

**LAKE TOWNSHIP  
BENZIE COUNTY  
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

**LAKE TOWNSHIP 2010 ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 2025-01**

**ADOPTED: OCTOBER 2, 2025**

An ordinance amendment to protect the public health, welfare and safety and to clarify provisions of the current Lake Township Zoning Ordinance that protect environmentally sensitive areas.

**PREAMBLE**

The principal foundations of the Lake Township Master Plan, adopted in 2023, include: “maintenance of the unique and high value environment of the Township;” maintenance of “the rural, open space and woodland atmosphere” of the Township; and maintenance of “ecological balance, open space, high levels of sanitation and low levels of pollution.”

Section 3.18 of the current Lake Township Zoning Ordinance regulates development in all environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, dunes, sensitive riverine areas, and steep slopes.

The stated intent of Section 3.18 is to “identify and safeguard those areas of the Township that are . . . sensitive to . . . being seriously endangered, damaged or destroyed if allowed to develop in a manner inconsistent with their conservation and preservation.” And further states: “Since the welfare and well-being of the citizens of the Township are directly linked and related to the natural environment of the area, . . . it is necessary to protect such areas from degradation.”

The current zoning ordinance specifies building setbacks from any lake or stream. That provision can be interpreted to apply to wetlands, but more clarity would avoid possible confusion.

As specified in the Township’s Master Plan, the township Planning Commission is developing an updated zoning ordinance that will include updated environmental protection provisions; but completion of the full ordinance is unlikely to occur for several months.

Residents of the township have expressed general concern about harmful development of sensitive area, as well as specific concerns about development of some specific parcels.

*Approved by Planning Commission – August 21, 2025*

The following ordinance amendment is adopted to provide clarity, avoid unnecessary controversy and provide advance review of any activity that could cause environmental degradation while the full ordinance upgrade is pending.

THEREFORE, THE TOWNSHIP BOARD FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF LAKE, COUNTY OF BENZIE, AND STATE OF MICHIGAN, ORDAINS:

Section 3.18 of the Lake Township Zoning Ordinance is amended by adding the following Sections 3.18(F) and 3.18(G):

**“F. Building Setbacks**

Any structure or part thereof shall have a minimum setback from the boundary of any wetland of 35 feet, and such setback applies in all zoning districts.

**G. Land Use Permit**

A land use permit, as specified in Section 14.3 shall be required prior to commencing any land clearing, vegetation removal, regrading or filling of land, or other site preparation if such activity will occur on any parcel in the Township that consists, in whole or in part, of any environmentally sensitive area as defined in Section 3.18 (B). The applicant for the land use permit must physically mark wetland boundaries and the Zoning Administrator shall require proof that the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy approved the wetland delineation.”

This Ordinance Amendment shall become effective seven (7) days following its publication in the manner provided by law.

I certify that this is a true copy of Ordinance Amendment No. 2025-01 that was adopted by the Lake Township Board on October 2, 2025 and published in the Benzie Record Patriot on October 8, 2025.

Effective \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Penny Georgevich  
Lake Township Clerk