

Jan 20, 1993
Kalamazoo Gazette
By Earlene McMichael



GAZETTE CORRESPONDENT PHOTO / ROONEY BRAZEE

Asylum Lake area near planned WMU research and business park will be managed by the state.

DNR

Continued from A1

southwest section of the city of Kalamazoo, to the DNR. The state Legislature deeded the land to WMU in 1976. The parcel contains scattered trees and meadowlands.

The proposed research and business park would be built south and west of the Asylum Lake area on 260 of 600 acres WMU owns at the intersection of Drake and Parkview Avenue. The development area includes 34 acres of the Asylum Lake property in order to make way for redirected Parkview Avenue that will veer north to Drake Road.

An agreement transferring the land to the DNR must be signed and approved by the WMU Board of Trustees, the Natural Resources Commission and the state Legislature. No date has been set for the matter to go before those bodies.

"It's not in the coming days or weeks," Burke said. "It will be several months off. In general, I would think that folks would be responsive to this. I'm not sure there is controversy."

"If approved, the DNR will own and manage this property in perpetuity, thereby assisting WMU and the Kalamazoo community in preserving the natural character of Asylum Lake and its immediate environs," Roland Harmes, director of the DNR, said in a statement.

"The DNR applauds the farsighted thinking rep-

resented by WMU's plans for the long-range use of its land holdings near Asylum Lake, particularly the university's desire to retain Asylum Lake and its immediate environs as a natural open space," Harmes said.

"We are delighted with the DNR's interest in owning and managing this property," said WMU President Diether H. Haenicke. "The department's oversight will help ensure that this unique and valuable resource will remain exactly that, which has been our intention for the property from the beginning."

Mark Hoffman, president of the Asylum Lake Preservation Association, a group which opposes development of the Asylum Lake property, said he could support the DNR acting as an oversight agency as long as the property continues to be maintained as open space.

He expressed concern, however, over who would handle criminal and other complaints that would arise on the property.

"I suspect (residents) would get on the phone to the DNR," Burke said.

In statements issued by WMU, several community leaders added their support to transferring the 240 acres of the Asylum Lake property to the DNR.

© 1970-2004 KALAMAZOO GAZETTE.

All rights reserved.

Used with permission of KALAMAZOO GAZETTE