

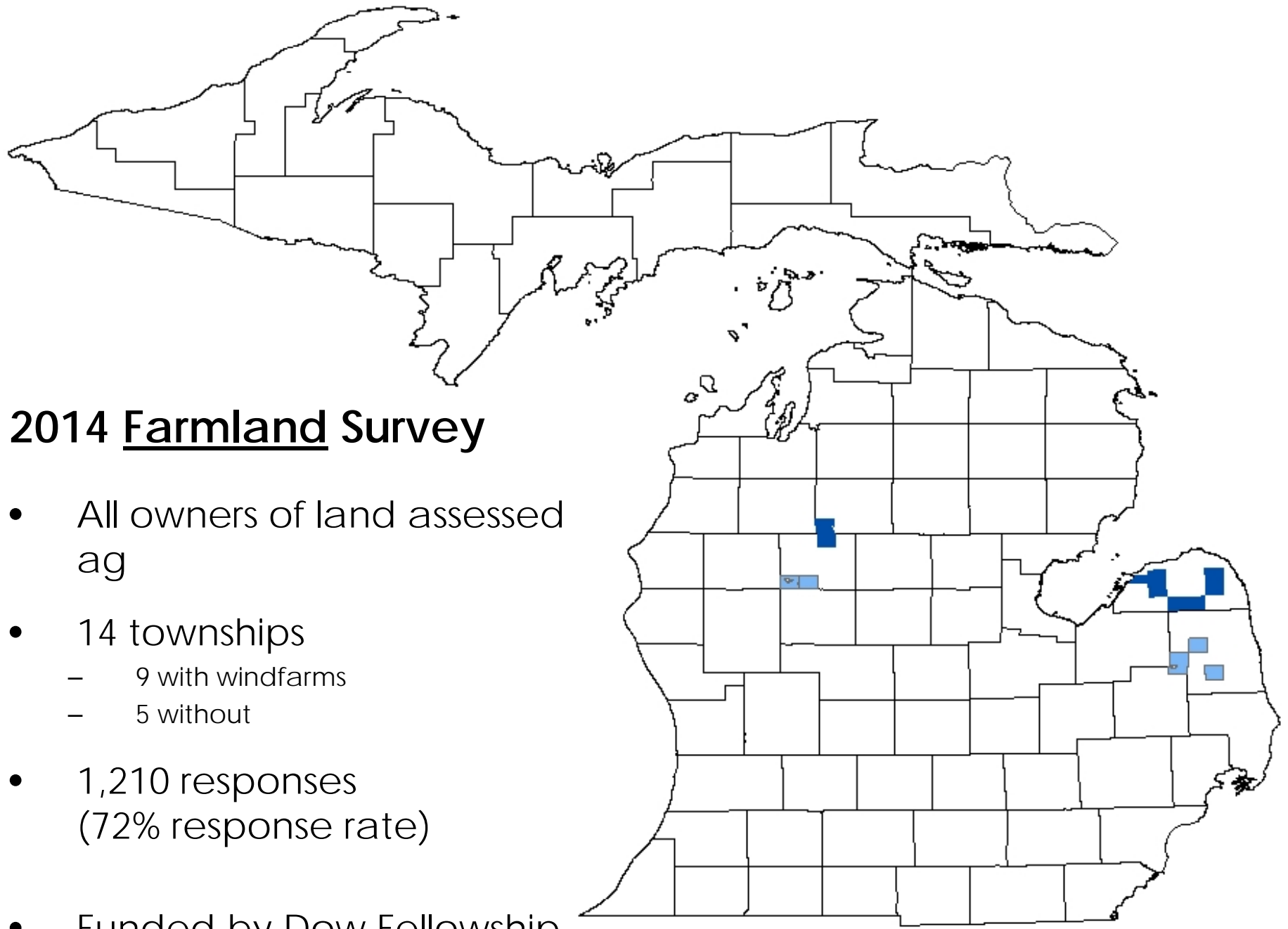
Lessons from Michigan's Windfarms

Michigan Association of Planning
September 27, 2017

Sarah Mills, PhD

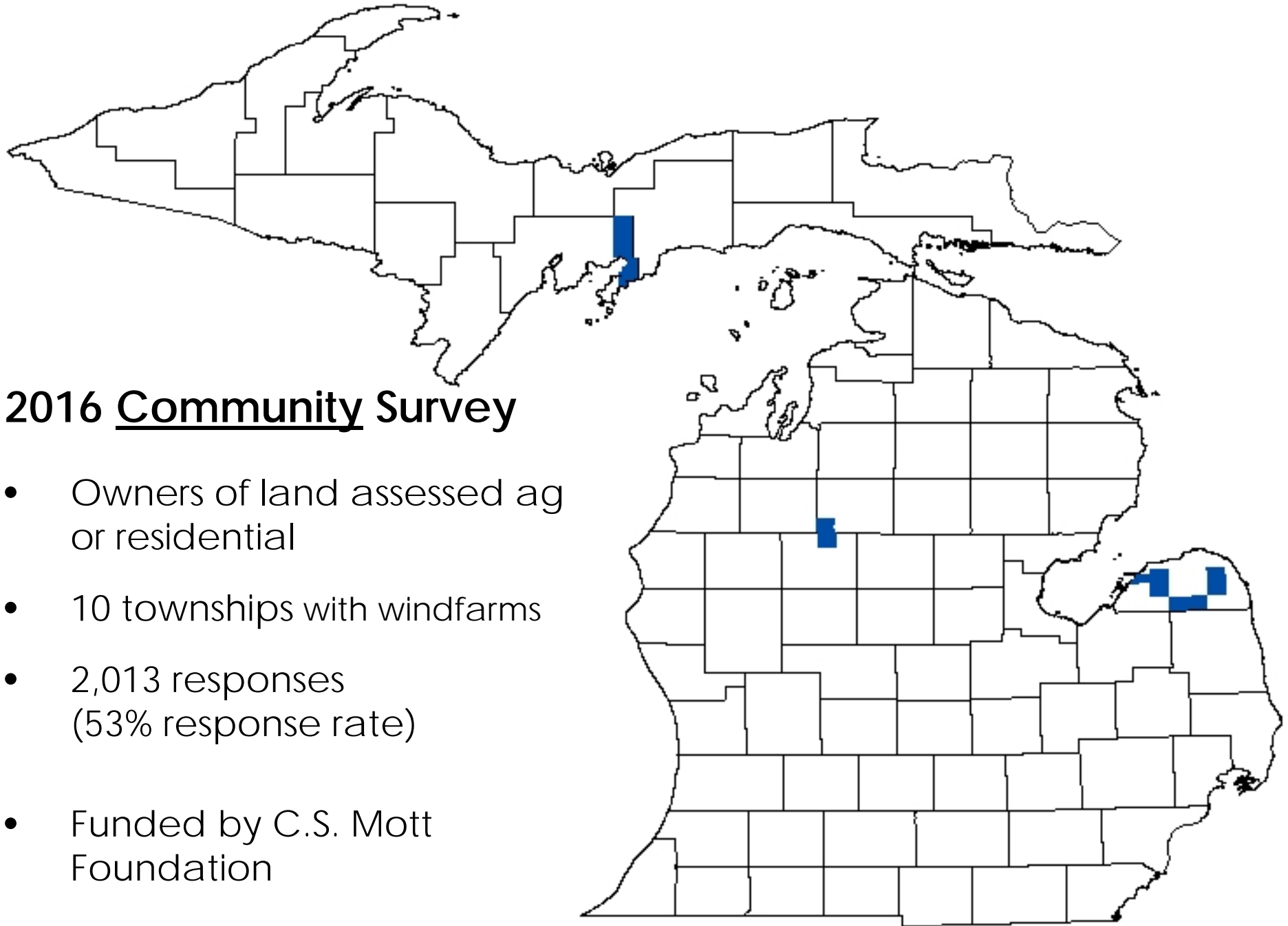
Why this research?

- Investigate Gratiot & Huron County claims of farmland preservation
- Understand why such different experiences
- C.S. Mott Grant: share those lessons with communities so that wind respects local community values



2014 Farmland Survey

- All owners of land assessed ag
- 14 townships
 - 9 with windfarms
 - 5 without
- 1,210 responses (72% response rate)
- Funded by Dow Fellowship



2016 Community Survey

- Owners of land assessed ag or residential
- 10 townships with windfarms
- 2,013 responses
(53% response rate)
- Funded by C.S. Mott Foundation

Data about the negative impacts

- Views on **noise, visual impact, property values** roughly 50/50
 - Financial stake = rosier view
 - OR
 - no financial stake = more soured view

BUT STILL SPLIT OPINIONS
- Most (72%) don't see **human health** impacts, but some do
- Majority (70%) don't think it's **divided the community**
 - Even in some pretty contentious projects

Data about the positive impacts

- Most (78%) see **job creation** with caveat about types of jobs
- Majority (60%+) haven't seen changes to **roads, townships services, county services, or local schools**
 - Despite pretty substantial payments
 - Likely because of how money being used: plug holes, do more of same
- Landowner payments linked to substantial increase in **on-farm investment** (2x neighbors, control) and increase in **succession planning**

Overall drivers of attitudes

- Direct compensation
- Being within earshot of turbines
- Attitudes about process, wind developer
- Type of land owned
 - secondary vs. primary residence
 - farmland / rental property *only*

What lessons do I draw?

- If goal is for substantial residential development or growth of tourism, wind may not be right
 - These landowners less likely
 - Some may be deterred from
- If goal is to sustain agriculture, wind can fit
 - Farm diversification & succession planning
 - Keeping young people on the farm/in town
 - Adds to the property tax base
 - Siting on property lines takes little land out of production
 - Compatible with PA 116

Same collision of farm/non-farm interests as led to Right to Farm

What my research suggests on zoning

- Have an open & transparent process
- Participating vs. non-participating landowners
- Noise, flicker analysis
- Decommission plan/financial assurance

Invite me to your community

- Grant from C.S. Mott Foundation covers my expenses—all you need to do is invite me
- Aim: to provide evidence-based account of experiences across the state
- I can give a presentation, or just answer questions
- Time-limited offer: grant ends in November!

Thoughts on solar

- Overall, 89% support
 - Compared to 83% for wind
- Visual impacts much more limited (drive-by)
 - But support structure isn't pretty
 - Screening possible
- Isn't compatible with farmland preservation
 - Good for marginal ag land; Brownfield, urban lots



Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6p7hp_cbwU



Gerald R. Ford
School of Public Policy



The CLOSUP Wind Project

Sarah Mills, Project Manager

Phone: (734) 615-5315

Email: sbmills@umich.edu

Web: www.closup.umich.edu/wind