

OHIO STREAM PRESERVATION

CONSERVATION EASEMENT BASELINE DOCUMENTATION

Baseline Documentation Report for

RIVER ESTATES
Village of Grafton, Ohio



2007 Monitoring

PROPERTY LOCATION

Permanent Parcel #: 1600002102015, 1600002102019, 1600002102018
Address: Mechanics Street
Municipality: Village of Grafton
County: Lorain
Acres Preserved: 58

CONSERVATION EASEMENT DETAILS

Purpose:

Preserving, protecting, and maintaining as a scenic natural habitat for plants, animals, wildlife, and together with the right of visual access to and view of the Protected Property in its scenic, natural, and open condition.

Specific Restrictions:

(For a complete list of specific restrictions, refer to the Conservation Easement)

Specific Reserved Rights:

(For a complete list of specific reserved rights, refer to the Conservation Easement)

DESCRIBE PHOTO POINTS:

1. View, looking northwest, of the pond.
2. View, looking north, of the East Branch of the Black River.
3. View, looking north, of the upland woods.
4. View, looking northeast, of the wetland.
5. View, looking northwest, of the pond.
6. View, looking north, of the field.
7. View, looking northeast, of the Tributary.
8. View, looking west, of the pine forest.

BASELINE INVENTORY

List and describe existing structures:

One (1) bridge was located within the conservation easement. The bridge can be found across the tributary between the ponds west of Mechanics Road. The bridge appears to be heaving.

Describe land cover (approximate percent forest, field, yard, etc.):

The protected property is approximately 60% upland woods, 15% open water, 5% scrub/shrub, 10% wet woods, 5% created forested wetland, 1% forested, emergent, scrub/shrub wetland, and 4 % field.

Condition of watercourses or water bodies:

The East Branch of the Black River, an un-named direct tributary to the Black River, mitigation wetlands and four (4) ponds were found within the conservation easement. Various inlet and outlet structures can be found on three (3) of the four (4) ponds. One (1) pond is isolated and did not contain any inlet or outlet structures. The East Branch of the Black River bisects the conservation easement. The un-named tributary is located along the east side of the easement which connects to a large pond and empties into the East Branch of the Black River. The tributary is perennial, sinuous, and entrenched approximately three (3) feet below the flood plain. The wetland areas of the easement are dominated by emergent, scrub/shrub, and wet forest vegetation.

Power lines present? If so describe location and condition of Right-of-way:

There were no power lines present within the conservation easement.

Describe existing trails or access roads and note condition:

Two walking paths were observed on the conservation easement. The paths are dirt trails found west of the ponds located near Mechanics Road and north of the residential houses on Timber Ridge Road. They appear to be in good condition and are maintained.

Existing dumps/disturbances?

There were no dumps or disturbances on the conservation easement.

Industrial or Commercial Activity?

There was no industrial or commercial activity found within or adjacent to the protected easement.

Encroachment from adjacent property?

There were no encroachments from the adjacent properties into the conservation easement.

Note presence or absence of tree stumps, other signs of recent cutting:

There were no signs of recent cutting on the protected property.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION VALUE OF THE PROTECTED PROPERTY

On December 14, 2007, Chagrin Valley Engineering Staff, Consultants for Ohio Stream Preservation, visited the River Estates conservation easement for the purpose of establishing a baseline documentation of said conservation easement. Specific criterion was examined to include vegetation, hydrology, presence or absence of disturbances, existing structures, and any other significant features of the property that enhance or degrade the ecological value of the property.

Site Location

The River Estates conservation easement is located in the Village of Grafton, Lorain County, Ohio. Railroad tracks are located along the northwest boundary. Mechanics Street is located along the east boundary along with a few residential houses.

Site Background

The SCS Map taken from the *Soil Survey of Lorain County, Ohio* indicates eight (8) soil types occurring within the protected property:

- 1) Bogart loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (BtA)
- 2) Chili loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (CIB)
- 3) Ellsworth silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, moderately eroded (EIC2)
- 4) Fitchville silt loam, low terrace, 0 to 2 percent slopes (FdA)
- 5) Haskins loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (HsA)
- 6) Mahoning silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (MgA)
- 7) Orville silt loam (Or)
- 8) Tioga fine sandy loam (Tg)

The 1987 US Department of Agriculture publication entitled *Hydric Soils of the United States*, as well as the Lorain County SCS office publication entitled *Lorain County, Ohio, List of Hydric Soils*, does not recognize any of the map units, as a hydric soil. However, the Soil Survey indicates that ***EIC2, HsA, MgA, and Or*** can contain hydric inclusions.

The National Wetland Inventory Map indicates the presence of one (1) wetland type within the protected property.

- 1) **POWZ** [Palustrine (P) Open Water (OW), Water Regime – Intermittently Exposed/Permanent (Z)]

Site Description

Located to the north of the East Branch of the Black River is an on-site created (mitigated) wetland area. An earthen water retention berm created two (2) cells or wetlands. During storm events the wetlands flood. The outflow pipes were installed at a sufficient elevation to drain the wetland during flood events. This is so trees are not stressed or damaged while leaving soil saturated.

South of the East Branch of the Black River, the conservation easement consists mostly of upland woods. The upland woods can be divided into two different types. The eastern most portion of the easement consists of a dense *Pinus strobus* (white pine) forest that is over 30 meters tall with either a scrub shrub understory or an herbaceous understory of *Vinca minor* (myrtle) or *Pachysandra terminalis* (pachysandra). The upland woods consist of a mixed species of trees.

Wetlands are found throughout the conservation easement. These wetlands are all classified as forested scrub shrub or forested emergent wetlands. Vegetation noted within the easement is as follows: *Ulmus americana* (American elm), *Acer rubrum* (red maple), *Carya ovata* (shagbark hickory), *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip tree), *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* (green ash), *Pinus strobus* (white pine), *Juncus effuses* (soft rush), *Symplocarpus foetidus* (skunk cabbage), *Rubus allegheniensis* (raspberry), *Rosa multiflora* (multiflora rose), *Acer negundo* (Box Elder), *Typha agustifolia* (broad leaf cattail), and *Cornus racemosa* (silky dogwood).

Habitat Assessment

The River Estates conservation easement contains an excellent variety of habitats that support a variety of mammals, birds, and other organisms. The site is situated in a rural area and is for the most part minimally developed. Areas adjacent to the easement are forested which help create a buffer for the conservation easement. The pine forest offers habitat for species of owl such as *Strix varia* (barred owl). The hardwood forest, along with its dense scrub shrub and grape vine tangles offer concealment and protection for various species of small mammals and nesting sites for birds.

The East Branch of the Black River offers habitat for a variety of fish. The river corridor contains trees such as *Carya ovata* (shagbark hickory) offers potential habitat for the *Myotis sodalis* (Indiana bat). The ponds, and forested depressions, which are scattered throughout the property, are potential breeding grounds for amphibians, dragonflies, and other insects and reptiles.

Ecological Value

Ecological value for the River Estates conservation easement is high due to multiple habitats including a small grassy field, upland forest, pine forest, the East Branch of the Black River, along with multiple natural wetlands, and created wetlands. Along with these habitats the protected property is topographically diverse with a steep ridge along part of the Black River and depressions found throughout the protected property. The easement is located in an area that is minimally developed with blocks of upland woods and farm field located around it. These features make this property well worth protecting.

Photo Journal – December 2007
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Photo 1: View looking northwest, of the pond.



Photo 2: View looking north, of the East Branch



Photo 3: View looking north, of the upland woods.



Photo 4: View looking northeast, of the wetland.

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Photo 5: View looking northwest, of the pond.



Photo 6: View looking north, of the field.



Photo 7: View looking northeast, of the Tributary.



Photo 8: View looking west, of the pine forest.