

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Location and Regional Setting

Corwith Township is located at the northern portion of Otsego County, which is situated in the northeast region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Corwith Township comprises 107.5 square miles, or nearly 21 percent, of the County's 514.6 square miles. Geographically, the Township contains all of three government survey townships, T32N-R3W, T32N-R2W and T32N-R1W. The distance from the north boundary to the south boundary is approximately six miles, with the east to west distance at approximately 18 miles. The 1.1 square mile Village of Vanderbilt is located in the Township, consisting of the south half and the northwest corner of Section 22 and the north half of Section 27 of T32N-R3W.

The Township is bounded on the north by Cheboygan County, on the east by Montmorency County, on the west by Charlevoix County, and on the south by Otsego County's Livingston, Dover and Charlton Townships. For reference, a location map is provided as Figure 1.

History

Corwith Township and the Vanderbilt area were first settled in the early 1880s. Settlers came to the area in the later part of the 19th century for the timbering industry and also participated in agricultural activities. Corwith Township was established as a general law township in 1877, and the Village of Vanderbilt was incorporated in 1901. The surrounding pine forests were virtually used up by the turn of the century. A second lumbering era reached its peak around 1910 and was completed by 1930. In the second half of the 20th century and with the advent of I-75, the area has become important for its year-round recreational opportunities.

Hold page for geographic location map, Figure 1

Purpose and Planning Process

The purpose of the *Corwith Township Master Plan* is to provide guidelines for future physical development of the community, while protecting the water resources, other natural resources and the rural setting. This plan presents extensive background information for the Township, including demographic and economic data, description and mapping of natural resources, inventory of existing land use and community facilities. The background information is analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes and trends occurring in the Township. Community concerns are identified based on Township Planning Commission and Township Board comments and a written citizen survey conducted in 2002. Community goals and policies are presented to guide future development based on these background studies, key land use trends and community issues. These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provide the basis for the Future Land Use Map, which recommends locations for various types of future development within the Township. The *Master Plan* also provides suggestions for implementation of identified goals and policies.

At present time, Corwith Township has no comprehensive or master land use plan. The community's land use regulations are provided through the *Otsego County Zoning Ordinance*. Corwith Township has decided to undertake its own land use planning as provided by state statute (Township Planning Act, P.A. 168 of 1959), but the zoning function will be retained by Otsego County.

The plan development process can help identify shared values and desired future considerations for the community. Sound land use planning can help solve and mitigate some of the conflicts, which arise between people with different lifestyles and occupations.

In recent years, local governments have taken a fresh look at the value of preserving a high-quality natural environment. Corwith Township is blessed with an extensive and rich natural environment, including several major streams and thousands of acres of State forestland. The Township desires to preserve local property values and provide a high quality living environment for residents, while protecting valuable resources.