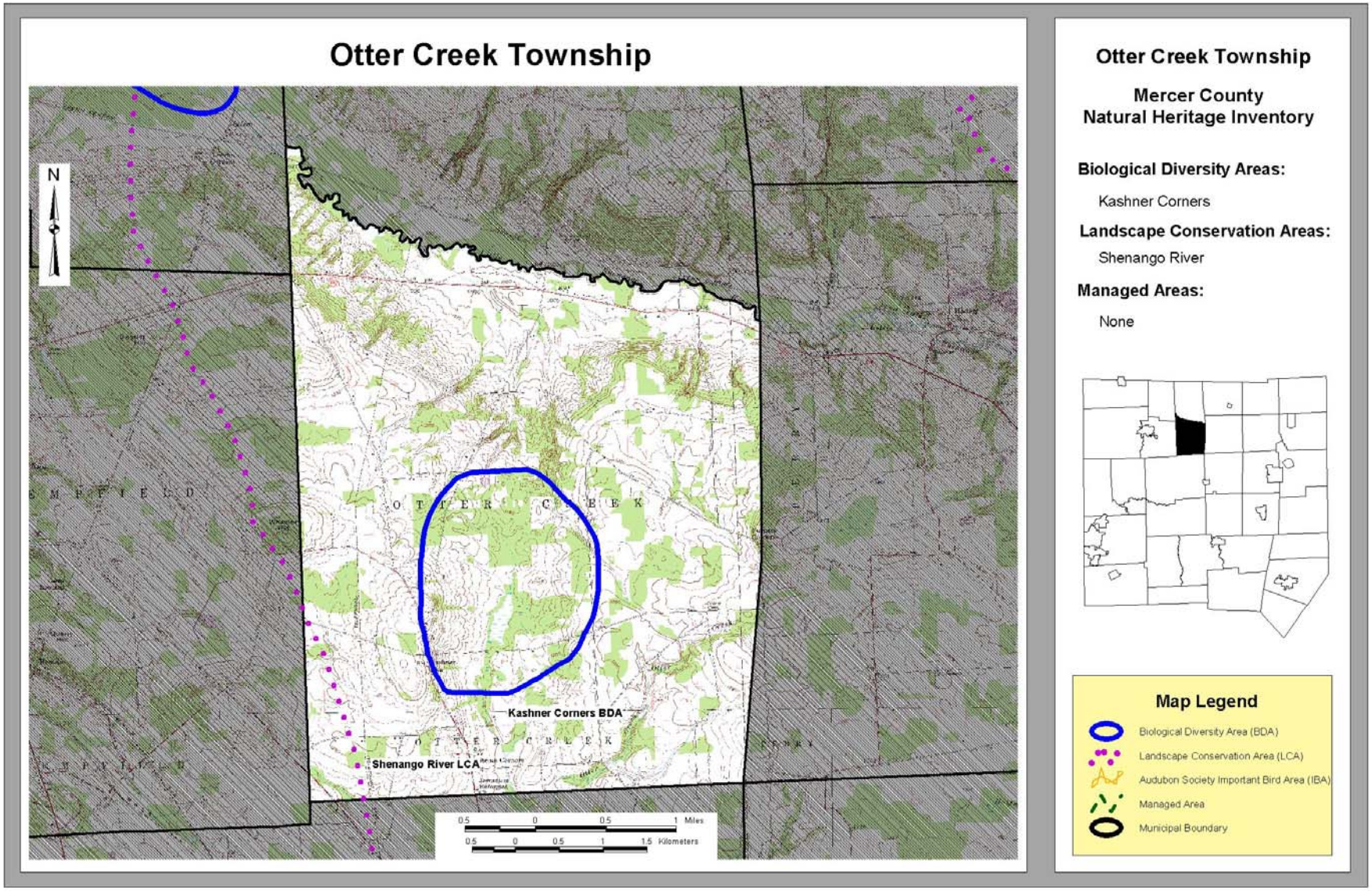
# OTTER CREEK TOWNSHIP

| | PNDI Rank | | Legal Status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Global | State | Fed. | State |

*NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| KASHNER CORNERS SWAMP BDA | *Notable Significance* | |
| Wet Meadow | G? | S3 |
| Bottomland Oak-Hardwood Palustrine Forest | G5 | S2 |
| SHENANGO RIVER LCA | *Exceptional Significance* | |

*MANAGED LANDS*: None


Otter Creek Township
N
Kashner Corners BDA
Shenango River LCA
0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles
0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 Kilometers
Otter Creek Township
Mercer County
Natural Heritage Inventory
Biological Diversity Areas:
Kashner Corners
Landscape Conservation Areas:
Shenango River
Managed Areas:
None
Map Legend
Biological Diversity Area (BDA)
Landscape Conservation Area (LCA)
Audubon Society Important Bird Area (IBA)
Managed Area
Municipal Boundary

## OTTER CREEK TOWNSHIP

Otter Creek Township is located in the north central part of Mercer County. The Little Shenango River forms the northern boundary of the township. There are two Natural Heritage Areas and no managed lands located in Otter Creek Township.

### Kashner Corners Swamp BDA

Kashner Corners swamp sits along a headwater tributary of Otter Creek. A large **Wet Meadow** is part of this wetland complex and features large patches of wide-leaved cattail (*Typha latifolia*) interspersed with rice-cut grass (*Leersia virginica*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Also prominent are nodding sedge (*Carex gynandra*), great bladder sedge (*Carex intumescens*), tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*). Upstream of the meadow lies a swamp with scattered trees and similar species to the meadow with the addition of scattered individuals of swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) and silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*). Some shrubs are present including white meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*), arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*) and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*).

**Figure 20. Kashner Corners Swamp**

Further upstream a mature **Bottomland Oak - Hardwood Palustrine Forest** dominated primarily by swamp white oak with associates of black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*) surrounds the stream. Spicebush (*Lindera benzion*) and American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) are dominant in the understory. Herbs in the swamp forest include clearweed (*Pilea pumila*), cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and common boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*).

The eastern non-wetland portion of the BDA is an area of mature upland forest. Some large American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) are present. Other canopy associates are black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), yellow birch (*Betula allegheniensis*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Spicebush (*Lindera benzion*) and witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) are dominant in the understory. Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), hay-scented fern (*Dennsteadtia punctilobula*), ground pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*) and beech-drops (*Epifagus virginiana*) comprise the herbaceous layer.

Threats and Stresses

Some cutting of trees recently took place in the northernmost part of the site. A large cornfield borders the west side. Addition of nutrients into the wetland system could alter the community and increase susceptibility to aggressive wetland exotic wetland such as common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Changes in the agricultural activities such as additional increased use of herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers within the watershed could impact the wetland system.

Recommendations

Informing the landowner of the significance of the natural communities present in the BDA would be a good first step in helping to assure protecting their continued viability. Activities that stand to alter the hydrology of the wetland should be carefully evaluated. The natural communities depend on an ample supply of ground water and decreases or increases in the water available may change the character of the wetland. The recharge area of the wetland is currently a combination of wooded areas and cornfields. Additional research into the dynamics of the wetland needs to be undertaken to determine what the best course of action is for the management. Impacts of upstream land uses on the hydrology and nutrient loads of these sensitive communities should be analyzed. Monitoring of exotic invasive species would help to limit problems stemming from these species.

**Shenango River LCA**

Shenango River LCA is discussed in Delaware Township.