

Dear Ann Arbor Leaders,

I am inspired by the on-going interest and evidence supporting the removal of Argo Dam. I first wrote about dam removal as a student in the U of M's School of Natural Resources and Environment. More than 10 years later, Ann Arbor is in the position of addressing the same issues that municipalities nationwide are facing: what to do with aging, obsolete infrastructure. You only have to look as far as the Village of Dexter to see that dam removal provides ecological, aesthetic, and economic benefits to a community. As a whitewater kayaker, I have personally enjoyed the free-flowing rapids of Mill Creek, driving 50 miles from Lansing each time. Mill Creek's rapids are now recognized in American Whitewater's national river database:

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/6820/>

It's time to provide the same benefits to the City of Ann Arbor. The reclaimed park lands, a healthy free-flowing river, and the enhanced recreational opportunities resulting from the removal of Argo Dam will have a major impact on the city, I assure you. Whitewater paddlers will travel from Windsor, Toledo, Lansing, Flint, Jackson, and beyond to enjoy the seasonal whitewater created on the Huron River's steepest grade. A fancy, engineered whitewater course isn't necessary; smart, agency-driven sediment controls will provide the whitewater features that will make Ann Arbor lower Michigan's premier paddling destination.

To learn more about the 40-year history of whitewater kayaking on the Huron River, please visit www.huronriverpaddlers.blogspot.com for a wealth of information. I am happy to answer any questions you may, via phone or email.

Thank you for your consideration. I wish you luck in your decision-making.

Best regards,
Jonathan

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Jonathan E. Lutz

Dear Environmental Commission Members,

I am a resident of Ann Arbor and a member of the Huron River Watershed Council, representing the City of Ann Arbor. I also teach planning law and sustainable development with the Urban and Regional Planning Program at UM. I won't be able to attend tonight's meeting because of a prior family obligation, although I did attend two of the three HRIMP public meetings.

I want to express my support for removing Argo Dam, for two primary reasons. First, I am convinced that it will be environmentally beneficial for the Huron River to do so, and second I believe that rowing--which I also support--can be accommodated on other reaches of the River. Specifically, I believe that with relatively minor modification (and ideally financial support from both the Ann Arbor Public Schools and UM--the two primary users of Argo Pond), both Geddes Pond and Barton Pond could be turned into rowing venues that can support crew as well or better

than does Argo Pond. That's the kind of win-win resolution we should be seeking to this debate, rather than just debating whether or not to take Argo Dam out.

I would also like to address one argument in particular that I've heard for keeping Argo Dam: that the portion of the Huron River that runs through Ann Arbor is an "urban river" and so it makes sense to use it for "urban uses" (i.e., with impoundments for crew). Just because part of the River runs through Ann Arbor doesn't mean that that entire stretch of the River should be urbanized. Rather, it makes more sense to me to maximize our urban uses on the stretches of river that need to be urbanized for a variety of reasons--Barton Pond and Geddes Pond--and to restore and maintain the rest of the river in as natural a condition as possible. The rowers argue that there would be too many conflicts with other users, but I believe that the multiple users on these two ponds could be readily accommodated with good management, especially given the relatively limited times and seasons that crew rowing actually takes place.

In sum, I recognize that change can be difficult, but I believe on balance that we can make the Huron River healthier by removing Argo Dam while supporting high-quality rowing on other reaches of the river, and I urge you to recommend those two actions to City Council accordingly.

Sincerely,

Richard Norton

As a life-long resident of Washtenaw County, I can happily lend my vote to the removal of this outdated, unnecessary, expensive piece of junk. There isn't one reason to keep it; even concerns about the rowing community pale in comparison. The rowing community needs to respect environmental issues. It is done all of the time when the hunters and anglers respect decisions made in favor of environmental protection.

Respectfully submitted and hoping to be treated with respect, Kathie Weinmann

Public comment to Environmental Commission
5/28/2009

The City of Ann Arbor has the distinction of being an environmentally progressive community. Retiring Argo Dam and allowing the Huron River to once again flow freely is consistent with that reputation. If the role of this Commission is to recommend policy that protects and enhances our air, water, land and public health, then retiring Argo Dam is the clear path.

As a nation, we're trending toward dam removal not dam replacement. Across the country, thousands of small dams like Argo Dam are being removed because the environmental, economic and safety factors demand removal over replacement. Dams fragment river systems into isolated bits and pieces that are biologically and physically separated from each other.

Local, state, and national river scientists agree that Argo Dam is a dam that no longer makes sense. For more than 30 years the dam has not fulfilled its intended purpose of producing

power, and for more than a century it has stood over high-gradient rapids. Free-flowing rivers with riffle habitat are rare in Michigan due to the thousands of dams on our rivers.

Argo Dam causes more harm than good. Restoring this 6-mile stretch of the Huron River will improve water quality by removing a warmer pond with a cooler free-flowing river, by improving habitat for fish and rare, freshwater mussels, and providing floodplains for stormwater treatment and storage.

Stream flow will become less erratic. The U.S. Geological Survey cites Argo Dam as one of two dams in Michigan that most dramatically alters the natural stream flow of a river. MDNR stopped stocking the fishery at the pond years ago due to lack of sufficient interest in fishing this site, and because the fish populations remained degraded due to the reservoir environment.

Finally, to those who argue that we should not restore this stretch of the Huron River because other dams remain, I offer this point for consideration: The story of our rivers is death by a thousand cuts – wetland fills, dumping, stormwater runoff, and other insults. So it only makes sense that restoring the river will take many actions of stewardship to keep her a freshwater jewel in our communities. Removing Argo Dam is a significant step in the right direction.

By removing Argo Dam and restoring the Huron River, we will turn bad news and a liability into an asset for the entire community.

Elizabeth Riggs
Watershed Planner

Hello Commissioners,

I have met with many scientists and staff over the last two weeks to review national, state, and local data on the environmental benefits of dam removal in order to confirm the environmental benefits from Argo Dam removal. I believe the attached document, that I shared this afternoon with commissioners at the working session, helps clarify the benefits.

In a meeting on Tuesday with Paul Seelbach, Sharon Hanshue and Chris Freiburger, fisheries biologists from MDNR, they suggested that the Woolen Mill Dam in West Bend, WI was a similar dam removal story and to watch this video. This link should take you to the video Taking a Second Look: Communities and Dam Removal. The most relevant part to Ann Arbor is the first 9 minutes where the Milwaukee River (West Bend, WI) experience is profiled.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCXR1r99-2s>

The MDNR has also expressed their support for Argo dam removal and will be submitting a letter to the City Council and attending the meeting. In addition American Rivers, Ann Arbor Area Trout Unlimited and Michigan Trout Unlimited, The League of Conservation Voters, Washtenaw Audubon Society, Huron River Paddlers, UM's Raw Strength and Courage paddling group, and the Huron River Flyfishing Club are supporting Argo dam removal.

Also, here is a link that cites a dam in Battle Creek that was similar to Argo in that it opened up a smaller section of river (Argo opens up 6 miles of free-flowing river):

<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10369-124681--,00.html>

Thank you for your consideration,
Laura

Laura Rubin

May 28, 2009

To the Environmental Commission:

I, and my family urge you to retain the Argo Dam.

We would normally be attending tonight's meeting to express this opinion directly and passionately in person, but were committed to traveling with our daughter- a Huron High School senior – to her final regatta in St Catherine, Canada.

While the goals of improving the health of the Huron are admirable, it must be realized that it is an urban river, always will be, and will remain so. At least two other dams are not likely to ever be removed for reasons of either providing a source of drinking water and /or powergeneration. The third, Geddes, won't because it would be politically distasteful to do so even though it wreaks the most ecological havoc in terms of weed growth, water stagnation and silting.

The river will still receive street and bridge runoff, will still make "engineered turns" past steel sheeted cofferdams and still not be allowed to naturally flood floodplain soccer fields.

The removal of Argo will completely disrupt the rowing community which is growing and constitutes a major high school sports venue. To date, no concrete plan has been offered to these several hundred users as to how they will be accommodated absent Argo Pond. To blithely state that rowing can be reassigned to distant locations on Ford Lake or Belleville – a long and dangerous commute for high schoolers- is irresponsible. For both safety reasons and simple civic pride, a local Ann Arbor venue should be found first.

Funds are committed for the dam repair. Funds for the extended park area and vision plan are not. Other promising possibilities of recreating electrical generation (and in the process possibly improve the cleansing of the impoundment) exist, but are not fully explored. Consumers Energy and the Veterans Administration are interested in reactivating

Argo Dam for hydroelectric generation. We also have no idea yet how proposed Cap and trade CO2 regulations will affect the economics of renewable hydro generation. It would be irresponsible to destroy the dam before we find out if it can be reactivated.

Finally, a couple of years back, Governor Granholm espoused the notion of "Cool Cities" as a means of promoting urban vitality. What "cooler" amenity could there be than the availability of a rowing venue to a city's citizenry. Cambridge, Boston, Philadelphia and more locally grand Rapids and Wyandotte, offer such opportunities on their urban waterways and promote and celebrate them in the process

We urge you to keep the dam - even if just in the short term - until all the options are explored and the preservation of rowing locally can be assured.

Bob Hart RA AIA

Hi: I would like to write in support of removing Argo Dam. I feel it would create an important piece of a great parkland area for the city

that would run from Barton to Superior Dam. Think Boulder Creek in Boulder, Colo. In addition, an interesting canoe run could be created that would attract paddlers from all over south east Michigan and Ohio. I know the rowers would be displaced and that they will mount an organized effort to oppose this. Hopefully they can be convinced to move to Barton Pond where we all can continue to enjoy them.

Hi: I am writing in support of removing the Argo Dam. I feel that it would benefit the city in many ways, supporting canoeing, biking and walking on the river. It would be great to connect the pathways so that people could walk or bike all the way from Barton to Superior.

I know that the rowing community will be upset and will mount an organized front against this. I would hope that they could be relocated to Barton Pond in a facility that they would be happy with and then we in the neighborhood could continue to enjoy them as well.

I am in total support of the proposal to remove Argo Dam. It is an decision that is environmentally and fiscally sound.

Thank you

Doreen J. Jessen

resident 2nd ward Ann Arbor

I support the removal of Argo Dam, I commiserate with the rowers, but think removal is a good idea.

Laurie Blakeney

Greetings,

I frequently fish the Huron all the way from Hudson Mills to Gallup Park. That's a lot of beautiful water. Very seldom do I see other anglers. Taking out Argo Dam might add a small amount of fishable water but that seems a poor trade-off for the loss of a very popular, easily accessible and well developed place for hundreds of rowers of all ages.

As a fisherman I say keep Argo.

Sincerely,

J. Vandervelde

Dear Commissioners,

Benefits from Argo removal that are important to me:

**** Improving the natural river length with the greater diversity of aquatic life and use by fishermen and the kayak community.**

**** The benefit of moving waters on the emotional well being of those who seek comfort and restoration of soul.**

**** The economic benefit as more people enjoy shore fishing and wading.**

** The tourist benefit such as noted when I viewed fisherman wading in downtown Grand Rapids.

One final note: As a 72 year-old who just started fly fishing, I noted how crowded the flowing waters of the Huron become when the insect hatches begin. We need more space for sports fishing. Also the use of water edge parks and pathways will increase and this is to benefit the safety of all of us.

Sincerely,
Gordon Sheill

To all concerned,

I am writing to express my concern that removal of Argo Dam is NOT the way to go. I have been sculling on Argo Pond for over 20 years. While I appreciate the sentiment that removing the dam will “restore” the Huron River, those seeking the dam’s removal do not seem to appreciate the habitat and natural beauty of the river as it is today. On Monday, there were dozens of kayakers and canoeists out on the river enjoying the pond. There was another couple of scullers out as well, one of whom was blind – and I admire the club members who trailed him in a launch giving him steering directions. Why remove our access to water that meets our needs and facilitates recreation for the athlete as well as the handicapped? Why take away access to a sport in which one can participate well into their 80’s? I want to spend my next 40 years rowing Argo Pond and enjoying the natural beauty of this man made body of water. If you turn it into white water, where will the swans nest? Where will geese nest? What about the herons and turtles?

Many who have expressed their desire to remove the dam seem to think that moving the rowers is an easy thing. In the two boat houses there is roughly \$2M invested in equipment, not counting the cost of the two facilities. One cannot “just relocate” without significant additional expense which must be far greater than the \$20K per year required to maintain the dam. From what I have read, the dam itself is in good condition, and the cost of removal will be significant.

We should keep the dam in place. If the city wants the users of Argo Pond to bear some of the cost, then I recommend the city council consider assessing a portion of the maintenance expense to the canoe livery and to the rowing clubs (which will then be passed on to the membership), and the remaining portion could be assessed by other means to recoup from the general Ann Arbor population – those runners, walkers, bikers, fishermen and nature lovers who also enjoy Bandemer Park, Beckey Park, Longshore Park, Huron Bridge Park, Barton Park, and Bird Hills Park (all of which are found on the banks of Argo Pond).

Angie Pyle

Gentlemen/Ladies of the City Council:

Just a short note to express support for the removal of Argo Dam when the issue comes to vote in the near future.

It is my position that whenever it is possible to remove a dam from a free-flowing waterway, it should be done for the sake of returning the river to a more natural state. Dams that do not provide hydroelectric power and are in place basically to impound water are detrimental to the fauna of the water by raising the temperature. A healthier watershed is maintained without this warming.

I lived in the area of the Huron watershed for many years and used the river extensively for recreation, mainly for canoeing and fly fishing. Please give serious weight to the comments of the members of Trout Unlimited that you receive; their organization has studied the issue of Dam removal for many years and is reasonably and scientifically based.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my views.

Michael D. Moran,

I have worked by the Argo Dam and by the Argo Pond for 25 years. I see how much this area is used by the rowing teams, by fishermen and women, by bicyclists going over the dam to the path that comes out by the Northside Grill. I see the runners and others constantly using the pond and the Dam. I think the supporters of the removal are well intentioned but don't use this area and see how vibrant and in constant use it is. The boat launch by the canoe park allows motorboats to put in and go up the river to the Barton Dam.

The railroad bridge which is still being used is in bad shape. I also think the dollars could be spent to figure out where the sewage overflows are dumping into the river during heavy rains.

Thank You.

Lynn Suits Lamkin

Unless you are going to use the facility for the generation of power and lead to a reduction of our dependence on coal burning to create electricity, It is hard to justify its preservation. Rivers are healthier without dams. Communities are healthier with healthy rivers. Ann Arbor should demonstrate its progressive earth friendly culture and accept its responsibility to future generations by removing this ecologically destructive facility-
Please

Paul Harkaway

I support maintaining Argo Dam unless prohibitively expensive because the rowing for students and adults provides important community, physical activity and use of the river. Judith Judge

Dear Environment Commissioners,

I am writing to support the removal of Argo Dam. Even with its many dams, the Huron is a beautiful river. I often imagine its status before the dams as a free flowing cold water trout stream. With lunker trout making spawning runs from the big lakes. These days that would be

steelhead and salmon but the idea is the same. The contribution to the beauty of southeast Michigan, and of course to Ann Arbor, would be immense.

So add mine to the voices supporting this effort.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Rauch

Dear members of the Environmental Commission,

I'm writing to support the removal of Argo Dam. The environmental benefits alone are sufficient to make removal the clear choice.

Environmentalists have known since at least the early 1970s that dams are an ecological boondoggle. Earth First found dams so problematic that it announced its existence back then with a protest against the Glen Canyon Dam. Some forty years and countless studies later, you don't need to be a radical to understand that dams fundamentally damage river ecosystems.

Take just one vital but overlooked factor in a river system: floodplains. Removing Argo would restore the natural rise and fall of the water level through that section of stream. The nutrients carried by the river would no longer concentrate to unhealthy levels in a stagnant pond, but would feed the shoreline. The natural banks, in turn, would provide flood storage, reducing the "flashiness" of the current during storms and periods of heavy flow. We know from USGS surveys that the river level downstream of Argo—a "run of the river" dam—is one of the most volatile in the entire state. When you have these extreme flows, water tears away the banks and habitat downstream, and then diminishes to a trickle.

Taking out the dam would let this stretch of river "breathe"—rise and fall naturally, and far less dramatically—rather than fall pell-mell onto whatever's downstream.

Proponents of keeping Argo Dam argue that there's not enough environmental data to support removing it, or that taking it out will not have a measurable impact. But they have often either misunderstood or misstated facts. For instance, it's simply not true that Barton Dam allows colder flows through its gates. And supposed studies showing Argo has no impact on temperature were never actually conducted.

In addition, opponents of removal seem to argue that taking out Argo won't be "enough"—that the environmental impact is somehow insufficient and should therefore be dismissed. It's clear that the impact will not, in fact, be minimal, but the notion that because taking out Argo won't solve all the Huron's problems is strange at best.

Finally, there are some benefits to some dams. But they're never benefits to the river

being dammed or its ecosystem. And the primary benefits such as hydropower and flood control are simply not relevant at Argo. (It would be nice to believe that someone somewhere is going to pony up the money to install hydropower at Argo, but city studies have concluded the payback is decades out. Moreover, the vague promise that someday we might get hydropower sounds like a case of offering two birds in the bush for the one—dam removal—we've got in hand.)

There are legitimate reasons to keep Argo, and the debate about those reasons is and should be robust. But those reasons are social, not environmental. Examples abound in Michigan and Wisconsin of restored river health and habitat after dam removal. Just upstream, the removal of Mill Creek Dam has been a resounding success for both the natural and the "lived" environment. I strongly encourage you to follow the examples of Dexter and many other states and cities. For the sake of the environment, remove Argo Dam.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to the city.

Best wishes,

John Lofy

Dear Commissioners,

Please remove Argo Dam soon, rather than maintaining it. Improvement of stream quality trumps its use for sculling and canoeing, which can be done at Gallup or Barton Ponds.

Best Regards,

Stephen C. Brown

We strongly support the removal of Argo Dam, in order to restore the Huron river to a more "natural" state and benefit the associated wildlife. Edith Maynard and John M. Allen

I am an avid user of the Huron for fishing, canoeing, walking, sight seeing, photography, and even swimming. I also have friends who use the river for rowing. I am heartily in favor of removing Argo Dam but recognize that some accomodation must be made to allow the rowers to move to another spot...possibly Gallup park?

I am also a strong supporter of the Huron River Watershed council and Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited and appreciate the effort they are making to educate the citizens of Ann Arbor on the issues that exist with Argo Dam and reasons for its removal.
Mike Brooks

Mike Brooks

As a frequent user of the Huron River (fly fishing for smallmouth bass), I wish to comment in support for the removal of Argo Dam. I also live within a two-minute walk of the dam, and although I appreciate the beauty of Argo Pond and the amenities it provides to the rowing community, I believe that removing the dam will provide the greatest benefits in terms of river ecology and recreational opportunities for Ann Arbor as a whole.

The Huron River Watershed Council's extensive research on this issue has revealed that:

1. Removing Argo Dam is better for the river

- Cleaner water.
- Better habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Positive impact on critical water quality indicators: stream flow, temperature, dissolved oxygen, species diversity, sediment and nutrient transport.
- Natural control of invasive plant and animal species, eliminating the need for herbicides and pesticides.

2. Removing Argo Dam is a great quality-of-life opportunity

- Better canoeing and kayaking.
- Better fishing.
- 30 acres of brand-new parkland in the heart of Ann Arbor.
- Beautiful natural rapids.
- Revitalization of the northern gateway/approach to the City.

3. Removing Argo Dam makes economic sense

- Argo Dam requires \$500,000 in repairs just to stay in the shape it's in.
- Argo Pond is filling in with sediments and weeds, which will require an additional, major city investment to fix—temporarily.
- Dams are a massive insurance liability for the city.
- The Army Corps of Engineers give Argo Dam a high downstream potential hazard rating.

4. Removing Argo Dam will not be as difficult as some suggest

- It would be sad to lose rowing on Argo pond. However, the rowing community can be accommodated on other ponds in and around Ann Arbor. HRWC is committed to helping the rowing community build new high-quality facilities elsewhere.
- Preliminary studies show no contamination of dam sediments.
- The federal stimulus package, and state parks funds are all offering money for dam removal—but not for dam maintenance.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Justin Heslinga

Members of the Environmental Commission:

First, I would like to applaud the Park Advisory Commission and the Environmental Commission for exploring ways to better manage the Huron River. Planning for this important resource is a difficult, but essential, task.

In the robust public discussion about the recommendations for Argo Pond in the draft Management Plan, I believe there is a park use issue that has not been fully aired. In the interest of full disclosure, you should know that I am the parent of a high school rower AND a general member of the Huron River Watershed Council. I am also an urban planner who deals daily with questions of competing land uses.

Much of the interest for removing Argo Dam, and thereby Argo Pond, has focused on restoring the natural function and improving the health of the river. This strategy has worked successfully in other locations, including a local example in Dexter.

What this approach doesn't acknowledge is the urban setting in which Bandemer Park and Argo Pond function. The area is visually and physically separated from nearby roads, with few nearby residential neighbors. The park is, however, accessible from a freeway interchange, which makes it an opportunistic location for illegal activities.

The characteristics that currently make this urban park a welcoming environment are: 1) the system of linked pedestrian paths around the pond and to the adjoining neighborhoods, 2) the recreational facilities recently added to Bandemer Park, such as the BMX course, and 3) the activity on or near the water associated with the four rowing organizations and the canoe livery.

My greatest concern is that the welcoming environment now supported by the "eyes on the river" and sense of community ownership provided by the rowers will be lost if rowing is moved off the pond and the impoundment is drained. One has to look no further than Gallup Park to see how active recreational activity contributes to the success of an urban river park.

The most appropriate solution for Bandemer Park and the Huron River, in this unique location in the heart of the city, is to keep - and restore - the Argo impoundment as a recreational asset for the community. The best way to protect and improve the health of the river at Argo is to encourage the creation of an organization of pond users to provide stewardship for this park into the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.

Wendy Rampson-Gage

Please respect the science that has gone into the HRWC recommendation to remove Argo Dam.

Thank you.

Joan Lowenstein

Dear Environmental Commission Members:

I want to express my strong opinion that Argo Dam should be removed to restore that section of the Huron River to its natural, free flowing state. Doing so is simply the right long-term solution that

- 1) minimizes future costs/repairs to the present impoundment,
- 2) maximizes natural habitat for riverine flora/fauna,
- 3) increases the natural beauty of our river valley,
- and 4) maximizes the recreational opportunities for the majority of our citizens. Kayakers, canoeists, fly fishers all enjoy free flowing sections of our river.

On the last point, I recognize and respect that the impoundment provides flat water used by a fraction of our recreational users, namely our local rowing clubs/teams. If there were not other sites available for this activity, it would diminish my strong support for dam removal. However, given the opportunities to relocate to other local sites, I remain in strong favor of restoring this section of our river to its natural state.

Thank you for reading and considering my comments.

Sincerely yours,
Noel

Noel Perkins
Donald T. Greenwood Collegiate Professor of Engineering Arthur F.
Thurnau Professor Mechanical Engineering 2350 Hayward St.
University of Michigan

Dear Commissioners,

I can't support removing Argo Dam. For me, the reason comes down to Climate Change. I continue to believe that we are not even beginning to take the problem of Climate Change seriously in the US. If we were, I think we would not seriously consider removing a dam that in the past generated clean electricity; on the contrary, the only discussion would be how fast we can restore the dam system to full generating capacity.

I think an even better proposal would be to keep all of our dams and use all of them to generate electricity. Ann Arbor has poor wind and solar resources, but we have fair hydroelectric potential. This is probably the best opportunity for clean energy generation for the City of Ann Arbor. When we become serious about dealing with Climate Change, conservation and hydroelectric power will be our best local options. Further, hydro power is even more valuable than wind since it can act both as low level base load and peaking load. We will need clean sources of peaking power if we eventually move to wind and nuclear for most of our electric power.

Sincerely,
Ken Clark

I am a member of the Huron River Watershed Council. I have also canoed almost the entire Huron - every part except Kent Lake and Ypsi to Belleville. So I've seen all of the dams, and most of the river.

Spending more money to rebuild and then maintain the dam is poor use of funds. We know that the best thing for the environment is to have fewer

dams. The Huron River Watershed Council is our experts on the river. Their advice should carry significant weight. The HRWC isn't just a bunch of starry eyed environmentalists. The research and work on improving and understanding the Huron River Watershed is outstanding, using volunteers, experts, and careful observation. I trust their recommendations.

The vested interests of the rowers are obvious. We should support our rowing communities, but it doesn't have to come with environmental costs. There are other good options for them at Barton and also Gallip parks, as well as nearby lakes.

Please follow the science, follow the expert recommendations, take care of the amazing resource that is the Huron and support the removal of the dam. It is the best option for the river, and our environment. And the best use of our dollars.

Linda Diane Feldt

Hello

Please, if you haven't done it yet, visit the website www.hrwc.org/argodam to see why many of us who live near the Huron River want Argo Dam removed.

Thank you.

Devorah Wolf

Dear HRWC:

Although I appreciate the views of those who wish to see the dam removed, I am not in favor of removing the dam until the issue of cost efficient electricity generation (as raised in at least one letter to the editor of the AA News) is answered. I also read an opinion from Joe O'Neal saying the dam was in fine shape and the cost of repair was not prohibitive at all. His comments must be taken in to consideration - he ordinarily knows what he is talking about. I don't think we have the proper answers. If the dam can be repaired (re-converted?) to produce clean electrical power at a reasonable cost, I think that would be great!

Certainly it is stupid to remove a viable structure at a huge cost if it can provide useful energy. If at some point the dam does need major repair, maybe that's the time to think about removing it.

In summary, there seems to be conflicting opinions on the costs of maintaining the current dam vs. tearing it down and the viability as a "green" electrical generator. A unbiased third party needs to "run the numbers".

As I will be out of town later in the week, thank you in advance for forwarding my comments to those meeting on the 28th.

Peter Fink

It strikes me that with the number of dams on the river, removing one of the newer ones does little to "restore the Huron River."

Moreover, the pond serves a variety of useful recreational needs.

Leave it where it is, please.

Morris Taber

To whom it may concern:

The removal of Argo dam would be a financially and enviromentally responsible action. I realize that a few vocal special interest groups (the rowing clubs) oppose the removal, but they have other options including Gallup park.

The revitalization of Ann Arbor's northern corridor would benefit the citizens of Ann Arbor and also benefit the Huron river eco-system. The stinky pond would be replaced with high gradient water suitable for a productive small mouth fishery and great paddling opportunities. I believe the economic impact would also be positive due to the commerce created by new parkland, potential high gradient paddling opportunities and the overall beautification of the area.

I strongly urge that the dam be torn down despite the protestations of the vocal rowing minority.

Best regards,

Christopher DeVries.

I support the restoration of the Huron River and the removal of Argo Dam.

Raymond De Young, Associate Professor
Chair, Behavior, Education and Communications Program (BEC)
Co-convener, Workshop on Localization (WOL)
School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan

I'm writing to explain HRWC's statement that Argo Dam is failing, and to respond to criticism of it. Some people have said that the dam is in "excellent condition" and others have accused HRWC of being "hysterical" in our concern. I believe this is because parts of the dam--the concrete section--is indeed in good condition, and most people believe this is the full extent of the dam.

However, as I explained at the PAC meeting last night, the toe drain is also part of the dam, covered under the permit and all technical descriptions, as are the gates, chains, mill race, mechanics, etc. The reality is that the toe drains are deteriorating and not draining the water in the earthen embankment adequately. These drains reduce the elevation difference, and therefore the water pressure, between the mill race and the river. The risk is that parts of the earthen embankment will liquefy and fall into the river. The water in the mill race will then rush into the river, carrying loads of sediment with it and creating a "new" channel. This may cause flooding downstream, obstructions and back-ups in the river due to large sediment islands, and kill plants and animals. Similarly, as you heard yesterday, the upstream portions of earthen embankment add stability to the Argo impoundment, which is the reason we can't simply fill in the mill race to solve the

toe drain problem (not to mention the livery and portage costs). If the upstream earthen embankment breaches or slumps, the impoundment could also rush into the river diverting the dam gates.

Finally, we believe this is of great concern as the MDEQ and MDNR staff have been dogging the City for about 5 years on this issue. Over the last 5 years, staff and budget cuts have led the MDEQ to publicly announce that it would not be able to respond to minor pollution concerns, review wetland permits, or review minor applications for new permit discharges. In short, MDEQ has been forced to take action only on significant environmental dangers. MDEQ cannot afford to be "hysterical" about minor problems. The fact that they have expressed this raised level of urgency about Argo dam and the risks associated with an embankment collapse causes the Huron River Watershed Council great concern.

Thank you for your time and thought on the river and on the HR Impoundment Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Laura

Laura Rubin
Director
Huron River Watershed Council

To whom it may concern:

I have submitted the following to the Ann Arbor News. I thought it prudent to also send this to you. I truly hope you will consider all the facts, carefully.

Respectfully,
Margaret Perrett

To the Editor of the Ann Arbor News:

Laura Rubin of the Huron River Watershed Council is not seeing all sides, in her editorial printed on May 7, 2009. The fate of Argo Dam and Pond is multifaceted. Their argument for removal to improve the Huron's health is short-sided. If we really want to return the Huron River to its natural state, we'd better all move away and raze the city and all the dams. Not a likely occurrence—it is an urban river—all the better to maintain parts of it for urban use. I believe the wider, blue space that we have currently in Argo Pond is more useable to a wider spectrum of the public than the "fast-moving current and rapids like at the Delhi Bridge."

I attended the recent PAC meeting, held on the date of Ms. Rubin's editorial printing and was most intrigued to hear two very educated men, stating long-standing and usual support of the HRWC, but strongly parting company with them on this issue. I certainly hope the members of the PAC and City Council will seek out some more objective data,

rather than blindly accepting that from the HRWC. Making a decision based solely upon the pseudo-scientific data from the Watershed Council is paramount to allowing the fox to guard the hen house. Consider the result of the potential “lovely, fast-moving current” barreling through the city, flooding the river’s banks and doing who knows what to the sleeping underground Allen Creek. The extra width that the Argo Pond can hold provides protection that we are not able to realize, and will only appreciate all too late, if we no longer have it to buffer flooding from ice jams and spring rains.

Our city forefathers put the dam there for some reason—yes, it was originally intended for harnessing hydro-electric power, but it was placed in that spot for what I’m sure was a very specific reason. As the HRWC states, no dam is permanent—true, but they are maintainable and replaceable, and most often built by humans to control rivers to maintain our safe living areas. Please, Ann Arbor City Council—consider all the facts and potential ramifications in removing this long-standing structure. While the health of the Huron is important, so is the health, safety and well-being of the people who live around it.

I am a Ward 3 resident and a watershed planner for the HRWC for 10 years, where I’ve worked on other dam removals and gained training in dam removal projects.

As follow up to recent conversations with my Ward 3 council representatives about the Huron River at Argo Pond, I am providing the attached detailed expenses that will accompany the two competing scenarios: Retire Argo Dam and Restore the Natural Channel; or Rehabilitate and Maintain Argo Dam and Pond.

This information provides the economic rationale for pursuing the Retire Argo Dam scenario over the Rehabilitate and Maintain scenario. Even without factoring in the value of new land, the economic argument for retiring the dam is very sound. The information in the table is drawn from the HRIMP Report and actual costs from recent, local dam removal projects (adjusted for site conditions).

Also attached is a list of funding sources that focus on dam removal and river restoration for which this project would be eligible. Most, if not all, of the costs associated with removing the dam and restoring the site can be covered by these funding sources.

(Attachments forwarded to Park Advisory and Environmental Commissions)

Elizabeth Riggs
Watershed Planner

The argument that the basic biology of the Huron river would be improved by the removal of Argo dam, could be applied to the removal of any building in downtown Ann Arbor. Would not the Ann Arbor area be better off if ALL buildings, roads, and other human structures were to be removed? Of course,

humans-taking-up-space involves some sacrifice of nature. Our job as citizens is to manage our natural resources in a prudent and responsible way, while facilitating a mutually beneficial environment for humans in and with nature.

Argo Pond provides a resource that is truly unique and part of what makes Ann Arbor special. Literally thousands of people have been and will continue to be benefitted by the presence of Argo Pond, through an increasingly vibrant Ann Arbor rowing community. The kids involved are learning teamwork and hard work, as well as having an opportunity to get into terrific physical condition. We have a true obesity problem in this country, and Argo Pond remaining intact is directly contributing to reducing obesity and promoting a strong physical conditioning among hundreds of youth and adults in our community.

When I was a kid in the 1970s, I could 'walk onto' almost any sport's team, including football, basketball, soccer and gymnastics. Today, all of these sports are organized on a club level from a very early age. So, today, participation in sports in our public school systems is a very different experience than it was 30 years ago. Let's consider the Pioneer and Huron Crew teams! My son literally walked-on to his first Huron Crew practice and heard, "Okay, the Coxswain gets to talk. Everyone else, 'Shut Up!'" Being a relatively quiet, smart and internally strong kid, he came home and said, "Crew is great!! I want to stay on the team." I can't tell you in words about the transformation in my son's life since that day! Like many kids today, he had been obsessed with computer and video games. Crew literally scooped him up and gave him major additional reasons for getting up every day. These reasons included: friendship, teamwork, exercise, discipline, sportsmanship, hard work, education, respect AND appreciation for the beauty of the environment.

Ann Arbor is great place to live! Our family is passionate about the environment. Sometimes, however, I see people in our community who are more interested in getting a feather in their cap for removing a man-made structure than they are about thinking prudently through the careful process of making wise decisions as to how to manage our natural resources so as to create a win for the community AND a win for the environment. I know that just about every single CREW family is concerned about the environment and wants to take care of our waterways. We are not a group of callous parents who don't appreciate the importance of protecting our precious and few natural resources; however, the way we will build our community into a beautiful and vibrant place to live is by prudent and wise judgment—one careful decision at a time. In this case, I see the Huron Watershed Council applying statistics which have been gleaned from national averages in a careless way--to the Argo Pond body of water. Let's use accurate data and carefully applied science, without bias, to the biological questions surrounding this issue!

As a community, we need to make prudent, careful and wise decisions—one at a time—to preserve and protect our environment, as well as to promote and advance a vibrant environment in which future generations of people can thrive.

Respectfully written,

David Granner

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Ann Arbor. I have lived here, paid taxes and voted here for 28 years.

I would like to express my very strong support for retention of the Argo impoundment. This impoundment is critical for both recreational activities and competitive rowing. Without a stretch of water long enough to permit our rowers to practice at competitive distances, they will not be able to achieve the level of success they have been "growing into" over the last several years. The Huron and Pioneer teams made us proud at their latest regional meet in Cincinnati last weekend. Without the Argo impoundment as a venue for practice, our athletes, high schools and city would not have enjoyed (and been able to brag about) these teams' remarkable level of success.

I would like to note that I have always been a strong advocate for environmentally sound decisions. However, in this case, it is absolutely clear to me that the impact on quality of life in Ann Arbor would be critically harmed by removal of the dam.

Varsity sports is a necessary part of what we do to educate our children. It is these athletes who will be most directly harmed by removal of the dam, but in my estimation, the entire City of Ann Arbor will suffer, if a central blue water park is removed. It is unfortunate that the welfare of our children and the recreational opportunities for our citizens must be pitted against a desire to return the river to a natural course. However, as desirable as the latter may be, it cannot be measured against the harm that will be done to so many committed high school and college athletes, community rowers and other citizens who have come to love and require this part of our city's endowment.

I strongly encourage our City Council to support retention of the Argo impoundment.

Ned Kirsch

To whom it may concern:

I write to you today as a person who has been a rower and/or coach for 3 of the 4 rowing teams on Argo Pond and somebody who typically spends 2 to 6 hours per day involved in rowing-related activities on Argo Pond. I appreciate your willingness to read this e-mail

and consider my opinion in your final decision. I am sorry that I was unable to attend the public meeting last night.

My hope is that you will consider what this river has meant to me personally, my perception of the rowing community's use of this river and the potential of using other bodies of water, and my sentiments regarding the rowing community's use of the environment.

For perspective, Argo Pond has been the "center of the universe" for me since 1999, when I started rowing as a member of the University of Michigan men's rowing team. As you likely know by now, upwards of 100 freshmen each year learn to row as members of the UM rowing team. The proximity of Argo Pond to campus makes participation easy, as freshmen can run or bike to the boathouse. I am glad this opportunity was there for me, as during my four years at UM I represented UM at the National Championships, met my future wife (she was a member of the women's rowing team), earned my first post-collegiate paying jobs (as a coach for Ann Arbor Rowing Club and EMU), and became a member of a community of people who have made Ann Arbor a home for me. I have continued to spend significant time on Argo Pond, coaching every summer since 2003 for Ann Arbor Rowing Club (first as an assistant coach, then as the head coach, then periodically as an assistant coach while pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from EMU) and the past two seasons for Huron High School. Additionally, I rent space for a single rowing shell from the University of Michigan and row almost every day.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to row locally on Argo Pond, Ford Lake, and Belleville Lake, as well as on numerous other bodies of water in the U.S. and Canada. In many ways (and as you have undoubtedly heard), Argo Pond is a unique body of water for rowing. For one, it is almost always rowable, meaning that the wind conditions rarely interfere with rowing. Additionally, the river provides a 900m stretch that allows for straight, side-by-side racing, as well as challenging bridges and turns that make for good training for longer, time trial races (called "head races" in rowing). But most importantly, Argo Pond provides a location that is accessible to all four rowing programs. The two high school programs, UM, and AARC, have developed a rowing community that has four complementary programs, with the rowers and coaches working together to provide a fun, productive, and safe environment for hundreds of individuals. We promote safety on the river by providing supervision for the rowers, but also by looking out for the other users of the river, including the canoeists, kayakers, and fishermen. As an example, this past fall, I was involved in the rescue of a dog from a sinking car - given that it was 50 degrees and raining, there likely would not have been a rescue without having the river as an active recreational area. I have just returned from the Ann Arbor Police Department's annual awards ceremony, where I received the Chief's Civilian Award for the rescue. (Here is the story: http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2008/10/dog_saved_from_sunken_car_in_a.html) Finally, I should note that the City of Ann Arbor previously saw it worthwhile to allocate resources to renovating Bandemer Park and included the rowing community's plans in those renovations (which we greatly appreciate). The same issues that face us today also faced us back then, yet back then the furthering of rowing on Argo Pond received your

significant support.

The question, then, is what is the problem with moving our rowing operation to another section of the river?

From a purely physical standpoint, I see numerous problems:

(1) There is no other body of water that can house all four teams together. This has been definitively determined already.

(2) There is no other body of water that is as geographically convenient to all four teams.

(3) There is no other body of water that provides as long of a rowable stretch as Argo Pond, nor is there certainty that the proposed stretches will actually be rowable anyway (due to weeds). From a rower's perspective, it is important to understand that Argo Pond is about as short of a body of water as is reasonable for training; going shorter would limit training to the point of significantly harming performance. Argo Pond is truly the only place in Ann Arbor fit for rowing.

But there are more important issues, from a practical standpoint:

(1) One of the reasons the rowing community functions so well is that we have done this together for decades. We know what we are doing, how we are doing it, and how it will work on Argo Pond. The growing pains from moving would be more significant than I think you realize. Can we do it? Absolutely. But I think this would be more disruptive than it might seem to an outsider.

(2) The unknowns of the new bodies of water have not been explored in a way that allows for an educated decision. We do not know that Geddes or Barton would be rowable. We do not know that the Barton community would be accepting of the rowing community. We do not know where a boathouse would go, when one would be built, and if it would be able to be built in a way that is appropriate for rowing (for example, the space for a potential boathouse on Barton Pond may be too close to the water to get the shells out of the boathouse).

(3) The financial burden to the rowing community may be destructive. The four rowing programs are all funded by the team members through dues payments. None of the three programs have an excess of cash stashed away for a potential move. The money is carefully managed, with a majority used for each season's costs, and a small percentage saved to buy new shells. Even if the City were to offer to foot the bill to move the rowing programs, there would undoubtedly be costs that the rowing programs would be responsible for. This concerns me deeply, as I think that there would be a significant possibility that one or more of the programs could not survive financially.

(4) Most importantly to me, I have not been presented with a definitive answer regarding key questions surrounding the dam's removal: The cost of repairing the dam vs. the long term benefit has not been clearly defined. The benefit to the environment of removing the dam is an estimate of possible scenarios. The estimate for keeping the dam in similarly contains arbitrary numbers regarding huge unknowns, like sediment build up (there is a \$1.8 million dredging estimate for 20 years from now, when the sediment build-up rate is still unknown). Importantly, I think you are missing a cost. You should be considering the inability to row as an additional cost. It does not fit into a fancy

financial formula, but it should be considered in the same way that "improving the environment" would be considered. As I've tried to allude to above, I think that there is a tremendous cost (financial and otherwise) to making Argo Pond unrowable and I do not think it is adequately accounted for in the purely financial formulae.

(5) Lastly, the only substantial comment on a solution for the rowing committee in the HRIMP report is, "There are significant issues to establishing new rowing venues at either impoundment including public access, private property, available space for facilities and parking, safety, and operations. The committee recommends rowing opportunities and facilities are maintained and improved where possible. The committee supports the rowing community - both recreational and competitive - and is committed to sustaining it as a permanent partner on the river with appropriate facilities and space on the water." At present, the "significant issues" are not accompanied by a plan of any substance. Rather, they are accompanied by a suggestion and a feel good statement that "the committee supports the rowing community." The other statements in the report about moving rowing to Barton and Geddes suggest that this still needs to be explored. At this time, I do not have the confidence that a solution actually exists for the rowing community. Similarly, HRIMP's statements basically suggest that there is no solution yet, but somebody should be able to figure it out. Yikes! The fact that it is one of the biggest issues at the heart of this matter and has yet to be solved is really alarming.

My last comments surround the "us vs. them" mentality that surrounds the dam removal issue. The Ann Arbor News today said this issue, "has pitted key Ann Arbor interests of environmental interests versus recreational ones." Personally, I don't think that claim is fair, helpful, or particularly accurate. On the surface, yes, we are pitted against each other - for us to do what we want to do, we need the dam; others would like the dam to be removed. But in the end we are all people who love using the river and want to see it prosper in a way that continues to make our lives enjoyable. Trust me, rowers love being on the water. We are there in the rain, sleet, and snow; and can't wait in the spring for the water to thaw. We love the sunny days and endure the dreary ones; but either way, we are on the water. We pay attention to the water flow, water height, water temperature, and the ability to use the river and the surrounding parks in an appropriate manner. Where we differ is really based on our solutions. The rowers are not unconcerned about the dam issue - we simply see the solution as possible without the displacement of our community. When you consider this issue, I urge you to see that both sides are concerned about our environment, and that this is not a "pro-environment vs. anti-environment" issue.

Thank you for considering my opinion. I am available by phone at (734) 657-4843 if you would like to speak to me further about this issue.

Kevin Alschuler
Rower, University of Michigan, 1999-2003
Coach, Ann Arbor Rowing Club, 2003-present
Coach, Huron H.S. Rowing Team, 2008-present
Single sculler, 2003-present

My work schedule precludes my attending this evening's public comment meeting at Cobblestone Farm, but I would like to comment on the plans for repairing vs. removing Argo Dam. My wife and I have canoed on and otherwise enjoyed Argo Pond, and we certainly understand that removing it would be a loss to the rowing community. However, after reviewing the plans and the reports, it is clear to me that the DEQ recommended the dam be removed for good scientific reasons.

Given the significant adverse environmental impact that shallow, weedy Argo Pond has on the river, its water quality, and its biodiversity, I think repairing and maintaining it to be an inappropriate use of City funds. Removing it will have short-term costs of course, but those are justified by the improved quality of the river that will result. The recreational opportunities Argo Pond provides are not unique, and can be met elsewhere close by; they do not justify the short-term repair and long-term maintenance costs of the dam. More importantly, long-term spending of public funds to continue degrading Ann Arbor's river environment seems inappropriate to me on principle.

Thank you for your attention.

--

Lee Green MD MPH
Department of Family Medicine
University of Michigan

I wanted to pass along my opinion about Argo Dam. Save it! There's a successful, vibrant, active group of people using this part of the river. The benefit for all from this, even for me as I walk along the river and watch, is worth the effort needed to keep the weeds down.

Karen Kortesoja

Greetings,

I frequently fish the Huron all the way from Hudson Mills Gallup Park. That's a lot of beautiful water. Very seldom do I see other anglers. Taking out Argo Dam might add a small amount of fishable water but that seems a poor trade-off for the loss of a very popular, easily accessible and well developed place for hundreds of rowers of all ages.

Sincerely,

J. Vandervelde

The dam is a long term economic liability for the city that benefits one small group, the rowers. To keep the dam for their benefit is the equivalent of building the cycling community a velodrome with 100% tax dollars, and no one should expect that to happen. Offer to sell the dam to the rowers making them fiscally responsible for its perpetual maintenance, and if they can't afford it, then do what saves the greater community the most money in the long run and get rid of the dam. Forget about the environmental benefits, simply project out the cost of a perpetual subsidy to the rowers and this should be a no-brainer based on the outrageous expense.

Dave Fanslow

As a kayaker who uses Argo, among other local sites, I think the dam should be left in place unless you first determine that kayaking and other recreational rowing can continue on that stretch of the river. Otherwise, you will force overuse of other areas, leading to ecological degradation and irritated rowers and residents.

Furthermore, future improvements in power-generation may lead to resumption of hydropower systems. So why get rid of a potential asset that is already in place?

The algae that clogs the river could be removed and controlled by volunteers among the rowing community. Many, like me, would be glad to haul lots of that stuff out of the river.

John Woodford

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this to express my support for the removal of the ARGO dam on the Huron River. I have fished on this stretch of water and regularly canoe on this impoundment with my family. Additionally, I have had numerous friends who value this impoundment for recreational rowing, so it has taken long consideration for me to decide that the removal of the ARGO dam will be the right decision for the health of this watershed and ultimately for the surrounding community that loves this resource so. When the dam was first constructed, I suspect that many people were upset to see favorite stretches of this river lost as it was converted to an impoundment. Similarly, I have heard people express a sense of loss for the ARGO impoundment. Ultimately, however, I firmly believe that those same people will grow to appreciate this stretch of river in a new way as it returns to its true natural form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Dority

Hello,

I very much support removal of Argo Dam.

It is important to support the sustainability of our local precious resource, the Huron River.

It seems absurd to jeopardize the health of the river to support the recreational rowing activities of several hundred vocal and well organized users.

This area has many more nature enthusiasts, including walkers, bird watchers, kayakers, etc., who would benefit by the removal of the dam.

I hope the long view prevails.

Sincerely,

Alesia Lapinsky

Hello.

Since we live very close to the Huron River, we have read with great interest the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan report. We were not able to attend the public meetings in late January/early February, but would like to submit our comments. Thank you for producing such a comprehensive, easy to understand report that has helped greatly in our thinking about the future of the entire river system.

The Huron River is a tremendous asset to the community. Its value as a source of drinking water should be protected, and its scenic beauty preserved for the enjoyment of all citizens. We would not favor commercial development along the river unless it was limited and very carefully done. Rather, we support efforts to take good care of the watershed as described in the Committee Vision Statement.

We especially support improvements along the river that make it easily accessible to the greatest number of people. We have very much enjoyed the walking paths, making the loop around Argo Pond frequently and often spending a Sunday afternoon walking various sections of the trail farther from our home. Opportunities to walk provide healthy recreation for virtually everyone, without need for special equipment or membership in clubs or teams. The paths should be kept in good condition so walkers, runners, wheelchair users, bikers, families with strollers, etc. can safely share the space. (We appreciate the fact that the path around Argo is plowed during the winter so it can still be used.) Simple amenities like drinking fountains, restrooms, benches, adequate lighting and good parking areas should be well maintained.

We also love to see the rowers using Argo Pond. They have worked hard to establish their facilities, and while we don't join them we definitely support the opportunities they provide for many to enjoy the sport of rowing. Removing Argo Dam to return the river to a meandering flow would be a great loss for everyone. It's hard to imagine that enough fishing would result to offset the great number of school age citizens who would lose the opportunity to row. Barton Pond would be a weak substitute for the vibrant activity that takes place on Argo every day.

The proposed whitewater facility below Argo Dam seems to us to be a viable project to work towards. We also support efforts to deal with the excess vegetation that threatens to clog the waterway. And of course there is the eternal problem of goose droppings that plague Gallup and other parks. Given the likelihood that funding will be limited in the future, we favor a balance of good maintenance of existing parks and walkways, and attention to the overall good health of the river and shoreline, with modest improvements that will enhance but not overdevelop the area.

There are many beautiful spots along the Huron River where people can easily come close and enjoy the natural wonder of the watershed without a lot of man-made interference. We would like to see this continue, with places to look for

frogs and insects, places to boat and fish, places to run and stroll, places to escape from the necessary noise and concrete of our daily lives and interact with the natural world among us. Thank you for making this important effort to involve everyone in decisions that will sustain and improve the richness of our community by wisely using and protecting the Huron River watershed.

Sincerely,
David, Jan and Julie Esch

Hello,

I've been an Ann Arbor resident since 1978 (and lived in the area before that). I've always been interested in (and delighted by) the Huron River and it's attendant resources (like parks and wildlife areas). Our daughter joined the Huron River Watershed Council's "Adopt a Creek" program when she was fourteen - she was the one who, through research and presentation, got the Ann Arbor City Council to re-name the "Pittsfield-Ann Arbor Drain" to "Mallett's Creek." (Which, research showed, was the original name given to that creek.)

Worth mentioning in that regard: Our daughter (Erika) went on to earn her degree in Environmental Science at the University of Michigan. Though she retains a great interest in Ann Arbor and plans to move back here some day, she is currently living and teaching in California (USC Lawrence Hall of Science). I regret that she's not here now, because I know that she would be greatly interested in helping the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission in this vital effort.

For myself, my immediate concern is that my work schedule precludes attending public meetings on this matter. I can (at this time) only express my interest in keeping abreast of what is happening with the development plan.

I think it's obvious: having the Huron River as a safe, clean living resource is essential to Ann Arbor citizens and to this city's status as a leader in terms of economics, politics and "quality of life." Alongside economic development, the Huron River and it's attendant resources is the most important aspect of our continued prosperity.

So it is that I want to be fully informed and to participate as much as possible in this effort. Can you offer suggestions for my further participation in this program?

Meanwhile, I salute the efforts of the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission and wish you all success.

Jack R. Noel

To: HRIMP Committee

From: Richard Cole

210 Kenwood Ave

Ann Arbor, MI 48103

I writing to express my support for removal of Argo Dam, addition of park lands and a whitewater section in the Argo Dam section. Southeast Michigan's has many strengths, but one major weakness is the lack of adventure sport opportunities. I have seen many of my friends who grew-up in the area and who went to college at MSU or U of M leave the area after graduation because their sense of adventure was not being satisfied. I stayed because family was and still is a top priority, but I am envious of my friends who live in Portland, OR, Boulder, CO and San Fran, CA because they live within natural playgrounds. Don't misunderstand me I love our area's natural beauty, Ann Arbor is a great town for its arts and entertainment, and I am not expecting Ann Arbor to create mountains, but we have not taken full advantage of the natural features we do have. The development of a dirt bike park was a good addition and a skateboard park will excite many younger thrill seekers (I know because I used to skateboard myself). However, the dirt track and skate park will not be used by many people outside of their teens or early twenties. Whitewater however is a sport for wide range of ages. I started to whitewater kayaking just last year when I joined the U of M Kayaking Club. In just one year I have kayaked with people of ages spanning from 10 to 70 something and everywhere in between. Unfortunately, most of the kayaking is done five hours away in Pennsylvania. I think the committee and council will be surprised to see just how powerful an attraction a whitewater section would be not only for users, but spectators; and, how it will infuse some needed energy into the area.

Another reason why I think Ann Arbor should pursue the natural stretch of river from Barton to Geddes is the lack of city / river integration. Some of the most interesting places in the world are those that have incorporated water features into the personality of a city. We do have parks with some trails either leading to the river or along the river, but none are within an easy walk from the downtown area. I could easily see there being some more development (restaurants, shops, etc.) in the Depot St, Canal St and surrounding area. That development would connect the downtown to a nice stretch of the Huron and give visitors another unique area, a town within a town like Kerrytown, to go to see.

I know the rowers are concerned about their access, but they have options. No one is trying or wants to exclude them. I personally think that in the end the rowers could have a better training / competition area and Ann Arbor could have healthier more interesting Huron river.

Sincerely,

Rich Cole

Dear Sir,

I am a fellow white water enthusiast, that is in great favor of the project in Ann Arbor. I live in Toledo & would enjoy the short drive to have fun on the Huron vs. driving to south Bend or Pennsylvania.

Thanks,

Tom Cappellini

Dear Molly Wade and Matt Naud,

Hi,

My name is Cameron Savage and I grew up in East Lansing. I'm turning 19 this spring and I have been whitewater kayaking for over 10 years now. Kayaking has taken me all over the world. From paddling the warm rivers of Costa Rica, to the mountain streams of the southern US, to my summers working on the Ottawa River in Ontario, Canada, it has always been a part of my life. I've competed in freestyle kayaking for 4 years now with notable top finishes as a junior in the 2006 World Cup, 2006 US Team Trials and a 2nd place finish in the 2007 North American Championships. This spring I hope to do well in the 2009 US Team Trials, hosted in Glenwood Springs CO, at their new last year, and very successful man-made whitewater park and to make it to the World Championships in the fall.

Whitewater kayaking is an amazing sport. Many people from all over the world participate in it and it is eco-friendly and constantly growing. Festivals and Competitions all over the country have attracted international media attention and there is a large push for the sport to be featured in both the X-Games and the Olympics in upcoming years. Contrary to many misinformed people, it is an extremely safe activity and has many prominent and well-funded bodies ensuring the continuity of this. And although someone who doesn't paddle might not know this, there are hundreds to thousands of people in each state who paddle whitewater every year. That number will grow with the continued granting of access to rivers

When I started boating at age 8, one of the few beginner whitewater rivers anywhere close to mid-Michigan was the Huron. Through my parents' formed kayaking club, the Lansing Area Whitewater Paddlers (LAWWP), we would take trips down to Ann Arbor to do easy runs for the day. They were very fun and I have a lot of great memories of learning on the Huron. The problem is that once you are able to paddle

rivers above the difficulty of the tame section of the Huron that has some whitewater on it, there isn't much else anywhere close to mid-Michigan. The closest mid-level whitewater to here is in Pennsylvania. This leads to difficult issue of being a whitewater boater in Michigan –your choices are very limited.

I've always discussed with my fellow Michigan kayakers the prospect of having a decent whitewater park in the area. They have been popping up all over the country and have become quite popular. Some notable ones that I have been to, and enjoyed, are Watertown NY's Route 3 Wave and Hole Brothers (which have held numerous national and international competitions), Minden Ontario's Wild Water Preserve (which is a beautiful, 7km long man-made whitewater section that has been able to keep an amazingly natural look), South Bend IN's East Race (an epicenter of whitewater sport in the mid-west) and many more. East Lansing even unknowingly hosts an awesome river feature on the Red Cedar (behind the Library building at MSU), which when the river level is right, attracts paddlers from all over Michigan (I have even been in the local papers twice for surfing the wave there). They are very easy to make considering they normally come naturally and when they *are* man-made, they are generally also removing a dangerous and unnatural damn in the process. Another considerable bonus of whitewater parks is the obvious fact that they bring people to the area. This is great economically and has been proven so by a number of parks in the past few years (i.e. Reno NV, Salida and Pueblo CO, not to mention the US National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC). They are also 'cool' and provide a fun way to get people outside and enjoying nature.

When I heard of the possibility of a park in Ann Arbor, all I could think was "brilliant". Ann Arbor is the *perfect* town for a project like this. It has a large enough community to appreciate it and it's cool and edgy enough to attract boaters from all over. I currently go to school at Champlain College in Burlington, VT. One of the main reasons for coming out here was to be able to kayak more while in school. I found out this year, though, that it is not the right school for me and I am currently in the process of applying to schools. One of my top choices is U of M and the prospect of having accessible whitewater in the area would be a very persuasive argument to choose it. The reason I'm saying this is that there is a large and growing number of young paddlers who feel the same way as me. The University of Vermont Paddling Club, which I am a part of, has grown so much in the past year, that we can't even accommodate the numbers that flock to our weekly pool sessions. Freestyle kayaking or 'playboating' is becoming increasingly popular with people my age and it is a very cool and easy sport to get into. Unlike things like freestyle skiing or skateboarding, kayaking doesn't need a mountain or an ugly and obtrusive skatepark. All we need is one, natural looking, retentive feature, that is easy to access and maintain at all levels. This appeals to boaters of *every* skill levels, from first-time beginners to full on professionals.

I am very excited for future of this project in Ann Arbor. As the word gets out, you will notice that many whitewater boaters also feel the same way. Michigan could become a state that is desirable for whitewater, and this is the first step. If you need any more information or help in regards to the project, contact me. Please seriously consider

the possibility of a whitewater park. It will make more of an impact that you can imagine.

Sincerely,

Cameron Savage