



Natural Communities of Louisiana

Macon Ridge Green Ash Pond

Rarity Rank: S1/G2

Synonyms: spicewood pond

Ecological Systems:

CES203.193 Lower Mississippi River Flatwoods

General Description:

- Restricted to northeast Louisiana, primarily on the Macon Ridge
- Small depressional upland ponds
- Often surrounded by agricultural fields; historically found within hardwood flatwood forests
- These ponds do not receive alluvial flooding, but instead collect storm water and seepage from the surrounding landscape
- Potential habitat for *Lindera melissifolia* (pondberry, SH/G2/Fed. Listed endangered)



Plant Community Associates

Characteristic overstory species include:

Fraxinus pennsylvanica (green ash),
Populus heterophylla (swamp cottonwood),
Quercus lyrata (overcup oak),
Celtis laevigata (sugarberry)

Ulmus americana (American elm),
Nyssa biflora (swamp blackgum),
Quercus nigra (water oak),

Characteristic understory species include:

Diospyros virginiana (persimmon),
Acer rubrum var. *drummondii* (swamp red maple),
Ilex decidua (deciduous holly),

Planera aquatica (water elm),
Styrax americanus (snowbell),
Cephalanthus occidentalis (buttonbush)

Common herbaceous species include:

Arundinaria gigantea (switchcane),
Sabal minor (palmetto),
Vitis sp. (wild grape),

Sambucus canadensis (elderberry),
Campsis radicans (trumpet creeper),
Smilax sp. (greenbriars)

Federally-listed plant & animal species:

Lindera melissifolia (pondberry) possible

SH, G2, endangered



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Range:

Northeast Louisiana within the Macon Ridge and adjacent areas

Threats & Management Considerations:

Little is known about both the historic and current extents of spicewood ponds on the Macon Ridge. Land survey data and topographic maps may provide some of this information. It is known that many of these ponds have been lost to agricultural development, and continue to be threatened by farming practices in the way of hydrologic alterations, chemical runoff and contamination, trash dumping, and invasive species.



Use of appropriate management activities and developing a compatible management plan prevents destruction or degradation of this habitat type and promotes long-term maintenance of healthy Macon Ridge green ash ponds. Such management strategies should include:

- Preventing conversion of existing natural ponds to other land uses
- Maintain natural species composition by following appropriate hardwood management techniques
- Surveying for and removal of any invasive plant species (exotics or woody) with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means
- No soil disturbance or other activities that alter natural waterflow, including from adjacent areas



Interior view of Macon Ridge green ash pond surrounded by agricultural fields.