



# Wilson Township Master Plan 2013

Prepared by the Wilson Township Planning Commission

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## INTRODUCTION

### Regional Setting and History

Wilson Township is located in the northwest portion of Lower Peninsula of Michigan in Charlevoix County, (**Figure 1.1**). The Township is approximately 35 square miles and the 2010 census reported Wilson Township had a population of 1,964 persons. Land use in the Township consists primarily of woodlands and rural residential dwellings with some agricultural operations. A small number of commercial and industrial uses are located along the M-75 corridor in the northeast corner of the Township. Wilson Township is bracketed by the Cities of Boyne City to the north and East Jordan to the southwest and shares borders with the Townships of South Arm, Eveline and Boyne Valley in Charlevoix County and with Jordan Township which is in Antrim County (**Figure 1.2**).

Wilson Township was developed when Charlevoix County first became an official County. Shortly after the Treaty of 1836 in which Michigan became a State in 1837, Charlevoix County was part of the County of Michilimackinac and was one of 21 unorganized Counties in Michigan. In 1840, by an act of Legislature, Charlevoix County was named the County of Keskona. In 1843, the County was renamed to Charlevoix in honor of earlier French discoverers.

The County of Charlevoix was formally organized in 1860 and approved in 1868. Wilson Township is one of the original Townships located in Charlevoix County.

Zachariah Morgan is known as the first official recorded settler in Wilson Township in 1870, at which time he homesteaded land in Section 2 of the Township. He timbered for railroad ties for the GR&I Railroad and provided cordwood to others. Wilson Township was accessible by railroads at two points within the Township. The railroads crossed the township in the north and south region of the township. Wilson Township developed and became populated as a settlement site through the lumbering and farming era. Soil conditions were favorable for producing some crops or raising livestock. As the shoreline communities of East Jordan and Boyne City developed,

**Figure 1.1 Wilson Township Vicinity Map**

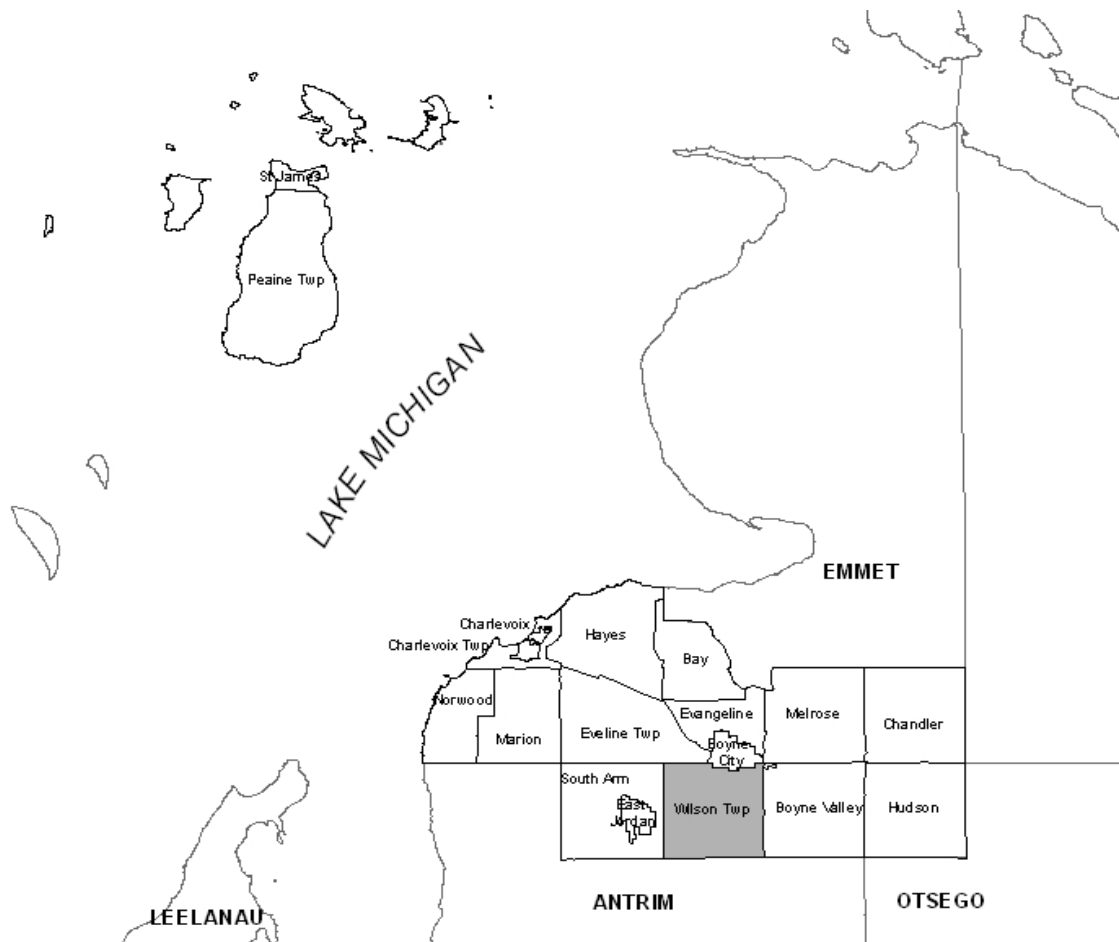


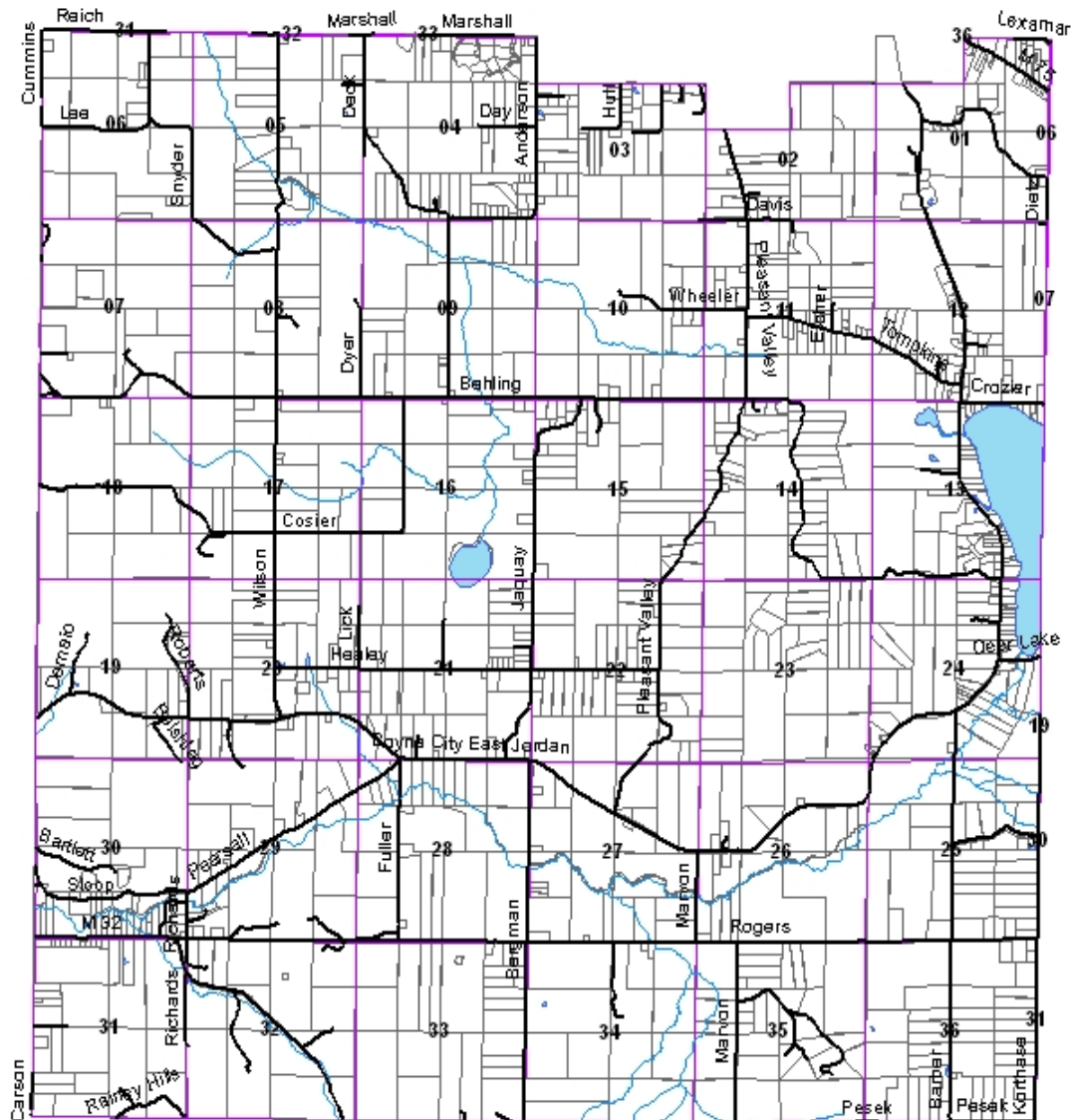
homesteaders and farmers spread throughout the surrounding area. As the Township was conveniently located near Lake Charlevoix, which was used as a primary transit route, travel routes through Wilson Township were developed. Many of the existing main arteries in the Township as shown in **Figure 1.3** were once used as routes for goods and products that were being transferred either to a waterway or nearby railroad.

The Township has always had a relatively small population base. Being located between two developing cities Wilson Township has maintained a rural character, offering a quieter lifestyle for people not wishing to live in a city.

With Northern Michigan's growing population and changing lifestyle preferences, additional residential development is beginning to push out into the Township.

**Figure 1.2 Wilson Township Location Map**



**Figure 1.3 Wilson Township Travel Routes**

### Plan Overview

The Master Plan of Wilson Township is designed to recognize and integrate new or changing development into the existing development pattern of the Township and adjacent areas. The plan is based on recent inventories of land use, the type and character of recent developments and the anticipated future growth and development in the Township and surrounding areas. Township planners and residents have consistently stated the desired goals for the Township of maintaining its rural woodland and agricultural character and to have a low density residential development in natural and pastoral settings. The Master Plan is intended to maintain and improve the desired character of the Township by providing a plan that defines the preferred direction and elements of future growth and development.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### Population

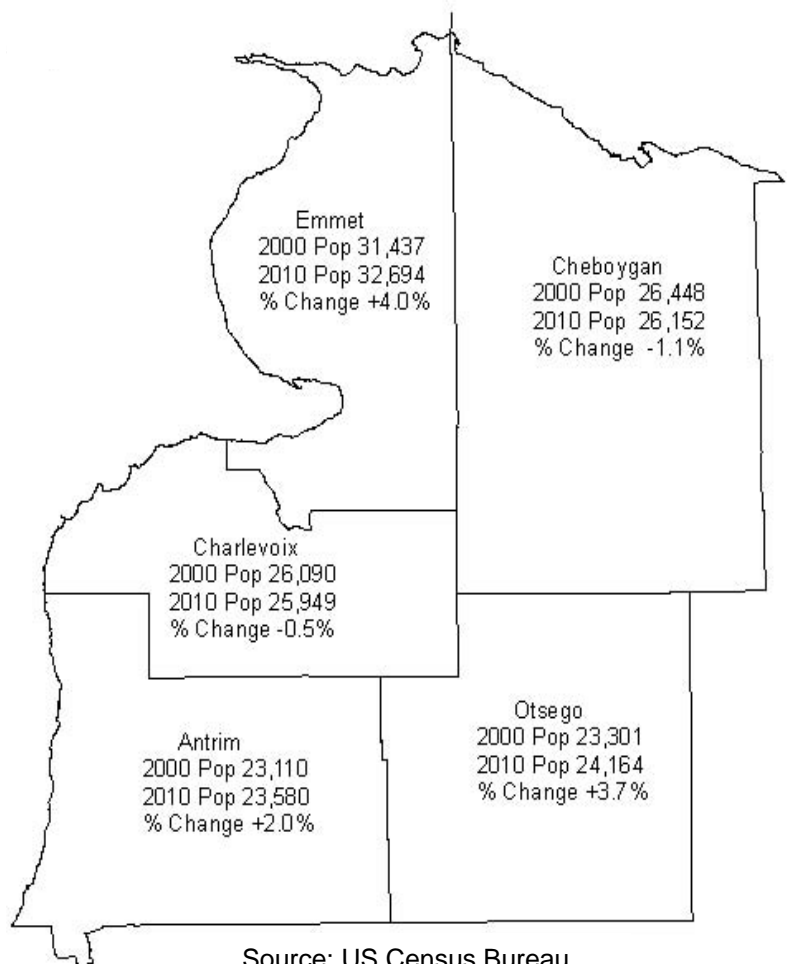
The 2010 Census showed that Charlevoix County had a population of 25,949, which was a 0.5% reduction from the 2000 count of 26,090. The decrease in population reversed a trend of strong population growth that took place over the previous four decades. From 1960 to 2000 the County population almost doubled from 13,421 to 26,090 persons. Of the 12,669 persons that were added over the last 40 years, the largest increase was from 1990 to 2000 when the County population increased by 4,622 persons, a population increase of 21 percent.

While 3 of the 4 adjacent counties did see population increases over the past decade, the increases were modest as compared the growth trends that were experienced previously. As shown by **Figure 2.1**, of the three adjacent Counties that had population increase Emmet County had the largest population increase of 4% adding 1,257 persons.

The low growth and population loss in the surrounding area is most likely attributable to out migration caused by the economic downturn experienced by the County, State and Nation over the last decade.

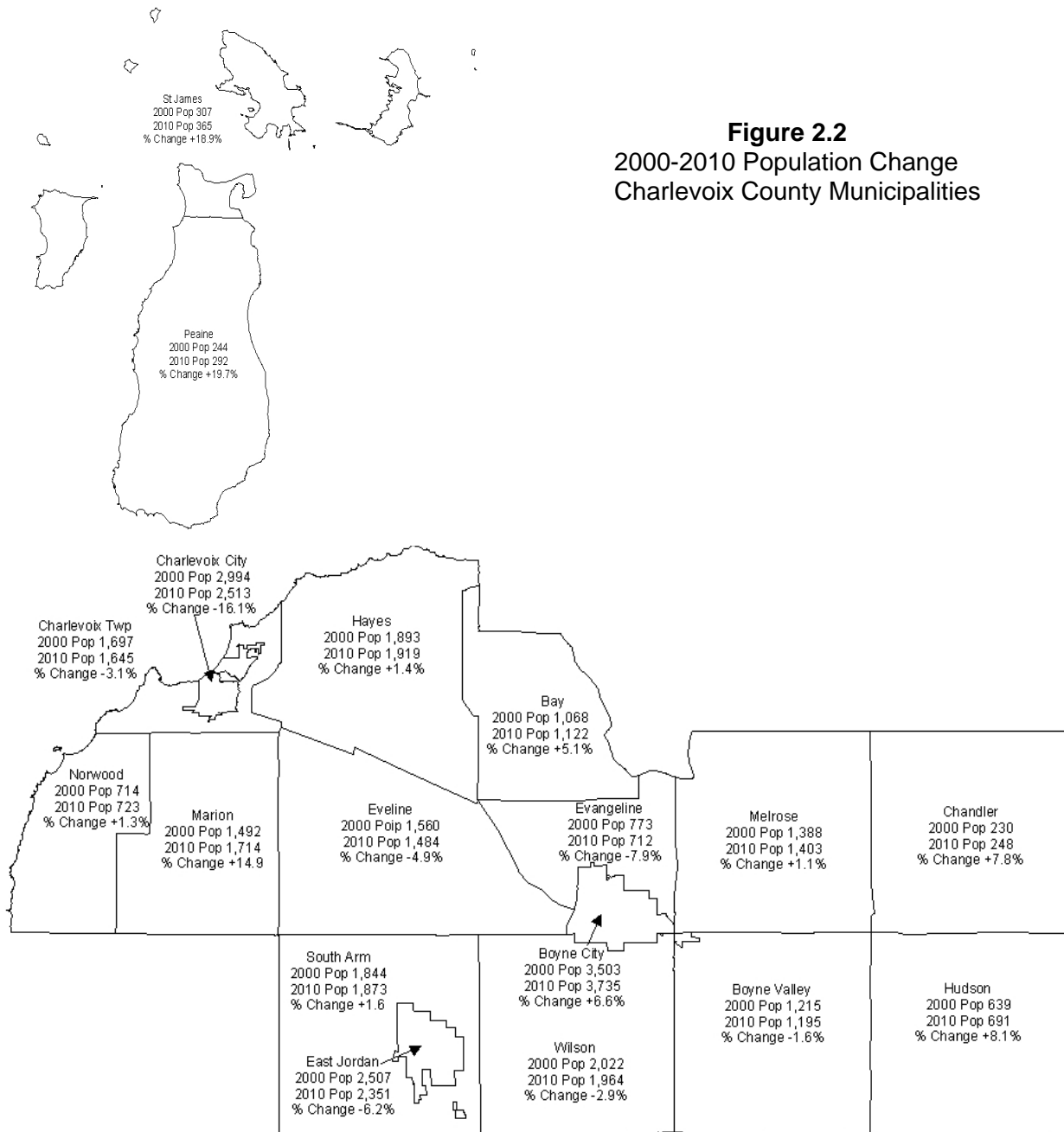
According to the estimated population changes prepared by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget, Charlevoix County had increases in population from 2000 to 2003, and then the trend quickly reversed beginning in 2004. Over the past decade the birth rates and death rates for the County have remained fairly consistent. Over the past 10 years the population of the county had a natural increase (births>deaths) each year that averaged approximately +44 persons per year. During this same period the net migration for the county averaged -58 persons per year for an average net loss of population of 14 persons per year. Beginning in 2004 is when Charlevoix County began experiencing the significant out migration. From 2003 to 2004 the net migration rate dropped from the in- migration of a 90 persons in 2003 to the out-migration of a 168 persons in 2004. While there was an in-migration in 2006 of 57 persons, the rest of the decade had significant out-migration with the largest out-migration occurring in 2008 and 2009 with a net out-migration of 253 and 227 persons respectively.

**Figure 2.1**



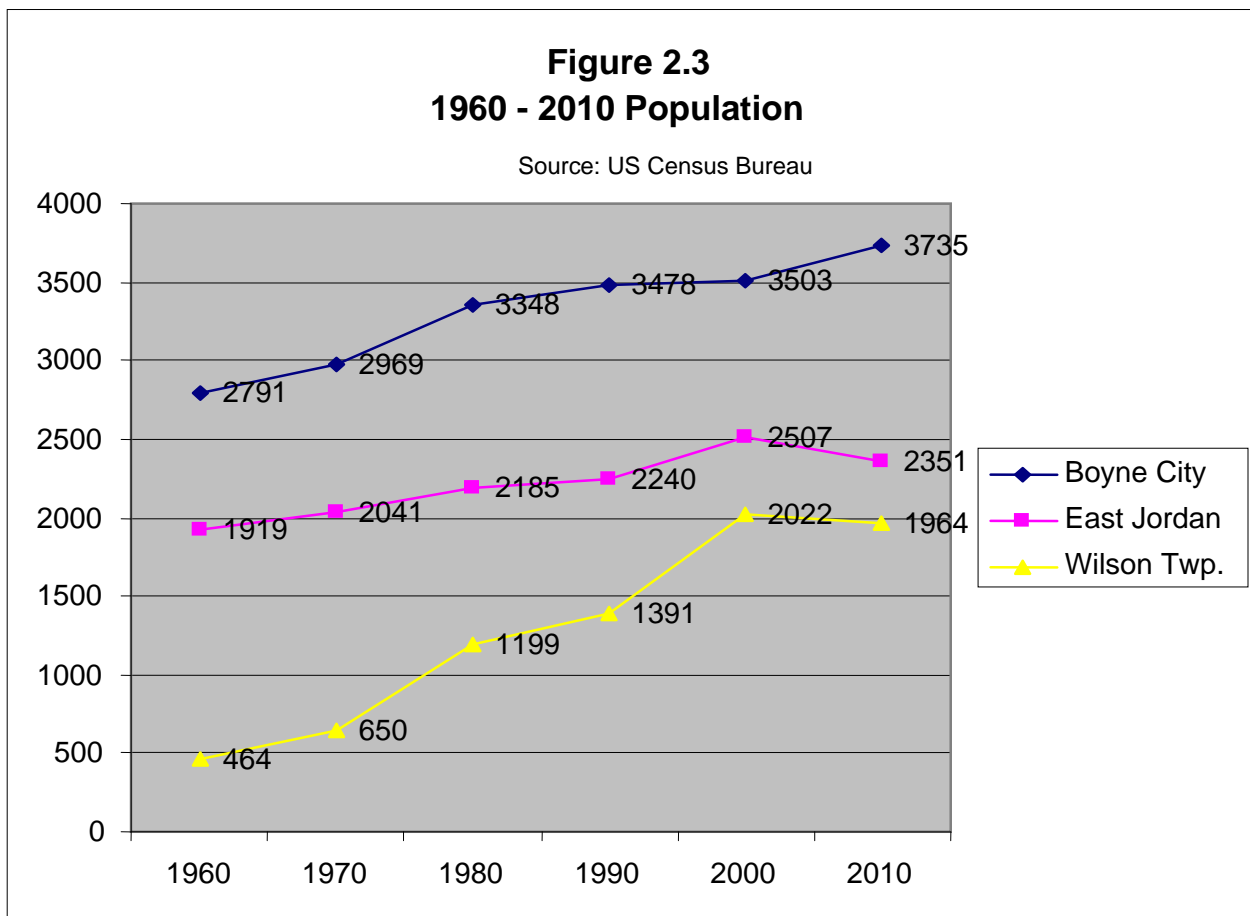
Source: US Census Bureau

The 2010 census showed that over the past decade the population in Wilson Township decreased by 2.9 percent from 2,022 persons to 1,964 persons. This was a fairly dramatic change as compared to the previous decade when the Township experienced a 45% increase in population. **Figure 2.2** shows population changes in Wilson Township and the surrounding municipalities since the last census.



Source: US Census Bureau

While the Township population did decrease by 2.9% (58 persons) over the past decade, the Township remains as the most populous township in the county and 4<sup>th</sup> largest municipality behind the Cities of Boyne City, Charlevoix and East Jordan respectively. Prior to the population decline in 2010, the Township grew at a much faster rate than the nearby cities of East Jordan and Boyne City from 1960 until 2000 and significantly narrowed the gap in total population numbers. As illustrated by **Figure 2.3**, over the past 50 years the Township population increased by over 320



percent compared to an increase of 26 percent in City Boyne City and a 23 percent increase in the City of East Jordan over the same time period.

### Age Distribution

A breakdown of the Township's population by age grouping shows that the decline in population can be directly attributed to the out-migration of young people. Over the last decade the number of people under the age of 44 declined by 22% (297 persons). Conversely, over the same period, those 45 and older increased by 36% (239 persons). While the decrease in population is a result of younger people leaving, the number of people over 44 continued to increase. From 1990 to 2000 the 44 and older age group increased by 67% (266 persons). The 2010 census shows that 46.1 percent of Wilson Township's population was 45 years old or older, a 12.5 percent increase since 2000 (**Table 2.1**). The largest increase in age group was by those 45-64 which grew by 8.7 percent followed by those 65 and older which grew by 3.8 percent. Not surprisingly, given this shift

in population age, the median age in the township significantly increased from 35.5 to 42.3 years old.

**Table 2.1**  
**Population By Age 2000 – 2010 for Wilson Township**

Age	#	2000	%	#	2010	%
Under 5	166		8.2%	101		5.1%
5-17	428		21.2%	400		20.4%
18-24	160		7.9%	106		5.4%
25-44	602		29.8%	452		23.0%
45-64	489		24.9%	659		33.6%
65+	177		8.7%	246		12.5%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census						

## Population Estimates and Projections

Each year, the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP) utilizes current data on births, deaths, and migration to calculate population change since the most recent decennial census and produce a time series of estimates of population. Estimated population for Charlevoix County from 2010 to 2011 predicts a modest increase in the County population from 25,949 to 25,998.

While population estimates try to forecast changes in population on an annual basis projections take a longer view and try to anticipate trends and forecast changes in population that will occur over a longer period. Population projections for the State of Michigan prepared by the Michigan Department of Technology and Budget forecast that the State population will rebound slowly over the next 20 years from the 2010 decrease of population to 9,883,640 to 10,683,432 in 2020 to 10,694,172 in 2030.

When making estimates or projections it is impossible to know with certainty what impact a wide variety of variables will have, and a number of assumptions need to be made and projections and estimates should be viewed keeping those assumptions in mind. These official population estimates are widely used for planning purposes, and they can serve as a basis for distributing federal, state, and non-governmental funds. They also provide valuable information about demographic changes that have occurred in different areas of each state.

## Seasonal Population

Obtaining accurate numbers of seasonal residents and tourists is difficult. Because the U.S. Census is conducted each decade in April, the numbers only reflect those persons who are primarily year round residents.

In 2010 the Census showed that almost 30% percent of the housing units in the county were seasonal units and 10% percent of the units in Wilson Township were seasonal. This was a 2% increase in seasonal units for the County and Township since the last census.

A rough estimate of the number of seasonal residents can be calculated by multiplying the number of seasonal housing units by the average number of persons per household. Using this method a seasonal population increase of 11,858 persons is estimated for Charlevoix County and for Wilson Township an additional 205 persons is estimated. This figure does not include those seasonal visitors or tourists staying in area motels, campgrounds or family homes.

## Race and Ethnic Composition

Information found in **Table 2.2** shows that the County and the Township have a very small minority population and that situation has changed relatively little over the last 10 years. From 1990 to 2000, the minority population in Charlevoix County increased from 2 to 3.5 percent. Probably the biggest factor in the increase was that the 2000 Census was the first time respondents were given the opportunity to choose more than one race category. This new designation was responsible for 34 percent of the total minority population. The growth in the minority population does not appear to represent influx of new residents, but is more likely due to those who previously classified themselves as white selecting 2 or more races in the 2000 census.

<b>Table 2.2</b> <b>Population By Race And Hispanic Origin For 2010</b>				
	Charlevoix County		Wilson Township	
	#	% of Total Pop	#	% of Total Pop
Total	25,949	100%	1,964	100%
White	24,806	95.6%	1,890	96.2%
Black	80	0.3%	4	0.1%
Am. Indian	382	1.5%	29	1.5%
Asian	59	0.2%	1	0.0%
Other Race	103	0.4%	17	1.5%
Two or More Races*	474	1.2%	26	1.3%
Hispanic or Latino Origin**	359	1.0%	17	0.8%
Total Minority***	669	2.5%	55	2.8%
* Census 2000 gave respondents the opportunity to choose more than one race category. ** Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin may be of any race. *** Excludes Hispanic or Latino Origin Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census				

## Disability Status

Data shown in **Table 2.3** gives an indication of how many disabled persons reside in Charlevoix County and Wilson Township as per the 2000 Census, a person was classified as having a disability if they had a sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, self-care disability, going outside the home disability or an employment disability. This data was not obtained as part of the 2010 census and has not been updated as part of the American Community Survey

<b>Table 2.3</b> <b>Disability Status Wilson Township and Charlevoix County - 2000</b>							
LOCAL UNIT	Disabled persons 5-20	% Disabled 5-20	Disabled persons 21-64	% Disabled 21-64	% of disabled persons 21-64 employed	Disabled persons 65+	% Disabled 65+
Wilson Township	52	9.6%	265	22.9%	65.7%	76	46.6%
Charlevoix Co.	501	8.5%	2,546	17.6%	60.5%	1,497	40.1%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census *Disability of civilian non-institutionalized persons.							



The 2000 Census showed that 17.4 percent of the persons in Charlevoix County had some type of disability and 19.4 percent of the residents in Wilson Township had some type of disability. The largest numbers of disabled persons in the Township were between the ages of 21 - 64 (265), and of the people in this group, 65.7 percent were employed. This compares with 79.1 percent of people with no disability who are employed. The 65 and over age group had the highest percentage of persons with a disability with almost one out of every two persons in Wilson Township having some type of disability (46.6%).

### Educational Attainment

Since 2000 the residents of Wilson Township have made limited improvement in educational attainment, as shown in **Table 2.4**. While the percentage of persons 25 and older who had a high school diploma decreased slightly from 40 percent to 35 percent, more people have attended college or obtained some type of advanced degree. The percentage of the population that obtained an associate degree increased from 8.1 to 12.4 percent. The percentage that obtained a bachelors degree decreased by 3.2 percent while those with a graduate degree increased 0.7 percent .

The 2006-2010 American Community Survey showed slight decreases in the percent of persons who only completed 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and had no diploma and those who had completed less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Respectively, these groups went from 12.6 percent to 9.0 percent and from 2.2 percent to 1.6 percent.

<b>Table 2.4</b>				
<b>Wilson Township Educational Attainment</b>				
Degree	2000 Census		2006-2010 ACS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	28	2.2	22	1.6
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> no Diploma	158	12.6	120	9.0
High School Diploma	501	40.0	467	35.0
Some college no degree	316	25.2	435	32.6
Associates	102	8.1	166	12.4
Bachelors	111	8.9	76	5.7
Graduate or Professional	37	3.0	49	3.7
Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010				

### Income and Poverty

Income statistics for Wilson Township and Charlevoix County (**Table 2.5**).show that the median income in the Township has increased by 18.2 percent, and while it now exceeds the median income of the State It is considerably lower than the County.

**Table 2.5**  
**Median Family Income For Wilson Township and Charlevoix County: 1990, 2000 & 2010**

Year	Wilson Township	Charlevoix Co.	State
1990*	\$40,177*	\$38,427*	\$47,569*
2000*	\$43,241	\$46,260	\$53,457
2010**	51,101	\$57,022	\$48,432

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census\*  
American Community Survey 2006-2010\*\*

From 1990 to 2000 the poverty rate in Wilson Township increased by 2.1 percent for families with children and by 0.7 percent for individuals (**Table 2.6**). The largest increase in poverty rate was for families with a female householder with no husband present which increased by 20.9 percent.

**Table 2.6**  
**Poverty Status For Wilson Township : 1990 & 2000**

Category	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Families	38	6.8	38	6.7
Families with no husband	24	27.9	12	31.8
Individuals	161	8.0	161	8.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Poverty characteristics in **Table 2.7** show economic distress in two sub-groupings, female headed households with dependent children and the elderly. One striking statistic shown by The Census was that while the number of females with dependant children below poverty decreased in the County as a whole, the number in Wilson Township increased by 242% from 7 to 24 families.

**Table 2.7**  
**Poverty rates for Wilson Township and Charlevoix County: 1990 & 2000**

Municipality	Females With Children under 18 Below Poverty					Age 65 and Over Below Poverty				
	1990		2000		Percent Change	1990		2000		Percent Change
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	
Wilson Township	7	20	24	32.4	242.9%	16	12.8	13	8.0	-18.8%
Charlevoix Co.	174	37.7%	163	25.6%	-6.3%	378	12.7%	222	5.9%	-41.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Housing Characteristics

Housing characteristics and data on the age of housing stock for Wilson Township and Charlevoix County are found in **Table 2.8** and **Table 2.9** respectively. In Wilson Township the large majority (80%) of the housing is owner occupied and only a relatively small number of housing units are seasonal. In the Township 8.2 percent of the housing units are seasonal as opposed to almost 29% in the County as a whole.

<b>Table 2.8</b> <b>Wilson Township and Charlevoix County Housing Characteristics: 2010</b>								
MUNICIPALITY	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied	Total Vacant/ Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal*	Vacant % Owner	Vacant % Renter
Wilson Township	876	735	91.2%	8.8%	89	63.1%	1.5%	4.3%
Charlevoix Co.	17,249	10,882	79.4%	20.6%	5,156	81.0%	3.5%	13.1%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census								
*Figure shows the seasonal housing units as a percentage of the municipality's total housing units.								

Information found in **Table 2.9** shows the year that housing units were built in Charlevoix County and Wilson Township. Generally speaking, the older a housing unit is the more likely it is to be in need of rehabilitation. As a rule of thumb, any housing unit that is older than 50 years may be in need of at least some, if not a great deal of renovation. Census data shows that 82 percent of the housing stock in Wilson Township was constructed after 1960.

<b>Table 2.9</b> <b>Wilson Township and Charlevoix County Year Structures Built</b>								
	1949 or Earlier		1950 – 1979		1980 -1999		2000-2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Wilson Township	110	12.3%	284	31.9%	398	44.7%	89	10.9%
Charlevoix Co.	3,257	20.5%	3,722	24.3%	4,960	32.3%	3,531	23.0%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census								

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Without a doubt, the greatest attractions for the residents and visitors of northwest Michigan is the area's environment and natural features. Recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, golfing, skiing, snowmobiling, boating and a multitude of other outdoor activities attract people from all areas of Michigan, as well as from other states. Many long time visitors decide to move to the area upon retirement. Because of the abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, the natural environment significantly contributes to the quality of life in Wilson Township as well as being an economic base and income generator.

### Climate

The lake effect on Wilson Township's climate is significant throughout most of the year. The prevailing westerly winds, in combination with Lake Michigan to the west, produce this lake influence. The lake effect increases cloudiness and snowfall during the fall and winter and also modifies temperatures, keeping them cooler during the late spring and early summer, and warmer during the late fall and early winter. In the late winter as ice builds up on the lakes, Wilson Township is subjected to temperature variations which are more closely associated with interior locations of the State. Diminished wind speeds or winds which do not traverse large unfrozen lakes often produce clearing skies and the colder temperatures expected at continental locations. Because the day-to-day weather is controlled by the movement of pressure systems across the nation, this area seldom experiences prolonged periods of hot, humid weather in the summer or extreme cold during the winter. Temperature and precipitation averages are shown in **Table 3.1**.

<b>Table 3.1</b>					
<b>Historical Climate Data 1981-2010 Averages</b>					
Period	Average Temperature			Average Precipitation	
	Max	Min	Mean	Total	Snow
Jan	28.3	13.1	20.7	2.34	31.0
Feb	32.0	13.0	22.5	1.55	20.8
Mar	42.3	20.0	31.2	1.82	10.6
Apr	57.2	31.8	44.5	2.48	4.1
May	69.8	41.8	55.8	2.92	0.3
Jun	78.7	51.7	65.2	2.91	0
Jul	82.9	56.4	69.7	2.65	0
Aug	80.8	55.5	68.1	3.67	0
Sep	72.6	49.0	59.0	3.83	0
Oct	59.2	38.6	48.9	3.89	0.8
Nov	44.8	29.9	37.3	3.05	12.7
Dec	32.7	20.0	26.3	2.66	31.3
Annual	56.8	35.1	45.9	33.77	111.6
Source: Michigan State Climatologist Office. Site: Boyne Falls MI, station 200925					

Climate data from 1981 through 2010 show that the prevailing wind is westerly, averaging 9 mph. The average 1 P.M. relative humidity varies from 51% for May to 78% for December, and averages 63% annually. Summers are dominated by moderately warm temperatures with an average of 9 days exceeding the 90 F mark. In July and August of 2006 temperatures 100 F or higher recorded. The lake influence was reflected in the minimum temperatures; an average of 173 days was 32 F or lower, an average of 22 days was 0 F or lower. Historically, the highest average monthly maximum temperature of 88.8 F was recorded July 2006, and the lowest average monthly minimum temperature of 0.9 F was recorded February 1994.

Climate data from 1981 through 2010 show the average date of the last freezing temperature in the spring was June 5, while the average date of the first freezing temperature in the fall was September 11. The freeze-free period, or growing season, averaged 97.2 days annually. The average seasonal snowfall was 116.2 inches with 122 days per season averaging 1 inch or more of snow on the ground, but varied greatly from season to season.

Precipitation is usually distributed throughout the year with the crop season, April-September, receiving an average of 18.3 inches or 56 percent of the average annual. The average wettest month is September with 3.9 inches, while the average driest month is February with 1.39 inches. Summer precipitation comes mainly in the form of afternoon showers and thundershowers. Annually, thunderstorms will occur on an average of 26 days. Michigan is located on the northeast fringe of the Midwest tornado belt. The lower frequency of tornadoes occurring in Michigan may be due, in part, to the effect of the colder water of Lake Michigan during the spring and early summer months, a prime period of tornado activity.

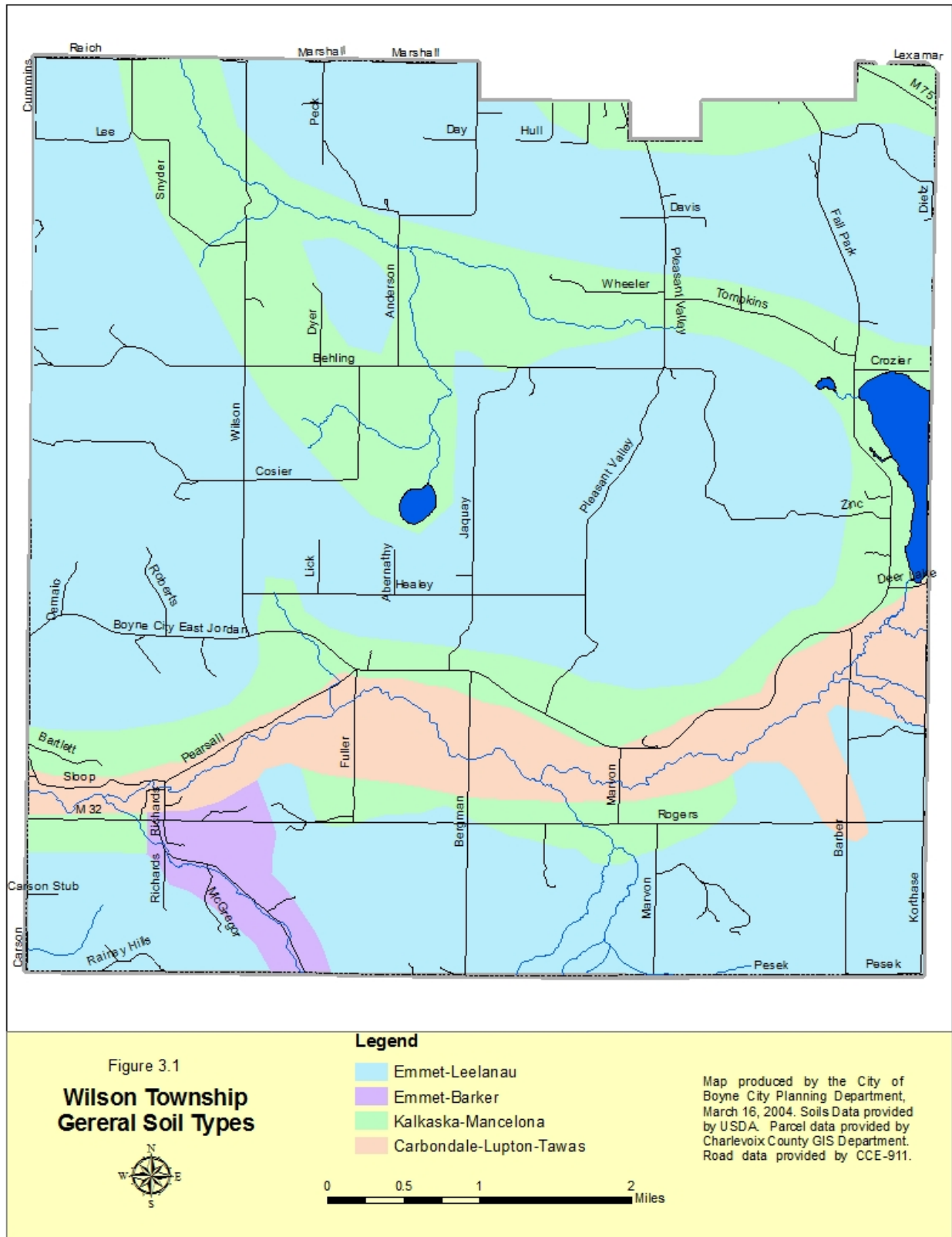
## Soils

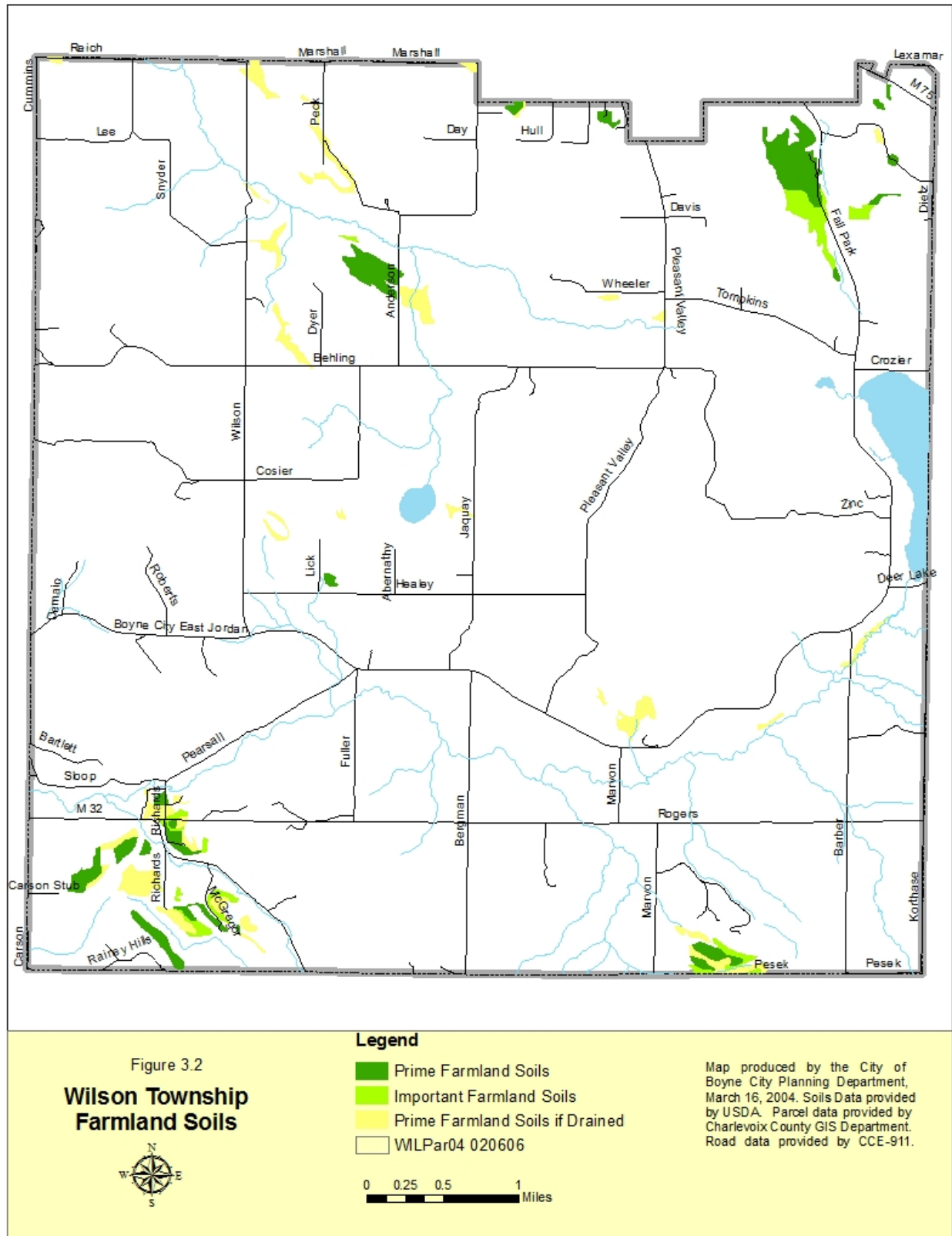
The various kinds of soils in Wilson Township differ from each other mainly because they developed from different kinds of parent materials, under different conditions of drainage, and for different lengths of time. The mineral soils were formed after the glaciers melted and the processes of soil formation began to alter the glacial debris. These soils are grouped by texture of parent material and natural drainage.

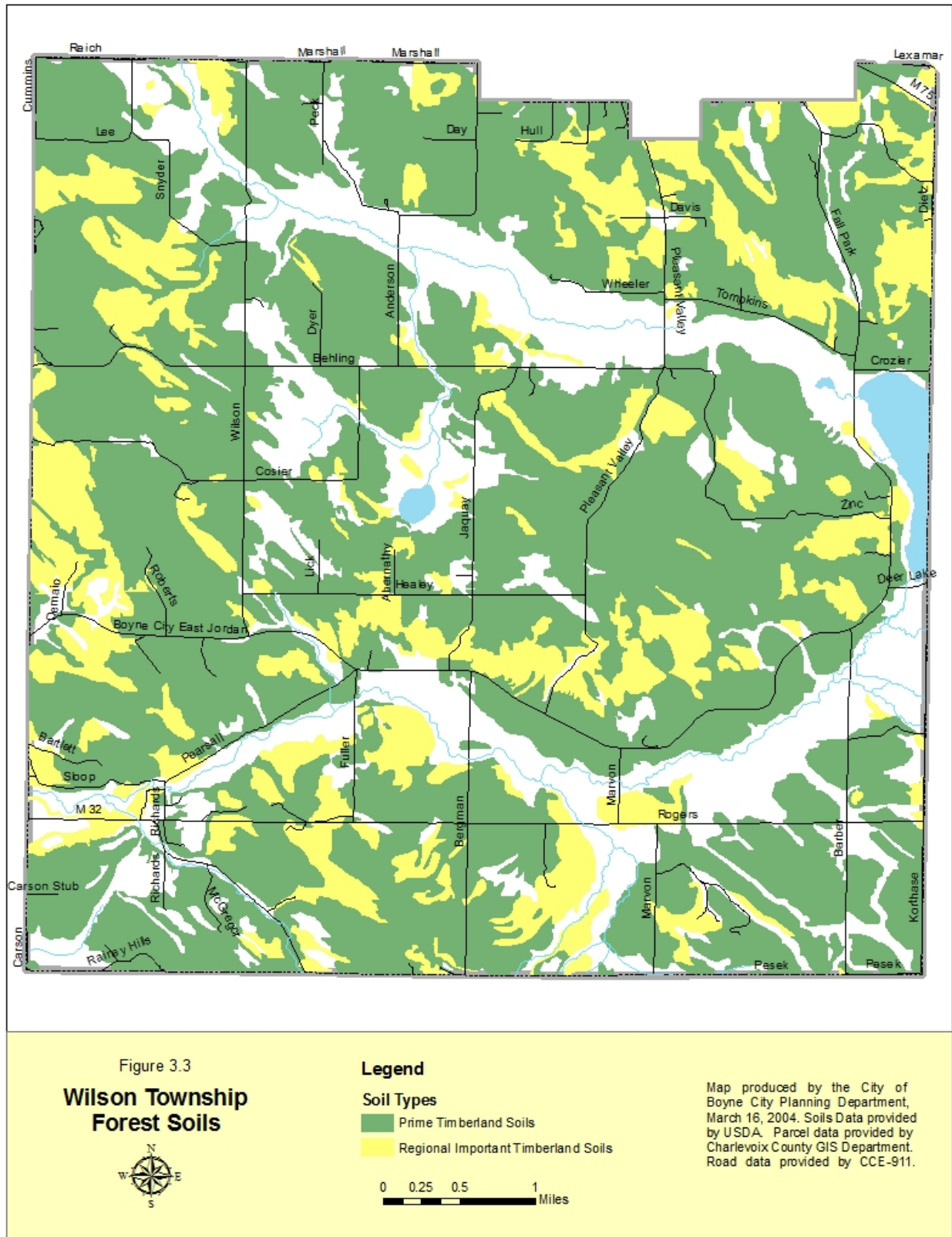
The descriptions of the general soil types in Wilson Township are listed in **Table 3.2**. In Wilson Township the majority of the soils are comprised primarily of Emmet-Leelanau Association and the Kalkaska-Mancelona Association. **Figures 3.1 - 3.5** show the general soil types and soils suitability and constraints in Wilson Township.

<b>Table 3.2</b> <b>Wilson Township General Soil Types</b>	
Soil Type	Description
Emmet-Leelanau	Well drained, nearly level to very steep loamy and sandy soils on moraines
Emmet-Barker	Well drained or moderately well drained, gently sloping to steep loamy soils on moraines
Kalkaska-Mancelona	Well drained or moderately well drained, nearly level to gently sloping sandy soils on lake plains and valley plains
Carbondale-Lupton-Tawas	Very poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping organic soils in depressional areas on till plains, outwash plains, and lake plains

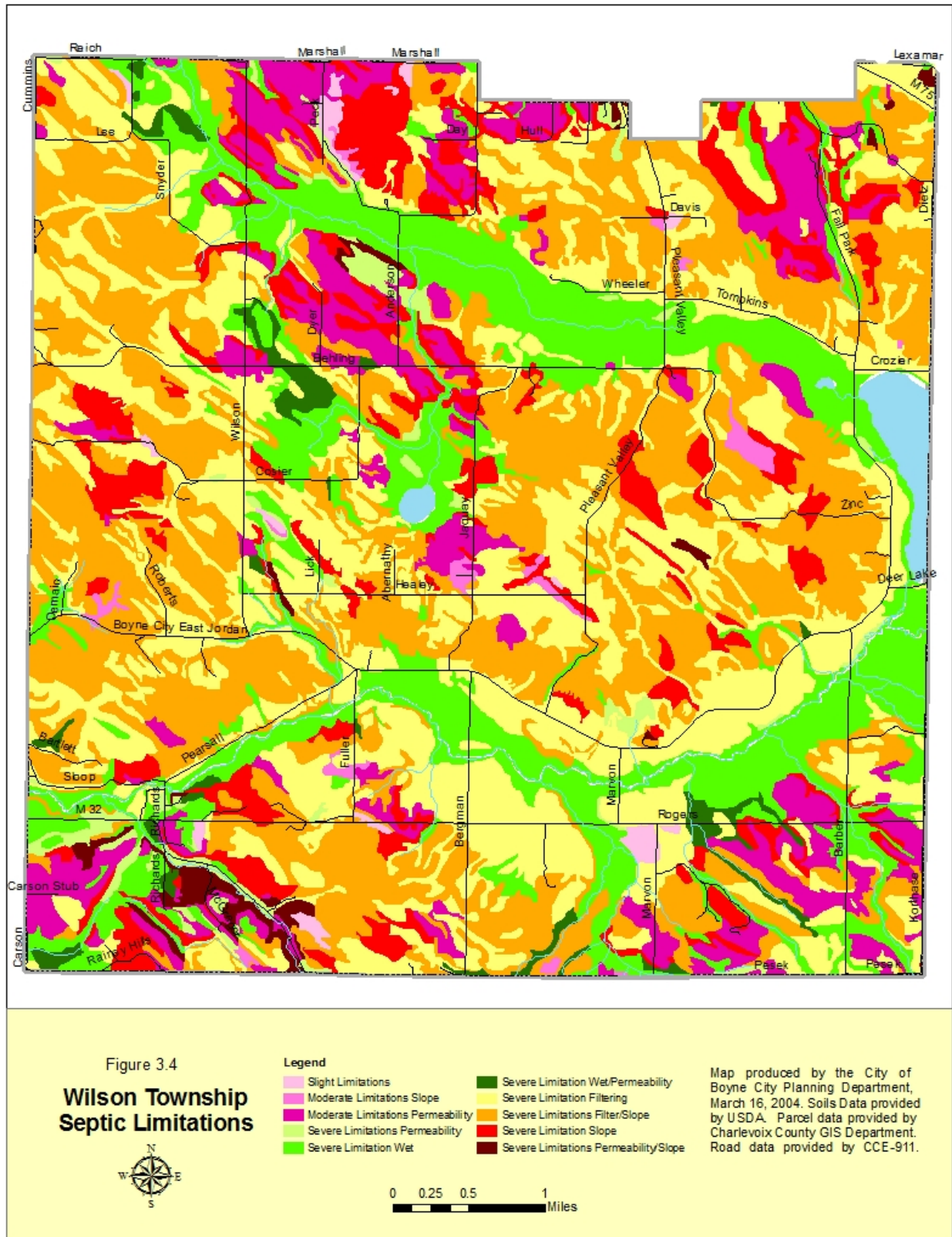
Source: Soil Conservation Service

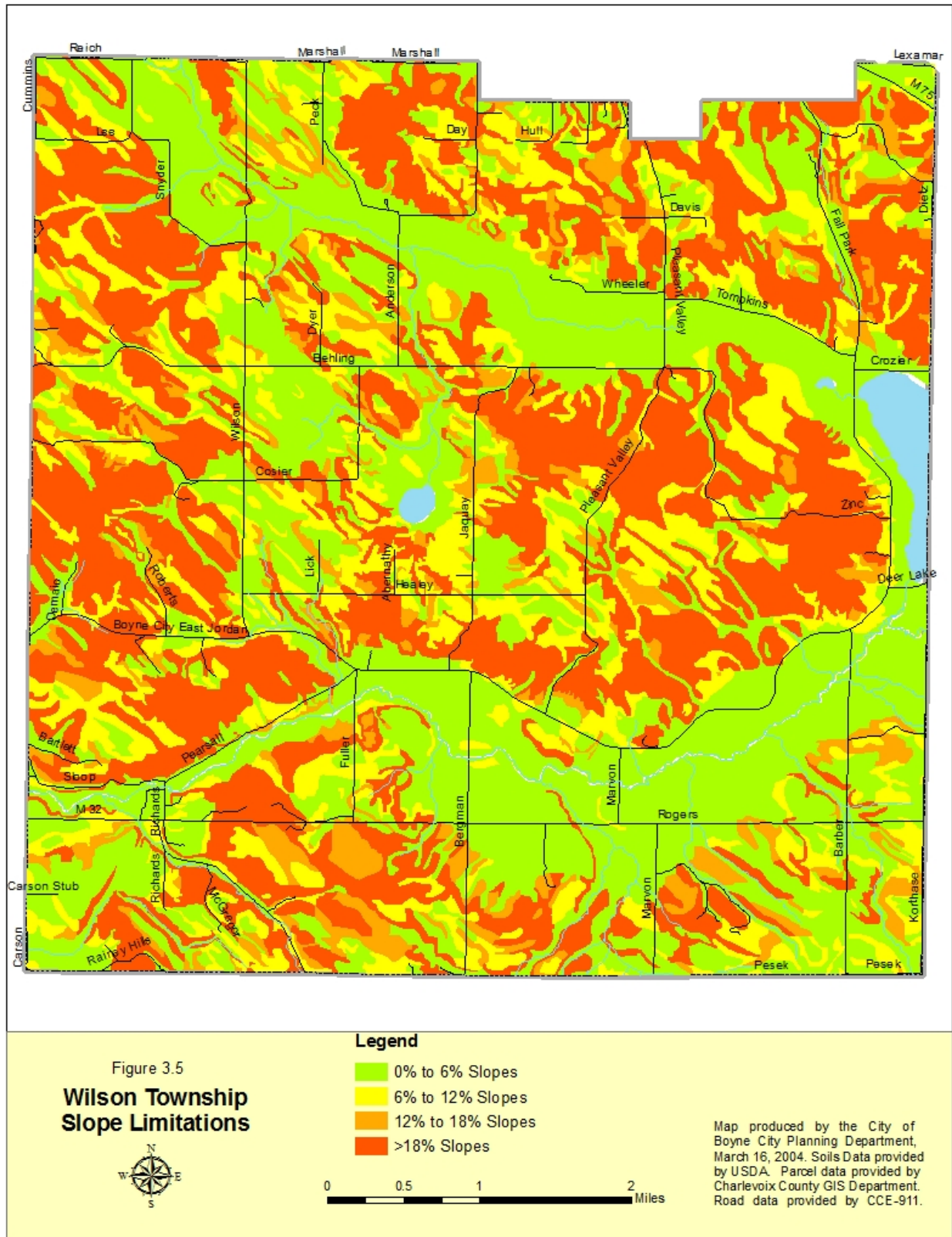












## Geology

The basic structure and texture of the land found in northwest Michigan are products of geological forces occurring centuries ago. The foundation upon which northwest Michigan rests is the result of glacial advance and retreat that shaped northern Michigan's landscape (**Figure 3.6**). Depending on their proximity to the surface, the bedrock formations deposited during these glacial activities have a direct bearing on where certain types of development can occur. Fortunately, these formations are not a constraint in Wilson Township, although outcroppings of bedrock are found in other areas of Charlevoix County.

One of the most notable features of Wilson Township's landscape is ground moraines. Moraines are accumulations of sand and gravel that were carried by a glacier and then deposited when the glacier melted. Moraines can be found throughout the Township, but predominate in the central and northern and southern portions of the Township. In most cases, moraines are characterized by steep slopes and unstable subsurface materials, which places mild to prohibitive constraints on development.

Large sections of Wilson Township are plains that are sandwiched between glacial ground moraines. Two outwash plains extend that westward from the northern and southern tips of Deer Lake provide a relative flatness in the center portion of the Township. While hydric and wet soils are more common in the low lying areas, development constraints associated with these areas are less considerable.

## Topography

An evaluation of the community's topography provides insight into site construction limitations, potential erosion problems and concerns regarding drainage. The hills within Wilson Township obviously provide visual relief and aesthetic beauty for community residents. However, they must be carefully managed if the problems just mentioned are to be avoided.

As can be seen by a relief model of Wilson Township (**Figure 3.7**) the terrain in the Township is characterized by low lying wetlands and floodplains adjacent to Porter, Deer and other creeks and around Deer Lake. The land gradually slopes up from these creek and lake areas and becomes mostly rolling hills located in the east, central, west and south portions of the Township. In terms of topographic relief, these areas range from an elevation of just under 610 feet above sea level along portions of Deer Creek to more than 1090 feet above sea level for the hills located in the western portion of the Township.

## Water Resources

Wilson Township's water resources can be classified into two major types: ground water and surface water. Groundwater is significant to the community as its quality and quantity determine how well the resource can satisfy the demand for water by Township residents. Where groundwater is found in glacial deposits, supplies within Charlevoix County are relatively plentiful. This is particularly true for Wilson Township, where resources are abundant and supply far exceeds demand. On site wells presently service most of the Township with a limited number of municipal customers located on M-75 are serviced by the City of Boyne City. **Figure 3.6** shows the residential water well locations in Wilson Township.



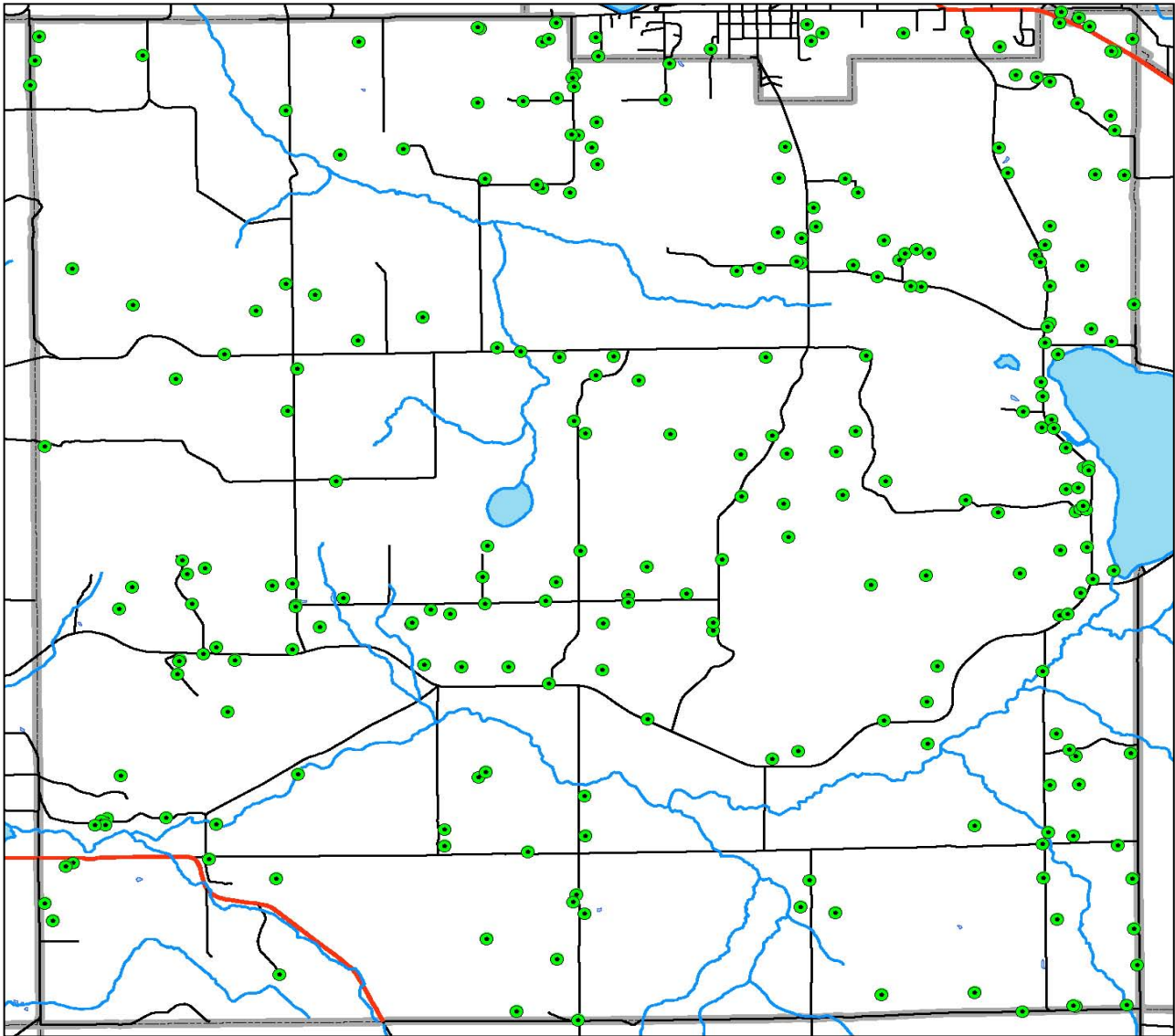
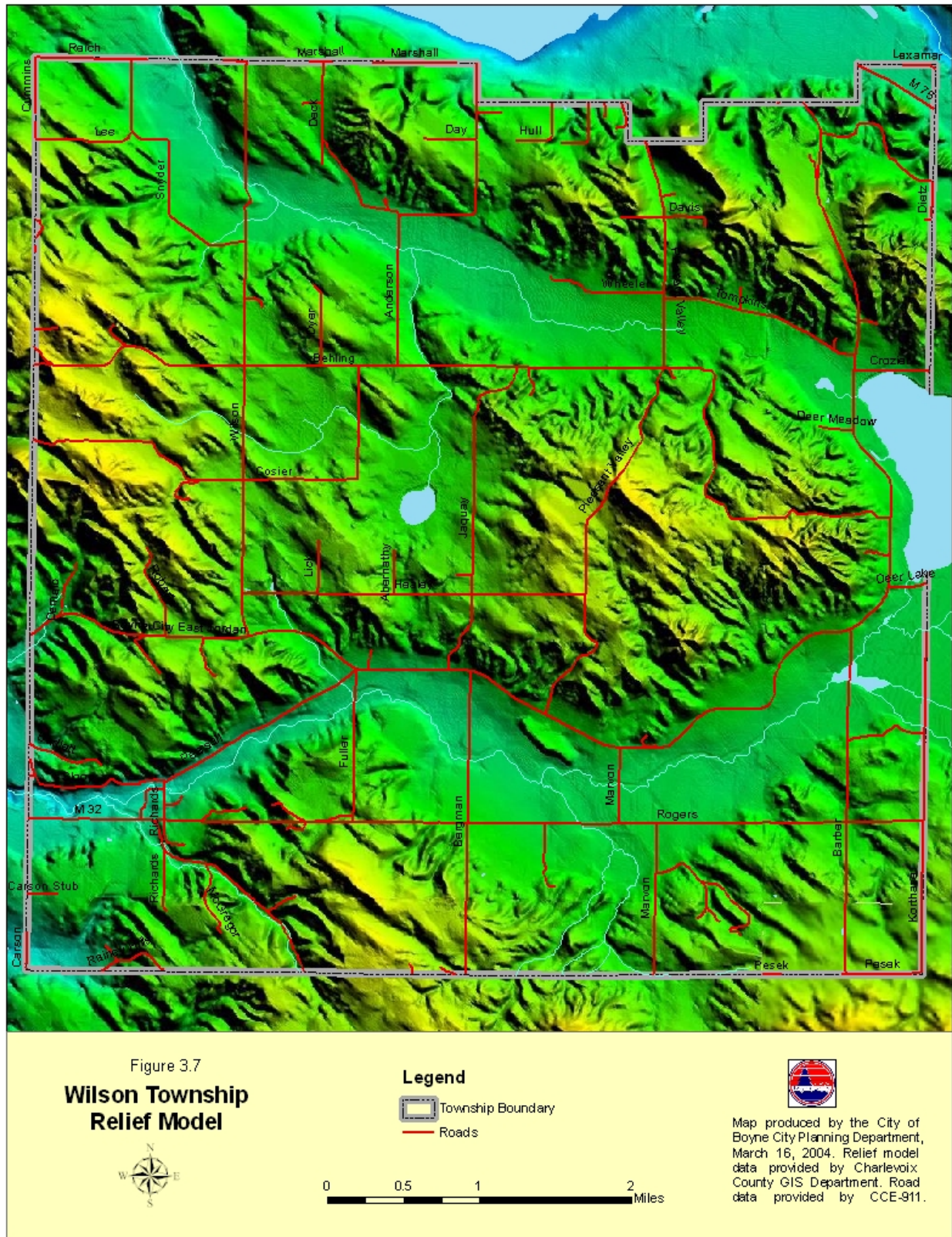
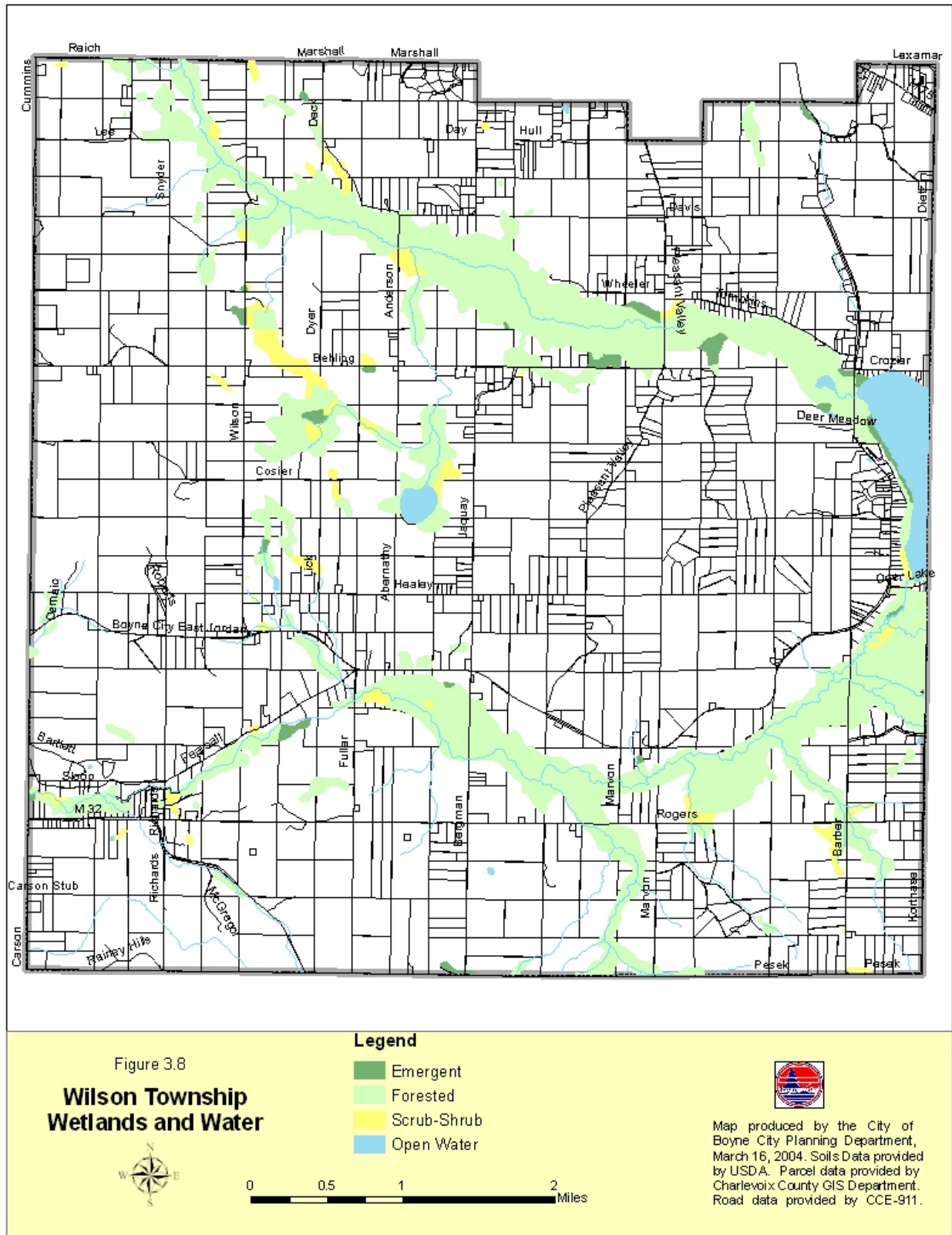


Figure 3.6

Although not used for domestic water purposes, the community's surface water areas are extremely important natural resources. The surface waters help recharge the community's groundwater, create a distinctive natural landscape, attract and provide natural habitats for wildlife and have immeasurable recreational and aesthetic value.







## EXISTING LAND USE

As shown in **Figure 4.1** and listed in **Table 4.1**, land use in Wilson Township can be classified into eight general categories: residential, commercial, industrial/extractive/utilities, agricultural, shrub land/open land, forest, water, and wetlands. Table 4.1 details the amount of each land use type by total acres and figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the different land uses throughout the Township.

<b>Table 4.1 Wilson Township Land Use</b>		
Land Use	Total Acres	Percent of Total Acres
Residential	1,152	5.2%
Commercial	63	0.3%
Industrial /Extractive/Utilities	143	0.6%
Agricultural	3,079	13.9%
Shrub Land/Open land	4,064	18.4%
Forest	9,406	42.6%
Water	222	1.0%
Wetland	3,953	17.9%
Total	22,082	99.9%*
Source: 2000 Charlevoix County Land Use Land Cover Inventory		
*Not equal to 100% due to rounding		

### Land Use Classes

#### Residential

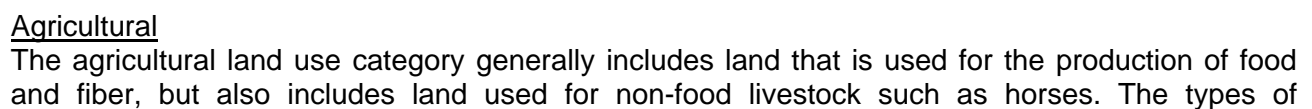
Residential land uses includes residential dwellings such as single family homes or duplexes, multi-family low rise residential dwellings, and mobile home parks. Residential land use comprises approximately 1,152 acres or 5.2 percent of the total land area of Wilson Township. By far the predominant housing type is single family dwellings that have been constructed on metes and bounds parcels. The vast majority of homes in Wilson Township are primary residences that are classified as homesteads. Data from the Charlevoix County Equalization Department shows that in 2010 the mean parcel size for a residential homestead in Wilson Township was 11.37 Acres and the mean SEV was \$61,410. In 2000 the mean parcel size was 10.1 acres and the mean SEV was \$69,000.

#### Commercial

The commercial land use category includes uses related to the sale of products and services. Commercial uses are mostly located in the commercial zoning district along M-75 although a few are located in the interior of the Township. Typical commercial uses are retail uses and service establishments. Some contractor offices and yards are also located in this designation. The commercial category also includes parking areas related to the commercial businesses. According to the composite land use map, the total commercial land use in the Township comprises approximately 63 acres or 0.3 percent of the total land area of the Township.

#### Industrial /Extractive/Utilities/Transportation

This land use includes extractive industries, manufacturing and industrial uses, utilities and transportation right-of-ways. The total land in this category comprises approximately 143 acres or 0.6 percent of the total land area. Mining operations make up the majority of this category and the largest concentrations are located in the northeast and southwest corners of the Township.





agriculture in this category include cropland, orchards, confined feeding operations, pasture land, farmsteads, greenhouses and horse training areas. In Wilson Township 3,079 acres or 13.9 percent of the land in Wilson Township is classified as agricultural.

#### Forest

Forest land is by far the largest land cover category in the Township with 42.6 percent (9,406 acres) of the land in the Township included in this classification. Forest types in the Township include upland forest and lowland forest. Upland forests include upland broadleaved species such as maple, beech, aspen and birch and upland conifers such as red pine, white pine, jack pine, white spruce, blue spruce, eastern hemlock and balsam fir. Lowland forests are dominated by species that grow in wet soils. Lowland hardwoods include ash, elm, red maple and cottonwood. Lowland conifers include cedar, tamarack, balsam fir, black spruce and white spruce.

#### Shrub land /Open Land

The shrub/open land category includes open land and rangeland such as barren land, herbaceous open land and shrub land. Herbaceous open land is usually subjected to continuous disturbance such as mowing, grazing or burning and typically it can have a variety of grasses, sedges and clovers. Shrub land is land in transition from being open to becoming and eventual forest. There are native shrubs and woody plants like blackberry, dogwood, willow, and sumac and tag alder. Approximately 4,064 acres or 18.4 percent of the land in the Township is classified in the township as shrub land/open land.

#### Wetlands

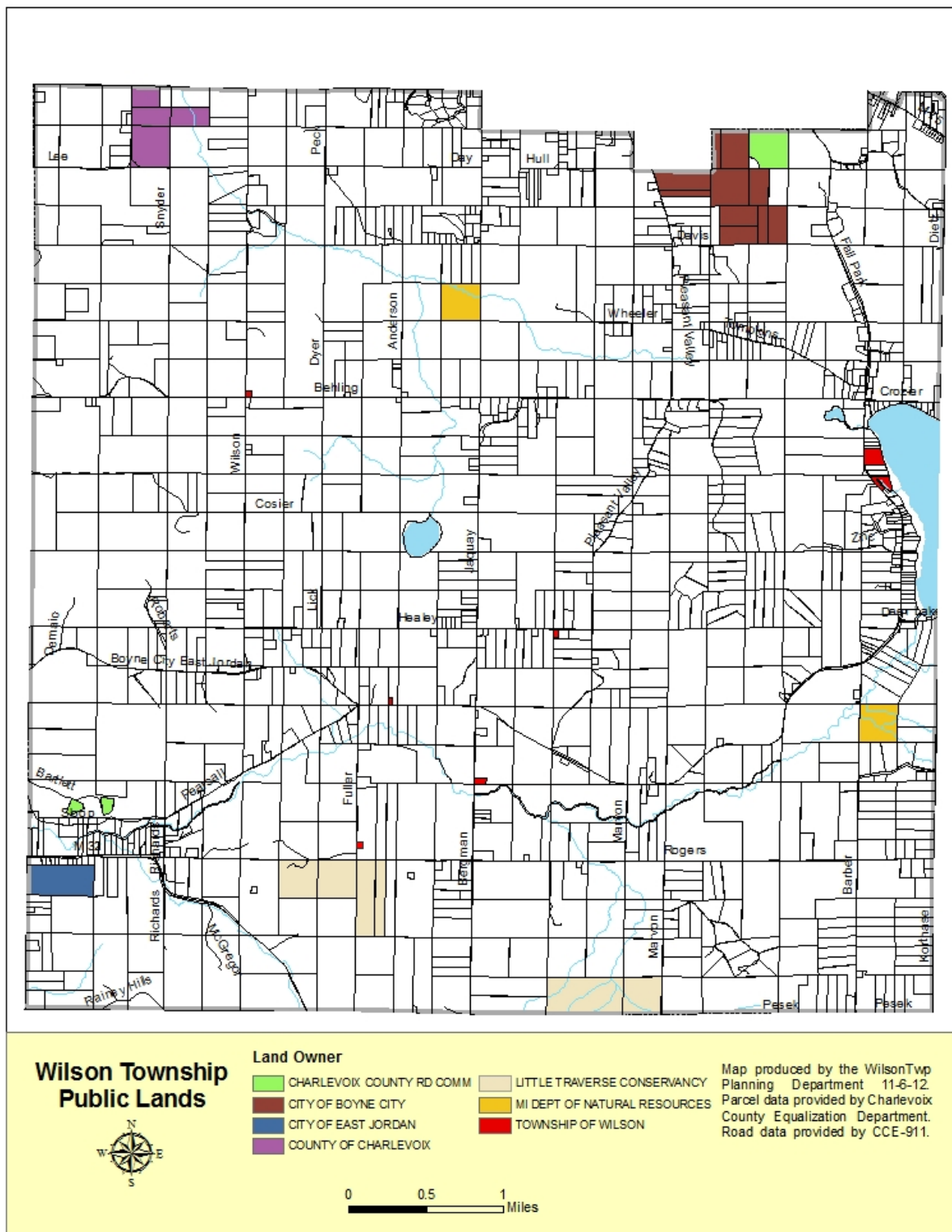
Wetlands are those areas where the water table is at or near the land surface for a significant part of most years. Examples of wetlands are marshes, mudflats, wooded swamps, and shallow areas along rivers, lakes or ponds. Wetlands include both non-vegetated mudflats and areas of hydrophytic vegetation. In Wilson Township there are 3,953 acres (17.9 percent) of land in the township classified as wetlands.

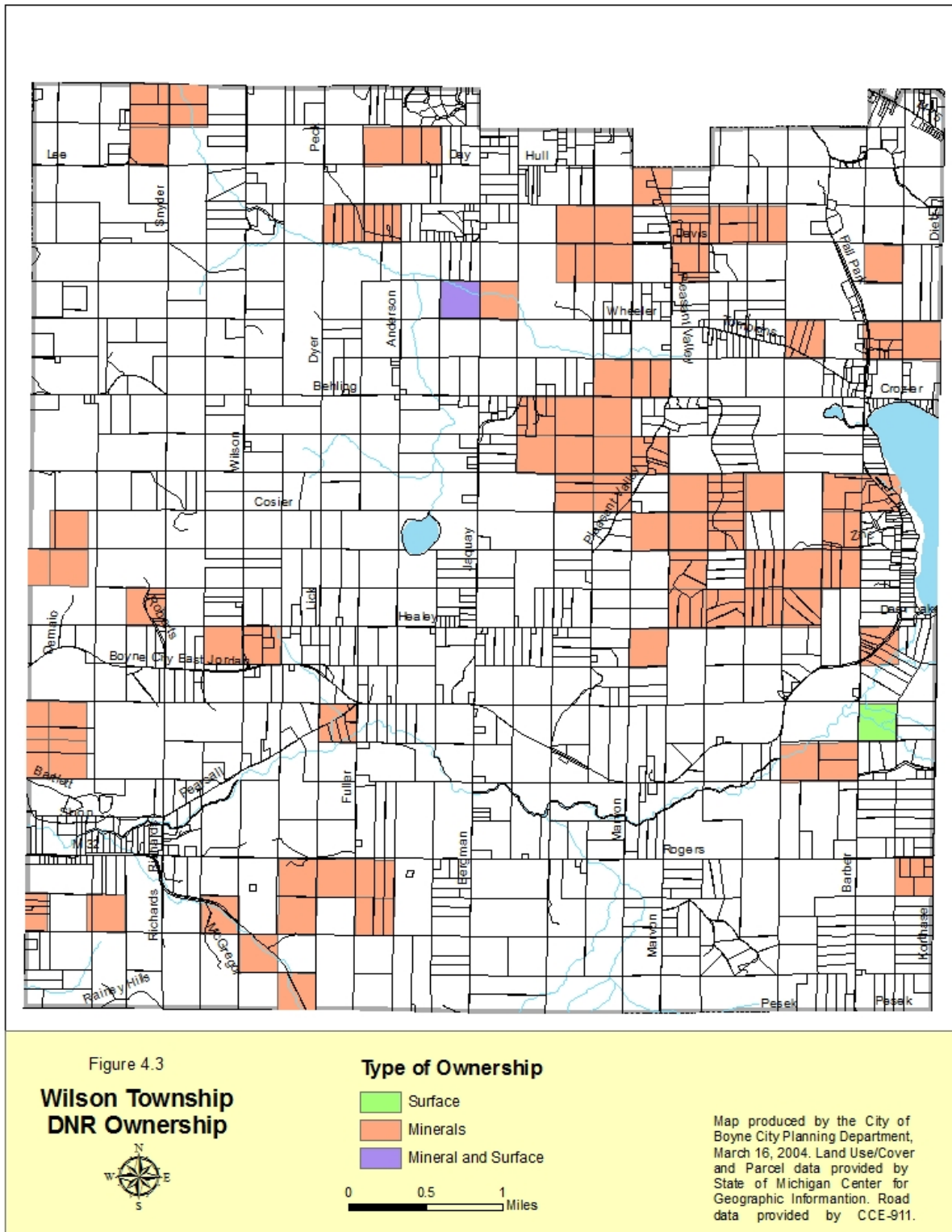
#### Water

The water category includes all surface water in the township such as lakes, impoundments, rivers and streams. Surface water comprises 222 acres or 1 percent of the Township.

### **Public Lands**

Public land ownership in Wilson Township is shown in **Figure 4.2**. The largest public land owners in the Township are the City of Boyne City and the Little Traverse Conservancy. The City owns approximately 218 contiguous acres which is part of Avalanche Park. The property is open to the public for recreational uses such as hiking, biking, disc golf, cross country skiing and sledding. The Little Traverse Conservancy owns 140 contiguous acres in section 32 and 33 and 120 contiguous acres in sections 34 and 35. The Conservancy property is open to the public for passive recreational uses. Other public land owners in Wilson Township are Wilson Township, Charlevoix County, the City of East Jordan and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. While the Department of Natural Resources only owns a small amount of surface rights in the Township, it does hold a significant amount of mineral rights as shown in **Figure 4.3**.





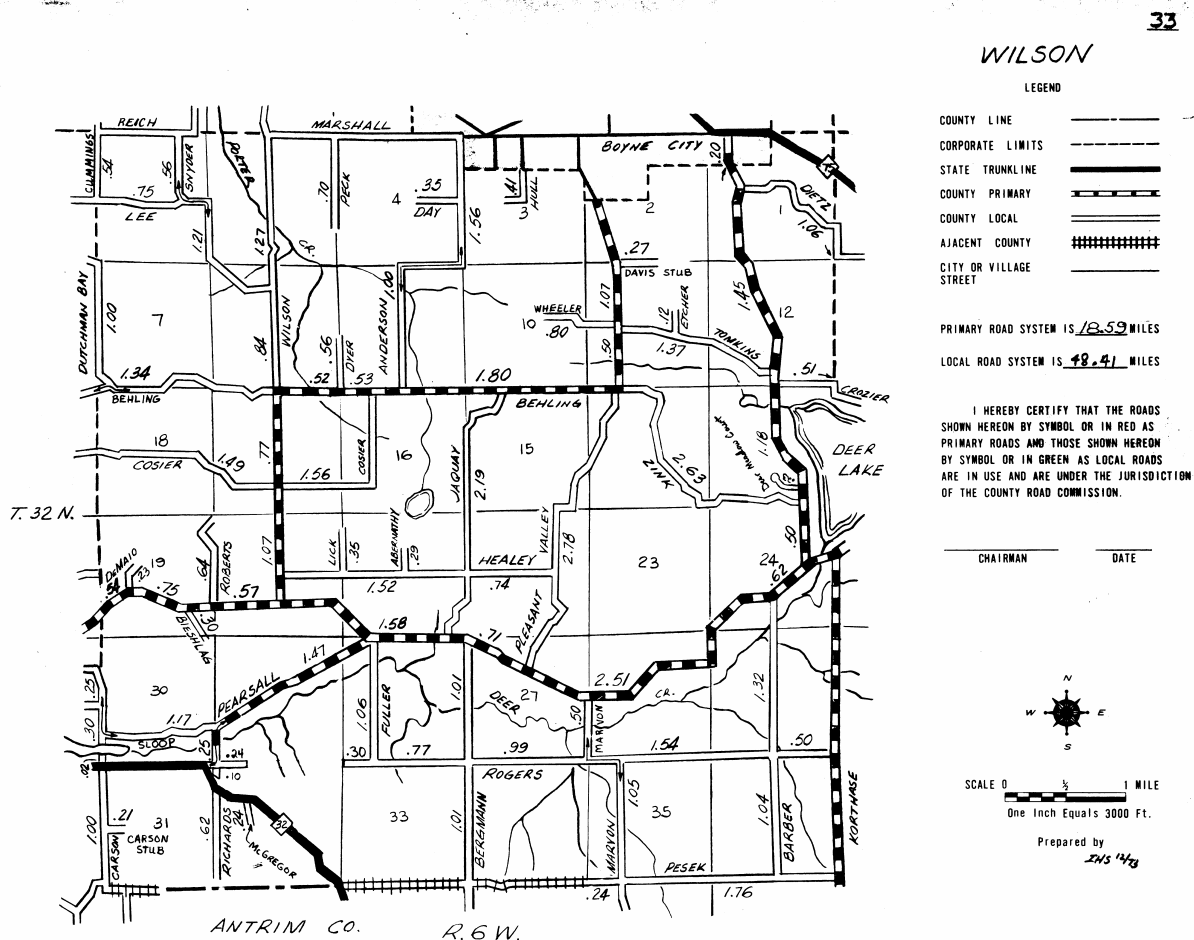
## INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

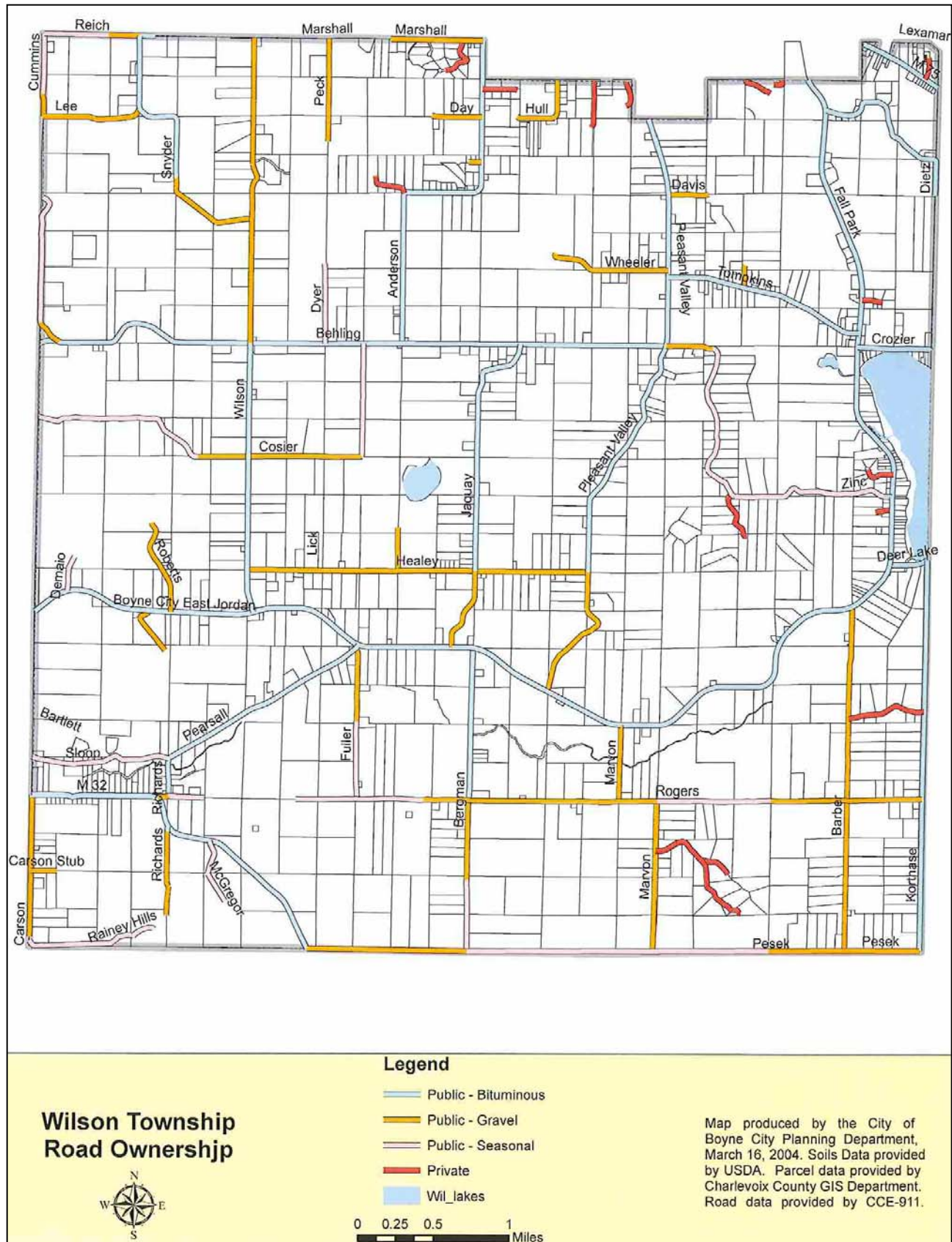
### Road System

The road system in Wilson Township is almost entirely comprised of county roads. Of the approximately 75 miles of roads in the Township, 67 miles are certified county roads. Of the certified county roads 18.59 miles are classified as primary and 48.41 are classified as local (See **Figure 5.1**). There are approximately 3 miles of state roads in the Township. A 2.3 mile section of M-32 crosses the southwest corner of the township and a 0.6 mile section of M-75 crosses the northeast corner of the Township. There is approximately 5 miles of private roads in the Township.

Wilson Township residents are in close proximity to US-131 and M-32, both of which provide direct access to Interstate 75. Classified as a state arterial, US-131 was originally constructed to provide access to lakeshore communities and continues to serve that function today. Locally, the connections between Wilson Township and the neighboring communities of East Jordan, Boyne Falls and Boyne City are generally adequate. The vehicular circulation within Wilson Township is relatively easy and convenient; however a significant amount of roads are either gravel or unimproved seasonal roads. **Figure 5.2** shows the road types and surfaces in Wilson Township.

**Figure 5.1 Wilson Township Certified County Roads**







## Airports

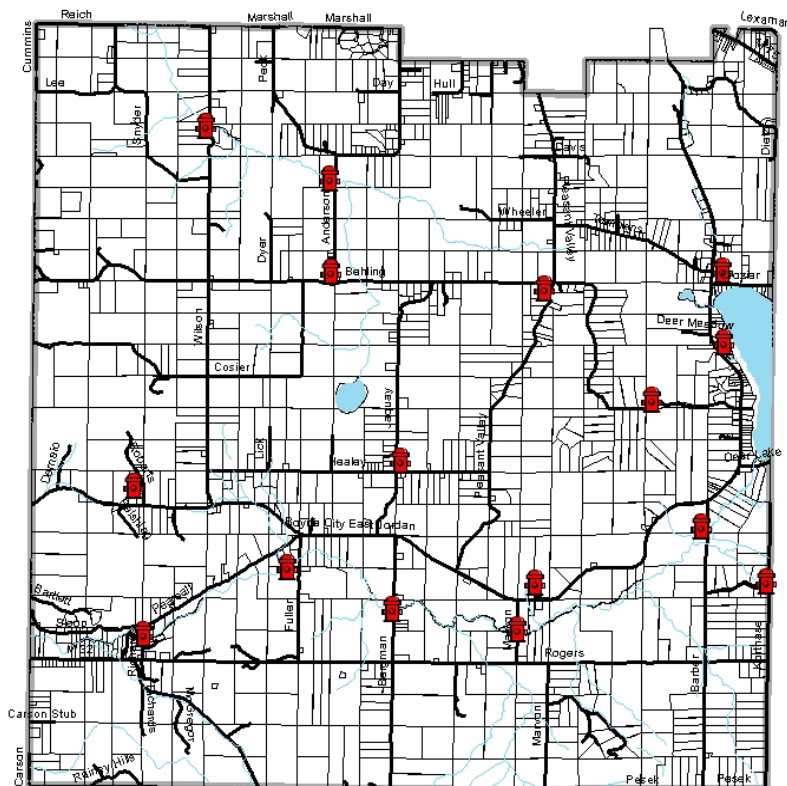
There are two public airports and one private airport located in close proximity to Wilson Township. Boyne City Airport is located in the City of Boyne City and has hangars, gasoline services and a 3,800 foot hard surface runway. East Jordan Airport is located in South Arm Township on M-32 just outside the city limits of East Jordan and has a 3,200 foot hard surface runway. The privately owned airport is operated by Boyne Mountain Resort, located just 5 miles from Wilson Township and has a 5,200 foot runway.

## Water and Sewer

Given its rural nature, the Township has not developed water and sewer infrastructure. The City of Boyne City has run water and sewer lines along M-75 in Wilson Township and currently the City is providing water and sewer services to two Wilson Township commercial customers along M-75. As development and redevelopment continues along M-75 it is anticipated more commercial customers will eventually want to hook up to the City system. In 2003 Capital Consultants prepared a sanitary sewer feasibility study that explored the possibility of the City providing sewer services to Wilson Township.

The lack of a public water system limits the fire fighting capabilities in the Township. To increase its fire fighting capabilities, the Township has constructed dry hydrants in various locations throughout the township as shown by **Figure 5.3**.

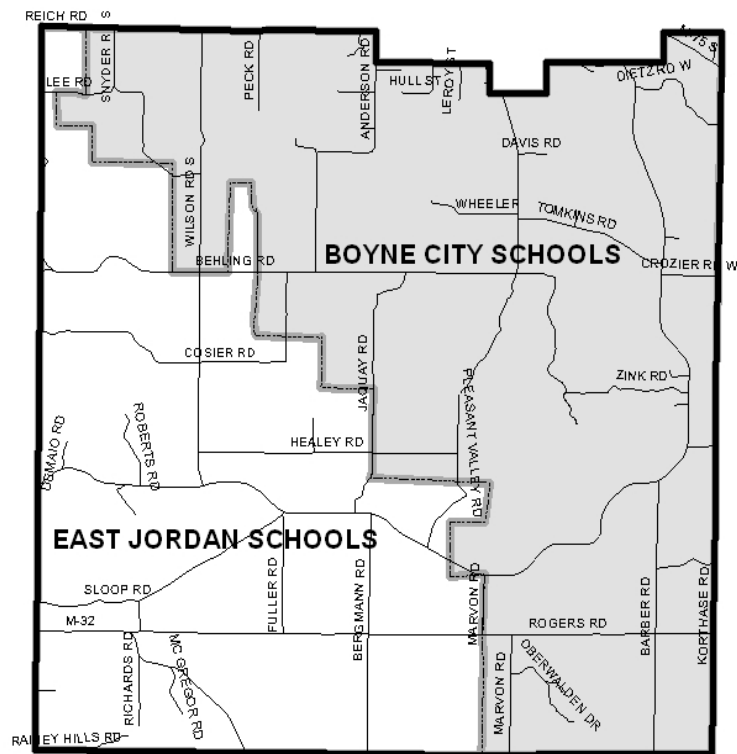
### Figure 5.3 Wilson Township Dry Hydrant Locations



**Figure 5.4**  
**Wilson Township School Districts**

### Schools

Wilson Township is divided between East Jordan and Boyne City School districts as shown in **Figure 5.4**. No school facilities or buildings are located within the township's borders. The Boyne City Public School system has three school buildings: elementary, middle school and high school, which share a common campus located on Boyne Avenue in the City of Boyne City. The East Jordan school system is comprised of three separate facilities located within the limits of East Jordan. The elementary school serves kindergarten through fifth grades and the middle school serves the 6-8 grades.



### Police and Fire Protection

Police protection and law enforcement for Wilson Township is available through the Charlevoix County Sheriff's Department, located in Charlevoix, and the Michigan State Police Post, located in Petoskey. The Sheriff's Department provides the bulk of law enforcement within the Township. Fire and ambulance services differ throughout the township, based on the location of the needed service. The Township contracts with the City of East Jordan and the City of Boyne City for fire and ambulance services. Costs of these services are based upon the state equalized valuation (SEV) of property located within each particular district. In 1997, police, fire, and ambulance services in Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet counties joined together to create a regional dispatch center. This enhanced 911 system handles both emergency and non-emergency calls. Callers can be located through the system and responders throughout the three-county area can be dispatched to emergencies. All police patrol cars are equipped with in-car computers to access statewide databases and vehicle locators to monitor police car locations using global positioning satellites.

### Recreation Areas

The vast majority of land in Wilson Township is in private ownership and the amounts of public recreation areas are relatively limited. Fall Park, located on the western shoreline of Deer Lake, is the most prominent park in the Township. Sharing a location with the Township Hall, the park is

approximately 5 1/2 acres and has 475 feet of water frontage on Deer Lake and a 700 foot canal that runs through the middle of the park. The Park is landscaped and maintained and has parking, a pavilion, children's play equipment, a gazebo and fishing platforms in the canal. The park is used often by residents and visitors to fish and relax and also for more formal gatherings such as family reunions and weddings.

The City of Boyne City owns approximately 218 contiguous acres in section 2 of Wilson Township which is part of Avalanche Park. The property is open to the public for recreational uses such as hiking, biking, disc golf, cross country skiing and sledding.

The Little Traverse Conservancy owns 140 contiguous acres in section 32 and 33 and 120 contiguous acres in sections 34 and 35. The Conservancy property is open to the public for passive recreational uses such as hiking and nature observation.



## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **Future Land Use Classes**

#### Residential

The Residential category denotes areas where the highest density of residential land use for the Township is desired. The typical use for this area would be single family dwellings and accessory structures on 1-2 acre parcels; however, home occupations and in home businesses would also be allowed with appropriate reviews and conditions. These areas are primarily adjacent to public primary roads and are located relatively close to the neighboring cities of East Jordan or Boyne City.

#### Medium Residential

The Medium Residential Category denotes areas where lot sizes between 3 and 10 acres are desired. This area is intended to provide residential home sites in a more rural setting. Typical uses in this area are single family dwellings and related accessory structures. Agricultural uses as well as home occupations and in home businesses are also allowed in these areas.

#### Rural Residential/Agricultural

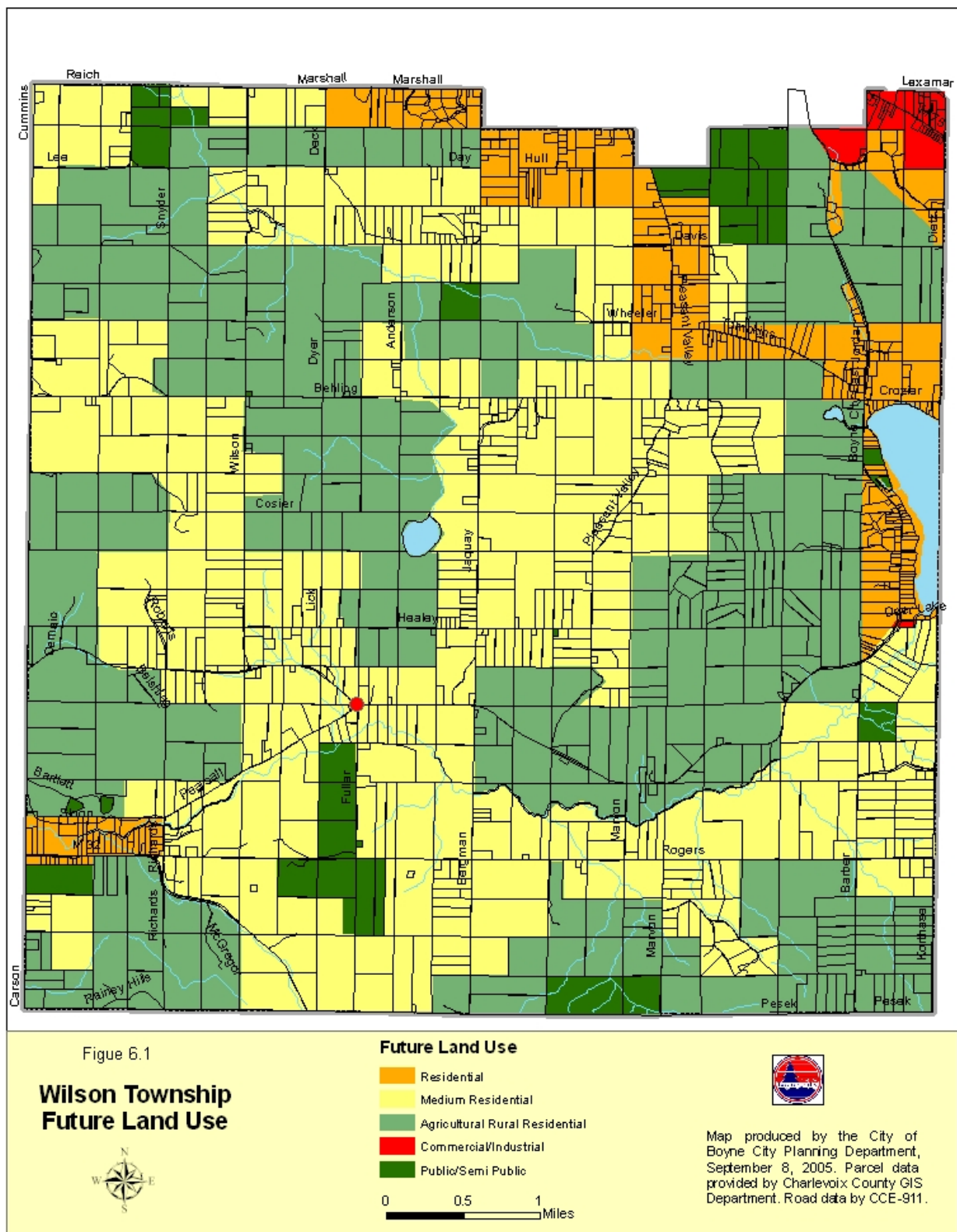
This area includes the prime agricultural lands and forest lands in the Township and areas that are currently being used for agricultural purposes. While much of this area is not actively being farmed, low density residential development and limited fractionalization of parcels in these areas is desired in order to maintain the rural character of the Township. While the minimum parcel size in these areas is 10 acres, reductions of the required lot size and area are allowed in conjunction with a clustered development that dedicates and preserves significant existing open space.

#### Commercial/Industrial

The commercial/Industrial category is intended to accommodate small commercial uses such as retail uses service establishments and light industrial uses such as manufacturing and contractor offices and yards. The majority of this category includes to the M-75 corridor and the C.H. Smith gravel pit located on Boyne City –East Jordan Road. In addition to the main commercial corridor on M-75, small areas of commercial uses have also been designated for the purpose of providing neighborhood convenience commercial goods and services to local residents. Possible locations for at the Boyne City – East Jordan Road and Deer Lake Road intersection, the intersection of Pearsall and Boyne City East Jordan Road. These commercial nodes are intended for a small neighborhood commercial establishment that would primarily provide convenience goods to nearby residences.

#### Public/Semi-Public/Recreational

This land use includes publicly owned lands and also privately owned lands that are open to or are intended to be used by the public. Publicly owned lands include properties owned by the City of Boyne City, the City of East Jordan, Wilson Township, Charlevoix County and the State of Michigan. Privately owned properties intended for public use are lands owned by the Little Traverse Conservancy as well as the Raven Hill Discovery Center.



## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

### **Infrastructure**

Goal: Balance development with the availability of sufficient infrastructure and services.

Objective 1: Maintain, protect and improve the road system in the Township.

- Strategy 1: Prepare and adopt an annual road improvement plan that analyzes existing road conditions, identifies needs, and prioritizes improvements.
- Strategy 2: Maintain function and capacity of Township roads through proactive access management.
- Strategy 3: Insure public roads can be improved to County standards prior to the creation of additional development parcels.
- Strategy 4: Require private roadways be constructed to Township standards prior to development and agreements for maintenance are recorded.
- Strategy 5: Review the location of proposed roads to provide for logical road extension and efficient future property development.
- Strategy 6: Promote the use of Special Assessment Districts to fund road improvements
- Strategy 7: Where appropriate insure new roads are planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users...whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot or bicycle.

Objective 2: Ensure necessary infrastructure and services are provided for future development.

- Strategy 1: Direct development to areas that have infrastructure in place.
- Strategy 2: Work cooperatively with public and private agencies to facilitate the improvement or construction of infrastructure.
- Strategy 3: Require the completion of necessary infrastructure as a part of site plan approval and obtain adequate surety to ensure its completion.
- Strategy 4: Encourage and promote the development of broadband service.

### **Residential Development**

Goal: Maintain rural residential character.

Objective 1: Provide for a range of residential styles and densities that are suitably integrated with rural landscape and are compatible with adjacent residential uses.

- Strategy 1: Maintain low density development in the rural areas of the township.
- Strategy 2: Use clustering techniques to allow compact development in exchange for the conservation of large contiguous parcels.
- Strategy 3: Promote higher density residential development along existing primary routes close to existing infrastructure and facilities.
- Strategy 4: Limit commercial development to the areas identified on the future land use map

## **Commercial and Industrial Development**

Goal: Provide for commercial and industrial development that meets the market needs of Township residents and provides employment and business opportunities without compromising the Townships rural character.

Objective 1: Facilitate and support the transition of the M-75 frontage from industrial uses to retail/service oriented commercial uses.

- Strategy 1: Support the relocation of existing industrial type uses along the M-75 Frontage
- Strategy 2: Support retail and service oriented commercial uses intended for destination and passerby automobile traffic.
- Strategy 3: Prepare a sub-area plan for the M-75 corridor that addresses aesthetic design and access management issues.
- Strategy 4: Develop minimum design criteria for commercial building design and facades.
- Strategy 5: Discourage commercial development in areas not designated on the future land use map for future development.
- Strategy 6: Work with the City of Boyne City to have public sewer and water available to parcels along the M-75 commercial corridor.

Objective 2: Have neighborhood commercial uses that provide residents with convenience commercial goods close to there home.

- Strategy: Identify suitable locations for neighborhood commercial uses intended to provide convenience commercial goods to local residents.

Objective 3: Provide for home occupations and home based businesses that provide employment and business opportunities that are compatible with surrounding residential uses.

- Strategy : Adopt adequate site plan review and zoning regulations to insure compatibility of home occupations and home based businesses.

Objective 4: Encourage and support industrial development in appropriate locations.

- Strategy 1: Target small and light industrial uses that require limited amount infrastructure improvements.
- Strategy 2: Identify and promote the growth of industrial niche markets
- Strategy 3: Promote the development of complementary and related industries

## **Zoning and Administration**

Goal: Zoning regulations and administration that result in compatible and desired land uses that balance and protect the environment, property values and individual property rights

Objective 1: Maintain a township zoning ordinance that is current and relevant.

- Strategy 1: Completely review ordinance at least annually and promptly address all new land use issues and legislation.
- Strategy 2: Insure rezonings/special uses/site plans comply with future land use map and/or goals of the master plan.
- Strategy 3: Review and coordinate zoning regulations and districts with adjacent jurisdictions.
- Strategy 4: Focus regulations and policies on outcome and not processes.
- Strategy 5: Refine zoning regulations to provide incentives for desired types of development.

Objective 2: Maintain fair, consistent and effective administration of the zoning ordinance.

- Strategy 1: Continue to contract professional full time planning and zoning services.
- Strategy 2: Require potential developers attend a planning commission meeting and discuss conceptual plans prior to formal submittals for site plan review.

## **Environment**

Goal: Maintain and protect natural resources in the Township

Objective: Maintain the high quality of land, air, surface water and ground water resources.

- Strategy 1: Adopt zoning ordinance regulations for green belts and buffer strips.
- Strategy 2: Maintain adequate setback distances from lakes and streams.
- Strategy 3: Maintain annual township clean-up program.
- Strategy 4: Avoid the fractionalization of woodland resources.
- Strategy 5: Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as surface waters, wetlands and steep slopes through planning, education and ordinances.
- Strategy 6: Continue to identify and monitor invasive species and develop appropriate ordinance to address negative impacts.
- Strategy 7: Adopt Township storm water control ordinance and coordinate with County for administration and enforcement.

## **Regional Planning**

Goal: Promote productive planning relationships with other governmental units in the region.

Objective: Participate in multi-jurisdictional planning.

- Strategy 1: Coordinate planning activities with adjacent jurisdictions.
- Strategy 2: Review and participate in County planning activities.
- Strategy 3: Support strong County Planning and the retention of the County Planner Position

## **Recreation**

Goal: Provide recreation opportunities to township residents and visitors

Objective: Maintain and enhance recreation resources.

- Strategy 1: Review and update the Township recreation plan

Strategy 2: Work with county and state agencies and private property owners to develop additional recreational resources and opportunities.

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities for acquisition of private lands suitable for public recreation.

Strategy 4: Identify and develop a trail route through Wilson Township that connects Boyne City and East Jordan.

## **Planning Process and Implementation**

### **Planning Process**

In 2002, Public Act 168 of 1959 was amended to become the “Township Coordinated Planning Act”, Public Act 168 of 2002. The Wilson Township Planning Commission followed the required procedures prescribed in the Coordinated Planning Act in the preparation and adoption of this plan. As defined by the coordinated planning act, the Comprehensive Plan shall “serve as a basis for land use regulation, infrastructure development, public and private investment, and any plans which may detail one or more topics of the comprehensive plan.”

In the spring of 2012 the Planning Commission thoroughly reviewed the Townships current master plan and determined that the plan should be updated. In compliance with the requirements of the Coordinated Planning Act, an “Intent to Plan” notice was provided to all of the adjacent jurisdictions in May of 2012. The Planning process began with an inventory and analysis of natural resources, infrastructure, facilities and land use conditions throughout the Township. In addition to reviewing the physical aspects of the Township, an analysis of the demographic and socio-economic status of Wilson Township residents was completed using data from the 2010 Census. In addition a survey was sent out to all property owners in the Township. Through the spring and summer of 2012 the Wilson Township Planning Commission worked on the plan and based on the compiled data and in conjunction with resident comments and responses from a community survey, the Planning Commission developed a Future Land Use Map and the Goals, Objectives and Strategies for the Plan. In November of 2012 the Wilson Township Board approved a draft of the Plan be distributed to the notification list as required by the Coordinated Planning Act. On November 19, 2012 the Draft plan was distributed for comments. After the mandatory comment period all the received comments were reviewed and a public hearing was held on June 5, 2013 at the regular meeting of the Wilson Township Planning Commission which recommended approval of the Plan. On July 10, 2013 the Plan was approved by the Wilson Township Board. The approved plan was then distributed to the municipalities and agencies as required by the Coordinated Planning Act.