

BACKUS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

**BACKUS TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN
FOR
LAND USE**



**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**

January, 2024

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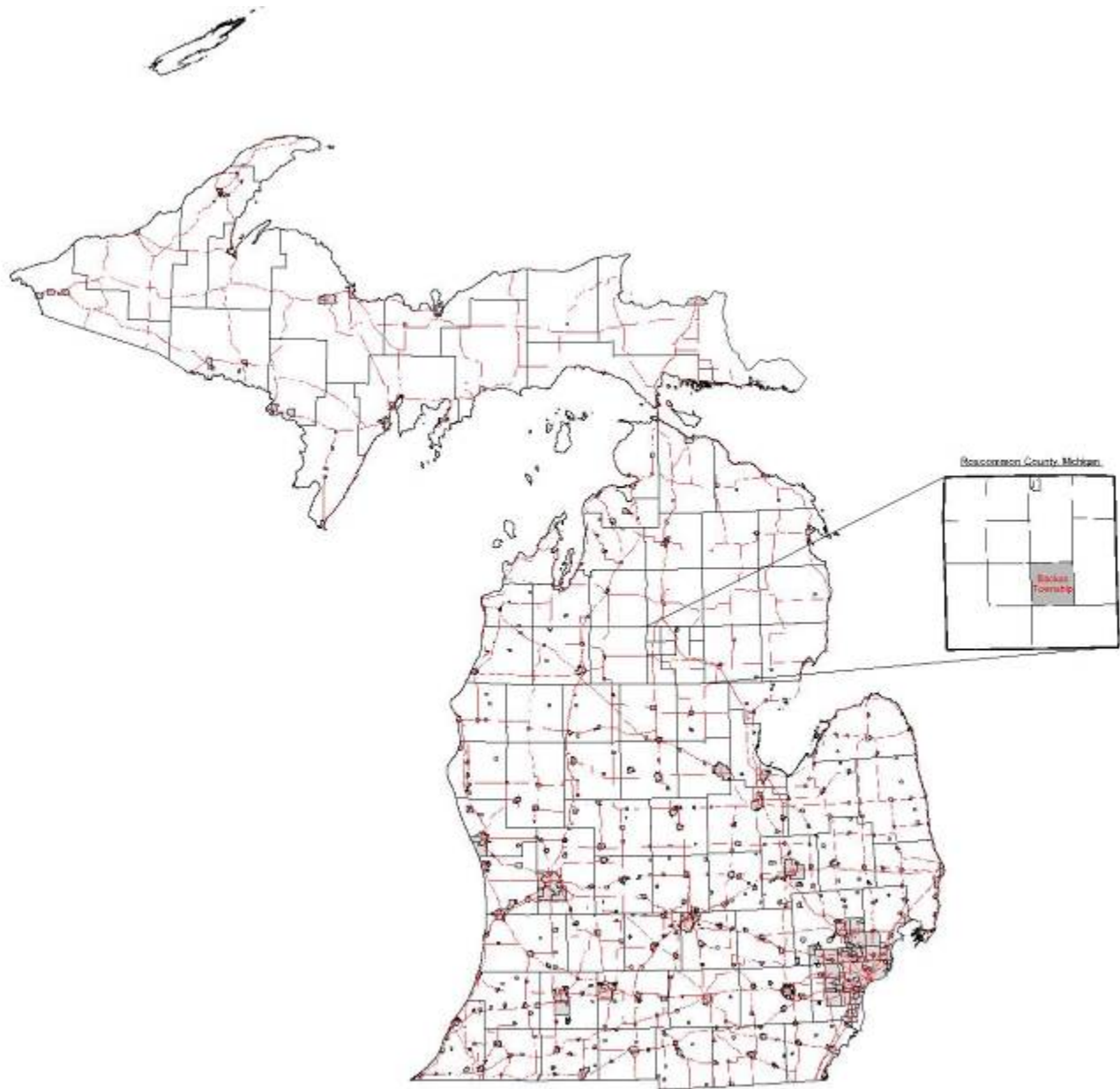
**CONSULTANTS
(2012 Original Plan)**

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Clare

West Branch



Backus Township, Roscommon County, Michigan

Backus Township Master Plan

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

In accordance with the State of Michigan's planning and zoning laws, having adopted a Master Plan previously, the Backus Township Planning Commission agreed to review and amend the existing Master Plan which was adopted March 5, 2012 and reviewed and agreed to remain unaltered in May of 2018. After examining current township and county data that could affect the development of the township, Backus Township Planning Commission has prepared this Master Plan revision for Future Land Use. The Planning Commission sees the township's future growth in the population of single family houses as its largest expanding land use but that the predominate land cover use will remain its vast forested undeveloped lands. Of particular interest in the plan is the development of the area around the M-55/I-75 interchange. This section of the township offers a great opportunity for recreational development within the township.

SECTION TWO

SECTION TWO BACKGROUND

A. Regional History

Roscommon County has a history dating back well before the arrival of European settlers. The area was previously known as Mikenauk, after an Ottawa chief. The Native Americans who occupied the area were mainly the Ottawa and Ojibwe tribes. Native American evidence in the county includes three villages, burial grounds, and several mounds. Most settlements and structures were located near Houghton Lake and the Muskegon and Cut Rivers. Among the Native American trails in the county was the main north-south Grand Traverse-Saginaw trail, which runs through the middle of the county.

Two years after the area passed from Native American control in 1836 by the Washington Treaty, the name of the county was changed. Surveyor John Brink named it Roscommon after a county in Ireland. A resurvey in 1852 by William Burt changed the name of Red Lake to Houghton Lake and the name of Forgingon Lake to Higgins Lake. These new names were in honor of fellow surveyors and geologists Douglas Houghton and Silvester Higgins. In 1875, the area now known as Roscommon County was legally established after being separated from Midland County. The settlement of Houghton Lake, which was started in 1873, was chosen as a temporary county seat. In 1879, the county seat was changed to the present-day village of Roscommon.

In the years immediately following the Civil War, Roscommon County's lakes,

and streams served as highways for the transportation of lumber out of the county to sawmills on the Au Sable, Muskegon, and Tittabawassee Rivers. By 1878, narrow-gauge railroads served the lumbering industry and settlements. From 1870 to 1880, the population of the county was associated primarily with the logging industry. During this period the population grew to almost 3,000. As the last of the logging drives ended around the turn of the 20th century, the population of the county declined. In Backus Township there was a post office from 1907-1934 in the lumbering town of Kirkland along Maple Valley Road. Another turn of the century lumbering community was the town of Maple Valley, which is at the intersection of modern day M-55 and F-97 (Maple Valley Road).

Most early attempts to settle the county for agriculture use in the 1880s and 1890s failed, largely due to the poor soils. There was some agriculture, primarily in the eastern townships, but farmland has never exceeded 13% of the county. Farming was mostly to supply lumber camps, especially with hay and feed for work animals, so as lumbering camps moved on most farms were abandoned. Some small farming enterprises providing specialty items for resorts and summer residents have continued, raising crops such as apples, berries, cabbage, onions, and mint. However, for the most part, by 1903 tax-delinquent lands including abandoned farms had reverted back to the State and were designated as State forest. Forest fires on the cutover pine lands in the 1900s prompted the Public Domain Commission to institute fire patrols and other conservation measures to save the area from neglect. From 1933 to 1941, the

Civilian Conservation Corps contributed to reforestation efforts and to the creation of parks and recreational facilities available to the public. Backus Township is about 50% covered by the Houghton Lake State Forest.

As early as 1870, groups of vacationers from the Saginaw area were traveling to Higgins Lake for rest, hunting, and fishing, mostly via railways. The use of tents and cottages became a regular occurrence around the lakes. The Higgins Lake, Lakeside, and Cottage Grove associations are early examples of vacation settlements in Roscommon County. Houghton Lake is Michigan's largest inland lake, and has long been popular as a fishing and camping destination. In the 1920s, the population of Houghton and Higgins Lake started to grow. Roscommon County grew with the influx of visitors and vacationers enjoying the area via automobile. This growth was stimulated by the arrival of electrification in the mid 1930s and the paving of old U.S. Highway 27 in 1936.

Road improvement was recognized as an absolute minimum for expansion of the resort industry at Houghton Lake. Earl Johnson of Johnson's Rustic Resort led the campaign. Major state highway construction on US-27, M-76, M-18 and M-55 was delayed by World War II but resumed in 1948. This road activity was accompanied by new resorts and motel construction. Small machine shops and auto industry parts manufactories were established at Prudenville and Roscommon Village after the roads were built.

Recent Past & Present

Creation of divided limited access Interstate Highways US-27 and I-75 in the 1960's dramatically shortened driving time from population centers to the south and has forever changed the character of the county. Many summer residencies were and are being upgraded into permanent homes. This is true in Backus Township due to its proximity to Houghton Lake (only three miles away). Particularly scenic spots including Denton Creek Pond and Backus Lake are both located near Crooked Road off of M-55. Major subdivision and house construction accelerated with special concentration on the lands around the three major lakes. Zoning and planning was sought to bring order from potential chaos especially in dealing with problems of sewerage waste and water supplies. Roscommon County encouraged local township zoning and planning and created a county planning commission whose initial charge was to promote the township boards.

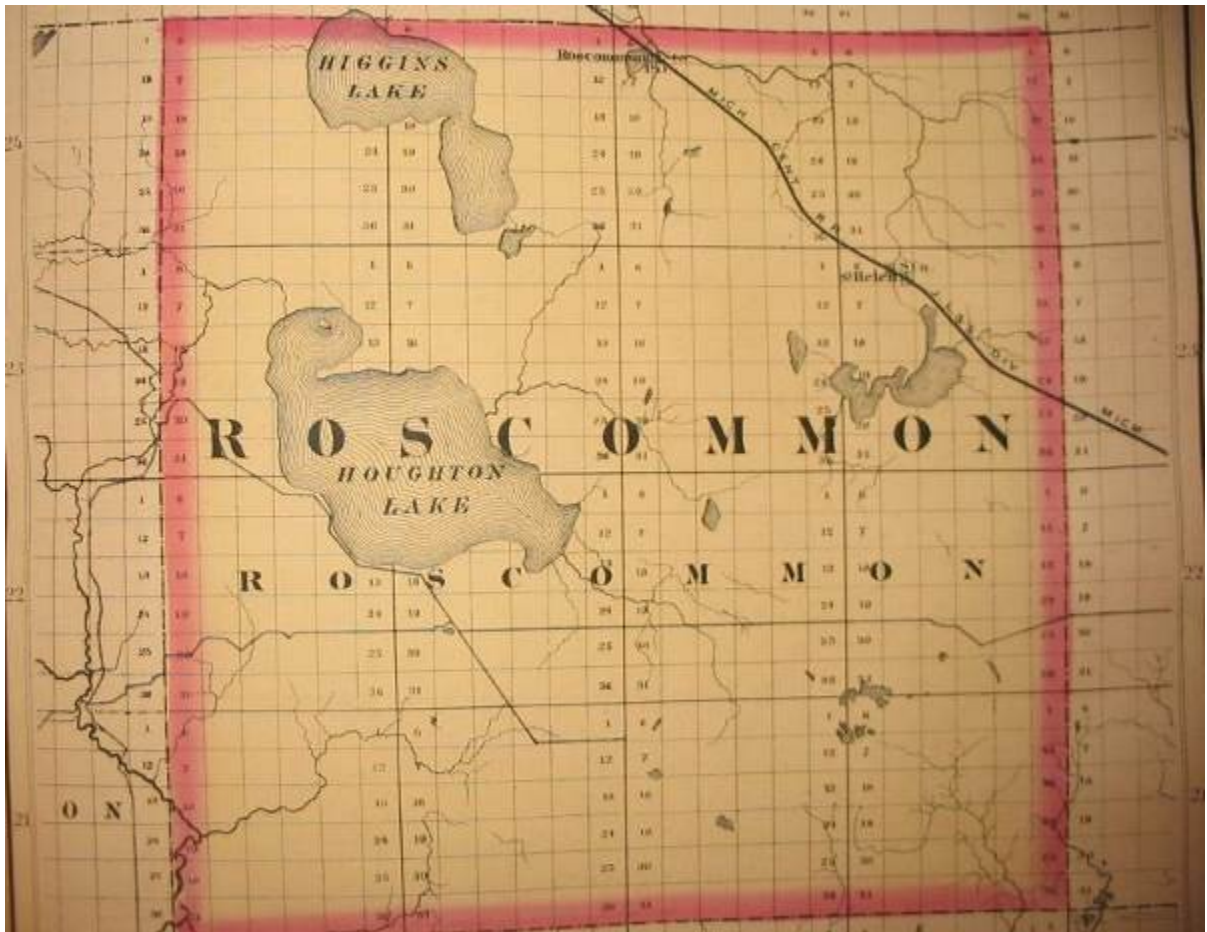
School construction and improvements surged to meet expanding enrollment. Kirtland Community College was established in 1966 in AuSable Township. Its primary charge was to serve the post high school education needs of the four counties of Oscoda, Ogemaw, Crawford and Roscommon Counties.

From 1976-2000 Roscommon County was one of the top 10 counties in population increases in Michigan. By 1990, the county's population had grown to almost 20,000. As of the 2020 census the population of Roscommon County had grown to more than 23,000. This number is more than double the population reported in the 1970 census. Many

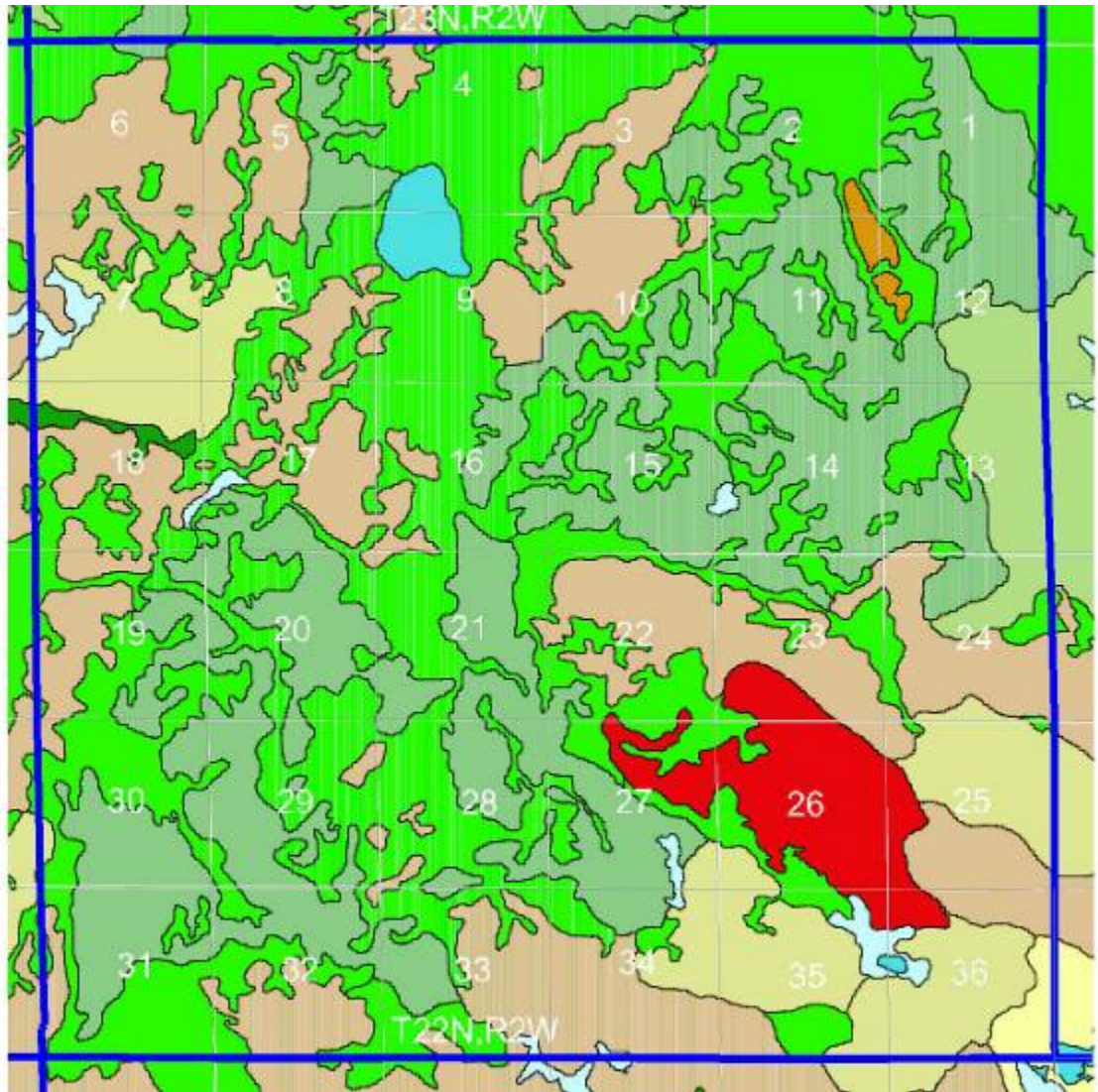
residents of densely populated areas of southeast Michigan have moved north to what were formerly resort areas. The convenience of rapid transportation has enabled retirees, small entrepreneurs and those just wishing to be away from the city to relocate to Roscommon County.

This placed pressure on scarce revenues of all local governments to provide for expanding service needs. Many new county, township or school buildings were

constructed using voted bond funds. But new trends are having significant effects. Local school district enrollments have been declining and the immediate consequences of the current recession (although the ultimate consequences cannot yet be forecast) are causing the school districts to close schools and with the county, townships and village to curtail some services and constrict the level of all their activities.



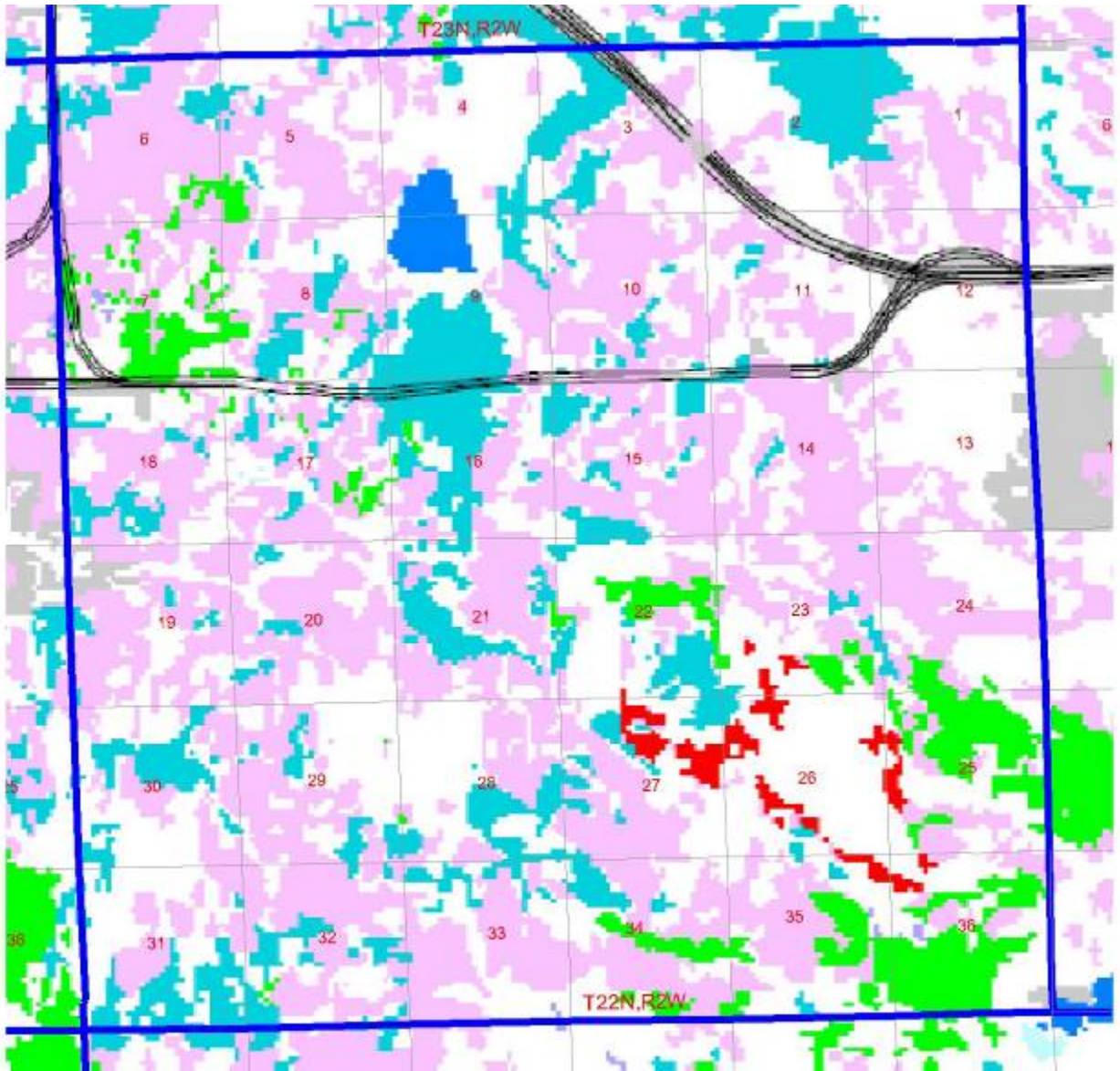
1873 Roscommon County Atlas



Legend

- ✓ ■ ASPEN-BIRCH FOREST
 - ✓ ■ BEECH-SUGAR MAPLE FOREST
 - ✓ ■ BEECH-SUGAR MAPLE-HEMLOCK FOREST
 - ✓ ■ BLACK ASH SWAMP
 - ✓ ■ BLACK OAK BARREN
 - ✓ ■ CEDAR SWAMP
 - ✓ ■ GRASSLAND
 - ✓ ■ HEMLOCK-WHITE PINE FOREST
 - ✓ ■ HEMLOCK-YELLOW BIRCH FOREST
 - ✓ ■ JACK PINE-RED PINE FOREST
 - ✓ ■ LAKE/RIVER
 - ✓ ■ MIXED CONIFER SWAMP
 - ✓ ■ MIXED HARDWOOD SWAMP
 - ✓ ■ MIXED OAK FOREST
 - ✓ ■ MIXED OAK SAVANNA
 - ✓ ■ MIXED PINE-OAK FOREST
 - ✓ ■ MUSKEG/BOG
 - ✓ ■ OAK-HICKORY FOREST
 - ✓ ■ OAK-PINE BARREN
 - ✓ ■ PINE BARREN
 - ✓ ■ SAND DUNE
 - ✓ ■ SHRUB SWAMP/EMERGENT MARSH
 - ✓ ■ SPRUCE-FIR-CEDAR FOREST
 - ✓ ■ WET PRAIRIE
 - ✓ ■ WHITE PINE-MIXED HARDWOOD FOREST
 - ✓ ■ WHITE PINE-RED PINE FOREST
 - ✓ ■ WHITE PINE-WHITE OAK FOREST
- ✓ = LAND COVER TYPE PRESENT ON THIS MAP

Vegetation circa 1800



Backus Township Land Cover Change, 1800's to 1978



B. Geography

General Geography

Backus Township (T22N, R2W) is one of eleven townships located in Roscommon County. It is nestled between Higgins Township to the north Denton Township to the west, Richfield Township to the east, and Nester Township to the south. The township comprises approximately 35.9 square miles with approximately 34.3 square miles of land and 1.6 square miles of water.

The terrain of the township is fairly flat with many low-lying swamplands around small lakes and in the river basins. Backus Township elevation generally slopes from the southeast corner of the township toward the northwest corner.

The highest point of the township is typically around elevation 1250 on the hilltops in the southern portion of the township in Sections 25, 26 and 34. The lowest point in the township around an elevation of 1150 is along the northwest corner of the township in the northwest corner of Section 6.

Backus Township contains several rivers and creeks as well as numerous lakes and ponds. Denton Creek and the North Branch of the Denton flow across the southerly portion of the township. Major water bodies include Backus Lake and Denton Creek Flooding Lakes. Other small lakes include Shadow Lake which flows into Lake James and Lanes Lake between Sections 35 and 36.

The township is mostly forested which is utilized as woodlands and hunting lands.

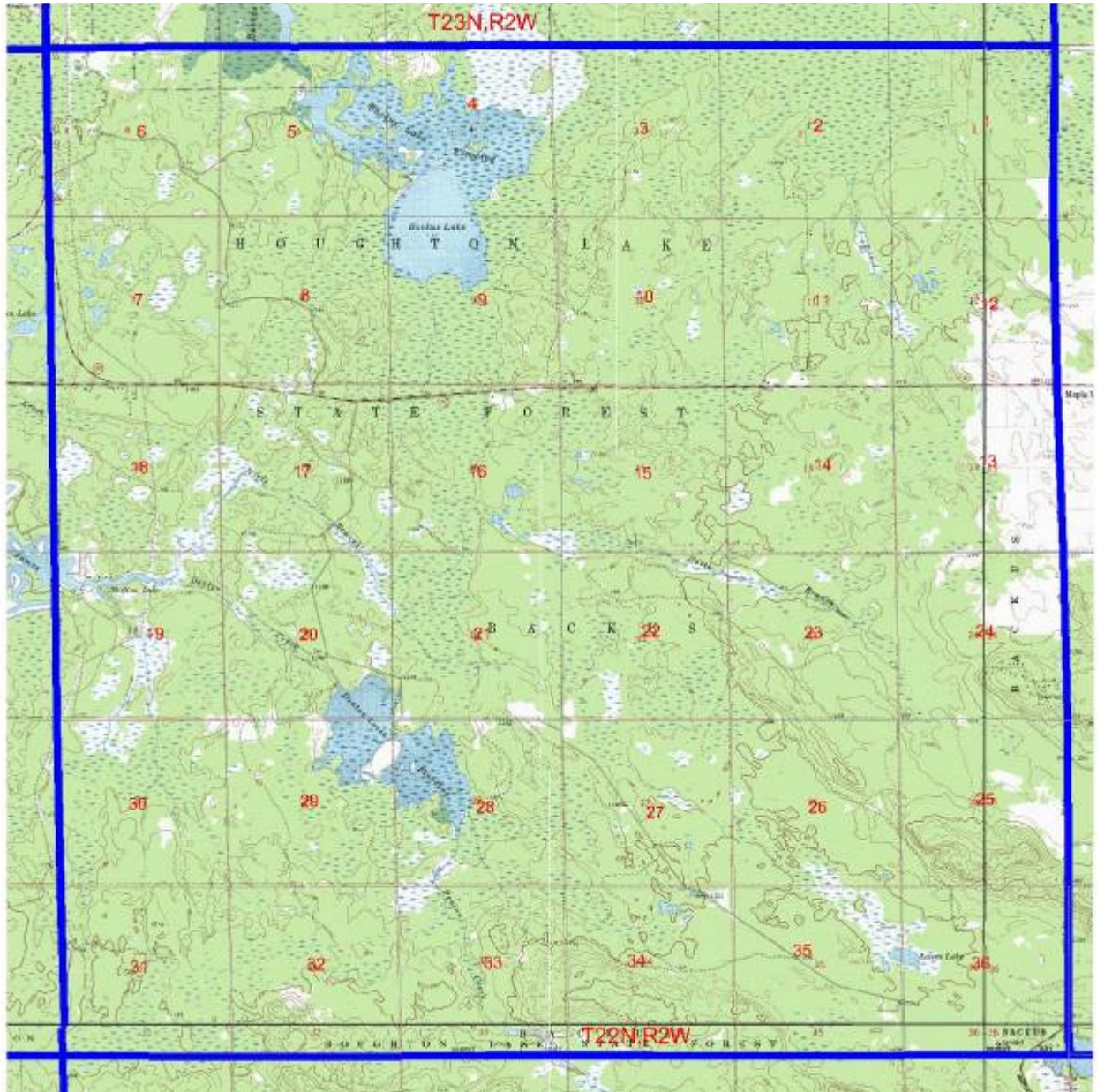
Minimal cleared land is used for agriculture purposes. Houghton Lake State Forest is located throughout the township. Forested wetlands, scrub-shrub wetlands and emergent wetlands are scattered throughout the township and are mostly associated with the drainage areas for the Denton Creek.

Backus Township's climate is varying, as is most of Michigan. In the winter the average temperature is 20.1 degrees F, with the lowest recorded temperature being -48 degrees F on February 1, 1918. In the summer the average temperature is 65.6 degrees, with the record high of 107 degrees on June 1, 1934. Total annual precipitation is 29.1 inches. The most precipitation falls between April and September adding up to 17.8 inches. Most thunderstorms occur in the month of July with an average of about 28 days of each year. The heaviest one-day rainfall of record fell on July 8, 1957 -- 5.18 inches. The average snowfall is 60.4 inches. On average, 108 days a year have at least one inch of snow on the ground. The greatest recorded seasonal snowfall of 124.1 inches fell in the winter of 1970-71. The lowest recorded seasonal snowfall was 24.0 inches in 1936-37.

The National Weather Service office at Houghton Lake (Roscommon County Airport) reports that the average relative humidity in mid-afternoon is about 64%. Humidity is higher at night, and average at dawn is about 85%. The sun shines 68 percent of time possible in summer and 32% in winter. The prevailing wind is from the southwest. Average wind speed is highest, 10.1 miles per hour, in January. Freezing temperatures typically include the months of November through March with occasional freezes in September,

April and May. The frost-free season is about 120 days. The average last killing frost is June 10th and the earliest is

September 10th, but killing frosts have been recorded in every month of the year.



Quadrangle Map for Backus Township

Geology

The processes that gave rise to the land within the Township provided the elevations, shaped the contours, deposited the underground formations of various minerals and carved the river valleys, and laid down the parent materials for the soils.

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock geology of Backus Township is that of the Michigan Basin: sedimentary rock of limestone, dolomite, shale, and sandstone laid down in ancient seas of the Paleozoic Age up to 500 million years ago. Above these sedimentary rock formations is a layer of glacial drift material in varying thickness deposited during the late Pleistocene period.

Surface Geology

The surface geology of Backus Township is glacial in origin. As the last glacier receded, the melting ice flowed toward what is now the Great Lakes. As the melt waters ran downhill, valleys were cut forming the now present streams and their tributaries. The variability of the streams and tributaries in the lengths and direction of flow can be contributed to the randomly located and irregularly piled glacial deposits. The deposited materials formed the moraines of fine textured till and outwash plains.

Soils Overview

Backus Township's topography and soils were formed by glacier deposits and erosion from over 10,000 years ago.

The most prevalent soil association is the Croswell - Au Gres - Tawas association. This association consists of nearly level to undulating, moderately well drained,

somewhat poorly drained, and very poorly drained, sandy and mucky soils on lake plains, outwash plains, and ground moraines. Areas of these soils associations are found along throughout the central portion of the township extending from the north side and the west side. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations, seedling mortality, windthrow hazards and plant competition. The less steep areas are suitable for building development. The steeper areas are not suited for building development because of the slopes.

The next prevalent soil association is the Graycalm - Grayling association. Nearly level to steep, somewhat excessively drained and excessively drained, sandy soils on outwash plains, lake plains, and moraines. This soil association is found primarily in the southeast corner of the township and along the M-55 corridor on the westerly side of the township. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations and seedling mortality. The less steep areas are suitable for building development. Some of the soils may require shoring for excavations.

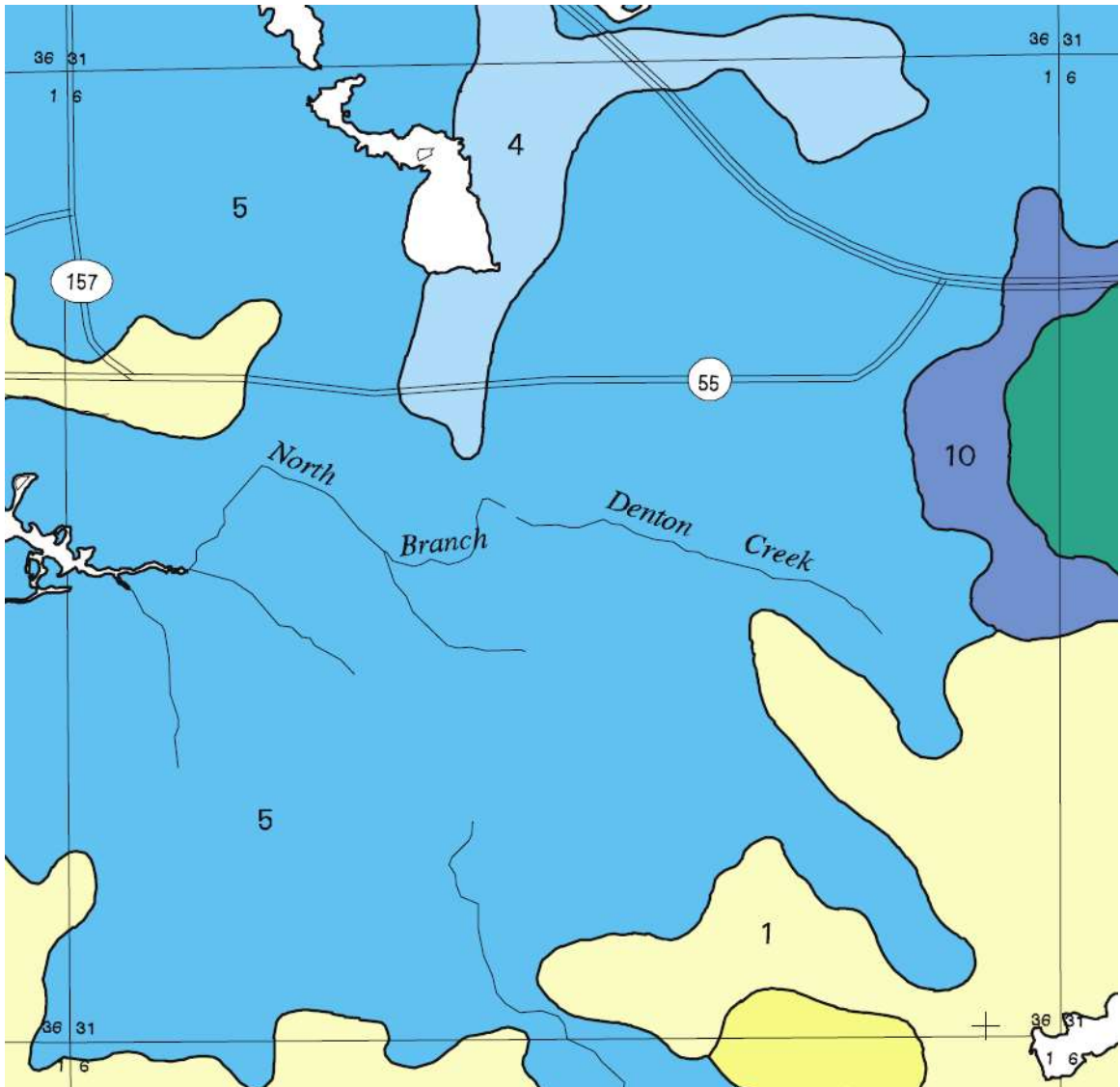
The next prevalent soil association is the Tawas - Lupton - Leafriver association. These soils are nearly level, very poorly drained, mucky soils on lake plains, outwash plains, and moraines. This soil association is found in the central northern portion of the township. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations, seedling mortality, windthrow hazards and plant competition. The less steep areas are suitable for building development. The steeper areas are not suited for building development because of the slopes.

The next prevalent soil association is the Wakeley - Allendale association. These soils are nearly level, very poorly drained and somewhat poorly drained, mucky and sandy soils on outwash plains, lake plains, and moraines. This soil association is found in the northerly portion of the eastern side of the township. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations, seedling mortality, windthrow hazards and plant competition. The less steep areas are suitable for building development. The steeper areas are not suited for building development because of the slopes.

The next prevalent soil association is the Kawkawlin - Sims - Nester association. These soils are nearly level to gently rolling, somewhat poorly drained, very poorly drained, and moderately well drained, loamy soils on ground moraines and end moraines. This soil association is found northerly portion of the eastern side

of the township. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations, seedling mortality, windthrow hazards, plant competition soil compaction and wetness. The less steep and dry areas are suitable for building development. The steeper and wetter areas are not suited for building development because of the slopes.

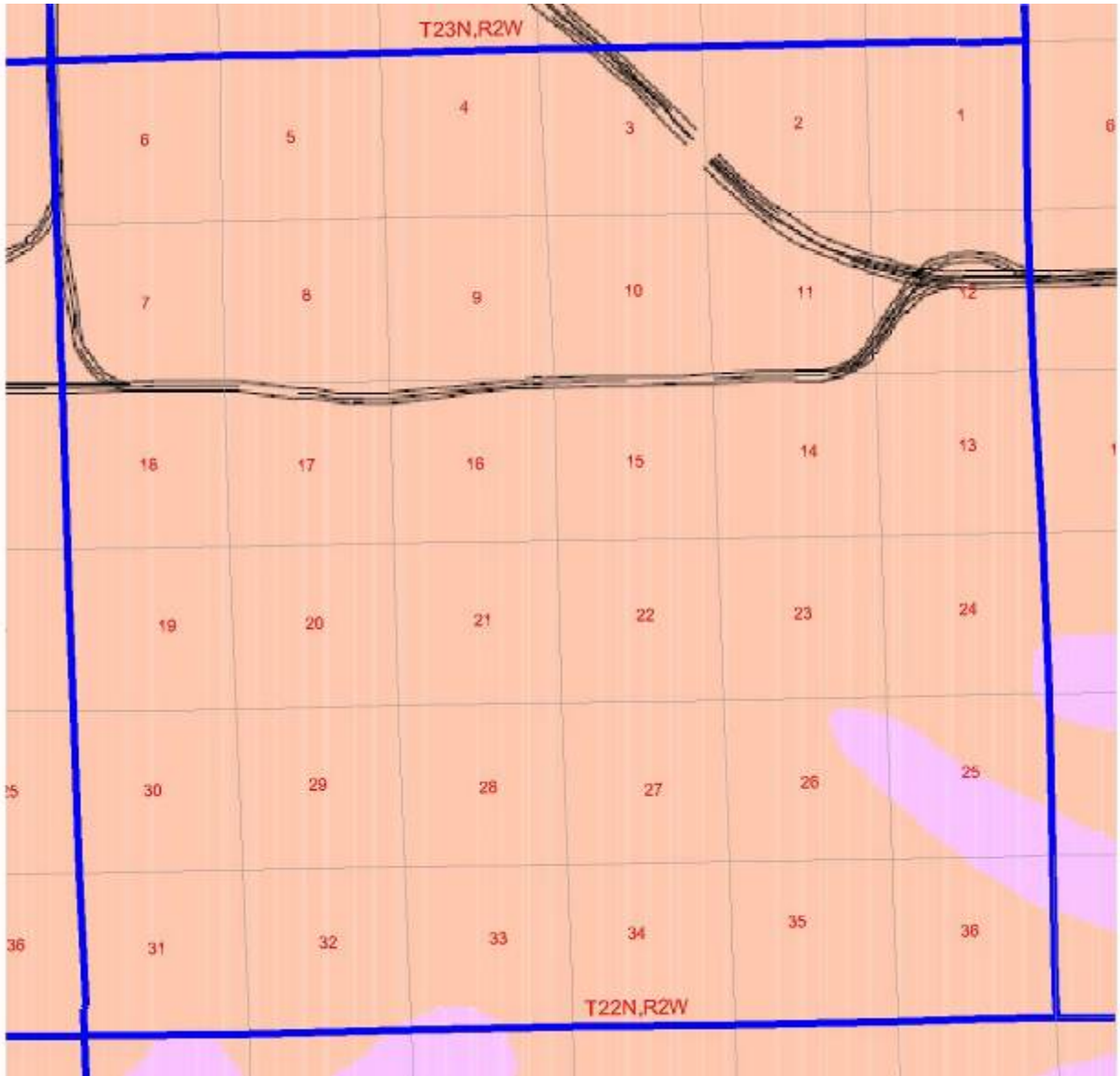
The least prevalent soil association is the Graycalm - Klacking -Perecheney association. These soils are nearly level to steep, somewhat excessively drained, well drained, and moderately well drained, sandy soils on outwash plains, lake plains, and moraines. These soils are typically forested and with concerns of equipment limitations and seedling mortality. The less steep areas are suitable for building development. The steeper areas are not suited for building development because of the slopes.



General Soils Associations of Backus Township

SOIL LEGEND

1	Graycalm-Grayling association
2	Graycalm-Klackng-Perechney association
3	Kellogg-Allendale association
4	Tawas-Lupton-Leafriver association
5	Croswell-Au Gres-Tawas association
6	Wakeley-Au Gres-Deford association
7	Debolt-Pinewood association
8	Nester-Morganlake-Rubicon association
9	Kawkawlin-Sims-Nester association
10	Wakeley-Allendale association



Backus Township Quaternary Geological Map

- Legend**
- | | |
|--|---|
| Major Roads | Ice-contact outwash sand and gravel |
| County Lines | Fine-textured glacial till |
| Geology class | End moraines of fine-textured till |
| Water | Medium-textured glacial till |
| Peat and muck | End moraines of medium-textured till |
| Postglacial alluvium | Coarse-textured glacial till |
| Dune Sand | End moraines of coarse-textured till |
| Lacustrine clay and silt | Thin to discontinuous glacial till over bedrock |
| Lacustrine sand and gravel | Exposed bedrock surfaces |
| Glacial outwash sand and gravel and postglacial alluvium | Artificial fill |

Hydrology

The streams, creeks, and tributaries flowing across the Township provide an abundant supply of fresh water to help recharge the underground aquifer with clean water. The streams that originate or are substantially fed within the Township include: Denton Creek and the North Branch of Denton Creek. The Township has no municipal water supply therefore, residents and businesses use individual wells to supply water. Typical well yields of 10 to 100 GPM with a 6" diameter well are located in bedrock or glacial deposits. Most of the entire township falls within the Muskegon River Watershed. A small portion of the northeast corner of the Township falls within the Ausable River Watershed and a very small portion of the southeast corner falls into the Tittabawassee River Watershed.

Backus Township contains the headwaters for the Backus Creek. Originating at M-55 the creek traverses northerly across the north part of the township. This basin includes Backus Lake Flooding, Backus Creek Flooding and finally the Little Mud Lake Flooding.

Also the Denton Creek and North Branch of Denton Creek traverse across the southerly part of the township flowing generally northwest from the central portion of the south side of the township and ultimately discharging into Shadow Lake and Lake James west of Backus Township. This basin includes the Denton Creek Flooding found in the southwest corner of the township.

Other numerous small unnamed creeks are scattered across the township that collect runoff and supply the low lying wetlands and small lakes.

Wetlands found throughout the Township are another source of natural water bodies (see National Wetland Inventory map that follows). National Wetland Inventory Maps are general maps used to provide information on the potential location of wetlands based on soils, topography, and other available data. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service prepared these maps through interpretation of topographic data and aerial photographs. This inventory map may indicate wetlands that are not actually present or it may not show wetlands that are present. According to the National Wetlands Inventory maps, wetlands in the Township range in size from very small isolated pockets smaller than an automobile to larger areas of several acres.

A variety of wetland types are scattered throughout the entire township. Larger concentrations of forested wetlands are found in the southeastern portions and northwestern portions of the township. Scrub-shrub wetlands are the next most prevalent wetland type in the township, and those features are scattered throughout the township. Several small bogs dominated with leatherleaf shrubs are included with this type of wetland. Small emergent wetland features are located within the township. These wetland features exist in low lying areas where runoff from surface water, and shallow ground water deposits remain present during portions of the growing season.

Wetlands can provide a variety of functions including sedimentation and pollution control, surface water filtration, storm-water storage and flood control, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics. The habitat within these wetlands varies from

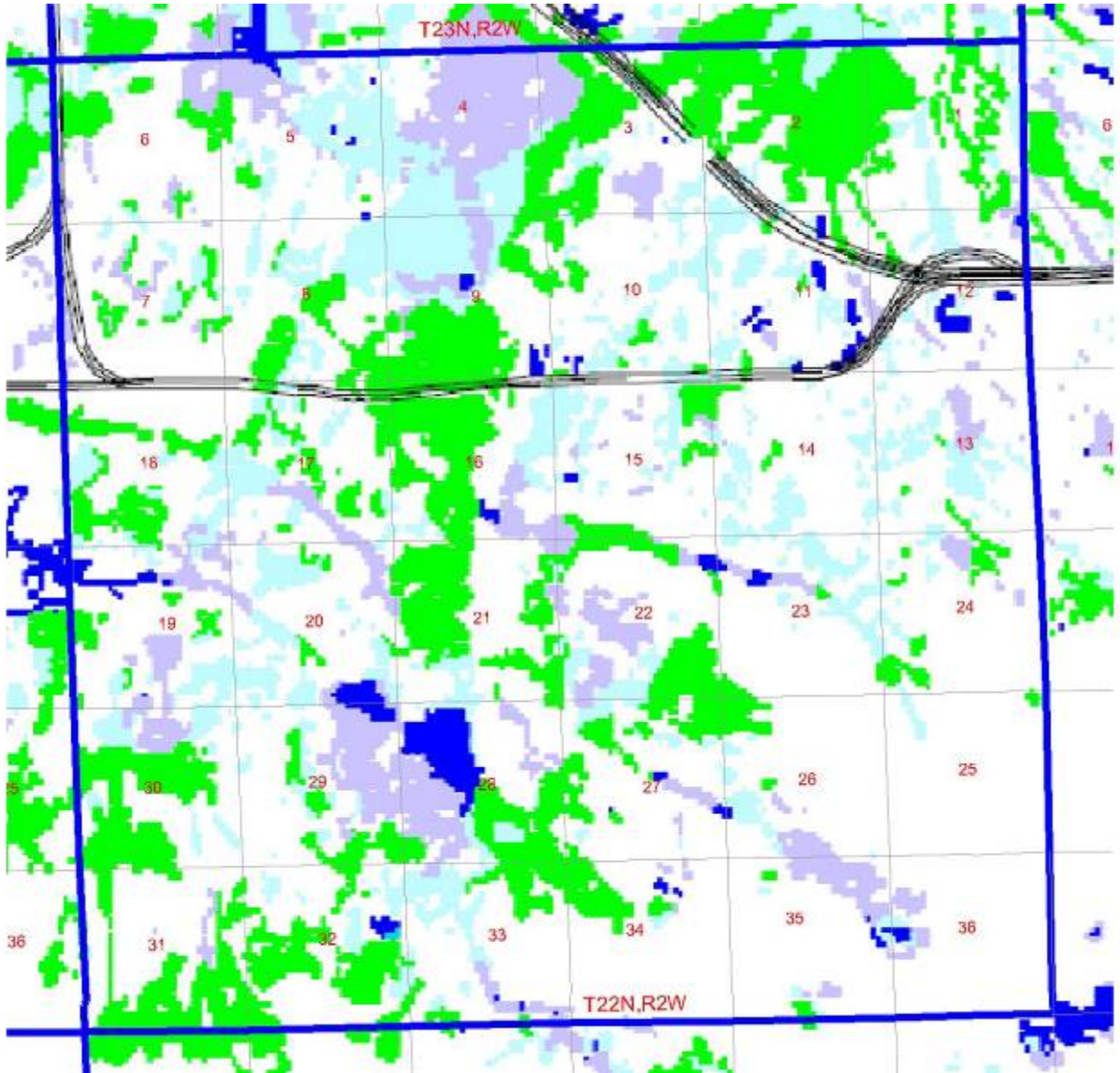
emergent vegetation such as cattail, sedges, and various wildflowers to scrub shrub to forested wetlands containing species including, but not limited to, dogwood, tag alder, northern white cedar, silver maple, cottonwood, and green ash.

Wetlands protection in Michigan is regulated under Part 303, Wetland

Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994, P.A. 451. Only with an on-site evaluation done either by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) or a qualified private consultant and verified by the MDEQ can the determination of the boundaries and regulatory status of wetlands be made.



Denton Creek Flooding



Backus Township National Wetland Inventory



Fauna and Flora

Backus Township contains a rich variety of natural resources and habitat types. Additionally, forested and scrub shrub uplands, riverine valleys, floodplain forests, swamps, emergent and scrub shrub wetlands can be found interspersed within the township. A portion of the Houghton Lake State Forest is located in Backus Township. Numerous small creeks and streams course through the township before reaching their final destinations. Some of these watercourses contain cold-water fish including Brook, Rainbow and Brown Trout, along with other species such as panfish and walleye. A few small, private inland ponds are found in the township.

About 90% of Backus Township is forested. This forest provides wildlife habitat, esthetic and scenic values as well as the potential for lumber and heating fuel. The State of Michigan owns about 14,800 acres of forestland throughout township.



The abundant wildlife which relies on these varied habitats provides recreational opportunities not only for the residents of the Township but also for the many visitors to the area. Large and small game hunting for species including white-tail

deer, black bear, rabbits, squirrels, ruffed grouse, waterfowl and wild turkey, is an activity enjoyed by many. Bird watching and wildlife observation, which have become another preferred recreational activity not only in Michigan but also in most other parts of the country, afford the participants great viewing opportunities in the Backus Township area due to the variety of available habitats and accessible lands. Wildlife including deer, fox, coyote, muskrat, and occasionally beaver, utilize the varied habitats during their life cycles including breeding, nesting, and raising young. A variety of smaller animals, reptiles, amphibians, bird species including neotropical migrants, waterfowl, and birds of prey also live and thrive in the area.



A wide variety of vegetation can be found within Backus Township. The tracts of pine-forested canopies can be seen from the roadways while traveling throughout the area. The blaze of yellow and red hardwood leaves in the fall, seen throughout the township adds a welcome splendor prior to the drab browns and grays of winter. The colorful profusion of spring, summer, and fall flowers in the open fields, along the roadways, and in the forests is a delight to gardeners, botanists and the general public. Numerous species

of wildflowers, grasses, ferns, trees and shrubs abound throughout Backus Township and the surrounding area. In addition to the many forms of wildlife including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects, aquatic species, trees and flowers normally observed, there are some species which are not as readily visible. This is due in part to the rarity of the species, the preference for isolation and solitude, or requirements for areas of undisturbed habitat. A few species of wildlife listed as threatened, endangered, or special concern under federal and or state law have been identified as having occurred within portions of Backus Township. The federally enacted Endangered Species Act of 1973, and/or Part 365, Endangered Species Protection of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994, as amended, provides protection for these special resources. A preliminary review of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Endangered (MDNR) Species Assessment website indicates that occurrences of protected species have been recorded within the Township.



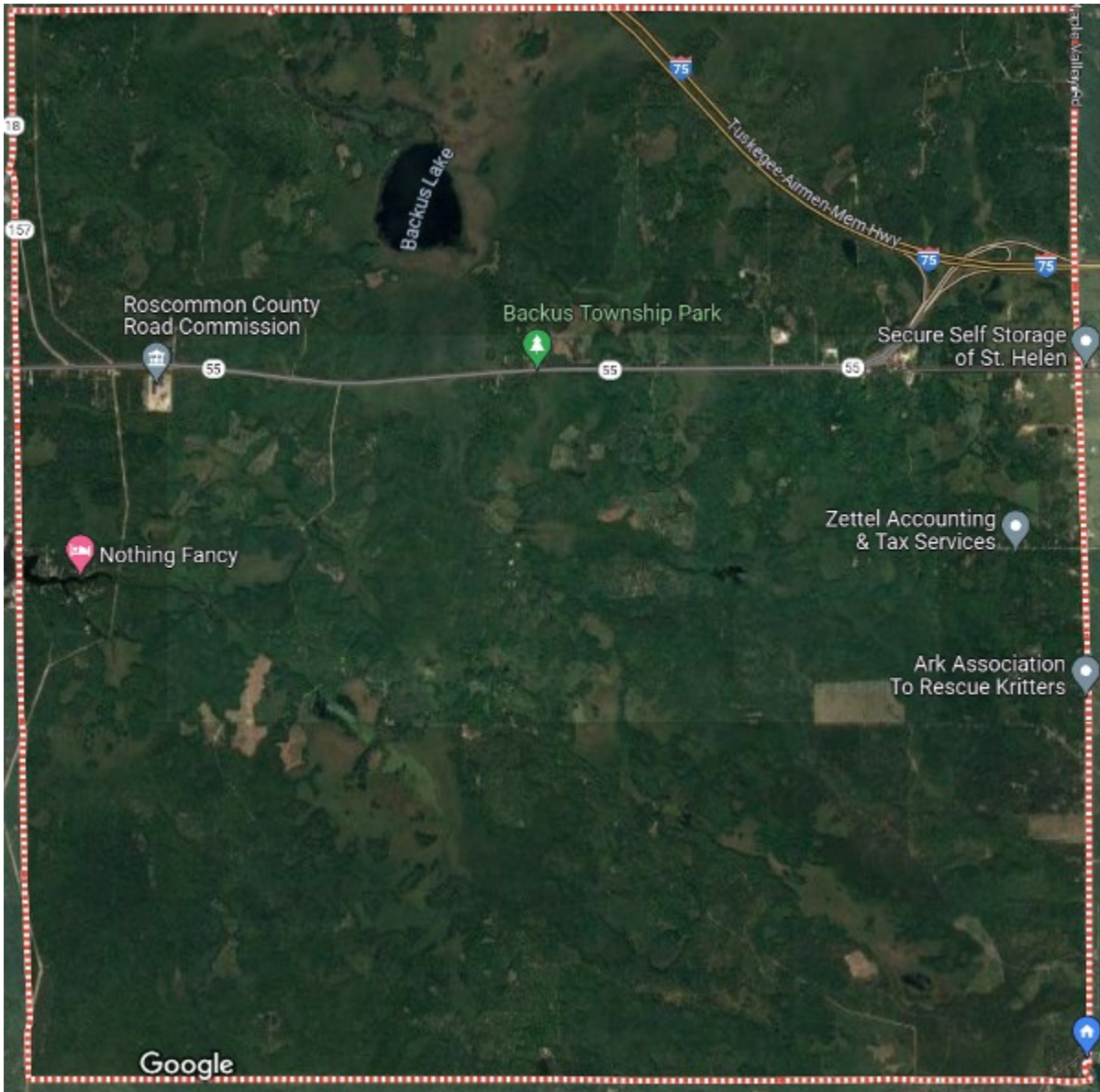
The Planning Commission recognizes that Backus Township contains several endangered or threatened species.

The presence of threatened or endangered species does not preclude activities or development, but may require alterations to project plans.

Special Concern species are not protected under endangered species legislation, but recommendations regarding their protection may be provided. Protection of special concern species will help prevent them from declining to the point of being listed as threatened or endangered in the future. Other federal and state statutes and regulations are in place to help protect and preserve the natural resources of local communities, a few of which include wetlands, inland lakes and streams protection, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the Regulations on the Take of Reptiles and Amphibians.



The vast diversity of the natural resources found within the township provides a necessary component for education, enjoyment, and continued appreciation of quality of life for those who reside in and those who visit Backus Township.



Aerial Photo of Backus Township circa 2020.

C. Existing Land Cover and Uses

Backus Township has nearly 23,000 acres of land. Most of the township's land cover is classified as deciduous forests with some woodsy wetlands and a few small areas of grasslands.

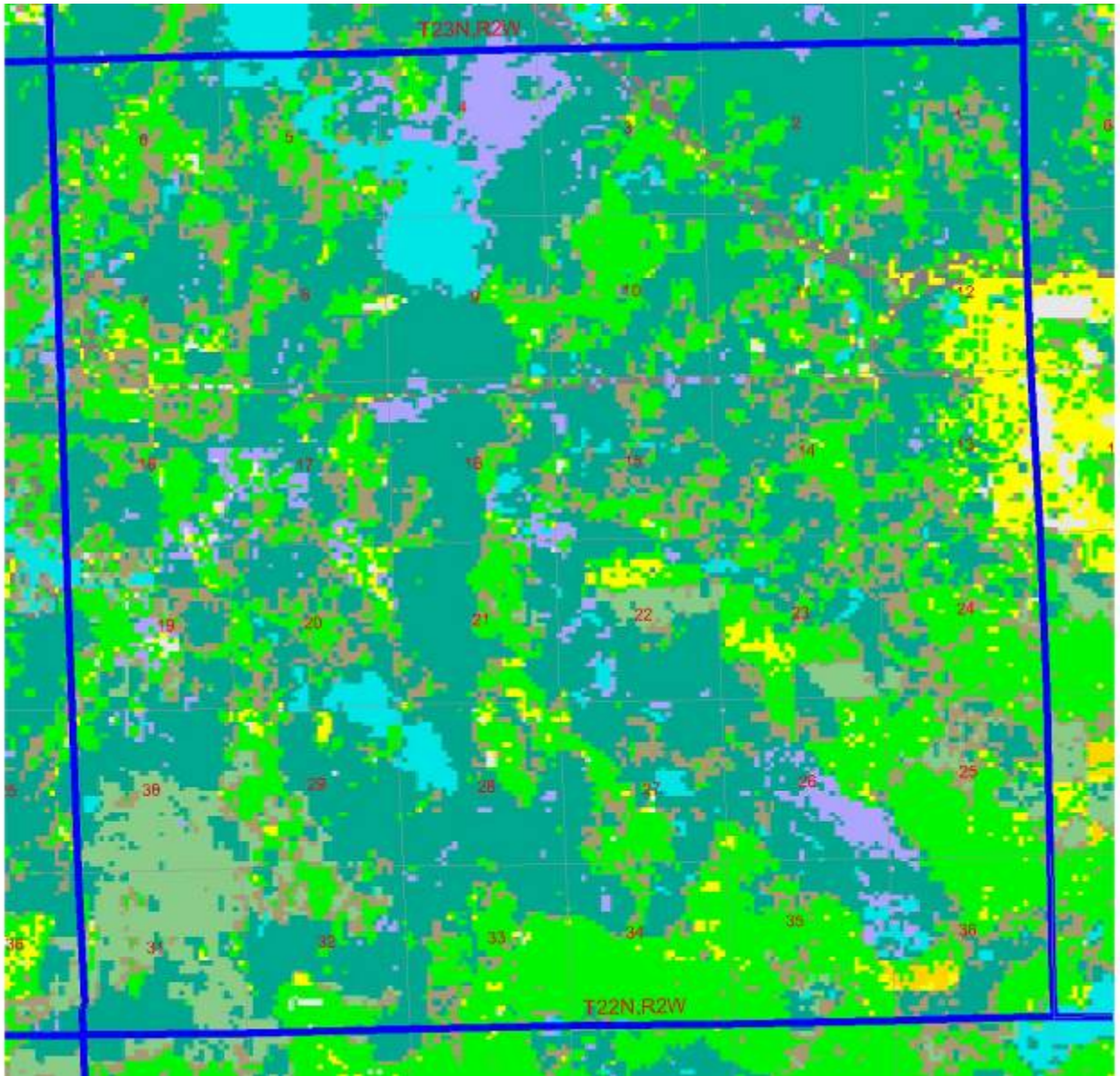
Most of the forests in the township are owned by the State of Michigan and a few large parcels are owned by private hunt clubs. A few areas are comprised of smaller residential parcels. These residential areas are located on the south side of M-55 on the west side of the township; by Lake James on the west side of the township; and along F97 on the east side of the township. A residential development of 10 acre parcels is located in the northeast corner of the township.

There is no school, no church, not even a tavern with the township boundaries. Most the commercial activities that take place in the township are from home operations although there are a few businesses located near the I-75 interchange. The township does have a public park that is located on M-55 in the middle of the township.

The plat maps (2008, 1986), which follow, illustrate the trends of ownership patterns in the township. Most of the parcels shown are larger parcels of 40 acres or more.

The State of Michigan owns numerous parcels in Backus Township including the Houghton Lake State Forest which encompasses a large portion of the township.

















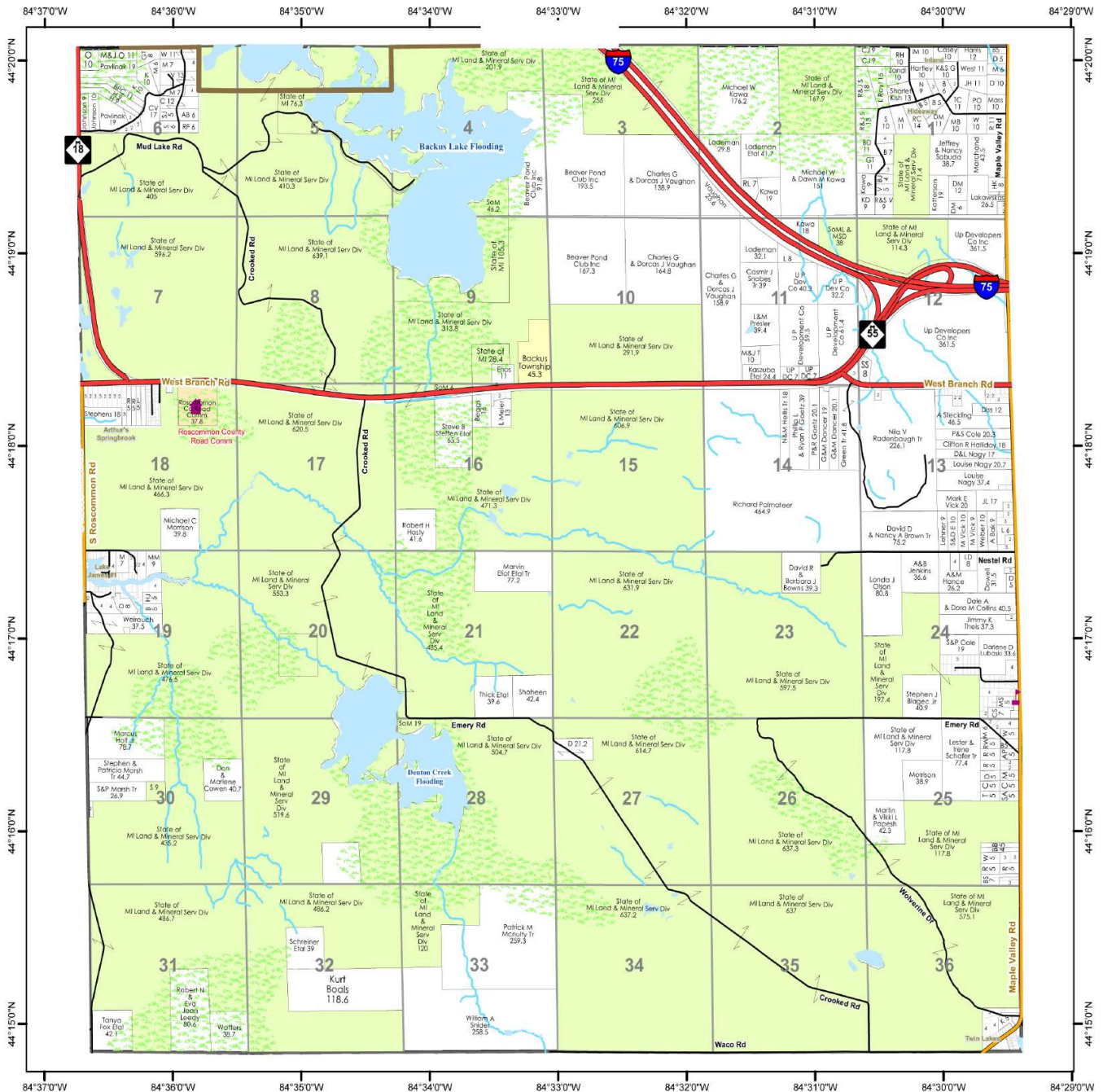


Backus Township 1992 Land Cover



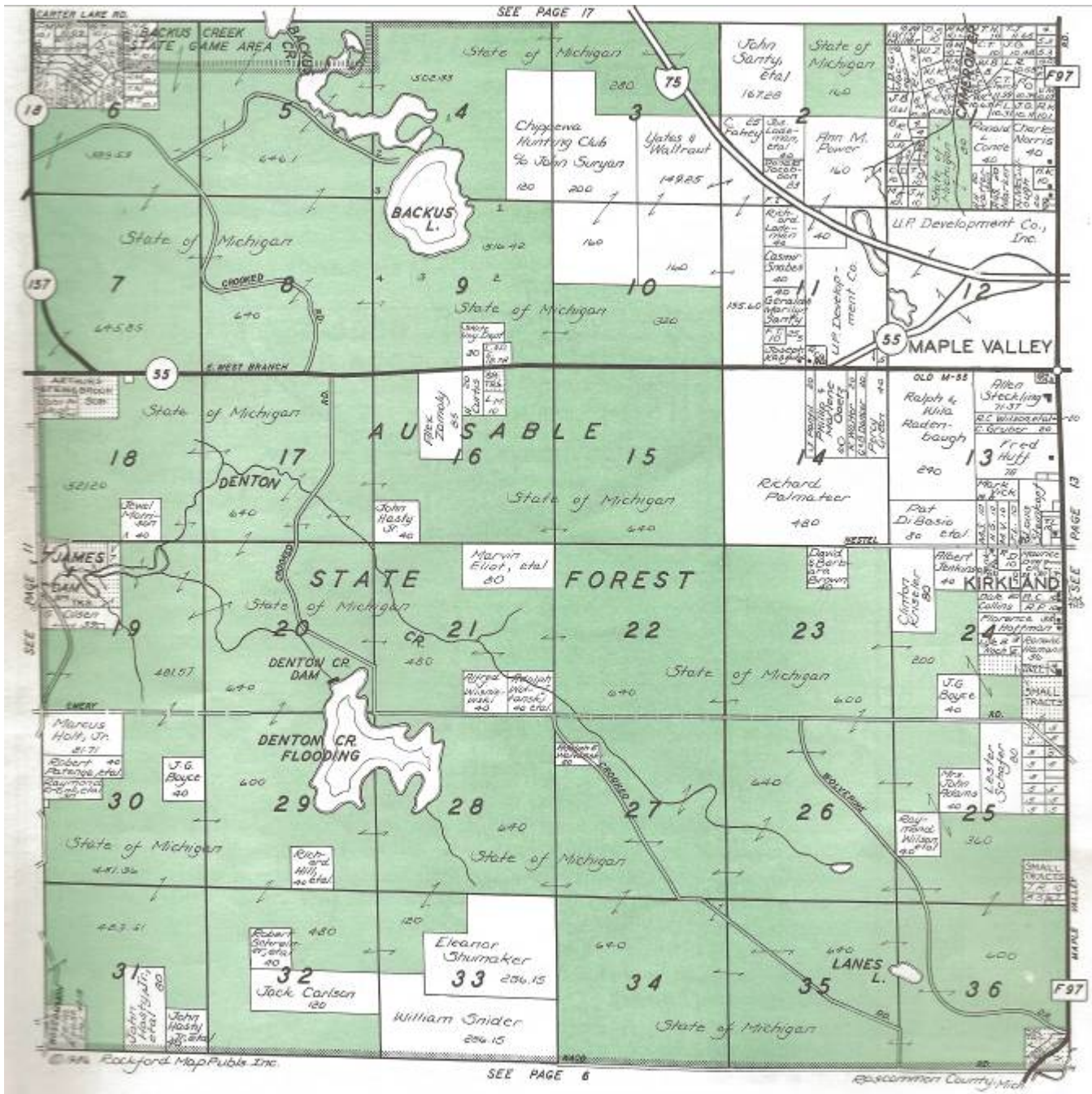
Land Cover Class

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Low-Intensity Residential |  Evergreen Forest |
|  High-Intensity Residential |  Mixed Forest |
|  Commercial/Industrial/Transportation |  Open Water |
|  Agriculture |  Great Lakes |
|  Grassland/Herbaceous |  Woody Wetlands |
|  Shrubland |  Emergent Wetlands |
|  Deciduous Forest |  Bare Ground |



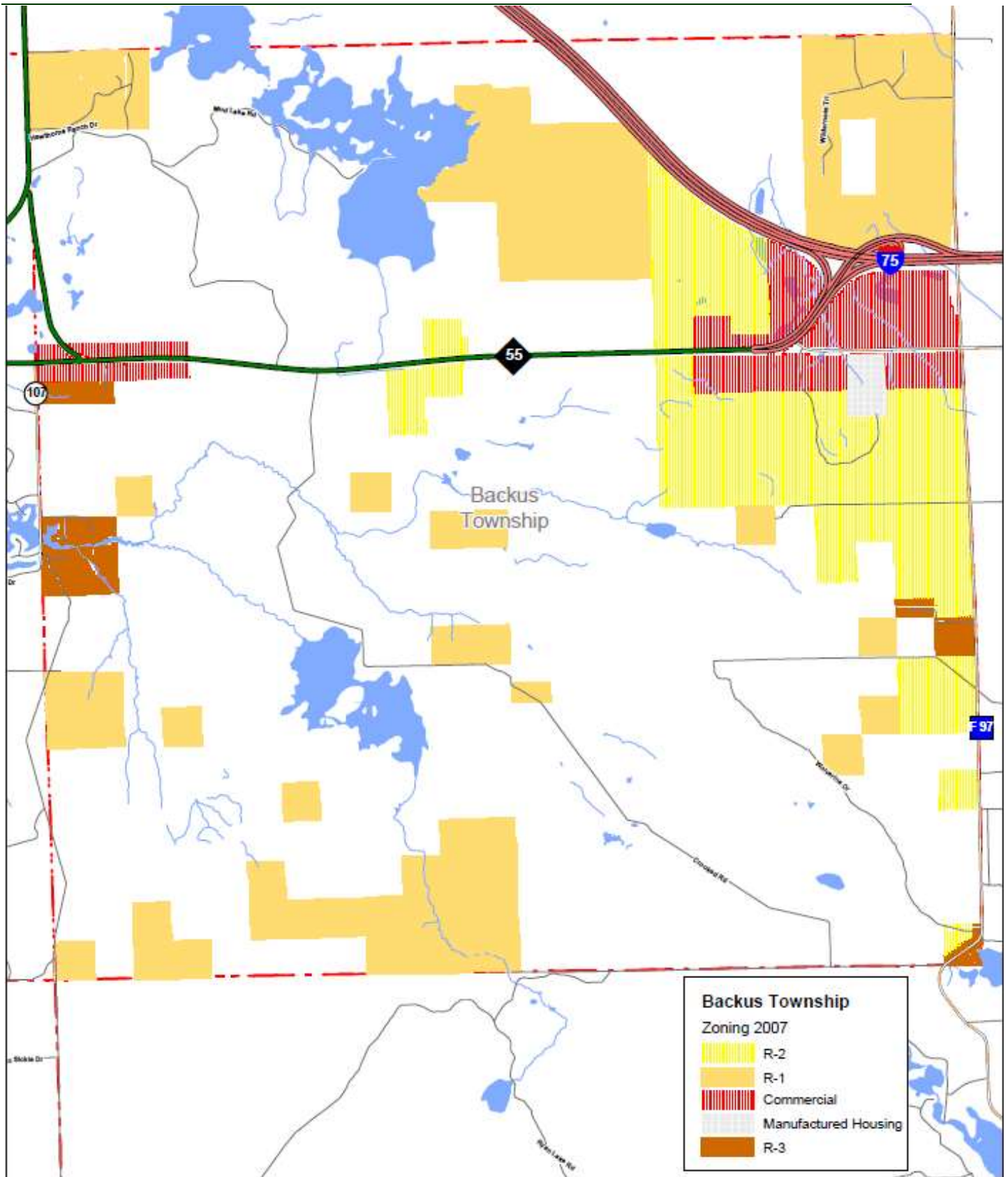
Backus Township 2008 Plat Map

Source: County of Roscommon



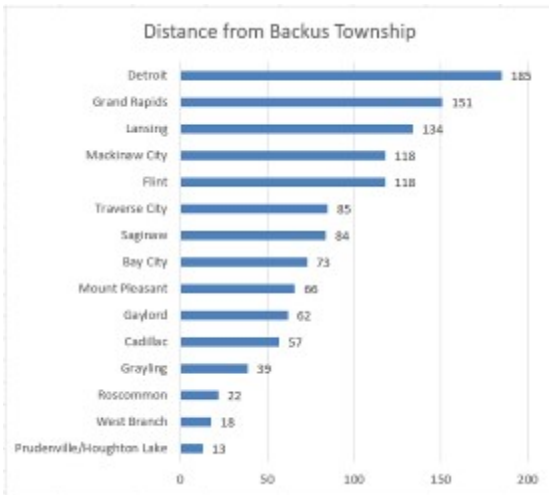
Backus Township 1986 Plat Map

Source: Rockford Map Publishers, Inc.



D. Transportation, Public Facilities, and Services

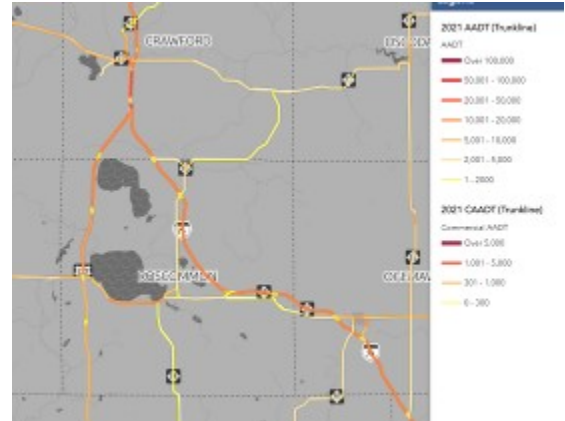
Backus Township has two state highways that service the township. Highway M-55 crosses the northern portion of the township and Interstate I-75, a limited access highway crosses the northeast corner. Exit 227 for I-75 connects M-55 with I-75 and is located at the northeast part of the township. The Township lies within a one-hour drive of several small communities including St. Helen, Prudenville, West Branch and Gladwin. Since Interstate I-75 is nearby township residents can drive to Cadillac, Grayling, Saginaw, Midland, Bay City and even Flint allowing them to be within the modern commuter’s range.



Source: Google Maps

Nearby access to Interstate I-75 and US-127 also provides Backus Township residents with access to the recreational and vacation opportunities throughout northern Michigan and elsewhere in the United States and Canada. The state and federal road system provides access for farmers, commercial and industrial, producers to market their products

efficiently throughout the region. The Roscommon County Road Commission is responsible for maintaining roads with funds provided by state gasoline taxes.



2022 MDOT Average Daily Traffic Map

Backus Township Roads	
Primary Roads	5.49 miles
Local Roads	23.94 miles
Source: Roscommon Co. Road Commission	



Rail transportation for freight in Roscommon County is provided through the Lake State Railway, formerly the Detroit & Mackinaw Rail Road. The Roscommon Transit Authority provides intra-county bus services for the county residents.

The Midland-Bay City-Saginaw International Airport (MBS) is just over an hour away from Lake Township. The MBS International Airport is the closest commercial airport capable of handling large jets, while the Alpena Regional offers daily flights to Detroit and is a Northwest Airlines airliner. Bishop International Airport in Flint is over two hours away but many residents utilize this airport.



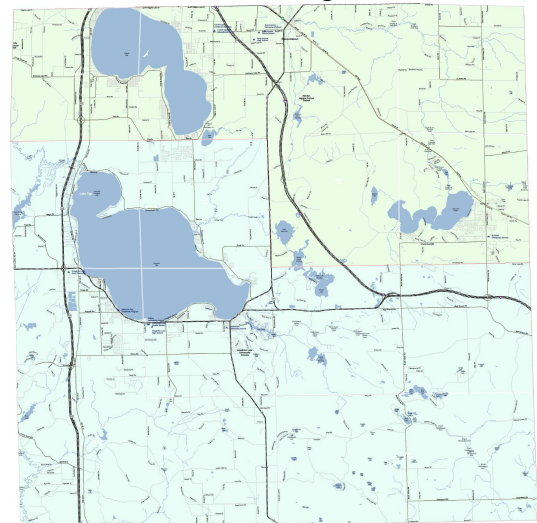
Utility services in the county are provided by Consumers Energy (electric service) DTE Energy (gas service) and AT&T (phone service). High-speed wireless Internet services are provided to portions of the township by M-33 Access and Charter Communications.

Police protection is provided by the Roscommon County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police.

Backus Township provides general services to the citizens in their community such as assessing, zoning and planning, and elections. These services are funded through local property taxes.

Primary and secondary education is provided by the COOR Intermediate School District (ISD). Children in Backus Township go to Houghton Lake Community Schools. Higher education is available to the township through Kirtland Community College, Lake Superior State College, Delta College in Bay City, Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw and Mid-Michigan Community College in Harrison as well as other state universities such as MSU, U of M and CMU and many private colleges and universities located throughout the state.

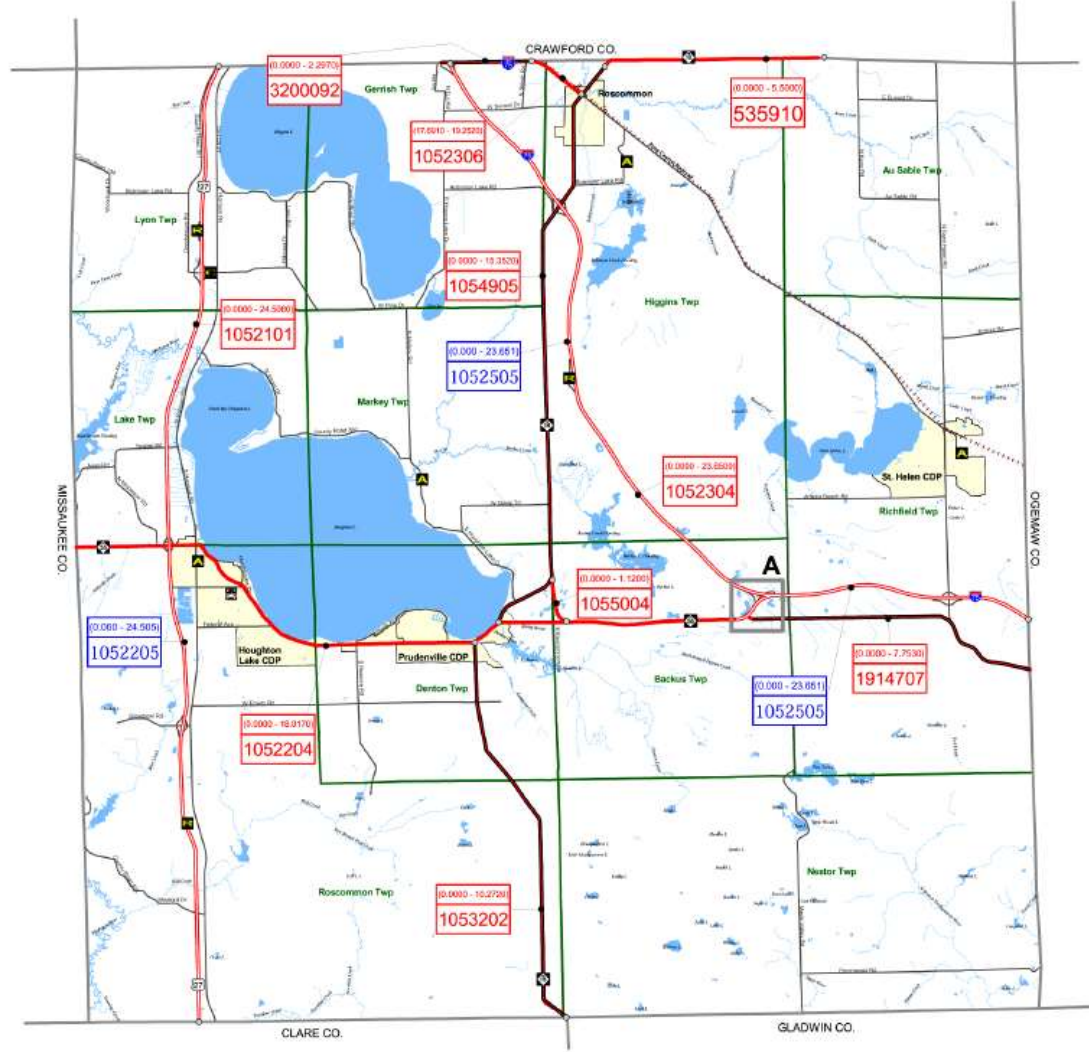
Backus Township provides these several services to the citizens in their community by means of local taxes. Denton Township Fire Department offers Fire Protection within Backus Township.



In addition to the Fire Department, Emergency medical services are also provided through local funding. Prudenville Emergency Medical is responsible for medical emergencies within Backus Township. Several hospitals are within 30 minutes of Backus Township. MidMichigan Medical Center in Gladwin, Mercy Hospital Grayling located in Grayling and the West Branch Regional Medical Center, located in West Branch, both offer full medical services.

Main Page
Legend

ROSCOMMON COUNTY PHYSICAL REFERENCE NUMBER MAP

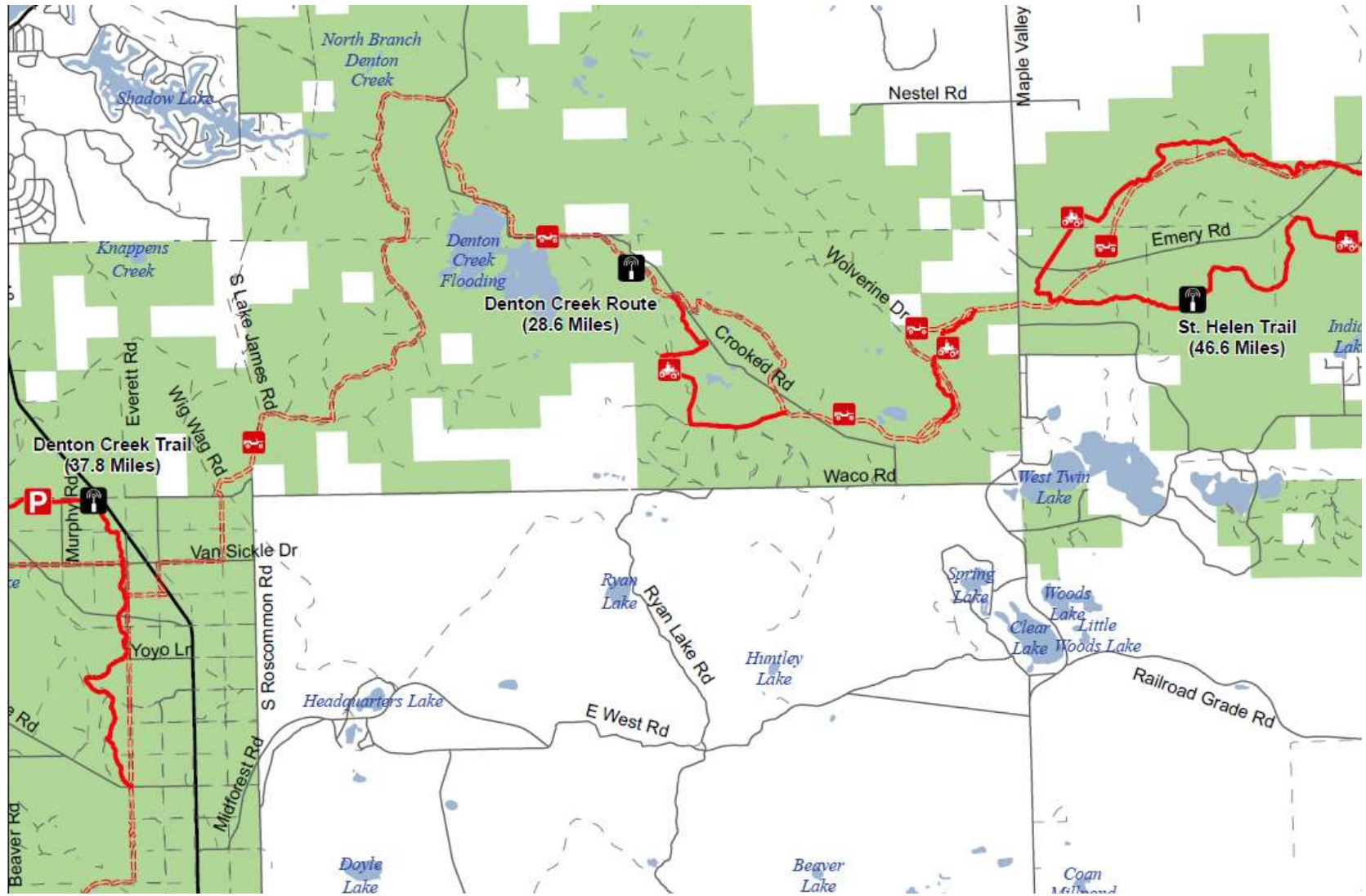


Michigan Geographic Framework
Version 1

ROSCOMMON COUNTY - 72

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROSCOMMON COUNTY - 72



Denton Creek Trail Map State of Michigan ORV Trail

E. Economic Profile of Roscommon County

Roscommon County is predominately a rural and forested community. It is about 60 - 90 minutes north of the industrial tri-city region of Midland, Bay City and Saginaw. The economic base of the county includes recreation, agriculture, manufacturing and government employment.

The population of the county is 25,469, increasing at least by 20% per decade since 1970. The county has a work force of about 9,870 persons that typically commute over 45 miles to work. Unemployment in the county is relatively high (14.9% 2010 unemployment rate) when compared to both state and national rates. August 2011 unemployment rate dropped to 12.6%.

Seventy-nine percent of Roscommon County's residents over 25 years of age have high school diplomas with only a little more than ten percent with bachelor's degrees. Per capita personal income for 2009 in Backus Township is \$43,250, in Roscommon County is \$34,276 versus \$48,700 per person for the State of Michigan and the United States is \$51,425.

Retail Trade is among Roscommon County's largest economic sectors, generating more than \$38 million versus \$24 million for construction (2005). The largest economic sector though is the Government, producing annually

\$72,192,000 (2005). The services and retail trades employ almost as many people as all the other sectors combined. Many of the jobs in the county are minimum wage with those in the manufacturing sector offering the best wages. The four largest employers in the county are the Wal-mart, Lear Corp., Kirtland Community College, and ROOC, Inc.

Annual Unemployment Rates

	2010	2015	2020
Roscommon Co.	14.9%	9.1%	12.7%
Ogemaw Co.	13.0%	8.0%	11.3%
Gladwin Co.	15.8%	7.4%	10.1%
Michigan	12.5%	5.4%	10.0%

The county has two public school districts and four colleges within close proximity: Kirtland Community College in Roscommon County; Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw County; Delta Community College in Bay County; and Mid Michigan Community College in Clare County.

Major transportation routes cross Roscommon County: Interstate I-75 transects the northeastern portion with US-127 splitting the county in half running north and south through the county. There are four truck companies that deal in the county. Greyhound in Bay City provides bus passenger service. The Lake State Railroad hauls freight in the county. Air travel and freight can go through the MBS International Airport. The largest airlines serving this airport is Northwest and United Airlines.

Property Values			
	2005	2010	% Change 2005/2010
Backus Township			
Real	16,534,000	18,718,700	13%
Personal	510,259	873,940	71%
Roscommon County			
Real	1,674,019,519	1,648,919,737	-2%
Personal	40,396,993	40,981,220	1%
Ogemaw County			
Real	1,023,232,944	1,002,277,113	-2%
Personal	35,564,421	57,888,184	63%
Gladwin County			
Real	1,119,226,839	1,122,171,649	0%
Personal	34,559,504	35,618,566	3%



M-55 at the east side of the township

F. Demographic Trends

The Backus Township population from 2000 to 2010 decreased from 350 to 330 a 6% decrease. This is the equivalent of 9.2 persons per square mile. Over this ten-year period, the county population has decreased 4%, the state has decreased 1%, while the United States population has increased 10%.

Backus Township residents, similar to most of the region, are almost all white (95.2%) and are almost equally divided between the sexes (166 male, 164 female). Most residents are homeowners (85.8%) where the average household size is 2.18 persons. The median age in the township is 49.5 years, with 26.1% of the population aged over 65 years of age.

The average commuting time for township residents is about 47 minutes as compared to 25 minutes for the average commuter time for all U.S. residents. This supports the earlier indication that Backus Township residents travel to local cities such as West Branch, Houghton Lake, Prudenville, Gladwin and as far away as Gaylord and Cadillac for work.

Most of the recent growth in the county has occurred around Higgins and Houghton Lakes which have Michigan's highest concentration of vacation / seasonal and part-time dwellings. The summer population of the township is estimated to at least double as many of the Backus Township's housing units are seasonal or recreational.

Population Projections					
	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Backus Township	365	370	378	385	390
Roscommon County	24,400	24,600	25,000	25,300	25,600
Michigan	9,997,200	10,139,500	10,296,700	10,433,100	10,549,600

Source: East MI Council of Governments

Population Trends			
	2000	2010	% Change
Backus Township	350	330	-6%
Nester Township	263	295	12%
Richfield Township	4,139	3,731	-10%
Denton Township	5,817	5,557	-4%
Roscommon Township	4,249	4,411	4%
Higgins Township	2061	1932	-6%
Markey Township	2424	2360	-3%
Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	-1%

Source: U.S. Census

SECTION THREE

SECTION THREE

PLAN OF ACTION

A. Analysis & Discussion of Findings

Backus Township is a northern Michigan general law township that is blessed with exceptional geography and natural resources. Small lakes and creeks exist throughout the township providing rich resources for enjoyment and outdoor recreation for residents, full and part-time, and for visitors. Almost 90% of the township is forested. Much of this land is state forest but most of the rest is held privately as large parcels for sport and recreational use.

As of 2020 the township is scarcely populated with only about 300 people and 294 registered voters. This equals only about one person per four square miles. This population is fairly elderly with many retirees. Seasonal homes predominate over homesteads with many residents commuting to warmer climates during the winter months. There are currently no commercial enterprises and no multi-family buildings. There are no major roads in the township except I-75, a major expressway in the northeast quadrant of the township, and M-55 which crosses the township east to west. M-18 skirts the northwest boundary of the township.

There are only small pockets of settlements throughout the township, limited development along F-97 and in the vicinity of the M-55/I-75 intersection. Most of those in the labor

force commute to nearby towns for work. The people of Backus Township rely on these other communities for most of their staples as well.

State of Michigan and clubs, along with the other large landholders, hold almost all the township territory. There is high unemployment in the area. The most active economic sectors are Retail and Services (low wage employers) and Government, the largest employer in the county and the surrounding area.

The township will continue to depend upon Roscommon County for police, social, and other services, and upon the Roscommon County Road Commission for the maintenance and repair of the township's roads.

Backus Township is a quiet, rural community that hopes to stay so. This Master Plan for land use sets out the township's design to retain the current character of the township. It projects well-maintained roads for commuting and shopping needs combined with good communication services and relatively near air transportation for an environment for both peaceful living and where local, small home enterprises can prosper in this rural setting. The plan also sees a great potential for the development of the area surrounding the junction of I-75 and M-55. The roads at this intersection carry tremendous levels of traffic that should be the basis of substantial economic improvements and growth in the areas of recreational enterprises and other commercial opportunities.

B. Goals and Determinations

Given the state of Backus Township and the effects of both local and outside forces, the Planning Commission puts forth the following goals for its future:

- Retain the Township’s rural, outdoor recreation character while providing opportunities for cottage industries and home businesses;
- Retain the high quality of the Township’s natural resources, the forests, lakes and streams;
- Continue to provide needed services and facilities for township residents and visitors;
- Develop and implement a recreation plan for the benefit of residents and visitors;
- Promote the continued development of high-quality health care in and for the region;

C. Policies, Strategies, and Actions

The planning commission proposes the following policies, strategies, and actions.

Retain the Township’s rural character.

- Use a zoning ordinance that sets out the types of land uses and development, e.g. forested versus residential areas, that will foster the maintenance of these Township characteristics;
- Ensure that high-intensity uses are located properly;
- Allow and encourage home-based businesses compatible with the rural community.

Retain the high quality of the Township’s natural resources.

- Ensure that proper setbacks, buffers, and restorations are a part of project site plan reviews;
- Ensure greenways and links between natural areas;
- Keep any high-density and intensity uses away from valuable natural resource areas.

Continue to provide needed services and facilities for Township residents, part-time residents, and visitors.

- The Planning Commission and Township Board shall continue to monitor the needs of the Township and to plan to meet future expectations;
- Work with Roscommon County Agencies to promote township needs, e.g. job creation in regional cities and towns, modern communication systems, good roads, and other services. See page 3-5
- The Backus Township Planning Commission and Township Board should continue to examine the need for road improvements and to cooperate with the Roscommon County Road Commission to maintain and improve the township road system.

Develop and implement a recreation plan for the benefit of residents and visitors.

- Prepare a recreation plan that may qualify the township for grants to construct improvements in existing parks and to study the possibility of additional park projects.
- Apply for grants to supplement township funds.
- Construct improvements.

Promote the continued development of high-quality health care in and for the region.

- The health care industry is a major regional employer and an important component of a healthy and aging community. The Township should work with the local health providers to ensure that it is fostering the continued expansion of this sector.

Develop the I-75/M-55 intersection area.

- Determine the developable lands in the vicinity of the interchange;
- Review the Township Zoning Ordinance and rewrite as necessary to encourage development and re-development of the intersection area then ensure properties are zoned appropriately;
- Promote the area for development through local real estate agents, the Roscommon County Economic Development Corporation and other suitable economic fostering entities.

D. Future Land Use

Based upon the goals of this plan, the lands of Backus Township are divided into future land use districts. Each district has a primary intent and purpose, as the names suggest, yet the uses and landscape of the districts may overlap and vary regardless of the boundaries set forth. The districts are:

- Forest/Conservation,
- Rural Residential,
- Low Density Residential,
- Medium Density Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Private Recreational Facilities

The **Forest/Conservation District** contains state forest areas including

riparian wetlands and other lowlands. The district covers much of the Township. The primary land cover and uses of this district are intended to be forests, recreation and tourist development. Of particular concern in this district are forest health and the maintenance and quality of the lakes and rivers.

The **Rural Residential District** has most of the agricultural lands within the Township. The intent of the district is to allow farming, sportsmen's clubs, and large lot, estate type of residential housing and to uses compatible with these purposes. These other uses include agricultural and other rural businesses with parcels of five acres or larger. Multi-family developments would be allowed as a special use to provide for possible retirement housing.

The **Low Density Residential District** is established primarily for single-family residential purposes as historically practiced. Some rural businesses may be allowed in the district by special use permits. Lots in this district should be a minimum of two acres.

The **Medium Density Residential District** allows for small lot residential dwellings in areas where older subdivisions were created in the past. Single family residences and associated uses are allowed on a minimum of 12,000 square feet lots. Where appropriate, rural businesses, public and semi-public uses might be allowed by special use permit.

Future commercial uses are provided for in the **Commercial Districts**. There is a small commercial district on the south side of M-55 at the west end of the

township. The largest commercial area though is currently located at the crossroads of M-55 and I-75. The intent of the Township is to revise this district to **Public/Private Recreational Facility District** (PPRF). The township would

like to encourage robust development of recreational facilities and activities in this area. Most uses within this district would be conditional uses and parcel sizes would vary by the needs of each use.



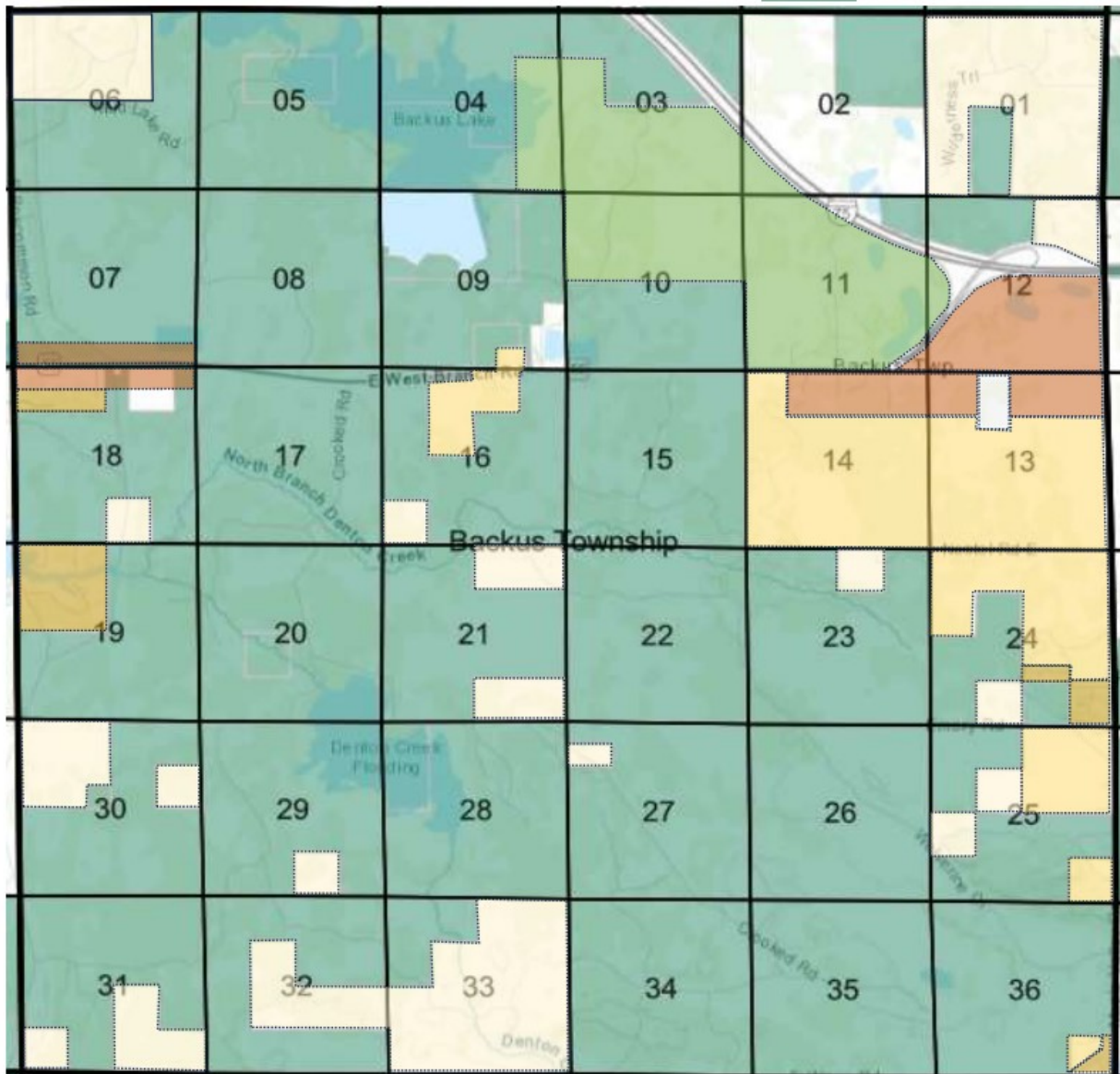
I-75 / M-55 Interchange

OBJECTIVE Utilize the county’s Hazard Mitigation Plan to protect the residents, visitors, and property within the County			
Strategy	Time Frame	Potential Partners	Potential Resources/ Funding
Strategy 1 Identify projects from the Hazard Mitigation Plan that can be initiated to mitigate damages from local hazards that negatively impact the County	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governments • Roscommon County Emergency Management • EMCOG • FEMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA • State of Michigan
Strategy 2 Seek funds to complete projects identified above	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governments • Roscommon County Emergency Management • EMCOG • FEMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA • State of Michigan

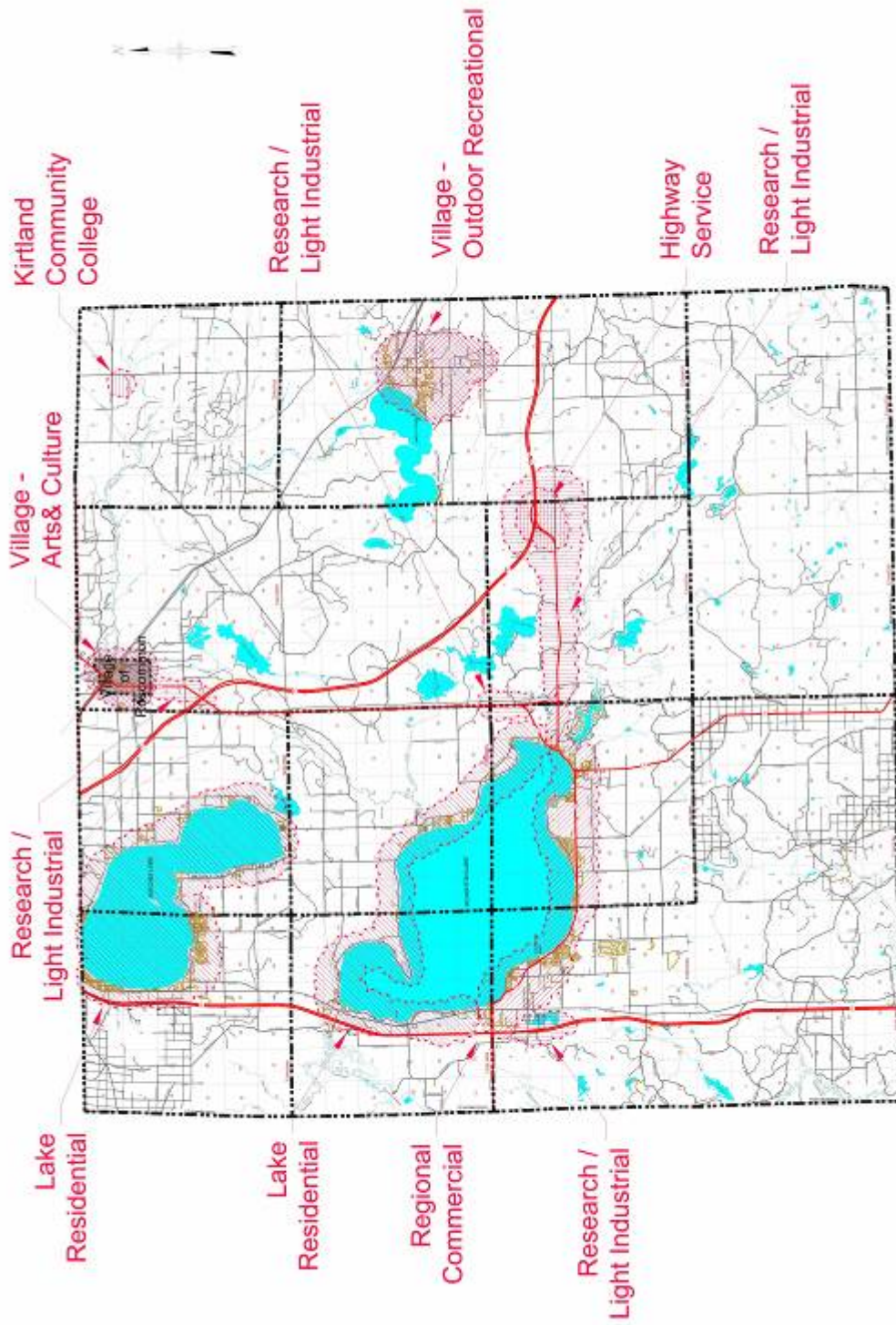


BACKUS TOWNSHIP
 FUTURE LAND USE MAP
 2023 MASTER PLAN REVIEW

R-1	PPRF
R-2	Commercial
R-3	Manufactured Housing
	State Land



Future Land Use Map



All other land areas are designated
Forest Recreational / Residential



Backus Township

3888 S. Maple Valley Rd.
Saint Helen, Michigan 48656
Phone: 989-389-3271

Roscommon County Master Plan RESOLUTION OF THE BACKUS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE MASTER PLAN FOR BACKUS TOWNSHIP

- Whereas, the Backus Township Planning Commission has made inquiries, investigations, assembled and analyzed all the data and information regarding the geography, population and resources of the Township; and
- Whereas, the Backus Township Planning Commission has formulated a plan determining the most advantageous designation of lands for future uses of various sections of Backus Township; and
- Whereas, the Backus Township Planning Commission has provided a draft of the amended Master Plan for review to the surrounding townships, Roscommon County, and other interested parties and has reviewed and incorporated all appropriate information in the amended Master Plan.
- Now, Therefore, the Backus Township Planning Commission hereby resolves to adopt this new Master Plan for land use in Backus Township,

YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT
Edana Doll	—	Lonnie Olson
Ed Zettel	—	Don Nagy
Tina Seegraves	—	

I, Ed Zettel, Vice-Chairman of the Backus Township Planning Commission, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of the resolution adopted by the Backus Township Planning Commission at its meeting thereof held December 21, 2023.

Signature: Ed Zettel
Dated: 12-21-23

Roscommon County Master Plan

RESOLUTION OF THE BACKUS TOWNSHIP TO APPROVE A NEW MASTER PLAN FOR BACKUS TOWNSHIP

- Whereas, The Backus Township Planning Commission has made inquiries, investigations, assembled and analyzed all the data and information regarding the geography, population and resources of the Township; and
- Whereas, The Backus Township Planning Commission has formulated a plan determining the most advantageous designation of lands for future uses of the various sections of Backus Township; and
- Whereas, The Backus Township Planning Commission has provided a draft of the amended Master Plan for review to the surrounding townships, Roscommon County, and other interested parties and has reviewed and incorporated all appropriate information in the amended Master Plan.
- Whereas, the Backus Township Board has reviewed the draft of the Backus Township Amended Master Plan and any and all comments from residents and property owners of Backus Township and has received the commendation and recommendation of the new Master Plan from the Backus Township Planning Commission.

Now, Therefore, the Backus Township Board hereby resolves to adopt this amended Master Plan for land use in Backus Township, Roscommon County, Michigan.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: *Eldona Doll, Darlene Rase, Louise Nagy, Mike Ojechowski, Roy Rase*

NAYS: *None*

ABSENT: *None*

I, Louise Nagy, Clerk of the Backus Township Board, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of the resolution adopted by the Backus Township Board at its meeting thereof, held January 2, 2024.

Signature: *Louise M. Nagy*

Dated: *January 2, 2024*