

Upland Habitat Impact Evaluation

1. Upland Habitat Characteristics

Upland habitat in the interchange areas consists of fallow fields (old fields), very small pieces of remnant prairie, and scattered woodland. Woodland is located in the northwest and northeast quadrants of the CTH C interchange, southwest quadrant of the STH 158 interchange, the northwest and southwest quadrant of the CTH KR interchange, northeast quadrant of the CTH G interchange, and northeast and southwest quadrants of the 7 Mile Road interchange. Kimmel Woods, a SEWRPC-designated natural area, is located in the southwest quadrant of the 7 Mile Road interchange. Kimmel Woods will be included in SEWRPC's *Planning Report 42, A Natural Area and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin*. The SEWRPC classifies Kimmel Woods as a moderate quality southern dry-mesic woods and lowland hardwoods. The recommended alternative would not affect Kimmel Woods. A narrow strip of the Union Grove Railroad Prairie is located along the railroad at the STH 11 interchange. The SEWRPC also noted a patch of remnant prairie at the CTH KR interchange.

2. Wildlife Associations

Wildlife associated with these upland habitat areas may include red fox, white tailed deer, raccoon, opossum, pheasant, squirrels, rabbits and other small mammals, and song birds.

3. Habitat Impacts

The proposed project will require the acquisition of 11 hectares (28 acres) of upland habitat as summarized in the table below. The effects of woodland losses are varied. Bisecting a woodland creates new edges, reduces the extent of tree canopy, and increases light penetration, which stimulates growth of understory plant species. This habitat change would increase the wildlife species that favor forest edge communities. However, it could render the area unsuitable for interior forest species. New woodland edges created by road right-of-way may experience tree loss from the drying effects of wind, sun, and exposure to pollutants in road runoff. Additional information on upland impacts is found in the *Wetland Functional Assessment and Project Impact Evaluation I-94 Interchange Study*, CH2M HILL 1996. Because old field habitat is more common in the interchange areas than woodlands, its loss may be less critical for wildlife than the loss of woodlands.

It should be noted that at the CTH G and CTH KR interchanges, the project team balanced upland and wetland impacts rather than completely avoiding a wetland. In the northwest quadrant of the CTH KR interchange, the relocated west frontage road minimizes the severance to a largely upland area, but affects the edge of an isolated wetland south of CTH KR and a wetland north of CTH KR. This alignment was selected to avoid bisecting the wooded area and a remnant prairie that SEWRPC noted during their wetland delineation survey. In the northeast quadrant of the CTH G interchange, a wetland is located at the west edge of a relatively mature oak-hickory woods. The relocated east frontage road affects the east edge of the wetland to minimize impacts to the woods. The SEWRPC noted that the least disturbed portion of the woods was the portion east of the wetland.

Upland Habitat Areas

INTERCHANGE	QUADRANT	HABITAT AFFECTED	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS
CTH C (Kenosha Co.)	NW, SW, NE	1.8 ha (4.3 acres)	<p>Upland shrubland/old field plant associations are found in the northwest and southwest quadrants adjacent to wetlands. Species include wild strawberry, multiflora rose, boxelder, sweet clover, Queen Anne's lace, wild bergamot, and goldenrod.</p> <p>A small oak-hickory woodland is found in the northeast quadrant north of the residences on CTH C.</p>
STH 158 (Kenosha Co.)	SW, SE	1.2 ha (2.9 acres)	<p>Upland forest and old field/grassland is found in the southwest quadrant. The woodlot includes northern red oak, hickory, and black cherry. Shrubs include buckthorn, dogwood, and hornbeam. Uplands in the southwest quadrant are in a primary environmental corridor.</p> <p>Woodland in the southeast quadrant, adjacent to the Kilbourn Ditch, include burr oak, black cherry, and ash. Closer to I-94, there is field surrounded by planted pines and cedars.</p>
CTH KR (Kenosha / Racine Co. Line)	NW, SW, SE	5.6 ha (13.8 acres)	<p>Woods and shrubland are located in the northwest quadrant, including white oak, burr oak, and shagbark hickory. Hackberry and black locust are also present. Understory species include raspberry, honeysuckle, and buckthorn. The northwest quadrant is designated by SEWRPC as an isolated natural resource area. The SEWRPC noted a patch of remnant prairie in the middle of this quadrant during their wetland delineation survey.</p> <p>In the southeast quadrant, woodland species include silver maple, boxelder, and black locust. Understory species include buckthorn, honeysuckle, currant, and raspberry. West of the wooded area in the southwest quadrant, species include choke cherry, red oak, and currant.</p>
STH 11 (Racine Co.)	NW, SW	0.1 ha (0.2 acres)	<p>The old field in the northwest quadrant contains species such as asters and goldenrods. Filling has occurred in portions of the field.</p> <p>A small portion of the Union Grove Railroad Prairie is located in the southwest quadrant adjacent to STH 11 and the railroad.</p>

Upland Habitat Areas

INTERCHANGE	QUADRANT	HABITAT AFFECTED	HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS
CTH G (Racine Co.)	NE	2.6 ha (6.4 acres)	The woodland in the northeast quadrant is an oak-hickory community and includes white oak, burr oak, shagbark hickory, and white ash. Understory species include black cherry, dogwood, and hop hornbeam. This woodland is designated by SEWRPC as an isolated natural resource area. The SEWRPC noted that the eastern portion of the woodland is of a higher quality than the western portion because it is less disturbed.

4. Direct Or Indirect Wildlife Impacts

Impacts to wildlife would primarily be the loss or disruption of areas that are used for feeding, shelter, or nesting. Some of these losses would be permanent, such as converting woodland to road right-of-way. Some wildlife habitat (primarily grassy areas) would be provided after construction activities are complete. Scattered wooded areas are located adjacent to the interchange areas; providing habitat for displaced wildlife.

5. Measures To Minimize Adverse Effects

During the alternatives development and refinement phases, the proposed improvements were aligned to avoid upland habitat where practicable. Measures to minimize adverse impacts include revegetation as soon as possible after construction, and maintenance practices that allow successional layers of vegetation to become established in order to provide more habitat diversity. The *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* would be followed to minimize adverse effects.