

Chapter 1: Introduction



Cheboygan County is located at the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula. The county is composed of 19 townships: Aloha, Beaugrand, Benton, Burt, Ellis, Forest, Grant, Hebron, Inverness, Koehler, Mackinaw, Mentor, Mullett, Munro, Nunda, Tuscarora, Walker, Waverly, and Wilmot. Also located in Cheboygan County are the City of Cheboygan, the Village of Mackinaw City, the Village of Wolverine, and Indian River (Census Designated Place) (**Figure 1-1**). The City of Cheboygan is the county seat and is located on Lake Huron. The name Cheboygan stands for "Water of the Chippewas." The first settler was Jacob

Sammons, a cooper from Mackinaw City who built a log cabin there in 1844, and then founded a town. The area grew productive during the lumber days, and was incorporated as a village in 1871, while later becoming a city in 1889.

Location and Regional Setting

Cheboygan County is 10 miles from Lake Michigan at the Mackinaw Bridge, and its northern border runs for 32.5 miles along the Straits of Mackinac and Lake Huron. It is bordered on the east by Presque Isle County, on the south by Otsego County and on the west by Emmet and Charlevoix Counties. Cheboygan County covers 715.6 square miles, or 457,984 acres. Fifty-seven percent of the County is in public ownership and 83 percent of the county is forested.

Cheboygan County is remote from urban centers. The closest cities to Cheboygan are Gaylord, 49 miles to the south, Alpena which is located 72 miles to the southeast on US 23, Petoskey which is 42 miles to the west, Grayling which is 75 miles to the south, and Sault Ste. Marie which is 74 miles to the north.

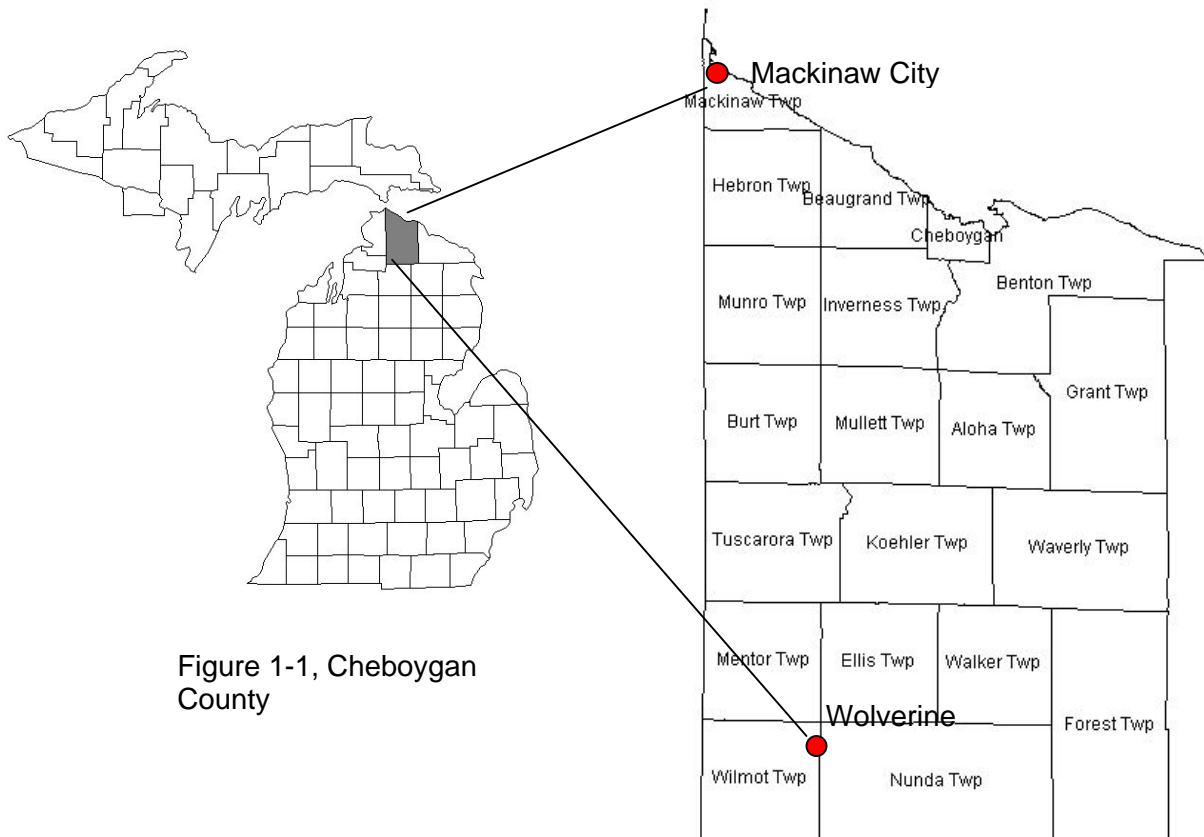


Figure 1-1, Cheboygan County

Purpose and Approach

What is Hazard Mitigation Planning?

In partnership with eight counties in Northeastern Lower Peninsula of Michigan, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) worked with each county in its region to prepare hazard mitigation plans. The Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 included new requirements for hazard mitigation planning. In order to become eligible for hazard mitigation grant program funds in the future, counties must prepare and adopt hazard mitigation plans. The DMA requires that local hazard mitigation plans that meet the requirements of the act must be in place by November 2004.

The intent of a hazard mitigation plan is to inventory possible hazards, assess the vulnerability of community to the hazards it faces, and to provide possible mitigation activities for those hazards. *The focus of the hazard mitigation plan is the development of projects and policies that can be implemented to reduce or prevent losses from future disasters.* The **Cheboygan County Hazard Mitigation Plan** includes text, tables charts and maps necessary to describe and discuss the following: 1) a hazard analysis based on a current community profile, hazard identification, risk assessment, and vulnerability assessment; 2) a listing of the communities goals and objectives; 3) a discussion of the alternatives for solving problems; 4) evaluation and prioritization of alternatives; 5) selection of feasible mitigation strategies; and 6) recommended mitigation strategies. The plan contains a hazard mitigation element that can be easily integrated into county or township comprehensive plans.

The process of Hazard Mitigation Planning consists of the following steps:

- Develop community profile and identify community hazards and risks
- Identification and definition of goals and objectives
- Identification of alternatives for solving problems
- Selection of evaluation criteria
- Selection of Alternatives
- Preparation of final plan
- Implementation of plan
- Monitoring and periodic revision of the plan

NEMCOG staff worked closely with the Charlevoix/Cheboygan/Emmet Office of Emergency Management and the Cheboygan County Local Emergency Planning Committee to prepare this Hazard Mitigation Plan. In addition, considerable effort was made to gain input from stakeholders in the county. This included meetings with townships; township association; county board of commissioners; local, state and federal agencies; local officials; community leaders and general public.

Information Collection

NEMCOG reviewed relevant plans, maps, studies and reports. Federal, state, regional and local government sources were reviewed to develop a current community profile. Information sources included: U.S. Census, zoning ordinances, master plans, recreation plans, capital improvement plans, parcel maps, aerial photography, MIRIS land use/land cover, USGS topographic maps, U.S Weather Service, NRCS soils maps, Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Hazard Analysis, local hazard analysis, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, emergency management plans, and Section 302 Sites from the LEPC.

Geographic Information System Support

NEMCOG's Geographic Information System (GIS) was used as a decision support tool and public education tool throughout the process. Existing data sets were incorporated and new data sets created in order to analyze existing conditions and study potential future scenarios. Specialized maps showing

community hazards, land cover/use, infrastructure, topography, soils, national wetlands inventory, forest cover, gas and oil wells, zoning, future land use and community facilities were prepared as part of the plan development. Maps helped identify community characteristics, vulnerable populations, and hazard areas. GIS data and maps will be retained by the community for future use to help implement and monitor hazard mitigation activities.

Increased Community Awareness of Hazards and Hazard Mitigation

Information was disseminated to the communities and public through the use of public meetings, presentations, news releases, and contacts. A secondary benefit of the planning process was the education of community leaders and citizens of the community in regards to hazard awareness. This education supported the decision making process and will assist communities in making better, more informed decisions in the future. In addition, the process strengthened partnerships between local units of government, planning commissions, emergency services, public agencies and private interests to pool resources and helped facilitate communication and understanding between various entities. By fostering lines of communication and increasing awareness of the cross jurisdictional impacts of land use and policy decisions, better and more informed decisions will be made in the future.

Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee

The hazard mitigation plan was developed with guidance from the Cheboygan County Local Emergency Planning Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from local units of governments; local, state and federal agencies; law enforcement, fire departments and community organizations. Committee members provided feedback throughout plan development, including identification of hazards and high hazard areas, definition of goals and objectives, identification of hazard mitigation strategies and selection of an action plan.

Community Involvement

The planning process provided several opportunities for public, community and agency input and comments. Public meetings involved the County Board of Commissioners during plan development and the draft plan was presented for commissioners' approval. Staff met regularly with the Local Emergency Planning Committee during plan development. This group has representatives from local communities, state and federal agencies and citizens. The group, together with the Charlevoix/Cheboygan/ Emmet Emergency Management Director, was instrumental in guiding plan development. Public meetings were advertised and held in Cheboygan County. Notices of the public meetings were sent to LEPC members and local communities officials. Meeting notices were also published in the local newspaper.

Meetings

- Cheboygan LEPC, March 10, 2003, kickoff and organizational meeting.
- Cheboygan MAPS Committee March 26, 2003. Introduction to Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Cheboygan LEPC, November 10, 2003. Hazard Ranking
- Cheboygan LEPC, March 8, 2004. Goals and Objectives.
- Cheboygan LEPC, March 26, 2004. Special meeting to discuss anchor ice riverine flooding in Wolverine. Participants included representatives from Planning Commission, Health Dept., and other County office, – Meeting
- Cheboygan LEPC, County agencies and MDEQ. April 6, 2004. Review Wolverine flood plain.
- Cheboygan LEPC, May 10, 2004. Mitigation Project identification.
- Cheboygan LEPC, July 12, 2004. Project update
- Cheboygan LEPC, September 13, 2004. Project prioritization.
- October 4, 2004, Special LEPC meeting to prioritize projects and actions.

Governmental Participation

During the two-year development of the Cheboygan Hazard Mitigation Plan representatives from all local governmental units participated directly in one or more planning and prioritization meetings held around the county. In addition to Cheboygan County government, other governmental units involved in the process were:

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
| City of Cheboygan | Inverness Township |
| Village of Mackinaw City | Koehler Township |
| Village of Wolverine | Mackinaw Township |
| Aloha Township | Mentor Township |
| Beaugrand Township | Mullett Township |
| Benton Township | Munro Township |
| Burt Township | Nunda Township |
| Ellis Township | Tuscarora Township |
| Forest Township | Walker Township |
| Grant Township | Waverly Township |
| Hebron Township | Wilmot Township |

Community Surveys

Early in the planning process, a local officials survey was sent to all township boards and the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners. This survey was used to gather information on community understanding and perception of natural and technological hazards and community preparedness. The results were used to help guide the planning effort and as a gauge to compare information gathered from external sources and local officials understanding of hazard issues. A summary of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Public Input for Plan Approval

A copy of the draft plan on CD was sent to local communities and any agencies requesting a copy for review. In addition, printed copies of the plan were available for review at the Cheboygan County Clerk's office:

Cheboygan County Clerk
870 South Main Street, P.O. Box 70
Cheboygan, MI 49721
Phone 231-627-8808

Review and Adoption of Plan

The steering committee, stakeholders and the public representatives reviewed a draft plan. Comments and suggestions obtained in the review process were incorporated into the final plan. The final plan contains mitigation strategies and an action plan that assigns priorities for specific hazards and mitigation measures; defines roles and responsibilities; and identifies the process for reviewing and updating the plan. Upon final approval, the hazard mitigation plan will be presented to the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners, the Cheboygan City Council, the Mackinaw City and Wolverine Village Councils and all Township Boards of Trustees for their review and adoption.

Recommended Plan Implementation Process

It is recommended that implementation of the Cheboygan County Hazard Mitigation Plan will be reviewed by the Charlevoix/Cheboygan/ Emmet Office of Emergency Management on an ad-hoc basis, or as directed by the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners, during a period not to exceed five-years from the date of adoption. The Charlevoix/Cheboygan/Emmet Office of Emergency Management may provide references and assistance for specific mitigating strategies to units of County government and outside entities.

Local units of government, county departments, and local, state and federal agencies will be encouraged to consider, propose and sponsor projects from the hazard mitigation plan. The HMC will coordinate and support plan implementation as well as monitor progress and determine timing and scope of plan revisions.