

OPENLANDS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Hoffmann Farm

SECTION 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property Address: 5515 Hill Road, Richmond, IL 60071

Legal Description (Section, Township, Range, County): Section 16, T46N, R8E, McHenry County

Acreage: 153.30 total acres (consisting of 3 parcels going from West to East, Pin #: 04-16-400-005 with 14.55 acres, Pin #: 04-16-400-008 with 40 acres, and Pin #: 04-16-400-009 with 98.75 acres)

- **Location Information and Regional Context:** *e.g. regional project connections, geological or natural community history, etc.*

The Hoffmann Farm property is located in the village of Richmond with a long history of farming nearby. The property is comprised of 3 parcels and is in proximity to the greater Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge (“Hackmatack”) area and just east of the Tamarack Core Area. For the purposes of this management plan the parcels will be named Parcel A for Pin #: 04-16-400-005, Parcel B for Pin #: 04-16-400-008, and Parcel C for Pin #: 04-16-400-009. The three parcels total 153.30 acres.

McHenry County has a glaciated landscape with excellent farmland soils and variable topography. McHenry County is host to 86 species on the Illinois endangered and threatened list, with three of those species currently cross-listed as federally endangered or threatened. The Nippersink Creek watershed serves as the anchor for the Hackmatack footprint. The Nippersink is a Class A high quality stream and is designated as a State of Illinois “Biologically Significant Stream.” The North Branch of Nippersink Creek is the nearest body of water and flows through the middle of the Hoffmann Farm property.

The property is currently being leased by Openlands to “Red Buffalo Nursery” (the “primary tenant”), a native plant nursery and ecological restoration company supplying native seeds and plants to the region. The production area of the nursery is located in Parcel B south of the outbuildings and just north of the cropland area in Attachment B. The property is located at the intersection of Route 12 and Hill Road. There is high visibility from Route 12, a major highway running north and south, west of the property’s boundary line along Route 12. A freight railway runs nearby, on an approximately east-west alignment, on land located just south of Hoffmann Farm. The northwestern boundary of Hoffmann Farm, at the intersection of Route 12 and Hill Road, is surrounded by public services such as the Nippersink District Library and Richmond Fire Department.

Parcel A is located within Richmond’s municipal limits while Parcel B and C fall within unincorporated McHenry County. Parcel A is accessible from a trail stemming from near the outbuildings in Parcel B as the western boundary of Parcel A alongside Route 12 is fenced. Parcel B is the main access for the property containing the main residence and the entrance for Red Buffalo Nursery off Hill Road. Parcel C is accessible from a driveway stemming from the secondary residence also off Hill Road, as well as an undeveloped driveway area that provides farm equipment access to Parcel C’s agricultural land. The driveway area is located off of Hill Road just west of the property’s northeastern corner.

Commented [AC1]: [Redacted comment]

Commented [AR2R1]: I hope Eugene would have enjoyed to see it on the map as well 😊

Commented [AC3]: Suggestion for clarity.... Sounds at first a bit like “Hackmatack is composed of three parcels.”

Commented [AC4]: Here’s a cool fact for future use when you are talking about the Nippersink.

Commented [AR5R4]: Thumbs up!

Commented [AC6]: I think you covered this sufficiently in the first paragraph...

Commented [AC7]: Suggestion to make it easier to reference the tenant consistently throughout the document (and to make editing this plan easier if Red Buffalo Nursery is somehow no longer the tenant).

Commented [AC8]: To avoid any minor confusion about which property is being referenced, I made a few suggestions to clarify this throughout this paragraph. As always, please consider my comments and incorporate changes in your own words.

Commented [AC9]: It’s hard to see this on a map but it is there!

- **Land Use History:** *e.g. past ownership history, adjacent land uses including public lands, potential adjacent threats, land use history such as agriculture or development, etc.*

The farm was owned by the Hoffmann family from 1975 to 2018, and was purchased by Openlands in May 2018 as part of a collaborative project with The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (TLC) and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The property was protected with a TLC conservation easement and then sold to Openlands. The property is now being leased to the primary tenant on a rent-to-own basis over a five-year term, with the intent being that the primary tenant will purchase the farm from Openlands.

The property was originally utilized as a dairy and agricultural farm, containing a chiropractor's office, two residences, two barns including a concrete dairy barn and a second metal-sided barn. Additional structures to the original property include an old windmill structure, a concrete silo attached to the dairy barn, and two garage-type outbuildings for storage. The primary tenant has since put in a few hoop houses south of the garage-type outbuildings as a production area for the plant nursery and utilizes the rest of the buildings for their operations. Currently, the parcel where the chiropractor's office was located, at PIN 04-16-328-001, was not acquired by Openlands and is now under private ownership.

The agricultural areas of Hoffmann Farm are currently under sublease to a conventional corn and soy farmer. The farming sublease is presently managed by the primary tenant of Hoffmann Farm as described in the primary tenant's lease with Openlands.

Protected lands owned by Hackmatack partners, including the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFWS), are located to the south (including MCCD's Glacial Park Conservation Area) and north (including MCCD's North Branch Preserve and USFWS's (formerly owned by Ducks Unlimited) Turner Tract, another Hackmatack site. Additionally, Openlands owns the Blackmon parcels just northwest of Hoffmann Farm located off Route 12.

- **Topography:** *e.g. dominant landforms or glacial features*

The property rolls gently from the North Branch of Nippersink creek at an elevation of 790 on outward towards the nearby cropland and wooded areas to a maximum elevation of 810 on the property. The North Branch of the Nippersink Creek and the isolated wetland lie about 20 to 30 feet lower than the rest of the property.

- **Soils:** *e.g. soil type description, drainage, runoff and erosion potential, agricultural potential, etc.*

With the North Branch of Nippersink creek being a major feature of the property running through the center in a gentle diagonal from the Northeast to Southwest, the soils 8082A – Millington silt loam (0-2% slopes, occasionally flooded) and 327B Fox silt loam (2-4% slopes) arranged alongside the creek cover most of the property or about 80 acres. The other soils on the property arranged from most abundant to least are 557A – Millstream silt loam (0-2% slopes), 527D2 – Kidami loam (6-12% slopes, eroded), 526A – Grundelein silt loam (0-2% slopes), 323C2 – Casco loam (4-6% slopes, eroded), 327A – Fox Silt loam (0-2% slopes), 618E – Senachwine silt loam (12-20% slopes), 523A – Dunham silty clay loam (0-2% slopes), 1082A – Millington silt loam (0-2% slopes, undrained, occasionally flooded), 197A – Troxel silt loam (0-2% slopes), 791B – Rush silt loam (2-4% slopes), 327C2 – Fox silt loam (4-6% slopes, eroded), 323D2 – Casco loam (6-12% slopes, eroded), and lastly 527D – Kidami silt loam (6-12% slopes). To see more information about total acreage for each soil, please see Attachment A.

Currently, soils deemed prime farmland are 197A, 327A, 327B, 327C2, 526A, 557A, and 791B. Most of these soils are being occupied by existing cropland and can be seen in the aerial property map in Attachment B.

Commented [AC10]: I think it's helpful to provide some background on how Openlands bought the property. I dropped in a few sentences here but again, please modify as needed in your own words.

Commented [AR11R10]: Looks good to me, thanks for expanding the idea

Commented [AC12]: Let's definitely mention all the structures, including the farm outbuildings too.

Commented [AR13R12]: Do you mean defining the outbuildings? Such as 2 barns, 1 storage area, and a shed. I'm not sure if those are the right words though.

Commented [AR14R12]:

Commented [AC15R12]: Yes, define them here if we can. I think in total there are two barns (a concrete dairy barn and a second metal-sided barn), an old windmill structure, a concrete silo attached to the dairy barn, and two garage-type outbuildings. Take a look at an aerial photo and check to see if that's right though. Also, Jack has put in some hoop greenhouses now, south of the two garage outbuildings, and we might mention those too. I believe there are two greenhouses.

Commented [AR16R12]: Rewrote this up a little and also included a map for more clarification of the outbuildings since they were so small on the parcel map

Commented [AC17]: We can add Blackmon here too. The Turner Tract is no longer owned by DU as of 2018 - it is officially owned by US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Here's a rule of thumb I employ myself when using acronyms: introduce the acronym in parentheses after the full name before you start using it elsewhere as a replacement for the full name. Example:

"Protected lands owned by Hackmatack partners, including the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD), are located to the south."

Commented [AC18]: It may be a dull topic but prime farmland is good information to record in a management plan. I would suggest including all of the prime farmland soils here, not just a few examples.

- **Hydrology:** *e.g. presence of surface water on property such as streams or wetlands, potential for flooding, general water quality, etc.*

The North Branch of Nippersink Creek is the major feature of the property running through the middle of the property in a soft diagonal. About 50% of the property containing all three parcels is considered high quality wetland. Additionally, the southwestern portion of Parcel A and B contain year-round surface water near the North Branch of Nippersink Creek and is marked with a “W” in Attachment A.

- **Natural Communities and Wildlife:** *e.g. natural community type, evidence of remnant communities, endangered or threatened species, known wildlife species, etc.*

Native trillium (*Trillium sp.*), milkweeds (*Asclepius sp.*), rosinweed (*Silphium sp.*) and mayapples (*Podophyllum sp.*) to name a few, were observed on the property on July 27, 2018. Remnant habitats of sedge meadow and wetlands was observed by the presence of great angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*), skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), and horse gentian (*Triosteum sp.*), to name a few. The wetland in the southwest portion of the property near the old hobby railroad tracks is a permanent body of water that is isolated and serves as an overflow for the North Branch of the Nippersink running through the approximate center of the property. The North Branch of the Nippersink is classified as ADID and is part of the larger Nippersink watershed throughout the Hackmatack area.

Commented [AC19]: Can you add the time of year these were observed?

- **Exotic Species:** *e.g. species observed, distribution, frequency, etc.*

Most of the non-wetland areas of the property are wooded and shady. The farm fields, parts of the riparian corridor that aren't overgrown with invasive species, and the open field currently being used as the production area of the plant nursery behind the farm outbuildings, are all open and unshaded. The primary tenant of the property has already identified and has been actively managing invasive species such as common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) in and around the production area of the plant nursery.

Commented [AC20]: How does the wetland relate to the creek corridor? Does it extend off the creek or is it isolated? Is it an oxbow of the creek? Is there anything else can you describe about the wetland from an aerial photo?

Commented [AC21]: I would also say the farm fields, parts of the riparian corridor that aren't totally overgrown, and the open field behind the farm buildings where Jack is starting nursery plants are all open, sunny and unshaded – but certainly probably have their own invasives issues like reed canary grass.

An oak hickory woodland habitat is present in the southern portion of Parcel B and Parcel C beginning just east of the North Branch of Nippersink Creek and west of the cropland in Parcel C. A second oak hickory habitat is present in the very southeast corner of Parcel C and is just east of the cropland area also in Parcel C.

- **Cultural and Aesthetic Resources:** *e.g. historic structures, archaeological resources, etc.*

Currently, two houses reside on the property: one in Parcel B and the other in Parcel C and both are residential. Within Parcel A and B there were railroad tracks (pictured in the attachment) sized for a small recreational train and running along Route 12, and remnants of a wooden train bridge over the North Branch of the Nippersink Creek. This infrastructure supported a hobby train that the previous owner used to drive around the property, occasionally providing rides to local children. The metal train tracks have been removed but many of the wooden railroad ties remain along the former track's course, as well as in a few piles stacked in the woods at the southern end of the property. Prior to Openlands' purchase of Hoffmann Farm, one of the farm outbuildings at the northern end of the property was also home to a full size antique steam locomotive, which was donated to a train museum by the seller. Additionally, based on business records of the chiropractor's office it appears that the former landowner also sold model train supplies out of the same location. No other archaeological or cultural resources are known to be associated with the property.

Commented [AC22]: I added in some additional details I know from talking to Elena. It's helpful to someone who doesn't know anything about Hoffman Farm to be clear that this was a "person size" train and not a full size railroad thing...!

- **Restrictions:** *e.g. any leases, mineral rights, right-of-ways, easements, etc. associated with the property, if applicable.*

The property is being currently leased to the owner of “Red Buffalo Nursery” and both houses are occupied by the owner and his extended family at present. A conservation easement was recorded on the entire property in May of 2018 and it is held by The Land Conservancy of McHenry County in perpetuity. As described above, there is also a separate sublease with a local farmer who grows corn or soybeans on the agricultural areas of Hoffmann Farm that are not being used by the primary tenant.

SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT PLAN

- **General Restoration and Management Goals:** *Provide a brief overview of project vision and purpose, e.g. maintain land health, restore pre-settlement vegetation, target habitat for key species, etc.*
 - 1) Remove and manage invasive woody, herbaceous, and wetland species
 - 2) Enhance native woodland and wetland vegetation with appropriate seeding and/or plugs
 - 3) Restore oak/hickory woodland in southern portion of property Parcel B and Parcel C.
 - 4) Streambank grading and stabilization where necessary.
 - 5) Perform ongoing management as needed.

Note that The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (TLC) is responsible for enforcement of the conservation easement on the property. Management and restoration activities and agricultural activities should be approved by TLC and coordinated with the primary tenant.

- **Key Objectives:** *List specific tasks that are instrumental in reaching goals, e.g. discourage brush encroachment, control invasive species, restore native vegetation, etc., and include reason for each objective*

Note that all listed objectives are funding-dependent. It is recommended that management objectives related to the above goals include:

- 1) Managing for invasive species with appropriate methods across the property. Considerable attention should be paid to woody invasive species removal around mature and seedling native trees to improve space and sunlight. Wetland invasive species management, specifically along the North Branch of Nippersink Creek, should be assessed to determine preferred removal methods, as reed canary grass removal may require a strategic approach.
- 2) Installing native seed mix and/or plugs to reestablish or enhance native vegetation across the property, including for current primary tenant of the property to produce native seed mixes and/or plugs.
- 3) Contract work to restore oak/hickory woodland to open the canopy and repopulate native vegetation.
- 4) Streambank grading and stabilization where necessary
- 5) Perform ongoing management on controlling invasive species

- **Recommended Management Practices:** *Provide overview of tools and methods used to complete objectives, e.g. prescribed fire, herbicide treatment, selective thinning, etc.*

Invasive species may be controlled by cutting, pulling, selective herbicide application, prescribed burning, and/or mowing. Seed may be distributed by hand or mechanical application if feasible. Plugs may be installed by hand.

Commented [AC23]: This list of goals should offer a big picture kind of snapshot of the work that needs to be done on the property – so no need to reference funding availability here as we mention it in the section below as a standard disclaimer. We just want to show here that we are aware of the kind of work that the site needs.

Commented [AR24]: Also included long term goal here and below

Commented [AR25]: [Redacted]

Commented [AC26]: I think we can just take this out here. We mention it above already.

- **Timeline (per funding availability):**

Priority	Objective	Anticipated Completion
1	Identify and clear woody invasive brush from wooded areas	TBD – in progress
2	Manage herbaceous invasive species	TBD – in progress
3	Restore oak/hickory woodland in southern portion of Parcel B and Parcel C	TBD
4	Install seed and/or plugs	TBD
5	Plant trees and shrubs	TBD
6	Streambank grading and stabilization where necessary	TBD
7	Perform ongoing management as needed	TBD

- **Additional Remarks:**

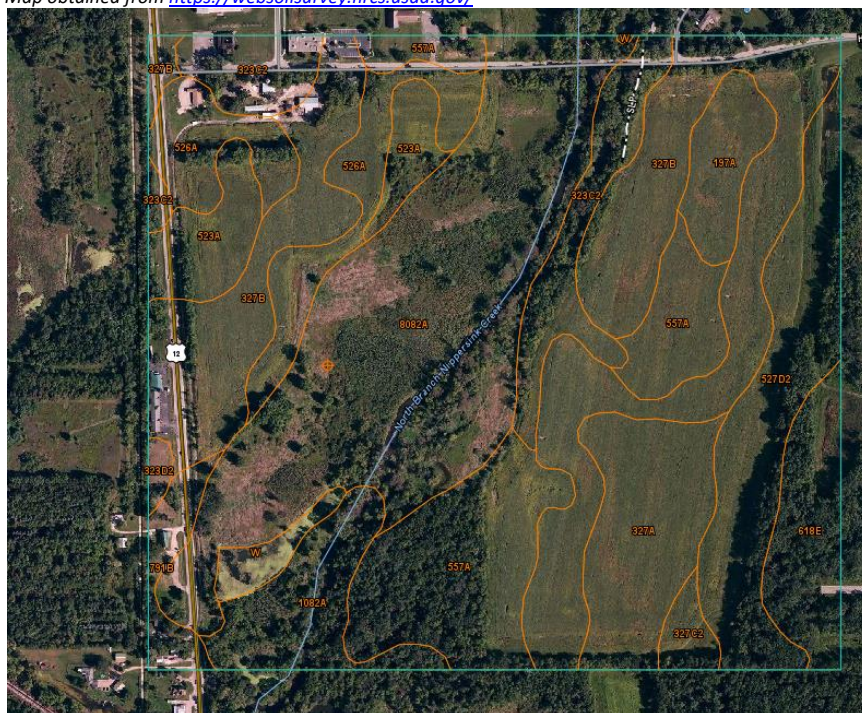
This management plan serves as a working document that may be revised as necessary.

Management Plan Date: July 11, 2018

Last updated: November 28, 2018

Attachment A Soils Map

Map obtained from <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>




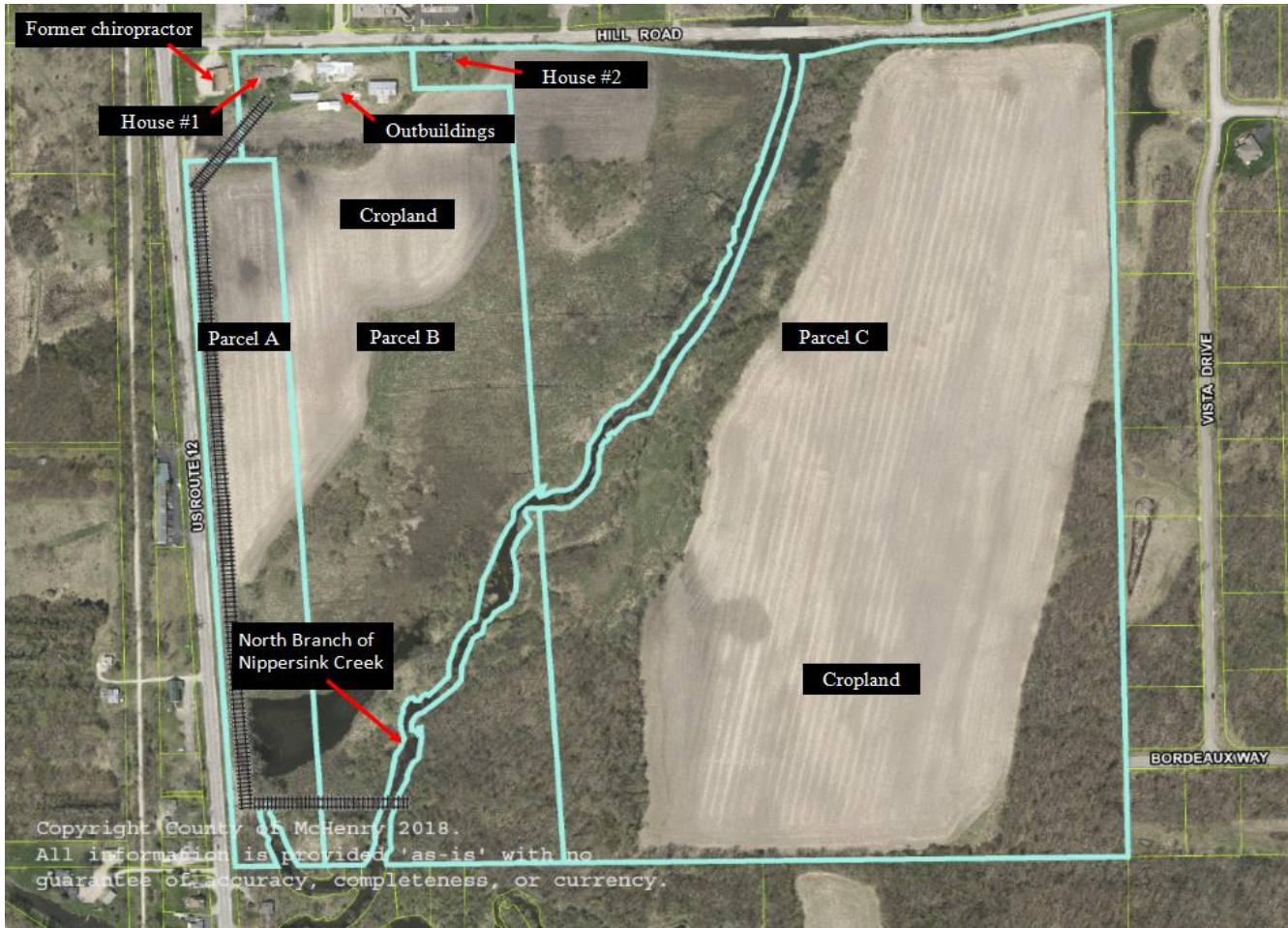
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Notes	Acres	Percent
197A	Troxel silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes	4.5	2.4%
323C2	Casco loam	4 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	11.5	6.2%
323D2	Casco loam	6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	1.0	0.6%
327A	Fox silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes	10.8	5.8%
327B	Fox silt loam	2 to 4 percent slopes	38.82	0.8%
327C2	Fox silt loam	4 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	1.5	0.8%
523A	Dunham silty clay loam	0 to 2 percent slopes	7.4	4.0%
526A	Grundelein silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes	11.7	6.3%
527D	Kidami silt loam	6 to 12 percent slopes	0.0	0.0%
527D2	Kidami loam	6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	17.0	9.1%
557A	Millstream silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes	19.2	10.3%
618E	Senachwine silt loam	12 to 20 percent slopes	10.0	5.3%
791B	Rush silt loam	2 to 4 percent slopes	3.7	2.0%
1082A	Millington silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes, undrained, occasionally flooded	7.3	3.9%
8082A	Millington silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	40.3	21.6%
W	Water		1.8	1.0%
Totals for Area of Interest			186.5	100.0%

**Attachment
Hoffmann Farm
Parcel Location**

Image obtained from <http://www.mchenrycountyqgis.org/Athena/>

Legend


 Approximate location of old hobby railroad tracks



**Attachment C
Hoffmann Farm
Outbuildings Map**

Image obtained from <http://www.mchenrycountygis.org/Athena/>

Legend

 Approximate location of old hobby railroad tracks

