



# MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT of NATURAL RESOURCES

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**NEWS  
BULLETIN**

DNR'S DIRECTOR RECOMMENDS OK  
FOR MONROE CREEK LAND PROPOSAL

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LANSING---Department of Natural Resources Director Ralph A. MacMullan is recommending approval of a 4-month-delayed land exchange which would lead toward development of a flooding and residential-recreational complex on Monroe Creek about 9 miles south of Charlevoix.

The proposed exchange was tabled last July by the Natural Resources Commission to allow time for a detailed study of the project's potential environmental impact.

Following a series of consultations with his staff members and field men, which covered every environmental aspect of the planned development, MacMullan will ask the Commission to "OK" the exchange during its November 11-12 meeting in Lansing.

Focal points in the exchange as it bears on the proposed watershed project are two state-owned easements on Monroe Creek, a narrow 5-mile-long feeder stream in Charlevoix County, which flows into the South Arm of Lake Charlevoix.

The easements, involving a pair of land strips, 3/4 of a mile long and 50 feet wide on both sides of the creek, are sought by the applicant, Francis D. Sheldon of Detroit, to meet his plans for developing a 400-acre flooding.

The impoundment would serve as the nucleus of a complex in which some 1,300 home sites would be developed and sold as a residential community, complete with recreational facilities, open space, streets, and multi-family dwellings.

In exchange for those state easements, Mr. Sheldon would convey to the State a 40-acre parcel on Warner Creek in Charlevoix County. He would also pledge to build a public access site on the artificial lake and take

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steps in his development work to give maximum protection to the project area's environmental values.

MacMullan's endorsement of the exchange came only after he, his staff advisors, and field specialists gave a probing "plus" and "minus" rating to each environmental factor related to Mr. Sheldon's proposed project.

In detail, that checklist scored the development's projected impact on local recreational opportunities, water quality, fish and other aquatic life, wildlife production, economic considerations, and aesthetic values.

MacMullan went on record as favoring the exchange after the summing up of these environmental considerations indicated that the proposed development's plus points decidedly outweigh those on the other side of the ledger.

MacMullan's decision also takes note of the fact that virtually all of the project area on Monroe Creek is privately owned and, as such, is certain to be developed, exchange or no exchange, to meet burgeoning demands for residential and recreational sites.

As the DNR's Director noted in his memorandum to the Commission:

"Planned development of this nature (meaning Mr. Sheldon's) will probably be more pleasing aesthetically than unplanned building under any present zoning regulations."

In his final recommendation, MacMullan also stated:

"If the area to be developed had been in the public trust (state-owned), my decision would have been easy---hold on to it in its present state and do everything to lessen the impact of the hordes on it. However, it is (for all practical purposes) in private ownership and the correct approach now is to control its development in such a way as to provide benefits to the public and a fair and just treatment to the present owners."

Approval of the exchange would set the stage for the DNR to issue a permit to build a dam for the 400-acre impoundment.

In favoring the exchange and eventual issuance of the dam permit,

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MacMullan has given weight to the fact that public recreation stands much more to gain by the promised development of a public access site on the impoundment. Presently, public fishing on Monroe Creek is extremely limited because of its small size, little access, and a bordering tangle of brush.

MacMullan's decision on the exchange also hinges upon the developer's agreement to follow quality control measures for his project which will:

- Preserve the outdoor environment to the fullest extent possible through building restrictions;
- Avoid nutrient problems in the impoundment and downstream waters;
- Reduce sediment losses to a minimum through erosion control and step-by-step safeguards;
- Provide the impoundment with a system for discharging waters with optimum temperatures and oxygen levels to enhance the downstream's fisheries values.

In his final recommendation, the DNR's Director stressed:

"It should be clearly understood that we do not intend to consider this decision to be a precedent for other apparently similar cases. We are certain that similar situations will arise. Each one should and will be considered on its own merit."

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