

Updating the PM Scenic Corridor Plan: Applying Limits of Acceptable Change



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Brief History of PM Scenic Corridor

■ 1978

- PL-625 designated 66.4 miles of PM mainstream as Scenic River
 - Management responsibilities to USFS
- Outstandingly remarkable values
 - Water quality
 - Fish and wildlife
 - Trees and forest cover
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Visual/aesthetic
- MI designates entire PM as MI Natural River
 - Zoning regulations to restrict development adjacent to river to protect environmental and aesthetic values



Scenic Corridor Management Plans

- First USFS plan in 1983
 - Administration
 - Jurisdiction, law enforcement
 - Policy to review plan every 5 years to keep “current and responsive to changing situations while meeting the intent “ of establishing legislation/EIS
 - Resource use and protection
 - Visual quality, fire, forest pests, water quality, air quality, minerals, vegetation, soils, fisheries, areas of special significance



1983 Plan Continued

- Structures and improvements

- Private lands

- Restrict new incompatible uses, screen development, use state/local zoning, acquisition priorities

- Public lands

- Develop/maintain watercraft launch sites, campsites, water rest stops, fishing access/trails
 - In particular, expand camping opportunities and limit watercraft access shifting to more walk-in access
 - Transportation system, signing, utilities, motorized use, interpretive services, public health/safety
 - Visitor control including watercraft allocation system on USFS lands



1990 Plan Update

- Key changes in PM conditions
 - Rapid expansion in anadromous fish populations/angling pressure
 - More visible physical resource impacts of recreational use such as erosion
 - Continued strength in non-angling watercraft use
 - Continued concerns about public safety/need for law enforcement
 - Increased recognition of the importance of tourism in the region's economy
 - Recognition of needs of disabled river users immediately prior to passage of ADA



1990 Plan Update Direction

- Accommodate shifts/increases in recreational use
 - Increase watercraft and walk-in access
 - Done
 - Harden access/campground areas to reduce negative environmental impacts and enhance access for the disabled
 - Done
 - USFS seek administrative jurisdiction of state water access sites
 - Not done



1996-97: Research with Visitors and Shoreline Owners

- Recreation use studies of visitors to access points fall 96, spring/summer 97
 - At 20 access points (18 public + 2 canoe liveries)
 - Generate 760,000 (80%) hours of corridor recreation use
 - Estimated 67,000 vehicles parked at these designated points
 - Fishing is most common spring/fall activity, summer greater variety including wide range of watercraft use
 - 87% of visitors from outside of 6 county region (Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola)
 - \$6.5 million spending by these visitors supporting 229 jobs in Lake and Mason counties



Private Shoreline Ownerships

- Generate about 179,000 (20%) hours of corridor recreation use fall 1996 and spring/summer 1997
- Owners and guests of 111 shoreline properties
 - Includes some associations/multiple owners
 - Many use public and private access points
- More likely to engage in land based corridor activities and higher proportion of summer use than visitors
- Fishing is the most important activity in each season
 - Hiking is the second most important activity in each season



Visitor and Shoreline Owner Issues - 1998

- Telephone interviews with willing visitors and shoreline owners in 1998
- First and second most important activities for each
 - Fishing top for both, canoeing second for visitors, nature observation second for owners
- Positive changes over time for each
 - Visitors
 - Erosion control, improved access, no positive changes, lack of development, clean(er) water
 - Shoreline owners
 - Erosion control, improved corridor management, no positive changes, lack of development, fewer canoes



Visitors and Shoreline Owners

- Negative changes over time

- Visitors

- Increased use, no negative changes, increased litter, conflicts, increased guiding/drift boats

- Shoreline owners

- Increased use, no negative changes, increased guiding/drift boats, conflicts, poor management/regulation, increased erosion



Visitors and Shoreline Owners

- Most important issues (extremely to highly imp.)
 - Visitors
 - Water quality, litter, shoreline appearance, steelhead populations, amount of public access, public facility maintenance, trespass, number of river users, level of regulation, sense of security, salmon populations
 - Shoreline owners
 - Water quality, stream trout populations, appearance of shoreline, litter, trespass, steelhead populations, number of river users, level of regulation, conflict between visitors and shoreline owners, sense of security
- Top 3 issues for immediate action
 - Visitors – water quality, number of river users, litter
 - Shoreline o.- number of river users, shoreline appearance, water quality



Time to Update the PM Scenic Corridor Management Plan

- Use Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) as a planning/management tool
 - ID concerns, issues and goals
 - Understand that compromise is needed
 - Decide which goal(s) ultimately constrain others
 - Define minimum standards and indicators of goal achievement
 - Ultimately constraining goal(s) can only be compromised until minimum standard is reached (the limit of acceptable change)
 - Put into effect management to further limit negative change and restore desired condition(s)



Purpose Tonight

- Hear from you to ID concerns, issues and goals
 - Look at concerns, issues and goals previously identified
 - Are there updates, more specificity needed?
 - Discuss any other concerns, issues and goals
 - Understand the multiple entities with PM corridor management responsibilities/jurisdiction
- Next meeting will begin to focus on standards (limits of acceptable change), ultimately constraining goal(s) and potential indicators of change