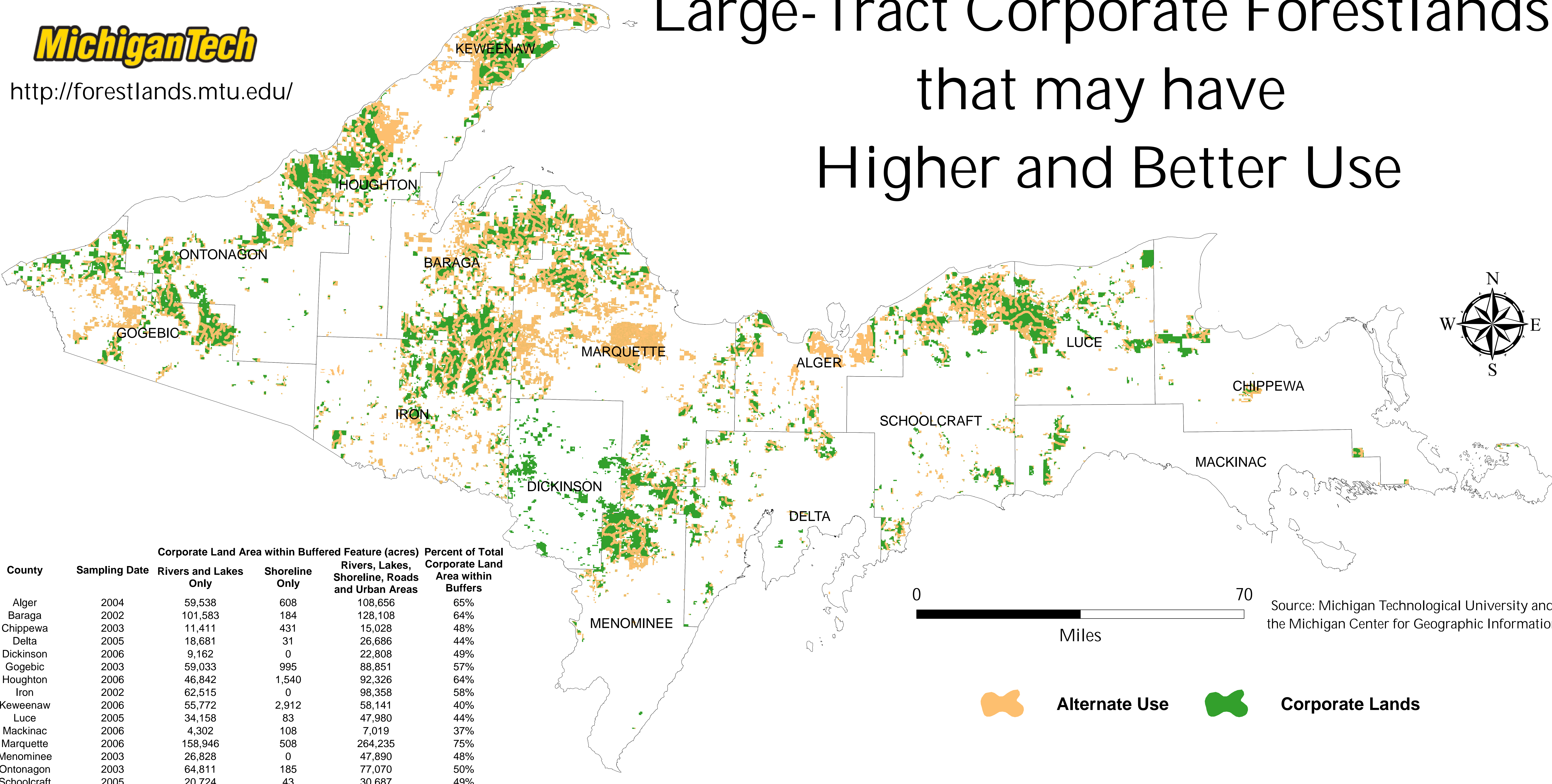


# Large-Tract Corporate Forestlands that may have Higher and Better Use



To highlight corporate lands that might have a relatively high potential for alternative use, buffers were created around landscape features that might affect this value, including lakes, rivers, shoreline, roads and urban areas. These features follow Michigan Geographic Framework definitions. In the case of roads, those included were state and federal highways, major and minor arterials, general non-certified roads, and U.S. Forest Service roads. For lakes, those bodies of water greater than or equal to 10 acres in size were buffered. Rivers, including creeks and streams, are those bodies that may be intermittently dry, but are large enough to be identifiable without vegetation covering the water body from bank-to-bank.

Once constructed, these buffers were merged and intersected with corporate holdings to measure the amount of corporate land that fell within the buffered regions. Regions were defined as lands that fell within 5 miles of urban areas and 0.25 miles of other features. While the most recent sampling dates vary across counties from 2002 to 2006, the percentage of corporate land falling within the buffered regions is quite pronounced, ranging from 37% in Mackinac County to 75% in Marquette County.

Note that this process was not designed to predict which areas might be divested in the near future, nor to quantify the probability of any given acre or parcel being divested and converted to another land use within a given period of time. The approach taken here was to use simple definitions that might help quantify and visualize where corporate forest lands lie relative to landscape features and to stimulate further discussion.