 3 would reduce Forest Service permitted commercial

watercraft permits by 25% as businesses sold or use fell below a minimum. (EA Chapter 2, pgs. 23-27, 33-35, and 42-44)

I did not select this alternative because while it would protect and enhance the ORVs it would limit the public's use and enjoyment of the river more than needed to protect the river values (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 10 (a)).

Alternative 4

This alternative would provide for the highest level of recreation use and would be the least restrictive to the recreation user. Under this alternative access and facilities would be increased. Restroom facilities would be provided or improved at Elk, Logmark, Maple Leaf, and Lower Branch Bridge. New parking would be provided at Jorgenson's and 40th Street. A back-down launch is proposed at Gleason's Landing. New seasonal overflow parking for vehicles with trailers would be provided at Rainbow Rapids (Wingleton Road), Gleason's Landing, Claybanks, and Green Cottage. Construction of angler boat access with parking for approximately 20 vehicles at Lower Branch Bridge would occur. Parking at Maple Leaf would be enlarged at the existing location. Providing year round drift boat passage under Indian Bridge is included in Alternative 4.

Available parking spaces would increase approximately 25 percent over the current level to approximately 790 spaces within the river corridor (Forks to Old US 31 Bridge), with approximately 690 parking spaces upstream of Indian Bridge (inclusive). This would occur through the establishment of overflow parking, enlarging existing parking areas, or delineation of sites with signs and wheel stops at Green Cottage, Claybanks, Jorgenson, Gleason's Landing, Rainbow Rapids, 40th Street, Lower Branch Bridge, Maple Leaf, and Walhalla. Parking would be restricted on county roads adjacent to developed access sites.

Summer public watercraft permits would not be required Monday through Thursday, excluding holidays and there are no additional permits proposed for spring and fall visitors. Alternative 4 would increase Forest Service permitted commercial fishing permits by 25%. Developed access and recreation sites would not be closed from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. during the fall season. Riparian landowner watercraft permits, one per tax parcel, would be issued annually and have an annual use report requirement. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classification would change for the river segment from Lower Branch Bridge to Walhalla from Semi Primitive Motorized to Roaded Natural. (EA Chapter 2, pgs. 23-27, 33-35, and 42-44)

I did not select this alternative because the effects analysis showed that there could be an impact to the river's ORVs and classification, i.e. that the scenic classification would have to be changed to recreation (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 10(a)).

In addition to the five alternatives that were considered in detail, four actions were considered but not analyzed in detail (EA Chapter 2, pps. 61-62).

Public Involvement

In 1996, the Forest Service and Michigan State University entered into a partnership to gather data on use and to identify the public's issues for the Pere Marquette River. There was a year-long survey of use in the river corridor commencing in the Fall of 1996

and concluding in the Summer of 1997. This survey provided data on the number of people using the river and the river corridor, what activities people were participating in, and the economic contribution of the users and their activities to the local economy.

The second part of this project involved interviews with visitors and shoreline owners who had said they would be willing to be interviewed when they completed the original use survey. Visitors and shoreline owners were interviewed by telephone and asked questions about their use of the corridor and its management. A list of issues and concerns identified as extremely or highly important was generated from this research (Nelson and Smith 1998; Smith 1999). This list of issues and concerns were the starting point for discussions with the public when the Huron-Manistee National Forests began the process of updating the 1983 Pere Marquette CRMP in 2003.

Since this initial research was completed, there have been three public meetings; the first on November 19, 2003, a second on January 29, 2004, and a third on December 14, 2006. Invitations to these meetings were mailed to river users, permit holders, riparian owners, conservation organizations, Pere Marquette Watershed Council, Tribal representatives, Michigan DNR, local government officials, and interested publics. For those that could not attend a meeting, contact information for mailing, emailing, or calling in comments was provided.

Each of these meetings had a specific objective(s). The first meeting in November 2003 was to review the issues that had been identified by Nelson et. al. to ensure the Forest Service had captured the issues that needed to be addressed in the river plan update. At the meeting, no additional broad issues were added to the list generated from the phone interviews in 1998 with riparian owners and visitors. However, the meeting along with e-mails, phone calls, and letters received in response to this November 2003 meeting provided clarification and detail to the broad issues.

The objectives for the second meeting in January 2004 were to describe the current management situation for various river resources and the rules and regulations, i.e. the framework within which the river plan update process would take place. An additional objective included the review of the issues. Comments from the meeting, e-mails, phone calls, and letters received after the January meeting confirmed the issues had been adequately identified.

The third meeting was held in December 2006. The objective of the meeting was to review the alternatives to ensure a reasonable range that addressed the issues identified by the public, Tribes, State of Michigan, and Forest Service had been developed. In response to public comments received at the meeting, phone calls, e-mails, and letters some proposed actions in the alternatives were modified.

In addition to the public meetings information about the river plan update process, all handouts, powerpoint presentations, and meeting notes were posted on the Huron-Manistee National Forests website (www.fs.fed.us/r9/hmnf/index.shtml). The 1983 Pere Marquette National Scenic River Plan update project has also been listed continuously on the Huron-Manistee National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions since April 1, 2004 providing additional opportunity for public comment.

Appendix B of the EA (pgs. 176-192) documents the scoping process and issues used for updating the Pere Marquette CRMP and include: public participation timeline, the

broad issues and where they are addressed in the EA, and a list of commenters and a summary of their comments by public meeting. A copy of the information used to develop this Appendix can be found in the Project Record.

In May 2007 a pre-decisional Environmental Assessment was released to the public, Tribes, and State for a 30-day comment period. A legal notice advertising the opportunity to comment was published in the Cadillac News (paper of record) and the Ludington Daily News on May 7, 2007. It was also published in the Lake County Star on May 10, 2007. The Forest received comments from 75 individuals, organizations, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) during the 30-day comment period. Comments received resulted in the development and analysis of an additional alternative, Alternative 5. Appendix J of the EA provides a summary of the comments received and the Forest Service response. A copy of the mailing list and the letters and e-mails received can be found in the project file.

In October 2007, a second pre-decisional EA was released to the public, Tribes, and State for a 30-day comment period. A legal notice was published in the Cadillac News (paper of record) and the Ludington Daily News on November 11, 2007. It was also published in the Lake County Star on November 9, 2007. Comments from 38 individuals, organizations, and the MDNR were received. In response to comments, Alternative 5 was slightly modified (40 CFR 1503.4). A summary of the comments received and the Forest Service response is attached as Appendix B. It has also been appended to the EA as Appendix K. A copy of the mailing list and the letters and e-mails received can be found in the project file.

Findings Required by Laws and Regulations

Law	Regulation	Finding
National Forest Management Act (NFMA)	Compliance with Forest Plan	The CRMP would implement the 2006 Huron-Manistee National Forests' Plan. The goals and objectives outlined in the Forest's Plan for Wild and Scenic Rivers, Management Area 8.1, (III-1.1-2) are as follows: *Maintain the outstandingly remarkable values of each river for which they were designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.* *Management direction is established by each river's management plan.* The CRMP will be incorporated, by reference, into the Forests' Plan. The Forests' Plan intends for the CRMP to be a stand alone document. Once incorporated by reference, the CRMP can be updated without a Forests' Plan amendment.

Law	Regulation	Finding
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	PL 90-542, 1968; amended PL 95-625, 1978 36 CFR 297 Subpart A	The purpose and need for updating the CRMP is to meet requirements of Act and interagency guidelines. No facets of this decision include implementation of a water resource project; therefore, a Section 7(a) analysis is not necessary.
Wilderness Act	36 CFR 293	There are no wilderness areas within or adjacent to the Pere Marquette River corridor so it will not be impacted.
Endangered Species Act (ESA)	Section 7 Consultation	Letter from USFWS dated June 13, 2007 concurring with USFS determination that the action would result in a *no effect* determination for Karner blue butterfly and Indiana bat and a *may effect but not likely to adversely affect* determination for bald eagle. In 2007, the USFWS removed the bald eagle from their threatened list. The eagle is now considered a sensitive species by the Forest Service; populations will continue to be monitored and threats to viability mitigated.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186		The river corridor is designated as old growth. Populations and habitat are expected to remain stable.
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)		Heritage resources are an ORV along the river corridor. Desired condition and ORV indicators have been developed to ensure the ORV is maintained and enhanced (EA Chapter 1, pgs. 11-12). Also, all Federal undertakings must be in compliance with the provisions of the NHPA.
Ceded Territories and Tribal Relations		The Pere Marquette River lies within ceded territories under the Treaty of 1836. Consultation, under the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and four Michigan Tribes, occurred throughout the update process and will continue as the CRMP is implemented. The Forest Service will ensure that tribal members will be allowed unimpeded access to the river for all 1836 Treaty rights (EA Chapter 2, pg. 24).

Law	Regulation	Finding
Clean Air Act	PL 84-159, 69 Stat.322, as amended	The river corridor is not in a protected airshed. Decision does not result in any pollutant emissions.
Clean Water Act	Regulatory Permits	A watershed assessment completed in 1999 for the PM River system concluded that water quality is unimpaired. This was corroborated by MDEQ in 2002. To maintain water quality, desired conditions and indicators have been developed. Implementation of Best Management Practices for activities would assure compliance. Monitoring will indicate whether water quality is being maintained.
Michigan Natural Rivers Act	State Act 231, PA 1970	The objectives of this Act are similar and complement those of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers program.
Executive Order 11988	Floodplain Management	This decision does not authorize ground disturbing activities. Site-specific NEPA analysis would be completed for these projects. Project design would include BMPs and standards and guidelines to prevent impacts.
Executive Order 11990	Protection of Wetlands	See Floodplain Management.
Executive Order 12898	Environmental Justice	Analysis of social setting does not indicate there will be an impact to minority or low-income populations.
Executive Order 13112	Invasive Species	Monitoring Plan includes indicators, standards, sampling, and management actions to address non-native invasive species.

Finding of No Significant Impact

As the line officer with the delegated authority to make these decisions, it is my responsibility to review the EA and determine whether the proposed action may have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. In compliance with 40 CFR 1508.13 and 1508.27, the following findings support my determination that there will not be a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement will, therefore, not be prepared. I have considered both context and intensity in my determination, based on environmental analysis in the Pere Marquette CRMP Environmental Assessment. My decision is based on a review of the record that shows there was a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk.

Context

The direction contained in the CRMP is programmatic and does not authorize implementation of site-specific, ground disturbing actions. Geographically the CRMP applies to the Pere Marquette National Scenic River Corridor established and published in the Federal Register (April 18, 1980, Vol. 45 No. 75) when the river was designated a National Scenic River. See Appendix A.

Environmental effects of the proposed action are essentially limited to the management area (river corridor) while the effects to human values extend to those who visit or use the river and its corridor.

Intensity

1. Consideration of both beneficial and adverse impacts. The purpose of the action is to establish a plan to meet regulatory requirements and standards to better protect and enhance designated ORVs and to maintain water quality and free-flow within the river. Specific actions are designed to benefit ORVs by mitigating impacts of uses that have the potential to significantly affect the ORVs. For example, the implementation of a fall watercraft permit system that would limit the number of boats on the river and pooling of watercraft permits Monday thru Friday during the summer season (EA Chapter 4, pgs. 123-164).

2. Consideration of the effects on public health and safety. Standards and guidelines (EA Appendix C, pgs. 193-199), limits on recreation use and capacity (EA Appendix F, pgs. 207-214), monitoring for water quality and recreation resource conditions (EA Appendix H, pgs. 219 and 222), and increased education and enforcement activities all contribute to improving public health and safety.

3. Consideration of the unique characteristics of the geographic area. This decision will not adversely affect any unique areas, historic features, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, or ecologically critical areas. While this decision does apply to a Congressionally and State designated river the intent of the CRMP is to protect and enhance the river and values for which it was designated. Therefore, ample consideration has been given to the unique characteristics within the project area. (EA Chapter 1, pgs. 8-21, Chapter 3, pgs. 71-109, and Chapter 4, pgs. 123-164)

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The differences in comments reflect a range of opinions and do not of and by themselves constitute controversy. I interpret the controversy criteria in a FONSI to be the degree to which there is scientific controversy relative to the results of the effects analysis, not whether one favors or opposes a specific alternative. Although I anticipate this decision will not be acceptable to all, the best available science was utilized in the preparation of the effects analysis for the CRMP and no scientific controversy has been identified. (EA Appendices B, J, and K)

5. Consideration of the degree to which effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. Rivers in the Wild and Scenic River system must be managed to protect and enhance the “outstandingly remarkable values” but not limit other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that the managing agency, or agencies, develop a comprehensive river management plan (CRMP) to provide for the protection of river values. The Forest Service has a 25 year

implementation history on the Pere Marquette with the CRMP being completed in 1983 and amended in 1990. Direction in the 2008 CRMP update does contain new management actions but they are similar to others that have been utilized on other rivers in the Wild and Scenic River system. Monitoring will provide us information that can be used to modify or adapt management if needed.

6. The degree to which this action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about future considerations. The CRMP, by Congressional intent, establishes a precedent for future management of the river corridor (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 3 (d)(1)). However, the management actions, standards and guidelines, and monitoring activities incorporated into the CRMP are designed to prevent actions that could have significant effects to the ORVs or other aspects of the human environment.

7. Consideration of the action in relation to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant effects. Each resource area addressed in Chapter 4 of the EA includes a cumulative effects analysis. The cumulative effects of the proposed action have been analyzed and no significant effects are anticipated. In addition, other projects on the Huron-Manistee that have the potential to impact a wild and scenic river must address the impacts in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

8. The degree to which the action may affect listed or eligible historic places. One of the designated ORVs is heritage resources. The CRMP provides for the survey, protection, interpretation, and monitoring of this resource. Clearance, with concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office, and consultation with the Tribes would be completed for any future site-specific projects in the corridor.

9. The degree to which the action may affect an endangered species or their habitat. In a letter dated June 13, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Forest Service's determination that the action would result in a *no effect* determination for Karner blue butterfly and Indiana bat and a *may effect but not likely to adversely affect* determination for bald eagle. In 2007, the USFWS removed the bald eagle from their threatened list. The eagle is now considered a sensitive species by the Forest Service; populations will continue to be monitored and threats to viability mitigated.

10. Whether the proposed action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The purpose of this action is to ensure compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This decision does not threaten violation of any Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Implementation

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Implementation of activities described in Chapter 4 of the CRMP will only occur following appropriate site-specific NEPA analysis and is dependent upon available funding.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215 by those who supplied comments or otherwise expressed interest in this proposal before the close of the 30-day comment period. Written notice of appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.4 "Content of an Appeal."

An appeal submitted to the Appeal Deciding Officer becomes a part of the appeal record. It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project or activity-specific evidence and rationale, focusing on the decision, to demonstrate why the Responsible Official's decision should be reversed. The appeal must be filed in writing with the Responsible Official and, at a minimum, must include the following:

1. State the document is an appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR 215;

2. List the name and address of the appellant and, if possible, a telephone number. When multiple names are listed, identify the lead appellant. Signature or other verification of authorship must be provided upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal);

3. Identify the decision document by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official;

4. Identify the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes or portion of the decision to which the appellant objects and an explanation for the disagreement;

5. State how the Responsible Official's decision fails to consider comments previously provided, either before or during the comment period specified in 215.6 and, if applicable, how the appellant believes the decision violates law, regulation, or policy.

A written notice of appeal must be submitted within 45 calendar days after the Legal Notice is published in the *Cadillac News*; Cadillac, Michigan; however, when the 45-day filing period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, then filing time is extended to the end of the next Federal working day. The date of the publication of the Legal Notice is the only means for calculating the date by which appeals must be submitted. The Notice of Appeal must be sent to:

Attn: Appeal Deciding Officer
USDA – Forest Service, Eastern Region
Gaslight Building, Suite 700
626 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Appeals may be faxed to 414-944-3963. Hand delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. Those wishing to submit appeals by email may do so to: appeals-eastern-regionaloffice@fs.fed.us. Acceptable formats for electronic comments are text or html email, Adobe portable document format, and formats viewable in

Microsoft Office applications. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14 and will only be accepted from those who have standing to appeal as outlined at 36 CFR 215.13.

The publication of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Appellants should not rely on dates or time frame information provided from any other source.

When there is a question about timely filing of an appeal, timeliness shall be determined by:

1. The date of the postmark, e-mail, fax or other means of filing an appeal and any attachments; or

2. The time and date imprint at the correct Appeal Deciding Officer's office on a hand delivered appeal and any attachments;

3. When an appeal is electronically mailed, the appellant should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the appellant does not receive an automated acknowledgment of receipt of the appeal, it is the appellant's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Contact

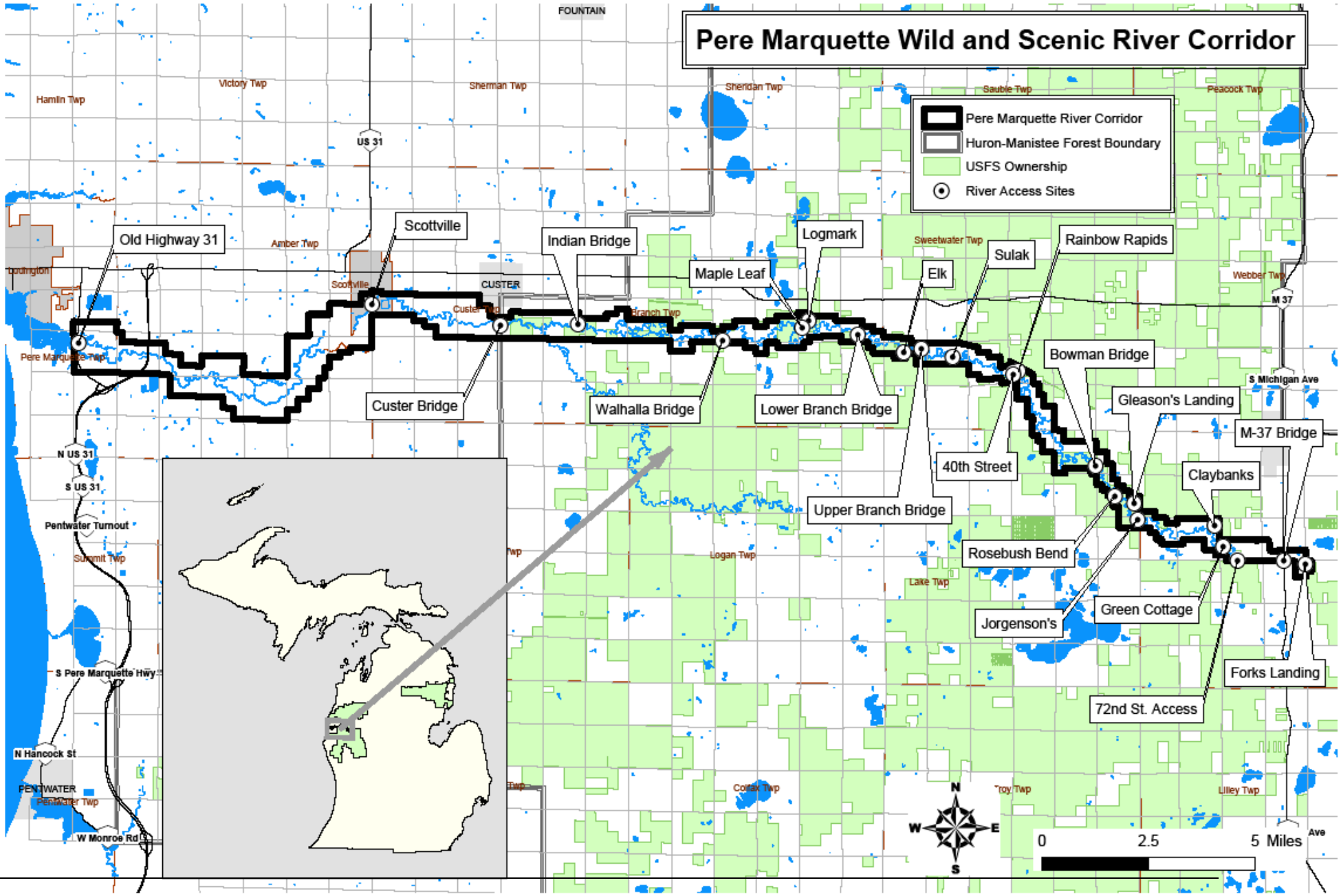
For further information on this decision, contact Les Russell, District Ranger or Diane Walker, Assistant Ranger at 231-745-4631.

Jerry Bird

JERRY BIRD
Acting Forest Supervisor

03/24/08
Date

Appendix A



Pere Marquette Wild and Scenic River Corridor
Pere Marquette River Corridor
Huron-Manistee Forest Boundary
USFS Ownership
River Access Sites
Old Highway 31
Scottville
Indian Bridge
Maple Leaf
Logmark
Elk
Sulak
Rainbow Rapids
Custer Bridge
Walhalla Bridge
Lower Branch Bridge
Upper Branch Bridge
40th Street
Bowman Bridge
Gleason's Landing
M-37 Bridge
Claybanks
Rosebush Bend
Green Cottage
Jorgenson's
Forks Landing
72nd St. Access
FOUNTAIN
CUSTER
US 31
M 37
N US 31
S US 31
Pentwater Turnout
S Pere Marquette Hwy
N Hancock St
PENTWATER
W Monroe Rd
S Michigan Ave
Hamlin Twp
Victory Twp
Sherman Twp
Sheridan Twp
Sauble Twp
Peacock Twp
Amber Twp
Sweetwater Twp
Webber Twp
Branch Twp
Pere Marquette Twp
Summit Twp
Logan Twp
Lake Twp
Colfax Twp
Troy Twp
Lilley Twp
N
S
E
W
0
2.5
5 Miles

Response to Comments on the October 2007 Environmental Assessment

Introduction

Comments received on the Environmental Assessment (EA) were essential in the update of the Pere Marquette National Scenic River Management Plan (PM River Plan). This appendix describes the process used to analyze public comments and develop agency responses. As mandated by law, the Huron-Manistee National Forests established and maintained correspondence with government agencies and tribal governments throughout the update process. Copies of all documents referenced in this appendix are located in the official project record, and are available upon request from the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District, Baldwin, Michigan.

Analysis of Public Comments

Comments on the EA for the update of the PM River Plan were received by the U.S. Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forests, in many forms, including letters, emails, faxes, and telephone calls. The content analysis and response to comments was completed by the interdisciplinary team.

Direction

As a federal agency, the USDA-Forest Service must follow the procedures mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act. Procedures of this Act include soliciting comment on environmental assessments from federal, state and local agencies, tribal governments, and interested and affected publics (40 CFR 1503.1[a]). Further, the agency is directed to “assess and consider comments, both individually and collectively” (40 CFR 1503.4[a]) and prepare a response to those concerns expressed during the comment period following the November 9, 2007 release of the EA for the update of the PM River Plan.

Possible responses to comments considered include (40 CFR 1503.4[a]):

- Modify alternatives, including the proposed action.
- Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency.
- Supplement, improve, or modify its analyses.
- Make factual corrections.
- Explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response, citing the sources, authorities, or reasons, which support the agency's position and, if appropriate, indicate those circumstances which would trigger agency reappraisal or further response.

Comment Letter Processing

The Huron-Manistee received comments from 38 individuals, organizations, and government agencies during the formal, 30-day comment period following the November

9, 2007 release of the EA for the update of the PM River Plan. The Forest Service used a coding structure and standardized application process of the coding structure to categorize comments. This method is effective in analyzing comments as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Using this coding structure, the content analysis of each letter, email, and phone call was completed. All comments received are available for public review in the project record.

Content Analysis

Each comment letter was read in its entirety, with the primary topic(s) identified. Comments were grouped by similar issues and further refined to eliminate redundancy. Content analysis involves not only identifying each action or change requested by a respondent, but also the reason(s) behind each request in order to capture the full argument of each comment. Therefore, paragraphs within a comment letter may be divided into several comments because multiple arguments are presented. Alternatively, several paragraphs that form one, coherent statement may be identified as a complete argument. A summary of comments by commenter can be found in Table B1.

Substantive Comments

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the interdisciplinary team to formally respond to substantive comments. Substantive comments are defined as those that fall within the scope of the decision-making for the PM River Plan. Based on the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations, a substantive comment is one that:

- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the EA;
- Questions, with a reasonable basis, the adequacy of analysis as presented;
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EA that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action and address significant issues; or
- Cause changes or revisions in the proposal.

Non-substantive comments, or concerns identified from them, include those that simply state a position in favor of or against an alternative, merely agree or disagree with Forest Service policy, or otherwise express an unsupported personal preference or opinion. While simple statements of opinion without a rationale were captured during the content analysis process, it is the strength of the respondent's rationale as a complete argument that provided the resource specialists of the interdisciplinary team a substantive comment to answer.

Scope of Decision

The Council of Environmental Quality's (40 CFR 1508.25) regulations define "scope" as the range of connected, similar or cumulative actions, the alternatives and mitigation measures, and the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to be considered in the environmental assessment. The U.S. Forest Service is required to explain why comments are determined outside the scope of the project. Generally, the types of comments received, and concerns identified, that were considered outside the scope of the PM River Plan update:

- Do not address the purpose, need, or goals of the PM River Plan update. Examples include comments that are not directly related to the EA or PM River Plan update such as concerns pertaining to routine administrative functions.
- Offer suggestions about areas beyond the Huron-Manistee's jurisdiction.
- Request action on concerns that are addressed by federal law or national policy.
- Suggest an action not appropriate for the current level of planning, such as actions that would occur through implementation of the PM River Plan update.
- Recommendations that did not consider reasonable and foreseeable negative consequences.
- Do not provide rationale for the suggestion or are statements of opinion.

Response to Comments

Once comments were reviewed, and issues identified, responses to the issues were developed. Where applicable, responses include references to chapters or sections within the EA where more information is available. Where warranted, responses note modifications to proposed actions, additional analyses conducted, as well as clarifications and/or corrections made to the final documents in response to comments received.

Issue Statements

The issue statements and the responses to these statements are presented in the remainder of this appendix. Comments and accompanying responses have been grouped by the issues used to develop and compare the alternatives.

A. River Access and Facilities – General Issues

Comment #28: Need new PM river signs throughout the watershed.

a. Develop PM watershed logo to give it recognition and draw people in.
b. Current signs say what not to do. New signs should say what to do and also provide information on the watershed.

Response: We agree that it is important for the public to be able to readily identify the Pere Marquette River and its access sites, as well as have useful information about the river in various formats. The update of the CRMP recognizes and reemphasizes the importance of information and education and identifies a number of actions we would take to guide, inform, and protect visitors to the river including the development of a logo unique to the Pere Marquette (EA Chapter 2, p. 25 and Appendix G – PM River Sign Recommendations).

Comment #29: Reduce stress in watershed by making access low impact.

Response: Use and population pressure have changed along the Pere Marquette River corridor triggering this update of the CRMP. Any actions within the corridor, including changes to access, would be evaluated within the framework of the WSR Act which considers the impacts of the proposal on free-flow, water quality, and the river's outstandingly remarkable values.

Comment #41: Increasing access points will allow a healthy spread of fishermen reducing current over-crowding issues.

Response: Comment is noted.

Comment #42: Restricting use in the flies only area may prevent overcrowding and direct fisherman to other areas of the river.

Response: Comment is noted.

Comment #44: In favor of all improvements, increasing parking and ticketing will help control illegal parking.

Response: Support noted.

B. River Access and Facilities – Issues Related to Specific Access Sites

Comment #36: Eliminate drift boat launching at Green Cottage. The site was not designed for this activity; only small watercraft that can be carried down the steps should be launched here.

a. It would preserve the site as an access for walk-in traffic as it was originally intended.
b. It would allow wading anglers some time before boats arrive.
c. On the downside, it would concentrate more boats on the upper stretch and increase float times but this could be alleviated by reducing permits in this stretch during peak fishing times, perhaps reallocate permits to other stretches.

Response: The Green Cottage property was acquired to provide a canoe rest step and angler access and parking between the Forks and Gleason's Landing. In 1991, the Forest Service completed an Environmental Assessment for the development of the Green Cottage Access Site. This process included public involvement. The selected alternative provided for watercraft access, including drift boats, a canoe rest stop, and parking for vehicles with trailers and walk-in anglers. Over time, the steps used for access deteriorated and became unsafe and in 2006 the Forest Service replaced them. Under Alternatives 1, 2, 4, and 5, the facilities will be maintained as currently designed limiting drift boat use at Green Cottage by available parking spaces for vehicles with trailers (EA Chapter 2 Table 7, p. 49).

No attempt was made by the Forest Service to allocate drift boat use by river segment for the spring or fall watercraft seasons since no information was available to form the basis of such allocations. However, the Forest Service will be monitoring use and adjustments, such as allocation by river segment, can be made in the future based on monitoring data.

Comment #20: Lumberjack and Fisherman's Trail access points should be included when counting available parking and implementing night closures.

a. These two sites are only 400 yards from Green Cottage. If parking is not limited here people could just walk to Green Cottage.

Response: We recognize that there are a number of informal access points being used by recreationists. The intent of the CRMP is not to formalize or designate every point of access within the river corridor. If monitoring shows that overcrowding at developed sites continues or we are seeing an increase in user created parking and access areas additional actions, such as requiring walk-in anglers to have a permit, can be triggered through adaptive management.

Comment #3: Support for Gleason's Landing improvements (back-down launch, seasonal over-flow parking lot)

a. It will reduce erosion and make safer.
b. It should be second priority after Lower Branch Bridge access improvements.
c. It will increase put-in use and relieve congestion at the site.
d. It will increase use of Gleason's to Bowman Bridge stretch of river.
e. State Natural River's permits will be required for renovations within 400 feet of river. Please consult with Natural Rivers staff early in the process.

Response: Support for improvements proposed in Alternatives 4 and 5 is noted. Prioritization of project implementation within the Pere Marquette National Scenic River corridor would be based on available funding, both from Congressionally appropriated dollars and outside partner funds. Prior to any work occurring, the Forest Service would conduct site-specific NEPA which includes public scoping and consultation with the State of Michigan Natural Rivers program. All required permits would be obtained prior to implementation

Comment #4: Opposition to Gleason's Landing improvements

a. Reconstruct the old watercraft slide in an environmentally safe manner.
b. A back-down watercraft launch will increase use at the site.
c. Gleason's Landing should be a carry-in launch.

Response: Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) and 3 propose closure of Gleason's Landing to trailered boat use. During the 30-day comment period on the May 2007 EA many comments on this proposal were received. One issue that was not considered by the Forest Service in their analysis of these alternatives is that Gleason's Landing is the downstream boundary of the "flies only" special regulation water. This would mean that anglers who wanted to fish from Gleasons to Bowman would be in violation of State regulations prohibiting the possession of bait in special waters. Alternative 1 would retain a watercraft slide and Alternatives 4 and 5 propose a back down launch. The effects of each of these alternative actions are described in Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences.

Comment #45: Idea of using Bowman's Bridge as an access point is interesting if you extend flies only section to Bowman's you may increase use. I typically get out at Gleason's because it is the end of the flies only water and that is where most guides get out.

Response: Under all Alternatives the facilities at Bowman Bridge will be maintained as currently designed (EA Chapter 2, Table 7 p. 51). Some members of the public feel that a back down launch at Gleason's Landing may actually

increase use of Bowman Bridge as anglers looking for a shorter trip use this section of river.

The State of Michigan is responsible for the enforcement of State laws and regulations in the river zone, including those related to fishing (EA Chapter 1, p. 5). Therefore, any proposal to extend the "flies only" water falls under the jurisdiction of the State and is beyond the authority of the U.S. Forest Service and the scope of the Pere Marquette National Scenic River Management Plan.

Comment #24: Support for expanding the parking lot at Rainbow Rapids.

a. Should be the second priority after access at Lower Branch Bridge because float use from Rainbow Rapids to Lower Branch will increase.

Response: Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 include expanding parking at Rainbow Rapids. Support of expanding the lot is noted.

Prioritization of project implementation within the Pere Marquette National Scenic River corridor would be based on available funding, both from Congressionally-appropriated dollars and outside partner funds.

Comment #27: Opposes 40th Street access development

a. Designate as access but improve to minimize erosion and user-created riparian damage.

Response: Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 include improvements at 40th Street. The 40th Street access site is currently not a developed site but is being used by the public for walk-in access (EA Chapter 3, Table 14, p. 86). This "facility" would be improved by having a parking area defined with parking spaces delineated (EA Chapter 2, Table 7 p. 51). Formally developing this site is expected to increase resource protection, reduce trespass on private land, allow parking controls, and make use of the river at this location more convenient for the walk-in visitor (EA Chapter 4, p. 133). Site-specific NEPA and public involvement would be completed prior to improvements if one of these Alternatives is selected.

Comment #5: Support for formal watercraft access at Lower Branch Bridge.

a. It will decrease boat density in other parts of the river by spreading out use.
b. It will improve experience for boaters and wading anglers by spreading fishing pressure out.
c. It will reduce existing erosion at the site.
d. It should be the first priority.

Response: Support for proposed improvements is noted. Throughout the update of the Pere Marquette National Scenic River Management Plan, river users have expressed a desire to expand the number of river access points to improve recreation opportunities and spread out use over more of the river. The location most often cited for development is Lower Branch Bridge (EA Chapter 1 – Key Issue 1, p. 16). Prioritization of project implementation within the Pere Marquette National Scenic River corridor would be based on available funding, both from Congressionally appropriated dollars and outside partner funds.

Comment #6: Opposition to access at Lower Branch Bridge.

a. More traffic on the river will be detrimental to bald eagles.
b. It will result in increased noise, traffic, and reduced security for landowners.
c. This stretch of river currently provides more of a wilderness (backcountry) setting and access would ruin this.
d. This is one of the few stretches of river left in Michigan for carry-in boats (canoes, kayaks) with little competition from commercial guides. Other parts of the PM and other rivers (Muskegon, Manistee) provide drift boat access.
e. This proposal considers drift boaters more, not enough consideration of all classes of users.
f. Taylor Road walk-in access anglers (Maple Leaf) will have more competition from drift boats.
g. The money for the access should be used instead to secure the site and stop people from dragging boats and causing erosion.
h. Commented against launch here during first 30-day public comment period and Forest Service response of (paraphrased) "leaving that stretch without a launch concentrates angling pressure on other sections of the river" is flawed because: (1) angling pressure across entire river is too high; (2) stretch from Landon Road to Walhalla is the last stretch where angling pressure is somewhat appropriate; (3) opening this stretch to drift boats will not bring pressure on other stretches to appropriate levels; and, (4) it will ruin the last piece of water where there is some reasonable level of angler use, you will allow the problem which is out of control across the rest of the river to infest this stretch where there are some natural limits to access.
i. Increase in boat traffic has directly affected the PM and its natural beauty, please be careful not to only listen to those who speak the loudest.

Response: As stated above, river users have expressed a desire to expand the number of river access points to improve recreation opportunities and spread out use over more of the river. The location most often cited for development is Lower Branch Bridge (EA Chapter 1 – Key Issue 1, p. 16).

The section of river between Lower Branch Bridge and Walhalla has development that exceeds the designation of semi-primitive motorized. Roads, electric line corridors, Barothy's Lodge, and other private developments visible from the river are simply too evident in regard to remoteness, naturalness, type and number of facilities and expected social encounters (EA Chapter 4, p. 131). These developments cannot readily be changed because the facilities are on private land (EA Chapter 4, p. 136). Changing the recreation opportunity spectrum classification for the river segment between Lower Branch Bridge and Walhalla from semi-primitive motorized to roaded natural acknowledges the existing level of development and recreation experience along this segment of river as well as expectations for future development (EA Chapter 4, p. 135).

Leaving Lower Branch Bridge without a watercraft launch facility would continue the situation of less access for boat anglers (less water to fish), thereby concentrating use on other sections of the river and increasing fishing pressure on these sections (EA Chapter 4, p. 142). Under Alternatives 2, 3, and 5 an increase in overall use on the river is unlikely to occur with an access at Lower Branch Bridge as the number of watercraft allowed on the river is capped by a proposed fall and/or spring watercraft permit system.

Finally, a -specific analysis would occur before any decisions are made as to the location, size, or facility specifics, including a Biological Assessment that describes the effects to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

Comment #35: Supports improved latrine facilities at Elk, Maple Leaf, and Logmark as long as their basic primitive character is maintained.

Response: Improvements to the Elk, Logmark, and Maple Leaf sites would occur under Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5 (EA Chapter 2, pp. 51-53). Support of these improvements is noted.

Replacing the pit toilet at Elk with a vault toilet would improve sanitation and subsequently water quality. The primitive character of the site would be maintained by limiting access to walk-in or canoe-in under all Alternatives.

Relocating the Logmark site in the same area to reduce erosion and provide better access to the river, installing a vault toilet, and designating four "primitive" campsites would be consistent with maintaining the outstandingly remarkable values of scenery, fisheries, and recreation for the Pere Marquette National Scenic River. Providing restroom facilities at Logmark would address sanitation concerns of riparian landowners while providing for visitor convenience (EA Chapter 4, p. 133).

All Alternatives include improvements for the Maple Leaf access which require site-specific analysis and public involvement prior to implementation.

Comment #23: Raising Indian Bridge is questionable, can't get through this stretch in a canoe without dragging it unless there is high water.

Response: Under Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 Indian Bridge would be raised to allow boat passage; however, under Alternatives 1 and 3 no change would occur to the bridge (EA Chapter 2, p. 54). As disclosed in the EA, Indian Bridge currently obstructs drift boat passage, especially during high water, limiting the value of the site as an exit from the river (EA Chapter 3, Table 14 p. 89). It should be noted that prior to the installation of the new bridge in 2004 boats were able to pass under the bridge even though the water is shallow in areas. The elevation of the new bridge is at the same level as the old but the design of the new bridge is different making passage more difficult.

C. Recreation Use and Capacity

Comment #1: Support for Alternative 4

- **a.** Agrees there are issues of overcrowding but way to deal with it is not more restrictions but better enforcement.
- **b.** Does not feel additional use restrictions in Alternative 2, 3, and 5 are fair and equitable.
- **c.** Night closures and limiting permits (Alternative 5) is all about privatization of the river and could be the first step of many in changing public access in the State of Michigan.

Response: The theme of Alternative 4 is to provide for the highest level of recreation use and demand while protecting and enhancing river resources. This alternative is the least restrictive to the recreation user. Support for this alternative is noted.

The Pere Marquette National Scenic River Management Plan is being updated to address public issues that have intensified or changed since the last update (1990). Two key issues were identified from public comments: (1) river access and facility management and, (2) visitor use and capacity. These issues were then used to develop the alternatives. Additional restrictions on visitor use for Alternatives 2, 3, and 5 (e.g., fall and/or spring watercraft permits, limits on parking, night-time closures of USFS access sites) were developed to be responsive to these key issues.

The Forest Service recognizes the need for additional enforcement of rules and regulations pertaining to the Pere Marquette National Scenic River corridor. The Forest Service would continue to work with local and State law enforcement agencies towards the desired condition of eliminating illegal behavior within the river corridor.

Comment #2: Supports Alternative 5

a. Look at use closely to insure that we are not developing a resource around guides and canoe liveries thereby restricting private, non-commercial use.
b. Supports over-flow parking at designated sites.

Response: Support of this alternative is noted. Alternative 5 is designed to provide a balance between recreation use and demands and the protection and enhancement of river resources while addressing the issues raised by the public, State, and the Tribes during the 30-day comment period for the April 2007 Environmental Assessment. Like the Proposed Action (Alternative 2), this alternative addresses the increasing year-round recreational use and demand within the river corridor.

Monitoring will provide a quality control and adaptive management strategy for the implementation of the Management Plan. The monitoring program (EA Appendix H) is designed to be the foundation for the long-term protection and enhancement of the Pere Marquette's river-related values. Objectives of the monitoring program are to:

- Determine the extent to which the plan is being implemented.
- Determine if desired conditions are being maintained or achieved.
- Ensure management direction (standards and guidelines) is being followed.
- Ensure management direction is effective in protecting and enhancing the outstandingly remarkable river values.
- Identify the need for adaptive management if the current level of management is not effective in protecting and enhancing the ORVs.

It should be noted that the commercial enterprises (guides, liveries) only exist because of public demand. The Forest Service has attempted to balance this

demand with other non-commercial public demands (private watercraft permits, parking needs, public access, etc.).

Comment #7: Support permits to limit watercraft and anglers.

Response: Support noted.

Comment #8: Permit availability (combined summer and fall watercraft)

a. Need permits to be readily available and at least one year in advance (internet/web-based system).
b. Permits need to be readily available for out-of-state visitors
c. Until a system to obtain permits that addresses the needs of the floating, unguided angler implementation should be delayed. A web-based system would be good or allow angler/boater to call the office before their trip and pay by credit card and assign them a permit number over the phone. To check their permit they would need to produce the permit number and their driver's license on the water.
d. Applaud limiting traffic on the PM but the current system does not work. Anglers cannot come a day early to get a permit. A number of alternative [approaches] can be developed to address this.

Response: It is the desire of the Forest Service to implement a web-based system to make it easier for the public to obtain watercraft permits. Ideally, one would access a system that could track permit availability for both livery permits and private watercraft permits. Such a system would allow the public to obtain permits outside office hours at the Baldwin Ranger District and eliminate the need to come to Baldwin for a permit when planning same day trips or trips on the lower (Segment 3) river.

Comment #9: Opposes fall and spring watercraft permits system.

a. A form of economic discrimination. Those who can pay for a guide get access.
b. Unequal distribution for a public resource.
c. Not clear how the system would be administered.
d. State residents should have precedence over out-of-state residents.
e. 150 watercraft permits limits where an angler can fish and will lead to more confrontations with landowners because reducing boat traffic will lead to more foot traffic and trespass. Foot traffic also causes more riparian degradation. The reason boating anglers spend more time at holes and move slowly down the river has to do more with the total number of anglers and the style of fishing, not boating pressure.
f. People cancel or do not show up and permits go unused.
g. Would support permits to monitor usage and increase revenue without limiting use.

Response: The number of permits for the fall season (Alternatives 2, 3, and 5) is based on the number of available parking spaces, current boat use, and the number of fishing holes (EA Appendix F, River Recreation Use Capacity Determination). In determining how many permits would be available under Alternatives 2, 3, and 5 the Forest Service attempted to seek an equitable balance between commercial guiding use and general public use in terms of the

proposed fall and spring watercraft permits. Seventy permits (47 percent) would be allocated to permitted guides (both Forest Service and DNR) and 80 permits (53 percent) would be available for the general public. This allocation considered historic use, trailer parking capacity within the corridor, and fishing hole density (EA Appendix F, pp. 210-214). It should be noted that commercial guides provide a service and are meeting a public demand and, in essence, their permit is being used by private users.

As stated previously, it is the desire of the Forest Service to implement a web-based system to make it easier for the public to obtain watercraft permits.

It is recognized that individuals who are not able to obtain a watercraft permit due to unavailability may choose walk-in angling as an alternative or they may use their watercraft on the section of river where permits would not be required. The Forest Service would continue to work with local and State law enforcement agencies towards the desired condition of eliminating illegal behavior within the river corridor. Also, monitoring will provide a quality control and adaptive management strategy for the implementation of the Management Plan. It would identify the need for adaptive management if the current level of management is not effective in protecting and enhancing the ORVs (e.g., degradation of riparian habitat due to over-use).

Finally, the Forest Service manages the Pere Marquette National Scenic River and is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As such, it is prohibited from discrimination in all its programs and activities.

Comment #10: Spring permit system may be needed.

a. Need to be pooled and available to the public.

b. Should be required and be minimal during this delicate season. Parking spaces should not be a control measure.

Response: The proposed use of permit seasons varies by alternative. Summer permits would be required under all Alternatives. Under Alternative 3 permits would be required in the spring, summer, and fall. Under Alternatives 2 and 5 fall permits would be required; in Alternatives 1 and 4 they would not. Measurement of key issue environmental effects are integrated into each Alternative and evaluated in Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences. Also, under Adaptive Management, if monitoring finds that the level of management is not protecting or enhancing the outstandingly remarkable values, more restrictive measures, such as requiring a permit over a longer season of use, would be instituted (EA Appendix H).

Parking spaces (in conjunction with a prohibition of parking along county roads within 400 yards of a National Forest access site) are felt to be an effective control of use. Parking spaces will be delineated, actual capacity for each developed site will be posted, and users will be expected to either park in a delineated space or go elsewhere if all parking spaces are full.

Comment #11: Fall permit system may be necessary but has flaws.

a. 150 total permits are not enough.

b. 70 guide permits and 80 private user permits is not an acceptable split for a public resource (not enough for public; either increase the total or reallocate more for private user).
c. 80 permits for commercial liveries and public is not enough for the fall.
d. Pool permits.
e. Do not want to drive 45 minutes to get a permit. Nature of the sport dictates unplanned outings.
f. River has a lot of out-of-state users. Limiting use could negatively affect local economy.
g. Restricting permits for watercraft will not reduce the number of fishermen. It will only concentrate people at walk-in locations which are already a problem during peak seasons.

Response: The number of permits for the fall season (Alternatives 2, 3, and 5) is based on the number of available parking spaces, current boat use, and the number of fishing holes (EA Appendix F, River Recreation Capacity Determinations).

Fishing guides are permitted through the Forest Service special use program. Although it is understood that not everyone agrees with the permitting of guides on the Pere Marquette River it is important to note that commercial guides exist as a business because there is a public demand for their services. By not permitting some guide activity on the Pere Marquette River we would not be fulfilling our responsibility to serve all members of the public to the best of our ability. We do not, however, cater to the guides in favor of the private citizen. As stated above, their services on the National Forest, including the use of any Forest Service facilities, are regulated through the special use program to ensure potential impacts are mitigated and a balance based on the best available information is reached (EA Chapter 2 – Alternatives, Actions Common to All Alternatives).

Individuals who are not able to obtain a fall watercraft permit due to unavailability may choose walk-in angling as an alternative (EA Chapter 2; Table 8, Fall watercraft permit numbers and allocations, p. 57) or they may use their watercraft below the section of river where permits would not be required (below Indian Bridge).

Also, as stated previously, it is the desire of the Forest Service to implement a web-based system to make it easier for the public to obtain watercraft permits.

Comment #12: The Pere Marquette River is a public resource. Therefore, [watercraft] permits should go to non-commercial users first and then left-overs can be used by guides.

a. Non-commercial users do less damage to the river corridor.

Response: Not everyone agrees with the permitting of guides on the Pere Marquette River. However, it is important to note that commercial guides exist as a business because there is a public demand for their services. As such, their services are regulated by the Forest Service. The 70 commercial – 80 private split on available fall and spring watercraft permits is based on the current number of guides operating under USFS and/or Michigan DNR permits

remaining the same and having at least an equal or slightly greater number available for non-commercial users (EA Appendix F, River Recreation Capacity Determinations). Numbers and other components of the system can be adjusted if monitoring shows there is a need.

There is no evidence that commercial guides do more damage to the river corridor. In fact, provisions of their special use permits ensure that they respect the river environment (e.g., responsibilities for trash, sanitation, customer service, etc.) or risk losing their permit.

Comment #13: Summer watercraft permit allocation/support for pooling of permits.

a. Support pooling Monday – Friday (as opposed to Monday – Thursday).
b. Requested consideration of an 80/20 percent livery/public split on each river segment to allow for more access for public boaters (those not using a commercial livery). No change in the Alternatives in the October EA that would reflect this request. Concerned the current system is too heavily weighted towards commercial liveries. Please reconsider an 80/20 split.
c. Enhance the ability of the public to obtain permits electronically through the internet. Non-commercial general public should receive priority over commercial interests when competing for limited public access.
d. Realign current watercraft permit allocation in favor of public from current 80/20 livery/public. Discourage raft use by requiring three permits per raft. Develop online permit acquisition system. Mandate more use of lower river through changed permit allocations.

Response: Under Alternative 5 permits would be pooled Monday – Friday excluding holidays. Pooling permits on these days would mean that the general public and the liveries would draw from a combined allocation of permits. This would potentially increase the number of permits available to the general public because historically the canoe liveries have not utilized all of their permitted capacity during the week. In addition, this would simplify management to some extent and encourage more use during those days not at capacity. Pooling permits on the weekends is not proposed because allocations are the basis for the businesses remaining viable. The liveries have been an historical part of the management of the Pere Marquette River. Public use of the river corridor in Lake and Mason counties, including use through canoe liveries and fishing guides, supported over 200 jobs.

Controversy and difference of opinion on private versus commercial opportunities for use of the Pere Marquette River has been ongoing since the early 1980s when the first CRMP was completed. Often times these differences are depicted as “public versus commercial” use. It is important to note that although we do acknowledge the different opinions, we (as the administering agency) view the use of public and commercial permits as meeting the public demands. All permits on the Pere Marquette go to the public, whether it be for private watercraft or those rented from liveries. The majority of watercraft users on the Pere Marquette River do not own canoes, kayaks, or rafts. Many of these people travel significant distances to enjoy the river. Without livery access, many would be unable to fully enjoy the river’s resources. The liveries serve the public in a manner that the Forest Service cannot; they are the provider of watercraft to

meet a public demand for access to a public resource that the Forest Service manages.

As with the commercial fishing guides, the commercial liveries exist because there is a public demand for their services. They are not a private organization in the sense that only limited members of the public can use their services. It should also be pointed out that on those instances when private watercraft permits are not available, livery-rented watercraft also sell out. Thus, on busy summer weekends (July and August), demand exceeds supply for available permits, both for private and livery-rented watercraft.

It is the desire of the Forest Service to implement a web-based system to make it easier for the public to obtain watercraft permits. Such a system would allow the Forest Service to track permit availability by allocation (commercial livery vs. public watercraft). Without this information, the Forest Service has no basis to go to the liveries and impose a change from historical use on weekends.

The total number of rafts will remain capped at the 2006 permit levels and two permits would be required for each raft. This is based on the assumption that on average four people are on each raft, which is the equivalent of two canoes.

As discussed under "Changing the Current Number of Watercraft Permits Available" (EA, p. 61) there is no evidence to suggest watercraft use is degrading the river's ORVs or water quality.

Comment #14: Opposes night closure.

- **a.** Benefits private landowners and creates rights not available to the public. Either no on can fish from 12 Midnight to 4 A.M. or everyone who has a license can.
- **b.** Slippery slope to other closures.
- **c.** It's a time of solitude with less traffic, and good fishing. It's more of a wilderness experience not dodging canoes and drift boats.
- **d.** Most problem behavior is during the day not the night.
- **e.** Will result in an economic loss for Baldwin and small businesses as users will go elsewhere.
- **f.** Will lead to more problems such as trespass. More trash will be left because people will not be able to leave at 12 A.M. so they will stay all night.
- **g.** How many people are out there at night?
- **h.** It would benefit the guides who can access the river through private land.
- **i.** The determined night fisherman will just pay camping fee and park at camp site. Thus people who truly want to camp will lose opportunities.
- **j.** It will be difficult to monitor and will reduce enforcement during normal business hours.
- **k.** Concerned landowners should contact local law enforcement.
- **l.** It will increase angling pressure and traffic during the day.
- **m.** Many people legally enjoy the resource at that time [night] so why close access sites.
- **n.** Understand desire to reduce user conflicts within the corridor but it [night closure] negatively affects recreational anglers.
- **o.** Hurts working men and women who can only get there at night. Hundreds of fishermen will give up on the PM.

p. If night fishing has been deemed to have a neutral impact why close it? Spreading usage over a longer period seems like a win-win situation.
q. Biggest concern in closing time period is the statement on page 140 (EA), "What there is no agreement on is whose access should be limited, by how much, and when." Recreation and use capacity is not a factor during this time period. Resident brown and rainbow trout are more active at night and hatch should determine if fishing should be available.

Response: The proposed night-time closure of USFS access sites (other than designated campsites) generated many concerns on the October 2007 Environmental Assessment; including a lack of support for the measure from the DNR. To address the issues of trespass, litter, illegal campfires, noise, and snagging associated with night time fishing during the fall, the Forest Service will rely on enforcement and improved signing and education.

Night closures, as well as other more restrictive measures, can still be implemented if monitoring finds that the current level of management is not protecting or enhancing the ORVs or addressing concerns about inappropriate activities and behavior. Night closures has been added to the monitoring plan under "Management Actions Triggered if Conditions are not Met" and will be part of the adaptive management approach over the life of the CRMP.

Comment #15: Supports night closure.

a. Consider extending to include July and August (late summer and early fall are the biggest problem).
b. People are more inclined to break the law and diminish ORVs at night when it is harder to see them.
c. Riparian landowners deserve peace at night to sleep. There are frequent noise problems.
d. The river and fish need a break from intense use. Night time people with lanterns step on gravel and cause erosion. Fish need to be allowed to reproduce.
e. Prefer the Alternative 2 11 P.M. to 4 A.M. closures.
f. Would like to see a spring time night closure (March 1 – April 15) to protect steelhead.
g. Overall high use is a concern and night closures are a step in the right direction.

Response: See response to Comment #14.

Comment #16: Limit erosion.

a. Continue use of sand traps and protect streambanks.
b. Appendix D, paragraph entitled Bank Stabilization, sentence beginning, "Future stabilization…attributable to human causes and uses." Should be removed because many natural events may prompt bank stabilization efforts (blow down of trees, Bowman Bridge tornado and flood of 1986).

Response: The emphasis for watershed management on the Pere Marquette River is on habitat protection and restoration. Much of this effort has focused on reducing sources of sediment delivery to lower sand bedload levels through the Pere Marquette River Watershed Restoration Partnership.

Stabilization of eroding streambanks has addressed the contribution from this source to sediment delivery. The cumulative amount of hardened stabilization done under the Pere Marquette River Restoration is 7.3 percent of the waterline over the 40 river miles between the Forks and Walhalla. It is 4.4 percent when viewed from the 66-mile designated Scenic corridor. The emphasis for future streambank stabilization within the river corridor is to focus on those erosion sites that are directly attributable to human causes. Erosion associated with natural disturbance events are part of the natural processes of river dynamics within a watershed. Maintaining the free-flowing characteristics of the Pere Marquette River is part of the mandate of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and any proposals to stabilize would be evaluated within this framework.

Comment #17: Removal of downed trees.

a. Should be only those who are properly trained (not the broad definition of who in the EA).

Response: In-stream or added wood, will be left undisturbed unless it constitutes a navigational hazard. If watercraft cannot go over, under or around wood, it constitutes a navigational hazard and may be cut only to the extent necessary for navigation. The maximum clearing width will generally be eight feet. The Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources will work with primary river users to assess potential navigational hazards and determine clearing needs. Agency personnel assigned to this task will be trained and familiar with large wood management in navigable rivers.

Comment #18: Property owner boat permits.

a. Large parcels should get more permits (allocate by frontage instead of tax lot).
b. Landowner permits should be numbered and large enough to be visible to other river users.

Response: One permit would be provided to each tax parcel or in the case of associations or large parcels with multiple owners, one permit would be provided for each permanent dwelling. It is the intent of the Forest Service to implement a system that does have visible tags and to monitor use on an annual basis (landowners with permits will be required to report usage annually).

Comment #19: Overcrowding

a. Shift canoe use during spring/fall fishing to lower river.
b. Expand no-kill downstream to Custer. Eliminates issues such as snagging, littering, overuse.

Response: Records and data do not show significant canoe use during the spring and fall fishing seasons (relative to summer watercraft use).

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for managing and protecting Michigan's fish and wildlife resources. The DNR sets fish and wildlife harvest levels and oversees fishing and hunting regulations and seasons on all lands. Therefore, expansion of the "no-kill" fishing zone is beyond the authority of the Forest Service.

Comment #21: Make livery owners and commercial users accountable for the negative impacts of their commercial activity.

a. Enhance ORVs by requiring livery owners pay to have a patrol on the river on the eight busiest weekends of the year, launch from M-37.

Response: The Forest Service believes that the majority of recreationists respect the river and private land and that it is the actions of a minority that are cause for concern. The CRMP emphasizes a combination of increased enforcement and information and education efforts to address these impacts.

Both commercial liveries and fishing guides operate under a special use permit for use of USFS facilities on the Pere Marquette. There are specific provisions within these permits regarding environmental protection that they must adhere to. If they don't comply with the terms and conditions of these permits they risk losing the permit.

Comment #30: Reducing canoe and raft traffic is helpful to the river and fishery.

Response: Analysis of the outstandingly remarkable values for the Pere Marquette River does not indicate that they are compromised under the current permit numbers (for watercraft traffic). Monitoring for physical and biological components has found that these are not at risk during the summer season (EA Chapter 2, p. 61).

Comment #31: Take input from registered guides on what is good and not good for the river (include someone from BBT and PM Lodge on river committees).

Response: Anyone at anytime can provide comments and suggestions to the Forest Service on any issue they might have. The Forest Service solicited input from the public, including river guides, livery owners, riparian landowners, and other interest groups such as the Pere Marquette Watershed Council. The Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources had a series of meetings to identify issues and recommended actions for the Pere Marquette River. The Forest Service also talked with Tribal representatives to obtain their comments and concerns for management of the river. Every effort was made to contact river users and interested parties for their input in the update of the river management plan. Successful implementation of the CRMP is dependent on the continued involvement of the public.

Comment #32: Find ways to reduce snagging especially below Indian Bridge.

Response: The Forest Service will continue to work with local and State law enforcement agencies towards the desired condition of eliminating illegal behavior within the river corridor. These behaviors include, but are not limited to; trespassing, vandalism, littering, trash dumping, illegal fishing (e.g., illegal methods such as snagging, harvest in no kill zones, etc.), animal leash laws, and human and pet sanitation (EA Chapter 2, Actions Common to All Alternatives, p. 24).

Comment #37: A poor job was done reaching out to the recreational anglers in this process. They fear this lack of outreach has resulted in commercial guides' interests being over-represented in the final plan at the expense of the unguided recreational angler.

a. Walk-in anglers are being discriminated against.

Response: Work on updating the Pere Marquette CRMP began in 2003. Since that time, considerable effort to contact interested and effected publics has been made. Information and opportunities to provide input to the CRMP update was provided in a variety of ways including a series of public meetings, direct mailings, newspaper articles, and posting on the Forest Service's website. It is unfortunate that no matter how extensive our outreach we cannot guarantee that every member of the public will receive information or be able to provide comments in a timely manner.

Comment #40: The primary purpose of making the PM a national scenic river was not to make it a commercial enterprise but rather to save the river in its natural state for the general public.

Response: The intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve the character of a river and keep it in a free-flowing condition, not to halt development or use. Rivers in the Wild and Scenic River system must be managed to protect and enhance the "outstandingly remarkable values" (ORV) but not limit other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values.

D. Management Issues

Comment #33: Unified management

a. Michigan DNR supports goal of cooperative and unified management of the Pere Marquette River to benefit the resource and those who use it.
b. Opposed to State of Michigan ceding sites to federal government. A memorandum of understanding between the Federal government and the State of Michigan providing one set of rules would be the best approach.

Response: One of the key issues identified through the public input process is a desire that Forest Service and State of Michigan access sites be managed under one set of rules and regulations through unified management. The public would like consistent management of public access sites.

The Forest Service and DNR would work towards unified management of the facilities and lands within the river corridor. This may be accomplished using a variety of processes, including but not limited to, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), land exchange (about 1,300 acres of State land would become part of the National Forest System within the river corridor), or the lease of State access sites by the Forest Service (FSM 2354.03 (5)).

Under unified management, all access sites and the watercraft and commercial permitting system would be managed under one set of regulations. Negotiations between the State of Michigan and Forest Service for unified management are

complex and a timeline for implementation has not been determined (EA Chapter 2 Actions Common to Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5, p. 33).

Comment #25: USFS and Michigan DNR guide permit management under unified management.

a. Most of 29 Michigan DNR permitted guides are the same as the 36 boats permitted with USFS permits so issue Michigan DNR guides a USFS permit to operate at USFS access sites. This will reduce complexity and enforcement concerns.

Response: Under unified management, outfitters and guides permitted by the DNR would be allowed to operate on the Pere Marquette River. The Forest Service would issue a special use permit based on their **existing** State permits (EA Chapter 2 Actions Common to Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5, p. 33).

Comment #26: Alternative 5 is acceptable provided there is unified management, adequate enforcement, and appropriate monitoring.

Response: Support noted. The Forest Service and DNR would work towards unified management of the facilities and lands within the river corridor. The Forest Service would continue to work with local and State law enforcement agencies towards the desired condition of eliminating illegal behavior within the river corridor.

The updated river management plan includes a resource monitoring system. Monitoring provides a quality control and adaptive management strategy for the implementation of the management plan (EA Appendix H). The monitoring program is designed to be the foundation for the long-term protection and enhancement of the Pere Marquette's river-related values. Objectives of the monitoring program are to:

1. Determine the extent to which the plan is being implemented.
2. Determine if desired conditions are being maintained or achieved.
3. Ensure management direction (standards and guidelines) is being followed.
4. Ensure management direction is effective in protecting and enhancing the outstandingly remarkable river values.
5. Identify the need for adaptive management if the current level of management is not effective in protecting and enhancing the ORVs.

Comment #34: Commend you for removing Alternative of Extension of Forest Service Authority.

Response: An alternative that considered extending Forest Service authority within the Pere Marquette National Scenic River corridor was not analyzed in detail. The rationale for not analyzing it in detail the EA is the desire of the Huron-Manistee National Forests to work cooperatively with the State of Michigan and stakeholders rather than extend its authorities. Cooperative efforts

would focus on resource protection, monitoring, and the development of thresholds and standards for measuring ORV protection and enhancement.

Comment #38: Enforcement

a. More enforcement situations will arise under this plan.
b. Commit increased expenditures for enforcement personnel including internships now.
c. Adding water based patrols during peak seasons would allow for better enforcement against poachers.
d. Increased revenue [funding] to ensure we have enforcement of the law. Increase license and parking costs, fines for parking without a pass or parking in the wrong area.
e. Emphasis on law enforcement will decrease negative experiences and raise comfort level of private landowners.

Response: The Forest Service will continue to work with local and State law enforcement agencies towards the desired condition of eliminating illegal behavior within the river corridor. We will continue to seek out opportunities for additional funding and staffing to increase our presence in the river corridor.

Comment #43: If restrictions become too burdensome, revenue will be lost and those of us who take care of and patrol the area when we are there will be lost as well.

Response: Comment noted.

E. Issues Outside the Scope of the Pere Marquette River Plan Update

Comment #22: Effects of global warming

a. Potential water level changes (decreases) and the need for more boating restrictions if water gets too low.
b. Fishery may require more protection.

Response: While it is recognized that climate change is a significant issue facing the world, analyzing its potential effects on the management of the Pere Marquette National Scenic River is beyond the scope of the analysis for updating the river management plan. It should be noted that a new EA may be conducted at any time to revise the CRMP if information on changing climate conditions and its effects on the Pere Marquette River becomes available.

Table B1. Content Analysis for Public Comments on October 2007 Pere Marquette River EA

Comment #	Comment	Commenter/s
1	**Supports Alternative 4**	Dygert, Eckland, Owczarski
1a	Agrees there are issues of overcrowding but way to deal with it is not more restrictions but better enforcement.	Dygert
1b	Does not feel additional use restrictions in Alternatives 2, 3 and 5 are fair and equitable.	Dygert
1c	Night closures and limiting permits (Alternative 5) is all about privatization of the river and could be the first step of many in changing public access in the state of Michigan.	Eckland, Owczarski
2	**Supports Alternative 5 (some with comments or concerns)**	Braun, Clark, Conway, Fraley, Fulgenzi, Granowicz, Grau (no other comments), Harrala, Karakashian, Kubit, Morse, Orzechowski, Rychel
2a	Look at use closely to insure we are not developing a resource around guides and canoe liveries thereby restricting private, non-commercial access.	Morse
2b	Supports overflow parking at indicated sites.	Morse
3	**Supports Gleason's Landing upgrade (Alternative 5)**	Bass, Braun, T. Clark, Conway, Dygert, Fraley, Karakashian, Smith (MI DNR), Orzechowski
3a	Reduce erosion and make safer.	Braun, Karakashian
3b	Should be 2nd priority after Lower Branch Bridge.	Fraley
3c	Will increase put in and take out congestion.	Karakashian
3d	Will increase use of Gleason's to Bowman stretch.	Karakashian
3e	State Natural River permits will be required for renovations within 400 feet of river please consult Natural River's staff early in the process.	Smith (MI DNR)
4	**Opposes Gleason's Landing upgrade**	Lewis, Sobanski
4a	Reconstruct old slide in an environmentally safe manner.	Lewis
4b	Back down launch would just increase use.	Lewis
4c	Should be a carry in launch.	Sobanski
5	**Supports access at Lower Branch (Alternative 5)**	Bass, Braun, T. Clark, Conway, Dygert, Karakashian, Morse, Orzechowski
5a	Will decrease boat density in other parts of river, spread use.	Bass, Dygert, Fraley, Karakashian

5b	Improve experience for boaters and waders by spreading pressure.	Braun
5c	Will reduce erosion.	T. Clark
5d	Should be 1st priority.	Fraley, Karakashian
6	**Opposes access at Lower Branch**	Burger, Harrie, Lewis, Palo, Welscott
6a	More traffic would be detrimental to bald eagles.	Harrie
6b	Increased noise, traffic and reduced security for landowners.	Harrie
6c	This stretch currently provides more of a wilderness (backcountry) setting and access would ruin this.	Harrie, Lewis, Welscott
6d	One of the few stretches of river left in MI for carry in boats (canoe, kayaks), with little competition from commercial guides. Other parts of PM and other rivers (Muskegon, Manistee) provide drift boat access.	Harrie, Welscott
6e	Considers drift boaters more, not enough consideration to all classes of user's.	Harrie
6f	Taylor Road walk in access anglers (Maple Leaf) will have more competition from drift boats.	Harrie
6g	Use money to secure site and stop people from dragging boats and causing erosion.	Harrie, Lewis
6h	Commented against a launch here during 1st 30 day and Forest Service response of (paraphrased) "leaving that stretch without a launch concentrates angling pressure on other sections of the river" is flawed because 1) angling pressure across entire river is too high, 2) stretch from Landon to Walhalla is the last stretch where angling pressure is somewhat appropriate, 3) opening this stretch to drift boats will not bring pressure on other stretches to appropriate levels, 4) it will ruin the last piece of water where there is some reasonable level of angler use, you will allow the problem which is out of control across the rest of the river to infest this stretch where there are some natural limits to access	Palo
6i	Increase in boat traffic has directly effected the PM and its natural beauty, please be careful not to only listen to those who speak the loudest.	Welscott
7	**Support permits to limit watercraft and anglers.**	Conway
8	**Permit Availability (combined summer and fall watercraft systems)**	Conway. Harrie, Kubit, Palo, Welscott

8a	Need permits to be readily available and at least one year in advance (internet).	Conway. Harrie
8b	Comes from out of state permits need to be available.	Kubit
8c	Until a system to obtain permits that addresses the needs of the floating, unguided angler implementation should be delayed, a web based system would be good or allow angler/boater to call the office before their trip and pay by credit card and assign them a permit number over the phone, to check their permit they would need to produce the permit number and their driver's license on the water.	Palo
8d	I applaud limiting traffic on the PM but the current system does not work, anglers can not come a day early to get a permit, a number of alternatives can be developed.	Welscott
9	**Opposes Fall and Spring permit system**	Dygert, Eckland, Owczarski
9a	Economic discrimination, those who can pay for a guide get access.	Dygert
9b	Unequal distribution for a public resource.	Dygert
9c	Not clear how system will be administered clearly.	Dygert
9d	State resident should have precedence over non-state resident.	Dygert
9e	150 watercraft permits limits where an angler can fish and will lead to more confrontations with landowners because reducing boat traffic will lead to more foot traffic and trespass; foot traffic also causes more riparian degradation; the reason boating anglers spend more time at holes and move slowly down river has to do more with total number of anglers and the style of fishing not boating pressure.	Eckland, Owczarski
9f	People cancel or do not show up and permits go unused.	Eckland, Owczarski
9g	I would support permits to monitor usage and increase revenue without limiting use.	Eckland, Owczarski
10	**Spring permit system may be needed**	T. Clark, McLane (PMWC)
10a	Need to be pooled and available to public.	T. Clark
10b	Should be required and be minimal during this delicate season, parking spaces should not be a control measure.	McLane (PMWC)
11	**Fall permit system may be necessary but has flaws**	Bass, T. Clark, Orzechowski

11a	150 total permits is not enough.	Bass
11b	70 guide permits and 80 private user permits is not an acceptable split for a public resource (not enough for public either increase total or reallocate more for private user)	Bass
11c	80 permits for commercial liveries and public is not enough in the fall.	Bass
11d	Pool permits.	T. Clark
11e	Does not want to drive 45 minutes to get permit, nature of sport dictates unplanned outings, put on-line (similar to Issue 8).	Orzechowski
11f	River has a lot of out of state users limiting use could negatively effect local economy.	Eckland
11g	Restricting permits for watercraft will not reduce the number of fisherman it will only concentrate people at walk in locations which is already a problem during peak seasons.	Brewer
12	**Public resource, permits should go to non-commercial users first and then leftovers can be used by guides.**	Harrie
12a	Non-commercial users do less damage to river corridor.	Harrie
13	**Summer watercraft permits/Supports summer time permit pooling**	Bass, Smith (MI DNR)
13a	Support pooling Monday - Friday instead of Monday through Thursday.	Smith (MI DNR)
13b	In our letter dated June 4, 2007 we requested you consider a 80/20 percent livery/public split on each river section to allow more access for public boaters (those not using a commercial livery), in the latest EA there are no changes to the allocation system, we are concerned the current system is too heavily weighted towards commercial liveries, please reconsider an 80/20 split.	Smith (MI DNR)
13c	In our letter dated June 4, 2007 we requested that you enhance the ability of the public to obtain permits electronically through the internet or from livery operators, this has not been addressed in the latest EA, non commercial general public should receive priority over commercial interests when competing for limited public access.	Smith (MI DNR)
	Realign current watercraft permit allocation in favor of public from the current 80%-20% livery/public, discourage raft use by requiring three permits per raft, prioritize creation of an online watercraft	

13d	permit system for public usage, mandate more usage of the lower river segments through changed permit allocations.	McLane (PMWC)
14	**Opposes Night Closure**	Bertrand, Braun, Brewer, S. Clark, T. Clark, Eckland, Fraley, Fulgenzi, Fuller, Granowicz, Herrala, Karakashian, Kubit, May, McLane (PMWC), Mitchell, Nutter, Orzechowski, Owczarski, Rychel, Smith (MI DNR)
14a	Benefits private landowners and creates rights not available to the public, either no one can fish from 12-4 or everyone who has a license can.	Braun, S. Clark, T. Clark, Eckland, Fraley, Fulgenzi, Fuller, Granowicz, Mitchell, Nutter, Owczarski
14b	Slippery slope to other closures.	Braun, Eckland, Owczarski
14c	Time of solitude, less traffic and good fishing, wilderness experience not dodging canoes and drift boats.	Brewer, S. Clark, Rychel, Smith (MI DNR)
14d	Most problem behavior is in the day not the night.	S. Clark
14e	Economic effects, users will go elsewhere, economic loss for Baldwin and small business and Michigan.	Eckland, S. Clark, Mitchell
14f	Will lead to more problems i.e. trespass; more trash will be left because people will not be able to leave at 2 A.M. so they will stay all night.	Fraley, Granowicz, Rychel
14g	How many people out there at night.	Fulgenzi
14h	Would benefit guides who can access through private.	Granowicz
14i	Determined night fisherman will just pay camping fee and park at camp spot, folks who want to camp will lose opportunities.	Herrala
14j	Difficult to monitor and reduce enforcement during normal business hours.	Karakashian, Rychel
14k	Concerned landowners should contact local law enforcement.	Eckland, Karakashian, Owczarski
14l	Will increase traffic and pressure during the day.	Brewer, Karakashian, Rychel,
14m	Many people legally enjoy resource at that time, why close access sites.	Kubit
14n	Understand desire to reduce user conflicts within corridor but, it negatively affects recreational anglers.	Smith (MI DNR)
14o	Hurts working men and women who can only get there at night, hundreds of fisherman will give up on the PM.	Rychel
14p	If night fishing has been deemed to have a neutral impact why close it, spreading usage over a longer period seems like a win-win situation.	Rychel

14q	Biggest concern in the closing time period is the statement on page 140 (EA), "What there is no agreement on is who's access should be limited, by how much, and when"; recreation and use capacity is not a factor during this time period; resident brown and rainbow trout are more active at night and hatch should determine if fishing should be available.	Eckland, Owczarski
15	**Supports Night Closure**	Gibbs, Lewis, Morse
15a	Consider extending to include July and August (late summer early fall biggest problem).	Gibbs
15b	People more inclined to break law and diminish ORVs at night when it is harder to see them.	Gibbs
15c	Riparian landowners deserve peace at night to sleep, frequent noise problems.	Gibbs
15d	River and fish need a break from intense use, night time people with lanterns step on gravel and cause erosion, allow fish to reproduce.	Gibbs, Lewis, Morse
15e	Prefer 11 P.M. – 4 A. M.	Lewis
15f	Would like to see spring night time closure (Mar. 1 - Apr. 15) to protect steelhead.	Lewis
15g	Overall high use is a concern and night closures are a step in the right direction.	Morse
16	**Limit erosion**	Conway
16a	Sandtraps and protect streambanks.	Conway
16b	Appendix D, paragraph entitled Bank Stabilization, sentence beginning, "Future stabilization… attributable to human causes and uses." should be removed because many natural events may prompt bank stabilization efforts (blow down of trees, Bowman Bridge tornado and flood of 1986).	McLane (PMWC)
17	**Removal of downed trees**	Conway
17a	Should be only those who are properly trained (not the broad definition of who in EA).	Conway
18	**Property owner boat permits**	Conway
18a	Large parcels should get more permits (allocate by frontage instead of tax lot).	Conway
18b	Landowner permits should be numbered and large enough to be visible to other river users.	McLane (PMWC)
19	**Overcrowding**	Dygert
19a	Shift canoe use during peak spring/fall fishing to lower river.	Dygert
19b	Expand no kill downstream to Custer eliminate issues such as snagging, littering, overuse.	Dygert

20	**Lumber Jack Access and Fisherman's Trail should be included when counting available parking and implementing night closures.**	Gibbs
20a	These two sites are only 400 yards from Green Cottage if parking is not limited here people could just walk to Green Cottage.	Gibbs
21	**Make Livery owners and commercial users accountable for the negative impacts of their commercial activity.**	Gibbs
21a	Enhance ORVs by requiring livery owners pay to have a patrol on the river on the eight busiest weekends of the year, launch from M-37.	Gibbs
22	**Effects of global warming**	Harrie
22a	Potential water level changes (decreases) may need more boating restrictions if water gets too low.	Harrie
22b	Fishery may require more protection.	Harrie
23	**Raising Indian Bridge is questionable, can't get through this stretch in a canoe without dragging it unless there is high water.**	Harrie
24	**Supports expanded parking at Rainbow Rapids.**	Karakashian
24a	Should be 2nd priority after access at LBB because use will increase (float RR - LBB).	Karakashian
25	**USFS and MI DNR guide permit management under unified management.**	Karakashian
25a	Most of 29 MI DNR permitted guides are the same as the 36 boats permitted with USFS guide permits so issue MI DNR guides a USFS permit to operate at USFS sites, this will reduce complexity and enforcement concerns.	Karakashian
26	**Alternative 5 is acceptable provided there is unified management, adequate enforcement and appropriate monitoring.**	Zeerip (Lake County Riverside Property Owners Association, Inc.)
27	**Opposes 40th Street access development.**	Lewis
27a	Designate as access but improve to minimize erosion user created riparian damage.	Lewis
28	**Need new PM river signs throughout the watershed.**	Lewis
28a	Develop PM watershed logo to give it recognition and draw people in.	Lewis
28b	Current signs say what not to do new signs should say what to do and provide information on watershed.	Lewis

29	**Reduce stress in watershed by making accesses low impact.**	Lewis
30	**Reducing canoe and raft traffic is helpful to the river and fishery.**	May
31	**Take input from registered guides on what is good and not good for the river (include someone from BBT and PM Lodge on river committees).**	May
32	**Find way to reduce snagging especially at Indian Bridge.**	May
33	**Unified Management**	McLane (PMWC), Smith (MI DNR)
33a	MI DNR supports goal of cooperative and unified management of the PM River benefit resource and those who use it.	Smith (MI DNR)
33b	Opposed to State of Michigan ceding sites to Federal government, a memorandum of understanding between the Federal government and State of Michigan providing one set of rules would be the best approach.	McLane (PMWC)
34	**Commend you for removing Alternative of Extension of Forest Service Authority.**	Smith (MI DNR)
35	**Supports improved latrine facilities at Elk, Maple Leaf and Logmark as long as their basic primitive character is maintained**	Young
36	**Eliminate drift boat launching at Green Cottage the site was not designed for this activity, only small watercraft that can be carried down the steps should be launched here.**	Morse
36a	Would preserve site as an access for walk in traffic as it was originally intended.	Morse
36b	Allow wading anglers some time before boats arrive.	Morse
36c	On downside it would concentrate more boats on upper stretch and increase float times but this could be alleviated by reducing permits in this stretch during peak fishing times, perhaps reallocate permits to other stretches.	Morse
37	**A poor job was done reaching out to the recreational anglers in this process; they fear this lack of outreach has resulted in commercial guides interests being over represented in the final plan at the expense of the unguided recreational angler.**	Palo, Bryan
37a	Walk in anglers are being discriminated against.	Bryan
38	**Enforcement**	Eckland, McLane (PMWC), Owczarski

38a	More enforcement situations will arise under this plan.	McLane (PMWC)
38b	Commit increased expenditures for enforcement personnel including internships now.	McLane (PMWC)
38c	Adding water based patrols during peak seasons would allow for better enforcement against poachers.	Brewer
38d	Increase revenue to insure we have enforcement of the law; increase license and parking costs; fines for parking without a pass or parking in the wrong area.	Eckland, Owczarski
38e	Emphasis on law enforcement will decrease negative experiences and raise comfort level of private landowners.	Eckland, Owczarski
39	**No issues**	Vander Hyde
40	**The primary purpose of making the PM a national scenic river was not to make it a commercial enterprise but rather to save the river in its natural state for the general public.**	Welscott
41	**Increasing access points will allow a healthy spread of fisherman reducing current overcrowding issues.**	Brewer
42	**Restricting use in the flies only area may prevent overcrowding and direct fisherman to other areas of the river.**	Brewer
43	**If restrictions become too burdensome, revenue will be lost and those of us who take care of and patrol the area when we are there will be lost as well.**	Brewer
44	**In favor of all improvements, increasing parking and ticketing will help control illegal parking.**	Eckland, Owczarski
45	**Idea of using Bowman's Bridge as an access point is interesting if you extend Flies Only section to Bowman's you may increase use, I typically get out at Gleason's because it is the end of the flies only water and that is where most guides get out.**	Eckland, Owczarski