

CATF Minutes

May 15, 2025 | 2:00 pm

Members in Attendance:

Zosia Eppensteiner*, Jane Fitkin*, Christy Foye, Brian Hummel, Michael Larson, Emily Leach, Jerry Messina*, Brad Neumann, Tyler Penrod, Erik Powers, Chloe Ravenscraft, Paola Rivera*, Karen Schmitt, Greg Seppanen, Anna Solberg, Dave Stensaas*, Jes Thompson, Nico Vermaat, Darlene Walch

**Joined via Zoom*

Guests in Attendance: Dominic Andriacchi, Jaclyn Butler

a. Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome to our new members!
 - i. Christy Foye, Caroline LaPorte, Kelsey Wermager, and Chloe Ravenscraft
- Welcome to guests joining!
 - i. Dominic Andriacchi

b. Special Presentation: Dr. Jaclyn Butler, State Demographer for [Michigan Center for Data and Analytics](#)

- Dr. Butler shared a number of interesting population trends that have been seen across Michigan as well as in rural counties in Michigan. Themes include:
 - i. Basic Info About Rural Michigan
 - 1. 53 of MI's 83 counties are currently considered rural
 - 2. 16.5% of MI's pop lived in rural counties in July 2020
 - 3. Rural counties comprised 22.8% of the state's total growth from July 2020 to 2024
 - ii. Statewide Population Trends
 - 1. In the past, there have been rapid rates of growth from birth rates as well as migration from other countries. These numbers leveled out between the 1970s - 1990s and then fully leveled out during the recession because of Michiganders moving out of state.
 - 2. Michigan's population has hovered around 10 million over the last 20 years.

3. Natural change in population (births and deaths) has been dropping significantly since 1957.
 4. In 2020, we officially switched from having more births annually to more deaths.
 - iii. Historical and Current Trends in the State
 1. Michigan had a more significant baby boom than the national average during the 1940s - 1960s.
 2. Relative to the national average, Michigan had a pronounced fertility decline and out-migration since the 1970s.
 3. We're currently hovering near "net zero" natural change, so we are at a very sensitive point in Michigan
 - iv. Population Trends in Rural Michigan
 1. Over the last 15 years, rural Michigan has experienced a few changes: decline from 2010 to 2016, balanced out from 2016 - 2020, and we started to see a slight increase again from 2020 on.
 2. Within the last few years, growth in rural Michigan counties was driven by migration gains from other Michigan counties as well as other states.
 - a. 30% of rural county domestic gains were from other states in 2022
 3. The UP has had a consistent natural decrease over the years, though starting in 2020 / 2021, the UP had net gains from other Michigan counties and other states.
 - a. Some UP counties have been in consistent decline since the early 2000s (not Marquette County)
 4. Rural Michigan counties experienced migration gains among two key age groups between 2020 - 2023: 1) prime-age adults and 2) retirement-age adults.
 5. Even with this growth, domestic gains in rural counties have slowed since the peak in 2022. This is consistent with national trends.
 6. Both Alcona and Ontonagon counties rank nationally among the top 15 counties with the highest median age. Though both counties saw an increase from 2020 - 2023.
 - v. Population Projections
 1. Statewide Population
 - a. Natural decrease is projected to steepen through 2050, placing downward pressure on potential growth (if births continue declining and deaths continue to rise as baby boomers die).
 - b. Migration can help to offset the decline mentioned above. We could continue to see a small rise in population for the next couple of decades, so the decline will not be as significant from 2040 to 2050.

2. County Projections

- a. 58 Michigan counties are projected to decline between 2025 and 2050.
- b. Steepening natural decrease is projected to contribute greatly to the decrease.

3. Marquette County

- a. Marquette County has a college with many other dynamics at play (such as outdoor recreation opportunities). Because of this, we likely will continue to see some slight growth.
- b. However, Dr. Butler pointed to Gogebic County as an example where domestic migration gains helped the county grow a bit, but these gains were not enough to offset natural decrease. Therefore, there was still a slight population decline even during years of migration increase.

- You can view her presentation [here](#). And find additional resources below:
 - i. [MCDA Data Insights page](#)
 - ii. [MCDA Reports](#)
 - iii. [Domestic Migration Drives Michigan Rural Population Growth from 2020 to 2023](#)
 - iv. [Michigan Shows Population Growth Amid Census Bureau Changes to International Migration Methodology](#)
 - v. [By 2050, the Majority of Michigan Counties are Projected to Have Smaller Populations](#)

c. Committee Updates

- Membership, Brad Neumann
 - i. Since our last meeting, CATF brought on 3 new members.
 - ii. A few additional people have been invited to CATF meetings: Christopher Germain with Lake Superior Community Partnership; Taylor McCaul, Red Cross; Claire Christen, KBIC.
 - iii. The membership committee has also been discussing the creation of a standard application or form as a way to streamline and standardize how we take interest in the organization.
- Outreach, Emily Leach
 - i. The Outreach Committee is working on understanding our role in helping implement the county climate action plan by way of the Marquette Area Climate and Health Adaptation Guidebooks which were published in 2018.
 - ii. Anna is currently creating a spreadsheet of the strategies from the climate action plan and the guidebooks to see where we are, what other organizations are doing, and how we can move forward.

- iii. There's also a Google Form which will be circulated throughout CATF and to CATF partners across Marquette County to see who has been impacted by the recent federal funding cuts.
 - 1. A note was made to add a question to the form: "Are you interested in sharing your story?"

d. Member Updates

- Tyler Penrod, Superior Watershed Partnership:
 - i. SWP is celebrating 25 years as an organization! They will be hosting a celebration at Lower Harbor's Theater Boathouse on Friday, June 20th. Marquette Monthly will have a poster with details on where to buy tickets and who speakers will be. There will be music, food, drinks, and more!
 - ii. The Great Lake Climate Corps summer crew will begin training next week. They have 16 crew members and 2 interns from Invest UP. This work consists of a 12-week season of local work like planting trees, as well as helping with ice storm recovery in the Eastern UP.
- Emily Leach, Marquette County:
 - i. The Marquette County Board has approved the Climate Action Plan!
 - ii. There are a couple of smaller facilities projects lined up for the near future, which will consist of community-wide implementation. One such project was the hiring of a consultant to update the community fire action plan. The goal is to have the new plan adapted in the fall and for CATF to help get the word out, get input, etc.
- Brad Neumann, MSU Extension:
 - i. He shared that there's a team working on responding to livestock accidents in Forsyth Township. They have a longer term vision to have a couple more trailers toward the Eastern and Western UP that can handle various types of livestock. They intend to have a training later this month.
 - ii. MSU Extension is working with the Department of Health and Human Services to the Michigan Climate Health Plan. Sterling Heights Project and KBIC will also be engaged on this topic over the next year. The focus is around technical assistance with regard to mitigation of health and human impact of climate change.
 - iii. They are also about to roll out a guide for local governments on citing solar facilities.
- Christy Foye, Marquette County Conservation District:
 - i. MCCD has been working on wildfire education with their Firewise Workshops in early March. This was held at the Up North Lodge in Gwinn. They plan to do more workshops, especially around wildfires as they get worse with climate change.
 - ii. MCCD sold thousands of native trees during their Spring Native Tree Sale. This year they also offered climate adaptive species.

- iii. They are currently ramping up field season which includes invasive species treatment, clean ups, and doing site visits with landowners.
- Darlene Walch, Sands Township Supervisor:
 - i. Sands Township has been doing their own wildfire education. They've had people particularly curious about alarm systems and the evacuation of large animals.
 - ii. The solar project on Sands Plains pre-dated any current law of how to compensate for projects, so it would seem they are moving forward with the plan and the permit that was approved in December of 2020. It will be a large project, though there is still some opposition still taking place.
 - iii. They are also continuing electronic recycling every 3rd Saturday of the month until their grant funding runs out.
- Brian Hummel, Marquette County Emergency Management:
 - i. There have been many community preparedness things taking place recently. Including around the newly realized flood concerns around Marquette Township (particularly around business properties on US-41).
 - ii. If anyone from CATF is interested, they will be participating in a statewide catastrophic emergency weather event program and there is space for 2-3 people to observe during the 3-day exercise. Contact Brian for more information.
- Michael Larson, Michigan Energy Options
 - i. MEO is working on a couple of projects with the Michigan DNR. They are looking at properties (mostly state parks) to see what kind of electric capacity they have and to see if they can support solar on their sites.
 - ii. Lime Island is moving toward a net zero project on the island.
 - iii. Ann Arbor is completing its first year after passing the carbon reduction millage which generates over \$1 million each year for carbon mitigation for residents (like heat pumps, electric panel upgrades, insulation, etc.).
- Jane Fitkin, Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior:
 - i. From Jane after the meeting: "Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior has just heard back from two funders who are granting us funds to continue and expand on our current programs, which is exciting. One will allow us to carry on with our wetland protection work for another year, which includes watershed-relevant educational campaigns and presentations (e.g. *Superior on Tap*) as well as advocacy for local wetland protections in Marquette County's coastal townships. The other, from CATF's own Community Foundation of Marquette County, will allow us to expand our vape recycling program from its current single location in the City of Marquette to a total of 6 locations throughout Marquette County! Since the program started in December, we've collected over 200lb of used vapes, and are partnering with Recycle 906, as well as the Battery Recyclers of America, to get the devices' batteries recycled and hazardous components properly disposed of. We hope to, at some point, be able to accept cannabis vapes in addition to the nicotine vapes we accept now;

this is one of the only vape take back operations in Michigan and we'd like to advocate for better battery recycling infrastructure at the state level as well. Lastly, we are in the midst of a hiring process for a part-time Outreach Coordinator to add to our very small staff; we're very excited to add capacity and strength to our team! That application soft-closes this Friday (May 16), but if folks know of any stand-out candidates interested, we'd be happy to consider them."

- Anna Solberg, CATF Coordinator & NMU SHINE:
 - i. We now have a CATF email, so please feel free to share!
MarquetteCATF@gmail.com
- Jes Thompson, CATF Chair & NMU SHINE:
 - i. NMU received an MDARD grant to put solar on the Wellbeing Center!
 - ii. Woodland Park is making progress. We'll be adding 2 hoop houses, moving the solar array, and the Neidhart and Norwood roads will be closed. Expect a new site in late July, early August.
 - iii. We're moving! SHINE will now be in Hedgecock 2603 & 2605, a nice conference room for meetings too.

e. Good of the Order

- Adjournment at 3:35 pm

f. Upcoming Meetings

- September 18 @ 2:00 - 3:30 - CEO of solar project in Republic will be here
- December 4 @ 2:00 - 3:30 - Dr. Jeffry Andreson will give report from Lansing