

Ann Arbor Environmental Commission

**RESOLUTION ON THE HURON RIVER AND IMPOUNDMENT  
MANAGEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATION**

Whereas, the Huron River is a significant natural feature in the City of Ann Arbor,

Whereas, the Ann Arbor community has shown high interest in the Huron River watershed by their support of studies and planning in the watershed and use of the Huron River,

Whereas, the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission created the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee to develop a comprehensive plan for managing the Huron River in Ann Arbor,

Whereas, the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee has developed a comprehensive plan for managing the Huron River in Ann Arbor entitled the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan (Plan),

Whereas, the vision for the Huron River in Ann Arbor as stated in the plan is as follows:

- A healthy Huron River ecosystem that provides a diverse set of ecosystem services.
- We envision a swimmable, fishable and boatable river, including both freeflowing and impounded segments, which is celebrated as Ann Arbor's most important natural feature and contributes to the vibrancy of life in the city.
- The river and its publicly owned shoreline and riparian areas create a blue and green corridor across the city that contains restored natural areas and adequate, well-sited public trails and access.
- Ample drinking water, effective wastewater removal and a full range of high quality passive and active recreation and education opportunities are provided to the citizens of Ann Arbor.

- Ongoing public engagement in the river's management leads to greater stewardship and reduced conflict among users. Our approach to management creates a model that other communities upstream and downstream emulate.

Whereas, the Huron River in Ann Arbor is highly used for recreational purposes and bordered by multiple parks forming a greenway along the river,

Whereas, the City of Ann Arbor owns the majority of the property along the Huron River in the City of Ann Arbor,

Whereas, The City owns and maintains four dams: Barton, Argo, Geddes and Superior, two of which (Barton and Superior) generate hydroelectric power. Barton, Argo and Geddes dams create ponds that are used by area residents for recreation and sport.

Whereas, Barton Pond is the primary source of drinking water for the City of Ann Arbor.

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MEDQ), Office of Dam Safety requires the city to take steps to repair the toe drains at Argo Dam. Argo dam currently requires a repair to toe drains along its 1500 - foot earthen berm and a decision to repair or remove the dam must be made in the immediate future to respond to the MDEQ concerns.

Whereas, Many river ecologists in the region have supported a recommendation to remove three priority dams: the Mill Pond Dam and Impoundment in Dexter, Michigan, Argo Dam in Ann Arbor, and Peninsular Paper Dam in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Fisheries Division, recommended the removal of these three dams as a key component in the rehabilitation of the Huron River (Fisheries Special Report, No. 16, Huron River Assessment, April 1995).

Whereas, the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan developed by the committee outlines a consensus vision statement, set of objectives and detailed analyses, along with 32 recommendations, 30 of which the committee is in full support.

Whereas, the Plan recommends that the City Council should apportion recreation dam maintenance costs to more appropriate funds and

Whereas, the Plan recommends that the City implement the City's Source Water Protection Plan with appropriate resources to ensure adequate protection of the city's drinking water sources.

Whereas, the Plan identifies two options as to recommendations to the Commission on the future of the Argo Dam area: 1) Preserving Argo Impoundment and 2) Removing Argo Dam.

Therefore Be it Resolved that the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission accepts the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan and endorses the 30 consensus recommendations in the Plan; and

Resolved that the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission recommends that the City Council support and endorse the consensus recommendations in the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan, and

Resolved the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission recommends that the City Council Establish a River Stewardship Committee (RSC) to provide oversight to the implementation of the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan. The RSC should be created with representatives from the Environmental Commission, Energy Commission, and Park Advisory Commission and others appointed by City Council with expertise in river science (e.g., ecology, hydrology) and river recreation (e.g., canoeing, rowing, angling, and other user groups). This committee should be supported by staff from Systems Planning, Natural Area Preservation, Field Operations, and Parks and Recreation Services, and

Resolved the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission recommends to the City Council to initiate activities to remove Argo Dam and to ensure that the dam not fail during that time period. Several studies should be conducted prior to removing the dam including, but not limited to:

1. Sediment management,
2. Dam removal protocols,
3. Land reclamation strategies; and
- 4.

Resolved the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission recommends to the City Council that the funding for the repair and maintenance of the recreational dams (Argo and Geddes) not be funded from the Drinking Water Enterprise Fund; and

Resolved the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission recommends to the City Council that funds currently used for the repair and maintenance of the recreational dams from the Drinking Water Enterprise Fund be reallocated to implement the Source Water Protection Plan to protect Ann Arbor's Drinking Water.

Submitted by Commissioner Stead  
Resolution Adopted on May 28, 2009

**Environmental Commissioners**

Steve Bean (Chair) YES

Rita Loch Caruso YES

Anya Dale YES

John German (absent)

Chris Graham (Vice-Chair) NO

Carsten Hohnke YES

John Koupal YES

Gwen Nystuen NO

David Stead YES

Margie Teall YES

David Wright NO

Valerie Strassberg YES

Kirk Westphal NO