

Boardman River Study is 'action guide'

A special report to the Record-Eagle by Dawn Cooper, Vice chairman of the Traverse Bay Regional Planning Commission, on the Boardman River Study just completed for the commission.

Picture in your mind a once wild and remote Boardman River watershed being gravely

threatened by advancing urbanization.

Now picture a river study committee representing all of the governmental units lining the Boardman, guided by the Regional Planning Commission, state advisers and the planning firm of Johnson, Johnson and Roy, meeting together for well over a year.

Now add to this picture the end product of their concern and endeavors, the Boardman River Study, released to the public this week. This report, a unique river inventory and management plan, was designed by local people to meet local river related problems.

Reads like a successful combination? Almost.

Add one more element to the mental picture, one Gordon Hayward, former South Boardman dairy farmer, past president of the Boardman River Advisory Council, currently planning assistant for the Regional Planning Commission hired to help implement the Boardman River Study.

And now there is hope.

If Gordon Hayward has his way, this is one plan which will not gather dust on a shelf. With the report planted firmly under his arm, he has already begun the task of translating and funneling the 200-plus pages of performance control guidelines, inventory analyses and dozens of matrices into the locally conceived, problem solving document it was meant to be.

Hayward's first step was to contact all the townships, the county and the city explaining the plan and its implications.

Next the townships will be asked to designate the Boardman as a natural river, part of the state of Michigan's Natural Rivers Program.

Each township will also be asked to appoint representatives to a "kind of inter-township planning committee" to work with the DNR's Natural Rivers Task Force.

Together they will have the job, as Hayward explains it, of developing a proposed land-use management plan for the river.

"This river plan allows the local groups to build their own evaluations and land use goals, rather than looking to the experts," Hayward continues.

"The strong point of the Boardman River Study is its inventory systems of natural and man-made elements. For

instance, suppose someone comes into the Regional Planning office and says he has an idea for a specific type of development for the river area. Where should he put it?

"Through a system of overlays, this inventory analysis system will tell us where this type of development could best go with the least amount of harm to the natural character of the river.

"Regional Planning will be able to use the same inventory system to aid the planning staff in development of township plans," according to Hayward.

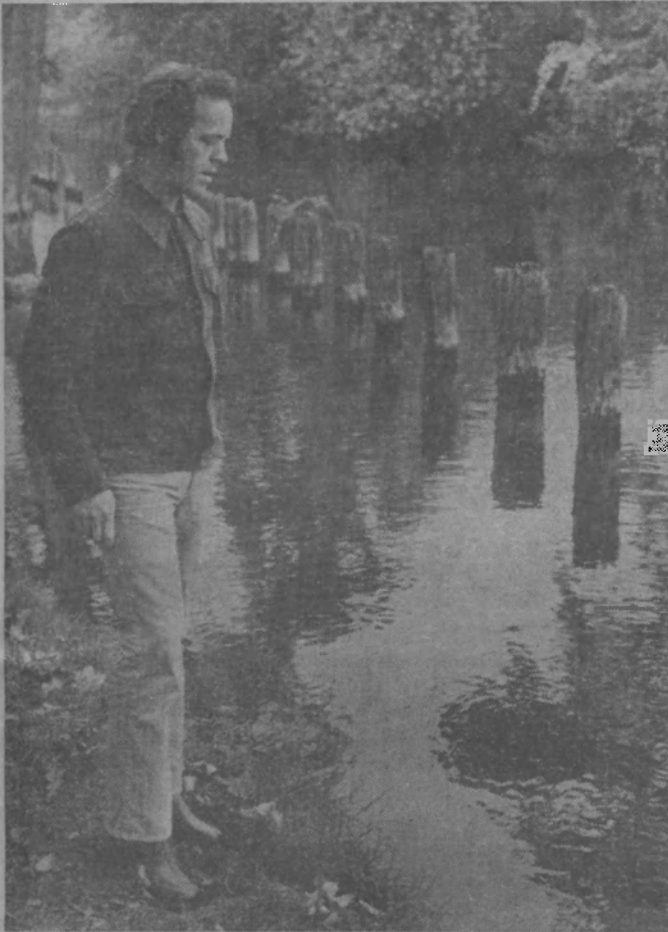
Hayward also emphasized the river report's performance standard guidelines which can be described as basic checkpoints in development which could best conserve natural conditions of the river basin.

"These performance standards," explains Hayward, "are not only critical to proper development, but are a way to show, guide, and provide choices to the individual landowners who wish to develop their land."

Hayward is convinced that we must act now to save the natural quality of the Boardman River.

"We live in a unique area and the Boardman adds to its uniqueness. What comes down the river goes into the bay, the river's effect on the bay should be a concern to us all."

Hayward firmly believes the report will provide the decision-makers of our area with the impetus and guiding force they will need to save the Boardman.



THE BOARDMAN RIVER has been the focus of concern for several years for Gordon Hayward, former South Boardman dairy farmer, past president of the Boardman River Advisory Council and currently planning assistant for the Regional Planning Commission. (R-E photo by Daun Perszyk)