Asylum Lake Property Transferred To WMU

The transfer of a 274-acre parcel of property surrounding Asylum Lake to Western Michigan University became official last week.

Gov. William Milliken's signature was all that was needed to make official the transfer, which had been passed by the State Legislature last year.

Last week, Milliken signed Public Act No. 272 authorizing the transfer of the Asylum Lake property from the Michigan Department of Mental Health to WMU.

Terms of the transfer are that WMU must utilize the property "solely for public park, recreation or open space purposes." The property is located north of Parkview Avenue and east of Drake Road. The location is across the street from Western's university farm.

The land, which has been eyed by several governmental units for use in a variety of projects, has been under control of the Kalamazoo State Hospital, but was declared surplus by the Department of Mental Health in March of 1975.

The land has been valued at $750,000 by a state assessor.

The property was part of a large parcel originally used as a dairy farm by the Kalamazoo State Hospital. That use ended in 1965 and the buildings were torn down.

The university has not announced plans for use of the Asylum Lake land. Several departments have expressed an interest in using the land for educational purposes.


Last year when the bill passed, Welborn noted that Western can grant "easements" for use of the land as a park by the county. The county had previously expressed an interest in the portion of the property around Asylum Lake and north to Stadium Drive for a park.