

CHAPTER 4

Existing Land Use

Pattern of Land Divisions

As development occurs, larger tracts of land are generally broken down into smaller parcels. Therefore, studying the existing pattern of land divisions is one way to analyze the status of land use and development. Land division patterns for Blue Lake Township are discussed below.

The largest land owner in the Township is the State of Michigan (over 16,000 acres), with large areas of contiguous undeveloped land, which is primarily used for recreation and forest management purposes. Privately held tracts ranging in size up to approximately 200 acres or greater are scattered throughout the interior of the Township.

Subdivisions and small tracts are primarily located along the lakefronts. Other small tract land divisions are occurring as small parcels along the roads are split from larger parcels. A site condominium does not actually create lots by land division. Therefore, a site condominium project may continue to appear as a large, undivided tract when it has already been converted to relatively dense residential use.

Existing Land Use Statistics and Characteristics

According to the 2010 Census, Blue Lake Township's land area is 34.7 square miles.

The map of existing land use, shown as Figure 4-1, illustrates the distribution of land uses within the Township. Figure 4-1 graphically represents the percent of the township in each land use category. The existing land use map is a compilation of data provided by Michigan Department of Natural Resources, aerial photo interpretation and additional field checking.

Blue Lake Township
Kalkaska County, Michigan

Figure 4-1 Existing Land Use/Land Cover - 2016

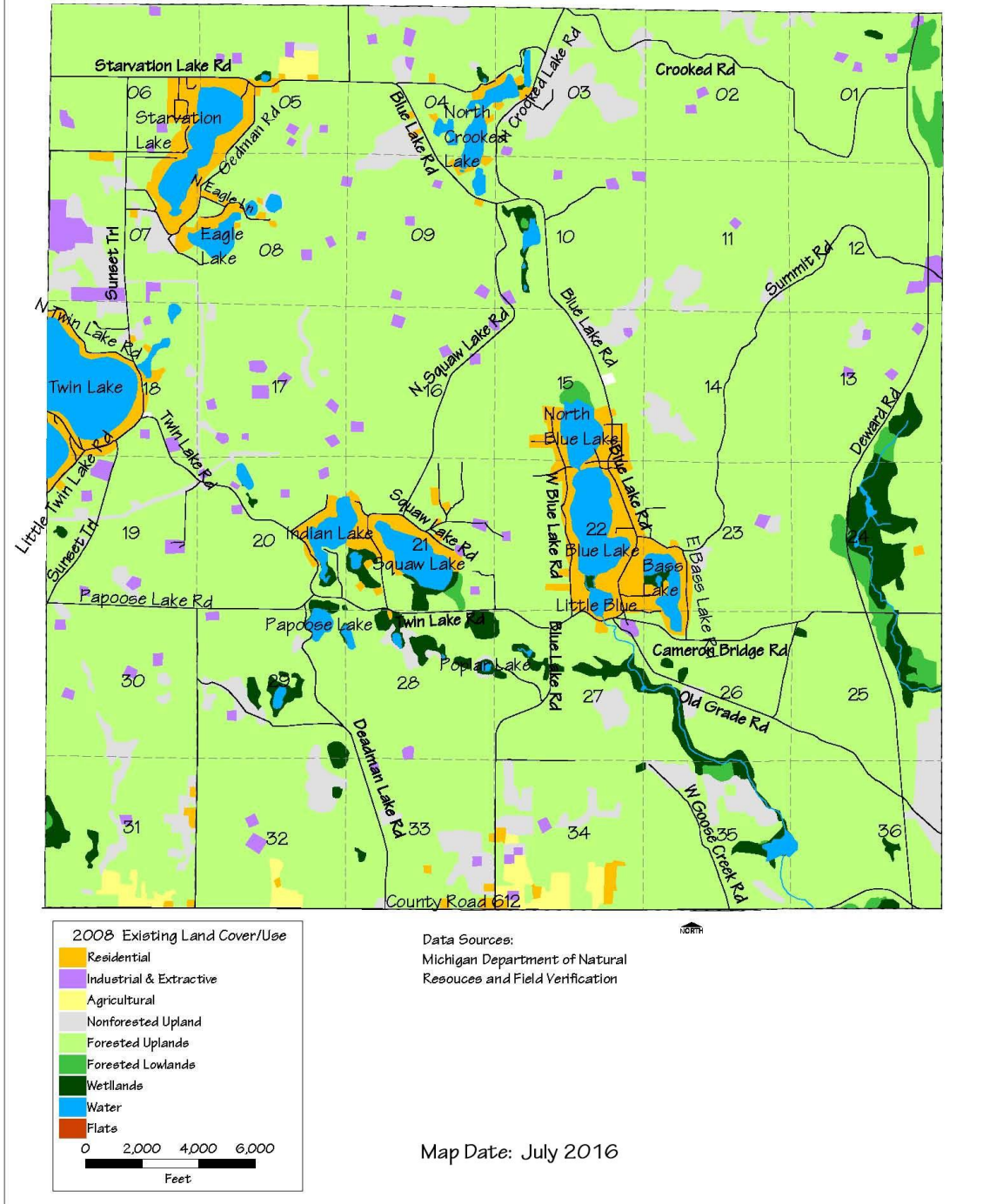


Table 4-1: Existing Land Use - 2008 2016 Blue Lake Township		
Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Township
Forested uplands	18,807.6	81.3
Nonforest	1,293.0	5.6
Residential	860.7	3.7
Wetlands	629.9	2.7
Industrial/Extractive/Util.	337.3	1.5
Forested lowlands	204.0	0.9
Agricultural	173.7	0.8
Commercial	5.0	0.02
Water	812.6	3.5
TOTAL	23,123.8	100.0
Source: Michigan Resource Information System, and MCP&D Field Verification and Map Updating.		

Forests and Wetlands

Forests, which include upland hardwoods and conifers, account for over 81 percent of Township land area in ~~2008-16.~~ —Heavily wooded areas are found throughout the Township, as can be seen in Figure 4-1.

Wetlands include land that has sufficient water at, or near, the surface to support wetland or aquatic vegetation. These areas are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland areas may also include land which supports lowland hardwoods and conifers. Wetland information was not verified by field inspection when these maps were compiled. Thus, the areas shown as wetlands by MIRIS may not actually meet State and Federal criteria for legally regulated wetlands.

Wetland areas comprise less than 3 percent of the Township in ~~2008~~2016.

Non-forested

The nonforested land category consists of herbaceous open and shrub land. As shown in Table 4-1, the percent of nonforested land in the Township is nearly 6 percent in ~~2008~~2016. Non-forested lands are scattered throughout the Township, as shown in Figure 4-1.

Residential

As can be seen from Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1, the amount of land being used for residential purposes is approximately 4 percent of the township in ~~2008~~2016.

The pattern of residential development within the Township is shown in Figure 4-1. Residential use has been the predominant land use along the lakefronts. Additionally, small tract land divisions continue to occur along many of the Township roads.

Agricultural

As shown in Table 4-1, agricultural lands occupy less than one percent of Township land area in ~~2008~~2016. As is illustrated in Figure 4-1, the active agricultural lands are dispersed mostly in the southern part of the Township.

Industrial/Transportation/Extractive

The major component of this land use category is oil and gas well sites, as shown in Figure 4-1. Table 4-1 shows a combined percent for industrial and extractive uses. While as of ~~2008~~2016 this land category is less than 2 percent of the Township land area, the owners of the approximately 25-30 miles of gas pipelines and a gas storage facility located in Blue Lake Township are the largest taxpayer in the Township. Also included in this category are transportation and utilities, such as utility line corridors.

Commercial

Table 4-1 shows that the amount of land developed as commercial in Blue Lake Township is less than one percent.