

Master Plan



Bergland General Law Township 2021

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Chapter One: Introduction

Authority and Basis for Developing the Master Plan

On 01 July 2006, The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) was enacted. The MZEA required each township to phase out their outdated Zoning Boards by 01 July 2011 and replace them with Planning Commissions. Bergland Township initiated this process in June 2007 with the formation of a Planning Commission. In September of 2008 the Michigan Planning Act was adopted, requiring planning commissions to create a master plan for their municipal jurisdiction.

This master plan was developed with the township for a harmonious, coordinated, and economical focus based on the character and conditions of the community; considerations include goals and strategies for development of present and future needs. Provisions required include transportation, safety, prosperity, population distribution, civic design, efficient public funds expenditures, recreation, and wise use and protection of resources. Per statute a Master Plan must be reviewed and appropriately updated every five years, and will guide future development up to 20 years or more.

Even though Master Plans must be updated every 5 years we found other neighboring community's plans that are older than that time frame. We have chosen to update this plan now because we have felt unease with the current state of the community. For whatever reason there have been few objectives realized from the previous Master Plan. Many of those objectives remain in this Plan. It is our hope that the discussion generated by amending the Master Plan will energize the community to work on needed improvements. This plan is the first update of the 2014 Master Plan.

Mission and Vision

Bergland Township's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of our lakes, rivers and forests for future generations. The Township, through the democratic process, shall evaluate the needs of our citizens and shall provide cost effective services to the community.

Bergland Township is striving to become the jewel in nature's crown

Planning Process and Guiding Principles

- Listen to our citizens and work for their health, safety, welfare, and comfort in the community. A community wide survey was sent to Bergland Township citizens.
- Assessment of township infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, sewer, and water systems. Creatively and efficiently use funds to advance Bergland Township.
- Cooperative assessment of township services included parks, the fire department, and cemetery association.
- Focus on a need to address development of business opportunities as wells as recreational opportunities.

- Recognition of the important natural resources dominating township territory including Lake Gogebic, the Ottawa National Forest, as well as underdeveloped privately-owned tracts of land.
- Data, reports, and available plans of organizations active in and around Bergland Township.
- Need for internal assessment and update of township operations, and official documents.
- Treasure and celebrate our heritage, while placing value and focus in our future.
- Create an achievable plan for the Planning Commission, the Township and its Board, and the many organizations and volunteers that have an interest in developing and protecting the community.

Planning Area

The planning area consists of all of Bergland Township, comprising the communities of Bergland and Merriweather, which is in the county of Ontonagon, state of Michigan. The general area is shown below. Appendix 1 contains the detailed overview pictures. Bergland Township is located in the Eastern Time Zone at 46 degrees, 35 minutes, 33 seconds North latitude and 89 degrees, 34 minutes, 24 seconds West Longitude with an elevation of 1,329 feet. Bergland Township is comprised of 108.2 square miles with 98.4 square miles of land (mainly forest land) and 9.8 square miles of water (most of which is in the northern part of Lake Gogebic).



Principal Characteristics of the Plan

- This Master Plan Consists of two parts: the plan itself and an Appendix with supporting documentation. It serves as a basis for zoning and to guide decisions related to the development and public capital improvements, and provides an official statement of the townships goals and strategies to pursue.
- A Master Plan is a living document which takes into consideration the fact that change is inevitable. It needs to be reviewed continually to assure goals and strategies reflect current and future community developments.

- The Master Plan is an authorized document to inform decisions regarding:
 - What do we want our community to look like now, in five years, ten years, and what is the vision for 20 years in the future?
 - How will we get there?
 - How will we determine whether we have achieved our goals, and the best goals?
 - Planning enables communities to take charge of their future rather than simply react to changing conditions. It helps keep the focus on intended responses to various issues and maintain a balance between encouraging change and protecting the character of the existing community. It is therefore critical to seek and employ input from the community in its development.

Community Survey Results

A community-wide survey was issued in July 2018 via mail. Out of 241 surveys issued, 61 were returned, which equates to 25% return.

Results indicated the township should focus on the following:

- 1 Investments and Improvements
 - Infrastructure- roads, water and sewer systems. 33 of 39 people that voted on this issue considered it the most important priority
 - Visual appeal of Bergland and Merriweather. 19 of 43 people that voted on this issue considered it a top priority, while 17 people considered it the second priority.
 - M28 Businesses was the third issue voted on, with 14 of 35 people that voted on this considering it a priority
- 2 Blighted properties in Bergland and Merriweather
 - Individual dilapidated buildings and properties throughout the township. 42 of 51 people that voted on this choice considered it a priority.
- 3 Bergland and Merriweather Parks interests and improvements supported include (voting for the following items was fairly consistent for all):
 - A fish cleaning station
 - Improve swimming beach
 - Vegetation management and beautification
 - Walking paths and gardens
 - Restroom facilities upgrade
 - Additional campsites at the Bergland Park
 - Picnic tables, and cement pad for Merriweather Park pavilion
- 4 Community services desired
 - Clean up events – solid waste collection, household hazardous waste, and electronics. 45 of 46 that voted on this question considered this a priority.

5 New township hall and fire station with meeting and social gathering space

- 44 of 59 voted yes.

Community Census and Housing Data

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population of the township was 550 in 2000 and 467 in 2010. 2016 Bergland Township census data estimates (source: United States Census Bureau website):

- 295 Residents
- An average age of 60.6 years, with 121 residents over the age of 65.
- Average household income of \$47,819, with a median household income of \$34,063 (median income eliminates outlier high and low data)
- Land values are stable.
- Most houses in the Township are older but along with the general economy are maintaining or slightly increasing in value.
- Houses purchased are usually either a residence, or vacation home.
- Many vacation homes are rented seasonally to tourist.

Bergland Township Property Information

Information from Ontonagon County Tax Assessor, as of 05 November 2018:

- There are 278 homesteaded properties (also known as Principal Residence Exemption, PRE).
- 1052 Non-PRE's.
- 57 Vacant platted parcels; some parcels have multiple lots.

Assessed values are calculated at 50% of market value. Assessed values of Non-PRE properties in Bergland Township include secondary homes, vacant parcels, and lots. Average assessed values by area are:

- East Shore \$93,200
- West Shore \$73,700
- North Shore \$52,300

Home values have been increasing, but statistical data was not available to determine at what rate.

Chapter Two: Community Overview

Statehood and the LaPointe Treaty

The history of Bergland Township began long before man divided the area into states, counties, townships and such. It had its origin in the original formation of the very geography of the region. The bountiful waters, minerals, and vegetative resources were the foundation for the settlement of man. In 1837 Michigan achieved statehood. At that time the Ojibwa Indians occupied this region. The only commerce was fur trade with the Indians. Through the LaPointe Treaty on October 4, 1842 the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin were purchased from the Ojibwa for the sum of \$875,000.00. The purchase opened the area to copper mining and Ontonagon County, which encompassed a huge area, began in 1843, holding their first elections on March 20, 1849. See Appendix 2, Map of Land Ceded Away in Treaties.

Copper Mining and Early Road Transportation

Mining began with the Minnesota Mine in 1848, the C.C.Cushman Mine in 1849 (re-named Victoria in 1858), followed shortly by the Norwich Mine in 1850. Over the ensuing years in excess of 100 mines were opened in the area with several along the northern Gogebic Lake region. With the mining came people and the need for roads, in addition to waterways, for transportation. September 28, 1850 saw the “Swamp Land Reclamation Project”. The installation of culverts and building of roads was planned with this reclamation in mind and funded from this source. The first area road being Agogetic Road connected the Norwich with the NE corner of Lake Gogebic. The most noted area road funded by the project was Military Road from Rockland to Fort Howard, Wisconsin (1863 – 1872). Highway 45 now follows this general route. See Appendix 3, Copper Mining and Early Road Transportation.

Copper mining saw its hey-day from 1861-1865 during the Civil War. The end of the war saw copper prices drop drastically causing a great majority of the mines to close – most permanently. The White Pine Mine began its first workings as late as 1876.

Pine Forestation: 1883 - 1905

With the closing of so many area mines many workers moved on. Some folks, however, could not bring themselves to leave this beautiful land. These turned, in large part, to earning their living with pine forestry. In 1881 the Diamond Match Company was formed and began milling in the Matchwood area in 1883. The Diamond Match Company Road from Norwich south to 10 Mile Creek then southwest to the Wakefield Mine at southeast Lake Gogebic was opened in 1884. This is the same year that the railroad line from Watersmeet built the Gogebic Station five miles south of Lake Gogebic with Stagecoach Road heading north to the Gogebic (or White House) Hotel on Lake Gogebic. The Charlie and Bryan O’Rourke Stage Line traveled the route from Ontonagon to Lake Gogebic and in 1885 the Gogebic Hotel began offering pleasure cruises and transportation on the lake with the steamer the “Brandt”.

1883 – 1888 saw the building of the area railroads serving both the north and south ends of Lake Gogebic.



Railways opened the north shore of the lake to settlement. In 1894 catastrophic fires across the region accelerated logging operations in the burned areas. Burned timber was still usable if harvested quickly before insects ruined it. Over the next few years The Diamond Match Company continued operations, but as timber became scarce they quickly turned their interests to forestland in California. They soon abandoned the area leaving large quantities of logs in the Ontonagon River selling these to other parties for transport and milling. In 1905 they sold most if not all of their Michigan lands.

Lake Gogebic Station



In 1888 the DSS&A Railway Company completed their Western Extension which ran along the north shore of Lake Gogebic. A small water tank station dubbed “Gwanach” was erected. The name Gwanach lasted only 3 months when it was formally named Lake Gogebic Station. The name changed again in 1891 to Ballentine having been named after an influential settler of the time. Ballentine had a post office with the 1900 census listing 65 residents. One of the industries in Ballentine was cutting quality ice from Lake Gogebic and shipping it by rail to Ewen. Lake Gogebic at that time covered just 12,800 acres. In 1911 Ballentine was re-named Korelock to promote a new area resort. The name lasted a short time when the village took back its proper name of Lake Gogebic Station. In addition to logging, ice making and a resort, the only other industry in the village of Lake Gogebic Station and surrounding area was a barrel head factory in 1920. There was, however, a very real and industrious settlement now known as
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Merriweather, complete with a church (1901), hotel, eatery, store, and school. The school was built in Merriweather on property purchased from the Haskins family.

Bergland Beginnings

October 2, 1902 Gunlek A. Bergland platted the town of Bergland. Lake Gogebic Station does not fall within a platted area as it was located west of the Sandy Beach plat. By early 1903 the foundations of the town were in place. Bergland boasted a railroad depot with telegraph service, G.A. Bergland's Hardwood Lumber Mill, 2 hotels, a restaurant, a saloon, and the Matchwood Township Hall as well as various homes. In 1910 a well machine completed 9 town wells and cement sidewalks were introduced. Telephone lines were installed as early as 1911 although phones were not readily available to home owners until the 1950's.

The dam on Lake Gogebic was built in 1905 to facilitate more regular water levels for the operation of pneumatic power for the Victoria Mine. This caused many changes and difficulties for Bergland and property owners all around the lake. There have been many disputes over water levels over the ensuing years but lake levels are now maintained rather closely. Lake Gogebic currently covers approximately 13,400 acres.

School was originally held in the Shamrock Hotel. In 1904 Bergland's first dedicated school was completed. The original school was built on lots 3,5,7,9 & 11 of block 6 of the Bergland Plat. The school burned in 1911 and was rebuilt the following year. That schoolhouse lasted until it, too, burned in 1938. The Bergland High School was built on Block 3 of the Weidman Edition of the Bergland Plat in 1926. In the early 1980's Bergland hit on hard times and funding was no longer available for school operations. In 1984 grades 7-12 were sent to the Wakefield schools while grades k-6 stayed in Bergland. An annexation vote with the Ewen- Trout Creek school district was held in 1985 upon which grades 7-12 went to the Ewen school. All grades were sent to the ETC school in 1998 after the new school was built. The Bergland school was sold shortly thereafter.



Merriweather Beginnings

The first residential homes to be built in the village were started in 1917. The Village of Merriweather became platted in 1924 being named after an early land and mine owner, Algernon Merriweather, who had purchased the land in 1859.

The village started out as a lumbering town with the townspeople working in the woods and nearby sawmills. Later it became a residential town for the copper miners who worked at the nearby White Pine Copper Mine in White Pine, MI. The mine was started in 1954 and at its peak employed approximately 3000 workers. The White Pine mine ran for over forty years closing down in 1997. Lake Gogebic was an important transportation hub for Indians, trappers, and settlers with the Merriweather area used as a summer camp ground by the Chippewa Indians. There are still artifacts in the area from that time.

About 70% of the town population is now made up of retired workers with the working families having to leave the area to survive. Many of them hope to return here after retiring as this is where their family roots are.

Centrally located in the Village of Merriweather the town hall was built by the townspeople in 1947 and used for weddings, dances, and town meetings. A well was put in (approximately 1920) with the well water being used by the townspeople and horses for many years. The townspeople built the basketball court for the youth of the area. The handicap railings and ramp were installed later by the Township with the building being used as a voting precinct and meeting hall until 2008. The outdoor flagpole was put up in 2009 by the Merriweather Community Center when they took over the hall. The building was about 90% original.

The Merriweather Community Center was returned to Bergland Township in 2015 due to the group being unable to meet its financial obligations. The Fire Department razed the building in a training exercise in 2016 and a pavilion was erected on the site in 2018. The pavilion is used by the community for local gatherings and events.

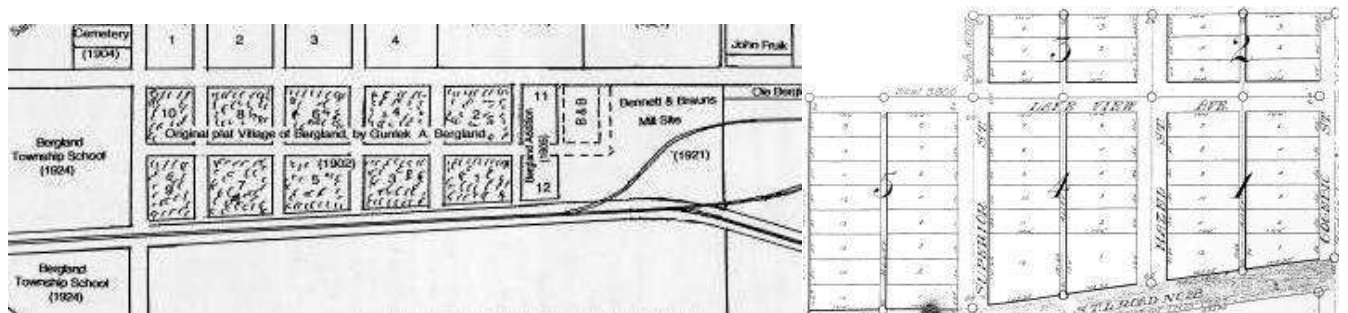
The Village of Merriweather is located 3 miles west of the Village of Bergland.



The Formation of Bergland Township

Bergland Township was formed from the Western ½ of Matchwood Township on March 12, 1912. This change was made, in large part, so that people wouldn't have to travel so far to participate in government affairs, such as voting. Roads at that time were still very rough and at times impassable.

Eleven platted areas have been recorded in the Township with an addition to the Bergland Plat. See Appendix 4, Bergland Plat Maps.



Two individual communities have sprung from these platted areas: Bergland (1902) near the northeast end of Lake Gogebic and Merriweather (1927) near the northwest corner of Lake Gogebic. Both communities built town halls, schools, churches and businesses to serve their respective communities. While Bergland has maintained status as the primary community, Merriweather residents have contributed greatly to the development of the township and retain great pride in their historical achievements.

The fire of 1922 destroyed most of Block 1 (the main business district) of Bergland. The town quickly rebuilt. In the 1930's several churches were built and over the coming years businesses abounded and thrived. Logging, agriculture and tourism formed the basis of the area's economy for all of Bergland Township's early years. The Bergland Mill was sold and renamed twice until it closed its doors in 1958, and the Bennett & Braun Mill was located in the township as well. In 1954 the White Pine Copper Mine had gone into full production and the dynamics of the area began to change. Telephones became commonly available to homes in 1953. Natural gas was installed in 1960 with the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline crossing through Bergland Township in 1967. The first sewer project was completed in the town of Bergland in 1970.

Other utilities which should be mentioned are cable TV in the 1980's and from 1995 – 2005 cell towers were erected. Some internet service providers also make use of the towers. A new sewer project extending service from Bergland through Merriweather and to the Ontonagon County Park was completed in 2012.

Roads became far more important as the population increased. In 1950 the "worst road in Upper Michigan" between Tula and Wakefield underwent a major rebuild, becoming one of the area's best sections of road. In 1960 the road to White Pine (Highway 64 North) was

relocated and hard surfaced for the first time. In the late 1970's or early '80's the Ontonagon County portion of East Shore Road was completed; the entire road was paved.

Businesses continued to thrive and the whole area grew. The White Pine Copper Mine at one time employed 3000 workers, closing for good in the 1990's. This influx of workers gave a tremendous boost to the local economy. Thirty years later locals still wistfully speak of the golden years of the White Pine Mine. Though the refinery continued to operate after the mine closed, the economic base suffered a terrible blow. Businesses began to fail and close their doors.

Industry and other businesses come and go, but the beauty of Bergland Township remains, and with it the people who have become the caretakers of this fine land. Many of our residents are descended from the original settlers of these parts. Joining them are the pioneers of today who have fallen in love with all the area has to offer and put down roots of their own. Industry currently consists of some limited timber cutting, log handling, and ever enduring tourism, the foundations on which our community was built. As our population has matured we have also developed a budding retirement community. There is strong potential for economic growth in both tourism and in retirement based business.



Chapter Three: Land Use

Lake Gogebic and its impact to the logging business and the transportation of lumber have shaped the existing land use in Bergland Township. The town of Bergland was platted in 1902 in order to build and operate a lumber mill on the North East side of what is now known as Bergland Bay. The town of Merriweather was platted in 1924 on the North-West side of Lake Gogebic. Once the old growth pine forests were logged off the significance of lumbering to the community declined and has led to the Townships current function as a residential and recreational community.

Bergland/Merriweather Townsites

The Bergland townsite consists of approximately 620 acres of land North and South of M28 from its Junction with M64 mainly to the East. It includes a mix of land uses including single family residential, commercial, the Bergland Township Park a DNR managed Lake access

site and the Gogebic Ontonagon Intermediate School District offices. The townsite is serviced with municipal water and sewer service.

The Merriweather townsite includes a mix of land uses including single family residential and commercial properties as well as a community park. The townsite does not have municipal water but does include sewer service.

Lakeshore/Resort

The shoreline of Lake Gogebic has been developed with cottages, camps, year around homes, transient housing, resorts, the Bergland Township Park and the Ontonagon County park. Most of these dwellings have private wells and septic systems.

Private Forestry Agriculture

The Ottawa National Forest is the predominant land use in Bergland Township with significant other land being owned by private commercial logging entities. The Commercial Forest Act (CFA) enables enrolled land owners to tax breaks and make CFA land available for public access for hunting and fishing. See Appendix 5, Commercial Forest Program Area Maps.

The Michigan Commercial Forest (CF) program provides a property tax incentive to private landowners to retain and manage forestland for long-term timber production. It is a voluntary program; participating landowners may withdraw from the program at any time. The CF program is administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The State of Michigan makes an annual payment to the County Treasurer equal to a specified rate on behalf of the landowner.

The landowner must have a forest management plan written by a registered forester or natural resources professional. The plan must describe how the listed land will be managed and include a schedule of treatments, such as reforestation and timber harvesting.

Listed land must be open to the public for fishing, hunting, and trapping by foot access.

According to Michigan DNR Commercial Forestry data, as of November 2018 there was 29,373.96 acres of privately owned land in Bergland Township enrolled in the CF program. All of the acreage enrolled has a potential for future development and uses other than standing timber.

Public Forestry Agriculture

Forests in Michigan are managed for timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation and recreation. Michigan forests have always supported local and state economies by generating jobs and income.

Forests around Bergland provide wildlife habitat survival for bear, deer, wolves, coyotes, fox, bobcats, fishers, porcupines, eagles, owls, birds and many more species that make the forest home.

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Ottawa National Forest Projects with Impacts in Bergland Township

The Ottawa National Forest actively manages the resources of the Forest - from the soil to the timber and plants that grow in that soil to the minerals underground. Although the state of Michigan manages the wildlife populations, the Ottawa National Forest manages the habitat on national forest land to provide optimum cover and food for the many species of birds, animals, insects, amphibians, and reptiles that call the Ottawa National Forest Home. Forest management continuously conducts surveys and testing to ensure that the policies enacted are consistent with the survival of wildlife.

Bergland-Presque Isle Timber and Vegetation Project

A project in early stages currently dubbed the Bergland-Presque Isle Project is in the scope and planning stages. The project will focus on forestry management for timber sales, while incorporating vegetation plantations to support wildlife populations and diversity.

The Environmental Analysis is planned to begin in 2019, with a final project decision signed in March of 2021. The analysis will draw conclusions of standing timber health and populations, harvest needs, cultural and botanical surveys, and potential for native pollinator plantings.

The Bergland Presque Isle project area goes both north and south of M28. There are a total of 60,255 acres inside the project boundary. 33,328 are Forest Service (FS) acres and 26,927 are Non-FS. (Nothing would occur on the Non-FS lands but they are included in analysis for cumulative effects. The management areas are 2.1, 2.2 and the Presque Isle river corridor which is 8.1. Depending on information gathered for this project, the river corridor may come out if there are no roads slated for decommissioning, or open/close on the Ottawa's Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), nor any other pending associated projects in the corridor. No vegetation treatments are planned for the corridor.

Very few collector roads access the area. Ottawa Forestry Geographic Information System data can help identify past timber sales for the area, especially the Bergland district. This may help identify how wood was previously hauled out of the forest.

Forest wide Designated Motorized Use Project Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Ontonagon Counties

The USDA Forest Service is proposing to make designation changes to some motorized access routes in the Ottawa National Forest. These changes are proposed to modify the Ottawa's motorized access system to be responsive to the public's request for access, as well as provide a system that is safe and more effectively managed. This project is called the Forest wide Designated Motorized Use Project.

Improving motorized access is responsive to concerns raised, while also providing benefits of an enhanced access system that is safe and more effectively managed. There is a need to proactively designate, and clearly identify, the roads and trails that can sustain motorized traffic. This would assist to keep motorized use on routes allowed for such use, which ultimately can protect resources in those areas where no access is allowed.

Once implemented, access changes will become part of the Ottawa's MVUM. The MVUM is a required publication that the Forest Service produces to display the authorized public access system, by motor vehicle type.

Climate Change Impacts

According to the current Michigan Department of Natural Resources Western Upper Peninsula Regional State Forest Management Plan, climate is as fundamental to forest communities as soil or hydrology. Since the 1980s, the climate has been changing faster than it has in recorded history. The best available climate science indicates that past trends will continue. In that context, some impacts of these trends are very likely or virtually certain:

- Ecosystems will change across the landscape – this may include changes in location and/or changes in composition;
- Boreal and sub-boreal species are likely to be extirpated or increasingly isolated in cool lake-effect microclimates;
- Forest succession will likely change, making future trajectories increasingly unclear;
- Forest productivity will change, driven by changes in CO₂ fertilization, water and nutrient availability, local disturbances and species migration;
- Seasonal distribution of keystone species such as deer and wolves will change with decreasing snow fall and increased midwinter snow melt events;
- Exacerbation of existing threats and new interactions between threats are likely to be the most obvious effects of climate change; and
- Many current management objectives and practices will face substantial challenges.

Land Use Goals and Strategies

Information from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Soil Survey in general indicates the “downtown” area of Bergland, as well as residential areas within the Township are generally surrounded by soils with saturated zones at or near the surface, or stony slopes, all limiting building opportunities. See Appendix 6 for excerpts from the report.

Individual sites, and zones under development consideration must be more closely studied to assure good design of sites and supporting infrastructure, as well as protecting wetlands and groundwater.

Goal: Enhance our image as a vibrant community

Strategies

1. Develop blight inventory with prioritization for resolution
2. Evaluate current zoning enforcement process and results
3. Assess township properties, promote properties for sale that qualify for tax incentives
4. Work to improve the visual appeal of the main streets in Bergland, Ash, Pine and Railroad. Consider decorative lights, fixing sidewalks, paving.
5. Consider beautification projects, i.e. flowers beds, and visually appealing street lighting in strategic locations.

Goal: Improve the health and well-being of residents and the community

Strategies

1. Organize with senior organizations, and other civil groups for community events such as mental health classes, exercise classes, and a hosted group meal preparation for participants to prepare meals to take home.
2. Organize community volunteers to help neighbors in need, such as leaf raking, small house repairs, shoveling snow, and welfare visits.
3. Consider civic events with local organizations to increase visibility and awareness, i.e. Fire Department training for First Aid, CPR and AED usage, Lake Gogebic Improvement Association for boat washing and invasive species management.
4. Study feasibility of Community Waste Collection Events – Household Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste, Electronics, Paper Shredding, Pharmaceuticals, Old Ammo, Tires. These events may be organized with other communities, or Ontonagon County, or sponsored by corporations or local vendors.
5. Organize fresh produce opportunities from suppliers to the community or other locally produced goods. Investigate sponsoring a Farmer’s Market type event.

Chapter Four: Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Water

A 1967 report on Public Water and Wastewater systems stated that there were 2 existing 8” wells and the pumps and equipment were <5 years old. The water system was upgraded in 1998. The engineering contractor was UP Eng. Wells #3 and #4 were upgraded, Wells #1 and #2 were abandoned and additional water main was added. At that time there were 127 residential users of the system and 28 commercial users.

Wastewater

Bergland Township owns and operates a sanitary sewer system which includes a 3-cell facultative lagoon system located 1.5 miles to the East of Bergland. The lagoons are permitted to discharge twice a year to the West Branch of the Ontonagon River under NPDES Permit MIG589000. The system was last upgraded in 2012 with the addition of the Merriweather

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extension. As a part of the Merriweather extension project Coleman Engineering conducted a Lagoon System evaluation in 2016, see Appendix 7, Excerpt from Coleman Lagoon System Evaluation.

The Merriweather extension was driven by recognition that septic systems were failing on the north side of the lake and impacting Lake Gogebic, see Appendix 8, Western UP Health Department letter from 2009 and an excerpt from a Coleman Engineering feasibility study. The project design was done by C2AE and they issued a project report dated 7/17/12 titled 12-0013 Bergland Twp SRF Project Plan, see Appendix 9.

As a part of the Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater (SAW) Grant funded by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the sewer extension work Coleman developed Asset Management Plans (AMP) for both the sanitary sewer system and the wastewater system. Executive summaries of both these reports can be found in Appendix 10. A smoke test study and camera inspection of the existing sewer system was done by Coleman Engineering in late 2017. The results of this analysis can be found in the report.

The concern with septic performance potentially impacting Lake Gogebic exists with all properties on the lake in both Bergland and Marenisco Townships. Many Lake properties do not have access to city sewer and use on-site treatment systems. On-site septic systems built prior to 1976 did not have to meet state or local standards. Currently, on-site septic systems are not inspected to determine function. Discovery of failing or under-performing systems is determined through real estate sales if the loaning bank or purchaser requires an inspection, or a building code addition is added to a house, a complaint is lodged, or the owner self-determines. Many properties were built prior to standards, and there are camps and cabins on and off the lake that still use an outhouse, with unknown drainage flow or piped systems.

Lots less than an acre must meet the building code and receive a variance from the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department to be installed. Furthermore, many lots only have room for one system – once a system fails, or may need to be added on to, there isn't available space on the property due to lot size or encroaching wetlands.

Stormwater

Bergland Township also operates a stormwater system located in the residential area south of Highway M28. The system consists of 23 stormwater structures, 6 outfalls and approximately 3,000 ft of stormwater piping located within and along the roadways. A copy of the executive summary of the Stormwater AMP can be found in the Appendix.

Communications

Bergland Township enjoys the same modern technologies available to the rest of the nation. Electricity and telephone are accessible to all. Natural gas is available in Bergland with several providers of LP gas serving outlying areas. Cell Phone towers provide reasonable coverage for the township. Cable TV is available to most along Bergland's M-28 corridor with satellite TV service available to others. There are several options for internet service. Many local businesses also offer high speed Wi-Fi.

Township Owned Buildings

The Bergland Township Hall is located at 101 Pine Street in the platted area of Bergland. This building houses the township offices, the fire hall for the volunteer fire department and a community meeting room used by many in the community. This building was built in 1955 and needs significant repairs. A voter referendum to upgrade the Township offices and Fire Hall was submitted and defeated in August 2010.

The old stone pumphouse, built by the WPA in the 1930's, was inducted into the National Register for historic places in 1998.

Fire Department

Bergland has a volunteer Fire Department to save on the costs of paying staff. The equipment consists of one 1988 Water tanker and a 2000 Pumper truck. The trucks cannot both exit the Fire Hall at the same time. The 10 active volunteers attend training sessions and monthly meeting. Age has become a concern as most of the members are at or nearing retirement age. Few younger applicants are available. The Fire Department belongs to a group with 15 other communities to provide mutual aid in fighting fires.

Cemeteries

Bergland Township maintains two cemeteries. Lake View cemetery is located at the Junction of M-28 and M-64 in Bergland. The first recorded burial was in 1904. Forest Lawn cemetery is located approximately one mile north on M-64 and was established in the early 1970's. Township employees along with supplemental hired help, mow and perform clean-up maintenance. The Cemetery advisory board along with the township clerk and sexton monitor activities and maintain records. There are enough burial sites for approximately the next 40 years.

Senior Center

The Lake Gogebic Senior Citizens Club, Inc. (LGSCC, Inc.) is a 501c3, non-profit Corporation, established in 1971, which promotes and safeguards the independence and wellbeing of older adults from Ontonagon County. The Ontonagon County Commission on Aging (CoA), established in 1975, serves as a central planning body for Ontonagon County in matters concerning the needs of the aging population. A copy of the Program Plan for the Senior Citizen Club can be found in the Appendix.

The Lake Gogebic Senior Center is a focal point for various activities and events for Bergland township. It serves as: the office for CoA/LGSCC, Inc., a meeting facility for various clubs (Lake Gogebic Recreation Club, Bergland/Matchwood Historical Society, cribbage card club, and the paint class). Morning coffee and snacks are available Monday thru Friday. WI-FI is accessible. Monthly blood pressures are offered thru Horizon Home Health, a flu-shot clinic in the Fall thru the Health Department, and other informational presentations.

The Lake Gogebic Senior Center is one of the oldest buildings in Bergland Township. The building is in dire need of improvements and repairs. Some windows and doors have been replaced. Current building improvement concerns include the siding, entrance steps, basement, flooring and the need for additional office space and storage. Millage and grant funding are strictly designated for the services and programs provided for the elderly. Fundraising projects are ongoing to cover the expense of improvement projects. Relocating to another building is also an option that would be considered.

Bergland Heritage Museum and Historical Society

The Bergland Matchwood Historical Society and Heritage Center is located in the historic Ranger Station on M28 ~ ½ mile to the West of its intersection with M64. The building is one of the first administrative office buildings for the Ottawa National Forest that the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) build in 1936. The museum is a part of the Western Upper Peninsula Heritage Trail and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A Forest Service Museum is located in the former Ranger station.

The Bergland Cultural and heritage Center facilities are staffed by volunteers of the Bergland Matchwood Historical Society (BMHS) for the purposes of opening the buildings to the public as a cultural/heritage visitor center and museum. The mission of the BMHS at the center is in delivering a public service by furthering interpretation of the historical and cultural significance of the national Forest and surrounding communities to visitors of public land.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities Goals and Strategies

Goal: Protect Lake Gogebic

Strategies

1. The Lake Gogebic Area Sewer Authority (LGASA) was a joint group from Bergland and Marenisco Townships charged with evaluating further extensions to the Bergland Township sewer system. The project became cost prohibitive and was tabled in October of 2018 until affordable financing can be found. An Ordinance was passed in 2019 requiring 3-year pumping and inspections for all septic systems in the Township. The Township should consider a Point of Sale ordinance that requires septic system inspection upon sale. Six townships in MI currently have such an ordinance.
2. Address along with Western Upper Peninsula Health Department and property owners with temporary permits for holding tanks, to achieve acceptable on-site sewage system performance
3. Inventory on-site, and outhouse septic systems in the Township.
4. Strengthen and expand citizen volunteer organizations available in the Township that are actively working on environmental protection and remediation. Assure organizations are aware of cooperative project opportunities.

Goal: Develop and maintain an infrastructure which serves residents and encourages business opportunities and growth

Strategies

1. Revisit a new Township Hall/Fire Hall/Community Center. In addition to the current Township Hall being old and in need of repairs the Senior Center is one of the oldest buildings in Bergland.
2. Review Capital Improvement Projects identified in the Coleman Engineering reports.

Goal: Ensure the Township has Emergency Management plans in place

Strategies

1. Evaluate which plans are appropriate and need to be in plan, i.e. Forest Fire, catastrophic blizzard or tornado, extended loss of electricity, contamination of water supply, failure of sewage system.

Chapter Five: Transportation

There are two State Highways in the Township. M-28 runs east and west entering Bergland Township at the Matchwood Township line at the northeast corner of Lake Gogebic progressing west to the Gogebic County line. M-64 runs basically north and south entering the township on the west side of Lake Gogebic at the county line and exiting to the north at the Carp Lake Township line. It shares the same roadway for approximately four miles with Highway M-28 where they overlap just north of Lake Gogebic.

A mix of paved and gravel roadways exist throughout the area. Most residential roads are paved and maintained by the County. The majority of unpaved roads are installed for access to forest lands. Often these are maintained by private companies or the Forest Service but barring gates or berms can usually be used by the general public.

Chapter 6: Implementation and Zoning Plan

Bergland Township is zoned. Zoning Ordinances were last published in 2008. There are four types of zoning districts in Bergland Township although the ordinance allows for more detailed breakdowns within each group:

- R-1 Residential
 - Platted land in the Village of Bergland
 - Platted land in the Merriweather area described as: All platted land in Merriweather except blocks 2 and 3 which are zoned C-1: from Raymond’s corner to Merriweather on Old M-28, along the North side of Old M-28 to a depth of 200 ft and along the South side of Old M-28 to the railroad traffic

C-1 Commercial

- The boundary width will be 2,640 feet from the right-of-way of highways M-28 and North M-64. Exceptions will occur where zones overlap.
- Residential and Lake Districts shall predominate causing a reduction to portions of the Commercial District.
- Lake District
 - The East Shore and West Shore of Lake Gogebic 5,000 feet deep from the shore line.
 - Also the North Shore of Lake Gogebic from the water's edge to the railroad track, being that area from the West Shore Lake District to the Bergland Dam
- Agriculture
 - All remaining land within the Township not classified as Residential, Commercial, or Lake, not having a Special Exception status. There are currently no agricultural land parcels in the township.

Implementation and Zoning Goals and Strategies

Goal: Evaluate and update the zoning ordinance for effectiveness, and consideration of current use and future needs.

Strategies

1. Review and update the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The Zoning variance procedure is confusing and needs to be reviewed and revised.
3. Clarify the zoning ordinance regarding the establishment of transient rental properties.
4. Develop Standard Operating Procedures both internally and for public zoning processes.

Goal: Extreme lack of long-term rental housing has created a detrimental availability for citizens to move to Bergland just to live, without buying or building a new home.

Strategies

1. Develop incentives for owners of transient rentals, and non-lived in houses to rent housing for long term rentals.
2. Study feasibility of future long-term rental housing for existing properties, i.e. encourage development of duplex rentals in existing non-resident housing, and new build rental properties.
3. Assess transient rental program policies for appropriate market and community conditions.

Chapter Seven: Economic Development

Improving the local economy and job creation is noted as a priority for Bergland Township through the public involvement that has been a part of this planning process. Bergland was founded primarily as a lumbering town though the community has been impacted from several neighboring communities (Wakefield and White Pine) mining businesses. The loss of these businesses, the railroad, and more recently, the local school consolidation has severely impacted the community.

Increasingly, research into economic trends and economic development strategy suggests that the traditional models of business attraction may not be suitable, successful, and sustainable for many communities, particularly in a time of constrained public resources. Investment in public infrastructure improvements and amenities that will enhance the community's image and attractiveness to prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, and employees. The improvements recommended in this plan (such as investment in infrastructure, parks and recreational amenities) are critical for any business attraction efforts by the Township.

The Master Plan also recommends an "economic gardening" approach to growing jobs and businesses in Bergland. This proven approach grows the local economy from within by promoting local entrepreneurship and small and local business development. The primary idea of economic gardening is to work with what is already present in the community to build new opportunities. If possible, Bergland Township should provide greater support for existing businesses and particularly home-based businesses, persons who work from home as freelancers, consultants, or remote employees, and other individuals making or selling products from home. In general, economic gardening strategies should seek to connect existing businesses and entrepreneurs to resources that will help them grow and thrive, while removing the barriers to starting and operating a business. One such resource organization is the non-profit Northern Initiatives, based in Marquette, that serves northern Michigan and parts of northern Wisconsin with lending and business consulting. Another resource is the revolving loan funds offered by the Western UP Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR).

Economic Development Goals and Strategies

Goal: Create a favorable business climate for local businesses.

Strategies

1. Evaluate the possibility of tax incentives for existing businesses.
2. Investigate the feasibility of brownfield opportunities.
3. Qualify for and pursue available programs and grants focused on small town business district revitalization.
4. Work with local realtors listing houses in the Commercial/Business District to promote properties as potential business space. Further, encourage potential for rental apartments within business properties if a house structure supports such a possibility.

Goal: Monitor neighboring community's economic developments

Strategies

1. Monitor developments of Copperwood mining company in Wakefield and White Pine. Bergland will evaluate the impact to housing and zoning should the White Pine project proceed.
2. Ensure industrial and commercial services can be incorporated into the community with minimal negative impact to the existing community and environment.

Chapter Eight: Recreation

The tourism industry is the major draw to the Bergland area and Lake Gogebic. To that end Lake Gogebic, the Ottawa National Forest and the Porcupine Mountain State Park provide some of the best recreational opportunities in the state.

Lake Gogebic

Lake Gogebic is the crown jewel of Bergland Township. With over 13,000 acres of pristine water and over 36 miles of shoreline it is a four-season gem that is largely undiscovered by many. Nestled within the Ottawa National Forest, Lake Gogebic is the Upper Peninsula of Michigan's largest inland lake located in the far western end of the Upper Peninsula. Lake Gogebic itself is in two counties and in two time zones.

The large northern portion of Lake Gogebic serves as the basis, or hub, of most of the activity in the township. The lake provides exceptional fishing opportunities for trophy walleye, jumbo perch, smallmouth bass, and northern pike along with other species. As in days past Lake Gogebic also continues to act as a transportation route. Boaters and snowmobilers travel from business to business around the entire lake, with snowmobilers utilizing it as an extension of the areas substantial trail system. State Highway M-64 offers a gateway to the Porcupine Mountain State Park. Voted one of the 10 best state parks in the nation Porcupine Mountain State Park covers an area of 33 sections.

ATV traffic does have some limitations, but is allowed on all roads maintained by the township, with access to other ATV trails in select locations. One notable trail is the Pioneer Trail, just northwest of the bridge which crosses the Middle Branch of the Ontonagon River. Due to changes and additions to ATV routes, see DNR or many local businesses for current ATV trail information.

The Bergland area boasts some of the finest groomed snowmobile trails in the mid-west. Bergland Township is situated at the hub of a series of trails which allow access to literally hundreds of miles of prime snowmobile routes. An abundance of snow and skilled groomers offer an extended sledding season with trails open from December 1 through March 31 weather permitting.

Updated 5/20/2021

Ottawa National Forest

The almost one million acres of the Ottawa National Forest are located in the Western end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan extending from the south shore of Lake Superior to the Wisconsin border. The Ottawa National Forest provides a wide variety of canoeing, kayaking, and boating experiences along with high quality warm and cold weather fishing opportunities.

Hiking trails on the Ottawa National Forest offer something for everyone with more than 196 miles of hiking and backpacking varying widely in character.

The Ottawa National Forest works closely with its partners and volunteers to provide a variety of cross-country skiing opportunities on groomed trails and offers a winter wonderland for snowshoe enthusiasts.

The Ottawa National Forest has over 2,300 miles of Forest Service road and trail open to off-highway vehicles (OHVs). There are approximately 450 miles of groomed snowmobile trails maintained through a cooperative effort between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, numerous local snowmobile clubs and USDA Forest Service.

Encompassing nearly one million acres there is sure to be something for everyone.

Recreation Goals and Strategies

Goal: The DNR boat launch/pier is a key draw for tourists to Bergland Township. Bergland Township will cooperatively partner with the DNR to improve pier recreation opportunities.

Strategies

1. Work with the DNR to establish transient docking spaces at both the old and new landing sites and overnight docking spaces at the old landing site.
2. Work with the DNR to establish handicap accessibility and improve the feasibility of fishing off the old landing site.
3. Work with DNR to assure the timing for projects is appropriate for the community, i.e. dock installation and removal.

Goal: The Township Park is another key draw for tourism in Bergland. Improve the Township Park to maximize occupancy and provide for community venues.

Strategies

1. Upgrade the electrical service to the campsites.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of a fish cleaning station.
3. Determine alternative uses for the underutilized ballfield and tennis courts.
4. Establish adequate pull-through and easy access RV service.
5. Establish walking paths in conjunction with Bergland's Cultural and Historical Center.
6. Establish handicap accessible recreational venues.
7. Improve the swimming area.
8. Upgrade shower/bathroom facilities.

9. Provide power to the beach pavilion and demolish the old change facilities

Goal: Improve the Merriweather Park

Strategies

1. A concrete pad was poured in 2019 for the pavilion.
2. Provide electrical service to the pavilion.

Goal: Improve ATV access

Strategies

1. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a trailhead in the Lower Park.
2. Work with MITRALE, DNR and others to improve and expand trail access with primary focus on the west side of Bergland.
3. Extend the Township trail connector to the west on M-28 to encompass local businesses in this area.

Goal: Expand bicycling and motorcycling opportunities

Strategies

1. Evaluate the feasibility of biking paths and routes.
2. Bring awareness to motorcyclists as to what the area has to offer.

Update History

5/20/21

- Changed cover page to reflect current Township officials
- Under Infrastructure strategies added that an Ordinance was passed in 2019 requiring 3-year pumping and inspection for septic systems
- Under Recreation Goals added
 - Provide power to the beach pavilion and demolish the old change house
 - A concrete pad was poured for the Merriweather pavilion and we would like to provide electrical service