

Rouge Tunnel Called Short-Sighted

By JACKIE KLEIN
SOUTHFIELD

"A proposed tunnel to cut flooding and pollution of the Rouge River may be a great engineering feat, but it would be the greatest disaster ever created in the Rouge Basin," says water resource expert Patricia Gilgallon of Southfield.

A former member of the Governor's Task Force on Water Rights, Use and Pollution Control, Mrs. Gilgallon says the \$219 million tunneling plan of consulting engineers Wade, Trim and Associates would "compound flooding and pollution problems and is 20 years too late."

"Engineers tend to concentrate on flooding and forget about drought protection. A tunnel would keep every bit of moisture out of the land, trees will go and the greatest disaster ever created in the Rouge Basin," says water resource expert Patricia Gilgallon of Southfield.



"A DAY AT THE RACES," sponsored by the Friends of St. Mary Hospital, proved to be a very profitable venture. Sister Mary Calasantia, executive director, accepts a check for \$12,000 from Mrs. Betty Tarpinian, head of the group, while Mrs. Ruth Porter and Mrs. Pat Ghandchi accompany her. "The money will be used to help purchase some of the latest equipment," Sister Calasantia said, "so there will be a lot of winners."

Trim outline plans for an 18-mile-long tunnel that would store storm water runoff under the Rouge River until flood threats have passed. The system would also help control pollution by pumping sewage to Detroit's waste water plant for processing, the report states.

Mrs. Gilgallon, chairman of the ravines committee of Tamarack Trails, an area that has experienced a great deal of flooding, says water can be controlled by open areas.

"The solution to flooding is land use and zoned control. Soil should be set aside for open use and not just land in the flood plains. Small farms should be retained and cities shouldn't make it prohibitively

expensive to hold open land. Parking lots could be covered with controlled gravel instead of paving.

"In seven years, people will be screaming they must have water pumped up and the drought gets worse as natural storage is cut back. We will have a glacier area."

"Unless you are prepared to build on stilts, building shouldn't be allowed on low lands. A substantial amount of land should be set aside for farms and open space. When you build anywhere, unless it's on the top of a mountain, there's no guarantee you won't get flooded."

MRS. GILGALLON says removal of marsh lands, covering the land mass with impervious materials, and paving flood plains will kill off organic life and cause pollution.

"Pollution can be controlled by allowing natural life to accumulate. Pollution is man-made and man makes it impossible for natural life to exist."

"There must be a balance and multi-species or excessive amounts of money will be spent for engineering solutions by those who don't take the time to be ecology

and environmental experts.

"If beasts can't live here, man sure as heck can't. There must be room for all things."

Mrs. Gilgallon says the level of water is rising in the great lakes, and water is going into Lake Erie. "The lake is like a rain barrel at the foot of gutters and eaves. Engineers advocate building bigger gutters and eaves, but the rain barrel remains stationary in size."

"No doubt, if money and political differences are settled, engineers can achieve their goals. But they will be creating their own disaster way beyond handling."

"Man's cementing the soil shut to percolation duplicates the worst in nature by creating drought effects. Excessive zeal to rid communities of unwanted water, and the answers engineered to accomplish this, conspire unconsciously to produce greater and greater floods."

THESE ARE Mrs. Gilgallon's suggestions for solution to problems of over-collected waters and their control for proper drainage.

Re-evaluate the whole structure of inter-connecting drain lines from the source, seeking relief channels.

Establish dispersement weirs and impoundments for holding and storing excesses of waters upstream, starting at the source of the district.

Study the ecosystem of the whole area and propose to individual communities lands to be rezoned to open use planning to balance drainage from their closed use developments.

Where accumulations have reached a point of no return, arrange for storage further downstream so backup or downstream damage will not occur.

Seek to preserve established environments, even if an investment on the part of upstream drainage clients' developments is higher.

Institute fines or fees within communities or watershed areas for handling drainage waters to encourage new concepts for building.

Mrs. Gilgallon was chairman of the Governor's Conference on Water and Natural Beauty, state representative

to the Lake Erie Basin Study Committee, and League of Women Voters water resource chairman.

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