

It's Time to Plan Ahead

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In view of the Dow Chemical Company's eventual decontamination of dioxin in Midland soils and in the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay, may I suggest that the Counties of Midland, Saginaw and Bay and the State of Michigan collaborate in developing a regional environmental enhancement plan of action for the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River corridors and the Saginaw Bay.

As for example, in the 1970s the Erie and Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board in Western New York oversaw an international study of the environmental enhancement of the Niagara River Corridor through Western New York and Ontario, Canada, from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The international environmental study examined the environmental status of the Niagara River Corridor in relation to pollution sources, geophysical features, land use and population concentrations, historic features, prominent buildings, highways and entranceways, and tourist activities concentrations. Possible conceptual solutions to environmental problems were considered through preparation of alternative design concepts for geographic areas within the river corridor and preparation of alternative river corridor "themes" for river system management. A preferred "design" concept was selected for each geographical area. Based on the improvement actions implied in the selected area design concepts, a series of environmental action programs, both short-range and long-range, were prepared for the entire Niagara River Corridor. These actions involved natural resources maintenance and enhancement, land use and transportation, aesthetics and prominent buildings, recreation, tourism and historic features. Among these, first priority for implementation was assigned to pollution abatement programs, particularly the need for upgrading municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants. The coordinated management program involved actions at the local, county, regional, state, federal and international levels to implement recommended action programs.

Later would come open space acquisition, housing development, urban redevelopment, storm water drainage and flood control management, trafficways planning, water quality management, toxic waste management, Love Canal Superfund site remediation, air quality improvement strategies, and coastal zone management planning programs pursuant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York State Department of Health. In 2004, New York State Governor George E. Pataki and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation promoted the creation of the Niagara River Greenway which will aid in the planning and development of a greenway of interconnected parks, river access points and waterfront trails along the Niagara River from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie.

Perhaps an environmental enhancement program such as the Niagara River Corridor would be applicable to the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River corridors here in the Saginaw Valley. It's time to plan ahead!