

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

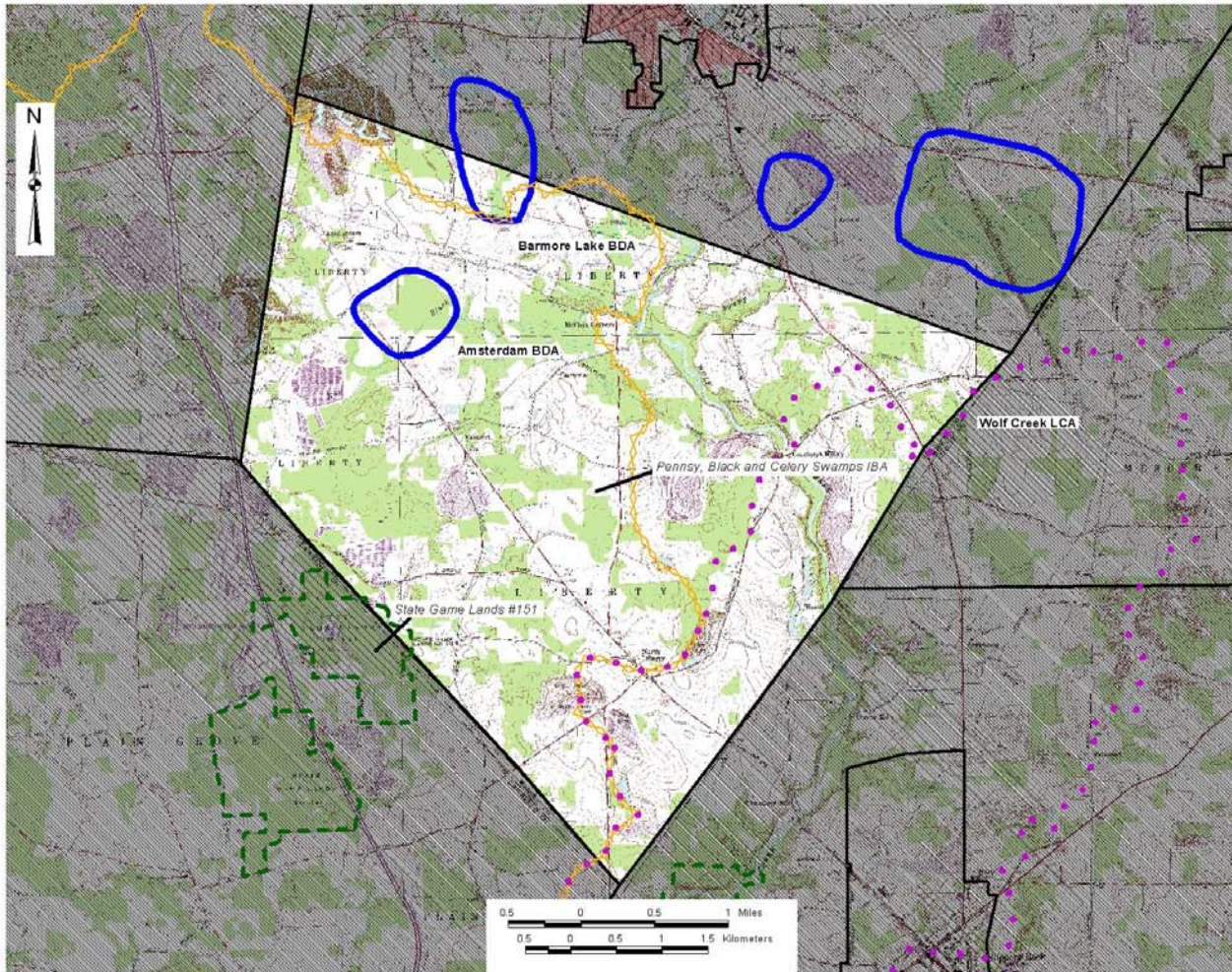
<u>PNDI Rank</u>		<u>Legal Status</u>	
Global	State	Fed.	State

NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS:

AMSTERDAM BDA	<i>Notable Significance</i>		
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	G5	S3S4BS4N	
Queen-of-the-Prairie (<i>Filipendula rubra</i>)	G4G5	S1S2	TU
BARMORE LAKE BDA	<i>Exceptional Significance</i>		
Special Animal 1	G3G4T3T4	S1S2	PE
WOLF CREEK LCA	<i>High Significance</i>		

MANAGED LANDS: State Game Lands #151

Liberty Township



Liberty Township Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory

Biological Diversity Areas:

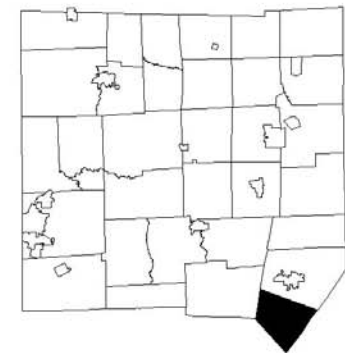
- Amsterdam
- Barmore Lake

Landscape Conservation Areas:

- None

Managed Areas:

- State Game Lands #151



Map Legend

- Biological Diversity Area (BDA)
- Landscape Conservation Area (LCA)
- Audubon Society Important Bird Area (IBA)
- Managed Area
- Municipal Boundary

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Liberty Township is located in the southeastern corner of Mercer County. Wolf Creek drains most of this township. There are three Natural Heritage Areas and one managed land - **State Game Land #151** located in Liberty Township.

Amsterdam BDA

This BDA is located in the watershed of Black Run. One animal and one plant species of special concern are present here; **great blue heron** (*Ardeas herodias*) and **queen-of-the-prairie** (*Filipendula rubra*). The population of queen-of-the-prairie is located along the roadside of State Route 258. The population is presumably naturally established but may be an escape from a nearby garden. The population here has apparently been growing. Other associated species are annual ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), wide-leaved cattail (*Typha latifolia*), wrinkle-leaf goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*), burdock (*Arctium minus*), thistle (*Cirsium* spp.) reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*). Herons nesting within this BDA are utilizing large trees associated with Black Run. Not directly surveyed as part of this study, details concerning this site and condition of the nesting colony are not known.

Threats and Stresses

The plant species could be impacted by activities associated with roadside maintenance such as herbicides use, cutting and trimming of vegetation or (excessive) use of road salt. Other activities such as ditching for water control or installation of sewerlines could directly impact the species.

The relatively quiet and isolated area where the animals breed has remained unchanged for some time allowing this population to remain here for many years. However, these animals are sensitive to disturbance, including casual visitation that occurs within a few hundred meters from their location. Any activities that occur frequently or continuously within the BDA during the nesting season stand to impact these animals. Removal of trees, living or dead, could remove valuable habitat essential to these animals.

Recommendations

Given the presence of the animal species of concern within this BDA, current levels of activity and disturbance are likely compatible with their needs. Assuring that landowners within the corridor are aware of the natural history and needs of the animals would confer added protection.

Informing PennDOT and the township about the presence of the plants of concern would be a good first step in protecting the plant population. Roadside maintenance activities should be evaluated for their affects on the plants growing near to the road.

Barmore Lake BDA

Barmore Lake BDA is discussed in Pine Township.

Wolf Creek LCA

Wolf Creek LCA is primarily in Butler County. Wolf Creek is a medium gradient-clearwater community that flows from Mercer County into Butler County and empties into Slippery Rock Creek in the vicinity of Moore's Corners. The section of Wolf Creek that flows within Butler County and the immediate watershed was designated as an LCA in the Natural Heritage Inventory for Butler County. These areas provide unique habitats and undeveloped space that merit protection.

Threats and Stresses

This stream is threatened by the rapidly developing residential areas outside the town of Slippery Rock. As these areas grow, the buffer area around Wolf Creek will be reduced resulting in erosion, sedimentation and pollution of the stream. Other activities such as mineral extraction and logging within the LCA or upstream areas of Mercer County can have a detrimental impact on the stream and its associated communities.

Recommendations

Any development in the watershed needs to consider the water resources. Careful municipal planning in the watershed is important to gauge the combined effects of development in the watershed. Non-point sources of pollution including siltation and nutrient inputs will need to be addressed.