

It's Time to Put the Saginaw Valley in Ecological Order

**by Richard A. Maltby, AICP
Midland, Michigan**

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In view of Governor Granholm's silence in providing the leadership and resources in cooperation with the counties of Midland, Saginaw and Bay for developing an environmental enhancement plan of action for the Saginaw Valley, I felt it necessary to summarize the findings of the "International Environmental Study: Environmental Enhancement of the Niagara River." I also commented on the environmental enhancement study in my previous essay, "It's Time to Plan Ahead."

The "International Environmental Study" emphasized the implications and impact of the Niagara River system on the larger regional environmental framework in terms of tourist oriented land use concentrations, transportation, environmental health, landfill and waste management, natural areas, governmental management and coordination practices, air and water pollution generators and vacant developable land adjacent to the river.

The planning approach used to develop the Niagara River corridor plan is applicable to the development of a regional environmental enhancement plan of action for the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River corridors and Saginaw Bay. The future of the Saginaw Valley clearly depends on the utilization and management of its water and land resources in a planned, ecological order.

The Niagara River and its shores represent a single system, as do the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and Saginaw Bay. Changes in one part of shore may restrict or preclude meaningful use or preservation of other parts. The goal-related findings and conclusions pertaining to the "Niagara River Environmental Plan" included the following:

- Abatement of Pollution
- Preservation of Natural Areas
- Enhancement of Scenic Beauty
- Expansion of River Oriented Recreational Opportunities
- Scope and Quality of Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development
- Improvement of Access to the River
- Improvement of Appreciation of Historical Heritage

The "International Environmental Study" technical report included the following components:

- Recommendations (Priorities, Selected Plans, Programs)
- Goals and Objectives
- The Current Environmental Situation Along the Niagara River
- Problem Areas

- Future Development Proposals
- Alternative Plans (Short-range and Long-range)
- Range of Solutions for Managing the Environmental Aspects of the Niagara River
- Procedure for Evaluating Alternative Plans

Although aimed at preserving natural areas and enhancing the scenic beauty of the Niagara River area, neither the short-term nor the long-range programs were directed at returning the area to its primitive scenic state. The programs recognized commerce and industry as prime contributors to the area and as essential features of the Niagara River environment. They also aimed at a change that would more effectively accommodate these and other productive functions in a scenic, recreation-oriented environment.

It's time to put the Saginaw Valley in ecological order.