

# Why County Must Save Its Farmlands

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the first of four articles excerpted from "Planning and the Environment" by the Wayne County Planning Commission. It deals with what county and local governments can do to preserve the environment. The first article deals with preservation of open space.

An optimum range of level and distribution of population in Wayne County should be selected and considered the target level.

The range selected should be such that suitably located space will be ample for all the living activities which the population may choose and so that there can be a wide range of options available as to living types, recreation, education, culture, aesthetic experience, transportation, employment—including agriculture—and commerce.

## See Drop In Water Deaths

Michigan has had a reported 196 water accidents in the first half of this year which killed 88 persons and injured 96 others, State Police provisional figures showed. Compared with the same period last year, deaths were down by 21, accidents by 33 while injuries were up by 16.

The deaths included 34 swimmers and waders, 14 boat passengers, 12 boat operators, 18 who died in various falls, two divers, three who attempted rescues, two who died in snowmobile mishaps, and three miscellaneous.

The reports showed nine drownings in swimming pools, 29 drownings while fishing, and that nine victims were under five years of age.

THE 1960 population of the County was 2,666,297. In 1970, it had increased only to 2,666,751. Thus, in one sense, the county had already achieved a stable state of population.

This, however, is a meaningless fact since the real significance of the decade's census figures is the distribution of population losses and gains. Nine cities, including Detroit, lost 182,561 persons; while 34 other units of government gained population by percentage figures ranging from 0.1 percent to 109.2 percent.

Many factors explain such

shifts. Some factors are logical and natural as the general affluence of portions of the population increases; as living standards rise; as age of structures takes its inevitable toll; as preference in activity choices change; and as new products are available.

Other factors causing population shift have been founded on racism, ignorance, fear, mistrust, and contempt. These factors must be rooted out of our experience, since they damage much more of the fabric of society than merely its land-use distributions.

TO ARRIVE at an optimum target population range for the county, more research needs to be done, and the Planning Commission proposes to undertake such a study, with other county agencies, under a federal grant. However, some aspects of such a study can be stated now.

The 2-2/3 million people now living in the county occupy, for urban purposes, about 460 square miles, and for agricultural purposes about 160 square miles. The space needs for adequately providing the full "quality of life environment" for the

current population will require some increase in the land now included in the urban use figure.

A county soils study, just now starting, will give important information on the areas which are prime for agricultural use.

Since Wayne County is a major consumer of certain crops and is a leading producer among counties of the state for some of the same crops (vegetables, sod, sweet corn, flowers), and since such agricultural land contributes to the greenbelt and open space urban areas need, it is logical to consider the

retention of good crop land for this purpose, even in this urban county.

We have, in other words, a fortuitous proximity of crop to consumer which should not be sacrificed on the altar of speculative land exploitation.

THERE ARE additional very important reasons for the retention of open land in the urban area—reasons not directly involved in food or fibre production.

Regardless of the ultimate population growth of the region and regardless of the economic pressures it puts on

the land, rational planning for that population dictates that the settled areas be intertwined with guaranteed open areas for:

1. Recreation and recreation. The greater the population, the more urgent the need.
2. Atmospheric chemical replenishing.
3. Encouragement of relating location of jobs to housing.
4. Discouragement of random decentralization.
5. Provision of space for at least some use of soils in waste treatment.

6. Ground water-table recharging.

7. A land bank—or safety factor—to have available in the event totally new forms of urban (or agricultural) living and demands appear.

8. Forestation for buffering sound and sight.

WAYNE COUNTY should resist the idea, which may be presented in regional plans, that the whole county is too close to the population center to be able to justify agriculture and open space and that these functions must all be provided at the outer edges of the region.

The county must also reject the inevitability of overcrowding and of enduring whatever population growth some computerized curve projections plot on a chart.



PROUD LAKE State Recreation Area, north of Wixom, boasts a new \$120,000 outdoor activities center. Area school children who visit will see a natural science study center, fire-place, balcony-library, movie projection facilities

both indoors and outdoors. The contractor, D. H. Haberkorn & Co. of Orchard Lake, finished the 4,720-square foot structure two months ahead of schedule for the State Dept. of Natural Resources.

## Regional Affairs

### How Area Lawmakers Voted On Trailers

By KATHY MORAN

In the course of four months of voting on the 14-foot trailer bill, the Legislature has added and then taken out amendments to the bill.

If the bill is signed into law by Gov. Milliken, it will allow transportation of 14-foot wide trailers on Michigan's 10 to 12 foot wide highways except on Saturday, Sunday and from noon on the day preceding a holiday until noon on the day after.

Observerland's four senators voted for the bill when it cleared the Senate a second time recently.

In the House, all Observerland representatives voted for the final bill on June 29 except Rep. Thomas Brown (D-Westland) who had also voted against it in May, and

Rep. Richard Young (D-Dearborn Heights) who had voted for it in May.

Young could not be reached for comment on why he changed his vote.

When it originated in the Senate, the bill called for allowing transporting the trailers on state highways and passed by 23-8.

PRIMARY proponents of the bill were representatives of the growing modular-housing industry. Current laws limit vehicle widths to 8 1/2 inches and permits can be obtained to transport 12-foot wide trailers.

Sens. William Faust (D-Westland), Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park) and David Plawecki (D-Dearborn Heights) voted for the bill in March and again in June.

But when it passed the House in May it was amended to allow transporting the vehicles on Saturday, Sunday, and holiday and would limit speeds to 34 m.p.h.

At that time Reps. Marvin Stemples (D-Livonia), James Tierney (D-Garden City), John Bennett (D-Redford Township), Joseph Forbes (D-Oak Park), and Young voted for passage.

Brown voted against it and Rep. Raymond Baker (R-Farmington) did not vote on it.

IT WAS referred back to the Senate for approval of the amendments and the amendment to allow weekend and holiday transporting was taken out of the final bill. The bill that passed the House the second time did not have the amendment in it.

When it passed the House the second time, Young and Brown voted against it. The compromised version passed by 67-31.

A representative of the U.S. Department of Transportation said that the bill will be carefully studied before the "monster" trailers will be allowed on the roads.

Federal authorities have already rejected a plea from industries to give blanket approval to transporting the units.

### VW Driver Sought In Accident

Parents and friends of a young Redford man who died May 17 as a result of injuries he received in a May 7 accident are seeking any witnesses to the mishap.

They are specifically looking for the driver of a Volkswagen seen near the accident.

David W. Johnson, 20, of Redford was hit on Venoy Rd. near Forest in Wayne while riding on his motorcycle. The motorist who hit him left the scene, but his car has since been identified. City of Wayne police say that it is very important that additional witnesses be found if the case is to be prosecuted.

Anyone with information can call the City of Wayne police department, detective bureau.

### 4 Officers Finish Course

Four Observerland residents were among the 43 police officers to graduate from a basic police training course offered by the Oakland Police Academy and Oakland Community College.

Graduating from the course were: Dianna Decker, of 32221 Grandview, Westland, in the Southfield Police Department; Leslie Newsom, of 30529 Astor, Farmington, Southfield Police Department; Raymond Ralls, of 5805 W. Hampton Court, Westland, Royal Oak Police Department; and Dennis Rochford, of 3125 Shawasssee, Farmington, Farmington Township Police Department. The officers earned nine credits in courses on law enforcement, criminal law and justice, physical fitness and defensive tactics.

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