

January 15, 2026

To whom it may concern:

Brownstown Township's Sibley Prairie is one of Michigan's true jewels. I write to enthusiastically support efforts by the Michigan Land Conservancy to acquire and protect 440 acres of this rare and extremely valuable ecosystem. Purchase of this site by the Michigan Land Conservancy would permanently protect a major portion of these lakeplain prairie remnants and allow for active restoration of this rare but remarkably resilient ecosystem by other conservation agencies or organizations.

I have been familiar with the Sibley Road Complex of lakeplain prairie remnants in Brownstown Township since they were identified and recorded by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) in their report *A Survey of Lakeplain Prairie in Michigan* (Comer, et.al., 1995; available at <https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/>). Sometime after that study was completed, I personally testified at a hearing conducted by the Michigan DNR in Brownstown Township. At the time, I was President of the Michigan Natural Areas Association, a group firmly committed to protecting significant natural areas across the state. Unfortunately, there was not strong local support for protecting the land at that time.

As noted in the MNFI study, the Sibley Road Complex of prairie remnants represents the one of the largest concentrations of this rare ecosystem type in all of Michigan. At the time of the study, only .6% of the historical acreage of lakeplain prairie in Southeast Michigan remained. The Sibley Road Complex is made up of a mosaic of oak savannah on the drier sand ridges and wet prairie in the lower depressions dominated by clay soils. This mosaic of lakeplain prairie and oak savannah provides critical habitat for a variety of rare plant and animal populations, some of which are listed as critically endangered within the state of Michigan.

Acquiring the Sibley Prairie property depends on the Michigan Land Conservancy's unique ability to quickly step in and raise the resources to purchase critical natural areas. They continue by working with other public and private agencies and organizations to provide the long-term restoration and care of these properties, making them available for public enjoyment and education. Protecting this parcel would add to two other preserves managed by the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy as part of the Greater Sibley Road Prairie Complex.

This is certainly an extraordinary opportunity to protect a key part of Southeast Michigan's great natural landscape heritage for the future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Grese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert E. Grese, Professor-Emeritus  
School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan