



Community Description

Manistee County is located on the shore of Lake Michigan in the northern lower peninsula of Michigan. See Figure 1. The county is approximately 20 miles south of Traverse City and about 100 miles north of Grand Rapids. Adjacent counties include Benzie County to the north, Wexford County to the east, Lake County at the southeast corner, and Mason County to the south. Lake Michigan forms the western boundary for Manistee County, providing residents with approximately 25 miles of freshwater shoreline. Organized in 1855, Manistee County was named for the Manistee River, which enters the county southeast of Mesick and flows south and then west to Lake Michigan. The City of Manistee is the county seat.

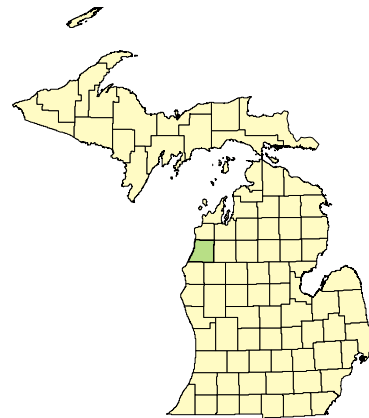


Figure 1: Manistee County is located in northwest lower Michigan

Manistee County totals approximately 585 square miles or 374,563 acres. Almost 100,000 acres are public lands, including 64,000 acres that lie within the Manistee National Forest, the largest National Forest in Michigan. Manistee County contains 14 townships and 5 incorporated villages. Manistee is the only city in Manistee County. See Figure 2.

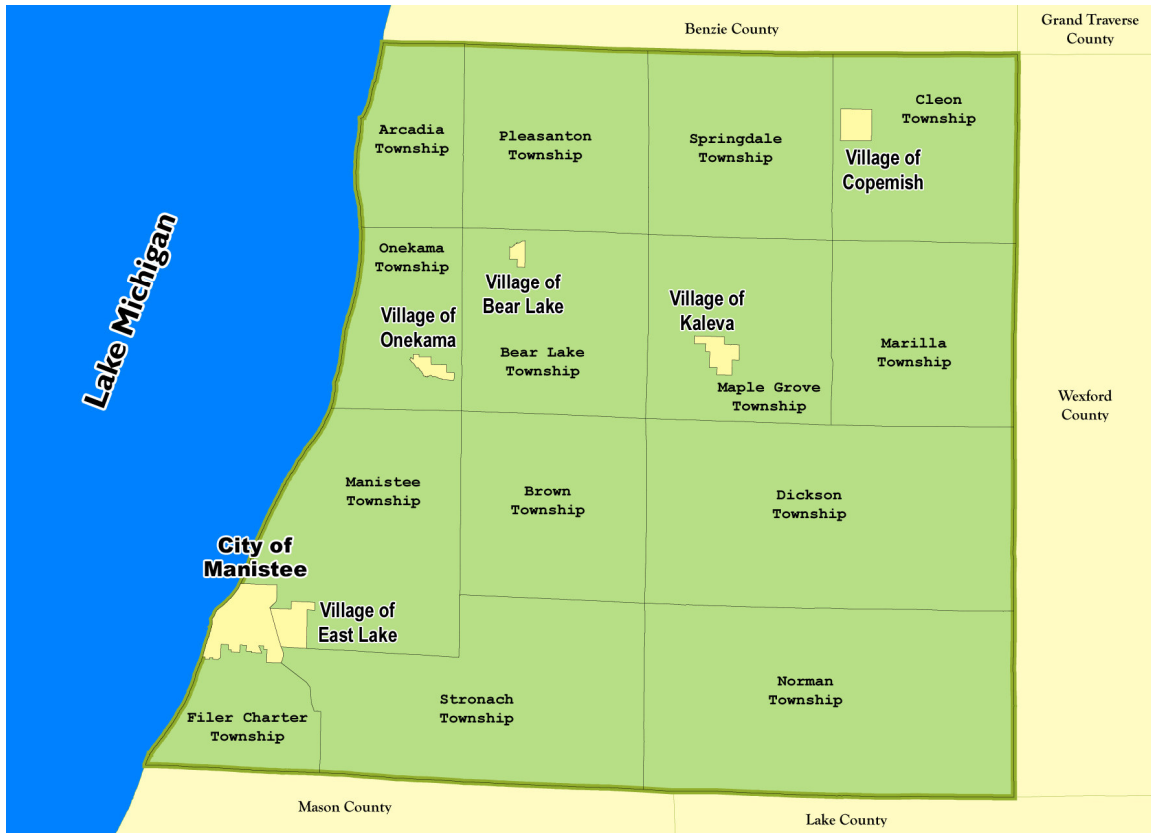


Figure 2: Manistee County contains one city, five villages, and fourteen townships. (Data: Michigan Geographic Data Library)

Prominent features of the landscape include the aforementioned Lake Michigan shoreline and large areas of farmland and forest. Extensive bluffs and dune areas can be found along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Many scenic rivers and streams flow through Manistee County, from east to west emptying into Lake Michigan. Seventeen lakes of varying sizes are scattered throughout the county. The two largest lakes are Portage Lake and Bear Lake. Small wetlands dot the landscape. Many other wetlands in the agricultural areas were drained long ago. Most of the privately owned shoreline of Lake Michigan and the inland lakes is developed with cottages, seasonal and year-around homes. The City of Manistee is a small port city that relies upon tourism and industry to support the local economy.

Four state roads carry traffic across Manistee County and to major destinations within the county. US-31 stretches north from Holland and passes through Manistee on its route northward to Mackinaw City. M-55 is an east-west roadway that carries traffic from Tawas City on Lake Huron westward across the state to Manistee. M-22 begins just north of Manistee and follows the shoreline of Lake Michigan



Lake Michigan provides Manistee County with 25 miles of freshwater shoreline.

northward to Northport and then heads southward to Traverse City on the east side of the Leelanau Peninsula. Lastly, M-115 cuts diagonally across the northeast corner of the county as it carries traffic from Clare northwest to Frankfort.

Manistee County has a population of 24,527 people, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Its population in 1990 was 21,265. The growth during this ten-year period, totaling 3,262 people, is an increase of slightly more than 15.3%. During this same period, Michigan's population grew by only 6.9%. The July 2006 Census estimate of the population of Manistee County is 25,067, indicating that the growth rate has slowed in the current decade.

Selected Census Data regarding the governmental units within Manistee County is shown in Figure 3. The population of three of the communities in Manistee County, Filer Charter Township, Manistee Township, and the City of Manistee, comprise nearly half (49.4%) of the population of the entire county. When one examines individual jurisdictions, the proportion of housing units of the county total can be quite different from the proportion of the county population. This is usually due to a large number of seasonal homes within specific jurisdictions. For example, Norman Township has 6.8% of the population in Manistee County and 11.4% of the housing units. This is largely due to the fact that 870 homes out of the 1,632 total in Norman Township are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

	Population	Percent of County Total	Housing Units	Percent of County Total
MANISTEE COUNTY	24,527	100%	14,272	100%
City of Manistee	6,586	26.9%	3,426	24.0%
Arcadia Township	621	2.5%	545	3.8%
Bear Lake Township	1,269	5.2%	755	5.3%
Brown Township	712	2.9%	379	2.7%
Cleon Township	700	2.9%	373	2.6%
Dickson Township	929	3.8%	660	4.6%
Filer Charter Township	2,208	9.0%	996	7.0%
Manistee Township	3,232	13.5%	1,182	8.3%
Maple Grove Township	776	3.2%	520	3.6%
Marilla Township	362	1.5%	222	1.6%
Norman Township	1,676	6.8%	1,632	11.4%
Onekema Township	867	3.5%	802	5.6%
Pleasanton Township	817	3.3%	623	4.4%
Spingdale Township	730	3.0%	567	4.0%
Stronach Township	804	3.3%	549	3.8%
Village of Bear Lake	319	1.3%	161	1.1%
Village of Copemish	232	.9%	105	0.7%
Village of East Lake	441	1.8%	209	1.5%
Village of Kaleva	509	2.1%	251	1.8%
Village of Onekema	647	2.6%	315	2.2%

Figure 3: Select data from the 2000 Census regarding Manistee County and the governmental units within it. Please note that the U. S. Census also counts village residents as part of the township in which the village is located. Therefore, the totals of the columns above are greater than the actual Manistee County totals.