

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview



Crawford County is located in the north central Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The county is composed of six townships: Grayling Township, Frederic Township, Maple Forest Township, Lovells Township, South Branch Township, and Beaver Creek Township. Also located in Crawford County is the City of Grayling, which is the county seat (**Figure 1.1**).

Location and Regional Setting

Crawford County is approximately inland 35 miles from Lake Michigan and approximately 50 miles inland from Lake Huron. It is bordered on the east by Crawford County, on the south by Roscommon County, on the west by Kalkaska County, and on the north by Otsego County. Crawford County has a land area of 558 square miles and a population of 14,273. Its population density is 25.6 people per square mile.

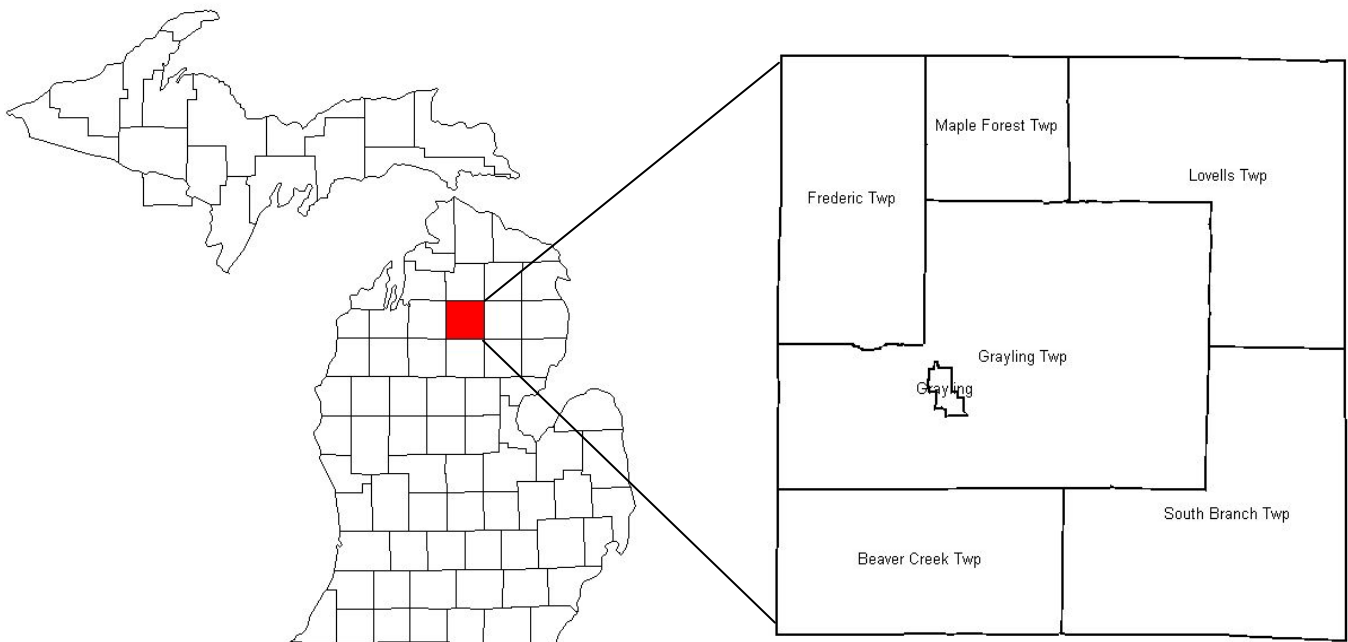


Figure 1.1

Purpose and Approach

In partnership with seven 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 County prepared its first Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2005. This planning document represents an update of the 2005 plan.

The intent of a hazard mitigation plan is to inventory possible hazards, assess the vulnerability of community to hazards it faces, and to provide possible mitigation activities for those hazards. *The focus of the hazard mitigation plan is development of projects and policies that can be implemented to reduce or prevent losses from future disasters.* The **Crawford 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 update consists of the following steps:

- Reviewed and updated Chapter 2: Environment. Updated information on the climate, soils, sites of environmental contamination, wetlands, discharge permits.
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 3: Community Profile. Updated demographics and housing information
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 4: Land Use. Updated information on oil and gas wells
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 5: Community Services. Updated all sections of the chapter
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 6: Hazard Identification. The committee updated information on wildfires, severe weather, severe wind storms, extreme temperatures, other natural hazards, and technological hazards. Information on local jurisdictions was updated including compiling new maps for each community.
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 7: Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. Evaluation criteria, and hazard analysis evaluation measures and benchmark factors were reviewed and no changes were made. Crawford County Hazard Rating was reviewed and the committee made adjustments according to updated hazard information. The Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Assessment was updated to reflect data and activities
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 8: Goals and Objectives. The committee added a goal concerning regional cooperation
- Reviewed and updated Chapter 9: Mitigation Strategies and Priorities. The committee made changes to this section, eliminating some actions, adding new actions and amending this list of responsible parties.
- Changes were made to Chapters 1 & 9.

NEMCOG staff worked closely with the Crawford County Emergency Management Director and 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 through the Local Emergency Planning Committee. The committee has 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, 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 with the Local Emergency Planning Committee during plan development. The group, together with the Emergency Management Director, was instrumental in guiding plan development. Public meetings were noticed and held in Crawford County. Notices of the public meetings were sent to LEPC members and local communities officials.

Meetings:

Region 7 Meeting – January 5, 2012 Provided information on the planning updates. Also, NEMCOG staff met with county Emergency Managers prior to the regional meeting.

Crawford County Mitigation Planning Committee (LEPC): Meeting to discuss the planning process and existing conditions sections of the plan, January 11, 2012

Crawford County Mitigation Planning Committee (LEPC): subcommittee meeting to update risk and vulnerability assessment, goals and objectives, and mitigation strategies, June 13, 2012.

Crawford County Firewise Planning Committee: Meeting to discuss wildfire and Firewise planning activities in Crawford County. July 26, 2012

Crawford County Mitigation Planning Committee (LEPC): Meeting to discuss Wildfire Protection planning and Firewise: August 2, 2012

Crawford County Township Association: December 5, 2013

Crawford County Mitigation Planning Committee (LEPC): Review draft plan and approve for review and comment. July 9, 2014

Crawford County Board of Commissioners: July 24, 2014

Governmental Participation

During the two-year development of the Crawford County 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 Crawford County government, local jurisdictions, community organizations, and state and federal agencies were involved in the process. The following communities are continuing participants in the Crawford County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Beaver Creek Township
Frederic Township
Grayling Township
Lovells Township

Maple Forest Township
South Branch Township
City of Grayling

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, the plan was posted on NEMCOG's web site and a copy of the plan was available for review at the Crawford County Emergency Management Office.

Review and Adoption of Plan

The steering committee, stakeholders and the public 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

Crawford County Board of Commissioners. Requests will be to the Grayling City Council and all Township Boards of Trustees for their review and adoption.

Recommended Plan Implementation Process

A Hazard Mitigation Committee (HMC), was formed from members of the County LEPC, and will be the local group responsible for overseeing implementation of this plan. The Crawford County Emergency Management Director will function on an ad-hoc basis as county staff providing program administration and project oversight. The HMC will develop a five-year action list of projects from the mitigation strategies identified in the Crawford County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The HMC should review the hazard mitigation plan each year, to determine what projects have been accomplished and add new projects to the five-year action list. The Hazard Mitigation Committee may assist other agencies to identify steps needed to accomplish a chosen project, such as funding sources, staff and agencies required to complete project, timelines and overall project costs. It should be understood, that HMC involvement will be determined by available emergency management staff time.

Since the Hazard Mitigation Committee is a subcommittee of the Crawford County LEPC, it will function, as does the LEPC, under the umbrella of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners. Members of the HMC must be members of the LEPC, who in turn are appointed by the County Board. Staff support will be provided by the Crawford County Emergency Management office which functions as a county department and therefore the program must coordinate with the County Board of Commissioners.

Local units of government, county departments, and local, state and federal agencies will have the ability to propose and sponsor projects identified in 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.