

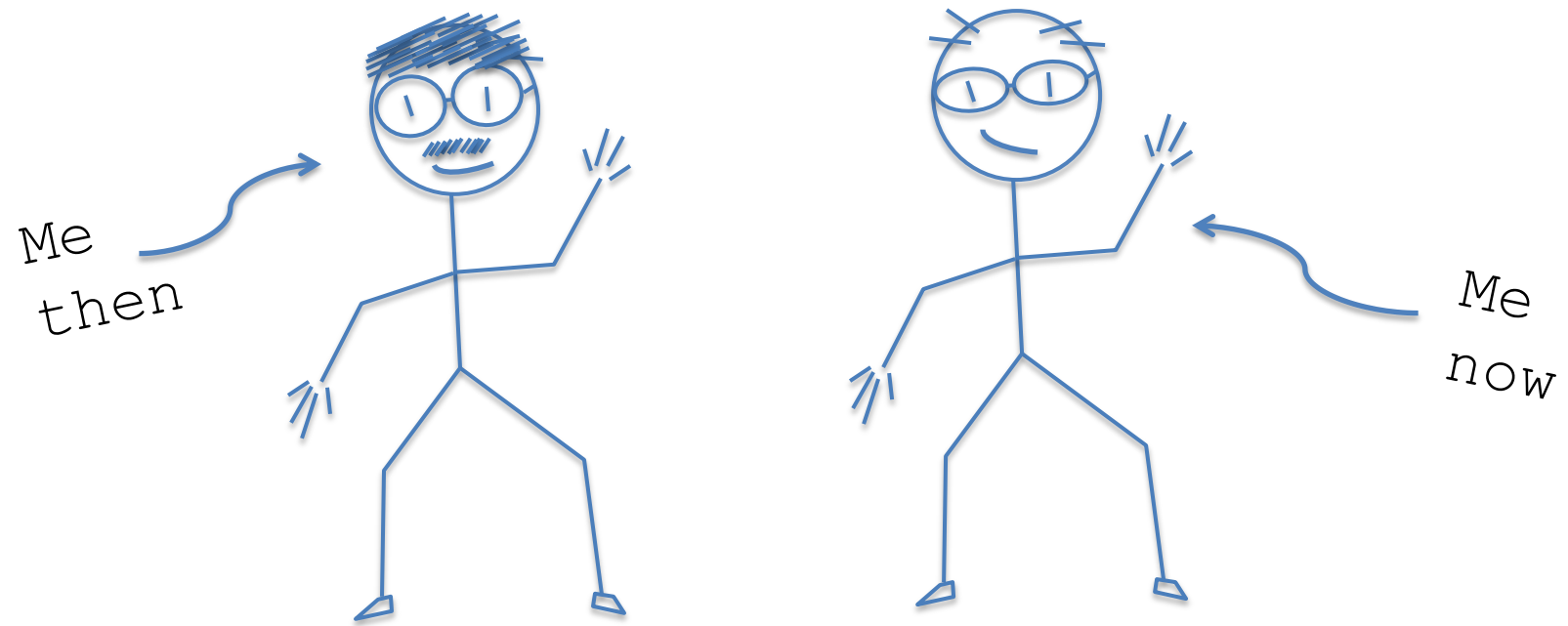
# Is parcelization government's fault?

Michigan Society of American Foresters  
November 1, 2012

Dean Solomon, Senior Extension Educator  
MSU Extension



# My professional journey



Growing more of these...



Charlevoixcounty.org

Than these



Kurt Schindler



# Who's fault is it?

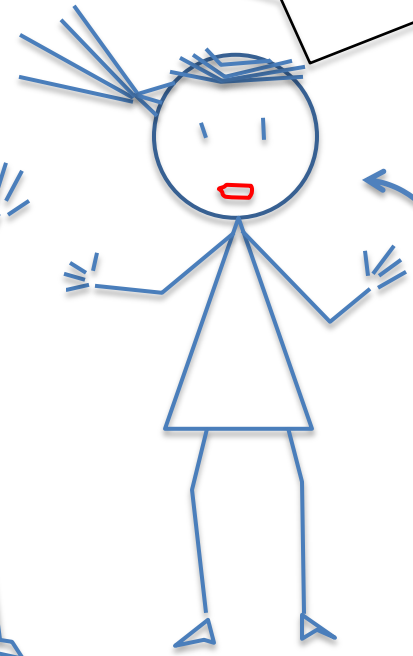
????????

Me



If I flunk my English test, IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

Teenage Daughter



# Who's fault is it?

## Timber markets

**Property taxes**

**Income**

**Environmental regulations**

**Interstate highways**

**Zoning**

**Timber tax treatment**

**Landowner motivation**

**Gas prices**

**Real estate markets**

**URBANIZING POPULATION**

**Aging population**

**Death**

**Estate taxes**

**The internet**



# Is parcelization government's fault?

*local*



Charlevoixcounty.org

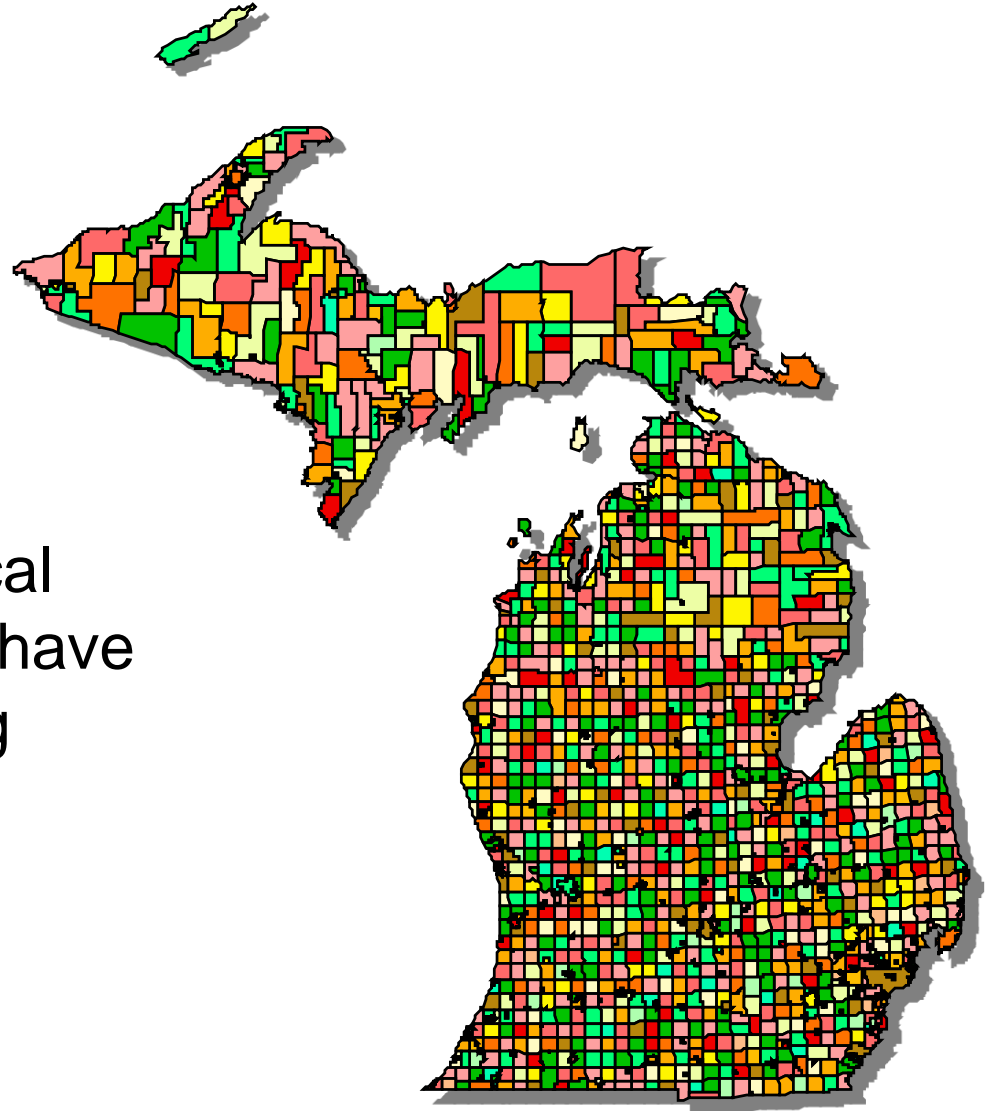


Charlevoixcounty.org



# Michigan zoning

More than 1,800 local governmental units have planning and zoning authority



## Why is zoning so important?

- Zoning districts – what uses go where
- Density
- Parcel sizes
- Review and approval
- Variances

Bottom line: Local zoning determines development patterns on the land.

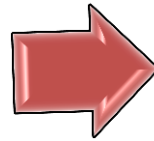




## Michigan zoning: A little history

### 1967 Subdivision Control Act

- 4 parcels per 10 acres
- Unlimited parcels > 10 acres
- 10 year re-division



### 1997 Land Division Act

- New formula
- Fewer bowling alleys and flagpoles
- Exempt divisions, re-divisions, bonus divisions
- Access and easements



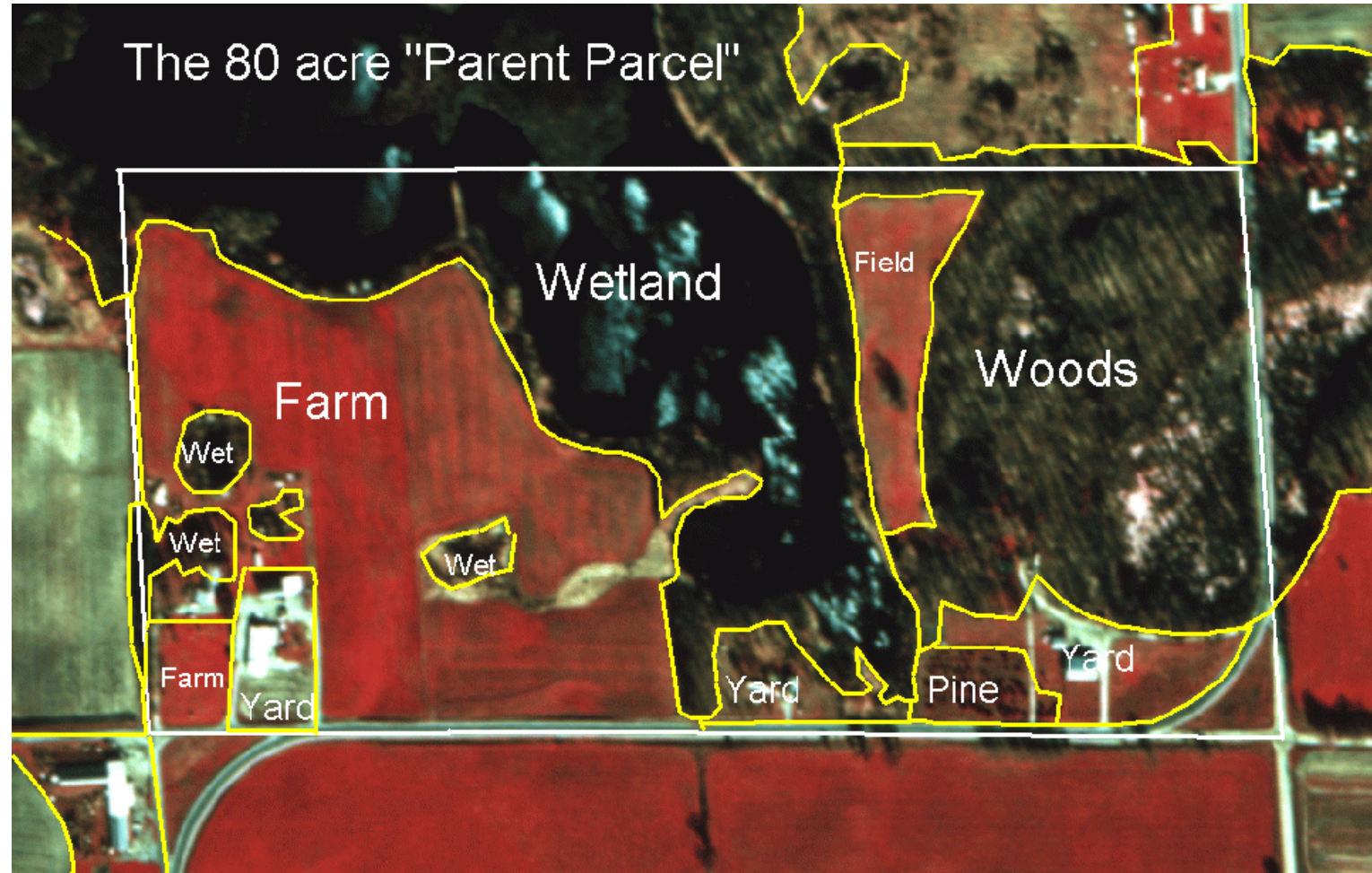
# Land splits 1967 style



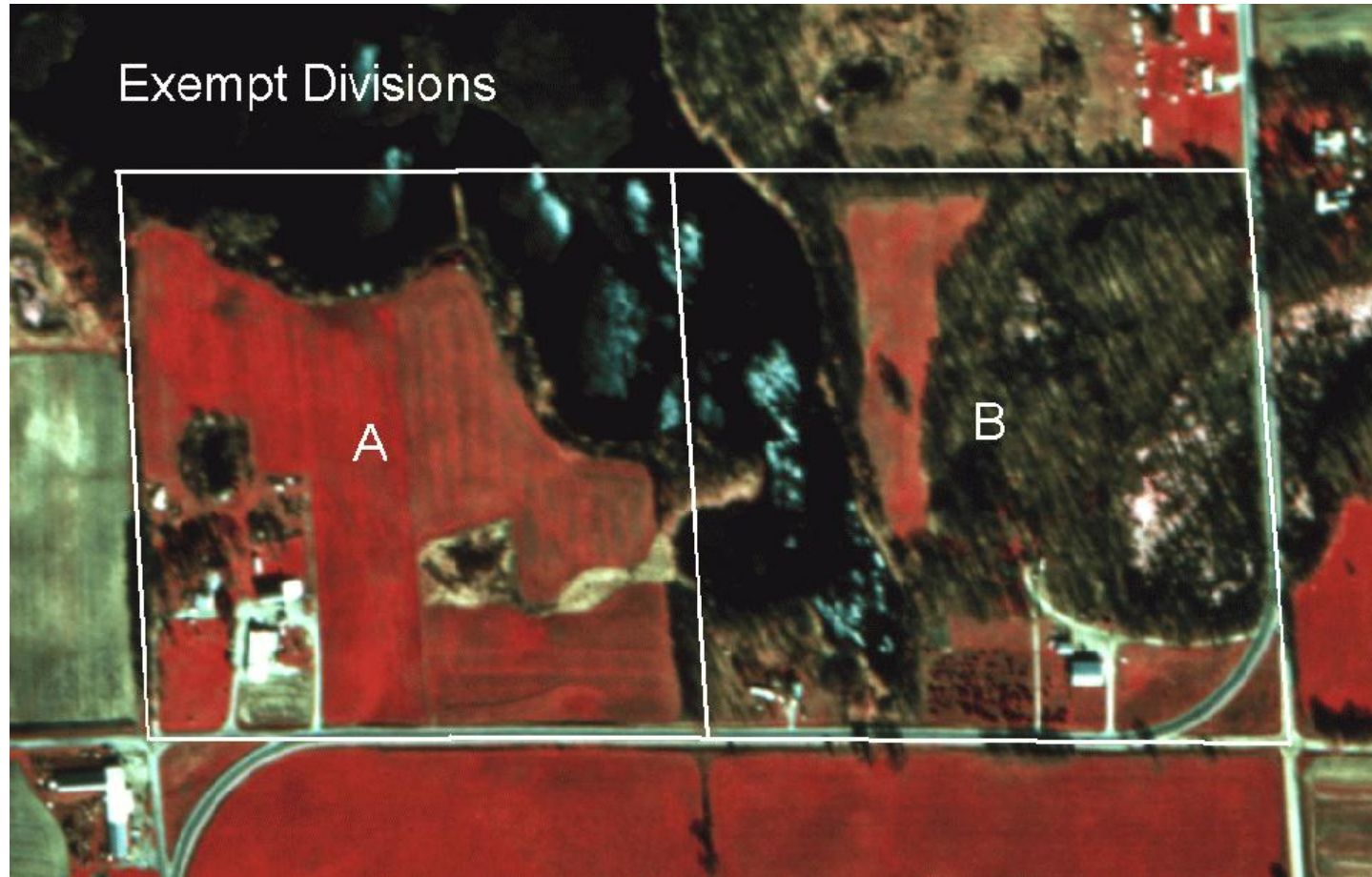
# Land splits 1967 style



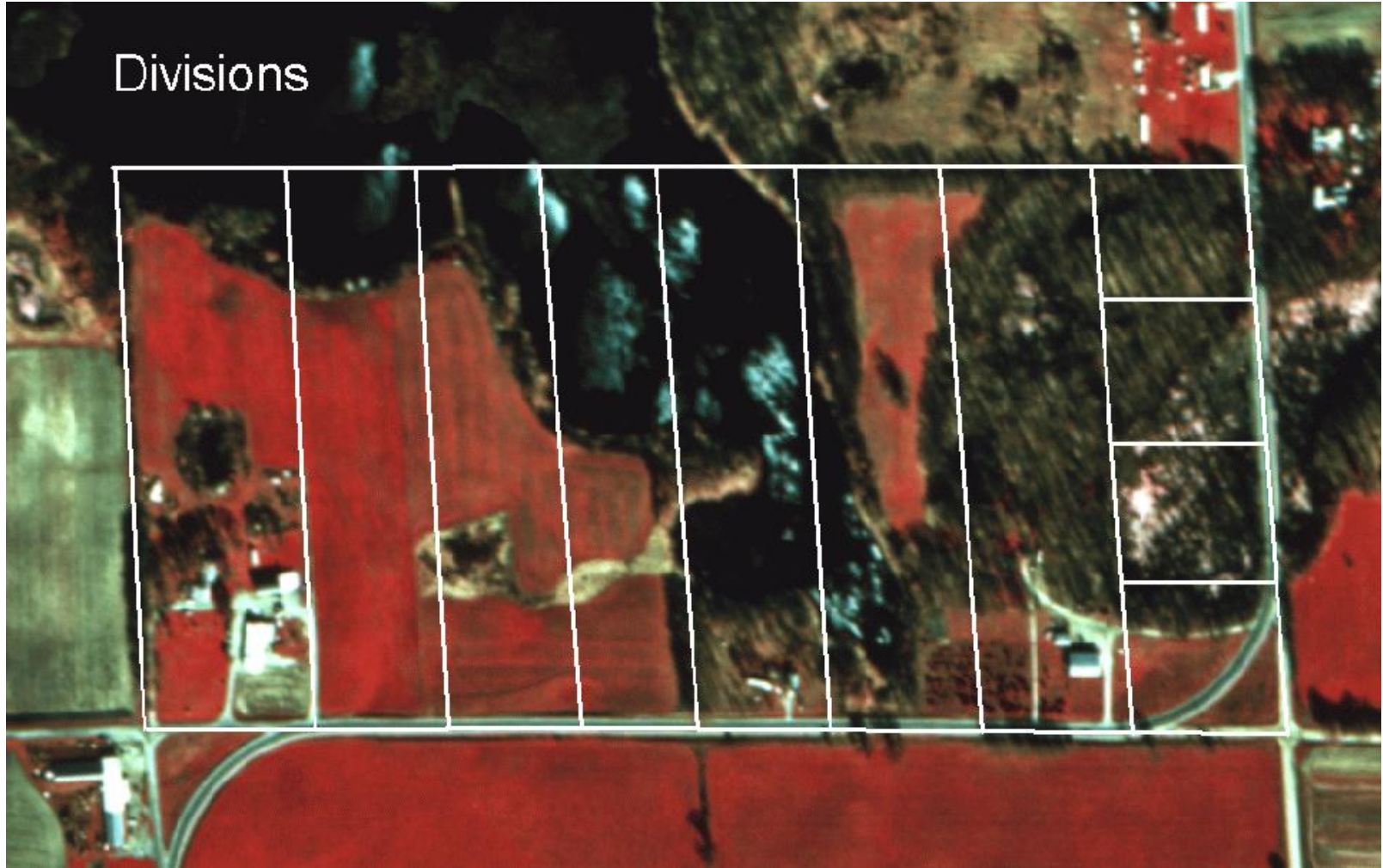
# Land divisions 1997 style



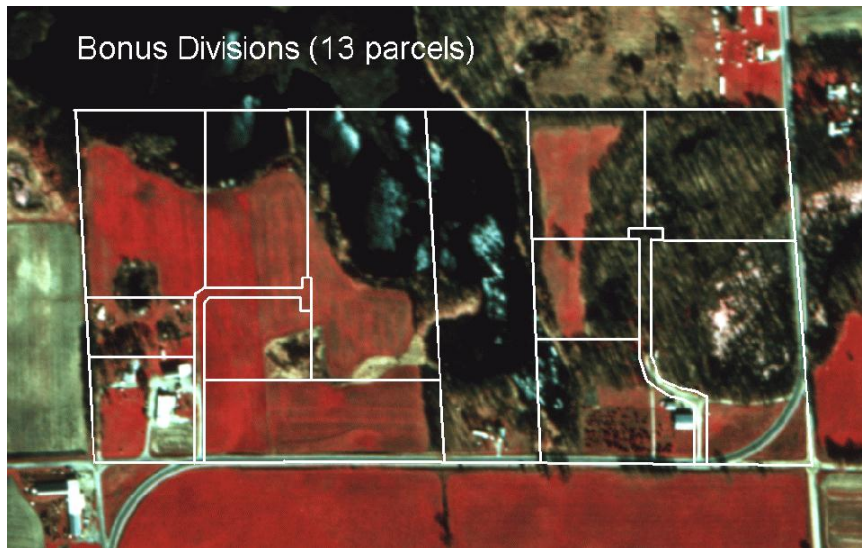
# Land divisions 1997 style



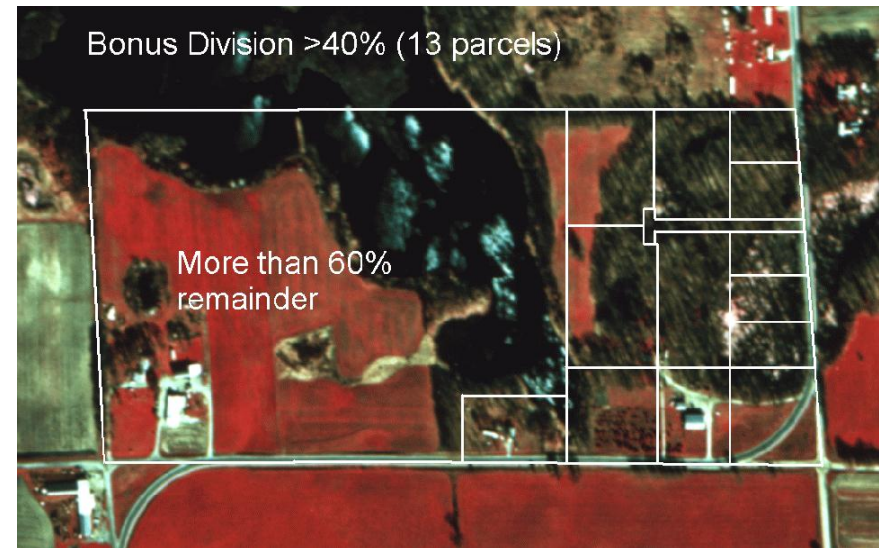
# Land divisions 1997 style



## Land divisions 1997 style



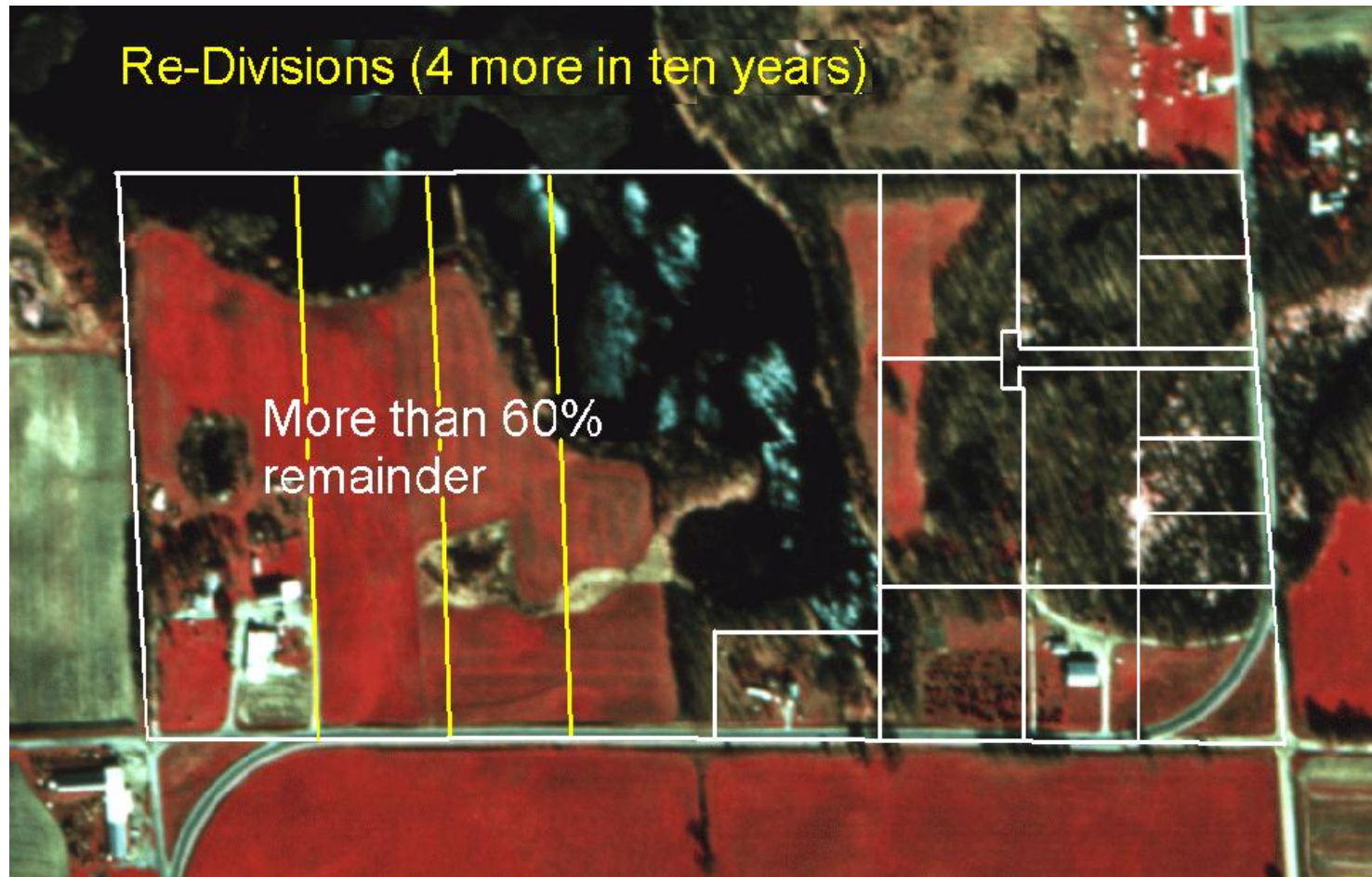
*Each division shares a common new driveway or private road.*



*Divisions occupy less than 40% of the parent parcel.*



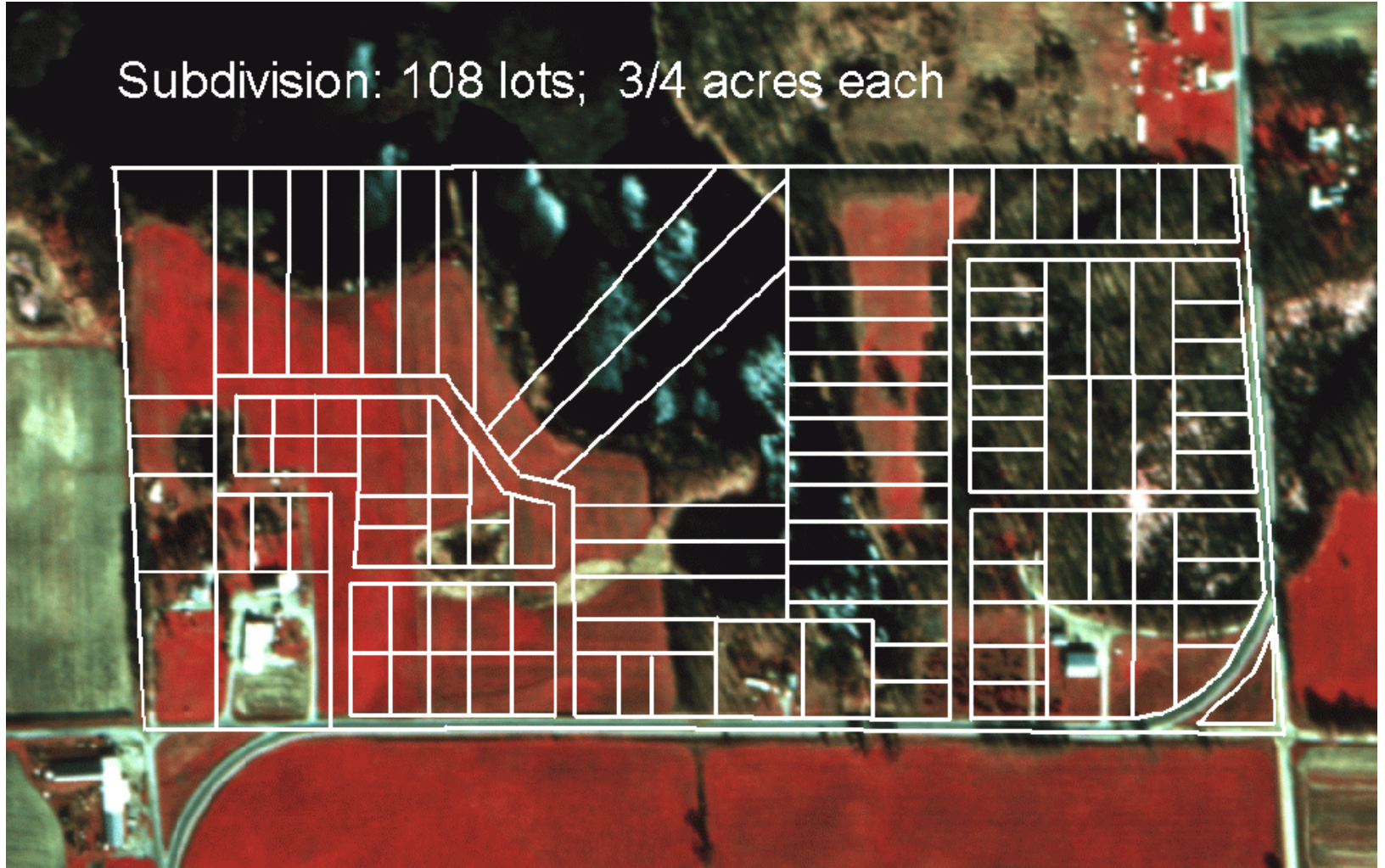
# Land divisions 1997 style





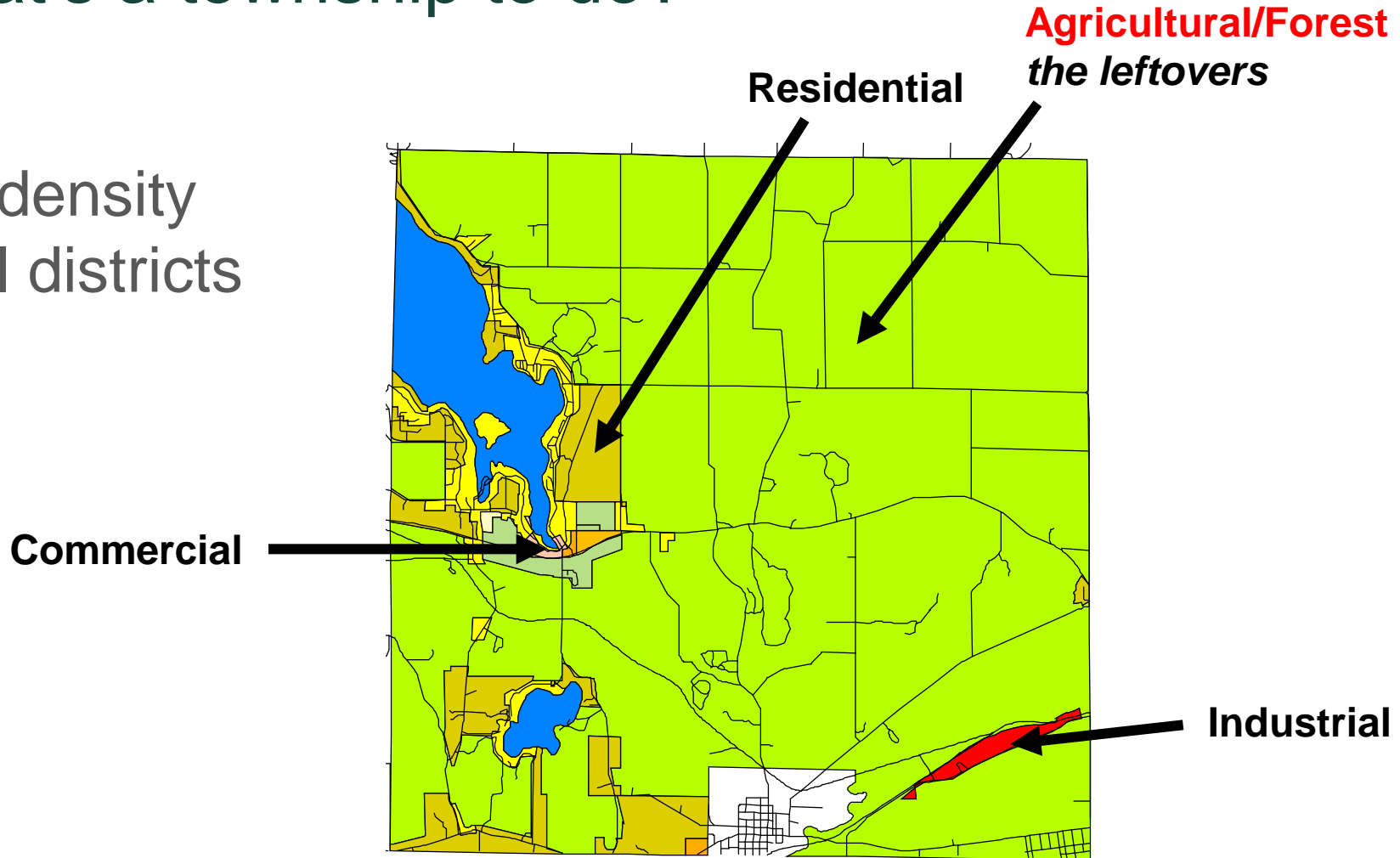
# Subdivisions

Subdivision: 108 lots; 3/4 acres each



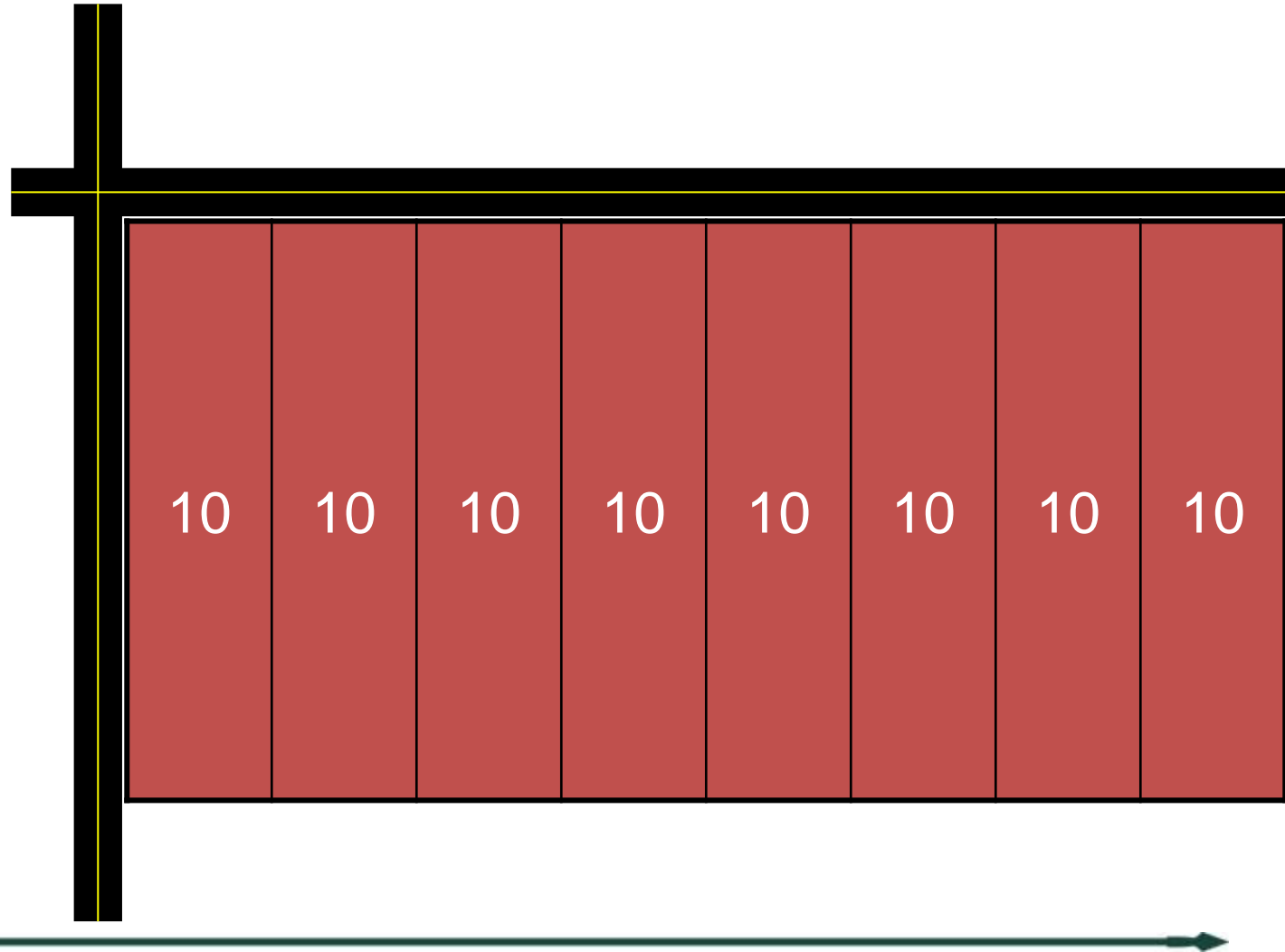
# What's a township to do?

low density  
rural districts



# What's a township to do?

Large  
minimum  
lot sizes



Which is worse? This?

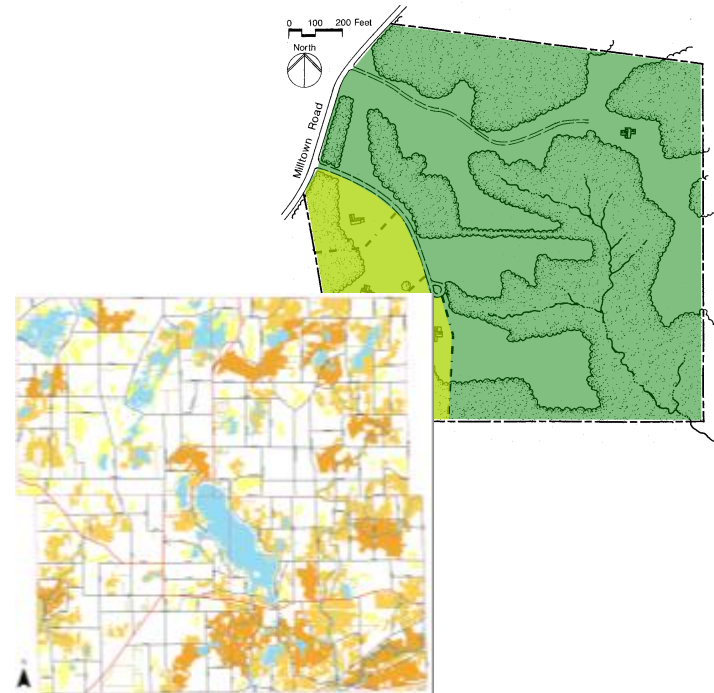


# Which is worse? Or this?



## A couple of options

- Purposeful planning in rural zones
- Conservation zoning



# Purposeful planning in rural zones

**Legend**  
**Potential Conservation Areas**  
Lower Priority  
Medium Priority  
Highest Priority

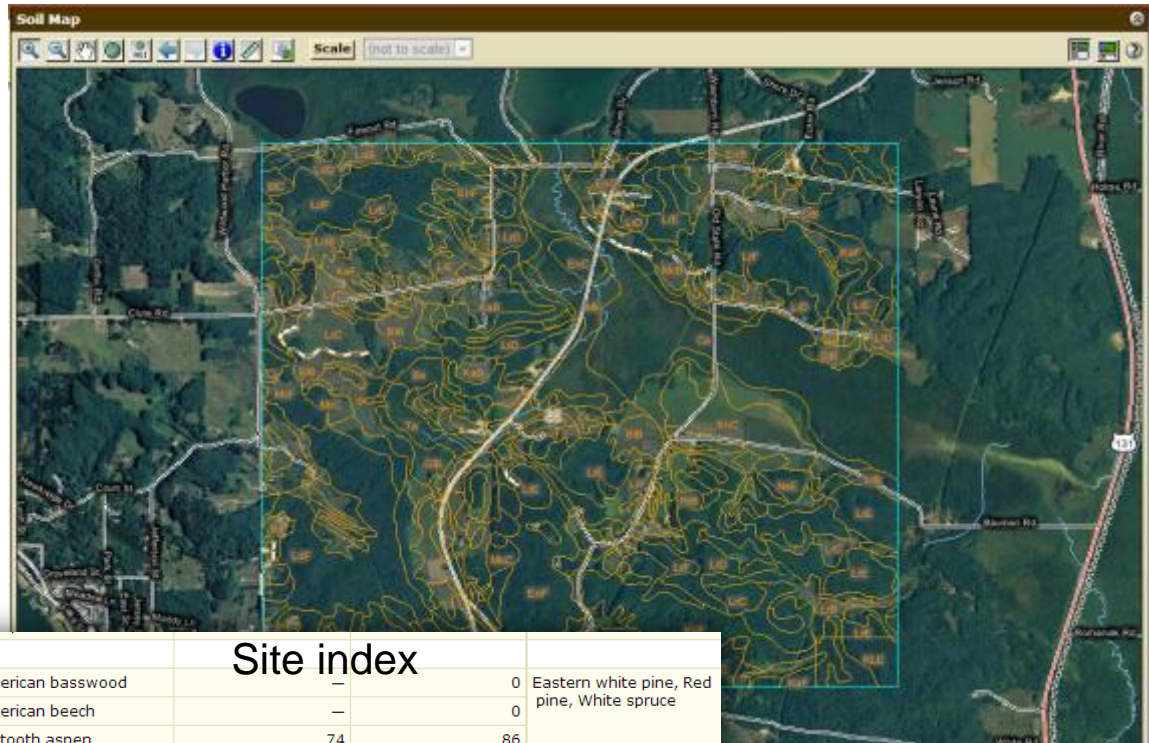


Potential Conservation Areas: Ross, Richland, Barry and Prairieville Townships



# Purposeful planning in rural zones

Web soil survey



EmB—Emmet sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes		Site index			
Emmet	American basswood	—	0	Eastern white pine, Red pine, White spruce	
	American beech	—	0		
	Bigtooth aspen	74	86		
	Eastern hemlock	—	0		
	Eastern white pine	—	0		
	Northern red oak	74	72		
	Quaking aspen	—	0		
	Red pine	—	0		
	Sugar maple	66	43		
	Yellow birch	—	0		
EnB—Emmet-Leelanau complex, 2 to 6 percent slopes					



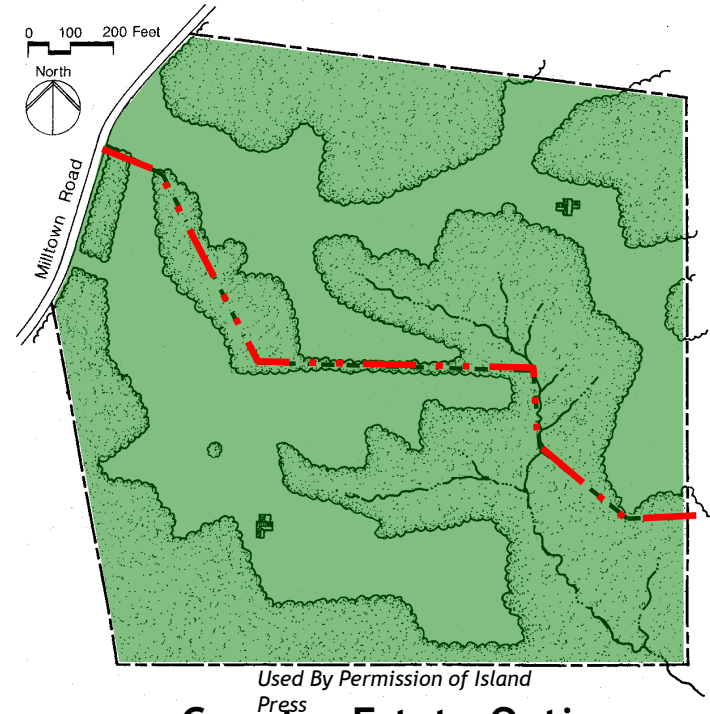


# Conservation Zoning

## *A Menu of Options*



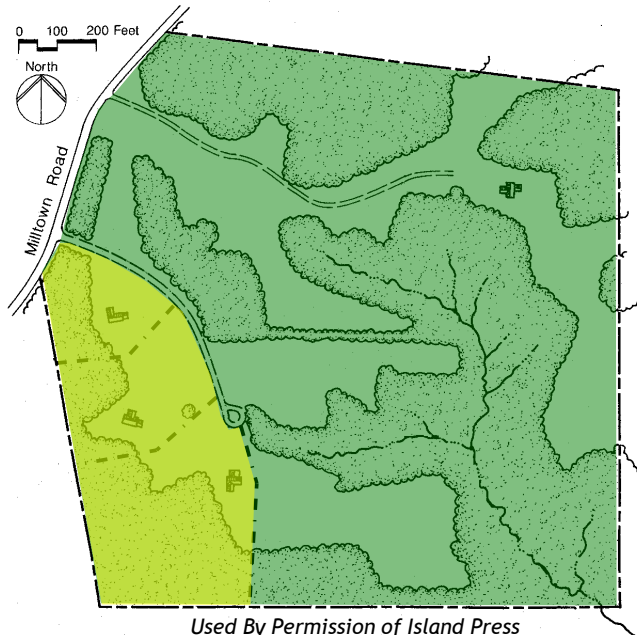
**Existing Master Parcel**



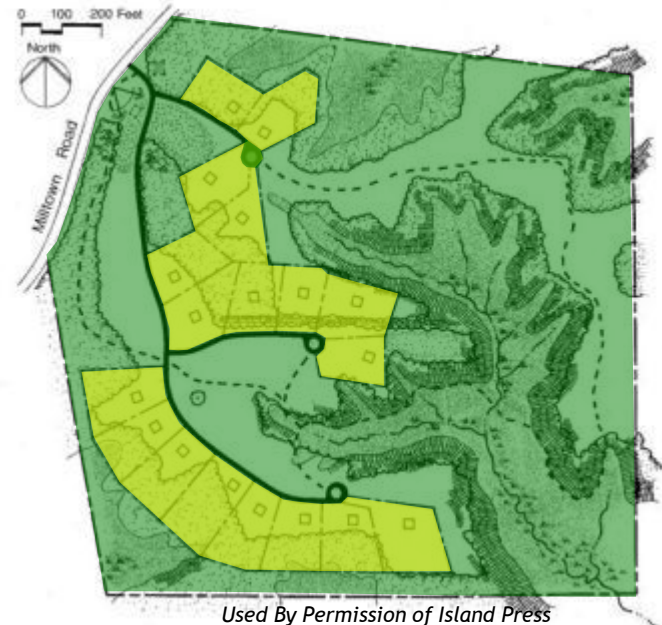
**Country Estate Option**

- The country estate option allows a parcel to be split into large parcels (25-40 acres in area).

# Sliding Scale & Basic Conservation Subdivision Option



**Sliding Scale Option**

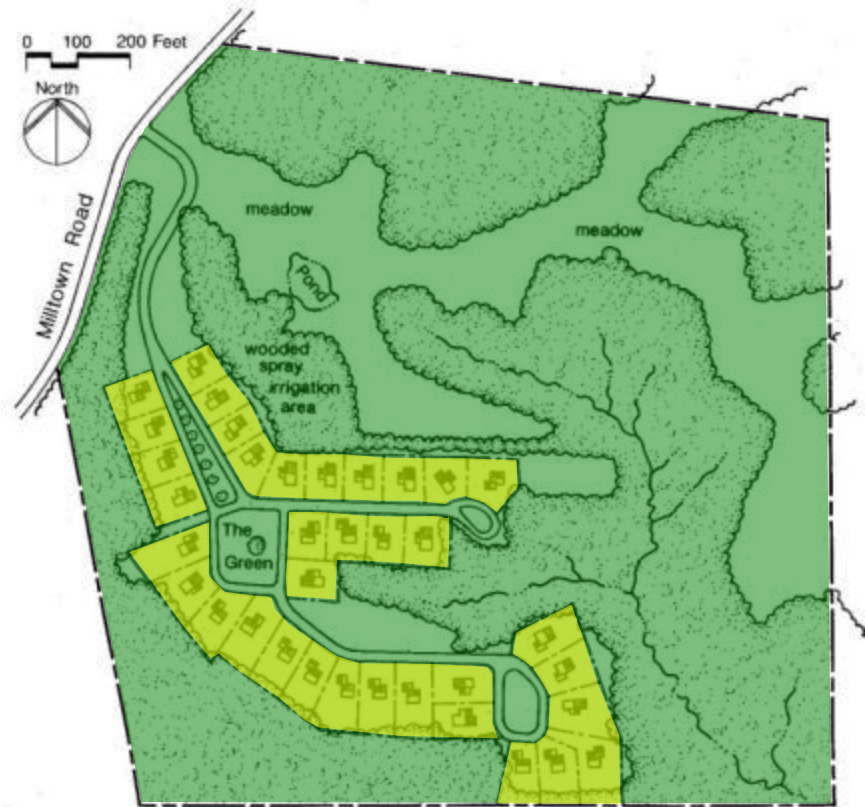


**Basic Conservation Subdivision Option**

- Parent parcel size dictates number of splits
- Developer retains full density

# Enhanced Conservation Subdivision

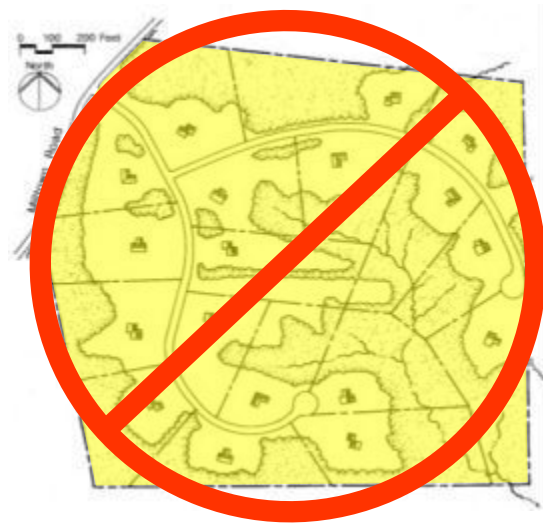
- Incentive based
- Density bonus for:
  - Affordable housing
  - Village development pattern
  - Public access, etc.



*Used By Permission of Island Press*

**Hamlet or Village Option**

# The result: significant land conservation



## So what's a forester to do?

- Whine
  - Participate
  - Get appointed to a planning commission
  - Get elected
- 1/3 of local officials “always” used natural resources info for master plan creation or updates
  - 1/4 for site reviews
  - “great need” to know where to access natural resources info

Olsen et al., 2007



Questions?

