



*All for the water.*

*JORDAN RIVER WATERSHED CENTER, 101 UNION STREET, EAST JORDAN, MICHIGAN 49727  
Rich Dietrich, President, 231.350.8086 [richandwavad@gmail.com](mailto:richandwavad@gmail.com)*

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Chestonia Township Board  
PO Box 295, 3995 Second St.  
Alba, Michigan 49611

Dear Township Board,

Friends of the Jordan River Watershed understand that the Chestonia Township Board is proposing to open up the roads in the Jordan River Valley to ORV and ATV use. After much discussion at our regularly scheduled meeting on August 15, 2024, we voted to send a letter opposing opening up of the roads in the Jordan River Valley to ORV and ATV use for multiple safety issues for riders and concerns for the area's natural habitat and the quiet area of the Jordan River Valley.

Organizations such as the Save the Jordan group in the 1960's, and today the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, formed in the 1990's are dedicated to "conserving the natural resources and protecting the environmental quality of the Jordan River and its watershed." There are also other groups concerned about the Jordan River's health and long term future including, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Trout Unlimited, Conservation Resource Alliance, North Country Trail and JV45 and others. Approving this proposal would impact the health of the Jordan River Valley and harm one of Northern Michigan's most prized natural resources.

There is a reason the Jordan River was designated Michigan's first Wild and Scenic River in 1972 under the State's natural Rivers Act. Those who live and visit here experience an uninterrupted pristine, natural riverine environment, carved by the retreat of Ice Age glaciers ten millennia ago. Fed primarily by cold water springs, the Jordan River

is famed as a blue ribbon trout stream, consistently drawing high praise for ecosystem health. Guides in drift boats with fly fishers ply the waters in the quiet hours. Canoes, kayaks, rafts, tubes and occasional stand up paddleboards do the same in the daylight summer hours. Hikers take to woodland trails along the Jordan River Pathway in the valley, and in winter on skis, snowshoes and snowmobiles.

The roads in the Jordan River Valley were built during Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) times and are mostly made up of cordwood. That design is already showing wear with logs sticking up in certain places, and would be exacerbated by the softer tires ORV/ATV's use. This can directly send dirt and debris into the river and negatively impact trout spawning and habitat, along with the natural habitats of numerous fish species in the Jordan River headwaters. Also, the current ability to maintain these roads is stretched thin by Antrim County Road Commission resources and adding additional ORV/ATV use would further deteriorate them, making these roads sandy and bumpy. If people want to get an idea of what county roads look like after excessive ORV use, they should drive south of Mancelona Road in the Sand Lake area on Sand Lake Road and Crooked Lake Road. Due to excessive ORV use these roads have become extremely sandy and bumpy. The Jordan Valley roads are narrow and winding and it would be very dangerous to make a mixed use area with ORV's able to speed around corners only to see a truck or car. These roads also serve as snowmobile trails in the winter, so opening the roads will make it legal to operate the ORV's on groomed snowmobile trails.

Again, the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed have made the decision to oppose this proposal by Chestonia Township Board and any other Township Boards to open the roads through the Jordan Valley for ORV/ATV use. The peaceful and tranquility of the Jordan Valley would be forever changed.

Respectfully,  
The Board of the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc.