



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

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Natural Resource Trustees release Kalamazoo River draft restoration plan, proposed projects

Comment period opens; online public meeting scheduled for April 29

State and federal Natural Resource Trustees for the Kalamazoo River released today for public review and comment the [Draft Supplemental Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment](#), which includes 14 proposed natural resource restoration projects aimed at restoring the ecology and public use and enjoyment that has been negatively impacted by historic polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination.

The public comment period begins today and runs through May 14, 2021, with a public online meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, April 29, 2021.

The draft plan document and additional information can be found on the [Kalamazoo River web page](#).



KALAMAZOO RIVER TRUSTEES
Restoring Your Natural Resources

Draft supplemental restoration plan, proposed projects

The draft restoration plan proposes a suite of restoration projects chosen from more than 80 ideas that were submitted by the public through an online [restoration portal](#) in 2020. After the current public comment period, Trustees will consider the public input and may revise the restoration plan.

Projects included in a final restoration plan and environmental assessment will be funded with a portion of \$10 million in settlement funds from NCR Corporation and more than \$2 million in remaining bankruptcy proceeds from Millennium Holdings and Plainwell Paper, Inc. The funds result from the companies' liability for injuries to natural resources due to PCB contamination of the Kalamazoo River. Approximately \$2 million in additional restoration funds will become available from the NCR settlement each year for the next seven years.

The Natural Resource Trustees will solicit restoration project ideas and propose projects to implement in the Kalamazoo River watershed until all current and future funds are expended.

Project ideas that were received prior to the Trustees' March 18, 2020, deadline were evaluated against criteria set forth in the [2016 Final Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#), available on the [Kalamazoo River web page](#). Project ideas were then ranked and prioritized for implementation, based on their potential to benefit natural resources injured by the release of PCBs and considering the amount of available funding.

How to submit a comment, attend April 29 meeting

The Trustees are seeking public review and comment on the [restoration plan](#), including the proposed projects listed in Section 3 of the draft plan:

- Send an email to KalamazooRiver.NRDA@NOAA.gov (please put "Kzoo SRP Comment" in the subject line).
- Mail comments to:
Lisa Williams
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2651 Coolidge Road, Suite 101
East Lansing, MI 48823.

At the online public meeting, Trustees will explain the restoration process and the implementation plan, discuss specific proposed projects listed in the plan and answer questions. The meeting will be recorded and posted online in a timely manner afterward.

You can [register in advance](#) for the online public meeting or join when the online meeting begins. If you do not have internet access and would like to join by phone, dial 636-651-3142 and use conference code 374288.

Individuals needing language assistance or accommodations for effective participation at the meeting should contact John Riley at 517-897-2398 by April 21, 2021, to request language, mobility, visual, hearing, translation and/or other assistance.

Background on the site

Paper mills conducting carbonless copy paper recycling released PCBs into the soils, sediments, floodplains and surface water in the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek from the late 1950s through early 1970s. This resulted in injuries to natural resources including fish, mammals and birds. In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency named the area a Superfund site by adding it to the National Priorities List. The state of Michigan continues to issue fish consumption advisories, recommending people do not eat or at least limit the amount of fish they eat from the portions of the site impacted by PCBs. The most current advisories are available in the [Southwest Michigan Eat Safe Fish Guide](#).

The Natural Resource Trustees for the site are the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE); the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Michigan Department of Attorney General; the U.S. Department of the Interior represented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and the U.S. Department of Commerce represented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

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