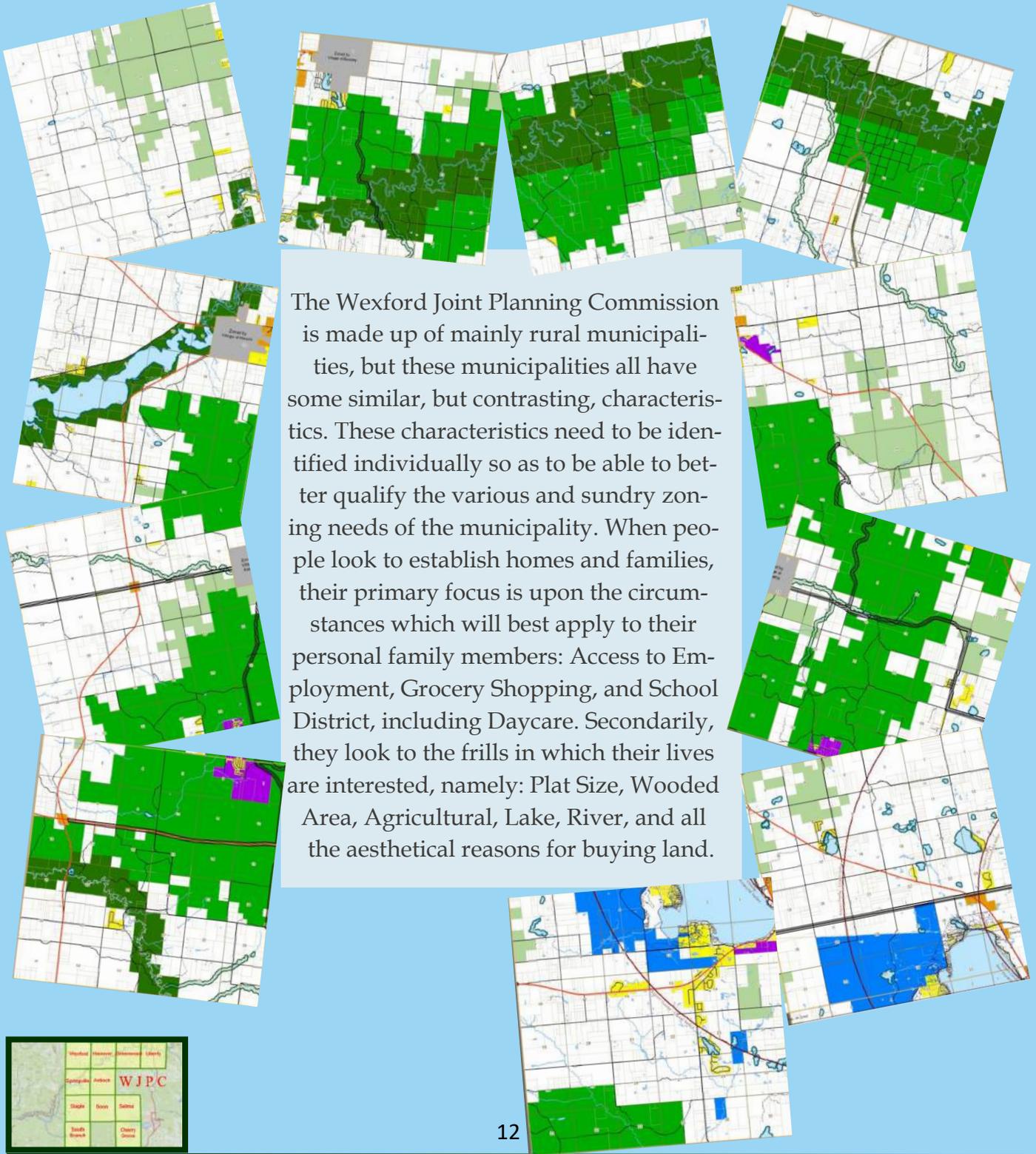


# Unique Jurisdictions

## Members of the WJPC



The Wexford Joint Planning Commission is made up of mainly rural municipalities, but these municipalities all have some similar, but contrasting, characteristics. These characteristics need to be identified individually so as to be able to better qualify the various and sundry zoning needs of the municipality. When people look to establish homes and families, their primary focus is upon the circumstances which will best apply to their personal family members: Access to Employment, Grocery Shopping, and School District, including Daycare. Secondly, they look to the frills in which their lives are interested, namely: Plat Size, Wooded Area, Agricultural, Lake, River, and all the aesthetical reasons for buying land.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

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## Introduction

The various municipalities of the Wexford Joint Planning Commission should be recognized not only as to the similarities, but also to their diverseness from one another. These diversities are not so extreme as to be devoid of Planning and Zoning, but as to the extent of the Zoning principles.

During the divesting from Wexford County of their Zoning Ordinance, the remaining townships in the county fell into three basic categories. Some of the most rural areas desired the simplest and most basic form of zoning possible. The rural townships with small villages wanted an ordinance that was weightier in the residential areas mainly, whereas the other townships desired the most restrictive ordinance for their multiple residential areas.

Four Wexford County Commissioners met personally with township officers in four meetings in the Spring of 2015 to understand what type of zoning the townships desired for themselves. At that time there were three separate zoning ordinances offered to the townships. County Zoning Ordinance No. 6 was the biggest of the three and featured the most rules, restrictions and guidelines. WJPC townships which favored this option were Cherry Grove, Liberty and Slagle.

Another option was the current County Zoning Ordinance No. 5, which was considered to be a mid-level ordinance in terms of its rules and regulations. WJPC townships which favored

this option were Hanover, Springville, Wexford, Greenwood and Selma.

The third option given the townships was County Zoning Ordinance No. 5 Revised. This ordinance was the simplest of the three options. WJPC member townships which favored this ordinance were Antioch, Boon and South Branch.

The result of these meetings concluded that the county would need help in providing all the townships with zoning, but the townships would have to provide the bulk of the funds to the county in order to have the zoning they wanted. Therefore, in January of 2016 the Board of Commissioners voted to charge townships \$2 per parcel to be their participation fee in continuing county zoning. The estimated fee for the participating townships would have been \$29,864 that would be brought into the county.

Still, the solution of combining county and township funds did not work out, and the county finally resolved to do away with zoning. The brunt was on the townships to either have their own zoning, or else combine into a Joint Planning group. In the end, eleven townships decided to join together in Joint Planning, and would cover the cost of doing joint zoning. Each township could have purposed to handle its own zoning, but the price tag of such a move would be astronomical for most of the townships.

This section naturally divides the eleven townships into four categories for the Master Plan: the Manistee River townships, the Mesick surrounding townships, the Lake Mitchell townships, and the most rural southwest townships.



## 1. The Manistee River Townships: Hanover, Greenwood, Liberty

### Introduction

Before calling out the differences between these three townships in this section, of which there are several, it makes sense to briefly outline the similarities between them.

### The Manistee River

A glance at the Wetlands Map below shows the Manistee River crossing from right to left across Liberty Township, through Greenwood Township, and finally across Hanover Township. There are approximately six subdivisions along the river, along with multiple canoe rental places and public access and parks that dot the river basin.

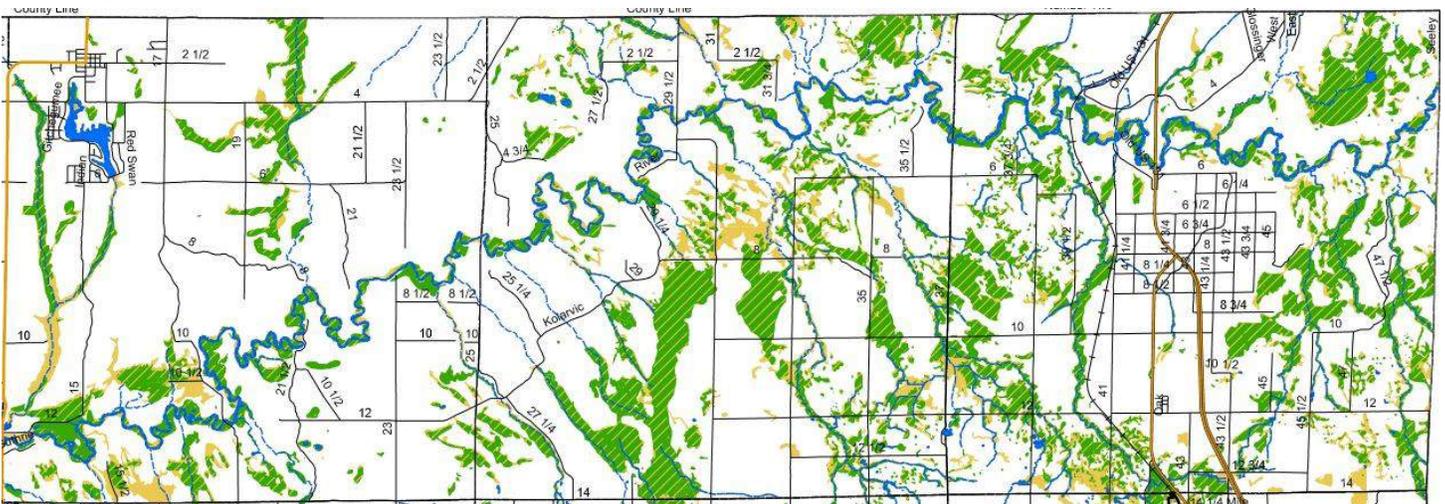
### State Forest

Another abundant resource for the three townships is the State Forest that extends the entire width of these townships. Again, from left to right, Liberty Township has more than 55%

of their land is Public Land primarily made up the forest. Greenwood Township has 53% of its land as Public Land of the State Forest, whereas Hanover Township boasts the most forest area with 69% Public Land in its boundaries. This adds up to much hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, etc., in the area. This also shows that the largest parcels in these townships are large tracts of publicly owned land.

### Wetlands

Again, the map below shows all the creeks (tributaries) that flow into the Manistee River in these three townships. The main hindrance of these creeks display large portions of wetlands which make the building of houses or other developments difficult, if not impossible. This also makes Zoning the townships more difficult in handling the certain restrictions of the Manistee River Corridor and the preservation of the forests and wetlands.



**Wetlands Map of Manistee River crossing Liberty,  
Greenwood, and Hanover Townships  
MDEQ Wetland Map 2006**



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## **Hanover Township**

Originally, Hanover Township covered the entire area of Hanover, Greenwood and Liberty Townships of today, or, the northern townships through which the mighty Manistee River flows.

This township was one of the four first townships in Wexford County. The division of townships mainly showed the population growth of Wexford County at the time, with a portion of County Seat Sherman and all of Buckley existing within Hanover's borders.

This township consists of primarily undeveloped forested areas, of which approximately one-half are in the Pere Marquette State Forest, with 18 of the 36 township sections covered either by the Manistee River Corridor or the Forest Conservation Districts.

The west side of the township is bordered by highway M-37, which includes the famously steep Sherman Hill just north of the Manistee River bridge. The only other way to traverse from the south side of the Manistee River to the north side is North 19 Road and the Harvey Bridge, a naturally scenic drive, preserved in this Master Plan as a Scenic Road Overlay District. Harvey Bridge is the only remaining truss bridge in Wexford County, and should be preserved. This bridge is on a seasonal road and is not plowed during the winter.

## **Forestry Makeup of Hanover**

During the 1800's the township was filled with a complete forested area. White Pine with a mixed hardwood forest covered the middle, with a Hemlock-White Pine forest stretching out seven miles wide, and reaching nineteen miles east from those. The entire southeast portion of the township was covered with a Jack Pine-Red Pine forest. The rest of the township, including the Buckley area consisted of a Beech-Sugar Maple-Hemlock forest. Since the ravaging of the forests in the late 1800's to the 1920's the area has come back to where there is a mixed Conifer-Deciduous forest. These forests again split the township in half, with residents living on the north side or the south side of the township.

Most of the land in Hanover Township is owned by the State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources. The DNR owns over 68% (15,000 acres) of the township, mostly the state forests. This leaves less than 1/3 of the township (6,887 acres) for private ownership. So the township made the most of



Harvey Bridge, Hanover Township



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

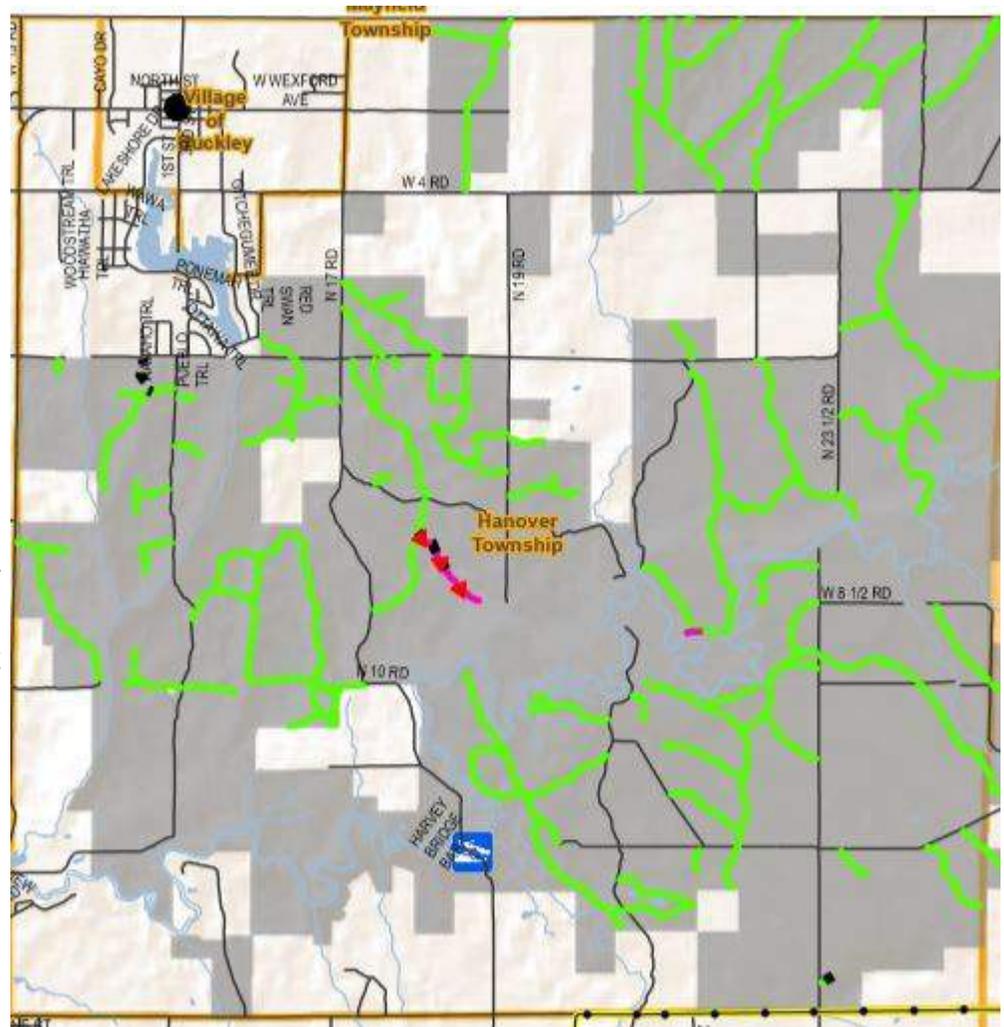
its private property by having three subdivisions on the south side on or below the Manistee River, and five subdivisions on the north side, not counting the entire village of Buckley.

The state forest also allows multiple ORV trails throughout the township. This mostly rural plus intensive subdivision layout, especially around Lake Gitchegumee, allows many outdoor hunting, fishing and recreational sports over the entire breadth of its borders. Hanover over the years has found a balance between large acreage plats and subdivision lots where people can build homes and commute to larger cities for work. The large percentage of homes are equidistant from the cities of Cadillac, in Wexford County, and Traverse City in Grand Traverse County.

Thus, the river, roads, and modern forests have determined to split Hanover in two halves. This is evident even in the fact that 18% of the Mesick School children come from Hanover compared to 28% of the Buckley School children also coming from this same township.

## Property Values

As a result of proper planning of the rural areas along with the well-placed subdivisions, Hanover Township has caused the Taxable Values (TV) of property to increase almost 15% in the last 12 years. The TV has gone from \$39,500,000 in 2009 to its current value of over \$46,700,000 as of 2020.



State Forest in grey, ORV trails in green.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## **Greenwood Township**

Just east of Hanover Township lies the six mile by six mile township of Greenwood. Once part of Hanover, Greenwood broke off and became its own township in 1873. For another year and a half, Greenwood would also contain the land mass that would become Liberty Township in 1874. Population determined when those boundaries would finally become permanent, and Greenwood would be placed between two townships along the Manistee River which would be closer to a larger population of people; Hanover with its own Village of Buckley, and Liberty being a bedroom community to the City of Manton.

Still, Greenwood Township would be divided by the mighty Manistee River and boast of the most rural developmental township in Wexford County. To this day, proportionately, Greenwood Township shows an ever increasing desire from families and retirees for



**Historic Town Hall, Greenwood Township**

new homes to be placed on plats of larger acreage or in special subdivisions along the Manistee River than any other township in the county. This increase in new dwellings can be seen in the natural increase in Taxable Property Value (TPV). When joining the WJPC in 2016, when its TPV was \$19,394,784, Greenwood's TPV has reached \$22,374,232 in just three years in 2019. This shows a growth of over three million dollars worth of taxable value. On a yearly rate, Greenwood's property value has been increasing approximately 1.5 million dollars per year.

### **Private vs. Public Land**

As is true with the three northern townships in the WJPC, the Pierre Marquette



**High Rollways, Greenwood Township**



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020



Baxter Bridge Campground, Greenwood Twp.

State Forest separates Greenwood in half, taking up over half the land mass in the township

(52.7%). The state forest

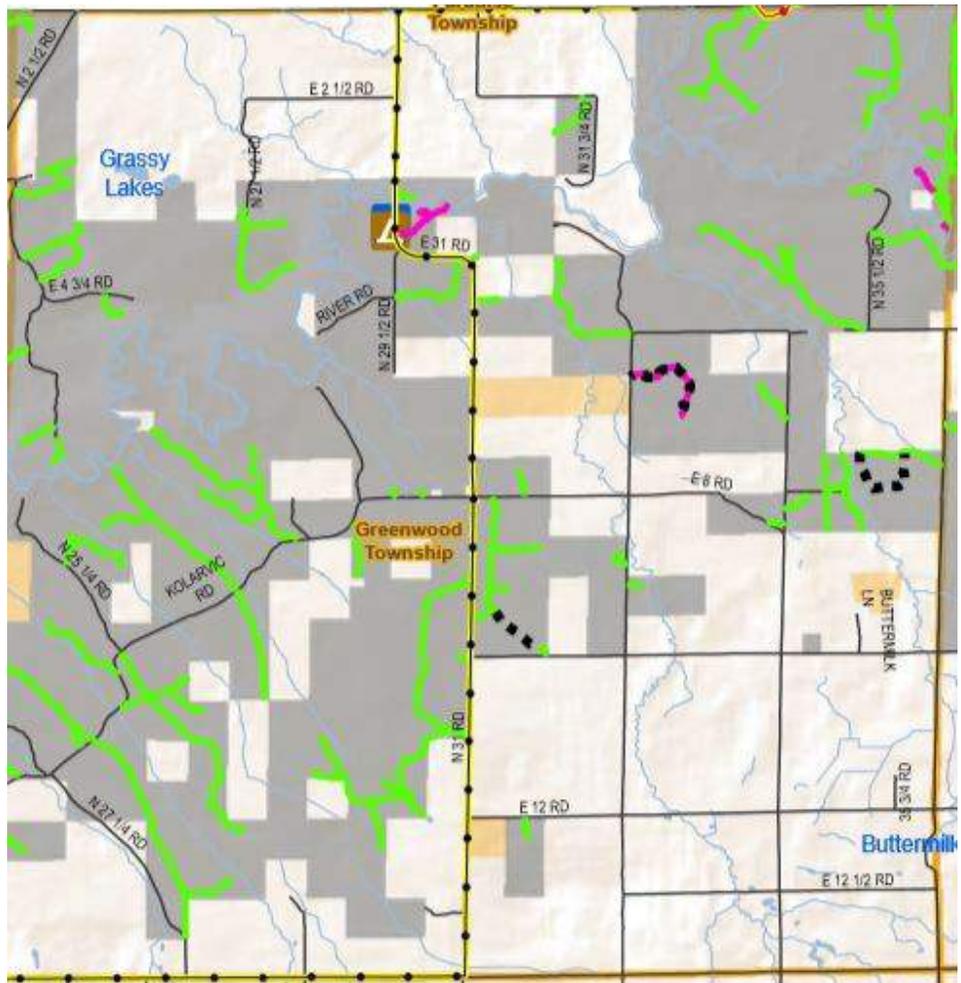
causes the most residences to be in the northwest and southeast portions of the township. The township stays connected via N-31 Road which dissects the township across Baxter Bridge and allows residents easy access to both Traverse City to the north and Cadillac to the south.

Three subdivisions were platted in the township, two along the river (sections 8 and 10) and one in the southwest (section 31). These subdivisions offer the attractiveness of the forest being almost out their backdoor.

The goal of the Master Plan is to keep Greenwood's overall rural look pristine for those who choose to live in this "in-between" township. An example would be the three school districts which overlap

Greenwood Township: Kingsley, Mesick, and Manton schools. Whereas many townships desire to have industry and commercial developments, Greenwood actually is a model for financial stability and livability.

The greatest sense of value can be readily seen in the Median Household Income between the three Manistee River townships: Greenwood - \$37,083 to \$58,068 from 2000 to 2017, or a 57% increase, whereas Hanover's was \$36,850 to \$47,500 (29%) and Liberty's was \$36,979 to \$43,558, or 18% increase.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## **Liberty Township**

The third township along the Manistee River was carved from Hanover Township in 1783 and from Greenwood Township in 1784 - Liberty Township. Several manmade developments have caused Liberty to have its unique blend of rural and rural-residential districts. The Manistee still splits this township into two substantial areas, with the northern portion having its own subdivision development, and the southern having its own subdivision.

The manmade railroad and highways that have made Liberty a township which would lure many residents its way. First, the railroad developed the closest city of Manton which is a mere 3000 feet from the township's southern border. But it is Business-131 and Interstate 131 that intersect directly in the middle of the township, giving quick and easy ingress and egress both north and south to the entire state.



Town Hall, Liberty Township

This highway also gives quick access to the cities of Manton and Cadillac for those that reside in Liberty and work in those places. Thus, Liberty folks have all of the access, but none of the headaches of having a city in their midst.

### **Private vs. Public Lands**

Again, the blessing of having a river surrounded by a forest is having public lands for hunting, fishing, and boating. Well over fifty percent (55.4%) of the township is made up of the Pierre Marquette State Forest, or almost 13,000 acres of its total 23,000 acres. This 10,000 plus acres of private land are primarily in sections 1-6 of the north part of the township, the twelve sections which contain sections 25-36 in the south part of the township, and sections 17-18 and 20 in the westerly part of the township. (Note: Section 19 is 700 acres entirely owned by the State of



Manistee River, near Chippewa Landing, Liberty Township



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

Michigan DNR.) By far the smallest parcels are in sections 27, 28, 33, and 34, but even these are mostly ten acres or greater.

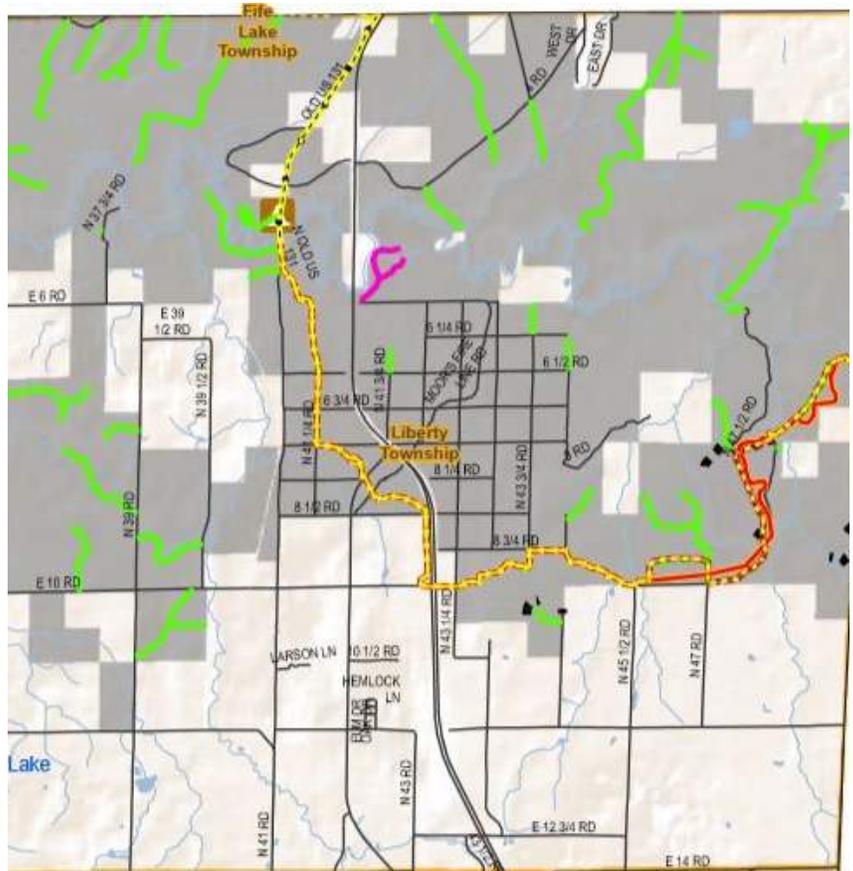
There is also an increase in Taxable Property Value (TPV) in Liberty Township. When joining the WJPC in 2016, the TPV was \$20,119,337. In the year 2029 the TVP topped \$22,161,342, an increase of over 2 million dollars in property value. This shows that people are buying and building in Liberty Township, and, when given a choice of large parcels in a rural area, plus quick access to close cities and even the rest of the state, these types of families are choosing property in Liberty Township.

Thus, the Master Plan seeks to preserve the rural qualities of the township, also adhering to allowing housing in the two subdivisions which are already there. Mainly the future Plan is to continue to preserve the natural boundaries of the Manistee River and its adjacent forests. This preservation should be paramount to the future success of Liberty Township Planning and Zoning.

### Conclusion

Although having their major differences, the three townships which comprise the northern portion of the WJPC boundaries do have some similarities also. Each of them is primarily rural in nature. Each has the Manistee River flowing from east to west through its township. The river becomes the natural boundary dividing the southern part of the townships from

their northern part. The ease of access from north to south in Liberty Township is slightly better than the same access in Greenwood Township, although a much better highway system exists in the former than the two-lane road in the latter. Whereas Hanover Township has a summer access road from north to south in the township, or else access is found from M-37 on its western boarder, which most people already use. And, although both Hanover and Greenwood townships have subdivisions along the Manistee River, Liberty has shied away from this subdivision process and the river, which helps keep the Master Plan for preserving the natural environment of the river in place.



## 2. The Townships Surrounding the Village of Mesick

### Introduction

These Village of Mesick's related townships hold as many differences as similarities in their rural municipalities. In this introduction we will include some of the similarities before we

discuss the succinct differences on the following pages.

### Land and Water

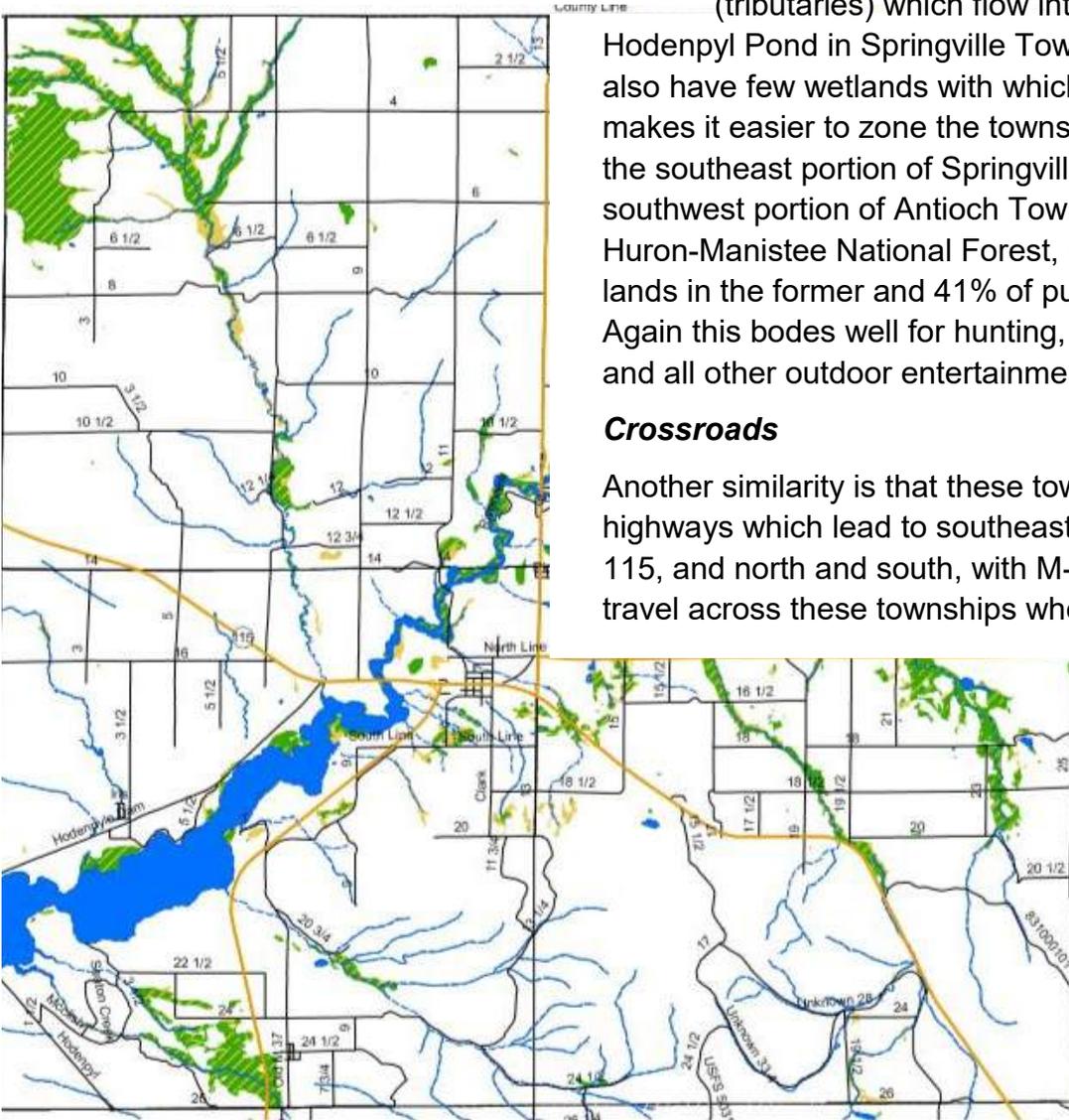
Wexford Township has the most agricultural properties of all WJPC townships by more than double. Antioch has much agricultural land also.

All three townships have dozens of creeks (tributaries) which flow into the Manistee River or Hodenpyl Pond in Springville Township. These townships also have few wetlands with which to contend. This fact makes it easier to zone the townships, although much of the southeast portion of Springville Township and the southwest portion of Antioch Township is home to the Huron-Manistee National Forest, making up 32% of public lands in the former and 41% of public land in the latter. Again this bodes well for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and all other outdoor entertainment.

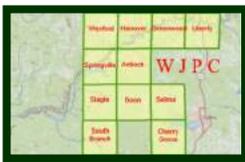
### Crossroads

Another similarity is that these townships hold the main highways which lead to southeast and northwest, with M-115, and north and south, with M-37. Therefore, many travel across these townships when going to further

destinations. This truth should desire the townships to put their best face on their zoning districts. So many winter/summer sportsmen are drawn, and hopefully will consider retirement or a second home in this area.



Wetlands Map of Mesick Area, Wexford, Springville, and Antioch Townships  
MDEQ Wetland Map 2006



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## **Wexford Township**

The township in the far, northwest corner of the county shares its county name. Wexford Township was the first township occupied by a land owner when Benjamin Hall first arrived by way of the Newaygo-Northport Highway in 1863. Although, the township was not named until 1869. Wexford Township was preferred as the most habitable land in the entire county because of its natural plateau above the wild and wet forests of the rest of the county.

As a result of the County Seat being at Sherman in 1871, Wexford was filled with a list of villages and settlements in its township. Wexford Corners, Glengary (also Claggettsville or Sherman West), Cornell, Harlan and Bagnal were all villages based either on railroad stations or a local school and church being settled there. The township has always been a stable region for livability,



**Town Hall, Wexford Township**

thanks too its central location to residential centers. Buckley is a mere mile from its eastern border, Mesick 1.5 miles from the southern, Copemish 5 miles from its western, and Traverse City and Cadillac are both within a 15-mile drive for work and necessities. This central location bodes well for a township with no current village.

## **Agriculture**

The township also has an abundance of agriculture in large swaths of property in the northern portion of the township, providing the largest area for growing crops in the county. The entire northeast 9 sections is identified by loamy Hodenpyl-Karlin Soil, the very richest for growing crops. This portion of the township is identified by its Agriculture-Forest Production zoning

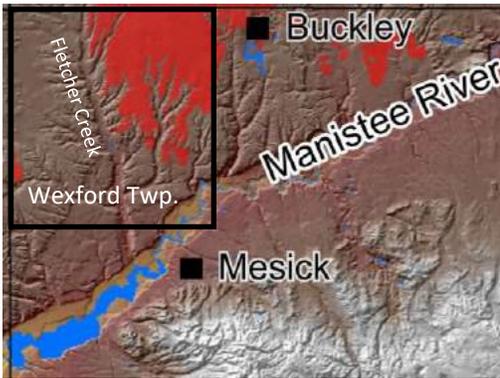
District and is protected in this Master Plan



**Old Engine Show, Wexford Township**



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020



Red area in Wexford Township shows soil-rich and loamy Hodenpyl-Karlin Soil.

in its usage. The Old Engine Show in section 1 of the township amplifies this very important aspect of farming and agricultural

subdivisions, mostly in the eastern side with several along M-37 highway. These subdivisions allow housing that has close access to the highways that take residents to Traverse City and Cadillac. The rest of the township spreads out its housing over the rural area with larger plots of land. This mix of housing has caused Wexford Township to have the largest amount of population growth of any of the other townships in the WJPC. The growth of Wexford has increased from 798 in 2000 to 1073 in 2010 to 1103 in 2018 or a 38% growth rate in the last 18 years.

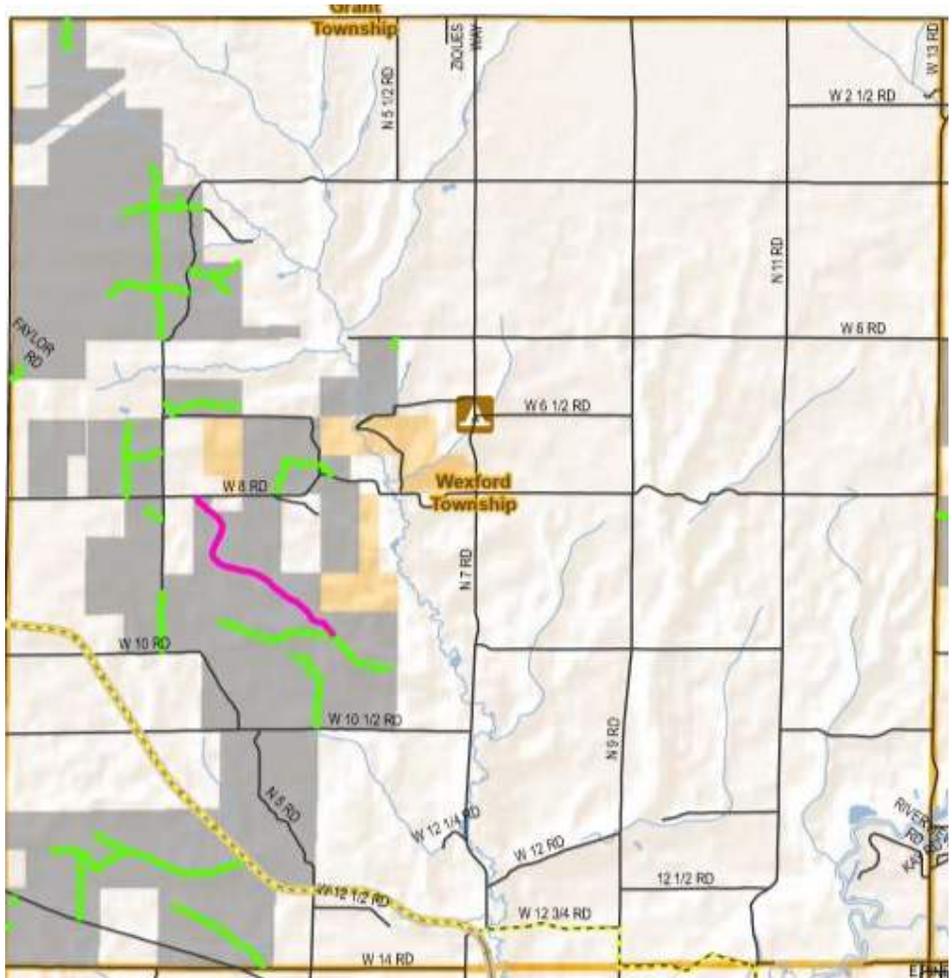
life.

### Public vs. Private Land

Wexford Township has the most land mass of any township in the county at 36.547 square miles. The state forest is on the western side of the township, covering 4,513 acres. The lack of lakes in the township leaves 18,877 acres for zoning purposes, which is the most private acreage of all townships in the county. Also, having the fourth most number of parcels in a WJPC municipality at 1044, it also has the fourth largest Taxable Value in property values at \$36,745,927.

### Subdivisions

The township has seven



State Forest in grey, ORV trails in green. Pink is DNR road closed to ORV's. Snowmobile trail in yellow, formerly RR track line.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## Springville Township

One of the four original townships formed in 1869 in Wexford County, Springville covered 216 square miles of territory, or three-eighths of the county. Over the next 20 years, five other townships were formed from Springville as the population rose in every area of the southwest portion of the county. Then Springville mirrored the other townships with its six mile by six mile border. The early Ann Arbor Railroad brought early settlement villages of Yuma and Mesick into the township. And in 1924-25 the building of the Hodenpyl Dam and dam pond brought a man-made lake to the township. The early Newaygo State Road, the railroad, the Manistee River (including Hodenpyl), and state highways M-37 and M-115 converging together made Springville Township the crossroads from south to north and from east to west in northwest Michigan. The township road system also allows easy access to every portion of the township.

Southern neighbor to Wexford Township, Springville is almost the antithesis of its northern counterpart. Whereas Wexford



ST Community Center/Library, Mesick, Springville Township

Township has almost no water running through it, save for Fletcher Creek running the distance from north to south and a tiny bit of the Manistee flowing through its southeast corner, Springville Township has both the Manistee River and the massive Hodenpyl Dam Pond. This dam was placed on the southwest border of Springville causing the Hodenpyl Dam backwaters, which in turn caused Consumer Energy to lease the surrounding Manistee River property into campgrounds and resorts.

Still, Springville Township has the best of every kind of zoning district available. The thick Manistee-Huron National Forest grows in the southeastern fourth of the township.



Hodenpyl Pond and Dam, Springville Township







Antioch Hills Golf Course, Antioch Township

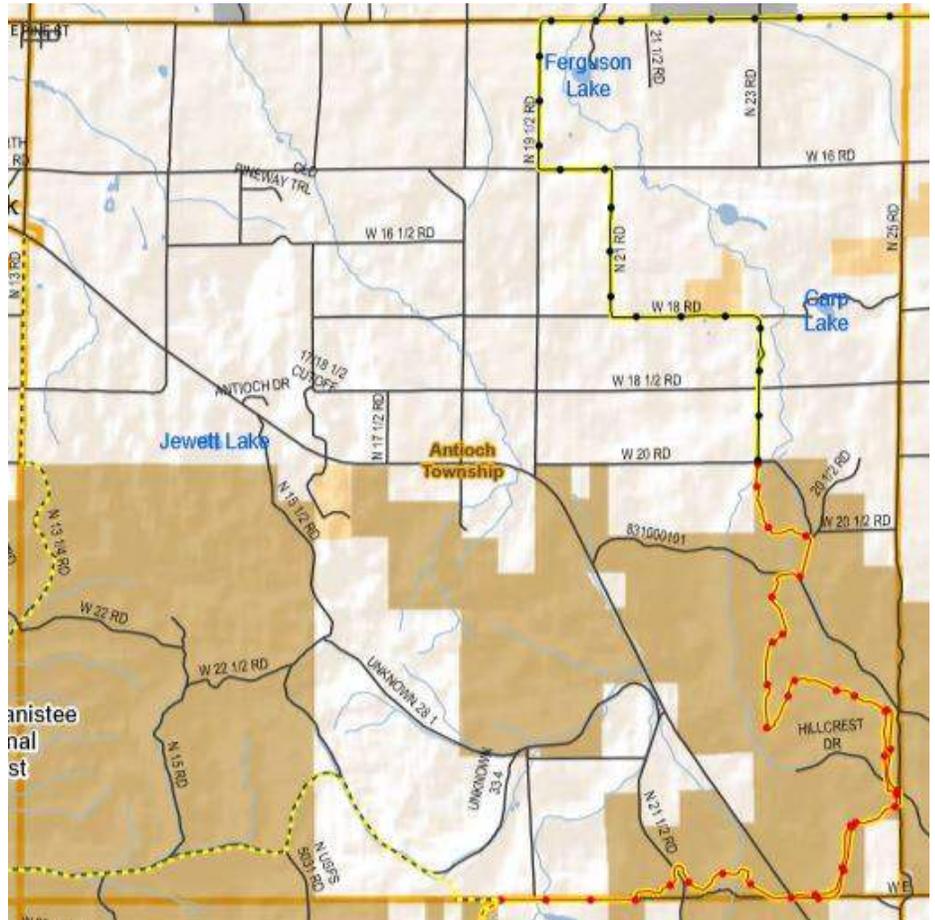
## Conclusion

Wexford, Springville, and Antioch townships combine to make the northwest portion of Wexford County. These townships, although there are many differences, have some similarities in the types of residents which hold mainly large parcels with the dwellings within one acre along the fronted roads. This leaves much rural land to go along with the public lands in the area. And M-115 easily connected this northwest portion of the county to the southeast portion where the county seat resides.

acres, or 41% of the total land in Antioch. This is mainly the national forest in the lower half of the township. The remaining private land equals 13,275 acres, plenty on which to build a family homestead or farm.

## M-115 Highway

The last portion of this major highway was completed though Antioch Township and designated a state highway in 1957. This completed M-115, which started in the 1930's, slowly going from Frankfort to Mesick and from Cadillac to Clare. This highway dissects Antioch almost diagonally from northwest to southeast. When completed it was the fastest way from Antioch to the city of Cadillac rather than having to go around the national forest towards Manton.



National Forest in brown. Snowmobile trail in yellow. Motorcycle and RV trail in Red.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## **Antioch Township**

Formed from Springville Township in 1872, Antioch spanned south to include Boon Township until Boon was formed in 1875. Still, Antioch was primarily made up from the early Springville residents, family members, and close friends and neighbors. It all depended on which side of the Newaygo State highway (now M-37) they decided to hold residence. Also shared between the two townships is a portion of the village of Mesick, and the Sherman-Mesick Cemetery, though physically parceled in Antioch, is run by Springville Township. Mesick Consolidated School also binds the two townships into one area. The Huron-Manistee Forest also joins in Springville's southeast and Antioch's southwest regions.

## **Overall View of Antioch**

Antioch is divided into two parts, the northern 18 sections and the southern 18 sections. The southern part is made up primarily of Huron-Manistee National Forest. Included in this area is the highest point in



Briar Hill, Highest Point in Lower Peninsula, Antioch Township



Townhall and Office building, Antioch Township

Michigan's lower peninsula, Briar Hill in the southwest portion of the township. Antioch Township also comes in second in the WJPC to Wexford Township's \$8 million worth of Agriculture properties with well over \$2 million worth of Ag., mainly in the eastern part of the township. The rest of the township is made up of larger parcels for residences (Rural Residential District) along the crisscrossing roads in the northern sections.

## **Subdivisions**

There are five subdivisions in the township. These are Maple Woods along Antioch Road, Anger Acres along M-115 at N. 15 Road, Briar Creek North off M-37 along the north part of Antioch Hills Golf Course, Old Pineway Trail (which boasts larger lots), and most of the remaining homes and lots in what was the original Village of Sherman. These subdivisions all provide easy access to main highways in the area.

## **Public vs. Private**

Public land in Antioch is just over 9,268



### 3. Most Rural, Best Potential Development Townships

#### Introduction

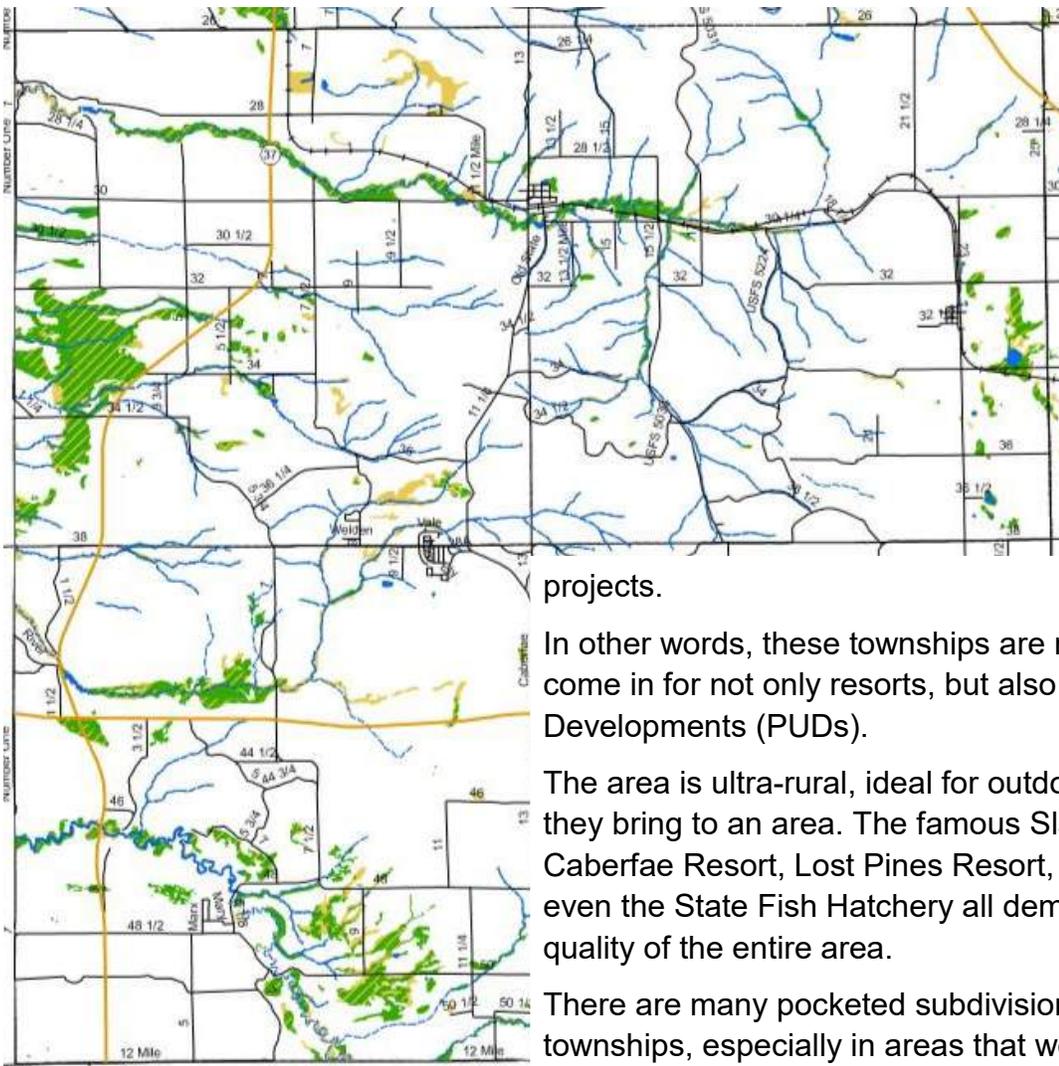
The three townships in the southwest area of the WJPC are Boon, Slagle, and South Branch Townships. Boon and Slagle share the boundaries of the independent village of Harrietta (not part of the WJPC), while Slagle and South Branch share the very popular

Cabrefae Resort and its subdivisions.

#### National Forest

All three townships hold much land that belongs to the federal government in the form of the Huron-Manistee National Forest, which runs parallel between M-31 on the west of it and I-131 on the east of it, including almost all land in between. Boon with 57% of its land, Slagle with 57%, and South Branch with 67% of its land is

forest area. This fact rivals the three Manistee River townships for public land ownership in its area with the main difference being that Boon, Slagle, and South Branch have much less wetlands with which to hinder their zoning projects or development



Wetlands Map of Boon, Slagle, and South Branch Townships, MDEQ Wetlands Map 2007

projects.

In other words, these townships are ripe for developers to come in for not only resorts, but also for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

The area is ultra-rural, ideal for outdoorsmen and all that they bring to an area. The famous Slagle Trout Club, Caberfae Resort, Lost Pines Resort, several canoe rentals, even the State Fish Hatchery all demonstrate the rural quality of the entire area.

There are many pocketed subdivisions throughout these townships, especially in areas that would thought to be the least likely for a subdivision. But they are well off the beaten path for those people who desire a more rural setting to their homes.

# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## Boon Township

Formed in 1875, this township was originally named Summit Township. The name came from the Summit home which was located at the top of the hill between Cadillac and Mesick. Stage Coaches would have to rest the horses after climbing the hill where the current Wexford County Road Commission building lies. This point is close to the center of Wexford County. It also demonstrates the elevated hills that 3/4ths of the township boasts. The township itself is the only perfect 36 square mile township (6 miles by 6 miles) in the county. And all of this is land with little waterways to even count as water cover. Basically, the only flat land is in the four sections in the southeast portion of the township that border Selma Township.

### **Huron-Manistee National Forest**

The Huron-Manistee National Forest stretches from Newaygo north and west. The northern part of this forest extends into Antioch Township, but almost covers the full



Townhall, Fire Department, and Office building, Boon Township

extent of Boon Township. As shown on the next page, the national forest covers 57% of the township. The forest area accentuates the rolling hills, making this a beautiful section of the entire area. The many recreational vehicle trails throughout the southern portion of the township draws outdoor enthusiasts to this area.

### **Inhabitable Areas**

The eastern portion of the township, punctuated by the subdivisions that make up the village of Boon where the township hall is located, are the districts where homes are the most buildable. Also, the western portion, where the village of Harrietta lies in a valley surrounded by hills and has sections of residences that continue into Selma Township. There are three platted subdivisions in Harrietta on the Boon Township side. Also, there are three subdivisions on the Lost Pines Resort area, a very nice hidden place in the southern hills of the township. The other subdivisions are in the village of Boon or just outside the village.



Lost Pines Lodge, Resort District, Boon Township



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020



Boon Country Store, Boon Township

grow at the same rate as other townships in the area, as shown by the growth from the 2010 Census to today. In 2010, the population was 679 people, whereas by 2017, the total population was 764, or a growth of more than 13%.

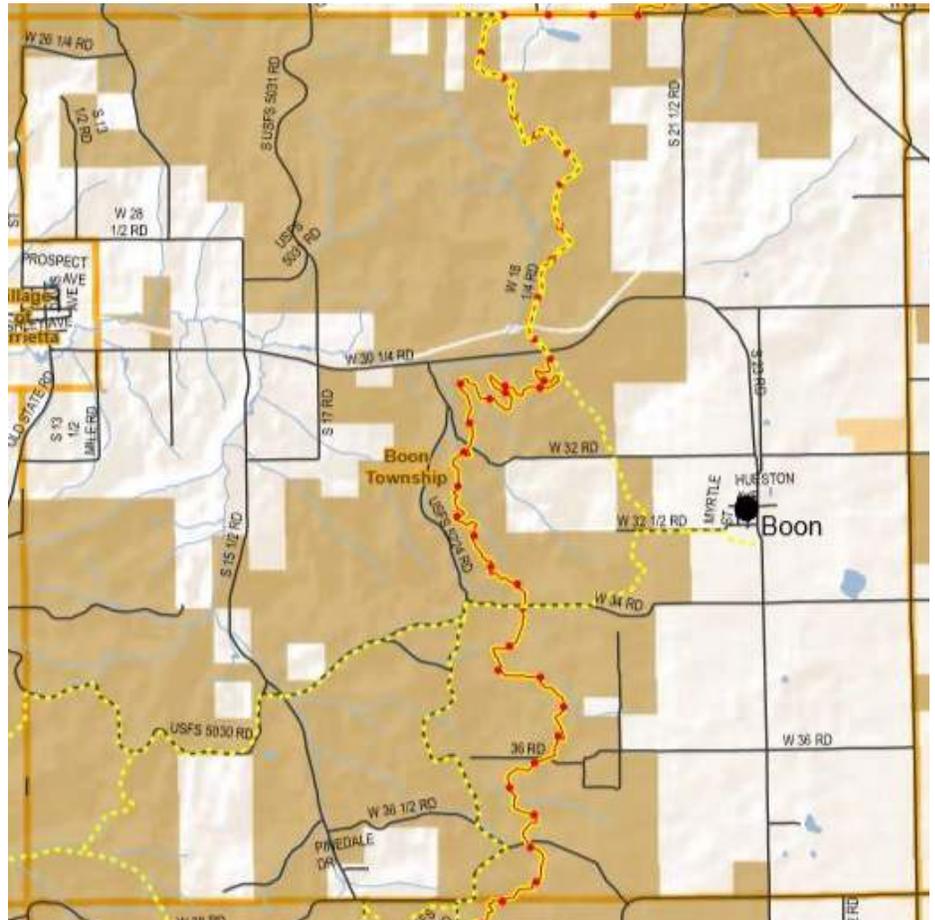
With one Resort District already, Boon Township is ripe with areas for resort development or Planned Unit Development. These types of developments could be used for secondary homes or residents also.

## Rural, Plus Bedroom Community

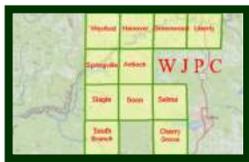
The eastern twelve sections of the township serve to have quick access to the City of Cadillac and its surrounding job market, and, at the same time, provide for a more rural feel than the other townships which surround the city. The western sections, which include Harrietta, still have as much access to Cadillac and Mesick to find an adequate job market for families that wish to remain in a much more rural area than most of the county's residents. The lack of commercial and industrial development in the township helps to continue to provide the most rural setting in which to live.

Population

Boon Township is continuing to



National Forest in brown. Snowmobile trail in yellow. Motorcycle and RV trail in Red.



## Slagle Township

The township of Slagle was originally part of Springville Township in 1869. On the 1889 Wexford County Plat Book, the township was still known as South Springville Township and the famous cold creek running through it was named Schlagle Creek.

This township is another example of very rural area where over 82% of the homes are owned by long-term residents and not by renters or transit people. This means that Slagle is a ripe place to either raise a family or come to retire.

### ***Rural With Many Subdivisions***

There are twelve subdivisions over this township. Five are in the Caberfae Village area with two more the Caberfae Highlands. So, most of these subdivisions are dependent upon the Caberfae Resort. Still, with the county road system, access to the city of Cadillac is within twenty minutes of these subdivisions, providing easy access for workers who also desire a rural



Townhall and Office building, Antioch Township atmosphere.

### ***National Forest***

Like surrounding townships, 57% of Slagle is filled with the Huron-Manistee National Forest. (see map on next page) This forest area continues from Boon Township and also in its western sections connects with Manistee County's national forest, and along Slagle's northern border with Springville Township. The forest offers outdoor recreation and sports for many visitors each year.

### ***Slagle Creek***

A cold stream crossing the entire township from east to west from beneath the village of Harrietta to empty into the Manistee River is



Slagle Trout Farm, Slagle Township





# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## South Branch Township

1880 was the beginning of the municipality of South Branch Township, when it was portioned off from Springville Township. It was named after the “South Branch” of the Manistee River which flowed through the southwest portion of its land. That river is now called the Pine River.

Although fewer residents than the other WJPC townships (almost 400), South Branch is one of the most rural of them all. Michigan highway M-55 dissects the northern one-third of the township, while highway M-37 crosses north-south of its far western portion. The township is a crossroads from the southwestern part of the state, and also to the west and the city of Manistee. Thus, its only commercially developed properties are at the corner of these two highways. The development of the commercial building and mud bog property on the northwest corner of that intersection is an example of what a developer has the potential of doing in a



Township Office building, South Branch Township

rural township. The very best example of this, of course, is Caberfae Peaks Resort in the northeast part of the township. As pictured below, this resort district is quite the attraction for skiers in the winter and golfers in the summer. Another example of creativity in development is the annual Hoxeyville Music Festival (next page) which boasts up to 5,000 attendees twice a year for Blue Grass and Country music. This music festival is played out on individuals’ properties off of 48 1/2 Road especially designed with a Special Use Permit from the WJPC.



Caberfae Resort, South Branch Township

## National Forest

Like surrounding townships, South Branch is replete with the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Almost 68% of its land is encompassed by this forest. This makes for a wonderful area for outdoor recreation across the township. And with the Pine River corridor, even canoeing, boating, and fishing are a large part of the outdoorsmen’s repertoire. The forest has isolated many residents from each other. Large parcels are



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020



Hoxeyville Music Festival, South Branch Township



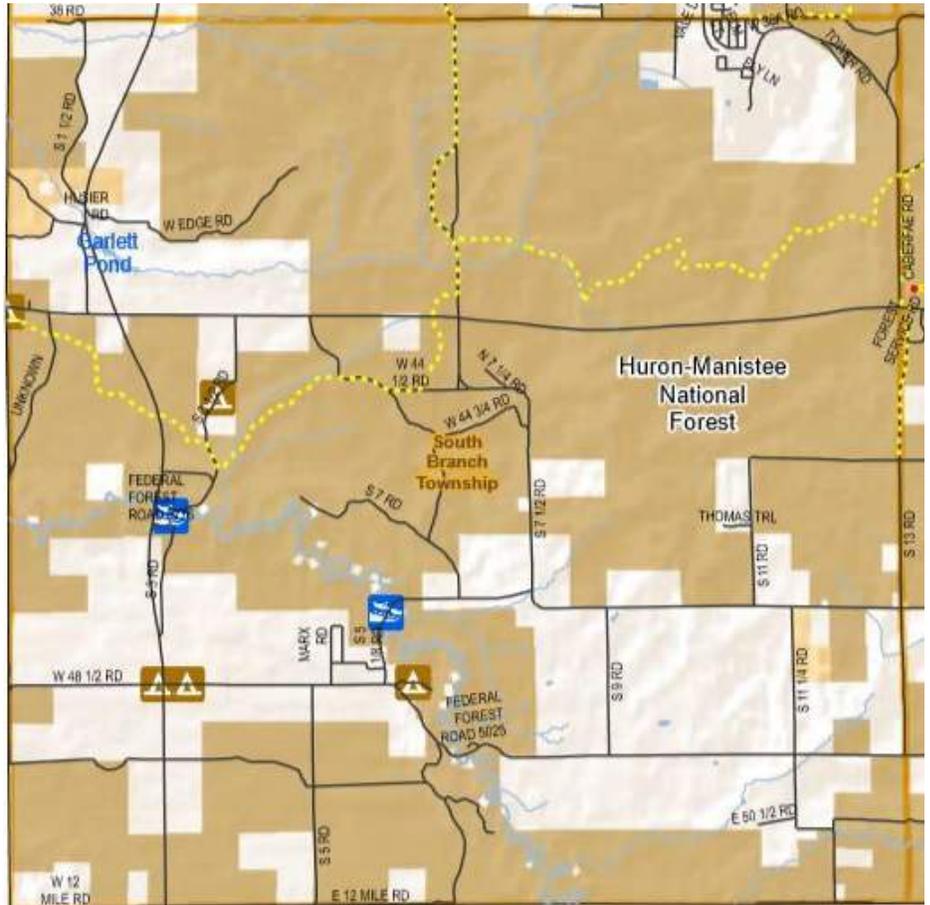
Pine River near Peterson Bridge, South Branch Township

the norm as people find a place away from large populations in the lower part of the state.

## Subdivisions

Four of the six subdivisions in the township are the Marx-Ziska Pine View subdivisions in the lower center of the township just south of the Pine River. Of the other two, one is just south of M-55 and the other is part of Caberfae Peaks Resort. These subdivisions are on larger parcels also than normal subdivisions. This gives more of a feel of being rural than regular subdivisions.

As a result of the naturally forested areas, large parcels, and the river, South Branch zoning goals should be to preserve what it already has by way of the attraction its outdoor areas hold for residents and visitors alike.



National Forest in brown. Snowmobile trail in yellow.



## 4. Lake Mitchell Townships

### *Introduction*

The remaining two townships find similar relationship to each other in at four main ways: sharing Lake Mitchell, being “Bedroom Communities” to Cadillac, having rural areas of national forest, and major areas of designated wetlands.

### *Lake Mitchell*

Nearly half of Lake Mitchell and its subdivisions are located in Selma and Cherry Grove Townships. Many residents, full-time and part-time residents share the lake and its amenities. They also much share in keeping the lake’s environment from destructing. Environmental provisions are built into the Master Plan to keep the lake in its best condition.

### *Bedroom Communities*

Not only does the lake itself draw people, but the closeness to city of Cadillac also invites job-seekers to the area. Both Selma and Cherry Grove Township residents are within ten to fifteen minutes of any part of the city.

### *Still Much Rural Area*

Both townships enjoy very rural areas the farther away from the lake into the outskirts of the townships. Larger parcels of land with much vegetation and even agricultural lands exist just as in the more rural townships in the WJPC.

### *Wetlands*

As seen in the Wetlands Map to the right, both

townships have the most wetland areas in the county. This is due to two factors, the lake and its tributaries, and the townships being the lowest areas in the entire county.



Wetlands Map of Selma and  
Cherry Grove Townships  
MDEQ Wetlands Map 2007

## Selma Township

Beginning in 1869 as part of Colfax Township, Selma became its own township in 1870. Originally named Thorp, after a Civil War hero who lived in the area, the name Selma was given to it by the state legislature. An almost impassable area back then due to the marshes and forests throughout, the city of Clam Lake (renamed Cadillac) and the Big Clam Lake (renamed Lake Mitchell), brought the area into acclaim as a growing lake community supplying lumber and workers to the mills in the city close by.

### **Lake Mitchell Residential Districts**

One of the main zoning assets for the township are the subdivisions which are around and close to the lake. There are 25 subdivisions which form the communities around the north side of Lake Mitchell. Of the other 7 subdivisions, six of those are surrounding other smaller lakes, Pleasant Lake and Woodward Lake. These subdivision areas have seen the most



**Townhall and Office building, Selma Township**

growth in in last 20 years in the township, growing between 200 to 300 more than the region has grown (Munitrix, Population Trends, 2018). Even figuring normal losses by death and relocation, a positive growth of 400 over these years is a healthy sign of not only stability, but also positive development. A continued similar growth in the future would mean further regulations upon these subdivisions, especially around the lakes to protect the environment of the lakes.

### **Public vs. Private Land**

While traversing the main roads in the township shows residential development, still, much of the township is rural in its nature. Almost 41% is land that is Public Land, mostly made up of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. And over 200 square miles of the national forest in Selma is also considered wetlands, which is township sections 27-29 and 32-34, west of Lake Mitchell. This land is primarily uninhabitable for any development (Confer with Wetlands Map on previous page). This area is also zoned as a Wetland



**Lake Mitchell, Selma Township**



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

Conservation District. Contained within this conservation district is the Brandy Brook Waterfowl Area.

## Bedroom Community

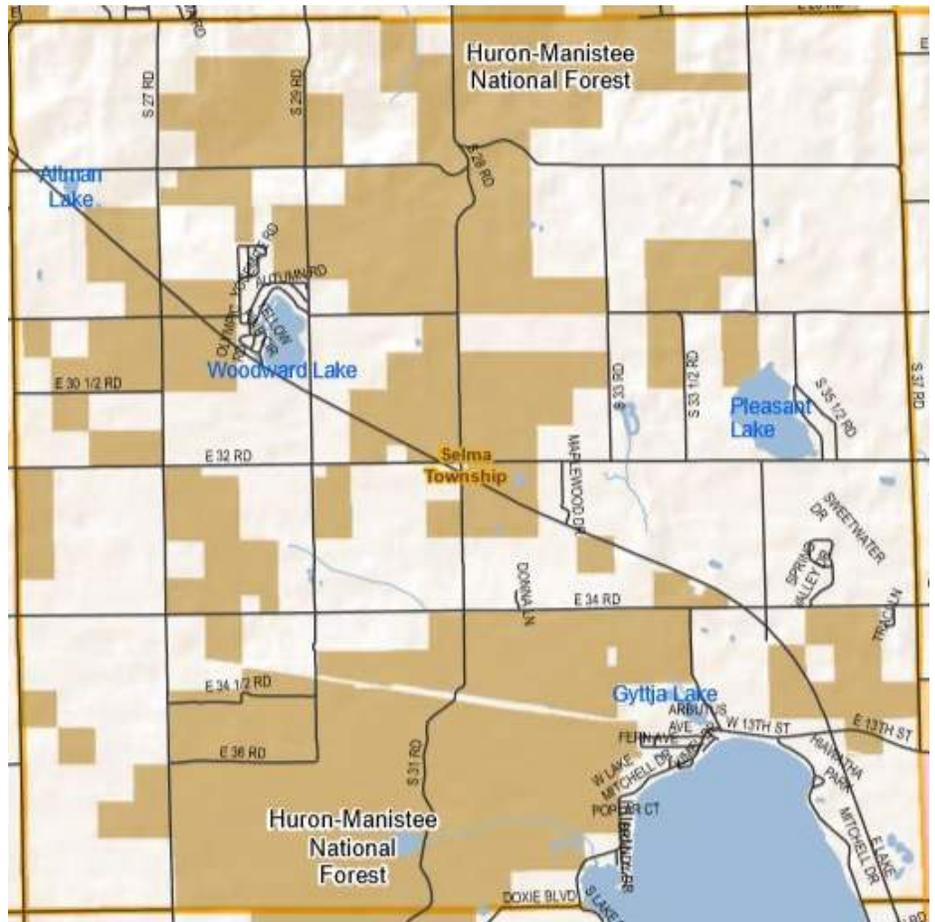
The lakefront subdivisions lend to not only retirement and seasonal resident homes, but also homes for longtime residents who work in the adjacent city of Cadillac. There is easy access into all parts of the city via M-115, M-55, and East 34 Road. The state highway M-115 dissects the township from northwest to southeast going through the center of the township. This holds true to Selma Township being the second largest populated township in the WJPC to its sister township of Cherry Grove.

## Wetlands

The blessing of having a large lake for subdivision development, also brings the disadvantage of large amounts of wetlands and wetland soils in an area. The protection of these wetlands is essential to preserve the water quality, stabilize stormwater runoff, recharge groundwater, and provide wildlife habitats. The preservation of these wetlands in their natural state is the highest priority of any Master Plan.

This Master Plan emphasizes the development of a “Green Belt” of natural vegetation and

topographical features around Lake Mitchell and other lakes in the WJPC area which will naturally preserve the water quality and keep chemicals from degrading the lake. Since this “Green Belt” would extend into Cherry Grove Township, the cooperation between the two townships and their residents in purposing the development of this “Green Belt” is highly recommended.



National Forest in brown.



## Cherry Grove Township

Beginning in 1869 as part of Colfax Township which covered six township areas in the southeast portion of Wexford County, Cherry Grove became its own township in 1872. As with Selma Township, Cherry Grove was an almost impassable area back then due to the marshes, bogs, and forests throughout, the city of Clam Lake (renamed Cadillac) and the Big Clam Lake (renamed Lake Mitchell), brought the area into acclaim as a growing lake community supplying lumber and workers to the mills in the city close by.

### **Residential Districts**

One of the main zoning assets for Cherry Grove Township are the subdivisions which are around and close to the lake. There are a total of 50 subdivisions in the township. Many of them are around Lake Mitchell, with about half of them throughout the M-55 corridor and around the Lakewood on the Green golf course in sections 23 and 26.



Lake Mitchell over Hemlock Park, Cherry Grove Township



Townhall and Office building, Cherry Grove Township

### **Public vs. Private Land**

Although Cherry Grove Township is known to have the most residential developments in the WJPC, still 33% is land that is Public Land, the majority of this Public Land made up of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. And large areas of the national forest in Cherry Grove which covers much of the township area. This land is primarily uninhabitable for any development (Confer with Wetlands Map on previous page). This area is also zoned as a Wetland Conservation District. Contained within this conservation district is the Mitchell Creek Waterfowl Area. This Wetland Conservation District entirely covers section 4, and partially sections 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Other Wetlands Conservation Districts are in sections 23, 24, 26, and also section 15.

### **Bedroom Community**

The subdivisions, which primarily are along the M-55 corridor and South 33 Road lend to not only retirement and seasonal resident homes, but also homes for longtime



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

priority of any Master Plan.

This Master Plan emphasizes the development of a “Green Belt” of natural vegetation and topographical features around Lake Mitchell and other lakes in the WJPC area which will naturally preserve the water quality and keep chemicals from degrading the lake. Since this “Green Belt” would extend into Selma Township to the north, the cooperation between the two townships and their residents in purposing the development of this “Green Belt” is recommended.

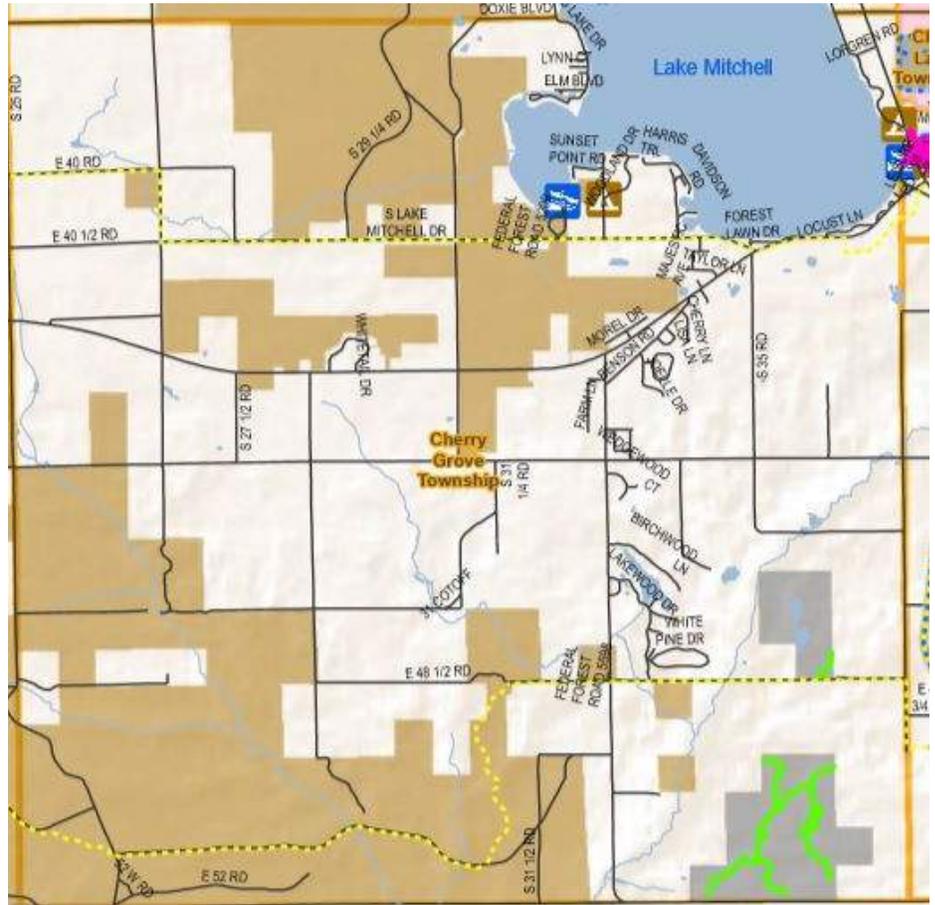


Lakewood Golf Course, Cherry Grove Township

residents who work in the adjacent city of Cadillac. There is easy access into all parts of the city via M-55 to M-115 at Cadillac West. The state highway M-55 dissects the township from west to east going through the upper one-third of the township. This makes Cherry Grove the largest populated township in the WJPC.

### Wetlands

The blessing of having a large lake for subdivision development, also brings the disadvantage of large amounts of wetlands and wetland soils in an area. The protection of these wetlands is essential to preserve the water quality, stabilize stormwater runoff, recharge groundwater, and provide wildlife habitats. The preservation of these wetlands in their natural state is the highest

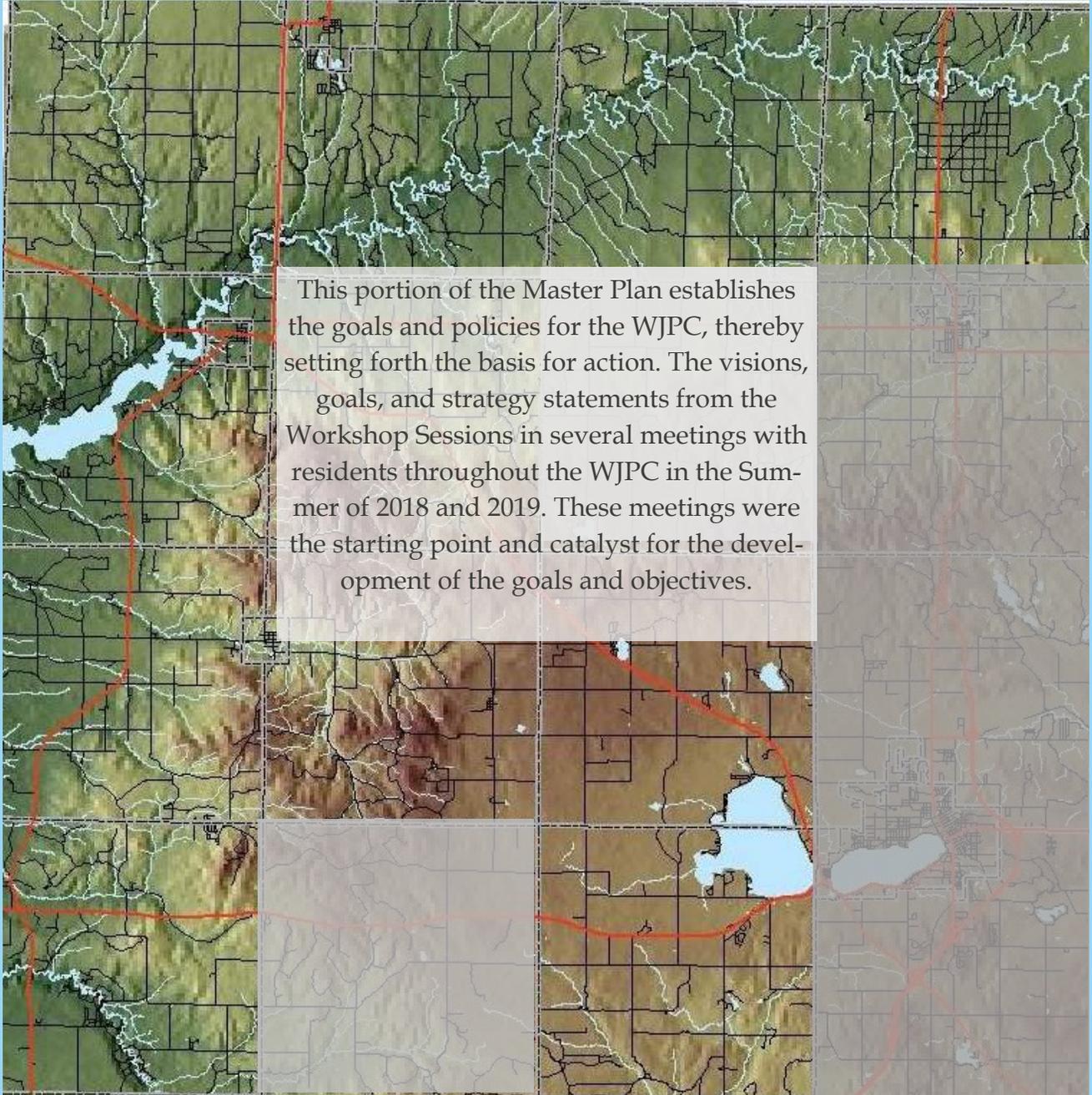


National Forest in brown. Snowmobile trails in yellow. EGLE roads for ORV's in green.



# GOALS AND POLICIES

## What does the WJPC want in Zoning?



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## Introduction to Goals and Policies

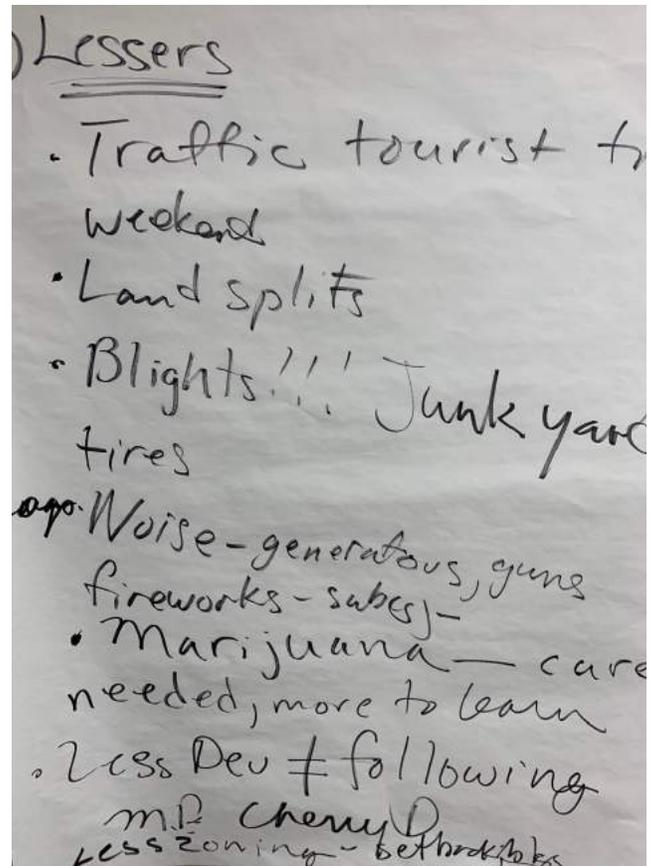
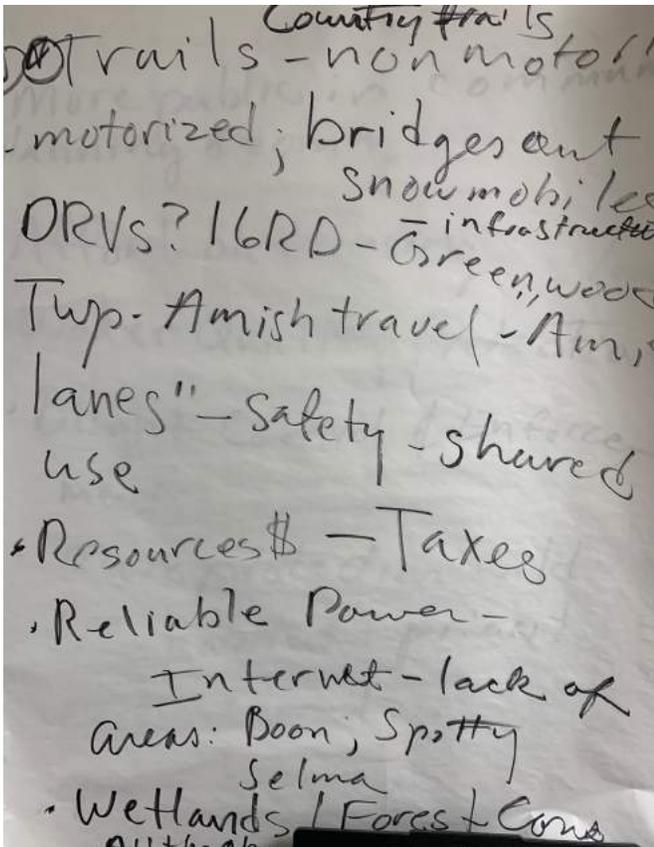
The goals and policies reflect the WJPC communities' concepts and concerns which emerged through the visioning process, and accomplishing the following:

- Give direction to private property owners regarding the physical environment desired by the residents of the WJPC.
- Provide direction for more detailed analysis and eventual changes in existing regulations.
- Establish a framework to assist the Planning Commission of the WJPC and its Staff in assessing the impact of their

planning and zoning decisions.

Goals represent a desired outcome, and objectives are a breakdown of the issues the goals are meant to address. More concrete and action regulations can be found in the Wexford Joint Zoning Ordinance. Goals are organized into the following topics:

- Residential Land Use
- Agricultural and Historic Preservation
- Natural Resource Preservation
- Commercial Land Use
- Transportation



## A Master Plan Community Worksheets

# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

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## I. Residential Land Use

**GOAL: To preserve rural character and enhance the strong tourism base of the communities while continuing to recognize and plan for future housing needs.**

### POLICIES:

1. Provide a logical arrangement of residential densities which recognizes the physical and natural characteristics of the land and compatibility with existing land use conditions.
2. Recognize the importance of single family homes and maintain and improve upon conditions that ensure their continued viability and desirability.
3. Increase open space and natural resource preservation between residential developments.
4. Encourage housing styles that meet a variety of needs while still maintaining the existing residential values.
5. Provide alternatives to traditional residential land development patterns that will result in efficient and better arranged land uses, increased open space, and the preservation of natural and rural resources.
6. Always balance the property rights of the individual resident in conjuncture with the property rights of the neighbors.

## II. Agricultural and Historic Preservation

**GOAL: To recognize the importance of agricultural assets and historic character of the municipalities, and foster preservation initiatives.**

### POLICIES:

1. Productive agricultural lands (i.e. Wexford, Antioch, Boon Townships, etc.) should be preserved and protected from encroachment by high density residential and commercial land uses.
2. Maintain a minimum overall lot size pattern throughout the majority of the WJPC.
3. Promote awareness and appreciation of each municipality's unique historic and natural assets which are vital to the heritage of the WJPC.
4. Maintain and increase the visual appeal of the WJPC rural roadways in order to preserve its rural character and natural beauty.
5. Ensure current zoning regulations promote historic and rural preservation efforts.
6. Promote the economic benefits of being able to sell a property's development rights either publicly or through private agreements.



# WJPC Master Plan - 2020

## III. Natural Resource Preservation

**GOAL: To continue to value natural resources recognizing the contribution of these elements to the high quality of life provided to the WJPC residents.**

### POLICIES:

1. Protection of woodlands and wetlands within the two watersheds in the WJPC.
2. Natural vegetation and topographical features along the rivers and stream corridors and waterways shall be preserved.
3. Agricultural practices shall respect waterways and the natural drainage and run-off patterns associated with them.
4. The protection of wetlands (i.e. Selma, Cherry Grove) is essential to preserve water quality and provide wildlife habitats.
5. At a time of development, three aspects of wetlands protection should be reviewed: the wetland itself, the buffer area around it, and the remainder of the watershed area.
6. The existing land form shall be made a part of land use planning and design. The primary objective is preservation of the natural contours rather than alteration through mass grading. This is to reduce erosion, maintain stability, and control run-off.

## IV. Commercial Land Use

**GOAL: To maintain and attract a limited number of quality businesses in appropriate areas to serve the needs of residents, contribute to the tax base, and provide jobs.**

### POLICIES:

1. Concentrate development activities in limited targeted areas.
2. Commercial uses shall be located with direct accessibility to paved thoroughfare and confined to areas having a minimal impact upon adjacent residential areas.
3. Provide for only those commercial land uses that serve the needs of the WJPC residents in their rural communities.
4. Promote excellence in design and architecture in a manner which reflects the best features of the WJPC rural areas.
5. Allow limited commercial and office development to certain main corners along municipal highways and crossroads.
6. Show preference to Cottage Industries (i.e. Amish, Mennonite, others) throughout the WJPC which are important for the overall residents of the WJPC.



## V. Transportation (Complete Streets)

**GOAL: To help to provide a transportation system which facilitates the safe and efficient flow of traffics, which provides alternatives for pedestrians and bicycles.**

### POLICIES:

1. In cooperation with the Wexford County Road Commission, help to establish a system which provides smooth traffic flow, relieves congestion, and preserves the rural character of the WJPC area.
2. Consider a pedestrian and bikeway plan linking destination points throughout the WJPC area to promote hiking and trail riding.
3. Allow for the passage of slower vehicles along the roadways (Amish buggies, etc.) which helps the overall plan for zoned rural communities.

NOTE: according to Michigan Public Act (PA) 135 of 2010, a Complete Street provides “appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot or bicycle.

## IV.

**GOAL:**

### POLICIES:

- 1.

