



LIVINGSTON COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

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NEW Livingston County High-Quality Natural Areas Assessment

HOWELL, Mich. - The Livingston County Planning Department is excited to share a new publication that was researched, written and produced in-house by Principal Planner Rob Stanford. The approximately 100 page document is chock-full of analysis and corresponding beautiful and informative maps created by Livingston County GIS Technician Sandon Lettieri. The publication identifies, ranks and maps High-Quality Natural Areas throughout Livingston County. The assessment represents an extensive update to the County Planning Department's initial 2004 study entitled "Livingston County High Quality Natural Areas." Computing technology, data availability, and mapping products and processes have improved tremendously since 2004, which has allowed us to do much more in depth analysis than was previously available.

High-Quality Natural Areas

are defined as places on the landscape dominated by native vegetation that have various levels of potential for harboring high quality natural areas and unique natural features. In addition, these areas may provide critical ecological services such as maintaining water quality and quantity, soil development and stabilization.

The process utilized for this publication was established by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI). MNFI recommends that local municipalities throughout the State of Michigan, incorporate this information into their master plans and zoning ordinances. The site map and ranking data can be used by local municipalities, land trusts, and other agencies to prioritize conservation efforts and assist in finding opportunities to establish an open space system of linked natural areas and habitats in the region. A new mapping application for high-quality natural areas will be developed and added to the Livingston County GIS Map Gallery. Highlights of the plan include:

- The identification of over 980 High-Quality Areas in Livingston County ranked as Low, Medium or High priority.
- A comparison of County Planning's 2004 Livingston County High Quality Natural Features Report with the new 2022 assessment, documenting the loss of 9,839 acres of conservation lands.
- Conservation data for each Livingston County municipality such as total High-Quality Area acreage and acreage upgraded, degraded or lost over the 17 year time period.
- Numerous maps such as land use, land cover, green infrastructure, biological rarity, Livingston County High-Quality Areas, and High-Quality Area changes over time.

This beneficial new Potential Conservation Areas Assessment can be found on the Livingston County Planning Department website at: <https://www.livgov.com/plan/Pages/County-Plans.aspx>

To learn more about the Livingston County High-Quality Natural Areas Assessment, please contact:

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