

**A Report On The Historical & Cultural Land Use  
Of**

**Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek**

**Located Within Cross Village, and Bliss  
Townships, Emmet County, Michigan**

**Prepared For**

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## **Executive Summary**

Andrews Cultural Resources (ACR) has completed a cultural and historical land use study of Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek. The purpose of this project was to identify and assess historical, cultural and archaeological resources that are associated with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) that occur within the project area.

A total of five cultural resources were found during the course of this project. Three of these are significant and are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, collectively, as a property of traditional cultural value. One of the cultural resources, a village at the mouth of Wycamp Creek, is already listed on the National Register. All these cultural resources should be taken into account with the development of a management plan as well as with any future plans that would change the environmental character of the project area and general vicinity. This report describes the methods used, findings, and recommendations about the cultural resources identified in the project area.

## **Introduction**

The Natural Resources Department of the LTBB has received a federal grant to develop a management plan for Wycamp Lake within Emmet County, Michigan. ACR was approached to perform research about the cultural significance of the project area as part of the management plan. This project was begun by ACR on 26 June 2006 and was concluded on 25 July 2006.

Acknowledgement must be given to many of the people who helped make this project possible. Doug Craven, Bill Parsons and Archie Kiogima of the LTBB Natural Resources Department provided important information and coordinated the initial development of this project. I am indebted to the LTBB Archives and Records Cultural Preservation Department for their cooperation and assistance with historical and cultural site data, especially Leonard 'Joe' Mitchell the Cultural Preservation Coordinator. Similar gratitude is due Barbara Mead of the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), Lansing, who provided data on archaeological sites.

Appreciation is also extended to the persons who provided historical and cultural information about the project area. These consisted of: Glenn Holdorph, Yvonne Walker-Keshick, Evelyn Lasley-Andrews, Leonard 'Joe' Mitchell. All of these persons are enrolled members of the LTBB. Other LTBB members also contributed information but asked not to be identified by name.

Wesley L. Andrews served as the Principal Investigator for the project and is likewise an enrolled member of the LTBB. Mr. Andrews authored the report and he alone is responsible for its content including all errors and the conclusions expressed within it. As a final comment it should be noted that this report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians or any of its governmental departments or employees.



## **Project Area Description and Environmental Setting**

The study area includes Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek and .5 mile from their waters edge. It is located within Township 38 North, Range 6 West (Cross Village) and Township 38 North, Range 5 West (Bliss) of Emmet County, Michigan.

Several unimproved roads provide access to Wycamp Lake and Creek. One leads to an old boat launch site on the south side of the lake near the south central portion of Section 30 of Cross Village Township. A road on the north side of the lake leads to a small dam on Wycamp Creek in the northwest 1/4 of the southwest 1/4 of the southwest 1/4 in Section 25 of Cross Village Township or 45 degrees 39.218 minutes north and 84 degrees 59.737 minutes west at an elevation of about 610' above mean sea level (AMSL).

A few buildings that are used as seasonal residences are found within one-half mile of the south and north sides of Wycamp Creek, especially near the mouth. These are upon private land while the majority of the property along the creek and lake is state owned.

Most of the area adjacent to the lake and upper reaches of the creek are low wetlands some of which are cedar swamp and some marshland. A small area on the north side of the west one-half of Wycamp Lake is a dune environment dominated by white and red pine. The dune environment is also found to extend west and north of this point to Lake Michigan. The west part of Wycamp Creek to where it empties into Lake Michigan is higher in elevation and is forested by beech, sugar maple, hemlock. These environmental conditions are very similar to the pre-European settlement of the region.

Wycamp Lake and Creek are the northern elements of a larger wetland area that extends through central Emmet County that includes Larks Lake and Pleasant View Swamp. The project area is also classified as a Lake Plain environment being the Cheboygan Subdistrict of the Presque Isle District of Northern Lower Michigan. The soils are poorly drained sand and the topography in general is a mix of wet depressions and dry beach ridges (Albert, Denton and Barnes 1986:23).

## Research Methods

The research methods for this project were divided into three distinct tasks. The first is the documentary literature review, the second consists of the oral history interviews as well as a physical or field investigation, and the third task is the synthesis and compilation of the information obtained from the first two into a report. All research methods and procedures used in this project conform to all acceptable guidelines, standards, laws, and policies of the LTBB, United States, and the State of Michigan.

### Documentary Literature Review:

This component entails examining contemporary as well as historical sources of information about the project area. This includes land records, maps, documents and reports. Especially useful were the holdings of the LTBB Archives & Records and Cultural Preservation Department, Harbor Springs and the OSA, Lansing, Michigan. Collectively their records contain information about all types of cultural resources known for the local area and are the most comprehensive of their kind. Other repositories visited included the Petoskey Public Library; the Emmet County Register of Deeds; the State Archives of Michigan and the Library of Michigan, Lansing; the Archives of Notre Dame University, Indiana; and the Petersen Library of the Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinaw City. Of the last three some of the most valuable information was obtained from the holdings of the state archives and the state library.

### Oral History Interviews and Field Investigation:

A list of potential interviewees was compiled and added to as new persons were suggested by others who thought they might have more information. As a result, 16 persons made up the list but only 9 were available to interview. Some persons asked not to be identified by name as a condition of their participating with an interview. The interviews were very informal and were conducted in a conversational style. Some of the information that was obtained was considered 'culturally sensitive' by those interviewed and it was deemed appropriate to only summarize the cultural significance rather than provide details in the report.



The field view investigation was implemented based upon results obtained from interviews and the documentary literature review. Glenn Holdorph assisted with this task by locating places of potential cultural and historical significance.

*Synthesis and Report Production:*

This component compiles the data collected from the first two tasks into a report that evaluates the significance of the findings and makes recommendations about further research and impacts to cultural resources within the project area from the proposed undertaking. The report uses maps to enhance the presentation of the facts. Copies of this report are being provided to the LTBB Archives and Records Cultural Preservation Department as well as the LTBB Environmental Department.

Each of the cultural resources were contextualized with LTBB culture and history and used to assess their significance. This was accomplished by referring to other known published and oral sources of information by and about the Waganakising Odawak.

Some of the information about the cultural significance of the project area is summarized in a general fashion at the request of some of the persons who were interviewed. While this means that some of the details are not included in the report it does not hinder an understanding of the significance behind each cultural resource.

An assessment of the cultural resources was performed using 'National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties'. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places is possible when a cultural resource meets the criteria. If accepted most cultural resources are afforded limited protection under federal law.

Traditional Cultural Properties are places that are of cultural significance to a group of people such as where spirits reside, places of historical events, plant gathering areas, etc. They are one type of cultural resource classified by the federal government as eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Research Findings**

Some of the Odawa bands inhabited the Emmet County region prior to the arrival of Europeans in the early seventeenth century. Very little is known about that period but it has been suggested, perhaps from oral historical sources, that the Odawa Sinago band resided in the region at that time (Andrews 2005: 17).

Historical information about the general vicinity of Wycamp Lake is closely tied to the Odawa settlement of Cross Village. This town has been known by several names in the nineteenth century such as Aanimewaatikoing (Prayer Tree Place) which is the Odawa name, as well as its French equivalent La Croix. During the eighteenth century it was usually referred to as the village of the Kiskakon after the principal band of Odawa by that name that resided there. Some of the Odawa Sinago band may also have lived there with them (Andrews 2005: 18, 28).

The Kiskakon Band living at Cross Village was a close neighbor and related to the Odawa bands named Nissawakwaton and Sinago who lived together in a single village south of present day Good Hart. All these Odawa bands have shared a long history and usually lived in close proximity to each other. The settlement containing the Nissawakwaton and Sinago bands near Good Hart was known as Waganakising referring to a crooked white pine tree that stood in near the village. It was sometimes called by its French equivalent 'L'abre croche'. The name Waganakisi was applied to the general region between what is now Harbor Springs and Cross Village (Andrews 2005: 18).

The oldest historical documentary source that provides information about the project area is found in the notes and maps compiled by John Mullet, the land surveyor for the United States government in 1840. These show Wycamp Lake, the vegetation and other natural features. The meander of the creek and the shoreline of the lake are very close to conditions found today. This would suggest that the dam that was built on the creek has had no significant impact upon the water table of the lake in recent times.



# Lake Michigan

*Map Showing Lands That Were Purchased Prior to the 1855 Treaty of Detroit*

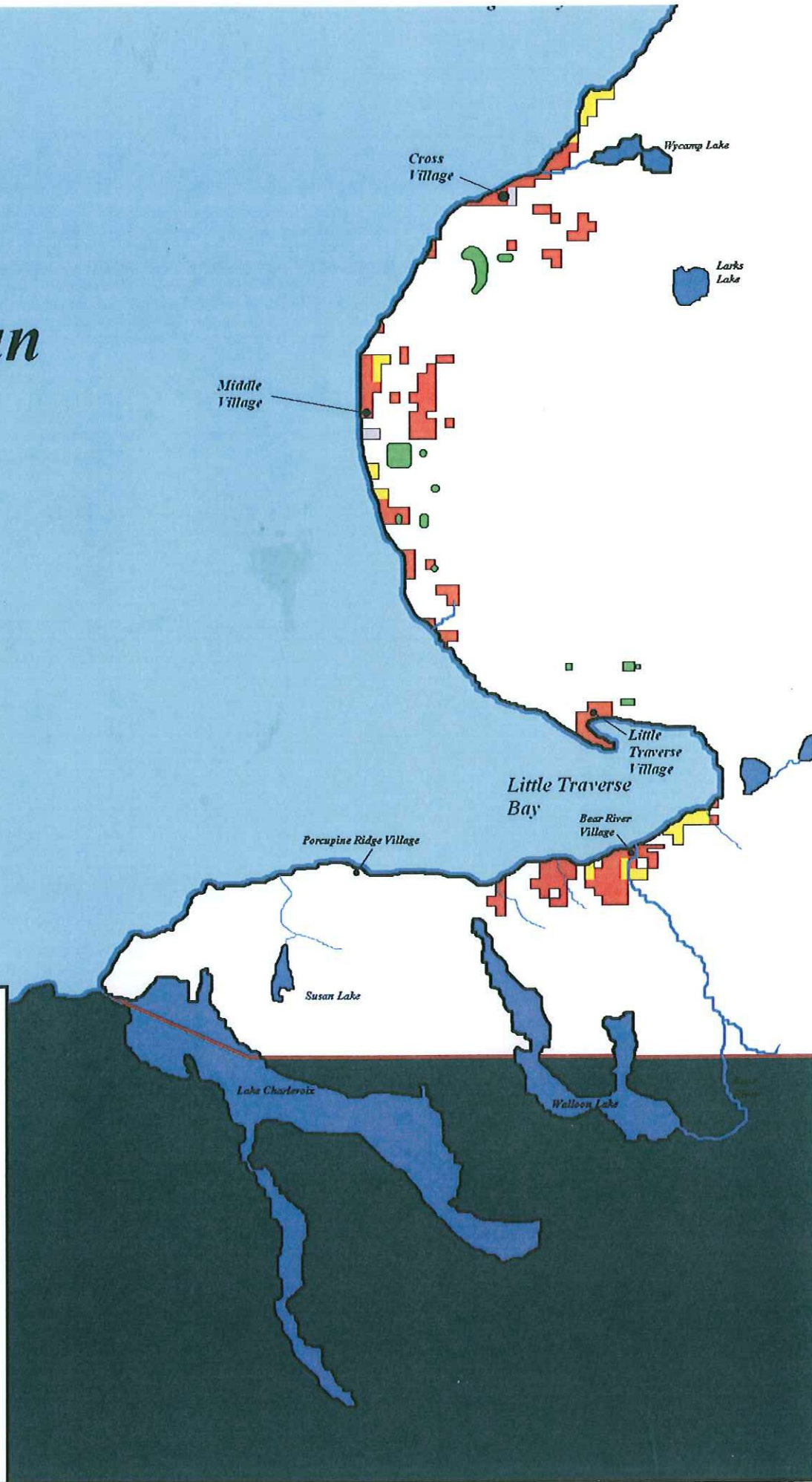
- Purchased by Odawa Chiefs & Headmen
- Catholic or Presbyterian Church Purchase
- Non-Odawa Land Purchases
- Odawa Agricultural Fields
- Principal Odawa Settlements
- Reservation Boundary

North



0 1 7

Scale (in miles)





The construction date of the dam is not known but it would post date when the area was first surveyed in 1840. This further indicates that Wycamp Lake is a natural formation and not the result of impoundment from the dam. No cultural features are noted on the first surveyors' notes and maps except the "Village of the Cross", now Cross Village, to the southwest (GLO 1816-1960).

Also during the 1840's the Odawak began to purchase land in an effort to establish their right to remain in their homeland and not be removed to the west as was the federal policy of the time. Land purchases made before the treaty of 1855 by the Waganakising Odawak were most often made by prominent persons such as the Ogimaak (civil chiefs and heads of families). The land selected was usually where settlements, agricultural fields, and subsistence activities were centered (Andrews 2005: 31-32).

Within the project area the band at Cross Village purchased land at their village and north along the coast of Lake Michigan adjacent to Sturgeon Bay. Joseph Nawamashkote, the principal Ogimaa of Cross Village purchased this land on behalf of members of the band in October of 1844. At the mouth of Wycamp Creek he bought lots 2, 3, and 4 totaling 179.9 acres in Section 26 of Cross Village Township.

The following year, in September of 1845, his son Michel Matweyodakashe purchased the west 1/2 of the southeast 1/4 of Section 26 in Cross Village Township. Francis Pierz, the Catholic missionary assigned to Cross Village, also purchased land in Section 26. He bought lot 1 but it is outside of the project area (Michigan Department of Treasury 1818-1962; Emmet County 1867-1940).

Most of the land purchased by Joseph Nawamashkote in Section 26 and other places near Cross Village was later subdivided into smaller parcels for individual members of the Cross Village band by 1875 and either given or sold to them by the Ogimaa Nawamashkote (Emmet County 1867-1940).

The land purchased by Michel Matweyodakashe in Section 26 was owned by him at least until 1873. Michel did not live upon the property in Section 26 because he owned two lots each with a house in Cross Village and probably resided in one of them. The assessed value through 1873 of his land in Section 26 does not suggest that a structure was present upon the property. However a plat map from 1902 depicts a 'mill' on that parcel but by that date he is no longer the land owner. On the tax assessment records his last name is the same as his father Nawamashkote (Emmet County 1867-1940; Meyers 1902:34).

A provision of the 1855 treaty enabled Odawa heads of household to select land within the Waganakising reservation. Records from that selection process show that none of the land within, or near the entire project area was selected as land allotments by Waganakising Odawak (Michigan Department of Treasury 1818-1962).

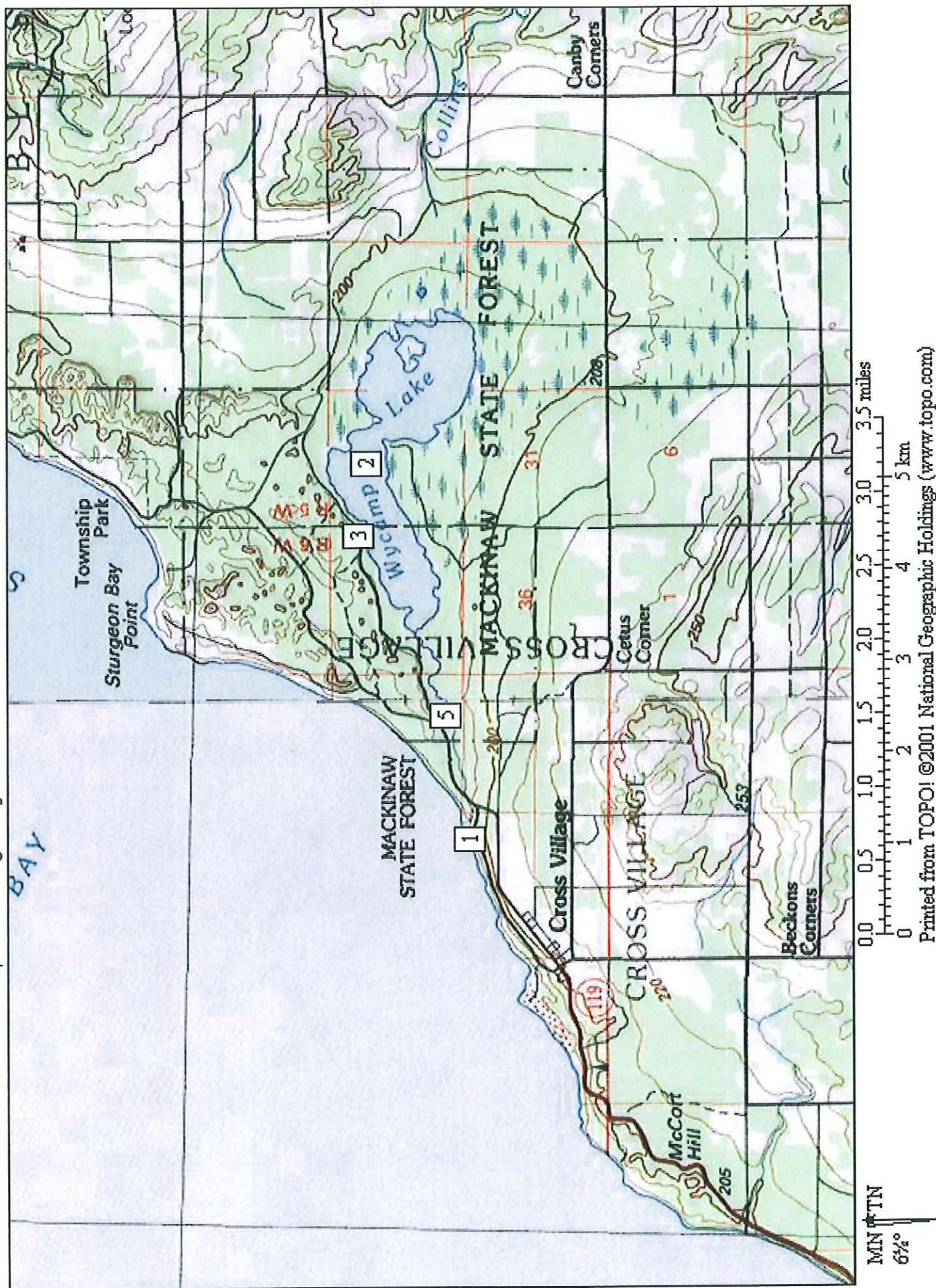
A paucity of information exists about how the land described above was used during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by the Waganakising Odawak. It is generally believed that as the migration of Euro Americans increased into the region the Odawak gradually lost control and access to their land based resources. Tax assessment records and plat maps indicate that by 1900 none of the land within or adjacent to the project area was controlled by the Waganakising Odawak. Commercial lumbering in the region started in the late nineteenth century and most of the timber was harvested from the project area (Andrews 2005; Emmet County 1867-1940; Meyers 1902).

In terms of natural resources it is important to emphasize that the project area is situated in close proximity to several types of environments. The dunes, the wetlands, Lake Michigan, the uplands and the creek, all provide some unique resources useful to human populations in the region. The environmental character of the project area is an important element to its significance within Odawa culture and history.

A total of 5 cultural resources were identified from the research performed for this project and they are all believed to be associated, at least in part, with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa. Each of these cultural resources is presented in the discussion below.



Map Showing Project Area and Location of Cultural Resources





*Cultural Resource 1: Wycamp Creek Village.*

A review of the previously known cultural resources from the records (maps and files) of the LTBB Cultural Preservation Department and the OSA revealed one previously known cultural resource within the project area. It is identified by an OSA number '20EM4' and is called the Wycamp Creek Site. It is located upon private property and is classified as an archaeological resource that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It is situated upon the north bank of Wycamp Creek where it empties into Lake Michigan being within the northwest 1/4 of the northwest 1/4 of Section 35, and the northeast 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of Section 34 of Township 38 North, Range 6 West (Cross Village). The site comprises at least three time periods of use from pre-European times known as the Middle Woodland, Late Woodland and a component dated to the seventeenth century (OSA Site File 20EM4).

The Middle Woodland portion is specifically represented by a cultural phase called the Laurel Tradition based upon specific types of stone tools, ceramics and other materials that were found there. It is identified as a camp site (OSA Site File 20EM4).

The Late Woodland period component is characterized by the assemblage of stone tool and ceramic artifacts which are more numerous and suggests a more intensive occupation that resulted with it being classed as a habitation site (OSA Site File 20EM4).

The final component of site 20EM4 is identified as a seventeenth century Odawa/Ottawa habitation site. The occupants to this site are believed to be ancestors to one or more of the bands that make up the present day Waganakising Odawak (OSA Site File 20EM4).

At least some elements of site 20EM4 extend to the south side of the mouth of Wycamp Creek as reported by LTBB members who have found pottery and stone tools there but the site is not identified in the records of the OSA as extending into that location (LTBB Interviews 2006).

*Cultural Resource 2: Water Spirit at Wycamp Lake.*

Oral traditions among the Waganakising Odawak indicate that Wycamp Lake was formerly known as 'Spirit Lake' because it is one of the places where a particular spirit is known to sometimes visit. Interviews with LTBB members' document this tradition in the present time as well as providing historical depth to this belief. Other sources have likewise identified the existence this same underwater spirit who is called 'Mishibizhi' among the Odawak and Ojibwak people from ancient times to the present (LTBB Interviews 2006; Blackbird 1887: 75-79; Smith 1995).

The significance of this spirit is that he is the principal leader of all beings who live under the ground and in the water. He lives in a cave somewhere in the Great Lakes. His physical appearance is similar to a Great Lynx which is also the English translation of his name. He has a long tail and scales like a fish but the scales are of copper. He is not worshiped by the Odawak but is accorded great respect. Some people provide him with gifts to assure a harmonious relationship with him because when offended or provoked he can do great harm to people. Mishibizhi is known to be at odds with other spirit beings and is directly responsible for creating the great flood long ago that covered the world (LTBB Interviews 2006; Blackbird 1887: 75-79).

He resides under the water and whenever he attempts to emerge from there, the sky beings, who are ever vigilant for him, detect his presence and attempt to drive him back under the water. These sky beings are also known as the thunder spirits, thunders, or thunder birds. They create storms with thunder, lightning, rain, hail, and wind in an effort to contain Mishibizhi. According to oral traditions there is a steep sided ravine south of Cross Village along Lake Michigan where the sky beings shot lightning at Mishibizhi that hit the ground cutting a great gash upon the landscape (LTBB Interviews 2006).



Cultural Resource 3: Elder Gathering at Campground.

Cultural, social and political activities associated with the Waganakising Odawak have taken place at the site of the old campgrounds on the north side of Wycamp Lake during the latter part of the twentieth century. It is situated within the northeast 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of section 25 of Township 38 North Range 6 West, and the northwest 1/4 of the northwest 1/4 of section 30 of Township 38 North Range 5 West. The geographic positioning system location is 45 degrees 39.68 minutes north and 84 degrees 58.542 minutes west upon an average elevation of 617' AMSL. The campground encompassed an area of about 6 acres square.

The campground was selected as an annual meeting place by Waganakising Odawak in the 1980's at a time when cultural and political activities were experiencing a revival. The initial meetings focused on treaty rights and it was attended by Odawak and Ojibwak from the Great Lakes including some from Manitoulin Island and Garden River in Ontario (LTBB Interviews 2006).

These meetings resulted in creating a strong emphasis upon local issues such as federal recognition and cultural revitalization that relied on direction from Waganakising elders and Odawa culture and history. These annual meetings eventually became known as 'Elders Gatherings' and began to incorporate other cultural activities such as solo fasts, sweat lodges, traditional teachings, and naming ceremonies (LTBB Interviews 2006). The influence that these gatherings and activities had upon the future direction of the Waganakising Odawak demonstrates their connection between religious practice and political action in the late twentieth century (LTBB Interviews 2006; Pflug 1998).

Eventually the gatherings were discontinued due to a conflict with the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources who owned the campground and tried to implement a permit process upon the Waganakising Odawak for use of the campground. These gatherings were held from about 1985 to about 1989. The LTBB Archives and Records Department has many photographs of these gatherings in their collections (LTBB Interviews 2006).

*Cultural Resource 4: Natural Resources.*

Plant gathering, fishing, and hunting are the principal activities reported by LTBB Odawa members as activities at Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek. Several kinds of plants found within the project area such as mullein, blueberry, wintergreen, cedar, and birch are utilized for food, medicine, ceremonies, and craft construction materials.

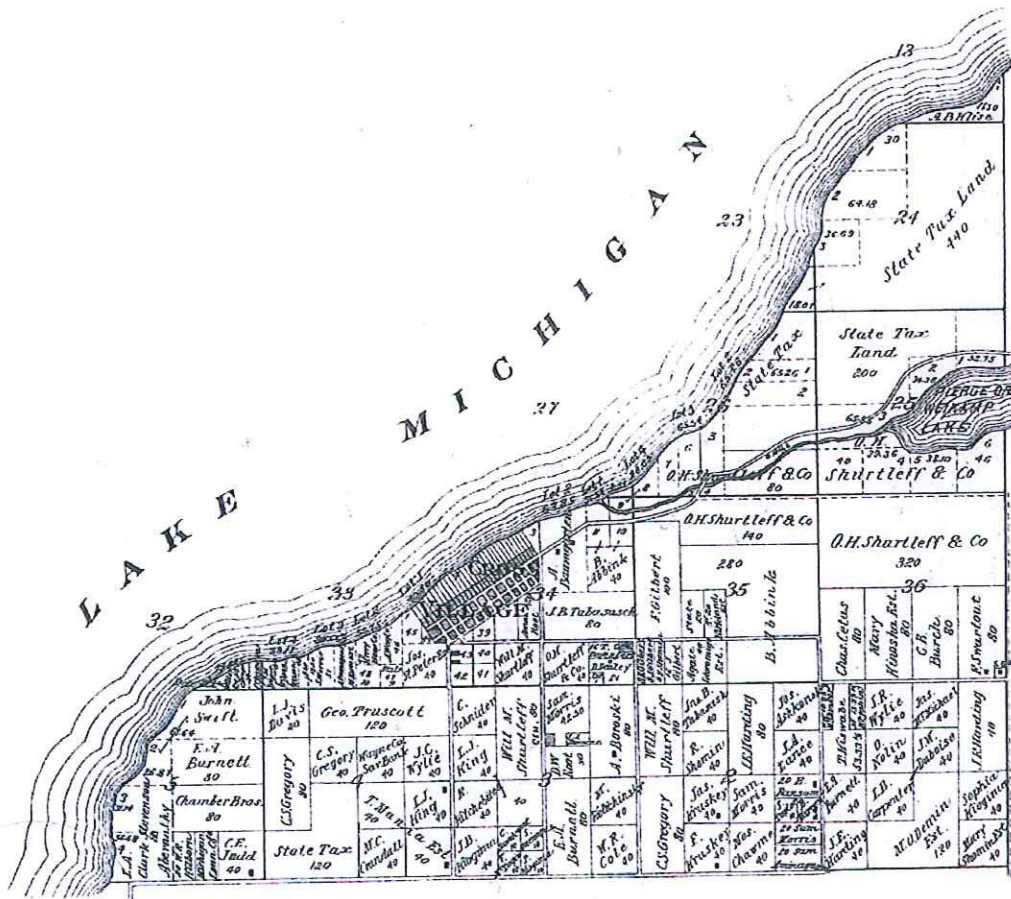
Fishing with hook and line at Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek for bass, bluegill, trout and pike are an important activity for many persons in the summer while fishing in winter is confined primarily to Wycamp Lake. Smelt are netted and suckers are speared on Wycamp Creek in the spring but not as intensive today as in years past because of fewer smelt and property owners unhappy with trespassers. The smelt 'runs' are fondly remembered by many local residents as a springtime social event that also provided appetizing meals (LTBB Interviews 2006).

Blueberries were plentiful until about 1950 in a area just north of Wycamp Lake in the north half of Section 25 and the south half of Section 24 of Township 38 North, Range 6 West (Cross Village). Today it has grown to timber but it was formerly kept open by burning which encouraged the growth of blueberries. LTBB elders in recent times have suggested that the area be burned off again to reestablish the growth of blueberries there. It was called the 'Blueberry Plains' and was one of the best blueberry picking areas in the region. Odawaak and non Odawaak from as far away as Middle Village would come and camp at Wycamp Lake where the old state campground was located and stay for the duration of the harvest every August. Some of the berries were used for home use but many were also sold. It was during the berry-picking time that the missionary priests would go and preach to the Odawa when they were camped at Wycamp Lake where a large white cross formerly stood on the top of a large sand dune just west of the old campground. The cross was taken down in the 1980's by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is also worth noting that the name of the lake on a plat map from the early twentieth century is given as 'Pierce or Wycamp Lake'. The name Pierce being a variant of the name of the missionary Pierz from the mid nineteenth century (LTBB Interviews 2006; Meyers 1902: 34).



# PLAT OF CROSS VILLAGE

Townships 37 & 38 North, Range 6 West  
OF THE MICHIGAN MERIDIAN



*Cultural Resource 5: Saw Mill.*

As mentioned previously a plat map of Emmet County from 1902 depicts a 'mill' on the north side of Wycamp Creek in the north central part of the south half of the southeast 1/4 of Section 26 of Cross Village Township (Meyers 1902: 34). The land ownership history from 1845 to 1873 indicates that this parcel was purchased and owned by the son of the chief at Cross Village, Michel Matweyodakashe, also known as Michel Nawamashkote. Tax assessment records do not reveal the existence of any improvements or structures existing upon the property from 1867-1873 (Emmet County 1867-1940).

The letters and reports of a missionary at Cross Village, Francis Pierz, contains information about a saw mill that he had built in 1847 however its location is not known and it may not be the same mill depicted on the 1902 plat map (Pierz 1837-1873).

The area depicted on the 1902 plat generally corresponds with a disturbed area that was visited and physically examined during this project. An area was discovered upon the low ground on the north side of Wycamp Creek that showed some past human activity that had disturbed the ground surface. No cultural material or structural features were observed. The dimensions of the disturbed area are about 40' north to south, by 60' east to west (Meyers 1902: 34).

White colored, chalky marl was noted at an eroded spot on the south edge about 1' below the ground surface. Information obtained from interviews of LTBB members indicates that in the past marl was dug up from this place and spread into the local agricultural fields. It is situated upon an elevation of 646' Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) and is located at 45 degrees, 39.179 minutes north, and 85 degrees 00.179 minutes west. This location is within the southwest 1/4 of the northeast 1/4 of the southwest 1/4 of the southeast 1/4 of Section 26, of Cross Village Township 38 North, Range 6 West (LTBB Interviews 2006).



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Waganakising is a cultural landscape that comprises many different components that are identified by, and deeply imbedded in, Odawa cultural beliefs, ceremonial practices, and historical events. The Wycamp Lake area is the northernmost part of that landscape which extends south to Little Traverse Bay.

### 1 "Wycamp Creek Village".

This is an archaeological site that has a component that is associated with the history of the LTBB. The significance that it has for the LTBB is that it was a habitation or village from at least the late sixteenth century. It is located upon private land which means there is very limited ability for management of the natural or cultural resources identified at this location. Much of the physical integrity of the site has been destroyed by archaeological excavations as well as the construction of houses and roads. It is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is afforded very limited protection.

### 2 "Water Spirit".

This cultural resource is a traditional cultural property of the LTBB. It includes Wycamp Lake and its environs for at least 1/2 mile from the waters edge. Part of the significance of this place is its environmental setting. The importance of the relationship between the Odawa and the spirit, from the point of view of Odawa culture, is one of maintaining a peaceful balance. Reciprocal gift-giving is an important element of Odawa cultural beliefs and ceremonial practices and is why this spirit is respected in this manner.

Destruction or changes to the natural features of the lake by humans potentially impacts the nature of that relationship in a negative manner. These aspects should all be taken into account with the development of a management plan for the lake. The lake should also be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.



### 3 "Elder Gathering".

This is a multi-component site of historical significance to the LTBB because of some of the activities at the old campgrounds. The elder gatherings that took place there contributed in part to the cultural and political revitalization of the Waganakising Odawaak in the latter part of the twentieth century. It is suggested that it be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

### 4 "Natural Resources".

This cultural resource is actually a collection of many natural resources, especially botanical, that occur within and around Wycamp Lake. The significance is closely related to that described for the 'Water Spirit' in terms of maintaining its cultural and physical integrity. It qualifies as a traditional cultural property and should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The blueberry plains mentioned previously no longer exist as a contemporary environment due to the fact that they grew into timber and because they were not being maintained by burning the area on a regular basis. However the old campground at Wycamp Lake is associated with this historic activity and should be added as a component to the significance of that cultural resource.

### 5 "Saw Mill".

This cultural resource is a historical and archaeological site that needs further study to determine its significance. It is not certain if it is related to the early mill built by the missionary Pierz to supply Cross Village and the local area with lumber. If it is the location of the first saw mill built near Cross Village that factor may add to its significance to the LTBB. The saw mill site is not recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at this time.

In conclusion it is the opinion of the principal investigator that three of the cultural resources identified during this project, numbered 2, 3, and 4, are associated with and significant to the LTBB. They are eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places. The level of protection for these cultural resources would be somewhat enhanced by being on the National Register, especially those upon public or tribal lands. It is recommended that these cultural resources be taken into account in the design of a management plan for Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek, especially when any proposed undertaking would disturb the ground surface or alter the natural character of the landscape and its view shed. Such activities may adversely impact the cultural and physical integrity of these cultural resources.

While no other cultural resources, especially archaeological, were identified from the sources that were consulted, the paucity of information should not be interpreted to suggest that no other archaeological cultural resources exist within the project area. It simply means that very few have been previously found and documented in that vicinity. The most productive method for locating archaeological sites is to perform field work on an area that involves systematic digging into the ground. This method was not part of the scope of work for the present project. Subsequently it is further recommended that an archaeological survey of the environs of Wycamp Lake and Wycamp Creek that are owned by the State of Michigan be performed to identify additional cultural resources and to potentially provide additional detail to those already found.

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