

Threats to Ecological Value

Unlike most other PCAs, this site contains many narrow upland corridors instead of a core central area. Consequently, any development into these upland areas should consider open spaces and buffers so as to allow movement of wildlife through this site as well as from PCA 15 to PCA 17.

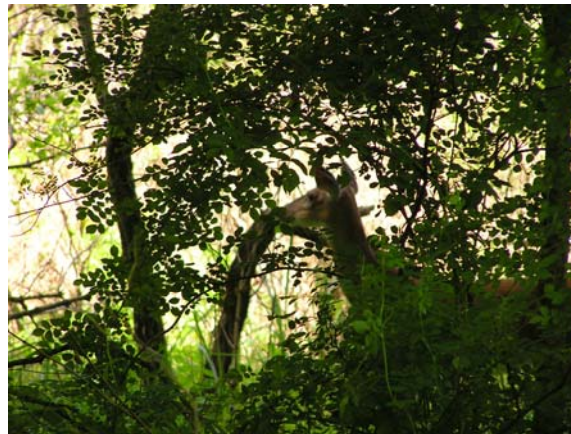
Overall, the dry-mesic southern forest community is of moderate to high floristic quality, although several areas are dominated by aggressive or non-native species such as garlic mustard and oriental bitter-sweet.

Crane's Lake is relatively free of the non-native invasive purple loosestrife. However, purple loosestrife could become much more common in the marsh in the future.



Management Recommendations

PCA 16 is a very good candidate for conservation priority. Individually, PCA 16 includes several different areas of ecological importance in terms of either botanical quality or wildlife habitat. This property is also important because it connects PCA 15 and PCA 17 and allows greater wildlife movement.

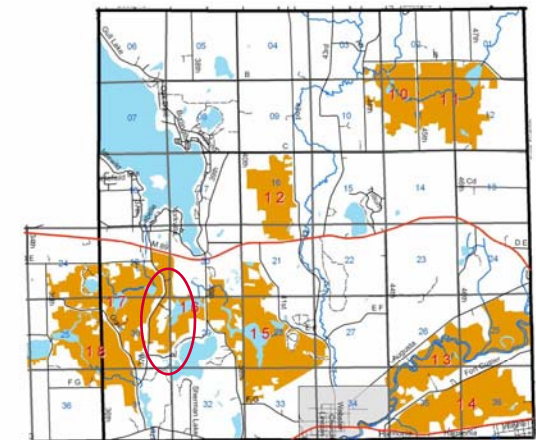


PCAs 15-19, although separated by several roads, comprise a large area of potential conservation value. This area includes a large and diverse collection of plant communities and wildlife habitat that is generally intact. Because these larger natural areas are now uncommon, maintaining them should be a conservation priority in the four-township area.

Ross Township Crane's Lake PCA 16

Location

Potential Conservation Area (PCA) 16, located in sections 19, 20, 29, and 30 of Ross Township, is a 278-acre property roughly bounded by M-89, 38th St., North Sherman Lake Dr., Yorkshire Rd., and 37th St.



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

Legend

- state highways
- county roads
- township boundary
- Village of Augusta
- lakes
- rivers
- sections
- potential conservation areas



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Michigan
Natural
Resources
Inventory

Diverse Ecosystems

Site Description

This Potential Conservation Area (PCA) is primarily upland forest. Much of the forest borders Crane's Lake. A small headwater wetland is located in the northwest corner of the site. The border of this site includes roads, a golf course, agricultural fields, and low- to medium-density housing, especially near Sherman Lake.



Potential conservation area 16
Ross Township
278 acres

Legend

- potential conservation area
- roads
- wetlands



Communities and Ecosystems

The uplands are dry-mesic southern forest, and the forest corridors are relatively narrow.

Pine plantations are widespread at this site, especially at the south end.

Crane's Lake is a relatively shallow lake located near the center of the property. This lake represents the headwaters of the Ransom Creek system. Several areas of emergent marsh occur along the edge of the lake.

The swamp in the northwest corner of the site is a hardwood-conifer swamp in good ecological condition. Tamarack is the dominant tree.

Because of the steep slopes adjacent to the swamp, groundwater flows continuously into the wetland and maintains a water table near or just above the soil surface.



Moss-covered hummocks occur throughout the swamp.

Plants and Animals of Interest

The wetlands in PCA 16 are ecologically significant. Crane's Lake provides important habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. The floristic quality of the hardwood-conifer swamp is relatively high, in part due to the presence of plants such as small green wood orchid and swamp saxifrage.



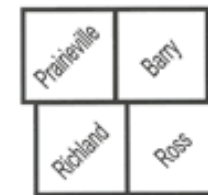
Blanding's
Turtle

Two Blanding's turtles were found seeking a nesting site in the surrounding area. Nine of the eleven species of frogs and toads of southern Michigan were heard in this area.



Sandhill Cranes in
Emergent Marsh

PCA 16 is part of a large area of contiguous forested uplands and wetlands that provide a corridor for wildlife movement and bird breeding. The 2003 Michigan Breeding Bird Census recorded 56 species in this area.



Four Township Water Resources Council

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