

# **DEERWOOD TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN 2006 UPDATE**

On October 4, 1994, the original Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted by the Township Board.

In 2006, the Township Board initiated an update to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. A committee was appointed to facilitate the update and made up of the following members Lansin Hamilton, James Rude, Dennis Graff, Judy Hamilton, Jory Danielson, and Tom Miller. The update plan was adopted on September 5, 2006.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a means to guide the community into the future. It explains the feeling of the community toward its past, present and future.

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## **HISTORY**

The development and settlement of Deerwood Township began in the mid 1800's with construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which was being built west from Carlton. The City of Deerwood was established as a section station to provide for railroad maintenance.

Although the Township was heavily forested, most of the timber was hardwoods rather than pine. However, with the logging of the pine stands and establishment of the rail service, settlement of the Township began. The Township was organized in 1872 and settlement, primarily by persons of Swedish and Finnish heritage, was well underway by the late 1800's. Primary activities included logging and small farming operations. Three or more country schools were constructed in addition to the school in the City of Deerwood and one just outside of the Township at Ruttger's Corner.

Travel was primarily on wagon trails which wound from farm to farm with all trails eventually leading to Deerwood which was the supply center for the entire area.

By the late 1800's, the search for deposits of iron ore suitable for mining was on, the first successful shaft being the Kennedy at Cuyuna in 1907. The first load of ore was shipped in 1911 when the Soo Line Railroad reached Cuyuna. The Cities of Crosby and Ironton were established about 1910 along with other settlements called "locations" cropping up at each mining shaft location.

The only mine established in the Township was Oreland in section thirty in 1908. Although the first drilling to locate ore bodies on the Cuyuna Range was by Cuyler Adams near Ann Lake in 1903, only one trainload of ore was ever produced in Deerwood Township.

The shaft near Oreland, first called Chesquitawney, was dug by the Rogers-Brown Ore Company in 1908. However, severe water problems forced abandonment within the year. Later, in 1911, Cuyler Adams acquired the property and continued sinking the shaft. Operated as the Adams Mine, a trainload of ore was produced and shipped during World War 1. Because of continuing water problems in the mine and the poor quality of the ore, mining activities were again abandoned.

Finally, after over eighty years of mining on the Cuyuna Range the last operating mine, the Algoma-Zeno at Trommald, closed and the last ore shipped in 1984.

In the early 1900's, a fish hatchery was located on the Cedar Brook. Later, as tuberculosis became recognized as a serious problem, the facility was acquired and operated for many years as a TB Sanitarium. Following effective control of TB, it was utilized as a county nursing home. Later it was sold and converted to a sports complex known as Heartland.

Prior to 1900, people (tourists) were coming into the Deerwood community by railroad from the Duluth area. Later they began to build summer homes on the lakes close to Deerwood, including Cuyler Adams on Reno Lake. As the road system improved and the automobile became more comfortable and reliable, a demand for "Mom and Pop" resorts and fishing camps developed and a number of small resorts resulted. By the late 1900's, such resorts providing a wide range of services and recreational opportunities. In addition to this requirement, an increasing demand for individual lakeshore ownership has developed. The desire of many is to own their own lakeshore cabin and/or live on a lake and this has become a significant factor in the Township development.

Lakeshore and forest land that had been available for public recreational pursuits is becoming increasingly restricted against public use and enjoyment. Many small lakeshore farms and considerable unimproved wooded shore lands were platted or divided into individual cabin or home sites and sold in response to the public's desire to own their own piece of lakeshore.

In the late 1970's the only remaining large block of public land was dedicated as the Crow Wing County Larson Lake Memorial Forest. A resident of Deerwood Township, Lansin Hamilton, who later became Crow Wing County Land Commissioner, pursued dedication of this block of public land administered by Crow Wing County, for a memorial forest to assure its retention for public use and benefit. This would mean managing the forest for timber production, wildlife and the public recreational uses. While the forest was initially named the Larson Lake Memorial Forest, following Hamilton's retirement it was renamed the Lansin R. Hamilton Memorial Forest. The forest of some 1600 acres is utilized for hunting, snowmobiling, and timber and includes a cross-county ski trail system maintained by the County Land Department. Additionally, the forest is open to public hunting of deer, grouse, squirrels, waterfowl and trapping of certain fur-bearing animals.

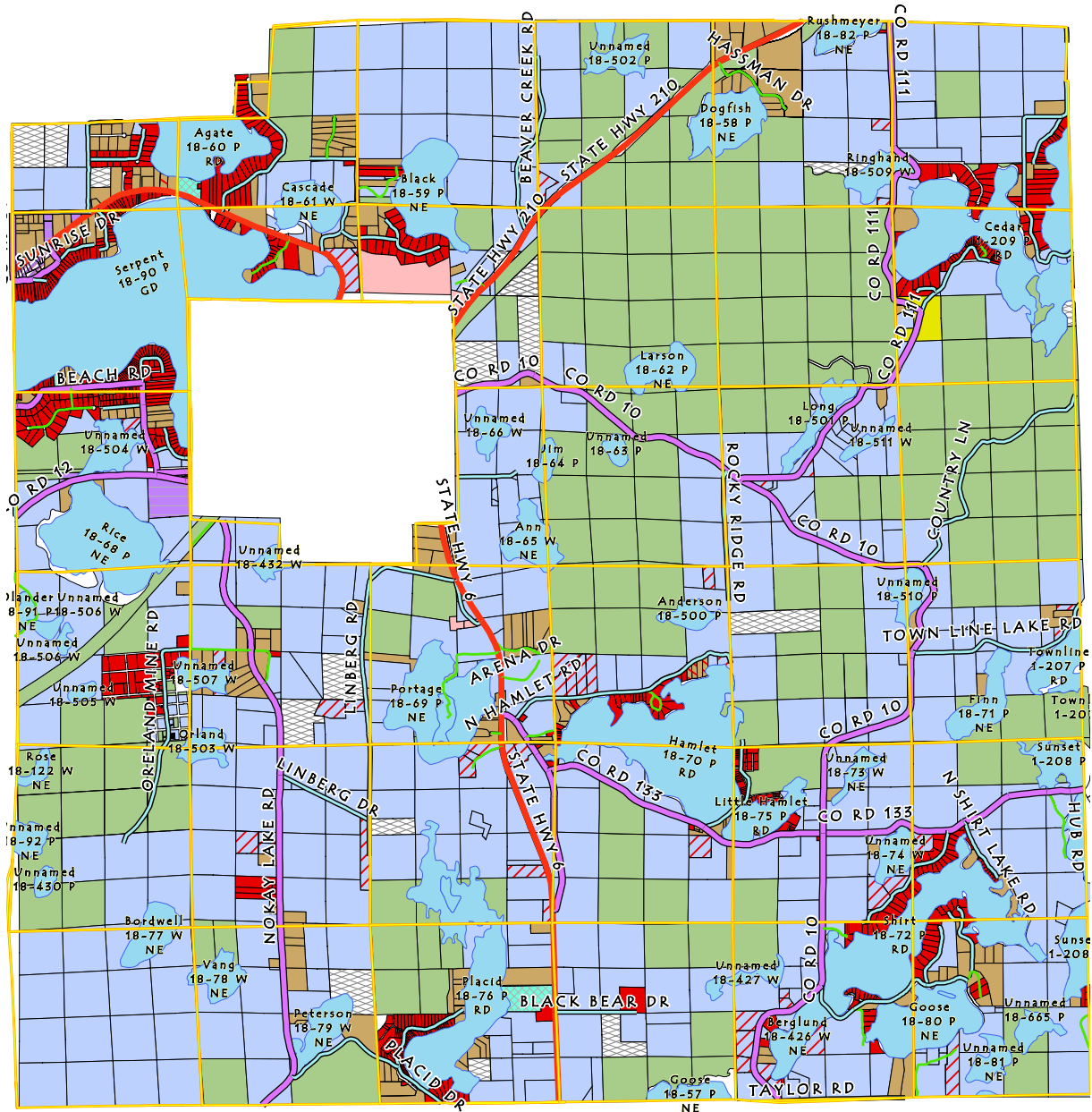
As the demand for rural living continues to increase and other more satisfactory means of livelihood occurs, farming continues to decline. Almost all income is now provided by employment outside of the Township. This includes jobs in retail business and both small and large manufacturing operations from Aitkin through the Cuyuna Country Communities to the Brainerd Area.




















Significant commercial development has occurred. Logging continues to provide income to forest land owners and the loggers who log the timber. The establishment of the Trus Joist MacMillan plant in adjoining Irondale Township has greatly improved the market for aspen timber which is prevalent in Deerwood Township. Although initial operation utilized aspen timber, it now includes a mixture of tree species. A somewhat later development included the purchase of the facility by the Weyerhaeuser Company, an extremely large forest products company.

The population continues to increase. According to the 1990 census, the estimated township population was 875. In 2004 the census showed 1,338 residents. The township is primarily rural residential in nature, but continues to have a sprinkling of small farms, several larger farms, and a few small resorts.

The Township is served by the Town Hall built in 1991. A meeting room and kitchen are available for use by Township residents.

# DEERWOOD EXISTING ZONING MAP



- |                                                                                               |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Section   |  Shoreland Res 1     |  Greenspace      |
|  State Hwy |  Rural Res 2.5       |  Public          |
|  Co Rd     |  Rural Res Cond. Use |  Waterfront Com  |
|  Twsp Rd   |  Rural Res 5         |  Commercial 1    |
|  City Rd   |  Agriculture         |  Commercial 2    |
|  Private   |  Ag Cond. Use        |  Multiple Zoning |
|  Lakes     |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                     |

# **INVENTORY OF DEERWOOD TOWNSHIP**

## **Environment**

Deerwood Township has no serious pollution problems. There is no evidence of Eurasian Milfoil in any of its lakes. The Township has a relatively low population and there is still much unimproved land within its borders. Moreover, 1600 of its acres have been designated as the Larson Lake Memorial Forest, now the Lansin R. Hamilton Memorial Forest.

However, there are some isolated patches of Purple Loosestrife. Discouragingly, since the closing of the local landfill, there has been a tendency toward excessive roadside littering, and in some instances, excessive amounts of garbage stored on private home sites.

## **Services**

There is shopping in both Crosby and Deerwood, and larger malls are 20 miles away in Brainerd. Additionally, Township proximity to the metro area (120 miles) offers residents alternative shopping. The Township has a cemetery, shared with the City of Deerwood, local fire protection (contracted for with the City of Deerwood), and County Sheriff's protection. Two major state highways and six county highways run through the Township. Additionally, there is a local network of 28 miles of well-maintained town roads, approximately 50% of which are bituminous surface. Cellular phone service is available, and the Cuyuna Lakes Medical Center and Hospice offer modern services. Additionally, ambulance and First Alert Services are a part of the local scene. The Township is served by three electric companies and independent garbage disposal. Railroad access is available within the City of Deerwood. Finally, Crow Wing County offers a variety of social services including both Meals on Wheels and Home Nursing Care.

However, the Township finds itself without access to the Serpent Lake Sewer District, and currently there is no 911 enhancement. There are some natural gas and cable services within the Township.

## **Housing**

Housing in the Township is primarily modest, single family, year-round dwellings. However, the Township has a number of lake homes, seasonal cabins, and a few year round mobile homes. According to the 2000 Census data, there are approximately 498 permanent homes and 230 seasonal homes.

## **Natural Resources**

There are six fully operational gravel pits and several dormant pits within the Township, and substantial timber resources located primarily on private land.

## **Recreation**

The Township has numerous lakes, five with public accesses, and most of these lakes are being stocked with walleyes periodically. Fish varieties include sunfish, crappies, walleyes, northern pike, and large mouth bass. There is an ice arena that provides public skating and

golf links are available both at Ruttger's and in Deerwood. A network of cross-country ski trails and groomed snowmobile trails exists. Additionally, Larson Lake Memorial Forest is open to public hunting: grouse, squirrels, water fowl, and white-tail deer.

However, there are no public campgrounds within the Township and there are no areas for public swimming. The City of Crosby does have a public swimming beach and campground.

### **Entertainment**

Semi-pro hockey is a part of the entertainment scene; live theater and cinema are available 20 miles away in Brainerd. Casino gambling is to be found 20 miles south of the Township. Moreover, proximity to the metro area provides for a variety of professional types of entertainment.

### **Economics/Employment**

Within the Township, the following businesses exist: two lumber companies, a construction company, ice arena, various farms, a bed and breakfast, two resorts, a Sand and Gravel Ready Mix Company, and tire and auto repair shop, a truck repair shop, two cabinet shops and several private businesses.

## LAND USE GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Residential**

The **goal** of the Residential District is to provide adequate opportunity for meeting the housing needs of the Township while maintaining the natural wooded character of the rural area. The Residential District is located within 1,000 feet of lakes which is defined as the Shoreland Area. Lots that are adjacent to the lake are called "riparian lots" and lots that are within the Shoreland Area but are not adjacent to the lake are "non-riparian lots". The following lists the three types of Residential Districts recommended for the Township:

- Residential 1 – Located on General Development Lakes  
Minimum Riparian Lot Area = 20,000 sqft.  
Minimum Nonriparian Lot Area = 40,000 sqft.
  
- Residential 2 - Located on Recreational Development Lakes  
Minimum Riparian Lot Area = 40,000 sqft.  
Minimum Nonriparian Lot Area = 40,000 sqft.
  
- Residential 3 - Located on Natural Environment Lakes  
Minimum Riparian Lot Area = 80,000 sqft.  
Minimum Nonriparian Lot Area = 80,000 sqft.

**Recommendations:** Allow single and two family dwellings; allows some home occupational uses; allows agricultural crop land use; allows a reasonable number of household pets; allows some public uses compatible within such districts; some other uses allowed under Conditional Use Permit but must be generally compatible within such district.

### **Rural Residential**

The **goal** of the Rural Residential District is to provide adequate opportunity for meeting the housing needs of the Township while maintaining the natural rural characteristics of the Township. The Rural Residential District is located outside of the Shoreland Area and within ¼ mile of established roads. Rural Residential lots should be a minimum of 5 acres and have 300 feet of lot width along the road as well as 300 feet of lot width at the building site.

**Recommendations:** The Township recognizes the unguided growth of earlier years within its boundaries. It is critical to the well-being of our area to maintain the natural, generally wooded, rural characteristics which our residents wish to preserve. Rural residential areas need to be well-planned with minimum visibility from the main roads and good aesthetics. Roads and services built to County standards should be the responsibility of the developer. Furthermore, forest removal should be as limited as possible.

Areas designated commercial corridors should be avoided for residential development. Where necessary, buffer strips should be provided. Some limited agriculture is allowed.

### **Agriculture/Forestry**

The **goal** of the Agricultural Forestry District is to retain and promote agricultural and forestry land use as long as proper Best Management Practices are followed, minimal adverse impacts are imposed on adjacent property, and a minimum of 10 acres of lot area and 330 feet of lot width are maintained. Agriculture and forestry is generally located in areas that are outside Shoreland Areas and intermixed with Rural Residential Districts.

**Recommendations:** Both agriculture and forestry require relatively long term investments; in the case of forestry, generally a minimum of 40 years. Often, investments made by a current owner can only be fully realized by some future owner. Therefore, since significant values or benefits are realized by the public, values not necessarily enjoyed by the land owner to any degree greater than the general public, cost sharing is made available. This enables the current land owner to make necessary and desirable resource investments. Programs, plus funding and technical assistance are available from public agencies at the County, State, and Federal levels. These include programs such as RIM, CRP, ASCS, DNR and the USDA SWCD.

While the agricultural activity in the township has gradually diminished, it is still an important economic activity. Forestry, on the other hand, has become increasingly significant due to greater land owner awareness and the substantial increase in timber stumpage values and prices in recent years.

Forest lands are often owned primarily for values other than timber production and management must, of necessity, be multiple use. Proper forest management can optimize timber production, and thus income, to the land owner and yet be modified to enhance habitat for most forms of wildlife and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

### **Commercial**

The **goal** of the Commercial District is to establish adequate locations for commercial business to operate with minimum impact on the rural nature of Deerwood Township. Commercial development should be located along specific sections of designated highway corridors of State Highway 6 south of Deerwood, County Road 12 west of The City limits of Deerwood, Highway 210 East of the City of Deerwood, and Highways 6/210 to Crosby City limits. Scattered commercial development is discouraged in rural areas. Commercial use of home should be discouraged.

Surface water oriented commercial districts shall generally be a commercial use with the need to have access to and use of public waters. Examples include resorts, marinas and restaurants. Any new proposed surface water oriented commercial districts shall comply with County Ordinances.

### **Industrial**

The **goal** of the Industrial District is to encourage the development of responsible industries to compliment the existing economic base. All industrial development will be screened and



landscaped to promote compatibility with the rural wooded aesthetics of the Township. No industrial development will be allowed until the requirements of appropriate state agencies have been met. Industries that produce minimum waste and pollution will be encouraged. Industrial development shall be limited to the commercial corridors listed above.

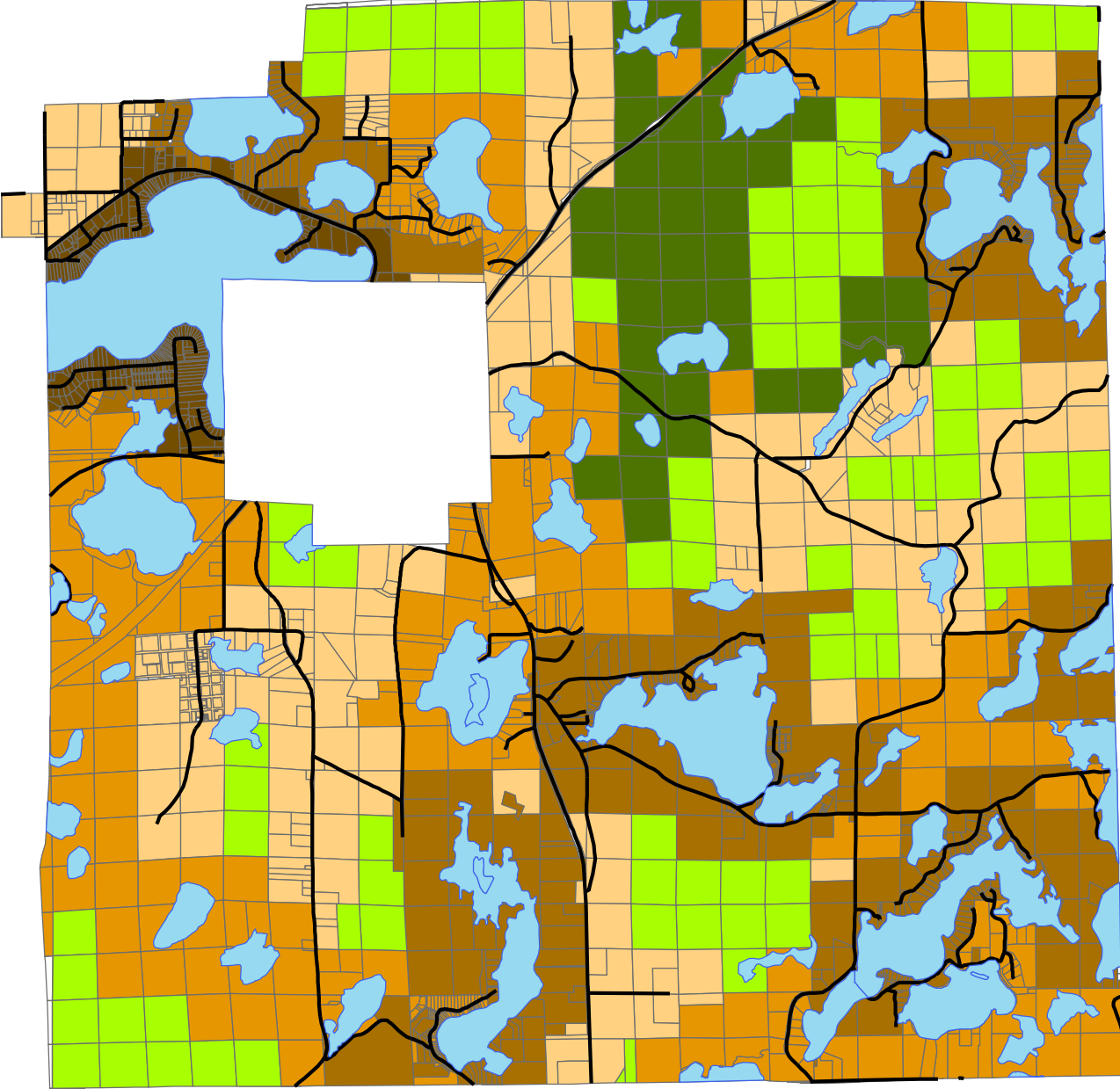
**Recommendation:**

Since Deerwood Township is not served by municipal wastewater services, care must be taken in granting permits to industries that produce detrimental wastes. In all cases where the usage will be adjacent to a non-compatible land use, appropriate standards meeting County Ordinance requirements shall be obtained.

**Open Space**

The **goal** of the Open Space District is to protect wetlands and other unique areas for the benefit of plants, animals and the public. Open Space Districts are identified as existing wetland areas as well as the Memorial Forests.

# TOWNSHIP FUTURE LAND USE MAP



## Legend

- Residential 1 (NE Lakes)
- Residential 2 (RD Lakes)
- Residential 3 (NE Lakes)
- Rural Residential (5 acre)
- Agricultural/Forestry
- Open Space