Threats to Ecological Value

The emergent marsh in PCA 10 is hydrologically tied to the dam at the marsh outflow. If the dam is maintained,

Common Arrowhead

then the current flood storage services provided by the floating mat marsh will be preserved.

However, the spread of common reed is altering the marsh plant community in several areas east and northeast of the largest pond in the marsh. If this reed continues to spread, it may alter the current plant community and reduce the habitat diversity in the marsh, which could be unfavorable for some bird species.

Spotted Touch-me-not and Joe Pye Weed

Management Recommendations

PCA 10 is an excellent candidate for conservation priority. It is important for maintaining floristic diversity in the four-township area, providing wildlife habitat, and reducing flood peaks downstream of the marsh. If these ecosystem services are valued, then maintaining the dam at the marsh outflow will best support the existing marsh community.

Common reed is slowly spreading in Sherriff marsh. This species should be monitored in the future to ensure that it does not significantly alter the emergent marsh community. If this does occur, the most up-to-date control measures (which continue to change) could be used to reduce the prevalence of common reed at this site.
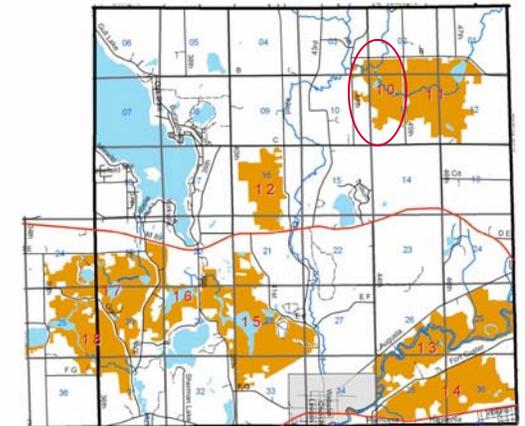

Common Reed

Ross Township Sherriff Marsh PCA 10

Location

Potential Conservation Area (PCA) 10 is located in sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12 of Ross Township. This 316-acre site is bordered by B Ave., 45th St., C Ave., and 44th St.

High priority potential conservation areas
Ross Township (and portion of Richland)

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Michigan
Natural
Resources

Legend
— state highways
— county roads
☐ township boundary
☐ Village of Augusta
■ lakes
— rivers
— sections
■ potential conservation areas

Diverse Ecosystems

Site Description

This Potential Conservation Area (PCA) features Sherriff Marsh, but upland areas also occur in the PCA. A major tributary of Augusta Creek flows through the center of the marsh, where several shallow ponds occur. The property is bordered by agricultural fields, low-density housing, and roads.
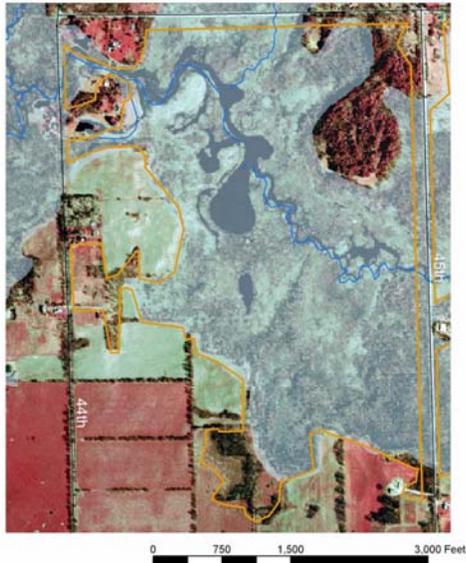
Potential conservation area 10
Ross Township
316 acres

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION   Michigan Natural Features Inventory

Legend
▭ potential conservation area
— roads
▭ wetlands

Communities and Ecosystems

Most of PCA 10 consists of Sherriff Marsh, a floating marsh with a well-developed quaking mat that floats 5-30 inches above more consolidated organic sediments.

There are several shallow ponds in the center of the marsh with submerged aquatic vegetation. A small dam, which was installed in the early 1950s, restricts outflow at the downstream end of the marsh.

During the late spring and early summer the mat floats, and the wetland acts as a temporary reservoir for waters flowing through this part of the Augusta Creek drainage system.

Lakeshore Sedge

Towards the perimeter the marsh grades into southern shrub-carr and southern swamp.

The upland habitat in PCA 10 is primarily dry-mesic southern forest. Many of the understory species are not native to Michigan, and overall the forest has low to moderate floristic quality.

Plants and Animals of Interest

The shrub-carr and swamp communities harbor a high diversity of plants. Most notable of these is the uncommon purple fringed orchid. The varied structure of the vegetation also provides a variety of animal habitats.


Purple Fringed Orchid

Snapping Turtle

The ponds and marsh habitat in the center of this site offer well-protected habitat for nesting and migrating water birds. The 2003 Michigan Breeding Bird Survey identified a total of 67 species.

Amphibians and reptiles also thrive in this wetland habitat. Seven of the eleven frogs and toads of southern Michigan, were identified in this area. Three species of special concern have been observed here: the Blanchard's cricket frog, Blandings turtle and spotted turtles.

Prairieville | Barry
Richland | Ross
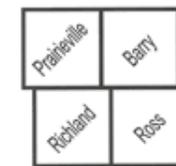
Four Township Water Resources Council

P.O. Box 634
Richland, MI 49083-0634
www.ftwrc.org