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Housing project to move forward

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ELK RAPIDS — A housing development connected with the controversial Elk Rapids Preserve project will be allowed to go forward with some modifications.

Glen and Myrna Howse, owners of the proposed Capa Bran development in the village, will be allowed to keep an access road that was installed without permits but must do wetlands restoration elsewhere on their property, under a recent federal ruling.

"The rest of the fill will have to be restored," said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project manager Bob Deroche.

Deroche declined to specify how many acres of wetlands restoration the Corps will require at the Capa Bran site.

The proposed project is adjacent to — and to be developed simultaneously with — Traverse City developer Bill Clous' controversial Elk Rapids Preserve housing project. Fill work was done at both sites without the required permits, and the Corps stepped in to halt work in 2002.

Wetlands within a mile of Lake Michigan fall under federal jurisdiction.

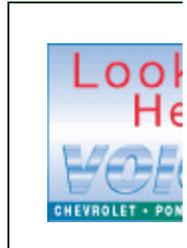
In 2005, the Corps issued after-the-fact permits for Clous' Elk Rapids Preserve project, ordering some wetland restoration elsewhere on his 20-acre property.

The July 19 Corps ruling on Capa Bran takes a similar approach. But because the Capa Bran property is much smaller, required wetlands restoration at the site may have a larger impact on development plans.

"Certainly, it will effect the amount of developable lots," Deroche said.

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