

Alcona County Community Action Plan – 2005

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the Alcona County Economic Development Corporation for hosting this county-wide planning effort.

Alcona County EDC 2005 board members:

Richard Gillies, Chair
Steve Ashford
Gary Horn
Tom Katona
Sheila Phillips
Manual Pompa
Terry Small

EDC Consultant:
Bethany Styer

Funding provided by:

National Forest Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990
through the U.S. Forest Service

Sponsor:

Huron Pines Resource Conservation & Development Area Council
501 Norway
Grayling, MI 49738

Coordinated by:

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
P.O. Box 457
Gaylord, MI 49734

Cover:
by **Jan Kellogg**

Alcona County Community Action Plan - 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE #
Chapter I: Introduction	
A. Purpose of the Action Plan	I-1
Eligibility	I-2
B. Development of the Action Plan	I-2
C. Future Use and Modification of the Action Plan	I-3
Chapter II: General Background	
A. Setting	II-1
Location and Regional Setting	II-1
Historical Perspective	II-2
Geology	II-3
Topography	II-7
Climate	II-7
Soils	II-8
Water Resources	II-10
Fish and Wildlife	II-10
Threatened and Endangered Species	II-11
Forest and Wetland Resources	II-14
Land Use Patterns	II-20
Housing Characteristics	II-22
Healthcare	II-26
Infrastructure and Services	II-27
B. Demographics	II-30
Past Trends and Projections	II-30
Population By Municipality	II-32
Seasonal Population	II-34
Population Projections	II-34
Gender	II-35
Age	II-36
Race and Ethnic Composition	II-40
Disability Status	II-43
Chapter III: Economic Development	
A. Comparison to the State and National Economy	III-1
B. State of the Local Economy	III-4
Past Industry Structure	III-4
Unemployment	III-6
Employment By Industry Sector	III-7
Occupational Forecast	III-7
Employer-Defined Problems	III-8
C. Labor Force	III-11
Demographic Characteristics	III-11

TABLE OF CONTENT – PAGE 2

TITLE	PAGE #
Age Composition	III-12
Education	III-12
Income	III-13
D. Needs	III-14
E. Opportunities and Projects	III-15
F. Implementation Strategy	III-19
IV. Project Implementation	
A. Introduction	IV-1
Background	IV-1
Project Goals	IV-1
B. Project Strategies	IV-2
Highest Priority Long-Term Projects	IV-2
Highest Priority Short-Term Projects	IV-5

LIST OF FIGURES

TITLE	PAGE #	
Figure II-1	Alcona County Location Map	II-1
Figure II-2	Alcona County's Municipalities Map	II-2
Figure II-3	Landform Units in Northeastern Lower Michigan	II-5
Figure II-4	Alcona County Glacial Landforms	II-6
Figure II-5	Alcona County Bedrock Geology	II-7
Figure II-6	Alcona County Soil Associations	II-8
Figure II-7	Alcona County Hydric Soils and Steep Slopes	II-9
Figure II-8	Alcona County Pre-settlement Vegetation	II-14
Figure II-9	Alcona County Land Classification	II-15
Figure II-10	Alcona County Forest Cover Types	II-15
Figure II-11	Alcona County Forestland Ownership	II-16
Figure II-12	Alcona County Area of Timberland by Forest Type and Ownership Group - 2001	II-18
Figure II-13	Alcona County National Wetlands Inventory	II-20
Figure II-14	Alcona County Land Cover	II-21
Figure II-15	Alcona County Present Land Use	II-22
Figure II-16	Northeast Michigan Owner and Renter Occupied Housing Units: 2000	II-25
Figure II-17	Northeast Michigan Medical Indicators	II-27
Figure II-18	Alcona County Transportation Map	II-29
Figure II-19	Alcona County Population 1930-2000	II-31
Figure II-20	Northeast Michigan Population 1900-2000	II-31
Figure II-21	Population Increase from 1990-2000 for Northeast Michigan, Michigan and U.S.	II-32
Figure II-22	Population Change for Alcona County, Michigan and U.S.: 1990-2000	II-33
Figure II-23	Northeast Michigan Population Projections: 2010 – 2020	II-35
Figure II-24	Northeast Michigan Population by Gender: 2000	II-36
Figure II-25	Northeast Michigan Population by Age: 2000	II-39
Figure II-26	Northeast Michigan 2000 Median Age by Census Tract	II-40
Figure II-27	Percent of Population 21-64 Years with a Disability for Northeast Michigan: 2000	II-43
Figure II-28	Percent of Population 21-64 Years with a Disability Who Are Employed for Northeast Michigan: 2000	II-44
Figure III-1	Unemployment Rate Change for Alcona County, Northeast Michigan, Michigan & U.S.: 1994-2003	III-1
Figure III-2	Median Household Income for Alcona County, Michigan & U.S.: 1999	III-2
Figure III-3	Poverty Status for Alcona County, Michigan & U.S.: 1999	III-3
Figure III-4	Income Types for Alcona County, Michigan & U.S.: 1999	III-3
Figure III-5	Employment by Industry for Alcona County, Michigan & U.S.: 2000	III-4

LIST OF FIGURES - Page 2

TITLE	PAGE #
Figure III-6 Wage and Salary Employment by Sector for Alcona County: 1993-2002	III-5
Figure III-7 Unemployment Rate Change for Alcona County: 1994-2003	III-6
Figure III-8 Northeast Michigan Occupational Employment Forecast: 2000-2010	III-7
Figure III-9 Age Composition for Alcona County and Michigan: 2000	III-12

LIST OF TABLES

TITLE	PAGE #	
Table II-1	Alcona County Threatened and Endangered Species	II-13
Table II-2	Alcona County Acres of Timberland by Forest and Ownership Type	II-17
Table II-3	Alcona County Net Volume of Growing Stock on Timberland by Major Species Group and Net Volume of Live Trees on Timberland by Hardwood/Softwoods Group	II-18
Table II-4	Alcona County Area of Timberland by Stand Size and Stocking Class of Growing Stock Trees	II-19
Table II-5	Alcona County Annual Growth and Removal	II-19
Table II-6	Alcona County Land Use	II-21
Table II-7	Alcona County Housing Characteristics: 1990-2000	II-23
Table II-8	Alcona County Housing Characteristics: 2000	II-24
Table II-9	Age of Housing Structures in Alcona County: 2000	II-25
Table II-10	Population for Alcona County and Municipalities: 1990-2000	II-33
Table II-11	Alcona County Population Projections: 2010-2020	II-34
Table II-12	Alcona County Gender by Municipality: 2000	II-35
Table II-13	Population by Age for Alcona County: 1990-2000	II-36
Table II-14	Age Distribution by Municipality for Alcona County: 2000	II-38
Table II-15	Age Comparison: Alcona County, Michigan & U.S. - 2000	II-39
Table II-16	Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for Alcona County 2000	II-41
Table II-17	Population Comparison by Race and Hispanic Origin for Alcona County, Michigan and U.S.: 2000	II-41
Table II-18	Alcona County Population by Race and Hispanic Origin by Municipality: 2000	II-42
Table II-19	Alcona County Disability Status: 2000	II-44
Table III-1	Northeast Michigan Occupational Employment Forecasts: 2000-2010	III-8
Table III-2	Summary of Alcona County CAT SWOT Analysis	III-9
Table III-3	Northeast Michigan Civilian Labor Force by Demographic Group: 1998	III-11
Table III-4	Alcona County Educational Attainment: 1990-2000	III-13
Table III-5	Median Household Income for Alcona County and State: 1989 and 1999	III-13
Table III-6	Summary of Economic and Community Development Needs for Alcona County	III-14
Table III-7	Alcona County Economic and Community Development Opportunities and Projects	III-15
Table III-8	Alcona County Highest Priority Long-Term and Short-Term Projects	III-19

I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the Action Plan

The economic well-being of many rural communities depends upon the goods and services that are derived from national forests. The economies of these communities can suffer from a lack of industrial and business diversity. This is especially serious in communities whose economies are predominantly dependent on recreation and timber resources. It can be exacerbated where management decisions made on the national forests by Federal and private organizations may disrupt the supply of those resources. The Forest Service has the expertise and resources to promote modernization and economic diversification of existing industries and services based on forest resources. They can also provide leadership to assist rural communities to upgrade existing industries and to diversify by developing new economic activity in non-forest related industries.

The National Forest Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990 aims to provide accelerated assistance to rural communities that are faced with acute economic problems associated with Federal, State or private sector resource management decisions and policies. In order to qualify the community must be located in or near a national forest and be economically dependent upon forest resources. This assistance is coordinated through a "Community Action Team" (CAT) and a "Community Action Plan" (CAP). The program provides aid to develop strategic action plans to diversify these communities' economic bases and to improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural areas.

The goal of the Community Action Plan is to provide technical assistance to economically disadvantaged communities. The Action Plan identifies opportunities to promote economic diversification and enhance local economies that are dependent upon national forest resources. The plan may include the goal of upgrading existing industries, development of new economic activity in non-forest related industries, and/or training and education activities directed towards meeting the community's planned goals. The Action Plan may also identify opportunities to use value-added products and services derived from national forest resources. This Community Action Plan will be implemented to upgrade existing industries to use forest resources more efficiently and to expand the economic base of rural communities so as to alleviate or reduce their dependence on national forest resources.¹

¹ Source: National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for assistance, the community must meet the requirements of the definition of “rural community” as stated in Sec. 2374 of the National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990. This act defines “rural community” as any town, township, municipality, or other similar unit of general purpose local government having a population of not more than 10,000 individuals that is located in a county where at least 15 percent of the total primary and secondary labor and proprietor income is derived from forestry, wood products, and forest-related industries such as recreation and tourism that is located within the boundary, or within 100 miles of the boundary, of a national forest. The term “rural community” also refers to any county or similar unit of general purpose local government having a population of not more than 22,550 individuals in which at least 15 percent of the total primary and secondary labor and proprietor income is derived from forestry, wood products, and forest-related industries such as recreation and tourism that is located within the boundary, or within 100 miles of the boundary, of a national forest².

B. Development of the Action Plan

Huron Pines Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) recognized the need for communities in Northeast Michigan³ who have a large amount of forestlands to participate in this CAP process. They applied and received funding from the U.S. Forest Service for four Community Action Plans in this Northeast Michigan region. Huron Pines contracted with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to help shepherd this planning process. Alcona County was the third of these communities to begin the process. Alcona County has had an active Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for many years. The EDC expressed a strong interest in being the host committee for the CAP process and implementation.

Representatives of Huron Pines RC&D and NEMCOG met with the Alcona County EDC in February 2005 discuss this plan. The EDC identified several members of the community at large who they thought would be valuable members of the Community Action Team (CAT). This list included a wide variety of community representatives of the government, private and civic sectors, as well as all of the EDC Board. A series of four community-input sessions was held from April through July. A list of those invited to these sessions is found in **Appendix A**.

A committee of the EDC reviewed a draft copy of the final plan at a meeting held in July. The full EDC Board adopted the final plan at their regular meeting in _____. They plan on presenting a summary of this plan to the Alcona County Board of Commissioners, the Township Boards and other organizations over the next several months. People who participated on the CAT Team will be invited to attend a meeting

² Source: National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990

³ Huron Pines RC&D Northeast Michigan counties are: Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Alcona, Otsego, Roscommon and Presque Isle.

within next six months to review the final plan and discuss what needs to be done towards implementation.

C. Future Use and Modification of the Action Plan

Now that the Alcona County Community Action Plan is complete, the EDC plans on using it as a guide for future economic development. They will take the highest priority long-term and short-term projects and work towards implementing them. A review of the progress made on the plan will be made at each monthly meeting.

An annual appraisal of the plan will take place in conjunction with a public input session. The project lists will be reviewed for progress made during the proceeding year. Discussions will take place regarding which projects should remain on the list and which new ones should be added. The projects will be prioritized so that the EDC will have a guide for the following year.

II. General Background

A. Setting

Location and Regional Setting

Alcona County is located in the northeastern part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan on the western shore of Lake Huron (**Figure II-1**). The county measures twenty-four miles north to south and thirty miles east to west and encompasses approximately 679 square miles or approximately 434,560 acres. Its eastern border is defined by Lake Huron, which offers some 27 miles of coastline.



Figure II-1
Alcona County Location

The townships of Alcona, Caledonia, Curtis, Greenbush, Gustin, Harrisville, Hawes, Haynes, Mikado, Millen and Mitchell are located in Alcona County. There are two incorporated places in the county: the City of Harrisville located in Harrisville Township and the Village of Lincoln in Gustin and Hawes Townships. There are several unincorporated places within county. They include Curran in Mitchell Township, Glennie and Curtisville in Curtis Township, Greenbush in Greenbush Township, Hubbard Lake and Spruce in Caledonia Township, Mikado in Mikado Township, Black River in Alcona Township, and Barton City in Millen Township (**Figure II-2**).

Upland forest is the predominate land cover in the county, with much of that being pine and oak. These drought tolerant species prefer and thrive on the mostly sandy soils. Farming is limited in Alcona County, as indicated in a countywide land cover/use inventory, compiled in the early 1980's, which found approximately 41,600 acres of farmland. As in other parts of the State, there is a downward trend in the number of active farms. Farmland tends to be concentrated in eastern parts of Caledonia, Mikado, Hawes, and Curtis Townships; and around the communities of Barton City and Curran. The Au Sable River, Pine River, Black River and Thunder Bay River systems, with their interconnected network of smaller streams and creeks, and the many lakes and impoundments provide an abundant source of high quality surface water features.

The greatest attraction for the residents and visitors of northern Michigan is the area's undeveloped and clean environment and its rural nature. Recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, golfing, snowmobiling, boating and a multitude of other outdoor activities attract people from urban 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 is a major economic base and income generator.

At the same time, the environment places constraints on human activities. Certain critical and sensitive parts of the natural landscape cannot be altered without creating problems that are not easily corrected. Increased flooding and soil erosion due to the indiscriminate filling of wetlands and clearing of land are but two examples. Therefore, it is essential that any future development respect the different characteristics of the natural environment. This is important in preserving the attractiveness of this part of the State, preventing potential hazards related to undue alteration of the land, and maximizing the economic benefits of the tourist and recreation industry.

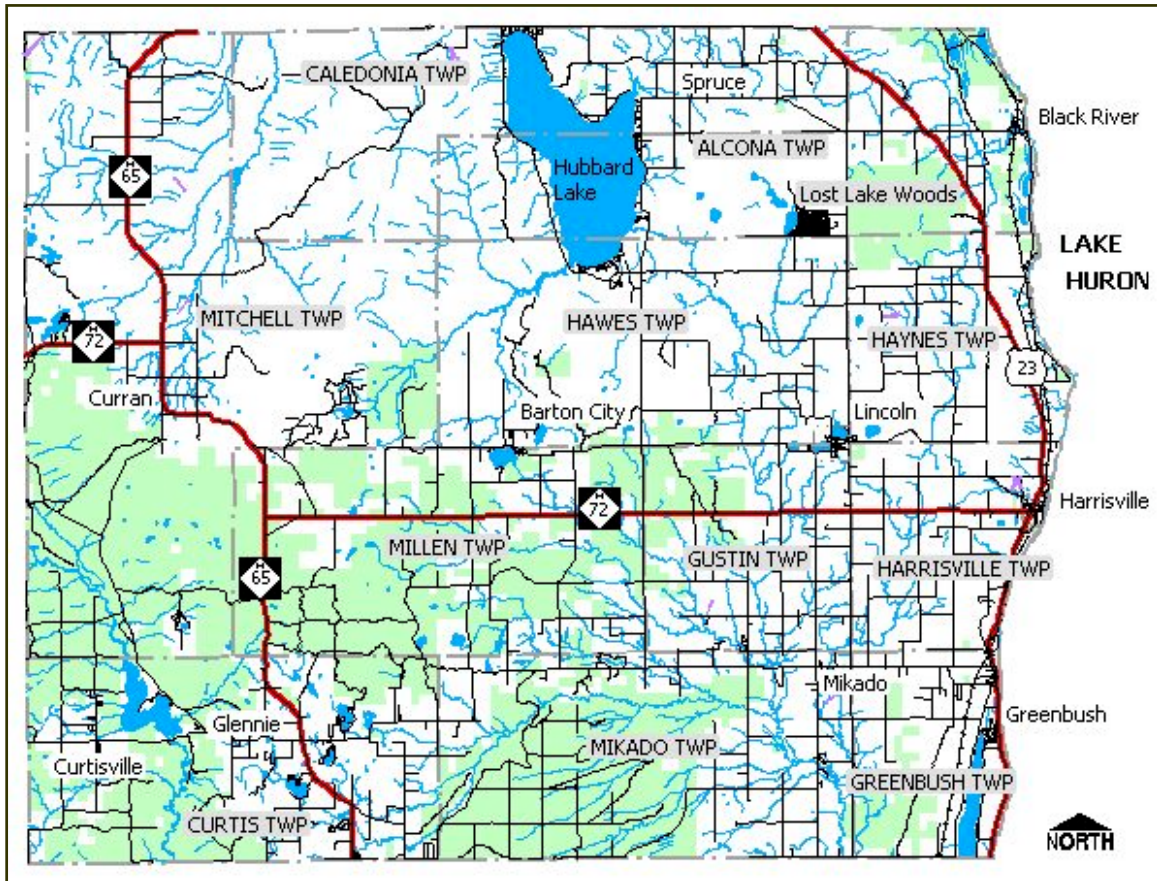


Figure II-2
Alcona County's Municipalities

Historical Perspective

Alcona has a rich history and its human occupation has spanned at least the past eleven centuries. The earliest artifacts found here are stone lance heads, similar to those used by the ancestors of today's Native Americans from approximately 9,000 BC. Native Americans, while traveling to trading posts, would stop to camp on Lake Huron's shoreline near "The Great Black Rock", which is north of Greenbush. Out in the lake offerings were placed in the rock's hollowed out surface to ensure safe journeys.

Alcona County was first known as the Negwegan District, formed by the Michigan Legislature in 1840, taking its name from the Chippewa Indian Chief. In 1843, historian

Henry R. Schoolcraft changed the name of the district to the Chippewa word meaning “a fine plain”. In 1846, the first settlement in the county was located at the village of Springport as a commercial fishing port. The first crop, rye, was raised near Springport in 1857. Additional ports were established at Alcona, Black River, and Harrisville to accommodate the growing fishing fleets and to serve the lumber industry. The Sturgeon Point Lighthouse opened in 1870 as a navigation aid, while the Life Saving Station opened in 1876.

In 1856, Davidson and Holden sold their water-powered saw mill to Benjamin Harris. The mill was located at Mill Pond and was developed into a grist and saw mill. The village at this mill, Harrisville, became the county seat when Alcona County was established in 1869. The expansion of logging opened the county westward to Curran by 1875. The largest saw mill was at Black River operated by Alger & Co. until it burned in 1898.

Today, the commercial ports no longer serve lumber and fishing commerce. The last commercial fishing business, the McCoy’s of Black River, closed in 1950. Today lumbering is still important to the Alcona county area. Farming also continues with beef cattle, alfalfa seed production, berries and dairying. The highway and road system serves the transportation needs of the forest producer, farmer and tourists. Alcona County is a popular tourist spot with nearly thirty miles of Lake Huron shoreline and one of Michigan's largest inland lakes, Hubbard Lake. There are miles of trout streams including the Au Sable River Valley area and hiking and snowmobiling with over one third of the county encompassing the Huron National Forest.

Geology

The rolling hills, river valleys, swamps and lakes were created by the retreating continental glacier some 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. Beneath this thick mantle of the glacial deposits lays a foundation of layered sedimentary bedrock.

Starting some two million years ago, during the Pleistocene era, continental glaciers formed in the Hudson Bay area. Several times, over this two million year period, the massive sheets of ice built up and inched their way south across what is today Michigan. The massive ice sheets, more than one mile thick, advanced in a southerly direction, bulldozing their way across the landscape. The glacier pushed material in front of it, incorporated rocks and soil into the debris laden ice; and scraped, ground and broke apart the sedimentary bedrock of the Michigan Basin.

Each advance and retreat of the continental glaciers took tens of thousands of years. This reoccurring process shaped and reshaped the land; obliterating and then creating hills, valleys, rivers and lakes, swamps and marshes. The last glacial period, called the Wisconsin era, created the landscape we know today. The glacier left behind boulders, rocks, cobble, sand, gravel, silt, clay and loam. In some areas the material was deposited in unsorted masses called till plains, ground moraines and end moraines. Water flowing from the melting glaciers also sorted materials, creating outwash channels, sand deltas,

kames and eskers. Fine materials, captured in the fast moving glacial meltwater, settled to the bottom of expansive glacial lakes creating lacustrine clay and silt plains.

Surface Geology

Most of the topographic features of Alcona County are a result of erosion or deposition during the Wisconsin Glaciation, the last glacial period (**Figure II-3 and Figure II-4**). The part of the glacier that covered Michigan began to recede about 14,000 years ago and moved completely out about 8,000 years ago. The glacial drift (deposit) that was left as the glaciers melted covered the entire county to a depth of several hundred feet. It formed such topographic features as moraines, till plains, outwash plains, lake plains and glacial drain ways. The western edge of the county is covered by the Hale Till Plain. It is nearly level to gently rolling and is dominantly loamy and clayey soils.

The dominate feature of the southern part of the county is the Jack Pines Delta. It is a sandy, nearly level to rolling area dominated by the Huron National Forest. The rest of the county is dominated by the Oscoda Lake Plain. This nearly level to undulating area is largely clayey soils with thin sandy caps in the southern part and sandy soils in the northern part. In Alcona County, two significant morainic formations can be seen; one in the area of the Silver Valley and the other in the northwest portion of the county.

As the glaciers receded, melting water exerted a great influence on the terrain in Alcona County. Much of the area that encompasses the Huron National Forest is a large river delta. As the Au Sable River passed through Alcona, Oscoda and Crawford Counties, it picked up sand and silt and later deposited them at the mouth of the river creating a sand delta. During this time, Lake Huron was relatively high and covered much of the eastern and southeastern portion of the county. The lake's shoreline stretched from the west and south of Whittemore, northeast to Sand Lake, and on north through the delta area around Foote Dam. As the level of Lake Huron dropped, the river began to cut deeply into the delta thus creating the area known as the high banks.

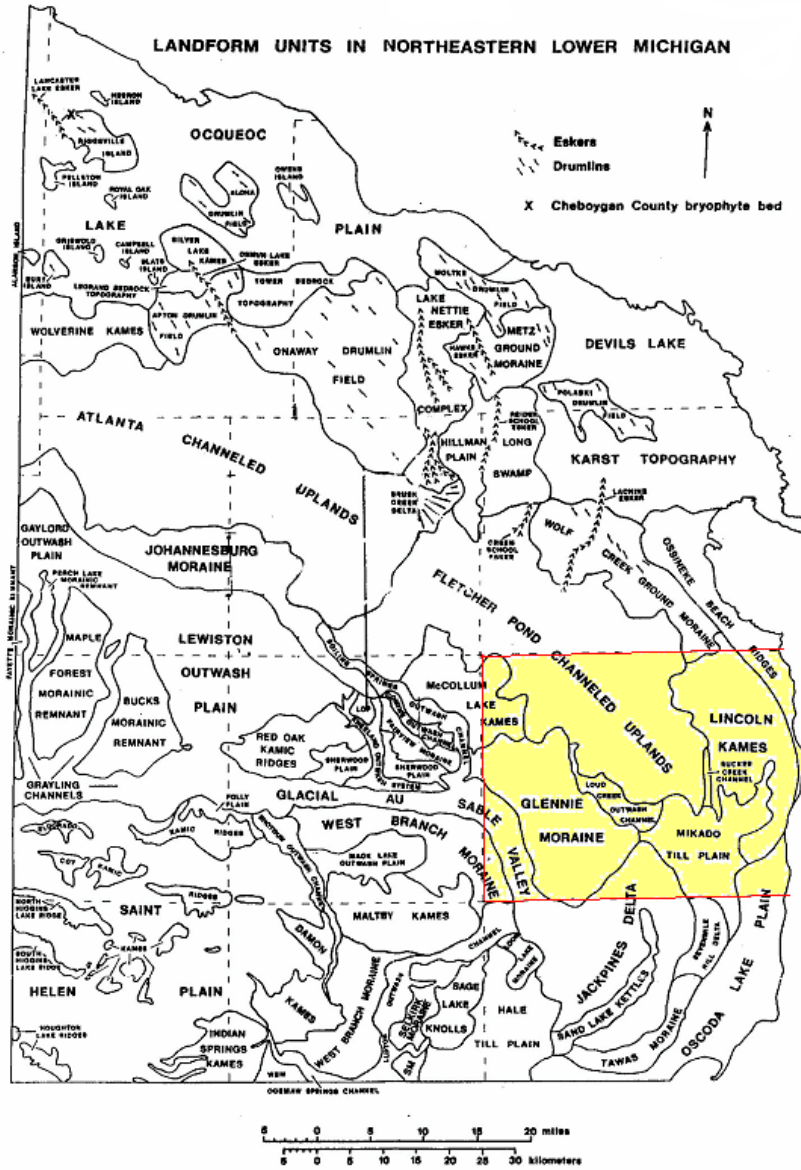
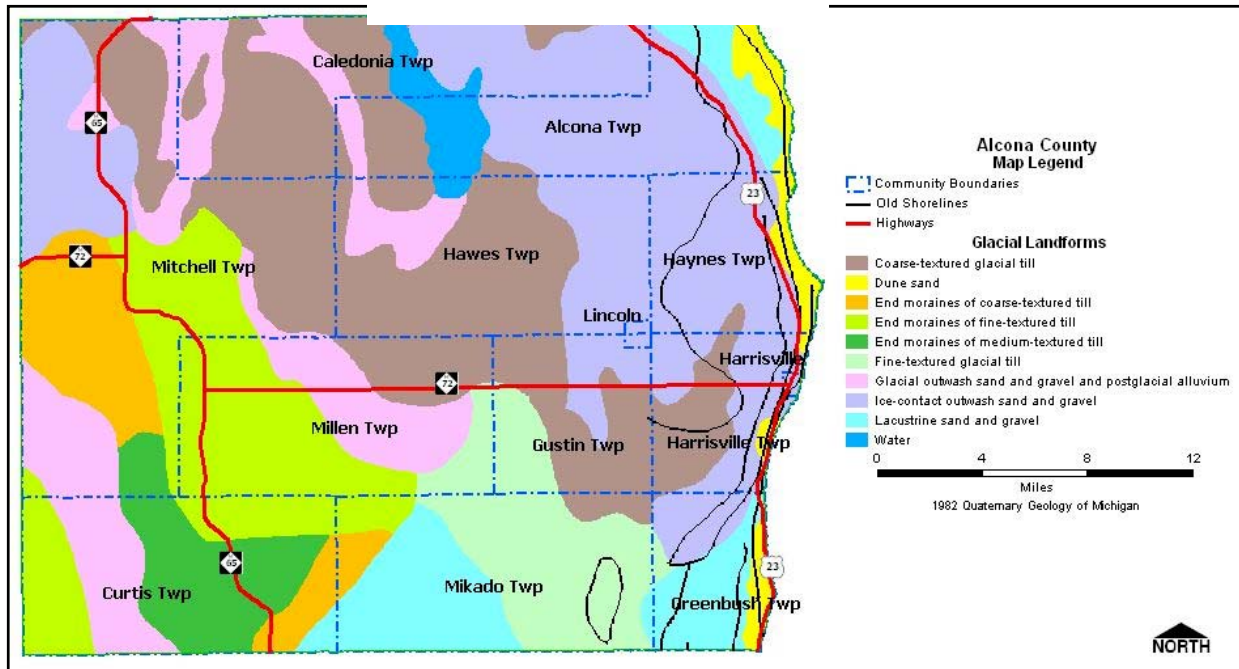


Figure II-3
Landform Units in Northeastern Lower Michigan

Figure II-4
Alcona County Glacial Landforms



Bedrock Geology

In Michigan's Lower Peninsula, the bedrock formations date from the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras. During these last two time periods, this area had a climate quite different from that which we know today. For some time the area was covered by a warm tropical sea, then dense tropical swamp and finally, much later, by great glaciers. Sediments from the warm seas settled to the bottom and formed layers or strata of sedimentary rock made up of silt, clay, sediments, marine animals, plants, coral, and other calcareous materials. These deposits formed shale, limestone, and dolomite bedrock. The uppermost bedrock in Alcona County consists of materials from the upper and lower Mississippian series of the Paleozoic era. Various strata contain minerals of varied importance. In addition to the oil and natural gas which has formed in porous rock or pockets between strata, economic deposits of limestone, gypsum, salt & brine were found. Coldwater Shale and Antrim Shale bedrock formations subcrop most of the county. Marshall Sandstone, one of the most important bedrock aquifers in the state, subcrops the southwestern corner of the county (**Figure II-5**).

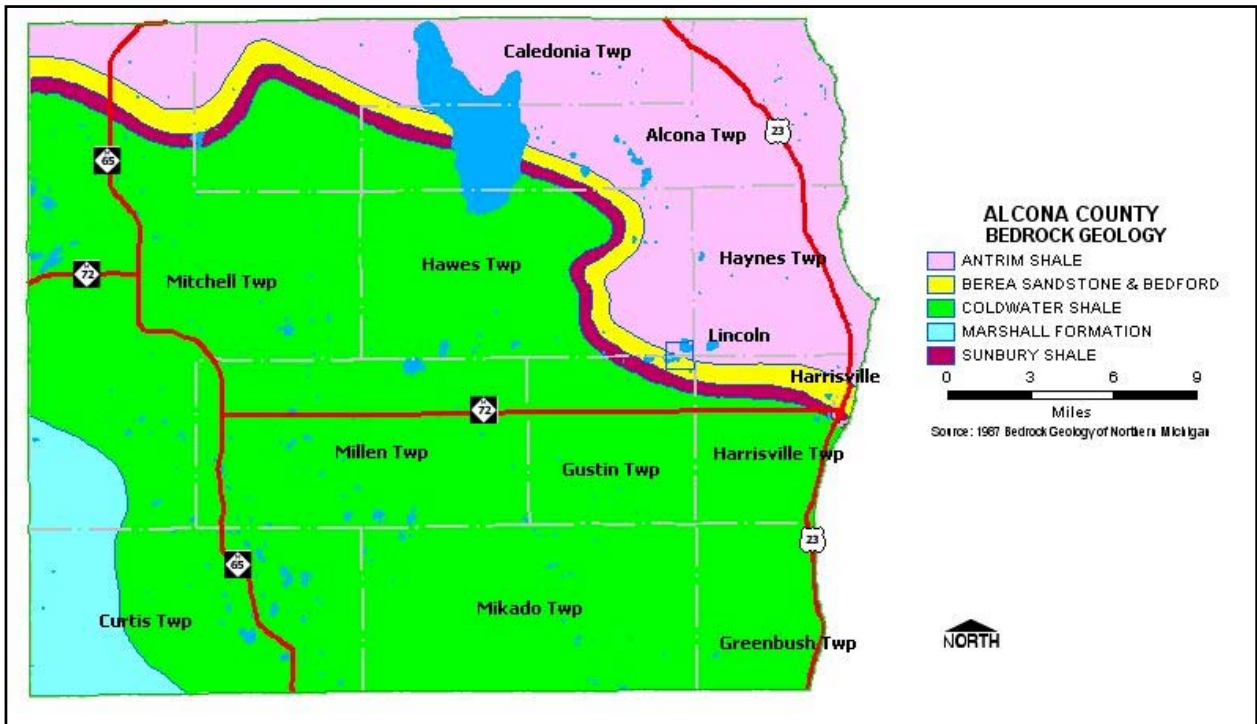


Figure II-5
Alcona County Bedrock Geology

Topography

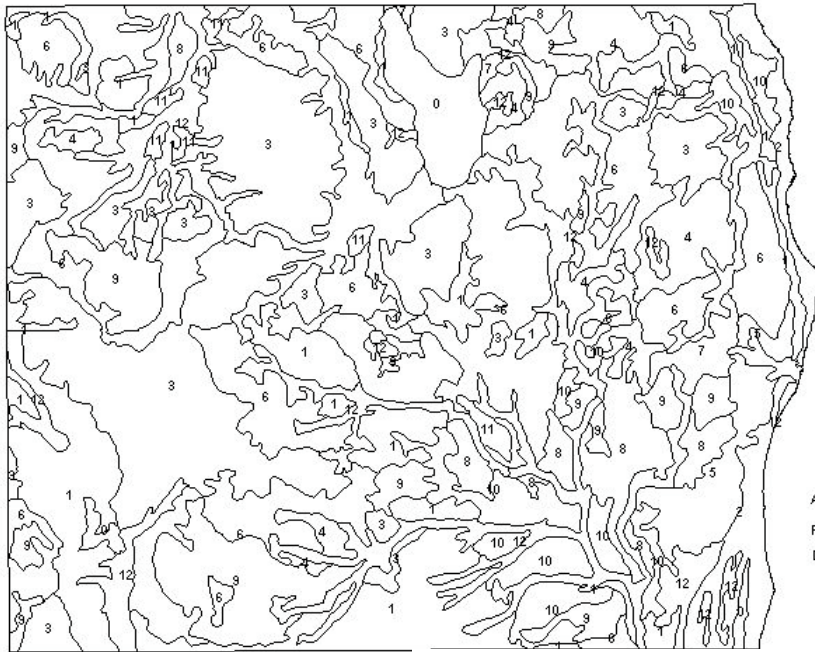
Alcona County's topography is classified as consisting of various level and undulating plains and rolling to hilly moraine areas. Elevations in the county range from 577 feet above sea level at the shoreline of Lake Huron (the eastern boundary of the county) and climbing to the highest elevation of 1,273 feet above sea level, in an area three miles southwest of Curran. There is much gradual sloping, but there are also portions of the county where elevations fall drastically, as along the western and eastern shoreline of the Alcona Dam Pond; these steep slopes are extremely unstable.

Climate

Typical of northern Michigan, the distinct four seasons offer an ever changing landscape. Long snowy, cold winters; and moderately warm summers are separated by a cool, green spring and a cool colorful fall. Located in the northeastern part of the northern Lower Peninsula, the eastern boundary of the county is formed by Lake Huron. Given this geographic location, the weather is influenced by the lake moderating effect of Lake Huron. The climate along the immediate Lake Huron shore is semi-marine in nature and lacks many of the temperature extremes found only a few miles inland.

According to the USDA Soil Survey of Alcona County, the average annual precipitation is 29.46 inches (includes water equivalent of snowfall). Precipitation is heaviest during the summer months with 60 percent of the annual precipitation from April through September. The average annual snowfall is 49.5 inches. Records show a long term average of 93 days when there is at least one inch of snow on the ground. Of course, the number of days varies greatly from year to year. The average daily temperature ranges from 67.9 °F for the month of July to 20.0 °F during January. The average mid-afternoon relative humidity is 61 percent.

Soils



ALCONA COUNTY SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

- 0 Water
- AREAS DOMINATED BY NEARLY LEVEL TO HILLY, WELL-DRAINED TO POORLY DRAINED SANDY SOILS
- 1 Grayling-Rubicon Association: nearly level to undulating
- 2 Rubicon-Eastport-Roscommon Association: nearly level to moderately steep
- 3 Grayling-Graycalm-Montcalm Association: undulating to hilly
- AREAS DOMINATED BY UNDULATING TO HILLY, WELL DRAINED AND MODERATELY WELL-DRAINED SANDY AND LOAMY SOILS
- 4 Emmet-Onaway Association: undulating to rolling
- 5 Rousseau-Alcona-Montcalm Association: undulating to rolling
- 6 Montcalm-Emmet Association: undulating to hilly
- AREAS DOMINATED BY NEARLY LEVEL TO HILLY, WELL-DRAINED TO POORLY DRAINED LOAMY AND CLAYEY SOILS
- 7 Bohemian-Brimley-Bowers Association: nearly level to undulating
- 8 Nester-Kawkawlin-Sims Association: nearly level to undulating
- 9 Nester-Ubly Association: undulating to rolling
- AREAS DOMINATED BY NEARLY LEVEL TO GENTLY UNDULATING, SOMEWHAT POORLY DRAINED AND POORLY DRAINED SANDY SOILS AND VERY POORLY DRAINED ORGANIC SOILS
- 10 Brevort-Iosco Association: nearly level to gently undulating
- 11 Augres-Roscommon Association: nearly level
- 12 Carbondale-Lupton-Linwood Association: nearly level

Figure II-6
Alcona County Soil Associations

Source: USDA

Hydric Soils and Steeply Sloped Areas

The Natural Resource Conservation Service completed a detailed soil survey of Alcona County. A digital or computerized version of the soil survey maps was acquired from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MIRIS program. The soil survey identified 153 different kinds of soil in the county. The soils range widely in texture, natural drainage, slope and other characteristics. Well drained and moderately well drained soils make up about 68 percent of the county, somewhat poorly drained soils make up about 20 percent, and poorly drained soils make up about 12 percent (**Figure II-6**).

Figure II-7 is a color thematic map that classifies hydric soils and soils on steep slopes. Development in these areas with severe building constraints should be limited. Hydric soils are saturated, flooded or ponded during part of the growing season and are classified as poorly drained and very poorly drained. Hydric soils have poor potential for building site development and sanitary facilities. Wetness and frequent ponding are severe problems that are difficult and costly to overcome. Sites with high water tables may be classified as wetlands and a wetlands permit would be required to develop these areas.

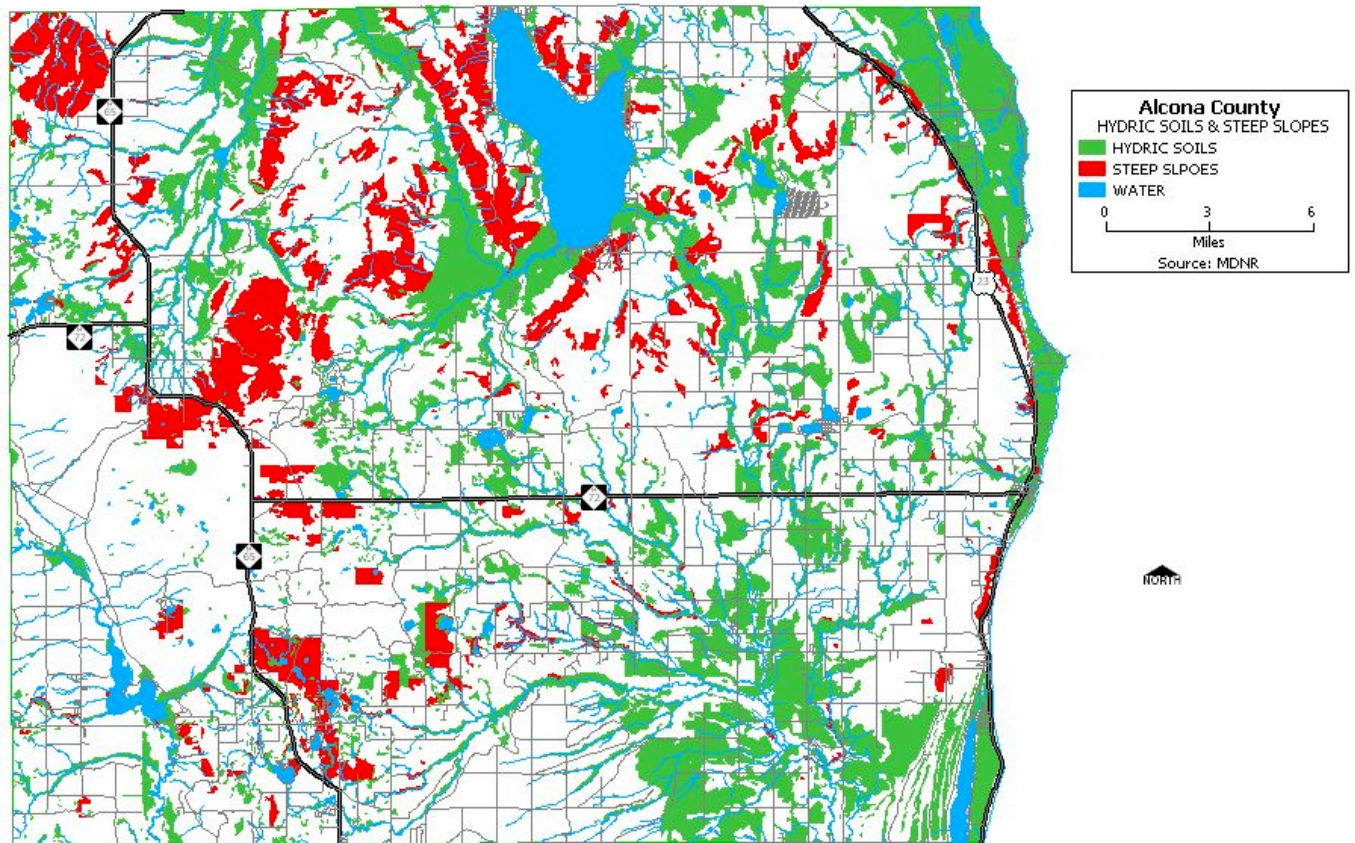


Figure II-7
Alcona County Hydric Soils and Steep Slopes

The hydric soils are mainly located adjacent to streams and creeks. This connectivity of riparian wetlands and surface water features can be seen throughout the landscape. There are extensive hydric soils areas to the southwest of Hubbard Lake, in large areas of southeast Alcona County, and in areas along the Lake Huron shoreline.

Hills and steeply rolling terrain may provide opportunities for spectacular views of the landscape. However, steeply sloped sites have severe building constraints, are more difficult and costly to develop. Maintenance costs tend to be higher on steeply sloped

terrain. Special design standards such as erosion control measures, limiting size of disturbed areas, retaining natural vegetation, re-vegetation, slope stabilization and on-site retention of water run-off from impervious surfaces would all serve to minimize resource impacts. According to information presented in the Alcona County Soil Survey areas with slopes 18 percent and greater are minimal and are concentrated in the northwest corner of the county. Steep slopes can also be found in central areas of the county, in the northwest corner of Mitchell Township, and on the west side of US-23 near the coast.

Water Resources

There are 233 bodies of water in Alcona County which, when combined, total over 13,000 acres of surface water. The combined length of all rivers and streams in the county is 301 miles. Additionally, there is more than 68 miles of Lake Huron shoreline along the coast of Alcona County.

The largest lakes that are at least partially found within the county are: Alcona Dam Pond (1,008 acres), Vaughn Lake (115 acres), Cedar Lake (775 acres in the county), Jewell Lake (193 acres), Hubbard Lake (9,200 acres), and McCollum Lake (81 acres in the county). Lakes and river shorelines are continually facing increased pressure from development as more seasonal homes and retirement homes are being built in the county. The recreation industry of Alcona County can be impacted by this development. There are other factors to consider as development occurs near shorelines, such as nutrient delivery rates into lakes and streams, accidental spills of contaminants, erosion control, and even scenic view quality.

Groundwater supplies in the county are very productive in the predominant gravels and sands of the glacial drift. The groundwater aquifers are recharged by precipitation which is readily absorbed by the permeable soils. Individual wells near the lakes and streams are usually quite shallow due to the high water table. The county drains into the Au Sable, Pine, and Comstock River systems, eventually reaching Hubbard Lake or Lake Huron.

Fish and Wildlife

Alcona County has been known as a good deer range for many years. The large deer herd built up following the wildfires of the 1890's to 1920's, with the herd peaking in the late 1940's to early 1950's. Large areas of public hunting ground and the tremendous deer herd combine to attract a large number of hunters to the county.

Alcona County, along with four other neighboring counties (Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle), is within the area which has been impacted by an outbreak of Bovine Tuberculosis (T.B.) in the local deer herd and in other wild animals. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has created a special separate deer management unit to oversee the situation, called DMU452. This allows the DNR to enforce special regulations covering deer hunting and feeding within these counties. The incident of Bovine T.B. found in the deer herd of this area has been very low (estimated

at under one percent of the population). The DNR and other agencies are trying to manage the situation and prevent it from becoming more wide spread. Since the disease was first detected here in 1996, the prevalence rate has decreased by 65 percent. This has been achieved through instituting regulations that reduce the amount of nose to nose contact (which is how the disease is spread) within the deer herd, through regulations on deer feeding. The DNR has also increased the length of the deer hunting season and are encouraging the hunting of antlerless deer. The overall goal is to totally eradicate T.B. from the wildlife community. The DNR is presently looking at instituting other methods of eradicating the disease that are more acceptable to hunters and landowners.

In addition to deer hunting, small game hunting is very popular with the local residents of Alcona County, as well as with tourists. Grouse, woodcock, rabbit and squirrel attract these hunters due to excellent hunting conditions.

Riparian forests adjacent to streams and lakes provide critical habitat for many species of wildlife and reptiles. The land and water interface in a long narrow, sometimes meandering, edge habitat. In Alcona County as well as throughout Michigan, natural undeveloped lakeshore habitat is one of the most endangered habitats. There is a continuing trend for lake lot owners to clear brush, aquatic weeds, dead trees and live trees that interfere with a wide-open view of the water. The native vegetation is replaced with well manicured and chemically treated lawns down to the waters edge. This practice not only degrades critical wildlife habitat but also impacts water quality by diminishing the riparian zone's capacity to filter nutrients and its ability to stabilize shoreline erosion.

Birds that use floodplain habitat for feeding and nesting include the red shouldered hawk, barred owl, kingfisher, northern oriole, red-headed woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, woodcock, wood duck and great blue heron. Deer, raccoon, northern flying squirrel, water vole, mink and river otter also frequent these areas. Numerous species of amphibians and reptiles, such as turtles, frogs, snakes, salamanders and newts can all be found in river/flood plain areas.

The rivers and lakes in particular support much of the tourist industry in the county. Canoeing is a popular sport. Fishing for trout is very popular on most streams, with several lakes also having trout populations. The warmer lakes normally have bluegill, bass, perch and pike. Tiger musky have also been stocked in several lakes.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Alcona County is home to a number of plants and animals that are threatened endangered or are of special concern as identified in Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) database. Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) is a program of Michigan State University Extension that works in close cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy. The following list (**Table II-1**) presents the endangered or threatened plant and animal species which can be found in Alcona County, and which are protected under the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of the State of Michigan (Part 365 of Public Act 451 of 1994, as

amended). This list also includes plant and animal species of special concern. While not afforded legal protection under the act, many of these species are of concern because of declining or relict populations in the State. Should these species continue to decline, they would be recommended for threatened or endangered status. Protection of special concern species before they reach dangerously low population levels would prevent the need to list them in the future by maintaining adequate numbers of self-sustaining populations.

The most widely known of the endangered species is the Kirtland's Warbler. The warblers utilize only young jack pine stands for nesting. In a natural unmanaged setting, jack pine forests are perpetuated by forest fires. During prehistoric times, wildfires would periodically sweep across the landscape, burning native pine forests and creating favorable seed beds for species like jack pine. In fact, jack pines need fire to open the cones and release seeds. According to the Natural Features Inventory, "The Kirtland's Warblers' breeding range currently encompasses ten counties in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula and four counties in the Upper Peninsula. They primarily over winter in the 600 mile Bahaman Archipelago, although, individuals also have been observed on surrounding island chains (Evers 1994)."

The bulk of the breeding population, 93 percent of the singing males in 2001, resides in the Northern Lower Peninsula counties of Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Roscommon, and Alcona. During the breeding season, the Kirtland's Warbler is dependent upon large, relatively homogeneous stands of jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) with scattered small openings. Warblers will start using a jack pine stand when the height of the tree reaches five to seven feet, or at an average tree age of 5-8 years old. Nests are built on the ground, concealed in the low cover of grasses, blueberries, sweet fern, bracken fern, blackberry, trailing arbutus, and/or wintergreen. Once jack pines reach a height greater than 18 feet (approximately 20 years old), the lower branches begin to die and the ground cover changes in composition, thereby leading to unfavorable nesting conditions. (Evers 1994). Jack pines need fire to open the cones and release seeds. All managed jack pine stands are harvested and planted or seeded mechanically to create warbler nesting habitat. Occasionally, harvested sites may be burned prior to planting or seeding.

Table II-1			
Alcona County Threatened and Endangered Species			
Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's Hawk		SC
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Northern Goshawk		SC
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Red-shouldered Hawk		T
<i>Calypso bulbosa</i>	Calypso or Fairy-slipper		T
<i>Carex albolutescens</i>	Greenish-white Sedge		T
<i>Carex frankii</i>	Frank's Sedge		SC
<i>Carex nigra</i>	Black Sedge		E
<i>Cirsium hillii</i>	Hill's Thistle		SC
<i>Cirsium pitcheri</i>	Pitcher's Thistle	LT	T
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's Head Lady's-slipper		SC
<i>Dalibarda repens</i>	False-violet		T
<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	Prairie Warbler		E
<i>Dendroica kirtlandii</i>	Kirtland's Warbler	LE	E
Dry northern forest	Dry Woodland, Upper Midwest Type		
Dry-mesic northern forest			
<i>Emys blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle		SC
<i>Festuca scabrella</i>	Rough Fescue		T
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon		T
<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle		SC
Great blue heron rookery	Great Blue Heron Rookery		
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	PS:LT,PDL	T
Hardwood-conifer swamp			
<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	Ginseng		T
<i>Percina copelandi</i>	Channel Darter		E
<i>Planogyra asteriscus</i>	Eastern Flat-whorl		SC
Poor conifer swamp			
Poor fen	Poor Shrub/herb Fen, Upper Midwest Type		
<i>Prunus alleghaniensis</i> var. <i>davisii</i>	Alleghany or Sloe Plum		SC
<i>Pterospora andromedea</i>	Pine-drops		T
Rich conifer swamp			
<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i> <i>catenatus</i>	Eastern Massasauga	C	SC
<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern		T
<i>Trimerotropis huroniana</i>	Lake Huron Locust		T
Wooded dune and swale complex			
Source: Michigan Natural Feature Inventory, MSU Extension - 2003.			
*LE = Listed endangered, LT = Listed threatened, PDL = Proposed delist, PS = Partial status (federally listed in only part of its range), C = Species being considered for federal status.			
** E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special concern.			

Forest and Wetland Resources

Pre-Settlement Vegetation

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has compiled pre-settlement vegetation maps of counties in Michigan (**Figure II-8**). The maps were generated from information contained in the first government land survey notes in the 1800's along with information such as current vegetation, land forms and soils. A review of the presettlement vegetation map of Alcona County show extensive areas were covered with pine and oak forests. This clearly shows a long history of wildfires in the area. The map delineates jack pine-red pine forest, white pine-red pine forest, pine barrens and pine/oak barrens, which combined account for 36 percent of the County. In the late 1800's extensive logging and subsequent wildfires resulted in the conversion of white pine-red pine forests to oak and aspen forests. This is most noticeable in Caledonia, Alcona, Hawes, Millen, and Mitchell Townships. Areas that were once covered with pine forests still have a high propensity for wildfires.

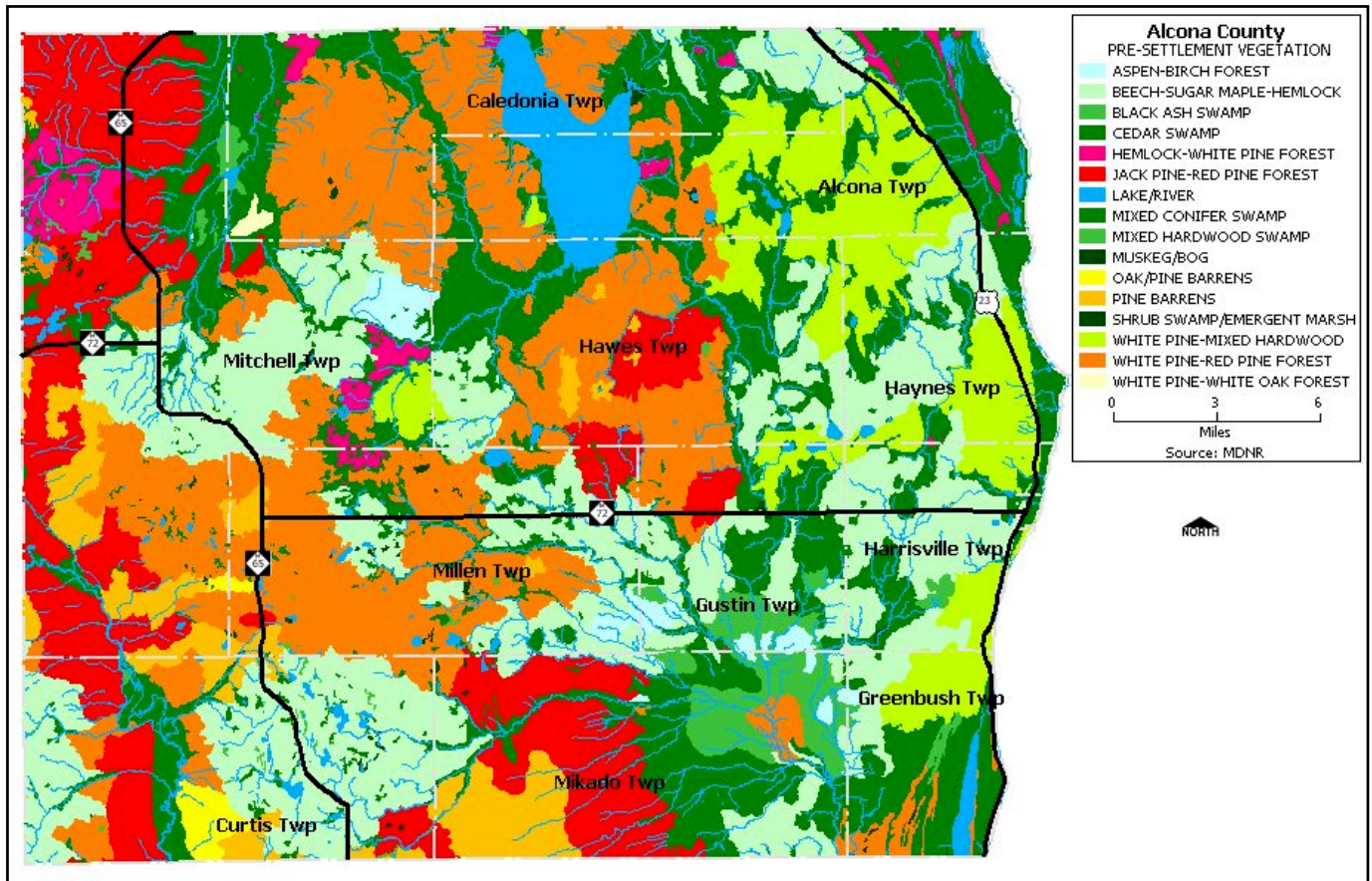


Figure II-8
Alcona County Pre-settlement Vegetation

Forests

According to 2001 statistics from the U.S. Forest Service, Alcona County has a total land area of 388,904 acres. Accessible forestland totals 283,567.1 acres (approximately 73% of the county’s total land area). A total of 100,557.9 acres are classified as nonforest, while 4,779.0 acres are classified as census water (**Figure II-9**). The Forest Service defines census water as permanent inland water surfaces, such as lakes, reservoirs, and ponds at least 40 acres in area; and streams, sloughs, estuaries, and canals at least one-eighth of a statute mile wide.

Alcona County Land Classification

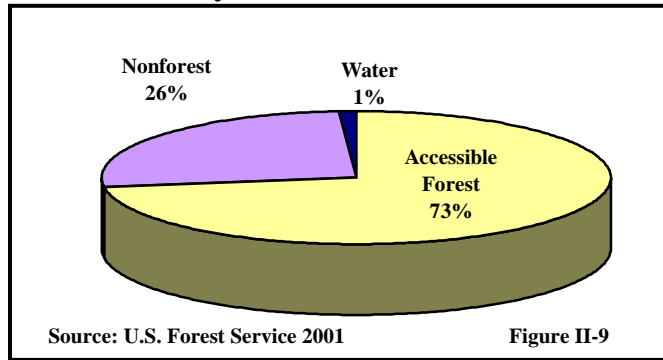
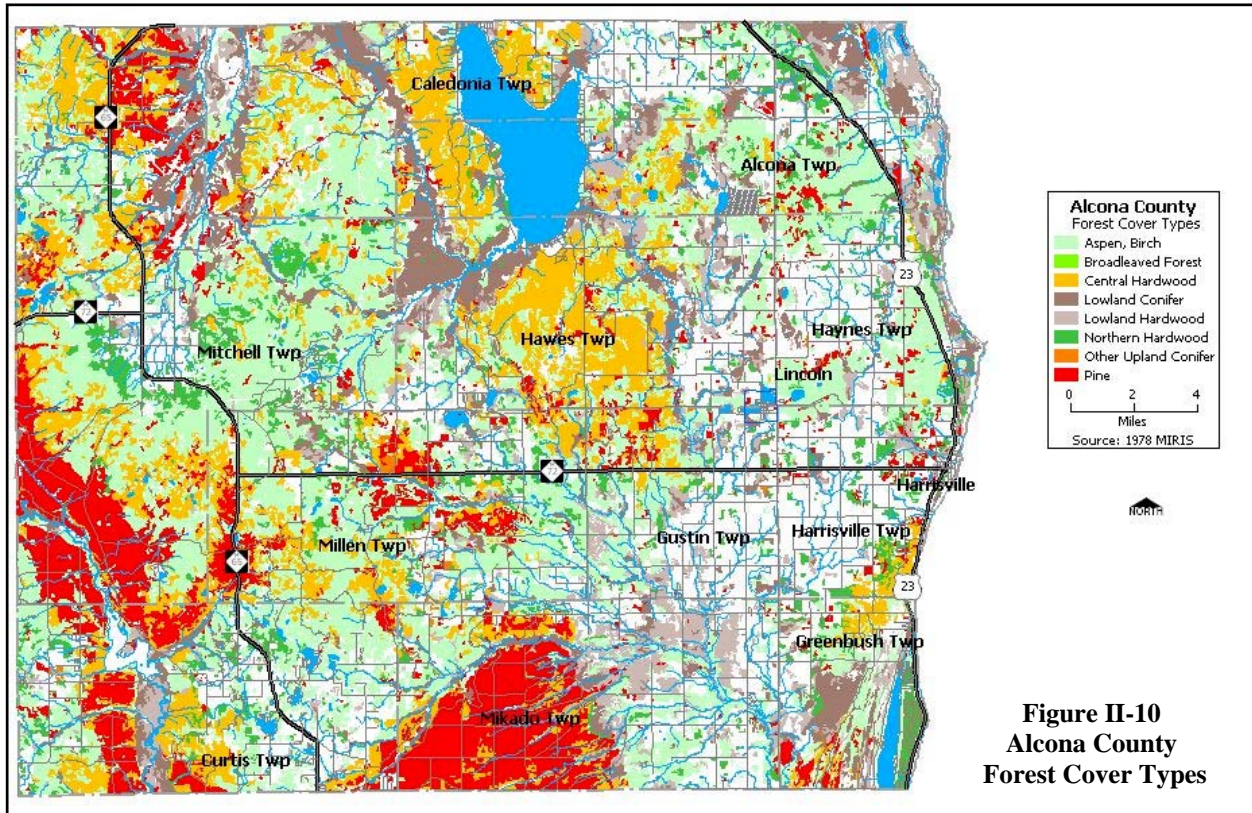


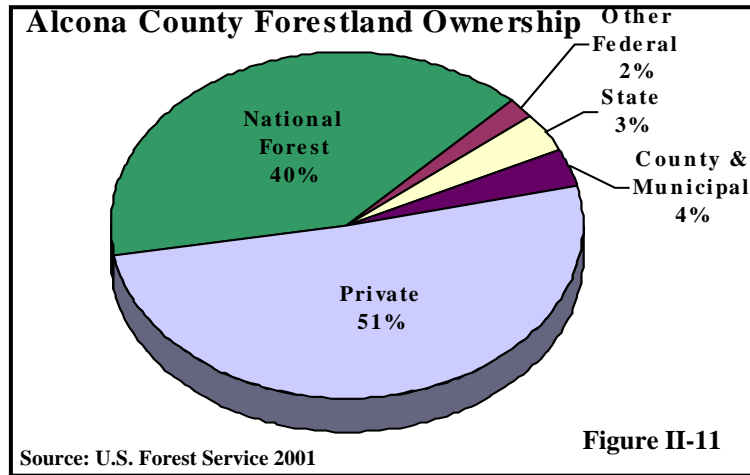
Figure II-9

Tree species vary depending upon the soils, moisture and past activities such as logging, fires and land clearing. **Table II-2** shows that the major forest species found in the county are aspen (26%), maple/beech/birch (25%), and oak/hickory group (23%). Other forest types found in Alcona County are northern white cedar (6%), red pine (5%) and balsam poplar (5%). Jack pine, eastern white pine, tamarack, oak/pine group, white oak/red oak/hickory group, northern red oak, elm/ash/cottonwood group, paper birch and balsam poplar make up the difference. **Figure II-10** shows the forest cover types in Alcona County.



Under dry spring conditions forest fires can occur in any forests type. However some forest types have higher risks. Jack and red pine forests have a high risk for wildfires. Oak and white pine forests have a moderate risk for wildfires. Draughty, low fertility sandy soils, found in outwash plains and channels, supported pre-settlement pine forests that for thousands of years were perpetuated by wildfires. Today, residential development has occurred within the same wildfire prone areas. There is a concentration of pine forest types Mikado, Curtis and Mitchell Townships.

A major portion of the forestland (49%) in the county is in public ownership – 42 percent federally owned, three percent state owned, and four percent county and municipally owned (**Figure II-11**). **Figure II-12 and Table II-2** shows the breakdown of tree species by ownership group. A good portion of maple/beech/birch, aspen, and oak/hickory group



is in private ownership. National Forest lands consist of a sizable portion of aspen, oak/hickory group, and maple/beech/birch as well. There are also red pine, balsam poplar, northern white cedar, jack pine, oak/pine group, northern red oak and white oak/red oak/hickory group in the National Forest. All of the eastern white pine, tamarack, and paper birch are in private ownership. State forest consists of aspen, maple/beech/birch, and elm/ash/cottonwood group. County and municipal forestland consists of maple/beech/birch group, oak/hickory group, and red pine. Also, a portion of aspen is classified as “Other Federal”.

Table II-3 shows the net volume of growing stock on timberland and the net volume of live trees on timberland by softwood/hardwood group. A growing stock tree is defined by the Forest Service as a live tree of commercial species that meets specified standards of size, quality, and merchantability (excludes rough, rotten, and dead trees). Approximately 119.7 million cubic feet of softwoods (coniferous trees, usually evergreen, having needles or scale-like leaves) and 314.5 million cubic feet of hardwoods (broad-leaved and deciduous) make up the growing stock of Alcona County. There are approximately 125 million cubic feet of softwood live trees and 328.7 million cubic feet of hardwood live trees in the county. **Table II-4** shows the acreage of size classes and stocking class of total growing stock (the degree of occupancy of land by live trees) found in Alcona County. This table shows that 43 percent of the forest acreage in the county are medium diameter trees, while 31 percent are large diameter and 25 percent are small diameter. Approximately half are fully stocked. **Table II-5** depicts annual growth and annual removals by major species group from 1980 to 1993. Average net annual growth exceeds removal for this period.

Table II-2							
Alcona County Acres of Timberland by Forest & Ownership Type							
	National Forest	Other Federal	State	County & Municipal	Private	TOTAL	%
Jack pine	5,839.0					5,839.0	2.1%
Red pine	9,239.9			1,296.5	4,544.9	15,081.3	5.3%
Eastern White Pine					4,722.0	4,722.0	1.7%
Tamarack					2,313.8	2,313.8	0.8%
Northern White Cedar	7,911.8				10,303.2	18,215.0	6.4%
Oak/Pine Group	687.1				609.4	1,296.5	0.5%
Oak / Hickory Group	31,624.8			5,186.0	28,344.2	65,155.0	23.0%
White Oak/Red Oak/Hickory Group	1,145.1					1,145.1	0.4%
Northern Red Oak	1,179.8					1,179.8	0.4%
Elm/Ash/Cottonwood Group			2,361.0		2,670.8	5,031.8	1.8%
Maple / Beech / Birch Group	13,441.8		2,361.0	3,889.5	52,209.1	71,901.4	25.4%
Aspen	35,615.7	5,839.0	5,186.0		25,759.1	72,399.8	25.5%
Paper Birch					3,772.8	3,772.8	1.3%
Balsam Poplar	6,554.3				7,779.0	14,333.3	5.1%
Nonstocked					1,180.5	1,180.5	0.4%
TOTAL	113,239.4	5,839.0	9,908.0	10,372.0	144,208.8	283,567.1	100%
Source: U.S. Forest Service 2001							

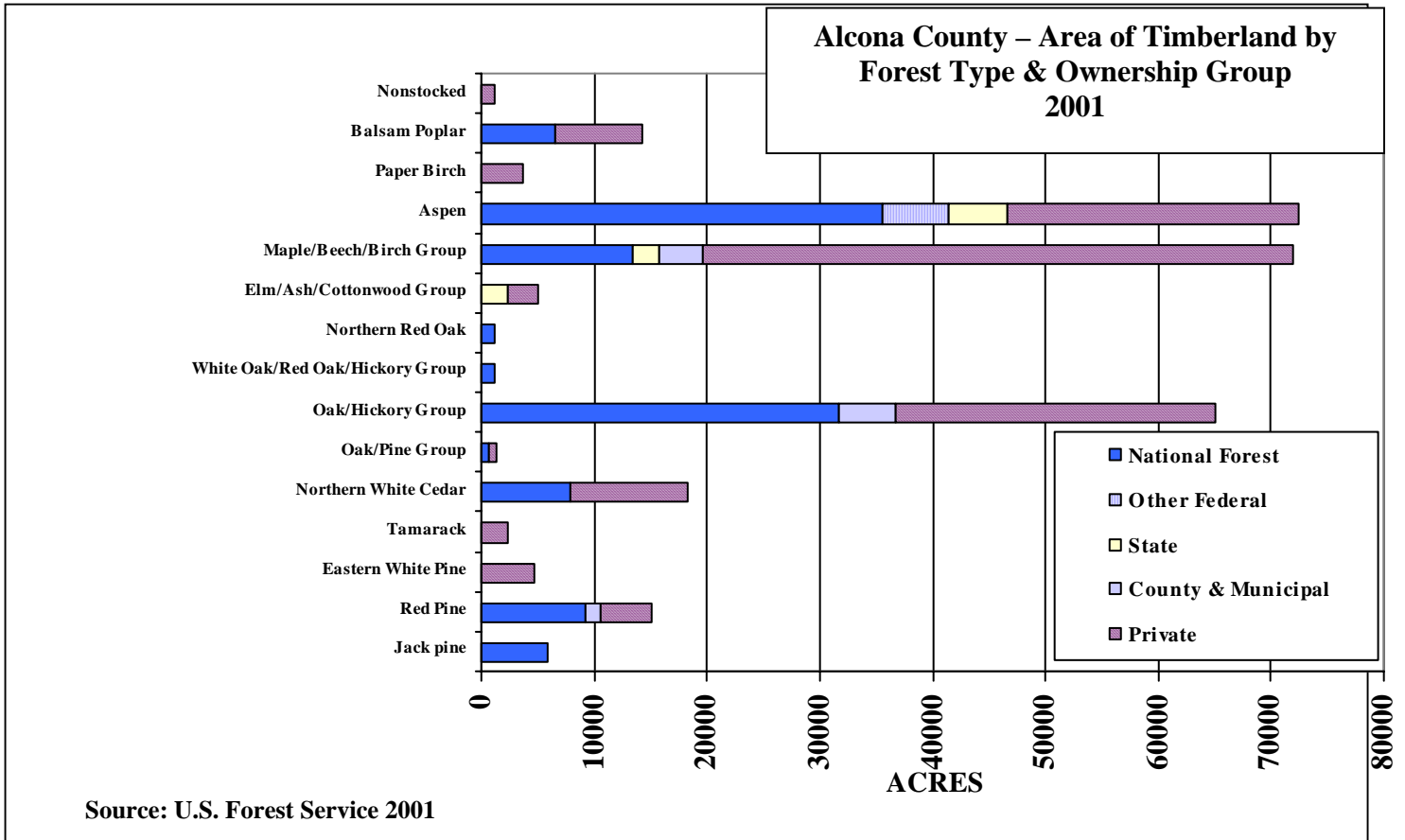


Figure II-12

Table II-3		
Alcona County		
Net Volume of Growing Stock on Timberland by Major Species Group (cubic feet)		
Total Tree species	Softwoods	Hardwoods
434,125,289.0	119,665,714.2	314,459,574.8
Net Volume of Live Trees on Timberland by Hardwood/Softwood group (cubic feet)		
Total Tree species	Softwoods	Hardwoods
453,783,682.4	125,038,360.3	328,745,322.1
Source: U.S. Forest Service 2001		

Table II-4			
Alcona County			
Area of Timberland By Stand Size Class (acres)			
Large Diameter	Medium Diameter	Small Diameter	Nonstocked
89,010.9	122,062.6	71,313.1	1,180.5
31.4%	43.0%	25.1%	0.4%
Stocking Class of Growing Stock Trees (acres)			
Overstocked	Fully Stocked	Medium Stocked	Poorly Stocked
39,900.7	144,910.5	69,233.1	29,522.8
14.1%	51.1%	24.4%	10.4%
Source: U.S. Forest Service 2001			
Overstocked – Stands in which stocking of live trees is 133% or more .			
Fully stocked – Stands in which stocking of live trees is from 100 – 132.9% .			
Medium stocked - Stands in which stocking of live trees is from 60 to 99.9% .			
Poorly stocked - Stands in which stocking of live trees is from 16.7 – 59.9% .			
Nonstocked – Timberland on which stocking of live trees is less than 16.7% .			

Table II-5					
Alcona County Annual Growth & Removal					
Average Net Annual Growth	Growing Stock	Sawtimber	Average Net Annual Removal	Growing Stock	Sawtimber
	Thousand Cubic Feet	Thousand Board Feet	1980-1993	Thousand Cubic Feet	Thousand Board Feet
TOTAL	13,062	53,516	TOTAL	4,138	10,043
Pine	2,887	9,024	Pine	447	1,796
Other Softwoods	1,091	3,976	Other Softwoods	47	78
Soft Hardwoods	5,073	21,857	Soft Hardwoods	1,871	4,036
Hard Hardwoods	4,011	18,659	Hard Hardwoods	1,773	4,133
Source: U.S. Forest Service 1993					

Wetlands

Poorly drained, lowland areas support northern white cedar, tamarack, balsam fir, black spruce, eastern hemlock, white pine, balsam poplar, trembling aspen, paper birch, black ash, speckled alder and shrub willows. Northern white cedar dominates the wetland areas where there is good lateral water movement and the soils are high in organic content. These lowland forests are typically located adjacent to water features and function as riparian forests and water quality buffers. The network of lowland forests, associated with

rivers and creeks, also function as wildlife corridors and are the backbone of large regional ecological corridors. Extensive areas of lowland forests can be found in Curtis, Mikado, Greenbush, Hawes, Mitchell, Caledonia and Alcona Townships (**Figure II-13**). Nonforested wetland types include lowland brush, marshes and bogs.

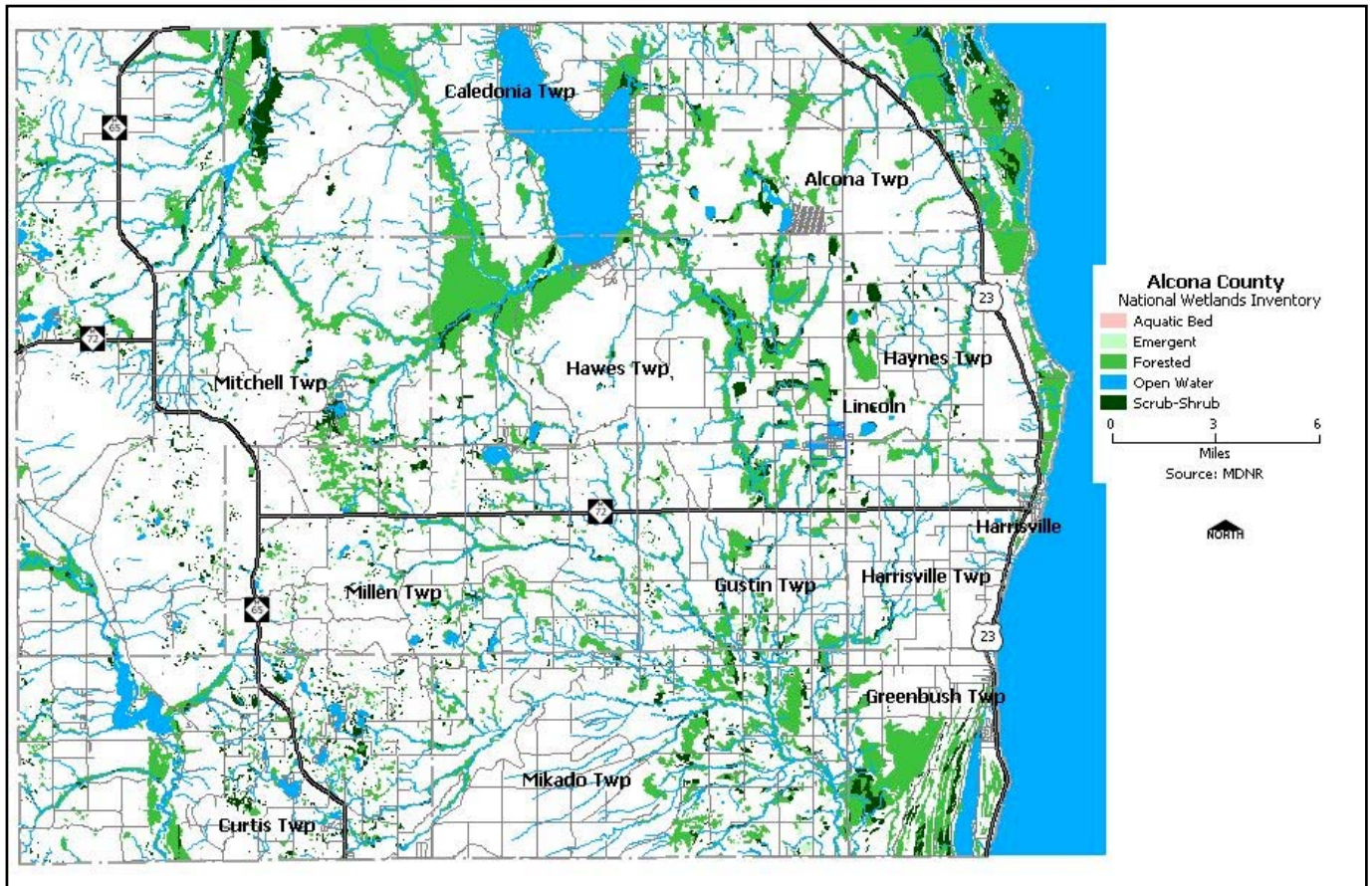


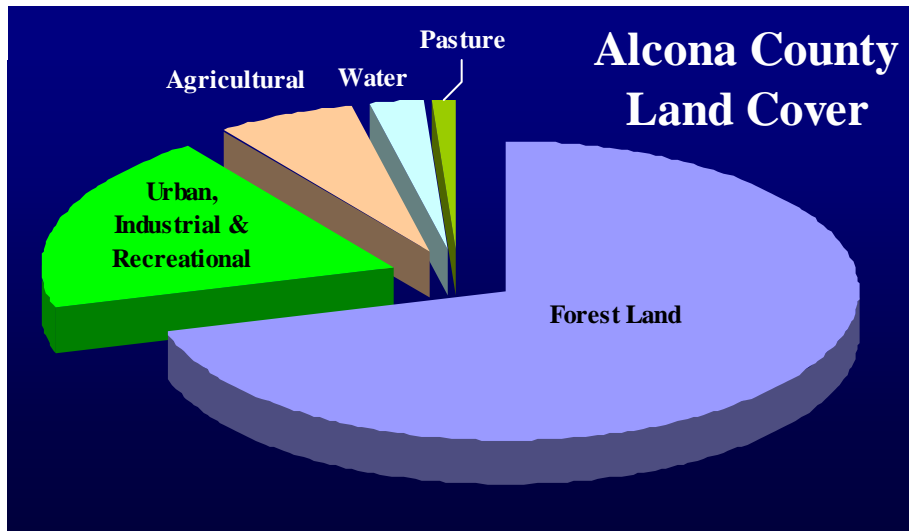
Figure II-13
Alcona County National Wetlands Inventory

Land Use Patterns

Table II-6 and **Figure II-14** describe the land use in Alcona County. Forest occupies approximately 71 percent of the county. Most of the woodland is in second growth stands. About seven percent of the county is used for farming, primarily for the production of cash crops, dairy products and beef. Approximately one percent of the county is used for pastureland. The remaining 23 percent of the county are made up of water, urban areas, wildlife habitat, parks, or recreation areas. Urban clusters include the City of Harrisville along with the Village of Lincoln. Buildup also exists in several unincorporated communities throughout the county as well as along rivers, lakes and streams. **Figure II-15** is a map of the land cover of Alcona County. Most of the agricultural land is found in the eastern portion of the county. The townships with the

greatest percentage of agricultural lands are Caledonia, Haynes, Harrisville and Gustin Townships, with lesser amounts found in Mitchell, Curtis, Hawes and Mikado Townships. As is apparent from both **Table II-6** and **Figure II-14** and **Figure II-15**, forest land is prevalent throughout the county. The National Forest Service owns 113,239 acres of Alcona County (approximately 40%). This is all within the Huron National Forest, which occupies much of the south central and south western portion of the county and stretches into neighboring counties.

Table II-6 Alcona County Land Use		
LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENT
Forest Lands	306,369	70.6
Urban, Industrial & Recreational	83,871	19.3
Agricultural	28,681	6.6
Water	10,430	2.4
Pasture	4,780	1.1
Source: Alcona County Resource Plan, 1995		



Source: Alcona County Resource Plan, 1995

Figure II-14

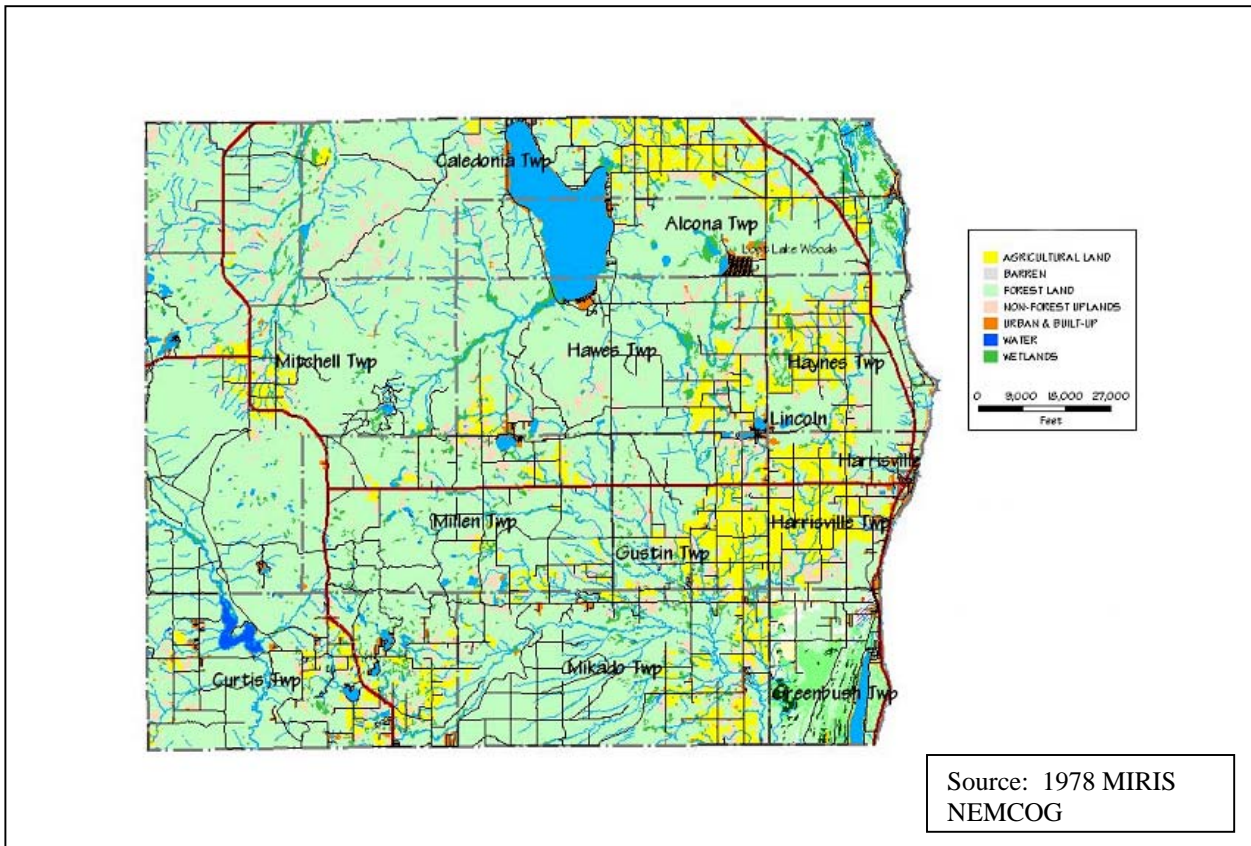


Figure II-15
Alcona County Present Land Use

Housing Characteristics

Over past decade the number of residential housing units in the county increased by only 1.6 percent (170 units), while the total occupied units increased by 20.4 percent and the population increased by 15.5 percent (1,574 persons). The number of seasonal housing units in the county also decreased by 9.6 percent (-538 units). These figures (found on **Table II-7**) are evidence of the trend found here where many newly retired people are moving into their seasonal homes and making them their year-round residences.

The percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Alcona County increased between 1990 and 2000 from 86.4 percent to 89.9 percent. Since the total number of housing units didn't change much during the period, these figures indicate that some rental housing units were converted into owner-occupied units during the last decade.

In all of the county's local units, except the City of Harrisville and the Village of Lincoln, at least 80 percent of the occupied housing units were owner occupied (see **Table II-8**). These two municipalities have some multi-family apartment units within their borders. (**is this true?**))

Vacancy data is one measure of the availability of housing within a community. Sufficient housing stock, for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied, must be provided to accommodate an expanding population base. According to the Census, Alcona County's owner-occupied unit vacancy rate was fairly low in 2000 at 2.6 percent (see **Table II-7**). **Table II-8** shows that throughout the county owner and renter vacancy rates are fairly low. Typical normal vacancy rates of owner-occupied housing are nationally about five percent. Alcona County's overall low vacancy rate indicates a fairly tight housing market and the possibility of an inadequate supply of available units for new residents. There is, however, still a large number of seasonal housing units in the county, some of which could be used as year-round units if there was a demand for it. **Figure II-16** shows that the number of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing in Alcona County is comparable to other counties in Northeast Michigan.

As has been mentioned earlier, many communities in Alcona County have large percentages of seasonal housing units (see **Table II-8**). The concentration of seasonal units is over 50 percent in the following areas: Alcona Township, Curtis Township, Greenbush Township, Millen Township, Mitchell Township, Lost Lake Woods and Hubbard Lake. The following areas have a fairly low percentage of seasonal housing units (less than 25 percent): Gustin Township, Harrisville City and Lincoln Village.

Housing Characteristics	1990	2000	% Change
Total Housing Units	10,414	10,584	1.6%
Total Occupied Units	4,261	5,132	20.4%
Owner-Occupied (#)	3,683	4,612	25.2%
Owner-Occupied (%)	86.4%	89.9%	4.0%
Renter-Occupied (#)	578	520	-10.0%
Renter-Occupied (%)	13.6%	10.1%	-25.7%
Total Vacant Units	6,153	5,452	-11.4%
Seasonal Units	5,605	5,067	-9.6%
Vacancy Rate:			
Owner (%)	3.0%	2.6%	-11.9%
Renter(%)	12.4%	11.0%	-11.5%
Persons Per Household	2.35	2.24	-4.9%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census			

**Table II-8
Alcona County Housing Characteristics: 2000**

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied	Total Seasonal Housing Units	% of Total Housing Units	Total Vacant % Owner	Total Vacant % Renter
Alcona Twp.	1,313	524	94.5%	5.5%	748	57.0	3.3%	9.4%
Caledonia Twp.	1,074	535	92.9%	7.1%	513	47.8	2.0%	11.6%
Curtis Twp.	1,605	608	91.9%	8.1%	924	57.6	4.9%	9.3%
Greenbush Twp.	1,453	685	90.2%	9.8%	733	50.4	2.2%	10.7%
Gustin Twp.	483	358	80.2%	19.8%	87	18.0%	2.0%	12.3%
Harrisville Twp.	790	555	90.8%	9.2%	205	25.9%	1.9%	12.1%
Hawes Twp.	1,003	528	91.5%	8.5%	433	43.2%	2.4%	18.2%
Haynes Twp.	598	308	93.5%	6.5%	276	46.2%	0.7%	0.0%
Mikado Twp.	666	397	90.7%	9.3%	229	34.4%	3.2%	5.1%
Millen Twp.	541	202	91.1%	8.9%	327	60.4%	1.6%	0.0%
Mitchell Twp.	731	193	94.3%	5.7%	526	72.0%	2.2%	8.3%
Harrisville City	327	239	64.9%	35.1%	66	20.2%	3.1%	13.4%
Lincoln Village*	246	179	74.3%	25.7%	40	16.3%	4.3%	17.9%
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	511	189	98.9%	1.1%	306	59.9%	5.1%	50.0%
Hubbard Lake CDP***	1409	491	94.9%	5.1%	881	62.5%	2.1%	28.6%
Alcona County	10,584	5,132	89.9%	10.1%	5,067	47.9%	2.6%	11.0%
Michigan	-----	-----	73.8%	26.2%	-----	5.5%	1.6%	6.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures.

** Count also included in Alcona Township figures.

*** Count also included in Caledonia, Hawes and Alcona Township figures.

CDP= Census Designated Place: These are delineated for the decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places.

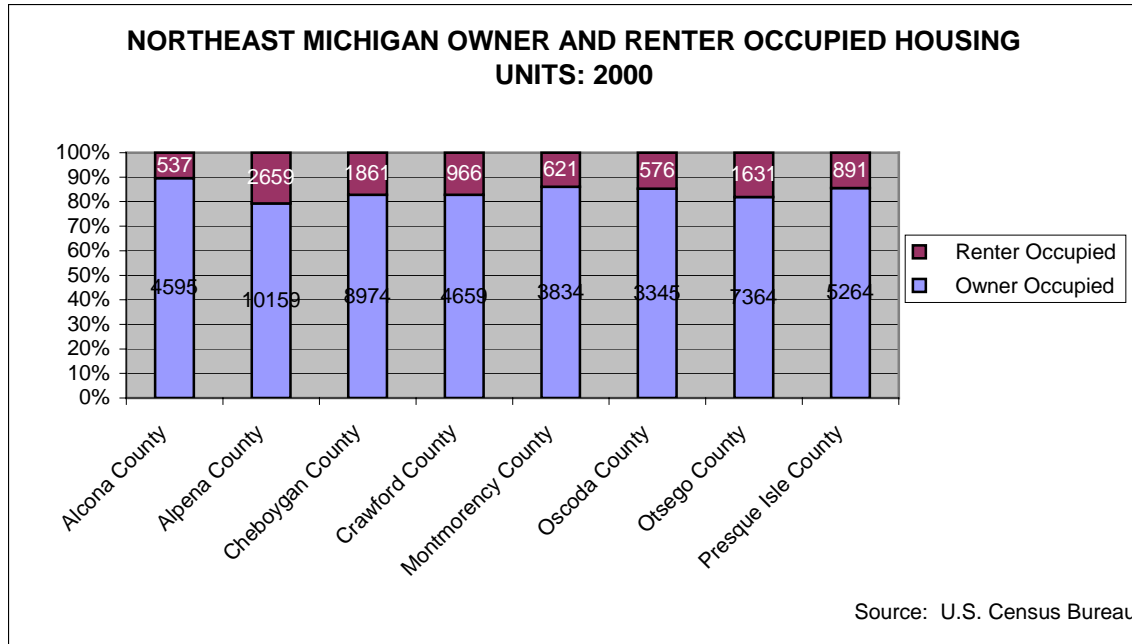


Figure II-16

When analyzing the county's housing stock, it is important to look at the age of the housing units. Typically, after 30 years homes are in need of upgrade, repair and/or replacement of major systems such as roofs, heating, plumbing and electrical. As illustrated in **Table II-9**, nearly 80 percent of all the housing units in Alcona County are at least 30 years old. More than one-third of the housing units in the county were constructed before 1960. These figures indicate that the county's ongoing housing rehabilitation program is very essential in maintaining the existing housing stock.

Year Structure Built	Number	Percent
1999 to March 2000	308	2.9
1995 to 1998	711	6.7
1990 to 1994	734	6.9
1980 to 1989	1,225	11.6
1970 to 1979	2,335	22.1
1960 to 1969	1,598	15.1
1940 to 1959	2,362	22.3
1939 or earlier	1,311	12.4
Total	10,584	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2000

Healthcare

There are no hospitals located in Alcona County. Clinics, doctor and dentist offices are located in Harrisville and Lincoln. The Alcona Health Center main office is located in Lincoln with a branch office in Harrisville. A Veterans Administration Health Center is located at the Aune Medical Center in Oscoda (Iosco County), with a VA hospital located in Saginaw. For health care services not available at these facilities, residents travel to Alpena General Hospital in Alpena, Grayling Mercy Hospital in Grayling, West Branch Memorial Hospital in West Branch, Tawas St. Joseph Hospital in Tawas City, Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey and Munson Medical Center in Traverse City.

Alcona County does have an extensive and advanced emergency medical system. Ambulance service is provided by Alcona County, which pays for the costs through the Ambulance Fund millage. There are currently two full time emergency medical service stations operating in Alcona County. The Harrisville Station, or East Station and the Glennie, or West Station are currently rated at the “advanced level”. The West Station is located on M-65, just south of the M-72/M-65 junction, north of Glennie, and the East Station is located at 2600 East M-72, six miles west of the City of Harrisville in Harrisville Township. The West Station Ambulance was completed in 2000 and the East Station Ambulance Barn was completed in 2001.

District Health Department #2 is often able to fill health care needs of the community, which are not available or affordable elsewhere. The Health Department service area includes Alcona, Iosco, Ogemaw and Oscoda Counties. Programs offered by the Health Department fall under three categories: home health care services, environmental health services and personal health services. Health Department offices are located in Harrisville.

Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health provides support services to developmentally disabled persons as well as persons needing mental health services. The Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health service area covers Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Presque Isle Counties.

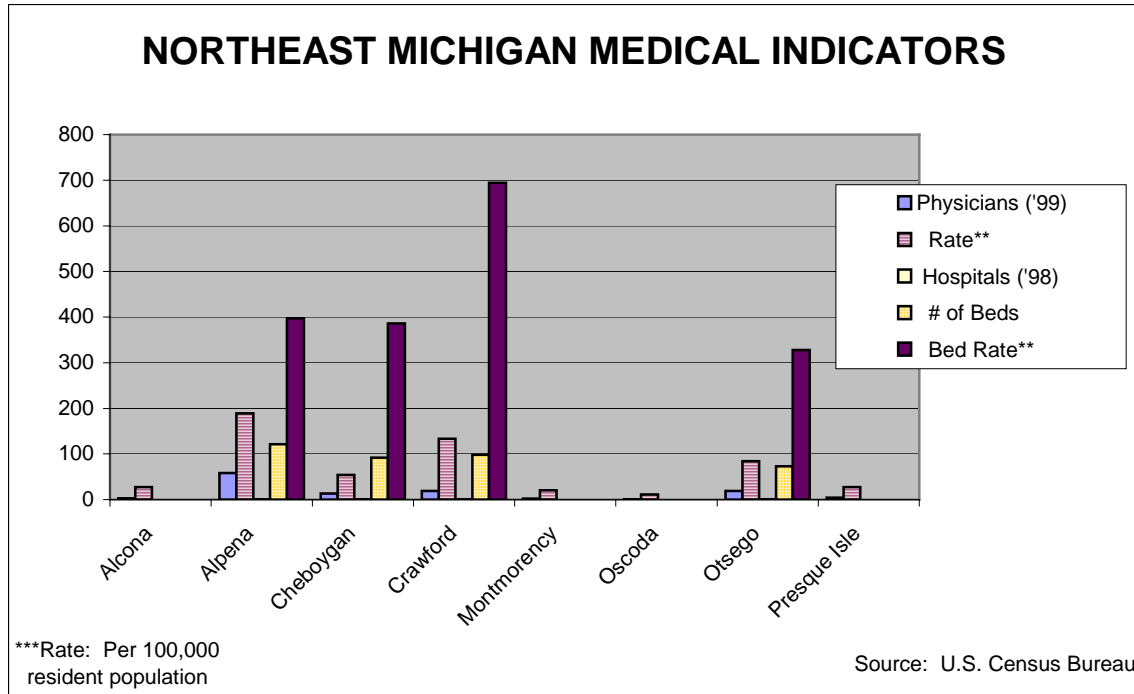


Figure II-17

Information found in **Figure II-17** compares medical indicators for all Northeast Michigan counties. This data is influenced by the location (or lack thereof) of a hospital in any given county. Medical indicators are quite good for those counties having a hospital, while the medical indicators for counties without hospitals barely register on the graph.

Infrastructure & Services

Townships within Alcona County do not provide public water or sewage disposal systems. The residents and business owners must rely on on-site private wells for domestic drinking water needs and private on-site septic systems for wastewater disposal. District Health Department # 2 regulates and maintains a permitting system for private wells and septic systems. The Village of Lincoln has developed a septage disposal system for businesses and some residences, which utilizes individual on site septic tanks and a central large drain field. The City of Harrisville provides public water and sewer disposal systems.

Due to large blocks of public lands and extensive areas of large private land holdings, there are areas in the county without primary utility services such as electricity and telephone service. Of great concern are the “unassigned areas” where no phone service is available from any phone company. A new telecommunication’s company (AllBand Communications Cooperative) has recently been formed. Their goal is to provide telephone, Internet and television reception to residents of these “unassigned areas”.

Natural gas service is available in more densely populated areas of the county, such as Lincoln, Harrisville, Mikado, Greenbush, Hubbard Lake, and Lost Lake Woods, provided by DTE. Verizon provides local telephone service to the largest geographic area of the county. Ameritech provides local phone service to southern parts of Greenbush Township and CenturyTel provides phone service to parts of Curtis and Mikado Townships. Cable television is available in more populated areas of the county. Mid-Lakes Cablecomm provides service to the Hubbard Lake area, Spruce, Lost Lake Woods, Lincoln, Harrisville, and Greenbush. Tele Media of Michigan and MW1 Cable Systems provide service to other limited parts of the County. Residents outside of cable service area must rely on satellite TV or TV antennas.

Consumer's Energy provides electricity to large portions of the county. Alpena Power Company serves the north end of Hubbard Lake, while Presque Isle Electric Cooperative serves parts of Caledonia and Mitchell Townships. Three-phase power for industrial purposes is available in areas of the county such as the Village of Lincoln, Harrisville City and limited sites within townships.

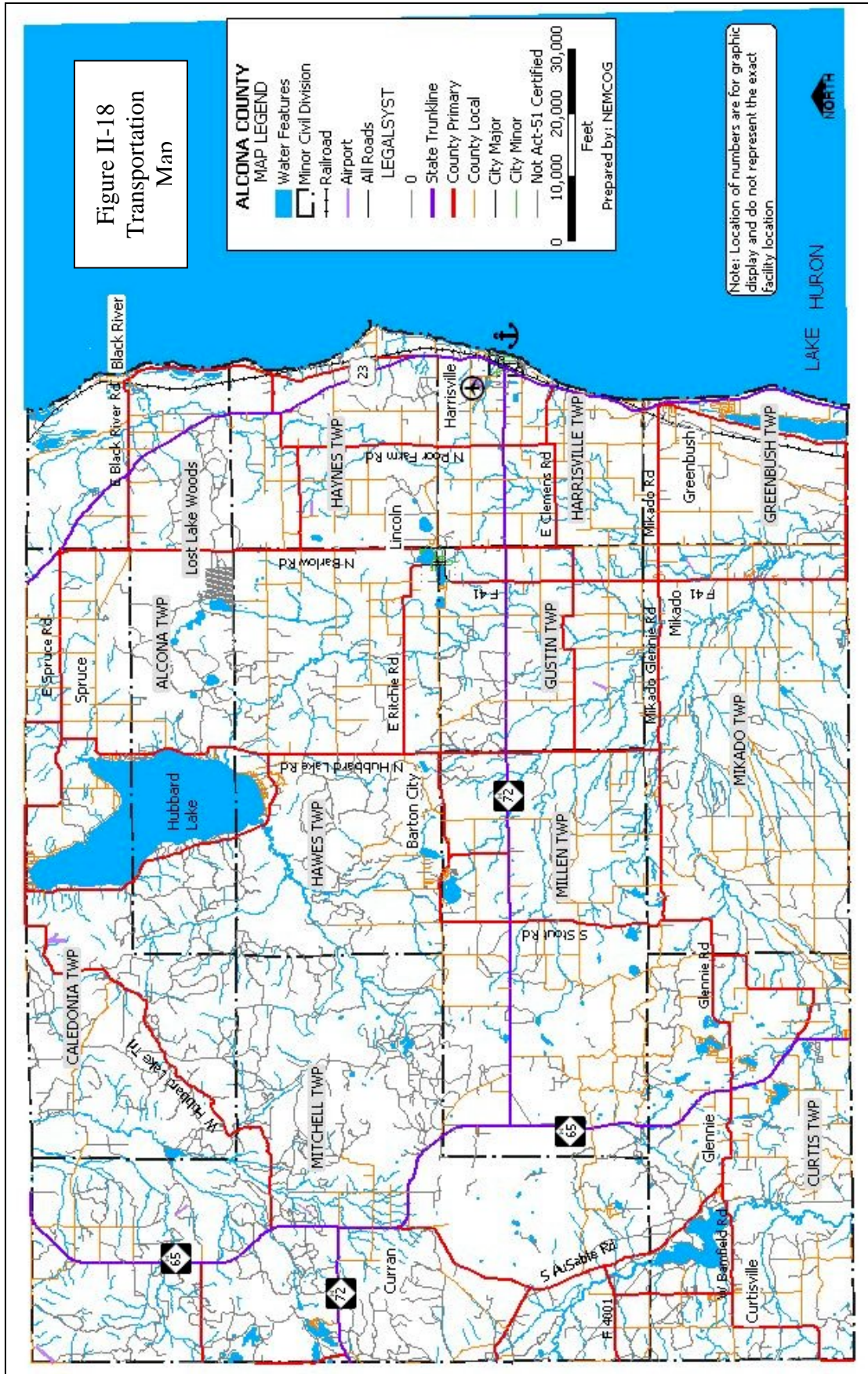
There is a wood-fired power plant, operated by Viking Energy, located in the Village of Lincoln. This plant burns wood wastes, slash, chips and similar materials to generate electricity. Farmers in the area can acquire ashes from the plant as an economical mineral soil additive, with appropriate soil testing to avoid potential problems with metal accumulation.

Transportation

Transportation facilities for both personal and business use add to the quality of life of a community. Increased mobility in the later part of the 20th century has supported the second home growth in the county. Furthermore, with the limited local economic base, many residents commute outside the county for employment. This section will provide information on the location and types of transportation facilities available to residents and businesses in Alcona County.

Roads

The transportation network consists of state highways, county primary, county secondary, city major and city minor roads. Private and Forest Service roads make up the balance. Seasonally maintained and unimproved public roads can be found in less populated areas. Three highways connect Alcona County to other communities. M-65 runs north-south through the western portions of the County. US-23 essentially follows the coastline connecting Alcona County communities with Alpena to the north and on up to the Mackinac Bridge and to Standish where it connects to many major highways going south. The only east-west highway, M-72, connects west to Traverse City and I-75 in Grayling and east to US-23 in Harrisville. **Figure II-18** shows the various transportation facilities in Alcona County.



Airports

The only public airport serving Alcona County is located in the City of Harrisville. The airport is considered a Class “D” airport facility and is able to accommodate small aircraft. Regional air service is available at Alpena County Regional Airport in Alpena, M.S.B. Airport near Midland and Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City. These airports provide commercial passenger air service and freight service. The Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport, located on the former Wurtsmith Air Base, is open to private aircraft. Since the airport was associated with a former B-52 air command base, the runway is the second longest runway in the state. There are a number of small private grass runways around the county.

Railroads

Lake State Railroad provides daily freight handling service to Alpena. The railroad runs along the eastern edge of Alcona County, through the City of Harrisville.

Marine

There is a Great Lakes port facility located in the City of Harrisville. The Harrisville Harbor provides docking facilities with 195 boat slips, fuel and pumpout facilities. Public restrooms/shower facilities, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, pavilion, grills, picnic tables and playground are associated with the harbor. This recreational harbor is part of the State of Michigan’s Harbor of Refuge network.

Public Transit

There is no county-wide dial-a-ride bus service available in Alcona County. However, Thunder Bay Transportation, based in Alpena, provides limited specialized transportation services in the county. The Thunder Bay Regional Ride, in cooperation with medical care facilities in the region, provides inter-county transportation for medical and other needs. Limited statewide passenger service is available from Indian Trails Bus Lines.

B. Demographics

Past Trends and Projections

Population

The 2000 Census shows that Alcona County had a population of 11,719. The county population density averages 17.4 persons per square mile, which is well below Michigan’s population density of 163.6 persons per square mile. However, higher densities exist within the communities of Harrisville, Lincoln and Lost Lake Woods and around major water bodies such as Hubbard Lake (**Table II-10**). The county population

has nearly doubled since 1960 (**Figure II-19**). The population of the county has increased every decade since 1930. Prior to 1960 the county experienced moderate low growth, growing by less than 500 people each decade. The largest population increase was 36.9 percent (2,627 people) recorded between 1970 and 1980. Although not the fastest growing of the eight counties that make up the Northeast Region (**Figure II-20 and Figure II-21**), Alcona County did experience an impressive rate of growth during the last decade (15.5%). Since 1990, Alcona County has grown at a significantly faster rate than the State of Michigan and at a slightly faster rate than the U.S. (**Figure II-21**).

Alcona County Population 1930 - 2000

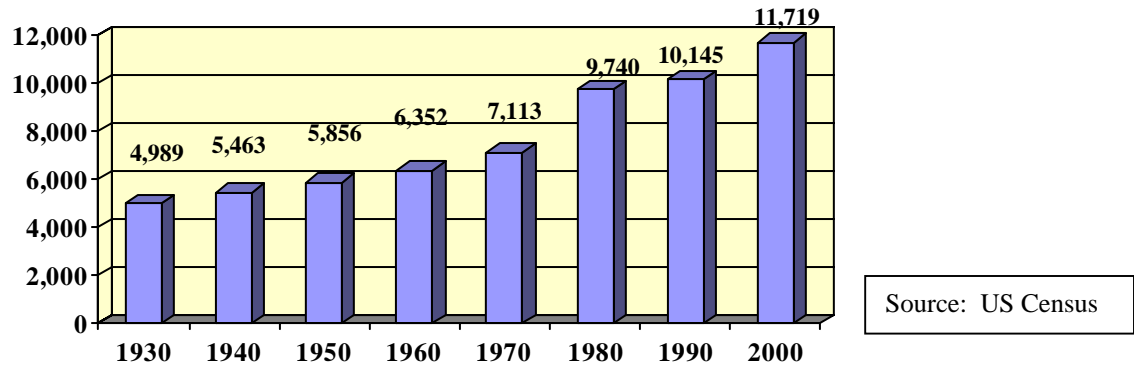


Figure II-19

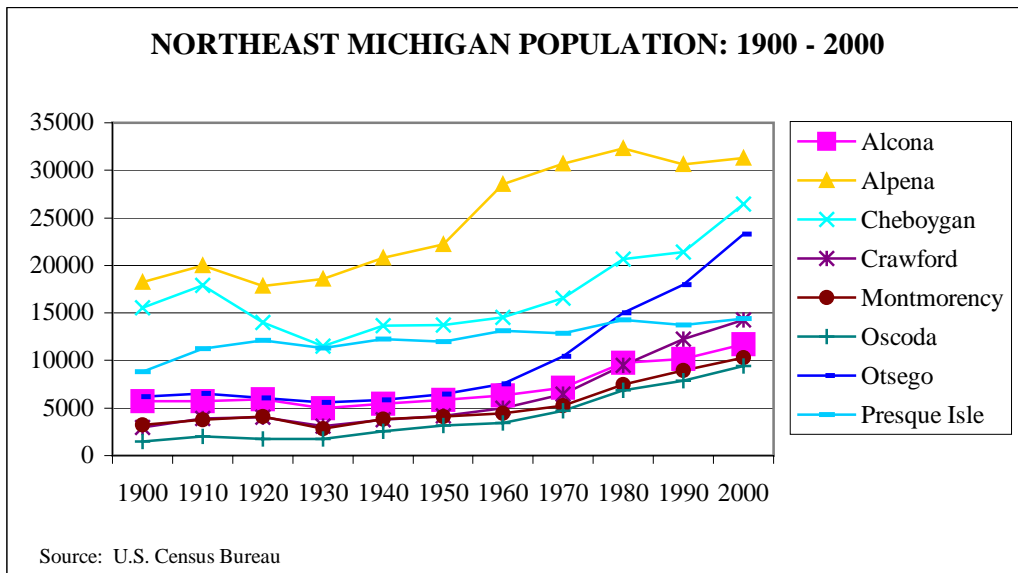


Figure II-20

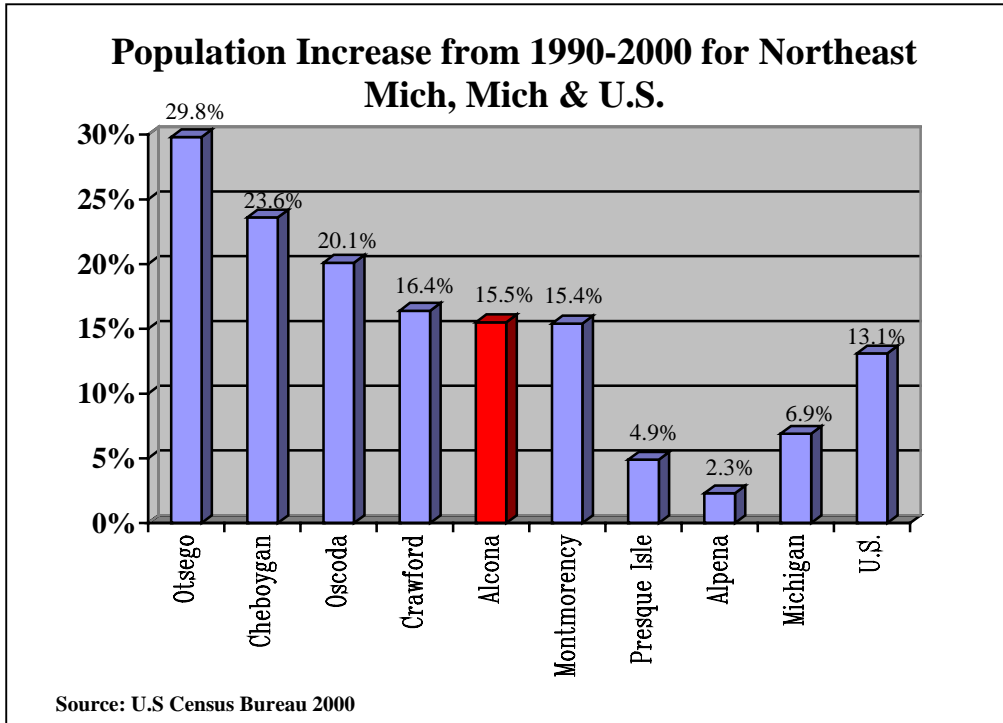
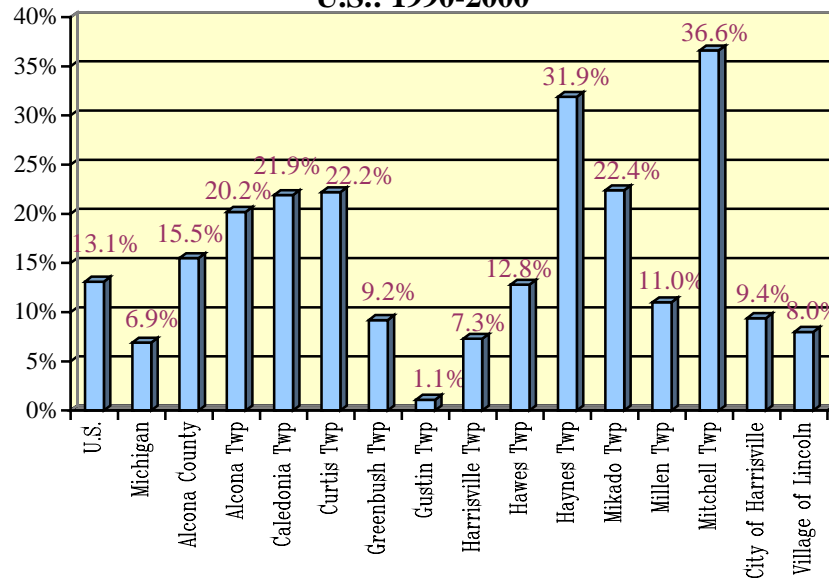


Figure II-21

Population by Municipality

All of Alcona County’s communities gained population between 1990 and 2000. Curtis Township gained the most year round population growing by 249 year round residents. Caledonia Township experienced the second highest amount of growth adding 216 persons (Table II-10). Mitchell Township had the highest percent growth rate though it added less actual people than seven of the other townships. Additionally, six of the townships had percent growth rates higher than the county average (Figure II-22).

Population Change By Municipality for Alcona Co., Mich & U.S.: 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Census

Figure II-22

**Table II-10
Population For Alcona County & Municipalities: 1990-2000**

Municipality	1990 Population	2000 Population	Population Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Alcona Township	906	1,089	183	20.2%
Caledonia Township	987	1,203	216	21.9%
Curtis Township	1,129	1,378	249	22.2%
Greenbush Township	1,373	1,499	126	9.2%
Gustin Township	823	832	9	1.1%
Harrisville Township	1,315	1,411	96	7.3%
Hawes Township	1,035	1,167	132	12.8%
Haynes Township	549	724	175	31.9%
Mikado Township	852	1043	191	22.4%
Millen Township	417	463	46	11.0%
Mitchell Township	290	396	106	36.6%
City of Harrisville	470	571	47	9.4%
Village of Lincoln*	337	364	27	8.0%
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	N/A	339		
Hubbard Lake CDP***	N/A	993		
Alcona County	10,145	11,719	1,574	15.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures.

** Count also included in Alcona Township figures.

***Count also included in Caledonia, Hawes, and Alcona Township figures.

CDP = Census Designated Place: These are delineated for the decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places.

Seasonal Population

Seasonal populations can have a significant impact on communities. Obtaining accurate numbers of seasonal residents and tourists is difficult. Seasonal residents may include retirees that winter in the south or recreational homeowners. It is important to note the U.S. Census population figures do not include the seasonal population of the county. Since the Census is taken in April, persons whose winter home is located elsewhere are not counted in Alcona County. The figures presented for housing characteristics show that 48 percent or 5,067 housing units are listed as seasonal, recreational or occasional use homes. Therefore, it can be assumed that the county's resident population can significantly increase during peak periods in the summer months. Using the 2.24 persons per household for Alcona County and the 5,067 seasonal homes, peak seasonal population could increase by approximately 11,000 persons; thereby potentially doubling the population of the county. This figure does not include those seasonal visitors or tourists staying in area motels, campgrounds or with friends and family. Special recreational events such as opening of deer hunting and trout fishing season can greatly increase this transient population.

Population Projections

The projections predict that all Northeast Michigan counties will grow to some degree over the next 20 years (**Figure II-23**). Population projections compiled by Northeast Michigan Council of Government (NEMCOG) predict the county's population will grow to 13,220 persons by the year 2010. Population is projected to grow to approximately 14,863 persons by the year 2020 (**Table II-11**).

Table II-11						
Alcona County Population Projections: 2010-2020						
	2000*	% DIF**	2010***	% DIF**	2020***	% DIF**
Alcona County	11,719	15.5%	13,220	12.8%	14,863	12.4%
* Actual Counts. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census						
** % DIF = Percentage difference from preceding decennial Census						
*** Projected population. Source: NEMCOG - 2002						

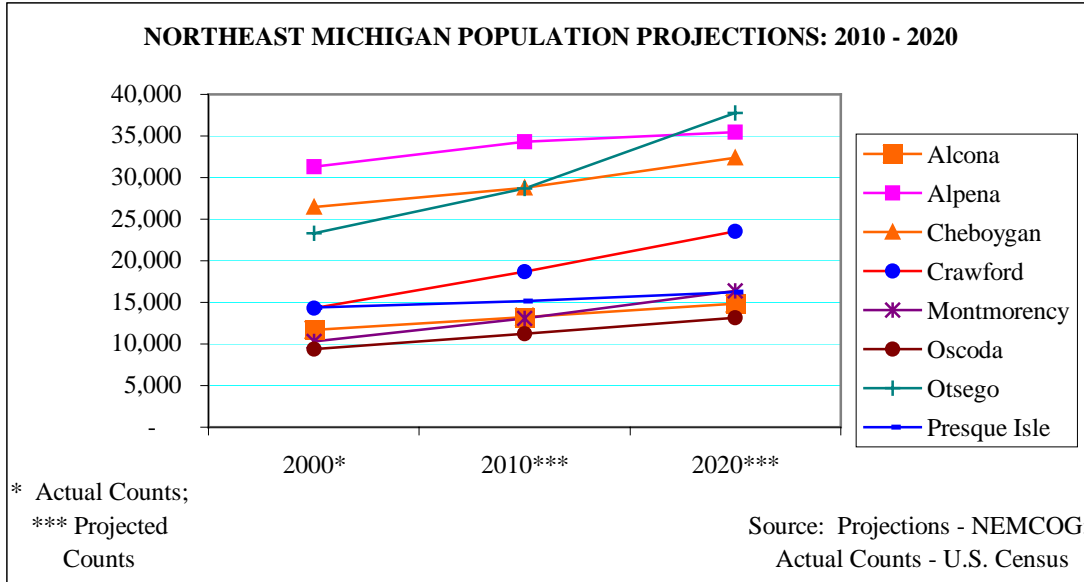


Figure II-23

Gender

Table II-12		
Alcona County Gender By Municipality: 2000		
	Male	Female
<i>Alcona County</i>	50.6%	49.4%
Alcona Twp	51.3%	48.7%
Caledonia Twp	51.1%	48.9%
Curtis Twp	52.0%	48.0%
Greenbush Twp	51.1%	48.9%
Gustin Twp	48.8%	51.2%
Harrisville Twp	47.6%	52.4%
Hawes Twp	48.9%	51.1%
Haynes Twp	51.8%	48.2%
Mikado Twp	53.1%	46.9%
Millen Twp	51.2%	48.8%
Mitchell Twp	51.0%	49.0%
City of Harrisville	49.0%	51.0%
Hubbard Lake CDP*	50.5%	49.5%
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	50.4%	49.6%
City of Harrisville	49.0%	51.0%
Village of Lincoln***	42.9%	57.1%

Source: Bureau of the Census 2000

*Count also included in Caledonia, Hawes, and Alcona Township figures.
 **Count also included in Alcona Township figures.
 ***Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures.

CDP = Census Designated Place: These are delineated for the decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places.

Census information separated by gender shows that, as would be expected, most of Alcona County’s population is split equally between males and females (**Table II-12**). The Village of Lincoln and Mikado Township have the highest deviations with approximately 43 percent males found in the Village of Lincoln and 53 percent males found in Mikado Township. All Northeast Michigan counties have an approximately 50/50 split between males and females (see **Figure II-24**). For most of Northeast Michigan counties, there are slightly more females than males.

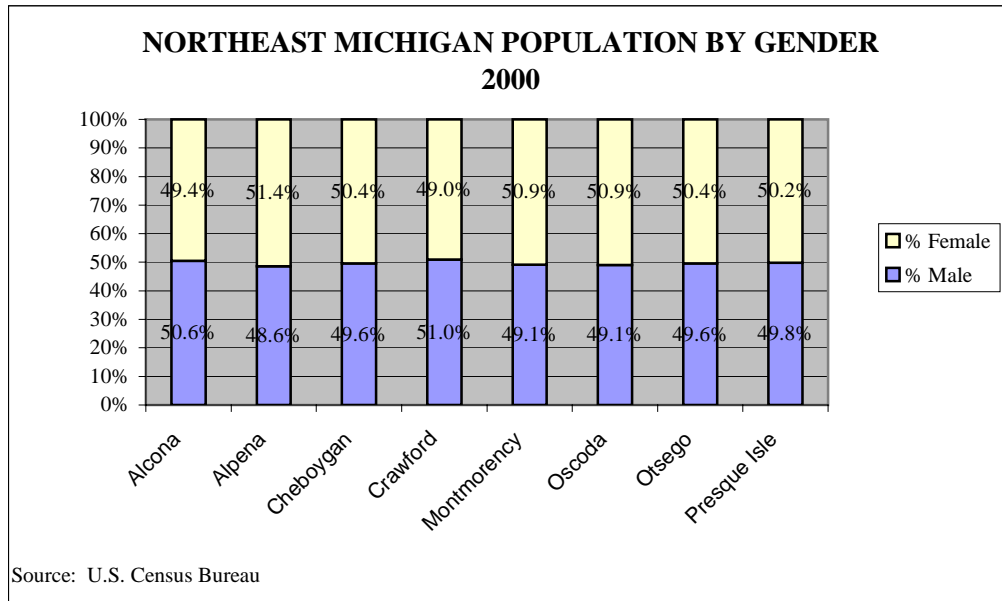


Figure II-24

Age

2000 census data shows that 55.5 percent of Alcona County’s population was 45 years old or older (**Table II-13**). The breakdown of county’s population by age grouping shows a loss in numbers of persons in the “under 5 years” and “20-24 years” age groups. The “25-44” “45-64 years” age groups gained the most persons over the last decade, increasing by 1,184 and 1,024 respectively. There was also a small gain in the “5-19” age group which increased by 105 persons.

Table II-13 Population By Age For Alcona County 1990-2000				
Age	1990	% of Total Pop.	2000	% of Total Pop.
Under 5	515	5.1%	505	4.3%
5-19	1822	17.4%	1,927	16.2%
20-24	438	4.3%	330	2.8%
25-44	1,271	22.8%	2,455	20.9%
45-64	2,612	25.7%	3,636	31.0%
65+	2,443	24.1%	2,886	24.5%
Median Age	44.8 years		49 years	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The median age of residents in Alcona County increased 4.2 years to 49 years old during the period 1990-2000, (**Table II-13**). This is a similar increase, but is still 13.5 years older than the median age for the State, which increased from 32.5 to 35.5 years. Alcona County's median age was 13.7 years older than the national median age. This increase in the median age can be attributed to the existing population getting older and the inward migration of retirees who sold their primary year round residences elsewhere and moved into their seasonal homes on a permanent basis.

All of the County's municipalities had older median age figures than the State, which had a median age of 35.5 years (**Table II-14**). Mikado Township recorded the youngest median age in the county of 40.5 years, while Alcona Township recorded the oldest figure of 57.6 years. The high median age in Alcona Township is attributed to the resort community development of Lost Lake Woods. In 2000 Census population data was available for Lost Lake Woods as a "Census Designated Place" (CDP). Median age for the Lost Lake Woods CDP was 67.1 years, some 31.6 years older than the State's median age. If the seasonal-summer population were reported for that CDP the median age would be even older.

Table II-14 shows age groups and median ages by township, cities, villages and CDP's. The distribution of persons by age was relatively uniform throughout the Townships. However, the age distributions of the population within Alcona County contrast with the State as a whole. In Alcona County, the percentage of the preschool and school aged children is lower and the percentage of the population 45 and older is higher than that found in the State as a whole.

Table II-14

Age Distribution By Municipality For Alcona County - 2000

MUNICIPALITY	< 5 Yrs.	%*	5-19 Yrs.	%*	20-24 Yrs.	%*	25-44 Yrs.	%*	45-64 Yrs.	%*	65 Yrs. & >	%*	Median Age
Alcona Twp.	28	2.6	148	13.6	20	1.8	180	16.6	337	31.0	376	34.5	57.6
Caledonia Twp.	39	3.2	184	15.3	43	3.6	251	20.8	388	32.2	298	24.8	50.5
Curtis Twp.	63	4.6	226	16.5	30	2.2	277	20.1	434	31.6	348	25.3	50.4
Greenbush Twp.	71	4.7	212	14.1	30	2.0	292	19.5	491	32.8	403	26.9	51.7
Gustin Twp.	53	6.4	135	16.2	31	3.7	206	24.8	242	29.1	165	19.8	44.1
Harrisville Twp.	61	4.3	263	18.6	48	3.4	293	20.8	404	28.6	342	24.2	47.0
Hawes Twp.	42	3.6	208	17.8	20	1.7	274	23.5	374	32.1	249	21.3	46.9
Haynes Twp.	31	4.3	127	17.5	27	3.7	140	19.3	252	34.8	147	20.3	49.0
Mikado Twp	64	6.1	222	21.2	34	3.3	271	26.0	285	27.3	167	16.0	40.5
Millen Twp.	17	3.7	78	16.9	17	3.7	88	19.0	148	32.0	115	24.8	50.3
Mitchell Twp	11	2.8	53	13.4	6	1.5	72	18.2	148	37.3	106	26.8	53.3
City of Harrisville	25	4.9	71	13.8	24	4.7	111	21.6	133	25.8	150	29.2	48.5
Village of Lincoln*	20	5.5	62	17.0	10	2.7	89	24.4	95	26.1	88	24.2	45.3
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	3	0.9	13	3.9	2	0.6	28	8.2	107	31.6	186	54.9	67.1
Hubbard Lake CDP***	20	2	93	9.3	18	1.8	141	14.2	377	38	344	34.7	59.6
Alcona County	505	4.3	1927	16.4	330	2.8	2455	20.9	3636	31.0	2866	24.5	49.0
State of Michigan		6.8		23.2		6.5		29.8		22.5		12.3	35.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures

** Count also included in Alcona Township figures

***Count also included in Caledonia, Alcona, and Hawes Township figures

CDP = Census Designated Place: These are delineated for the decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places.

Table II-15			
Age Comparison: Alcona County, Michigan & U.S. - 2000			
Age	Alcona County	Michigan	U.S.
Under 5	4.3%	6.8%	6.8%
5-19	16.2%	22.2%	21.6%
20-24	2.8%	6.5%	6.7%
25-44	20.9%	29.8%	30.2%
45-64	31.0%	22.4%	22.0%
65+	24.5%	12.3%	12.4%
Median Age	49.0	35.5	35.3
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census			

Table II-15 compares Alcona County age groups to those of the State and the nation. Alcona County has a significantly lower percentage of people under the age of 44. Therefore, the percentage of people 45 and over is much greater than that of Michigan and the U.S. **Figure II-25** shows how the age of Alcona County residents compares to other counties in northeast Michigan. Alcona County has a high percentage of residents 65 years and older, even when compared to Northeast Michigan, which has in itself a high percentage of elderly.

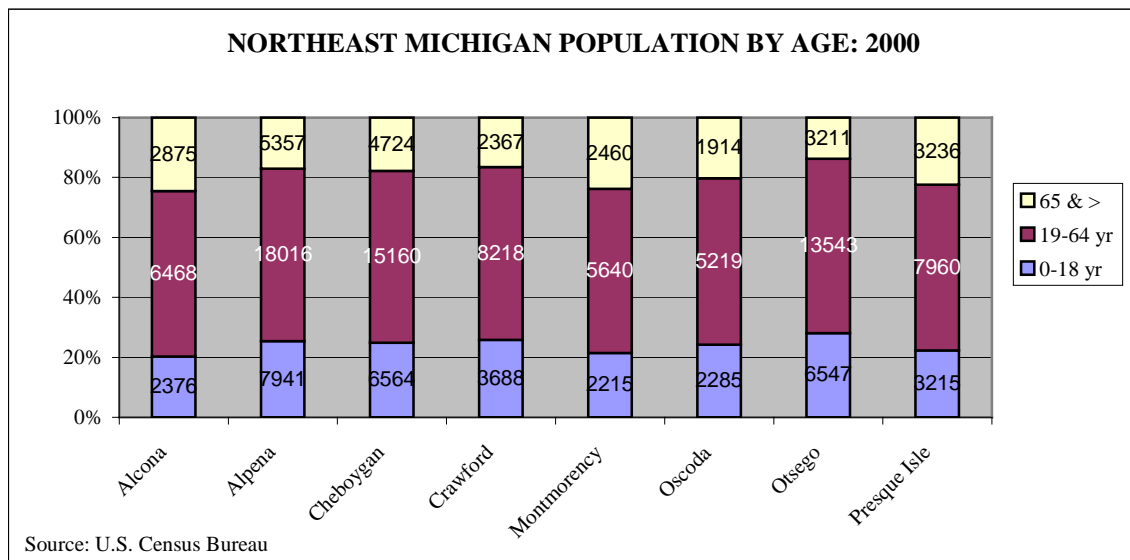


Figure II-25

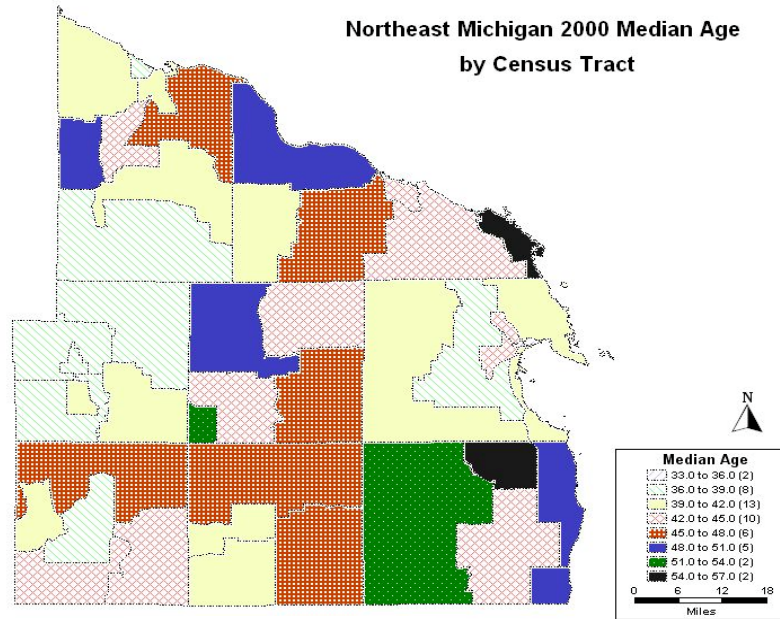


Figure II-26

Information found above on **Figure II-26**, shows median age by census tract for the Northeast Michigan region. This map gives a good visual snapshot of where residents have located by age. Older residents are found in the areas of lower population concentration and in the more resort areas (i.e. near lakes). Concentrations of the elderly residents by census tract form two lines that run roughly north and south through the middle and east and west along the bottom of the region.

Race and Ethnic Composition

Information found below on **Table II-16** shows that Alcona County has a very small minority population and that situation has not changed to any great degree over the last several decades. A small increase in the minority population from 1990 to 2000 is mostly attributed to different reporting criteria in the 2000 Census. For the first time, respondents were given the opportunity to choose more than one race category. Excluding the two or more races category, Hispanic or Latino Origin was the largest minority group with 0.7 percent of the population, followed by American Indian at 0.6 percent, and Asian and Black both at 0.2 percent. Persons indicating two or more races made up 0.9 percent. 2000 Census data shown in **Table II-16** isn't comparable to 1990 data because people were not given the option of choosing more than one race in 1990.

Table II-16		
Population By Race And Hispanic Origin For Alcona County 2000		
	Number of Persons	% of Total Population
Total	11,719	100%
One Race		
White	11,489	98.0%
Black	19	0.2%
American Indian	73	0.6%
Asian	21	0.2%
Two or More Races*	109	0.9%
Hispanic or Latino Origin**	81	0.7%
* Census 2000 gave respondents the opportunity to choose more than one race category.		
** Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin may be of any race.		
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census		

Data found on **Table II-17** shows that Alcona County has 17.1 percent and 21.8 percent more white population than Michigan and the U.S. respectively. Alcona County has a significantly smaller percentage Black population than both the State and the nation. Also, Alcona County has smaller percentages of Hispanic and Asian populations. However, the county has a nearly equal percentage of American Indian population as both Michigan and the U.S. **Table II-18** shows the racial breakdown of the county by municipality. As would be expected with such a homogeneous racial make-up, there is not a significant degree of variation between the municipalities and the county.

Table II-17			
Population Comparison By Race & Hispanic Origin Alcona County, Michigan & U.S. 2000			
	Alcona County	Michigan	U.S.
One Race	99.1%	98.1%	97.6%
White	98.0%	80.2%	75.1%
Black	0.2%	14.2%	12.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%
Asian	0.2%	1.8%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0	0.1%
Some Other Race	0.1%	1.3%	5.5%
Two or More Races	0.9%	1.9%	2.4%
Hispanic/ Latino Origin*	0.7%	3.3%	12.5%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census			
*Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race.			

Table II-18							
Alcona County Population By Race & Hispanic Origin – By Municipality 2000							
	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Hispanic/ Latino Origin	Some Other Race
Alcona County	98.9%	0.2%	1.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.1%
Alcona Twp	98.8%	0.2%	1.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%
Caledonia Twp	99.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
Curtis Twp	99.7%	0.0%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%
Greenbush Twp	98.9%	0.5%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%
Gustin Twp	99.4%	0.0%	1.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Harrisville Twp	99.6%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%
Hawes Twp	99.1%	0.2%	0.9%	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%
Haynes Twp	99.6%	0.0%	1.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%
Mikado Twp	97.6%	0.1%	2.6%	0.5%	0.1%	0.9%	0.2%
Millen Twp	96.8%	0.0%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%
Mitchell Twp	99.5%	0.3%	1.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Hubbard Lake CDP*	99.8%	0.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	99.7%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
City of Harrisville	96.3%	2.3%	1.4%	1.6%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Village of Lincoln***	99.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Source: Bureau of the Census 2000							
* Count also included in Caledonia, Alcona, and Hawes Township figures							
** Count also included in Alcona Township figures							
*** Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures							
CDP = Census Designated Place: These are delineated for the decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places.							

Disability Status

Data shown on **Table II-19** gives an indication of how many disabled people reside in Alcona County. 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. The 2000 Census showed there were 2,844 disabled persons in Alcona County. The largest numbers of disabled persons in the county were between the ages of 21-64 (1,513), and of the people in this group, 36.5 percent were employed. This compares with the state as a whole, where 54.8 percent of the disabled population between 21-64 years is employed. The lower percentage is likely attributed to limited employment opportunities and limited public transportation. Over 40 percent of the 65 years and older population was identified as having a disability. In comparison to surrounding counties (**Figure II-27**), Alcona County has relatively higher percentage of disabled person as the other counties in the region. In the eight county Northeast Michigan region, the average percentage of individuals with a disability between 21 and 64 was 21.8 percent and in the State as a whole it was 18.1 percent. Also, Alcona County has the second lowest percentage in the region of people with a disability who are employed (**Figure II-28**).

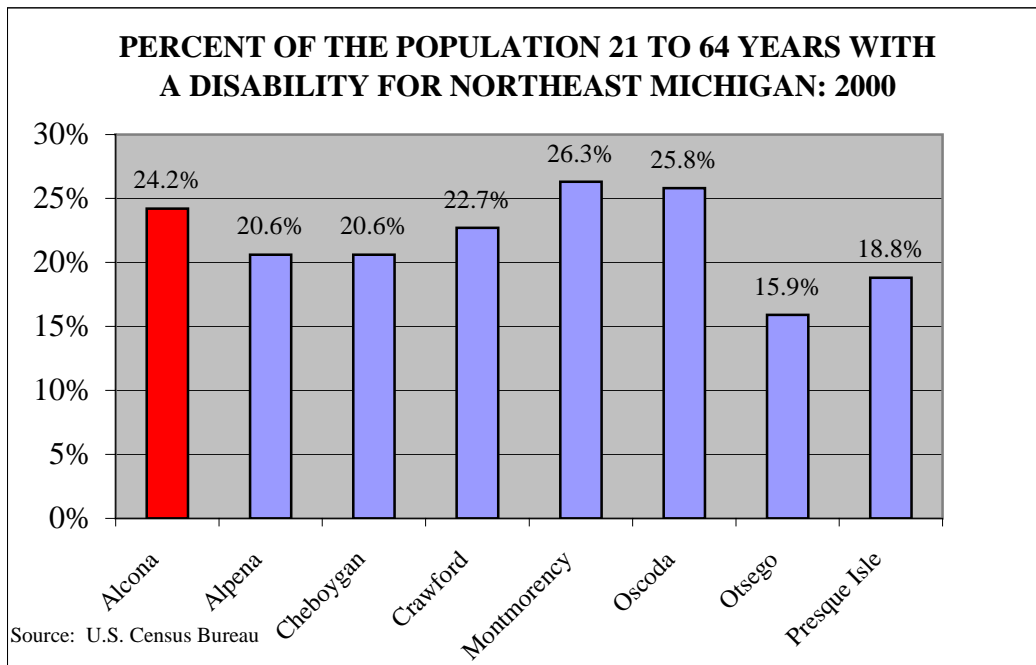


Figure II-27

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+
Alcona Twp.	12	7.8%	124	23.1%	40.3%	118	31.9%
Caledonia Twp.	18	9.8%	164	23.2%	50.0%	115	40.2%
Curtis Twp.	27	11.2%	218	29.1%	28.9%	156	45.9%
Greenbush Twp.	13	6.0%	178	22.9%	33.1%	161	39.0%
Gustin Twp.	37	25.0%	109	22.3%	33.0%	67	37.9%
Harrisville Twp.	34	12.6%	150	21.3%	50.0%	76	29.0%
Hawes Twp.	5	2.2%	148	23.2%	32.4%	100	41.7%
Haynes Twp.	11	8.1%	95	24.2%	44.2%	64	39.8%
Mikado Twp.	15	6.3%	142	24.4%	38.7%	90	50.0%
Millen Twp.	16	19.5%	55	24.3%	38.2%	52	54.2%
Mitchell Twp.	4	10.8%	55	25.3%	5.5%	56	45.2%
City of Harrisville	2	2.8%	75	30.7%	25.3%	82	44.6%
Village of Lincoln**	11	16.9%	38	20.2%	31.6%	51	56.0%
Alcona Co.	194	9.7%	1513	24.2%	36.5%	1137	40.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
 *Disability of civilian non-institutionalized persons.
 ** Count also included in Gustin and Hawes Township figures

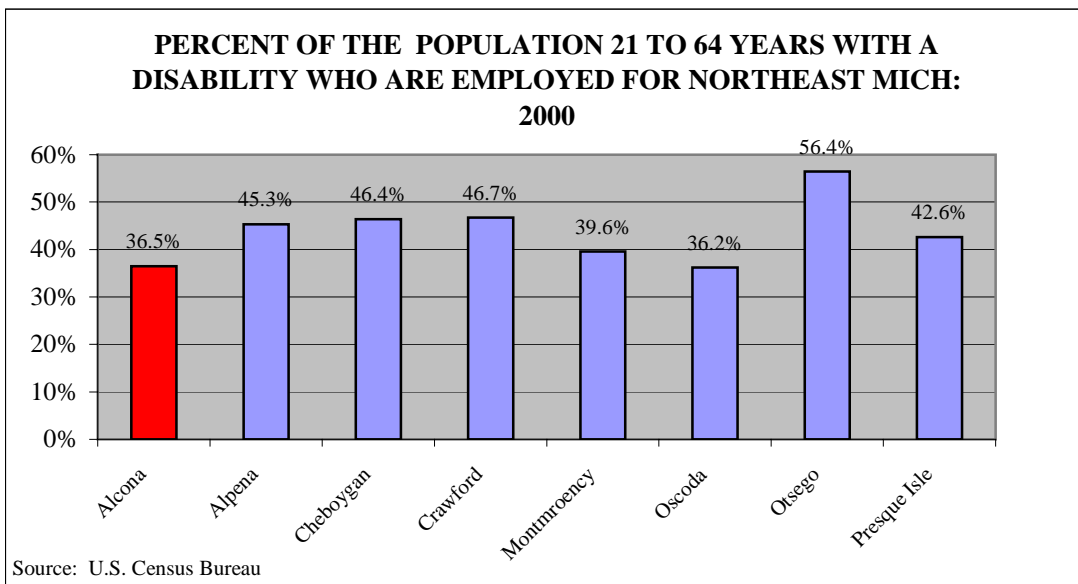


Figure II-28

III. Economic Development

A. Comparison to the State and National Economy

Alcona County is a rural, sparsely populated county sandwiched between two larger, more urbanized counties (Alpena and Iosco). The opportunity for year-round higher wage jobs has traditionally not been good in Alcona County. For this reason, a large number of Alcona County residents commuted to the Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Iosco County to work. Others commuted to Alpena County, where a large number of good paying industrial jobs could be found. Over the two decades, however, this picture has changed a great deal. In 1992, the Wurtsmith Air Force Base was closed, causing the loss of over 600 government jobs, some of which were held by Alcona County residents. In the late 1980's and early 1990's many hundreds of industrial jobs were lost in Alpena County due to severe cut backs and closures of several of their major employers. Alpena County was hard hit again in 2000 when the Fletcher Paper Co. closed its doors, leaving 230 employees without jobs. These job losses impacted Alcona County employment, as well. Unfortunately, the recent downturn in the U.S. economy has negatively affected these counties again, leading to closures and/or cut-backs in some of the newer businesses that have developed.

There is a marked difference found when comparing the economy of Alcona County to that of Michigan and the U.S. Alcona County's annual unemployment rate has been consistently higher than both the State and the national rate by a difference of between three and six percentage points. Since 1993, Alcona County unemployment rates have ranged from 12.9 percent (1993) to 6.6 percent in 2000, then increasing again in 2003 to 11.5 percent (see **Figure III-1**).

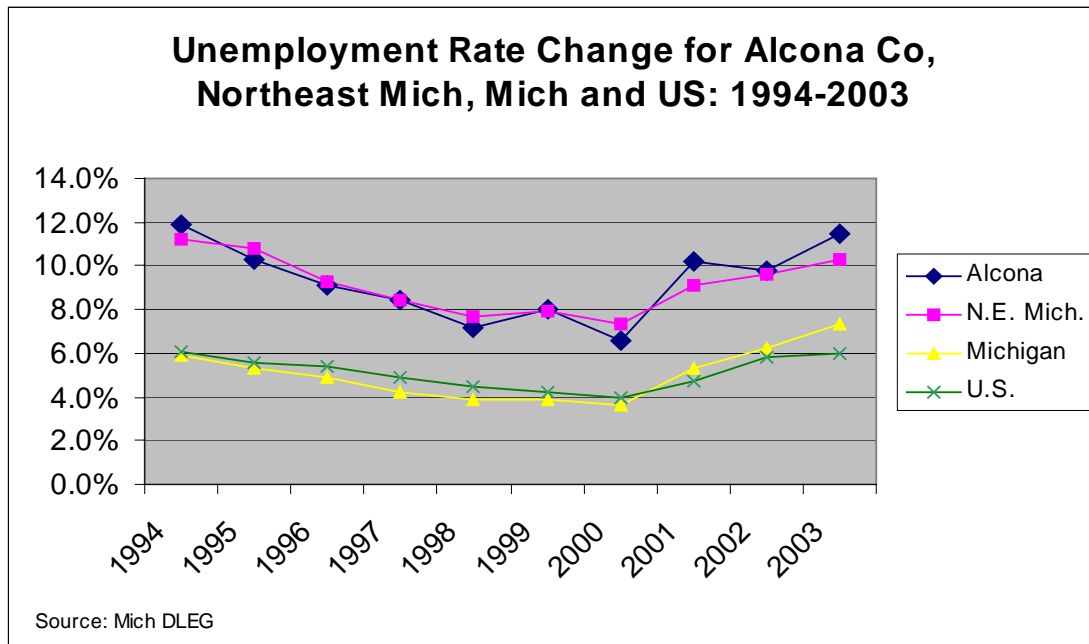


Figure III-1

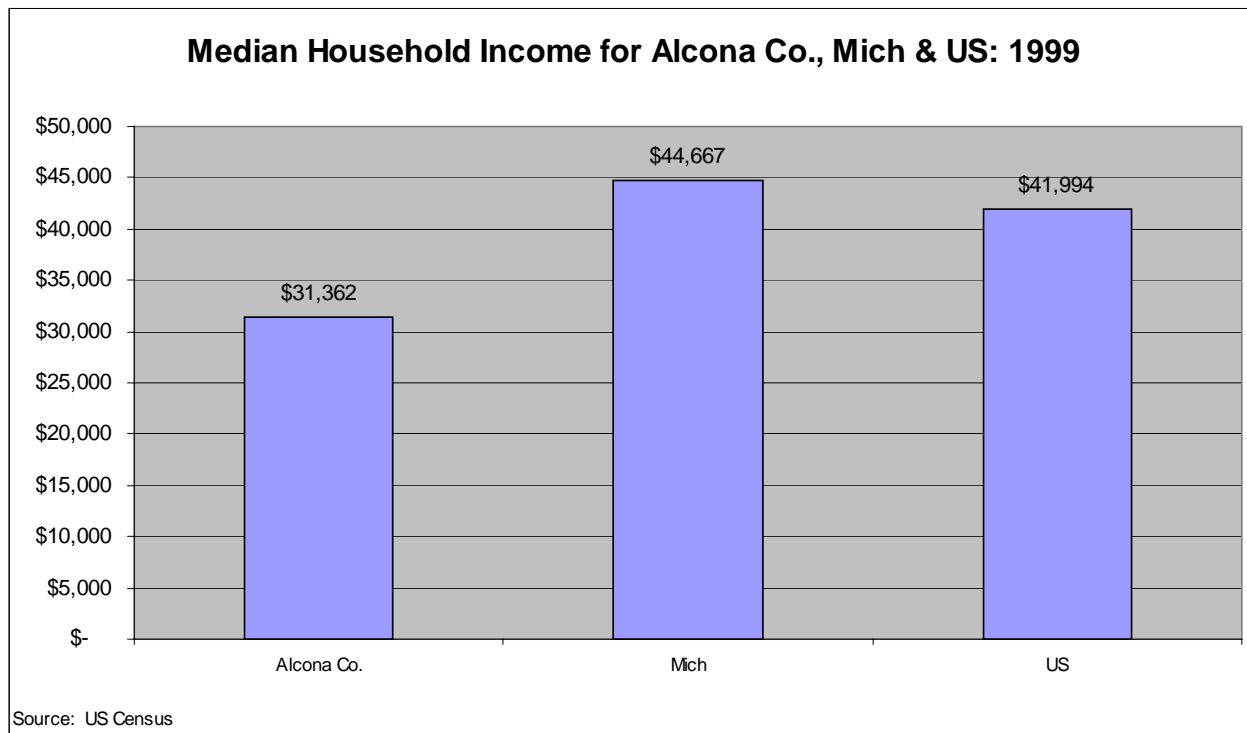


Figure III-2

Alcona County's 1999 median household income at \$31,362 was almost 30 percent lower than the State median household income for that year of \$44,667 and just over 25 percent lower than the national median household income of \$41,994 (see **Figure III-2**).

Given the lower incomes found in Alcona County, it is not surprising to find that poverty rates run higher than the State or U.S. in most categories shown on **Figure III-3**. The categories showing poverty data for families with children recorded a marked difference between Alcona County and the State or U.S. For example, the percentage of families with children in poverty was nearly four percent higher in the county than the State's rate. The percent of Alcona County female headed households with related children below the poverty level was 12.9 percent and 10.1 percent higher than Michigan and the U.S. respectively. Elderly individuals living in Alcona County do not tend to be as poor as families with children. In 1999 only nine percent of individuals 65 years and older were in poverty in Alcona County, which was only .8 percent higher than the State's rate and .9 percent lower than the U.S. rate. These figures support the assertion that Alcona County's working age residents have a hard time making a living wage, while retired people living in the county have more average incomes due to the retirement dollars they bring with them when they move to the area.

Census data also shows that Alcona County had a higher percentage of social security and retirement income than Michigan or the U.S. in 1999 (see **Figure III-4**). Consequently, it also has a lower level of earned income. Income from public assistance and SSI (Supplemental Security Income) was about the same for Alcona County as for the State and U.S.

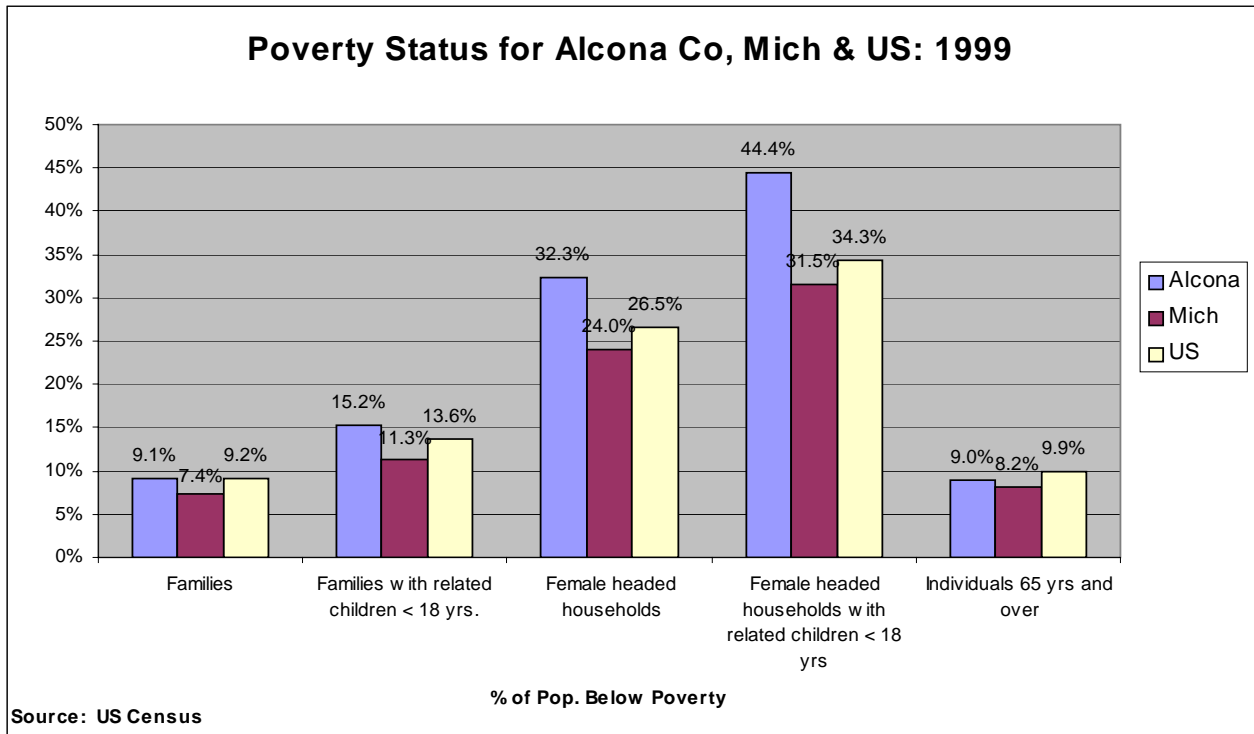


Figure III-3

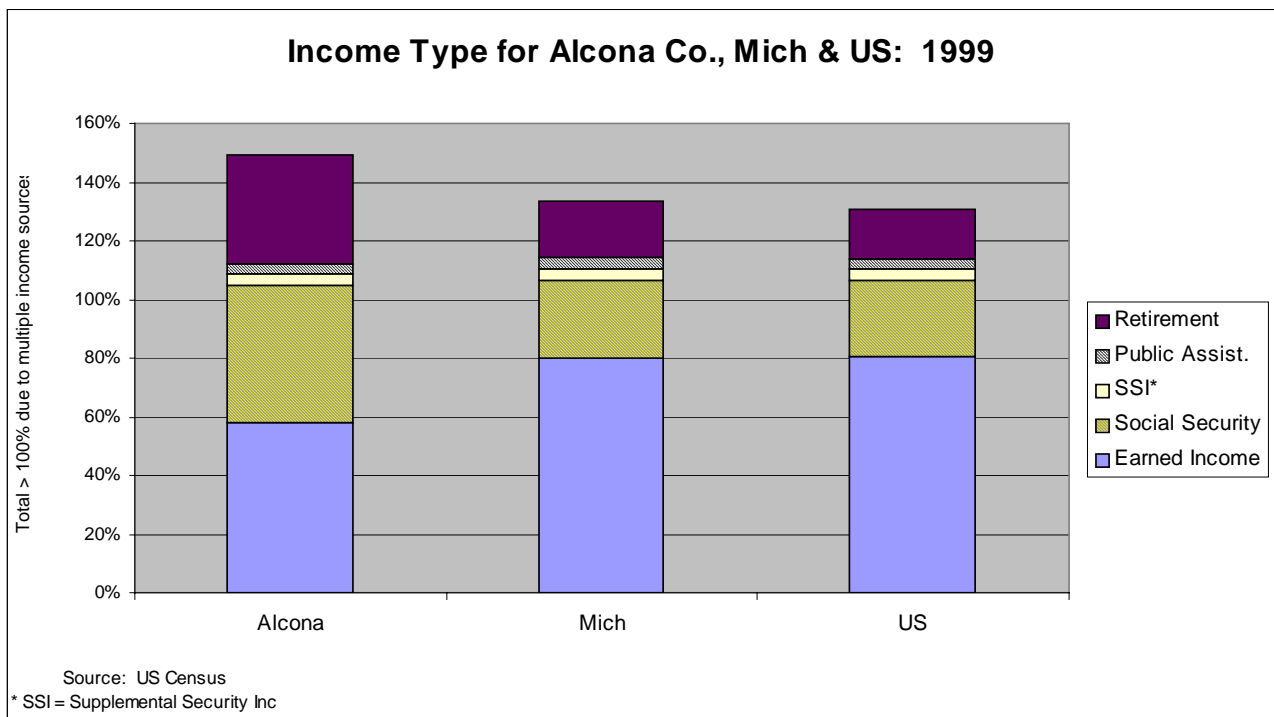


Figure III-4

The general make-up of the employment sectors also differs among Alcona County, Michigan, and the U.S. (see **Figure III-5**). There are a higher percentage of people employed in agriculture, forestry and mining, construction and retail in Alcona County than in the State or the nation. Generally, a smaller percentage of county residents were employed in manufacturing, wholesale trade and services than in the State or U.S. Alcona County had a higher percentage of manufacturing employment than the U.S. in 2000, however.

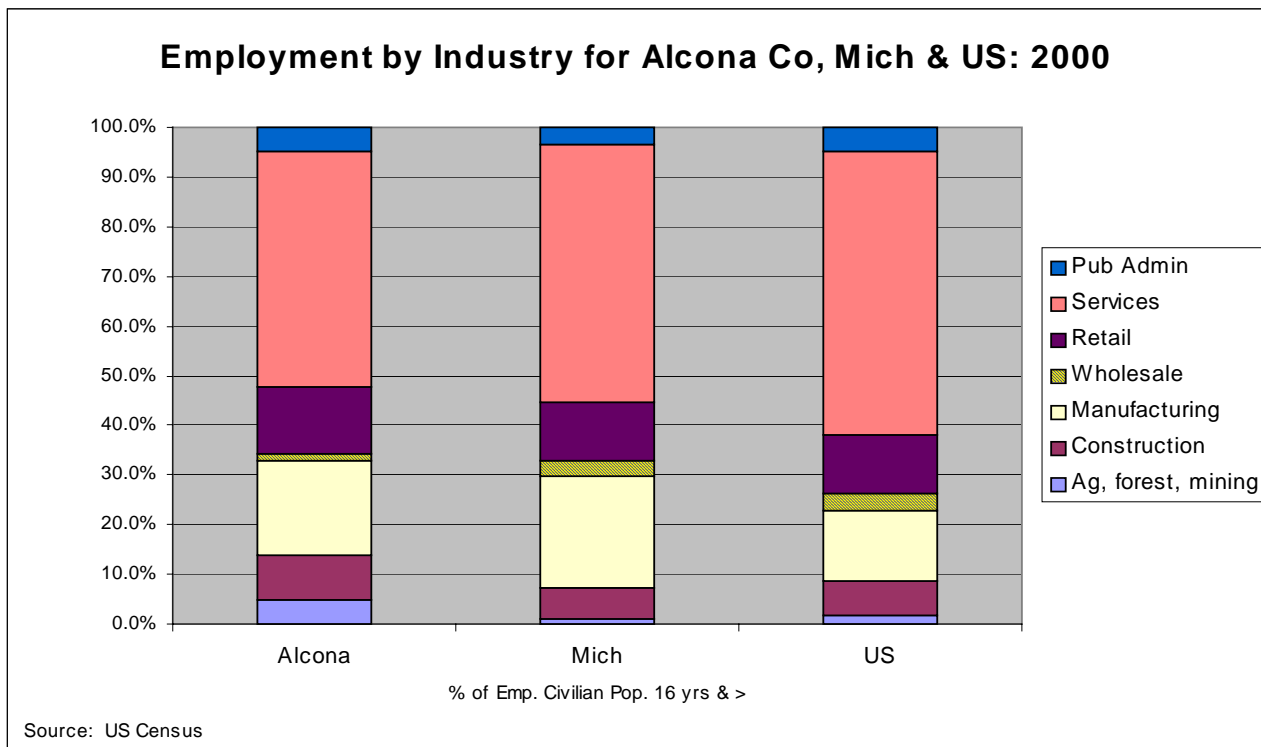


Figure III-5

B. State of the Local Economy

Past Industry Structure

Prior to 1992, the wage and salary employment of Alcona County and Iosco Counties was concentrated in government jobs.¹ Employment in that sector, however, dropped substantially,

¹ Data for Alcona County includes Iosco County. Iosco County numbers overshadow Alcona County because of population differences. However, the economies of the two areas are very closely linked because many people who live in Alcona County work in Iosco County.

due to the loss of over 600 government jobs when the Wurtsmith Air Force Base closed in Iosco County. Many residents of Alcona County worked at Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

Alcona and Iosco Counties added new jobs each year from 1993 through 2002, despite the loss of jobs in the manufacturing and government sectors during the period (see **Figure III-6**). Overall, these counties gained 1,025 jobs during the period, for a 10.5 percent net increase in wage and salary employment.

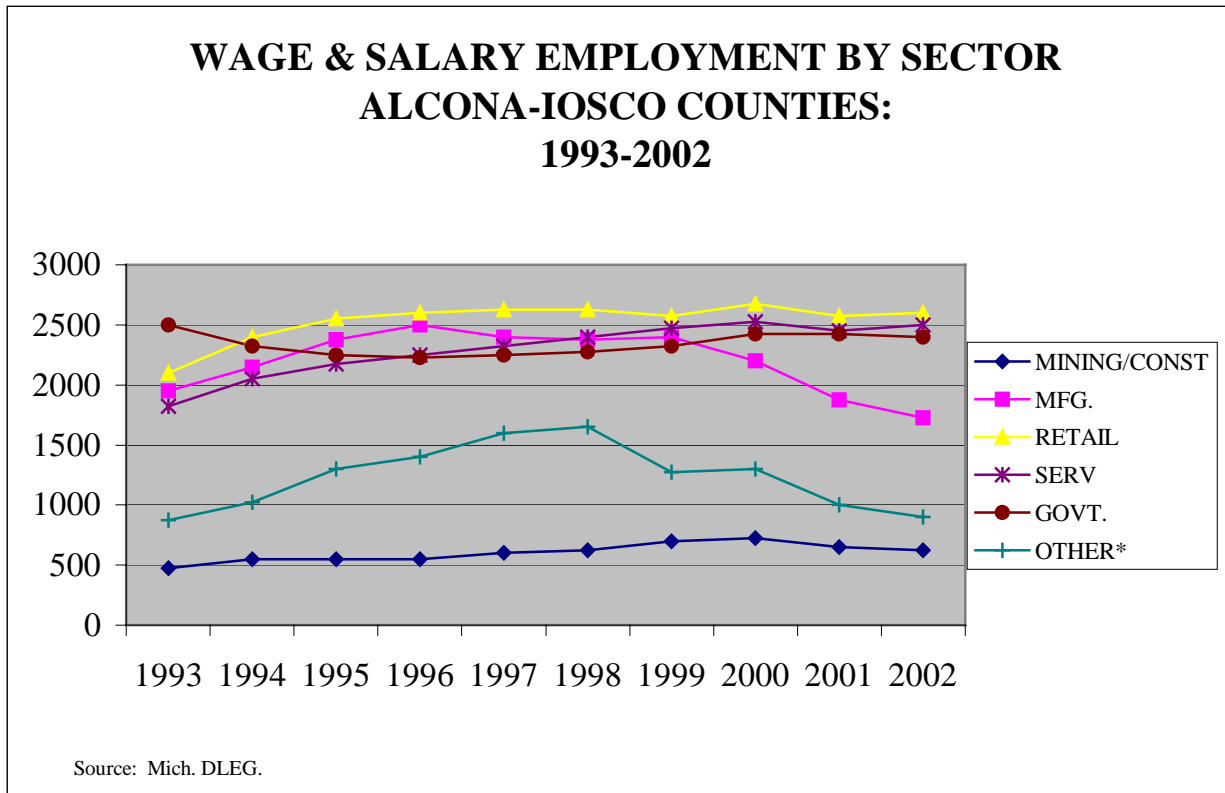


Figure III-6

Job losses in the government sector were directly due to the base closure mentioned earlier. From 1993 to 2002, the net loss of government employment was 100 jobs (-4%), but many more government jobs were lost in the years just prior to 1993. Since the closure of Wurtsmith Air Force Base there has been a concerted effort by local entities to attract companies to utilize the abandoned facilities. A large degree of success was achieved in attracting new manufacturing companies to the area from 1993 through roughly 1999. After that time, however, there has been a sharp decline in manufacturing employment in these two counties. In fact, between 1999 and 2002, 675 manufacturing jobs were lost, for a decline of 28 percent in that important sector. Over a ten-year period (from 1993 to 2002), Alcona and Iosco Counties showed a net loss of 225 manufacturing jobs (-11.5%). This was the largest numeric loss of employment in any sector of any county in Northeast Michigan during that time period.

Despite these job losses, however, Alcona and Iosco Counties did record healthy increases in wage and salary employment in all other employment sectors, from 1993 to 2002. The largest increases were found in the service sector (+675 jobs or +37%) and the retail sector (+500 jobs or 23.8%). The mining and construction sector increased by 150 jobs, during the period (+31.6%), while the “other” sectors recorded a net increase of only 25 jobs (+2.9%).

Unemployment

During the period shown on **Figure III-7**, Alcona County’s annual unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the State's rate by a difference of between three and six percentage points. In the early 1990's Alcona County's unemployment rate was very high (over 10% annual average rate). This was in response to the job losses in Iosco County (Wurtsmith Air Force Base closure) and in Alpena County, as was discussed earlier in this chapter. During the mid to late 1990's the county's unemployment rate fell nearly every year, until it reached a low of 6.6 percent in 2000. The overall economy for the State and U.S. was very good during those years, which was helpful in boosting the employment opportunities for Alcona County and adjacent Iosco and Alpena Counties. Unfortunately, in 2001 and 2002 the county's unemployment rate increased sharply taking it into the ten percent range again. The recent national recession was directly responsible for this increase, which is also reflected in the State's unemployment rate for those years. Alcona County's unemployment rate decreased by a small amount between 2001 and 2002 (from 10.1% to 9.7%). However, recent statistics have shown that it was again on the rise in 2003 with a rate of 11.5% and continues upward in early 2004.

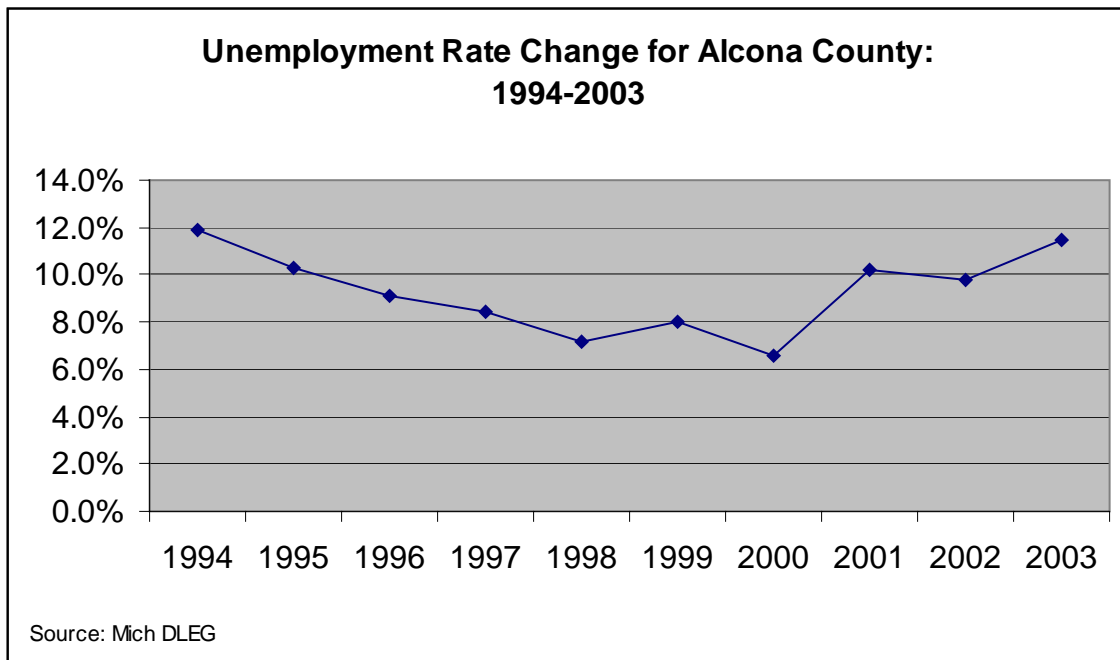


Figure III-7

Employment by Industrial Sector

As shown in **Figure III-6**, the largest employment sector found in Alcona and Iosco Counties is now retail employment (24.1% of the wage and salary employment in 2002). Service sector and government employment come in very close to retail employment at 23.2 percent and 22.3 percent, respectively. Manufacturing employment in 2002 was 16 percent of the wage and salary employment, which is the highest percentage of manufacturing employment found in this Region. Employment in "other" sectors ("other" includes transportation, communications & utilities, wholesale trade & finance, insurance and real estate) accounted for 8.4 percent of the wage and salary employment, while the mining and construction sector was last at 5.8 percent.

Occupational Forecast

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) has developed employment projections by industry and major occupation categories, for the Northeast Michigan Region through 2010 (see **Figure III-8 and Table III-1**). The Region is expected to add 4,420 new jobs between 2000 and 2010, for an increase of 7.1 percent. The occupations that are projected to add the largest number of new jobs are found in sales (+770 jobs), construction/extraction (+475 jobs), healthcare (+380 jobs), transportation (+335 jobs), food preparation and serving (+330 jobs), and production (+310 jobs). The only occupational category expected to decline within the next few years are those jobs found in agriculture, forestry and fishing (-150 jobs). It is promising to note that many of these projected jobs will be in occupations that tend to be higher paying than most (i.e. construction, healthcare, transportation and production).

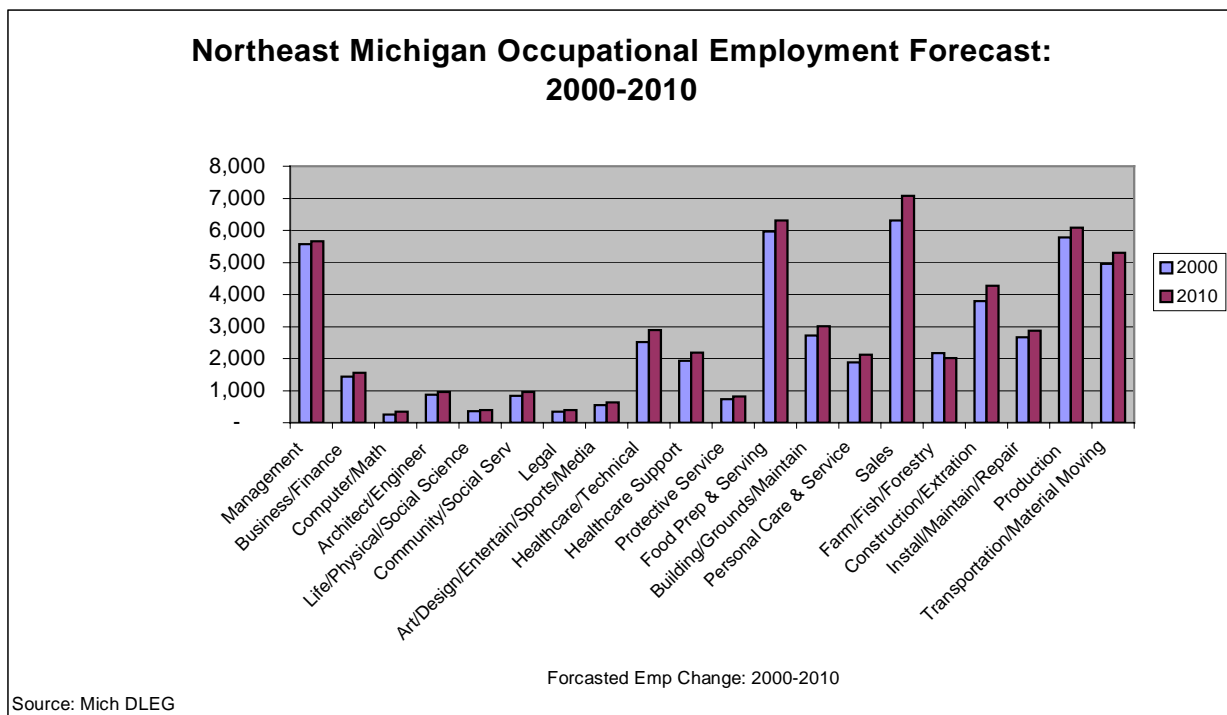


Figure III-8

Table III-1: Northeast Michigan Occupational Employment Forecasts: 2000-2010				
Occupation	Employment Levels		Change	
	2000	2010	#	%
Total - All Occupations	62,260	66,680	4,420	7.1%
Management	5,575	5,650	75	1.3%
Business/Finance	1,435	1,560	125	8.6%
Computer/Math	260	340	80	31.7%
Architect/Engineer	880	965	85	9.6%
Life/Physical/Social Science	365	395	30	7.9%
Community/Social Serv	840	960	120	14.2%
Legal	350	385	35	9.1%
Art/Design/Entertain/Sports/Media	555	630	75	13.7%
Healthcare/Technical	2,515	2,895	380	15.1%
Healthcare Support	1,930	2,185	255	13.2%
Protective Service	740	825	85	11.5%
Food Prep & Serving	5,970	6,300	330	5.5%
Building/Grounds/Maintain	2,725	3,015	290	10.6%
Personal Care & Service	1,875	2,120	245	13.2%
Sales	6,310	7,080	770	12.2%
Farm/Fish/Forestry	2,165	2,015	(150)	-6.9%
Construction/Extraction	3,795	4,270	475	12.5%
Install/Maintain/Repair	2,670	2,865	195	7.4%
Production	5,775	6,085	310	5.4%
Transportation/Material Moving	4,965	5,300	335	6.7%

Source: Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Growth, Office of Labor Market Information

Employer-Defined Problems

As was described in **Chapter I – Introduction**, this plan has been developed with the input of a Community Action Team (CAT). This team was made up of representatives of the Alcona County community, including government, private sector and civic leaders (see **Appendix A**). A series of four community input sessions were held over the course of four months in 2005. A portion of these sessions included a SWOT² analysis. Members of the CAT team were asked to list the positive and negative sides of pursuing economic and community development within the county. A summary listing of these items is found on **Table III-2**.

² “SWOT” stands for “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats”.

**Table III-2
Summary of Alcona County CAT SWOT Analysis - 2005**

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<p><u>Nature</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Lakes, rivers • Natural beauty • Recreation • Land • Wildlife • Public lands • Parks – federal, State and local • “Up North” feeling – close to nature, more relaxed • Air and water quality 	<p><u>Nature</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public lands mean less taxes for local government; less land available for development
<p><u>Recreation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical sites (lighthouse, depot, lumbering, etc.) • Alcona Recreation Area • Harrisville Harbor • Golf courses • Unique retail stores • Harrisville Art Fair • Harbortown Marketplace • Fireworks • Festivals (car shows, wine and cheese, arts, County Fair, etc) • Trails (snowmobile and others) • US-23 Heritage Route • Arts/Artists • To be able to live where people come to recreate 	<p><u>Recreation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited recreational opportunities for young adults
<p><u>Community Facilities and Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County schools good <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of the art facilities • auditorium • Library system good • Affordable housing • Transportation corridors – connection with other areas • Medical infrastructure good 	<p><u>Community Facilities and Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications poor in some parts of county • No expressway • Lack of public sewer and water in most parts of county • No post high school education opportunities in county • No hospital • Public transportation limited

Table III-2 Continued
Summary of Alcona County CAT SWOT Analysis - 2005

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse backgrounds • Caring community • Small community • Friendly merchants and businesses • Generous community • Volunteers • Good place to raise kids – safe • Groups partner with one another • Projects that come from the grass roots of community • Coordinate events calendar • Retirement community • Faith based organizations • Community services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-home services to seniors (home delivered meals) • Food & baby pantries • Food commodity programs • Congregate meals for seniors 	<p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people are resistant to change • Communication and coordination between organizations can be poor at times • Clanishness found in some areas • Fear of growth • Lack of involvement of young people in community • Sense of “community”, “being a good neighbor” is eroding • Lack of regional pooling of resources
<p><u>Economic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some new businesses starting – Internet related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cottage industries • Internet service is good in some areas of county • Small farms still found here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have found niche markets • Farms help to save large pieces of property from being divided and developed. • Affordable real estate • Low taxes • Available labor force 	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No motels (only a few resorts and B&B’s) • Negative attitude of lenders to local businesses • Limited employment opportunities • Flexibility in commercial zoning needed • Many businesses close in winter • Residents don’t support local businesses • Lack of work ethics is sometimes a problem
<p>Source: Alcona County CAT Team 2005</p>	

C. Labor Force

Demographic Characteristics

Table III-3 shows the demographic characteristics of the civilian labor force for the entire Northeast Michigan Region. (These figures are not available at the county level.) The numbers show that the unemployment rate is 1.8 times higher for the Region's black population, as it is for whites, and over twice as high for "other races" as for the white population. The Region's Hispanic population recorded an unemployment rate of two and one-half times higher than the area's white/non-Hispanic population.

Table III-3				
Northeast Michigan Civilian Labor Force by Demographic Group - 1998				
	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Area Total	146,050	138,100	7,950	5.4%
16-19 Years	9,182	7,956	1,226	13.4%
20-24 Years	13,242	12,017	1,225	9.3%
25-54 Years	106,319	101,595	4,724	4.4%
55-64 Years	13,277	12,745	532	4.0%
65 Years and >	4,030	3,787	242	6.0%
Male	79,498	74,942	4,557	5.7%
Female	66,552	63,158	3,393	5.1%
White	143,185	135,562	7,623	5.3%
Black	203	183	20	9.9%
Other Races	2,662	2,355	307	11.5%
Hispanic*	995	860	135	13.6%
Source: "Annual Planning Information Report, 2000- Northeast Michigan MWA", Michigan Dept. of Career Development - Office of Labor Market Information				
* Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race.				
Note: Detail may not sum to area total, due to rounding.				

The unemployment rates registered for younger people (16 to 19 years of age) in the region are nearly two and one half times higher than the population as a whole. Young adults (20-24 years old) also had a significantly higher unemployment rate than the population as a whole (9.3%). Persons falling into the middle-aged and white categories had unemployment rates at or below

those found in the total population. There is a small difference between male and female rates of unemployment in the Region (the female unemployment rate was .6 points lower than the male rate).

Age Composition

Age composition data for Alcona County and Michigan is found on **Figure III-9**. It shows that in 2000, 54.8 percent of Alcona County’s population was between 20 and 64 years old. This is the age grouping from which the majority of the labor pool is drawn. Alcona County has a smaller percentage of their population in this “labor pool” age grouping than the State as a whole (58.7%). This is due to the fact that the county has a large number of elderly persons aged 65 years and older. In 2000 24.5 percent of the county’s population fell into that category, as opposed to the State’s figure of 12.3 percent. Not surprisingly, the county also had a smaller percentage of children, aged 0-19 years than the State (20.7% and 29%, respectively). Unless the county experiences an influx of younger residents there will not be a large number of new workers entering the labor force in upcoming years.

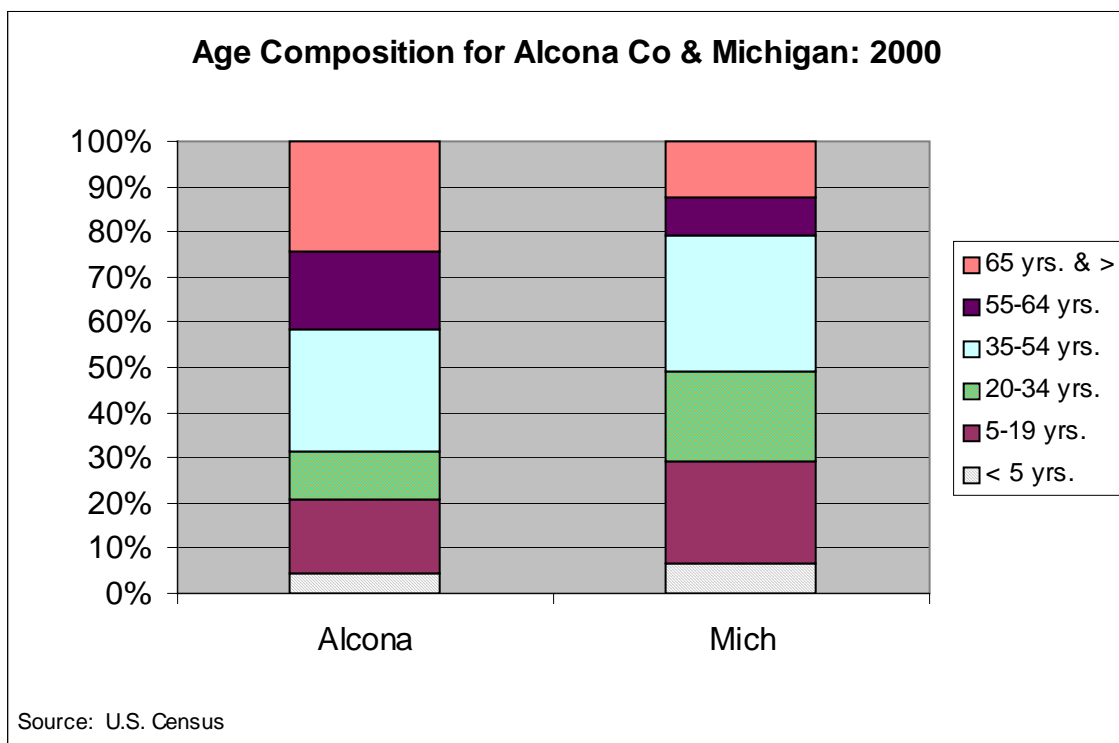


Figure III-9

Education

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks educational attainment for persons 25 years of age or older. Since 1990 educational attainment in Alcona County has improved as shown by **Table III-4**. The number of people 25 and older who had a high school diploma or higher increased from 68.5

percent in the 1990 Census to 79.8 percent in the 2000 US Census. Even though this represents a great improvement, it is somewhat lower than the 83.4 percent for the State as a whole. The percentage of persons with high school diplomas, Associate Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees all increased between the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. Additionally, the number of persons with less than 9th grade education, or 9th to 12th grade (no diploma) greatly decreased over the last decade.

Degree	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9 th grade	883	12.0%	504	5.6%
9 th to 12 th no Diploma	1,434	19.5%	1,310	14.6%
High School Diploma	2,910	39.5%	3,750	41.9%
Some college no degree	1,100	14.9%	1,880	21.0%
Associates	376	5.1%	537	6.0%
Bachelors	425	5.8%	589	6.6%
Graduate or Professional	239	3.2%	388	4.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure III-10 shows the educational attainment of Alcona County, compared to the State for 2000. As could be expected, the county had a significantly lower percentage of its population that attained a degree beyond high school. While 83.4 percent of the State's population had a high school degree or higher, only 68.5 percent of Alcona County's population did so. The State's figures show that 21.8 percent of its population had attained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2000, while only nine percent of Alcona County's population had done so.

Income

According to the U.S. Census, between 1989 and 1999 Alcona County's median household income increased by a greater percentage than did the State's rate (**Table III-5**). During the last decade Alcona County's median family income increased by over one-third (34.2%), while the State's rate only increased by 10.9 percent. This rise in the area's average income is most likely due to the fact that some financially stable retirees moved into that county during the period. In spite of this healthy boost to the area's overall income, Alcona County's 1999 median household income was still 29.8 percent lower than the State's rate during that year.

	1989	1989 (In 1999 \$*)	1999	% Change**
Alcona Co.	\$18,013	\$23,378	\$31,362	34.2%
Michigan	\$31,020	\$40,260	\$44,667	10.9%

* 1989 income converted into 1999 dollars.
 ** Percent change from 1989 income (using 1999 dollar conversion) to 1999 income.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

D. Needs

A summary of the economic and community development needs identified by the Alcona County CAT team is found on **Table III-6**.

Table III-6	
Summary of Economic and Community Development Needs for Alcona County	
Economic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities • Higher income levels, lower unemployment levels • Attract new and retain existing employers • Encourage new business development • Cottage industries • Diversify economy • Encourage sustainable development • Downtown renovations and reuse • Retain farms – find niche markets for agricultural products • Lenders and businesses need to work together • Accommodations for tourists (hotels and motels) • Businesses opened year round <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents to support local businesses • Flexibility in commercial zoning • Improved work ethics 	
Community Facilities/Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued planning to improve existing infrastructure and plan for future needs. (Including water, sewer, roads, telecommunications, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sewer improvements needed in Harrisville and Lincoln • Continue to maintain, upgrade and extend infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High speed Internet access limited in many parts of county. • Telephone service not available in parts of county • Maintain and improve local services (economic development, emergency services, health care, recreational, affordable housing, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post high school educational opportunities • Public transportation • Maintain and improve downtown's infrastructure (roads, parking, pedestrian access, beautification, etc.) 	

Table III-6 Continued	
Summary of Economic and Community Development Needs for Alcona County	
Environmental/Recreational	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and maintain the quality of life and natural environment • Maintain and improve outdoor recreational facilities and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize impact of Bovine TB on hunting activities • Better stock the lakes with pan fish for recreational fishing • Maintain and improve the recreational infrastructure (trails, parks, organized events, indoor recreation, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More recreational opportunities needed for young adults • More trails needed (hiking, X-country skiing, etc.) 	
Community/Organizational	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication and coordination between organizations, agencies, government units and the general public • Maintain small town sense of “community” without “clannishness”. • Pool community resources • Involve young people in planning and community activities • Overcome fear and resistance to change 	
Source: Alcona County CAT Team 2005	

E. Opportunities and Projects

The Alcona County CAT Team identified a variety of economic and community development opportunities and possible projects during the course of the community input sessions. A list of these opportunities and projects is found on **Table III-7**.

Once the CAT Team identified these items, they were asked to prioritize one top “short term” and “long term” project within each of the identified categories. The top projects are found on **Table III-8**.

Table III-7	
Alcona County Economic and Community Development Opportunities and Projects	
OPPORTUNITIES	PROJECTS
Economic	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist destination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational opportunities • Other tourist related businesses (i.e. casino) • Retirement community • Small and attractive downtowns (Harrisville and Lincoln) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn Sprinkler Lake facility into a conference center • Build a “green” (eco-friendly) business incubator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase Alcona County products (Ag, Arts/Crafts, etc.)

Table III-7 Continued	
Alcona County Economic and Community Development Opportunities and Projects	
OPPORTUNITIES	PROJECTS
Economic (continued)	Economic (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several small industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial park in Lincoln • Cottage industries (Internet related) • Energy plant in Lincoln • Small farms – niche markets • Affordable real estate • Low taxes • Available labor force • Housing is affordable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build “senior friendly” communities to attract retirees (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted living • Improve communications with local lenders • Improve recreational/tourist facilities and services (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist accommodations (i.e. hotel/motel) • Prison • E-Businesses • Skills training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality Training • Ag-tourism • Farm products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niche markets • Beef – safe meat due to extensive TB testing • Open local schools to community use (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-long learning (for seniors/others)
Community Facilities/Services	Community Facilities/Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system and facilities are good • Library system good throughout county. • Good transportation corridors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US-23 Heritage Route in place • Medical infrastructure is good <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency services • In-home services to seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize resources of local schools and school facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Elderhostel type program • On-line class offerings between schools • Improve adult education/life-long learning opportunities • Business mentoring – helping to ensure new businesses are successful • Entrepreneur training in high school • Dual enrollment in schools (i.e. Alcona/Alpena H.S., Alcona/ACC) • Continue to plan and implement strategies of the US-23 Heritage Route • Bring 21st Century/eco-friendly/small scale infrastructure to communities not already served or where services need to be upgraded.

Table III-7 Continued	
Alcona County Economic and Community Development Opportunities and Projects	
OPPORTUNITIES	PROJECTS
Community Facilities/Services (continued)	Community Facilities/Services (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become an “elder-friendly” community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian areas (cross walks, etc.) • Maintain and improve home health care services, especially for seniors. • Improve telecommunications throughout county. • Community Services Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 211 service
Environmental/Recreational	Environmental/Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakes, rivers, natural beauty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Huron access. Harrisville Marina/Harbor • AuSable River, etc. • Many acres of State and Federal recreational lands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor recreational opportunities. Area attracts outdoor enthusiasts. • Access to public lands/waterways. Some improvements needed • Two State parks in county (Harrisville and Negwegon) • Recreational trails exist throughout county. More needed, however. • Historical sites and other attractions. Improvements needed. • Festivals attract visitors for special events. • US-23 Heritage Route in place. Need to take advantage of opportunity. • Many artists and craftsmen in county. • Unique retail stores (i.e. Harbortown Marketplace) • Many golf courses in county • Underwater preserve in Alpena County. Need to take advantage of opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop nature-based, historical, ag and other packages for tourists in Alcona Co. (i.e. birding, wildflowers, fishing, historic sites) • Improve lakes and rivers, increase public access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock lakes with pan fish for recreational fishing • Improve, expand and coordinate recreational trails – motorized and non-motorized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect trails to one another • Handicapped accessible trails and walkways. • Improve indoor recreational opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior friendly activities (i.e. pool) • Recreational opportunities for young adults (i.e. theater group) • Coordinate with library activities • YMCA/YWCA or similar • Maintain and restore historic sites (i.e. lighthouse, depots) • Maintain, improve and add special festivals and events (i.e. military reenactments, art, writing, acting workshops, etc.) • Maintain and improve hunting opportunities (i.e. deer, bear, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcome negative impact of Bovine TB on deer hunting

Table III-7 Continued	
Alcona County Economic and Community Development Opportunities and Projects	
OPPORTUNITIES	PROJECTS
Environmental/Recreational (continued)	Environmental/Recreational (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative marketing of area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and link web sites • Maintain and improve coordinated events calendar • Overcome negative Bovine TB impacts • Continue to implement projects listed in the US-23 Heritage Route plan. • Build on the attraction of the Underwater Preserve in Alpena. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours and services for divers • Investigate possibility of expanding preserve area into Alcona County • Build on success of County Fair by attracting more visitors (i.e. concerts with big name bands) • Maintain and improve recreational facilities at local recreational facilities, State Parks and US Forest Service properties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve restrooms at State Park • Concessions at campground and USFS properties. • Horse trails, and other trail developments • Transportation to downtown from Harrisville Harbor
Community/Organizational	Community/Organizational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good volunteer network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many grass-roots projects developed and maintained by volunteers • Strong faith community • Strong sense of community – being a good neighbor. • Small towns – safe communities • Generous community and businesses • Groups partner with one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated meeting(s) between groups to improve communication and coordination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve young adults in planning • Educate community on importance of planned change. • Build on sense of “community” – market areas’ “small town” values. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a public gathering place • Take advantage of funding from local foundations (i.e. NE Michigan Community Foundation, Unite Way) • Develop County Coordinating Committee
<p>Source: Alcona County CAT Team 2005</p>	

Table III-8	
Alcona County Highest Priority Long-Term and Short-Term Projects	
Highest Priority Long-Term Projects	Highest Priority Short-Term Projects
Economic	Economic
Build a “green” (eco-friendly) business incubator. Showcase Alcona County products (agriculture, arts/crafts, etc.).	Open local schools to community use.
Community Facilities/Services	Community Facilities/Services
Become an “elder-friendly” community.	Improve telecommunications throughout county.
Environmental/Recreational	Environmental/Recreational
Improve Alcona County lakes and rivers in order to remain attractive for fishing and other recreation. Increase public access to rivers and lakes.	Cooperative marketing of the area.
Implement projects listed in the US-23 Heritage Route plan.	
Community/Organizational	Community/Organizational
Build on sense of “community” – market area’s “small town” values.	Facilitated meeting(s) between groups to improve communication and coordination.
Source: Alcona County CAT Team 2005	

F. Implementation Strategy

The Alcona County Community Action Plan (CAP) will be implemented over the course of next several years. The Alcona County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is the lead economic development organization in the county. Because the county is so rural and resources are limited, the need to partner with other organizations and agencies is imperative in guaranteeing success in implementing these projects. Therefore, the EDC will look for ways in which to form partnerships with appropriate entities within the county and region. The entities with which the EDC will partner will differ depending on the specific project.

Specific strategies for implementing each of the top priority projects listed on **Table III-8** are found in **Chapter IV: Project Implementation**. In general, however, implementation of projects will include the following steps, as appropriate:

- Work with existing organizations/entities to develop and implement strategy(ies).
- Work with legislators on developing and implementing projects, as appropriate.
- Apply to funding sources for developing and implementing strategy(ies).
- Hire a consultant to help develop and implement strategy(ies), as needed.

IV. Project Implementation

A. Introduction

Background

As has been discussed earlier, in **Chapters I and III**, this plan was hosted by and will be implemented by the Alcona County Economic Development Corporation (EDC). With the assistance of Huron Pines RC&D and NEMCOG, the EDC formed a Community Action Team (CAT) to help formulate this plan. The “needs”, “opportunities”, “projects” and “strategies” determined by the CAT Team were listed in **Chapter III**. The top priority projects identified through this process are found on **Table III-8** in that Chapter. Each of the top priority projects will be examined in more detail below (see **Project Strategies**).

Project Goals

Throughout the course of the community input CAT sessions, the following emerged as the top priority goals of economic and community development for Alcona County. The goals and projects are not listed in any priority order.

- Strengthen and expand all economic sectors, including manufacturing, service, retail, and agriculture.
- Plan and implement improvements to area infrastructure (i.e. roads, water, sewer, telecommunications, etc.)
- Improve services and facilities to make communities more “elder friendly”. Encourage businesses that serve older residents.
- Coordinate with local educational institutions to expand educational and cultural opportunities for local residents and visitors.
- Improve facilities, services and marketing in order to attract tourists and businesses to the area.
- Build on the area’s strong sense of “community” as a means to attract businesses and visitors.
- Work cooperatively between agencies and organizations in order to meet these goals.

B. Project Strategies

Highest Priority Long-Term Projects

- 1) **Build a “green” (eco-friendly) business incubator. Showcase Alcona County products (Agriculture, Arts/Crafts, etc.).**

Project Summary:

Alcona County does not have one “major” employer or employment sector. The local economy is made up of many very small businesses mostly within the sectors of retail and services and a small amount of manufacturing. There is only one small industrial park in the county, found in Lincoln. The county does not have the infrastructure needed in order to attract a large manufacturing facility to the area. If a business is interested in this part of the State, they are likely to locate in the more urbanized areas to the north or south of Alcona County. Given the current state of globalization it is very difficult to find any manufacturer willing to locate anywhere in northern Michigan.

The Alcona County EDC was successful in formulating and implementing a project which resulted in the renovation of an old building in Harrisville into a retail/arts and crafts incubator. This incubator has been in operation for a few years and has been instrumental in encouraging small retail businesses to start and expand in the area.

One idea that emerged from the CAT Team meetings was to explore the feasibility of constructing a “green” incubator in the area to be targeted towards service and/or retail businesses. A building would be chosen for renovation based on how well it could accommodate these businesses. The renovations would be carried out in an eco-friendly manner and the building would be renovated to include “green” technologies and to be energy efficient. **put in Bethany’s wording here**

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, Alcona County Board, Lincoln DDA, MSU Extension, Alcona County Conservation District, NEMCOG, local business community.

Project Strategy:

The first step in implementing this project will be to study the feasibility of such a venture. The EDC and project partners will begin by seeking funding for this study. Once funding is secured, a qualified consultant will be hired to undertake the study. The results of the study will determine the next steps in the project’s strategy.

2) *Become an “elder-friendly” community.*

Project Summary:

When examining the demographics for Alcona County, one finds that the area contains a high percentage of elderly residents. The official numbers reported in Census data do not take into consideration the large numbers of people who only reside in the area during the summer months. Many of these summer residents are older, as well. The data shows that the county’s elderly residents tend to be more affluent than the younger population found in the area. The unemployment rate for Alcona County tends to be much higher than the State’s rate, which indicates that the younger, working-aged residents are in need of employment opportunities. Given the fact that elderly people tend to need special services and products, one economic development strategy formulated involves encouraging elder-friendly businesses, services and facilities within the county. Becoming an “elder-friendly” community will involve many facets, including public sector improvements, additional services from the non-profit sector and new private sector businesses.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, local governmental units, County Road Commission, Alcona Health Center, District Health Dept. #2, ACCOA, NEMCSA, Thunder Bay Transportation, home health care providers, local business community, MSU

Project Strategy:

MSU’s Vital Aging Team and the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging have developed criteria to become certified as an “Elder Friendly” community. Items that a community needs in order to be certified include safety, mobility, connectivity, commercial viability, medical services, enriching opportunities, recreation, spiritual connectivity and an embracing and appreciative community attitude. If Alcona County communities are interested in being perceived as “elder-friendly” they need to strive towards filling any gaps missing in these identified items. While some items listed as being “elder-friendly” may not be possible for this county (e.g. a hospital), the project partners can begin working on the items that are realistic (e.g. making communities more “walkable”).

3) *Improve Alcona County lakes and rivers in order to remain attractive for fishing and other recreation. Increase public access to rivers and lakes.*

Project Summary:

Alcona County is blessed with many lakes and rivers, as well as being situated along Lake Huron. Activities that involve being on lakes and rivers are very popular for residents and tourists (i.e. fishing, boating, swimming, etc.). It is important to the county’s economy that these bodies of water continue to support fish life and are open and desirable for other water based activities.

Many people have built homes on lakes and rivers, making public access to these areas more difficult. Some of the publicly owned property situated on local lakes and rivers is very difficult to access, due to its remote location. For example, Negwegon State Park is located along many miles of Lake Huron. The park, however, is very difficult to find, as it is not marked with signs. Once found, it is difficult to access, as the road leading to the park is unimproved. Additional public improvements such as access sites, fishing platforms and boat launches need to be developed along lakes and rivers in Alcona County, so that more tourism can be encouraged in the area. These sites need to be accessible by handicapped people as well.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, MDNR, USFS, MSU Sea Grant, local governmental units, County Road Commission, local lakes associations, the Watershed Coalition, the Hubbard Lake Sportsmans' Club, etc.

Project Strategy:

A summit will be held with the project partners. Discussion will take place regarding developing a lakes and rivers improvement plan for the county. Possible funding sources for the plan will be explored. The plan will identify priority strategies and projects for improvements to the area's bodies of water.

4) *Implement projects listed in the US-23 Heritage Route plan.*

Project Summary:

In 2004, US-23 from Standish to Mackinaw City was designated by the State as a "heritage route". It is called the "Sunrise Side Coastal Highway", and includes the stretch of US-23 that goes through Alcona County. A management plan was developed for this Heritage Route, including projects that were determined to be desirable in making this route more attractive to tourists. A "Management Team" made up of representatives of all counties along the Heritage Route was appointed to help oversee this project. County Teams have also been set-up to undertake the work of implementing projects on a local level.

Project Partners:

Alcona County's Sunrise Side Coastal Highway County Team, the Sunrise Side Coastal Highway Management Team, in conjunction with local groups, organizations and elected bodies, as appropriate.

Project Strategy:

The Alcona County EDC will help to support the work of Alcona County's Team, as is appropriate and needed. The EDC will encourage other local organizations, groups and elected bodies to support this effort, as well.

5) *Build on sense of “community” – market area’s “small town” values.*

Project Summary:

During the course of the CAT meetings, one item emerged as the major reason that people loved living in Alcona County – the area’s sense of “community” and its “small town” values. Many people, who had recently moved into the area, cited this as the reason they did so. One idea that came out of this discussion was the possibility of marketing the area based on these factors. There are many small towns in the southern U.S. that actively market tourists who want to experience rural pleasures such as southern friendliness, home cooking, old time music, local arts and crafts, walkable and safe downtowns, etc.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, local Chambers of Commerce, arts organizations, local businesses, etc.

Project Strategy:

The project partners will meet to discuss the best way in which to begin to implement this idea. This idea will also be included as a part of the marketing plan, discussed below (Short-Term Priority #3).

Highest Priority Short-Term Projects

1) *Open local schools to community use.*

Project Summary:

Another topic that received a great deal of discussion at the CAT meetings revolved around education and the local school systems. While the CAT Team felt that the local schools were doing a very good job of K-12 education, ideas emerged where the schools could assist in helping the local economy, as well. Some of the ideas where a partnership with the local schools could be explored include: developing an Elderhostel type program during the summer months, offering on-line classes between schools, improving adult education/life-long learning opportunities, opening the schools to arts, cultural and sports programs for non-students, business mentoring/training for new businesses, entrepreneurial training in the high schools, dual enrollments between the schools and larger high schools (i.e. Alpena) and/or with the local community college. Developing some of these ideas would not only be helpful to the local community and economic development efforts, it should be helpful to the local school systems which are struggling under declining student enrollments and revenues.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, local school systems, Alpena Community College (ACC) and other institutions of higher learning, the Small Business and Technology Development Center at ACC, MSUE, etc.

Project Strategy:

The project partners will meet and begin discussions regarding the ideas mentioned. Barriers to the implementation of these ideas will be discussed and solutions explored. Research will be undertaken to explore how other communities have approached these problems and how they were solved. Based on this background information, decisions will be made as to which of these potential ideas would have the best chance of success. Potential funding sources will be explored, as needed.

2. *Improve telecommunications throughout county.****Project Summary:***

Having high-speed telecommunications is a very important part of being successful in many different types of businesses. Rural Michigan is at a disadvantage in this regard, because telecommunications tends to be very slow in these areas. Portions of rural Alcona County (and other areas of Northeast Michigan) are not served by any telecommunications companies at all. In those areas, cell phone service is usually non-existent or very spotty. The more urbanized portions of the county (i.e. Harrisville and Lincoln) do have telecommunications, but access to higher speed Internet services is very expensive. One way in which rural areas could attract more business and industry is by having a high-speed telecommunications system. Many smaller businesses may desire to locate in Alcona County, due to its quality of life, but need to have good telecommunications.

A new telecommunication company has recently been formed (AllBand Communications Cooperative). Their goal is to provide high speed Internet, TV, telephone services to the “unassigned” areas of Northeast Michigan. It is expected that this new company will start constructing the infrastructure needed for this system within the next year. More work needs to be done, however, to bring high speed Internet to other portions of the county, especially the more populated areas.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, AllBand Communications Cooperative, other telecommunications’ companies, MSU, etc.

Project Strategy:

Discussions will take place between the EDC and project partners to see what can be done to provide better telecommunication services to the county.

3) *Cooperative marketing of the area.*

Project Summary:

Alcona County has much to offer to businesses and visitors. It has a good location, along Lake Huron, between two larger population centers (Alpena and Oscoda). Due to a lack of available funding, however, Alcona County remains a “best kept secret” and is largely unknown to many outside of the immediate area. A marketing plan needs to be developed which will help guide the EDC and other organizations in a targeted marketing campaign. By joining forces among several organizations, a marketing campaign can stretch its dollars further and hopefully reach a wider audience. This project closely relates to several of the proceeding projects, especially Long-Term Projects #2,3,4 and 5.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, local Chambers of Commerce, the Alcona County Sunrise Side Coastal Highway Team, the Alcona County Conservation District, the Agricultural Diversity Team, local business community, etc.

Project Strategy:

The project partners will meet to discuss the possibility of developing a marketing plan for the area. Elements of the plan will be determined. Possible funding sources will be identified and pursued.

4) *Facilitated meeting(s) between groups to improve communication and coordination.*

Project Summary:

During the CAT meetings, it became apparent that Alcona County is fortunate to have many very active groups, organizations and a good leadership base. People who attended the meetings were surprised to discover how many activities and projects are presently taking place within the county. The need to communicate between these entities is very important, so that efforts are not duplicated and so similar endeavors can support one another. Communication is also important so that the local residents and visitors know what is being offered. One idea that emerged was to designate one central point to which organizations can submit their activities’ schedule to help produce a coordinated events calendar. That way everyone will know what is coming up and events won’t tend to conflict with one another.

Project Partners:

Alcona County EDC, other local organizations and agencies (governmental and non-profit), local media, etc.

Project Strategy:

A meeting will be held between the project partners to discuss ways in which to implement this project. Ideas will be explored such as the coordinated events calendar, coordinated web sites, a periodic newsletter, etc. An initial survey will be conducted to determine the existing web sites, events, organizations and other information.