

Threats to Ecological Value

Residential development poses the greatest threat to this PCA. Most of the flat areas in or near the PCA have already been developed, but the possibility of adding more houses exists.

Because 24th St. borders the western edge of this site, this road could serve as a source of non-native plant seeds. Continued road and driveway construction into the central portion of the PCA could also facilitate the spread of non-native plants.



Management Recommendations

PCA 20 is an excellent candidate for conservation priority. The species-rich plant communities are comprised primarily of native species, and the large property area reduces the likelihood of non-native species invading these habitats.



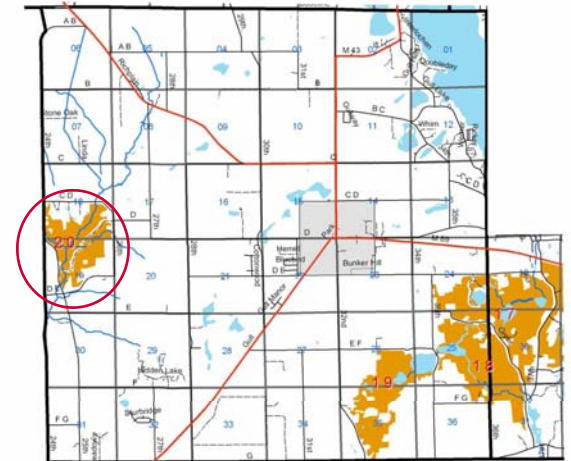
Eastern box turtle

By curtailing the two greatest ecological threats to this PCA—residential development and road construction—the current plant communities will be better protected. These plants, as habitat, would continue to benefit wildlife such as the Eastern box turtle, eyed brown butterflies, various amphibians, and potentially, the Eastern massasauga and Mitchell’s satyr butterfly.

Richland Township Spring Brook PCA 20

Location

Potential Conservation Area (PCA) 20, located in sections 18 and 19 of Richland Township, is a 332-acre property roughly bounded by CD Ave., 26th St., DE Ave., and 24th 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) of wetland and upland habitats borders Spring Brook. An old railroad bed bisects the wetland complex from northeast to southwest. Most of the area is spring-fed, and two main tributaries enter Spring Brook in the central portion of the PCA. Most of the property is bordered by roads or low-density housing.



Potential conservation area 20
Richland Township
332 acres



Communities and Ecosystems

The majority of the PCA is wetland complex that includes southern swamp, southern shrub-carr, and southern wet meadow. This wetland complex borders Spring Brook and its western tributary.



Nearly all of the upland habitat in PCA 20 is dry-mesic southern forest.

The eastern tributary to Spring Brook shows several signs of human alteration. Three earthen dams have restricted stream flow sufficiently to form permanent ponds. Even with these alterations, several meanders of the stream between the middle and lowest ponds appear in good ecological condition—no doubt due to the numerous seeps that emerge along the steep slopes of the valley.

Plants and Animals of Interest

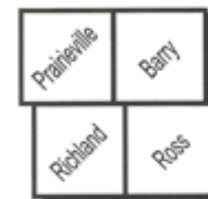
The dry-mesic southern forest and wetland complex are both in relatively good ecological condition. Most of the area contains native plant communities that are typical of spring-fed wetland habitats. Several species of interest were also present, including small green wood orchid and showy lady's slipper.



Showy lady's slipper
after flowering

Two Eastern box turtles were observed during this field season. A species of special concern in Michigan. This habitat is suitable for the Eastern massasauga rattle snake, another species of concern, and nearly all of the eleven frogs and toads of southern Michigan.

During the 2003 Michigan Breeding Bird Census, 49 species were observed in this area. Two species are of special concern in Michigan: the Cooper's hawk and the marsh wren.



Four Township Water Resources Council

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