

KI Sawyer Community Partnership, Upper Peninsula, Michigan



Birch trees in the central Upper Peninsula of Michigan (Lloyd DeGrane, 2020)

Partnership: Sawyer Community Alliance addresses health, economic, and social disparities within the community associated with living among brownfields.

Goal: To improve health, economy, and social disparities by:

- Establishing a stronger sense of community
- Remediating blighted buildings
- Providing community services
- Improving public services (water, transportation, etc.)

Community and population:

- Former home to the KI Sawyer Air Force Base, established in 1956; grew to 8,224 population by 1970 when base closed, and population plummeted
- 2010: KI Sawyer population: 2,264, nearly doubled growth since community opened; 2017 population estimate: 3,225
- 41% of residents living below poverty level



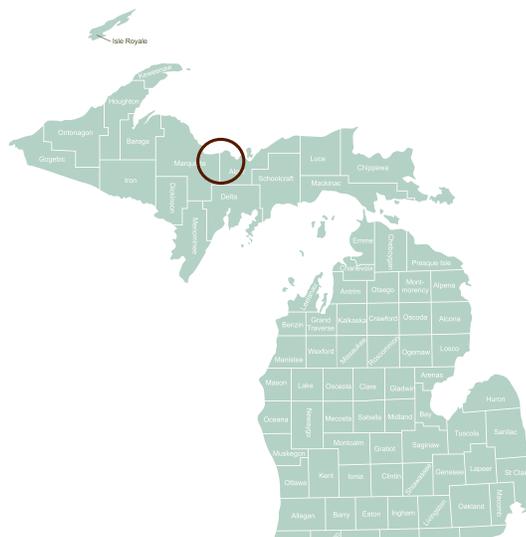
Environmental concerns

- Dumping, garbage management, and contaminated properties
- Hazards and contaminants in vacant and boarded buildings



Health concerns

- Lack of full-service grocery options
- Limited public transit, creating stress and harming health
- Inability to pay for healthy foods or healthcare



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry



Image of Sawyer Community Alliance members. Source: Lloyd DeGrane, 2014.



Image of the St. Francis Connection Center (food distribution center) (ATSDR, 2017).

Good news!

Despite some challenges, Sawyer Community Alliance and residents meet every month to work on ways to improve quality of life and health in the community.

BROWN assistance and collaboration

- Support for demolishing 200 units by 2017 and removing hazards, including lead and asbestos
- ATSDR funding by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation used to launch a Community Needs Assessment in summer 2018 (Nearly 250 people responded to the Assessment, which was used to inform planning and visioning initiative.)
- DNR work with Community Watch to remedy garbage cleanup, discourage dumping, and supply dumpster for community cleanups; pledge from Sault Tribe to help with garbage service
- Organization and promotion of community, youth, and family events, including picnics, movie nights, bike rodeo, etc.
- Walkability improvement: locating and identifying trails for renovation
- Support for Sawyer Community Alliance members to clean up and re-open two baseball fields connected to Sawyer Elementary School by an all-terrain trail
- Expansion of community garden with help of the local health clinic
- St. Francis Food Connection Center (food distribution center)
- RWJF funding for BROWN member and partners Food Access Survey in 2018 (response from 250 people)
- Food Access Survey used to determine foods available in a grocery truck pilot at local school in summer 2019. (Survey indicated residents would use the service, but it was not sustainable and was discontinued after 2 months. Post-survey was conducted to identify barriers; community considering ways to move forward.)



For more information



- visit: www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/brownfields
- email: atsdr.landreuse@cdc.gov



Reference:

United States Census. (2010). KI Sawyer CDP, Michigan. Retrieved from: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkml