

# Appendix B: Local Government Leader Phone Interview Results

## Bringing the Latest Science to the Management of Michigan's Coastal Dunes



Michigan Environmental Council  
May 2015

Phone Interviews of Local Government Officials

March 2015

***All Phone Interviews Conducted and Summarized By Tanya Cabala, Great Lakes Consulting***

*Northern Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** I live on a bluff above Lake Michigan. Protecting the Great Lakes and coastal waters is incredibly important.

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** The 2012 amendments have allowed construction on dunes in front of homes built on dunes with appropriate setbacks from Lake Michigan, blocking the viewscape and impacting their property values. Wants the impact on the economics discussed more.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** A lot about the view, people who followed the rules, they understood the issue. Property values.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** They have moved, move all the time. Every year the shoreline is different. People will be building all over them.

**Do you think of the challenge of managing dune development primarily as protecting the scenic views, or about limiting the risks of building and living in an unstable environment?** Both are important.

---

*Northern Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** We have extensive Lake Michigan shoreline, and high water and erosion issues. We pay attention to the shoreline. Great asset.

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** We want to be very careful about any kind of construction along the shoreline. Most have a deep respect for the landscape. We hold the land in trust.

**Do you wish to explain or elaborate on any of your answers?** Would not ever say the state is too protective, as we hold the land in trust. The state has done a pretty good of balancing protection here. He would not be in favor of tradeoffs for development. Leaning more toward local acquisition vs. state. Like the Trust Fund, state has resources. Planning and zoning, acquisition and ownership, working in partnerships. All good. In diminishing order.

**Is there anything else you would to say?** Essential to state's image and economy, tourism. State and local partnerships can work. We are stewards of the land.

---

*Northern Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** The dunes are an important issue. Interested in them.

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** Never had a problem, have a pretty good zoning ordinance. Setback from ridge, per erosion. Tree cutting control. Mostly related to high risk erosion.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** Building within the dunes area. Sometimes the builders are unhappy with the regulations, would like to build right up close for a view. Hear about Pitcher's thistle and piping plover – DEQ requires builders to protect them.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** Yes, we get wind erosion and waves from Lake Michigan on the base of the bluff – changes the dunes. Well, most of the dunes are pretty well stabilized, good grass, many trees. I don't see a whole lot of big changes.

**Do you think of the challenge of managing dune development primarily as protecting the scenic views, or about limiting the risks of building and living in an unstable environment?** The second. It is also an economic thing for us, as we are a resort area.

---

*West Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** Respect the interviewer, topic always needs our vigilance. Need to keep an eye on them.

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** So important that we are getting info out on these topics to the public. Appreciate knowing more about the topic, per my position. And generally. Did not know the dunes were of such significance (beyond parcel development) until this call – I appreciate them more.

**Is there anything else you would to say?** Awareness of the dunes – we need to improve upon. Our duty to learn.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** Get it from both sides – why won't DEQ let us build, dune protection. Not an easy thing to do.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** No clue, don't pay attention. They are endangered by development. If we don't do anything different, there will be even less dunes than there are now. Worse, not better.

---

*West Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** To help out!

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** I have more knowledge than the average person. Care more. Huge proponent. Want to stay involved.

**Do you wish to explain or elaborate on any of your answers?** “Everything’s good for everyone else but me.” Current attitude in relation to building on the dunes. I can do it, but not others.

**Is there anything else you would to say?** Generally, coastal dune management is very important. Sad because we have no donations, people who can afford it want to live on the lake – campaign donations. No foresight.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** Don’t hear much. Like every other issue, everybody is okay until it happens to them – everybody wants to build the way they want to.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** The more the people build, the more they change. But some groups are very aggressively trying to acquire dunes property – that is helpful. Money is biggest concern.

**Do you think of the challenge of managing dune development primarily as protecting the scenic views, or about limiting the risks of building and living in an unstable environment?** Hard to distinguish, answer 3: the value of the dunes as dunes. His board would not support dunes preservation.

---

*Northern Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** The importance of the critical dunes.

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** The people in Northern MI, when repeatedly when surveyed in many different ways by consultants – have decisively, emphatically made it known they value the nature, protection of the environment.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** Protection and what protection policies are in force, perception they are enforced unequally – people with money can complain to the state.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** Eroded, developed. Expect more erosion and more development.

**Do you think of the challenge of managing dune development primarily as protecting the scenic views, or about limiting the risks of building and living in an unstable environment?** It’s to keep the ecological balance. When you keep the dunes what they are supposed to be – it gives you the views, etc.

---

*West Michigan Township Supervisor*

**Why are you interested in participating in a phone interview?** Just to help out!

**What additional viewpoints or information do you wish to provide?** Should be more local. Needs state to oversee. People pay big money for the land, pay taxes, takes them months (6 months to a year) to be able to do anything. DEQ is too stifling. Not saying they should have no control. Blessed and cursed at

the same time. Most want to do the best thing they can and cooperate. Six to eight years ago, we dropped our ordinance as DEQ had a bunch of things they were going to ask us to do.

**What dune-related issues or concerns do you hear most about from community members?** Answered above. Takes too long to get permits, power stuff, nitpicky.

**How have dunes in your community changed in the last 20-30 years? What do you anticipate for the dunes over the next 20-30 years?** They are always changing to some degree. Trying to stabilize them. More regulations and more problems, less development. I want more development, more tax base. I think there is going to be less development.

**Do you think of the challenge of managing dune development primarily as protecting the scenic views, or about limiting the risks of building and living in an unstable environment?** Both of these. Why can't they (DEQ) figure it out in a reasonable amount of time? The biggest challenge is the power, overcoming that. People should be able to come to a reasonable decision in a reasonable amount of time.