



Project: Pinnacle Athletic Campus Site Plan Application **edr Project No:** 10013
Date: August 9, 2013
Persons Present: James Pippin, ecologist

On July 3, 2013, an Environmental Design and Research, Landscape Architecture and Engineering, P.C. (edr) ecologist, visited the proposed Pinnacle Athletic Campus site located off of Phillips Road in the Town of Victor, Ontario County, on behalf of the Town of Victor Environmental Conservation Board (Client). The purpose of the site visit was to provide general observation and identification of the dominant ecological communities and habitats present on the site.

The proposed 94.1 acres site (Study Area) is located along the west side of Phillips Road, extending south from Main Street Fishers Road and north from the Lehigh Valley Trail (Attachment A - Figure 1). The Auburn trail bisects the southern portion of the Study Area. The Study Area consists of a mix of upland, riparian and wetland ecological communities on undulating terrain (Attachment A - Figure 2), with a large portion comprised of undeveloped old field/scrub shrub located amongst disturbed land associated with a former sand/gravel quarry. The only man-made structure observed within the Study Area was the abandoned ruins of a chimney adjacent to the Auburn Trail.

Attached is a photolog (Attachment B) that provides representative photos of the different community types identified within the Study Area. Locations where the photos were captured are included on Figure 3 in Attachment A along with the approximate locations of the different ecological communities identified.

Inventory of Existing Cover Types

Successional Old Field

A successional old field ecological community is defined by Reschke (1990) as “a meadow dominated by forbs and grasses that occurs on sites that have been cleared and plowed (for farming or development), and then abandoned.” This ecological community type is located in the northern and eastern portions of the Study Area along Main Street Fishers and Phillips Road. Evidence of recent mowing was observed within the old field community within the Study Area and seems to be managed with a reduced mowing schedule throughout the year. This community is comprised of various grasses and forbs including Canada goldenrod, common vetch, Queen Anne’s lace, field thistle, white clover, teasel, timothy, orchard grass, and asters.

Successional Scrub Shrub

A successional shrubland ecological community is defined by Reschke (1990) as “a shrubland that occurs on sites that have been cleared (for farming, logging, development, etc.) or otherwise disturbed.” A large portion of the Study Area is comprised of successional shrubland (Figure 3). The successional shrubland community was observed in the center of the Study Area on the higher elevations of the reverting disturbed area associated with the former quarry operation. The successional shrubland community is comprised primarily of honeysuckle, gray dogwood, buckthorn, multiflora rose, black raspberry, and wild grape. In addition, there are small stands of box elder, basswood, green ash, Eastern cottonwood and black locust distributed throughout this community.

The herbaceous layer consisted of old field interspersed throughout. This layer includes the same common species as described previously in the successional old field community type.

Successional Upland Forest

The successional upland forest community encompasses areas along the Site boundary to the north and the fringe portions of a larger forested wetland complex to the south and west (see Figure 3). The successional upland forest community is primarily dominated by a mix of deciduous tree species such as black locust, cherry, red oak, Eastern cottonwood, green ash and basswood in the overstory. The shrub layer is comprised primarily of honeysuckle, buckthorn, blackberry and multiflora rose. Observations of the herbaceous layer included common species such as wood fern, Canada goldenrod, asters, and Queen Anne’s lace.

Wetlands

A riparian forested wetland located in the southern portion of the Study Area encompasses the largest percentage of wetland acreage observed on site (see Figure 3). This wetland is bounded by two streams to the north and west. Pursuant to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) online database and publicly available mapping, both of these streams are classified as C(t) trout streams and therefore protected under Article 15 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). The riparian forest is comprised primarily of overstory trees that include red maple, green ash, black willow, pin oak, cottonwood, and silver maple. Adjacent upland forest is dominated by northern red oak and black cherry. The understory layer is dominated by seedlings and saplings of the above-mentioned tree species, spice bush, silky dogwood and tatarian honeysuckle. Sensitive fern, solidago, aster, jewelweed, and various wetland grasses were observed throughout the herbaceous layer.

One forested wetland was located in the center of the Study Area. This wetland was inundated and comprised of primarily Eastern cottonwood and green ash. Silky dogwood and honeysuckle dominated the shrub layer. Sedges, soft rush and a mix of wetland grasses along with cattail dominated the herbaceous layer. An intermittent channel flows down a steep slope to the northeast outside of the Study Area on to an adjacent property.

There were numerous other smaller wetlands observed throughout the Study Area. The majority of these wetlands are emergent wetlands dominated by common reed (*Phragmites Australis*) located throughout the disturbed portions of the Study Area. Other small intermittent channels and drainages were observed flowing from seeps located along the slopes of the former developed quarry site.

Developed/Disturbed

Developed/disturbed land within the Study Area includes all former quarry pits and unpaved access roads (Figure 3). These areas are typically lacking or have limited vegetation with bare soil exposed.

Associated Habitats

As previously described, the Study Area is comprised of several ecological community types. The relationship of these communities to various wildlife species habitats is summarized below.

Successional Old Field Habitat

These grass/forb dominated areas are relatively short-lived. If not maintained, these areas succeed completely to shrubland, woodland, or forest community. In the interim, old field communities provide good nesting and foraging habitat in the form of seeds and foliage for songbirds such as the field sparrow, finches, black-capped chickadee, and eastern bluebird. Old fields also provide preferred nesting and foraging habitat for open country and grassland bird species such as bobolink, red-winged blackbird, horned lark, eastern meadowlark, and savannah sparrow. Birds of prey, such as northern harrier, also use open fields as hunting areas.

Non-resident animals often visit old-field communities either at certain times of the day, or in certain seasons when food in other habitats is scarce. Old field communities experience prolonged sun exposure during much of the day, resulting in the loss of snow cover before other communities. Grasses may begin to initiate growth here long before food sources become available in other communities. Therefore, browsing species, such as the white-tailed deer are frequent visitors in such areas, as are other mammals such as red fox and Eastern coyote out hunting for a meal of field mice or moles. Animal species documented within old field/scrub shrub habitats during the Study Area visit include:

- northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
- American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)
- common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*)
- European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
- yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)
- tree swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)
- red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

Successional Shrubland and Forest Habitat

Shrubland areas are dominated by small trees (seedlings and saplings) and shrubs with some grass and forbs. Shrubland provide nesting and escape cover for a variety of wildlife species. Shrubland bird species are a wide varied group that require low brushy vegetation but typically include northern cardinal, gray catbird, American goldfinch, various warblers, sparrows, indigo bunting and Carolina wren. Raptor species such as owls, red tailed

hawk and American kestrel also use this habitat for feeding. These habitats are also important for a variety of other wildlife such as butterflies and bees, garter snakes, frogs and others. In addition, some of the shrubland plant species found in these areas produce berries (e.g., blackberries and raspberries) that are a food source for birds and mammals such as white-tailed deer, eastern cottontail, raccoon, striped skunk and opossum. Animal species documented within the shrubland/ successional forest habitat during the Study Area visit include:

- red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
- northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
- white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
- American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)
- yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)
- American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*)
- European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
- American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)
- Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
- Eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)

Upland Forest and Forested Wetland Habitats:

Large areas of contiguous woodland provide habitat for forest wildlife species such as wood thrush, veery, eastern wood pewee, red-eyed vireo, black-and-white-warbler, black-capped chickadee, great crested flycatcher, and pileated woodpecker. Forested wetlands provide habitat for waterfowl, including Canada goose, great blue heron and wood duck. Mammals that utilize forest habitat include gray squirrel, eastern chipmunk, and whitetail deer. Smaller areas of contiguous woodland are found throughout the Study Area and provide habitat for forest edge species. Forests and forest edges including the larger riparian forest also provide important summer roosting and foraging habitat for several species of resident and migrant bat species.

It should be noted that in 2010, a young male black bear was observed roaming the greater Victor area in search of a mate and breeding territory. Local wildlife biologists speculate the bear was traveling along the Irondequoit Creek riparian corridor. This event is an indication of the significance of this very important riparian habitat to the regional wildlife community.

Developed/Disturbed:

The developed/disturbed areas offer minimal wildlife habitat. Foraging by mammal and bird species is expected but this type of covertype is of poor quality of long term wildlife management. Wetlands within these areas currently provide habitat for amphibian species such as green frogs but because these areas lack cover, diversity within these areas is low. Tree swallows were also observed foraging for insects during the site visit.

Conclusion

The Study Area includes a mix of ecological cover types including approximately 20.5 acres of successional old field, 20.2 acres of successional shrubland, 18.1 acres of successional upland forest, 20.5 acres of disturbed land, 8.9 acres of riparian forested wetland, and 5.8 acres of other wetlands. While the disturbed portions of the Study Area provide little habitat for wildlife species, there are wetlands located throughout these disturbed areas. The remaining cover types identified, such as the riparian corridors, appear to support a mix of relatively common species and most likely provide important corridors for a wide range of wildlife species such as black bear. No rare, threatened or endangered species were observed during the site visit.

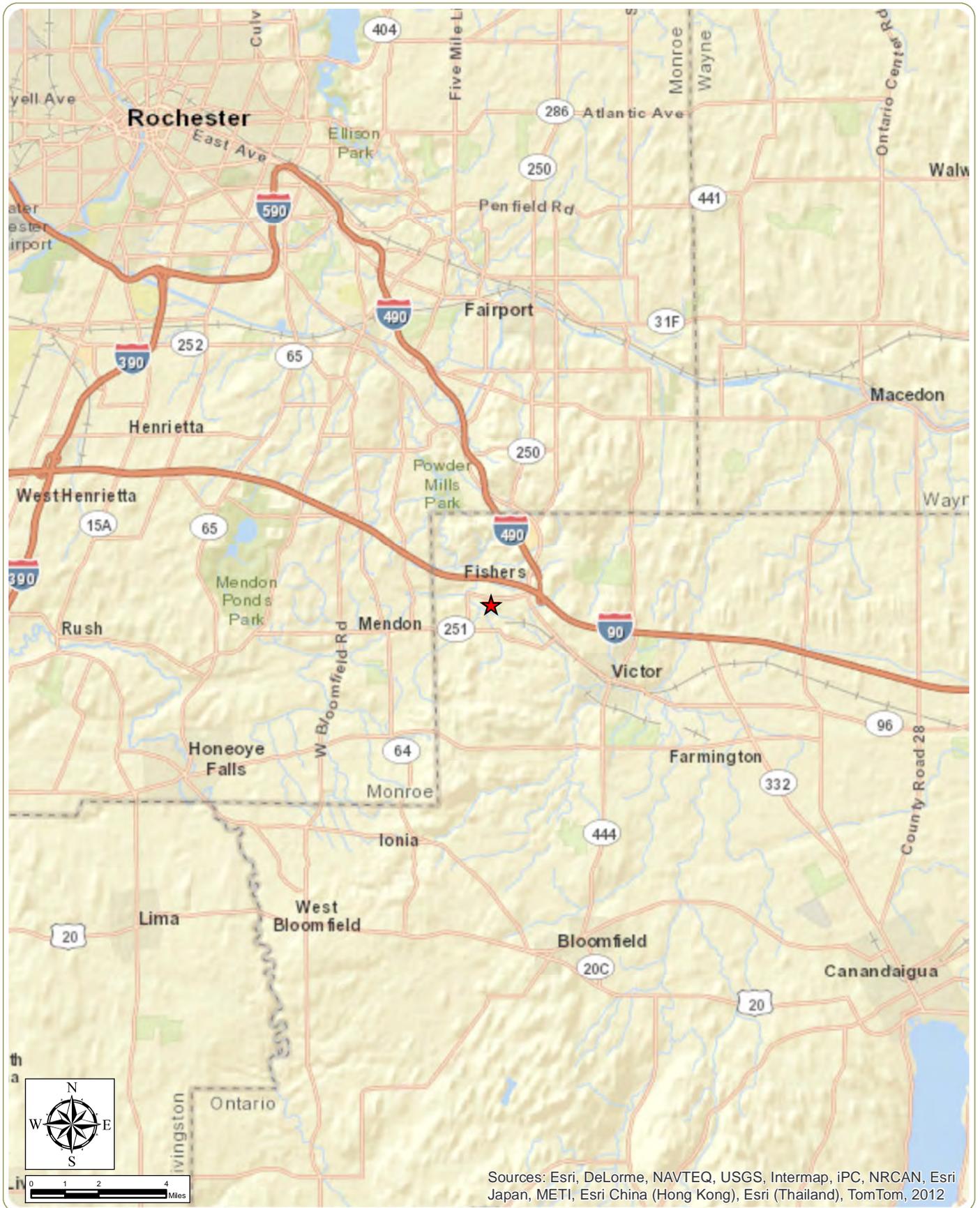
References

Reschke, C. 1990. *Ecological Communities of New York State*. New York Natural Heritage Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Latham, NY.

Copies To: Jane Rice, EDR

Attachment A

FIGURES



Pinnacle Athletic Campus

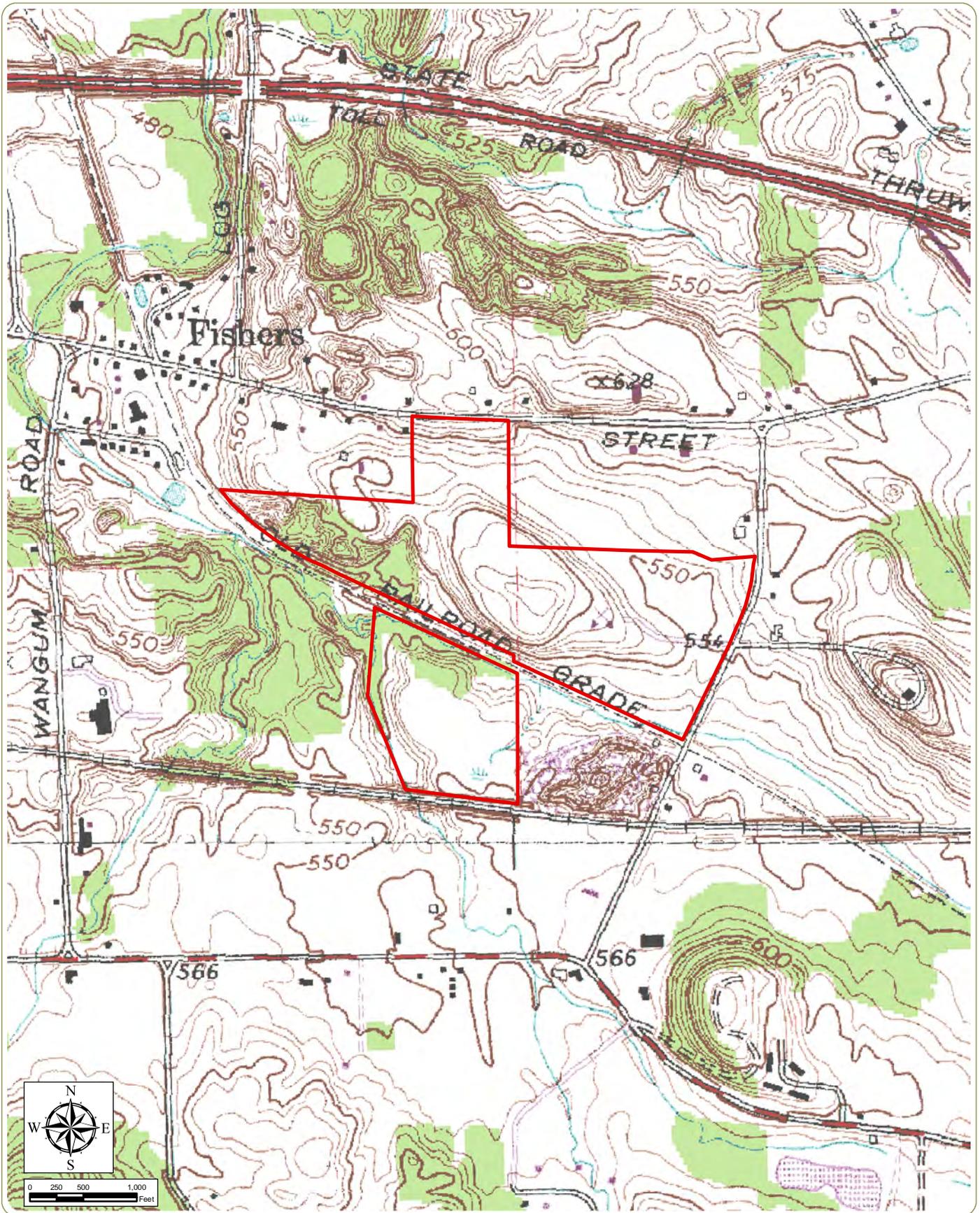
Town of Victor, Ontario County

Figure 1: Project Location

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Notes: Basemap: ESRI online streets.

★ Project Location



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Town of Victor, Ontario County

Figure 2: Topographic Mapping

July 2013

Notes: 1) USGS Fairport and Victor 7.5 minute topographic quadrangles.
 2) Project Boundary was approximated using Ontario County tax parcels.

 Project Boundary

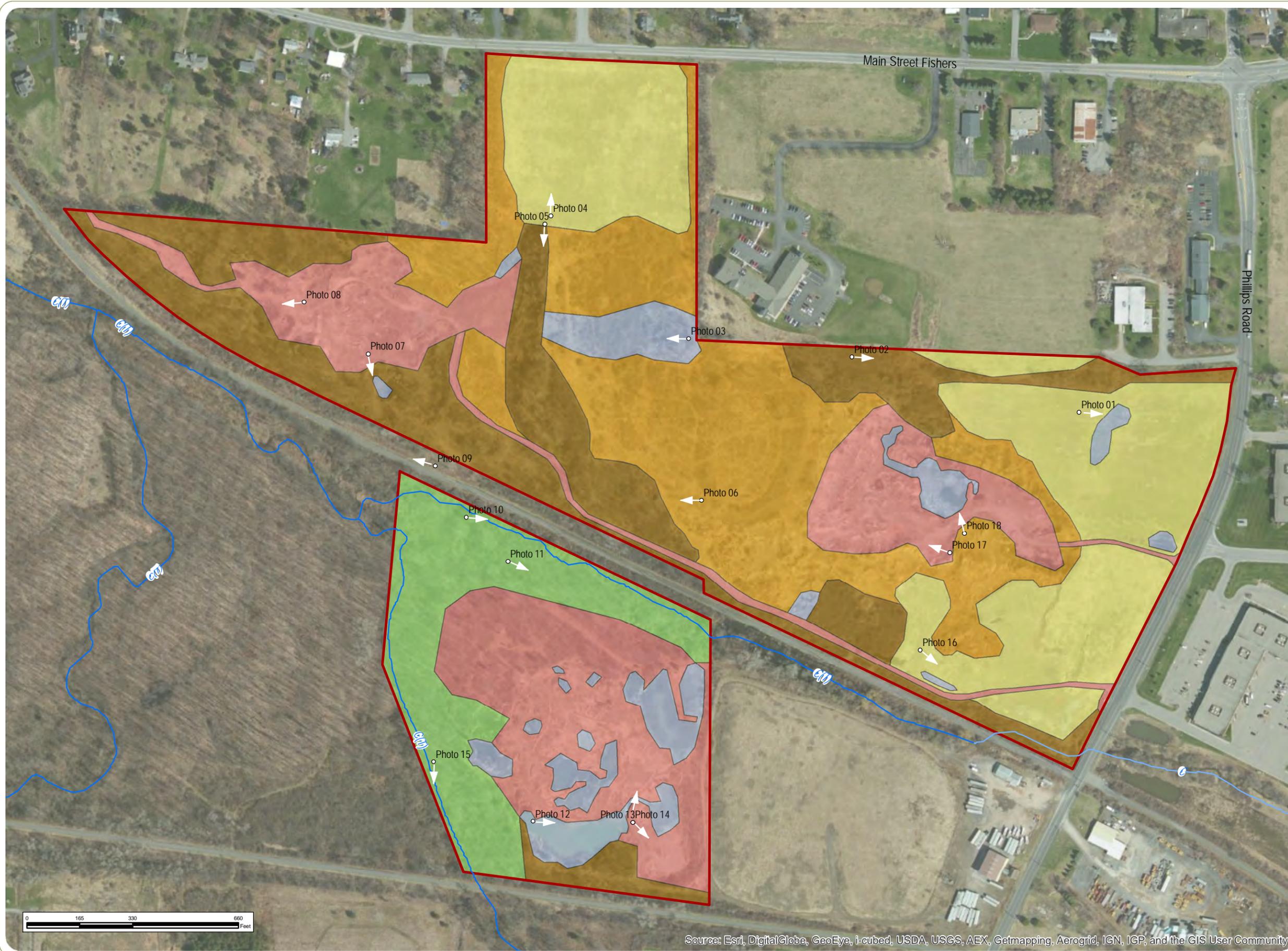
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Figure 3: Vegetative Communities

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- Photo Locations
- NYSDEC Protected Stream
- Unprotected Stream
- Disturbed/Developed
- Successional Old Field
- Successional Shrubland
- Successional Upland Forest
- Wetland
- Riparian Forest
- Project Boundary



Notes:
 1) Basemap: ESRI online imagery.
 2) Project Boundary was approximated using Ontario County tax parcels.

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Attachment B

PHOTOLOG



Photo 01

View from a successional old field in the eastern portion of the Study Area looking east at a wetland.



Photo 02

View of a successional upland forest in northeastern portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 03

View of a forested wetland in the central portion of the Study Area.



Photo 04

View looking north at a successional old field in the northern portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 05

View looking south at a successional upland forest in the central portion of the Study Area.



Photo 06

View of a successional shrubland and successional upland forest in the central portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 07

View looking west at a small wetland in the western portion of the Study Area.



Photo 08

View of a disturbed area in the western portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 09
View of bike path bisecting
Study Area.



Photo 10
View of a Class C(T) stream
located in the southern portion
of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 11

View of a riparian forest in the southern portion of the Study Area.



Photo 12

View looking east at a wetland in the southern portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 13

View of eroded channel within a disturbed area in the southern portion of the Study Area.



Photo 14

View of a disturbed area and wetlands in the southern portion of the Study Area.



Photo 15

View of a Class C(T) stream in the southern portion of the Study Area.



Photo 16

View of a successional old field in the southeastern portion of the Study Area.

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Figure 4: Photo Log

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Photo 17

View of a disturbed area and wetland in the eastern portion of the Study Area.



Photo 18

View of a disturbed area in the eastern portion of the Study Area.