

THE HURON RIVER

Robert Wittersheim

Over 15,000 years ago, the Huron River was born as a small stream draining the late Pleistocene landscape. Its original destination was Lake Maumee at present day Ypsilanti where a large delta was formed. As centuries passed, ceding lake levels allowed the Huron to meander over new land eventually settling into its present valley. Its 125 mile journey today begins at Big Lake near Pontiac and ends in Lake Erie. The Huron's watershed, which includes 367 miles of tributaries, drains over 900 square miles of land.

The total drop in elevation from source to mouth is nearly 300 feet. The Huron's upper third is clear and fast, even supporting a modest trout fishery. The middle third passes through and around many lakes in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties. Eight dams impede much of the Huron's lower third as it flows through populous areas it helped create. Over 47 miles of this river winds through publicly owned lands, a legacy from visionaries long since passed.