

Threats to Ecological Value

Non-native plants such as purple loosestrife could spread along the stream channels that flow into Upper Three Lakes. If purple loosestrife or other foreign species become very abundant, they could reduce the presence of rarer species in the wet meadow and prairie fen such as fringed gentian.



Fringed Gentian

Finally, continued residential development into the southern portion of this site could fracture this PCA and split the smaller southern end from the larger northern end.



Management Recommendations

PCA 19 is an excellent candidate for conservation priority. The Upper Three Lakes basin in particular contains several high quality wetland plant communities.



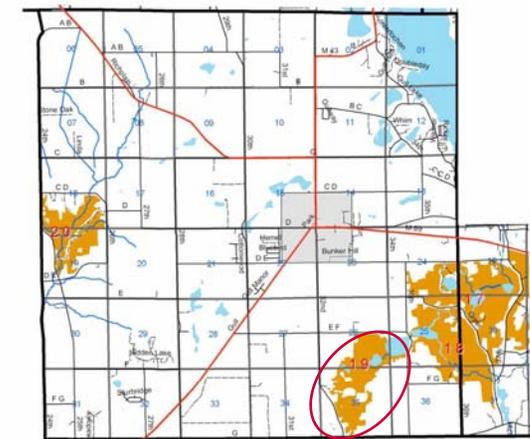
The presettlement vegetation of this PCA included oak-hickory forest, shrub swamp/emergent marsh, and lake communities. Emergent marsh and shrub-carr separate Upper and Middle Three Lakes, which were one lake two centuries ago. Otherwise, most of the habitat at this site has not changed significantly.

This site is also part of a larger collection of PCAs from PCA 15-19. Although roads separate this chain of PCAs, wildlife still move between these areas. Large natural areas like this group of PCAs should be a conservation priority in the four townships.

Richland Township Upper Three Lakes PCA 19

Location

Potential Conservation Area (PCA) 19 is located in sections 25 and 26 of Richland Township. The 392-acre site is roughly bounded by EF Ave., 35th St., G Ave., and 32nd St.



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

Legend

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



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Michigan
Natural
Features
Inventory

Diverse Ecosystems

Site Description

This Potential Conservation Area (PCA) is primarily wetland habitat, most of which is associated with Upper Three Lakes. The property is bordered by agricultural fields, old fields, roads, low-density housing, and Middle Three Lakes.



Potential conservation area 19
Ross and Richland Townships
392 acres

Communities and Ecosystems

The large basin in this PCA includes Upper Three Lakes and a range of wetland plant communities: southern shrub-carr, emergent marsh, southern wet meadow, and prairie fen.



Marsh Cinquefoil

The community of the highest floristic quality in this PCA is the southern wet meadow and prairie fen habitat along the northern inflow to Upper Three Lakes.

The southern portion of this PCA also contains a depression wetland which appears to be a mix of emergent marsh with smaller areas of undated shrub swamp along the perimeter.



Most of the land around and between these wetland basins is dry-mesic southern forest.

Plants and Animals of Interest

Because Upper Three Lakes experiences little boat traffic, the lake and its associated wetlands offer good habitat for migrating and nesting birds. The 2003 Michigan Breeding Bird Census recorded 45 species of breeding birds.

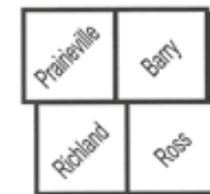
The plant communities in the headwater wetlands near Upper Three Lakes are in good ecological condition. A small population of cut-leaved water parsnip, a state threatened plant, occurs along the headwater stream north of Upper Three Lakes.

Six of the eleven species of frogs and toads of southern Michigan were heard, including the Blanchard's cricket frog, a species of concern in Michigan. There were also several signs of the American beaver cutting trees for a lodge that was found along the northern edge of the lake.



Legend

- potential conservation area
- roads
- wetlands



Four Township Water Resources Council

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