

Original: Fish Division

cc: Mr. Ruhl

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INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

DIVISION OF FISHERIES

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

COOPERATING WITH THE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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OBSERVATIONS ON BIG CREEK, CRAWFORD COUNTY

On Saturday, May 9, 1937, Hans Petersen, District Superintendent of Fisheries Operations, and I visited Big Creek Lodge at the invitation of Mr. W. G. Lerchen, and cruised Big Creek with Bill Miller, caretaker for the Lodge. I also fished the creek for about 1/2 mile.

Mr. Lerchen, as far as I could gather from his conversation, is not too seriously interested in building a dam at the lower end of the property, but considered it as one possible course of action in trying to improve the fishing in Big Creek, which he claims has deteriorated in late years.

It was pointed out that there was much evidence (in the form of old beaver dams) for the fact that such a dam would soon be filled with sand. This would be one of the chief considerations, as Big Creek carries a large amount of sand through its course. Considerable stream improvement work has been installed in Big Creek in the section which would be flooded by the proposed dam. Such silting and sanding-in would offset what good the stream improvement devices have so far accomplished. The raising of the water level would flood over some good wood-cock and grouse cover, as well as a small amount of timber.

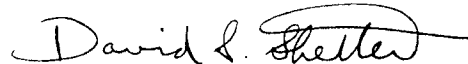
In all probability, such a dam would act much like a beaver dam. Fishing might improve following the installation of the dam for a period of two or three years and then decrease in quality. Unless an adequate

fish-way were provided, the upstream movements of brown and brook trout would be impossible. It would also make public fishing of the stream impossible without trespass above the dam because of the deep water, although I was given to understand that Big Creek was not heavily fished by others than landholders.

All points considered, I seriously doubt whether the slight and probably temporary improvement in fishing would be worth the investment.

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

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copy to - W. G. Lerchen  
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