

Once a thriving orchard overlooking Lake Michigan in Manistee Township, Douglas Valley Conservation Subdivision commanded its own stop on the railroad that bisects the property.

Economic pressures forced active fruit production to end, and the client chose to develop the property as a conservation subdivision to lessen the impact on the rural character of the area and upon the land itself. The Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio combined the elements of a desirable place to live, a thriving organic agricultural production facility, specialty retail shops, and a health spa to create a place people are drawn to visit for a day, a week, a month, or even a lifetime. This project stands out as a new model for sustainable agriculture and residential development in harmony with the land. The JHLE Studio prepared a plan that clustered the housing, allowing much of the land to remain open, while taking advantage of views to Lake Michigan, and disturbing as little of the site as possible.

Douglas Valley is located on a site in excess of 600 acres in size, in proximity to Lake Michigan, with ideal soil and site conditions for fruit growing. With the popularity and reputation of northern Michigan wines on the rise, the idea of creating a housing development interspersed with vineyards and open spaces, centered on a quaint "town" center that draws upon the history of the place, promises to have great potential.



Douglas Valley Conservation Subdivision

Manistee Township Michigan

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