



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

TO: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Robert L. Tetens, Director
DATE: February 11, 2014
RE: **Final Recommendation: Bloch - Vreeland Rd Property: Superior Township**

Background

In January 2011, a property located in Superior Township was nominated for consideration to the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program as part of Round 11. The property includes approximately 129 acres and is located in the southwest portion of the township. A portion of this property – 44 acres – was previously acquired by the Parks and Recreation Commission through the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) in December 2010.

The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee, along with Parks and Recreation Commission staff, visited the Bloch – Vreeland Road Property on a number of occasions, identifying a property primarily in active agricultural use. It does, however, include a number of significant natural features, the most significant of which is a seasonal stream that crosses the property from the northwest to the southeast. As the stream exits the property it flows into the Meyer Preserve. Also present on the site are wetland areas, the most significant of which is located along Vreeland Road on the north edge of the property.

In reviewing the property, the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee noted the valuable role agricultural lands offer in buffering natural areas. Purchase of a conservation easement on the agricultural land which comprises the Bloch - Vreeland Road Property would provide a valuable buffer to the adjacent Meyer Preserve. This is especially important given the course of the stream mentioned above.

The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee identified the Bloch – Vreeland Road Property as a high priority for protection (memo dated November 12, 2013), having determined that acquisition of a conservation easement on the property would make a significant contribution to the protection of the natural features of the adjoining Meyer Preserve.

Discussion

As required, the following due diligence investigations have been conducted:

- An appraisal of the property, prepared by Bosserd Appraisal Services, identified a value of \$613,500 for a conservation easement on the 129 acre parcel (\$4,750 per acre).
- A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Mannik & Smith Group, Inc. did not identify any significant environmental concerns.
- A boundary survey was prepared, including legal description and sealed survey drawing.

Recommendation

Based upon review by the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee and staff it is my recommendation that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize purchase of a conservation easement on the Bloch Vreeland Road Property (Superior Township) at a price of \$613,500.

Attachments