

A STATEMENT ON THE  
PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE KIRTLAND'S WARBLER  
MANAGEMENT AREA OF THE HURON NATIONAL FOREST

The Kirtland's Warbler is dependent upon the dynamic processes of nature for its survival. Were it not for ecological factors such as fire, plant succession, etc., this warbler probably would never have been. Man, because of his dependence also upon the dynamics of nature, has altered many of the natural processes to better meet his own needs. Of recent years, however, some have realized that man cannot alter natural processes at the total expense of other life forms. So in some cases man has now taken some steps to prevent the extirpation, or extinction, of some species that have been threatened by the alterations he has made. Thus it was that particular areas were dedicated to managing the nesting habitat of the Kirtland's Warbler by the U.S. Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

On the area so established on the Huron National Forest, the Forest Service has been cutting, burning and planting to reproduce young jack pine stands that provide the nesting habitat for these warblers. This has been one of the more positive programs in managing the habitat of an endangered species to date. The Michigan, Detroit and Pontiac Audubon groups have made financial contributions for the management of this area.

Outside the area specifically designated as the Warbler Management Area other measures are being employed which have probabilities for improving the nesting habitat. A rolling chopper is being used to reduce the slash from cutover jack pine areas and to create conditions conducive to natural reseeding of jack pine. If anticipated results are secured a considerable increase in habitat meeting the warbler requirements could result. Thousands of acres are being and are proposed for treatment in this manner.

In order to carry out programs to manage, use and protect our natural resources it is necessary to construct and maintain roads. That portion of the Huron National Forest that lies to the northeast of the Kirtland's Warbler Management Area to the Ausable River is now served only by the most primitive types of roads. This situation has been an obstacle to management of all the resources of that portion of the Huron. To overcome the problem, the Forest Service is developing a primary road system that is to tie into the county and state primary systems. It was originally planned to tie an east-west Forest Service road into Oscoda County Road No. 469 (Mack-Lake Road) which was designated as a county primary. County Road No. 469 goes through the warbler area. However, the Oscoda County Road Commission with the advice of the State Department of Highways has recently changed the classification of County Road No. 469 from primary to local. In turn, the classification of County Road No. 404 (the east-west road to the south of Mack Lake) was changed from local

to primary. This road crosses the south portion of the warbler area. In order to tie the roads together the Forest Service road had to be relocated southward. The most feasible place for doing this crosses the warbler area in an area where there is an insignificant amount of nesting habitat.

There may be disadvantages to developing a high standard road across this area. There would be about 10 acres of the area used for the road. When the area adjacent to this road does become nesting habitat, traffic could be a potential hazard to birds flying across the road. Traffic noise may be a factor in causing nest failures. However, there is a jack pine area near the town of Escoda that lies between two hard-topped busy roads that are only one mile apart. It was heavily used for nesting for many years, until the trees grew beyond suitable warbler habitat. Traffic noise in this case did not cause desertion or abandonment of the area.

In the very complex and sometimes controversial management of natural resources, the real art of management comes in blending the uses and protection so that as many demands as possible can be met. It is a fact that access roads are necessary to manage the resources of the forest. It is also recognized that some will consider it to be undesirable to construct a new road across the Girtland's Warbler

Management Area. To offset any possible undesirable effects and build this road on the proposed location the following management decisions have been made:

1. Establish a strip 300 feet on each side of this road that would not be managed to produce jack pine. The strips will be solidly planted to red pine or left in oak. These strips plus the road clearing will create a zone about 600 feet wide of non-nesting habitat. This will greatly reduce the possibility of birds flying across the proposed road and being struck by vehicles. It would, as a secondary effect, serve to reduce or absorb the traffic noise and also provide a break in an otherwise extensive monotype of jack pine which may be beneficial to other forms of wildlife.
2. Add all of sections 13 and 14, T25N, R21E (about 900 acres) to the Kirtland's Warbler Management Area which would more than compensate for the acreage reduction of the nesting habitat in the proposed road corridor.
3. Consider closing off some of the service roads in the area to reduce indiscriminate travel within the area which would result in disturbance of nesting birds.

to feel that these measures will make possible the construction and upgrading of the proposed and present road systems through this area without sacrificing the integrity of its primary purpose.

It is also pointed out that with about four and one-half miles of Oscoda County Road No. 489 bordering on and running through the warbler area, and with the upgrading of an additional one and one half miles of Forest Service road to tie into 489 there would have been a total of six miles of primary road in the area.

Under the present proposed system three miles of 489 would be dropped from the primary system. With the one mile of County 604 that has been added to the system, plus the one and one half miles of Forest Service primary road proposed to be constructed on a new location, plus one and one half of County 489 that will remain on the primary system the total primary system will add up to four miles or two miles less than the original primary system using 489.

JOHN VON BANGEN, SUPERVISOR

HERON-MANISTEE NATIONAL FOREST

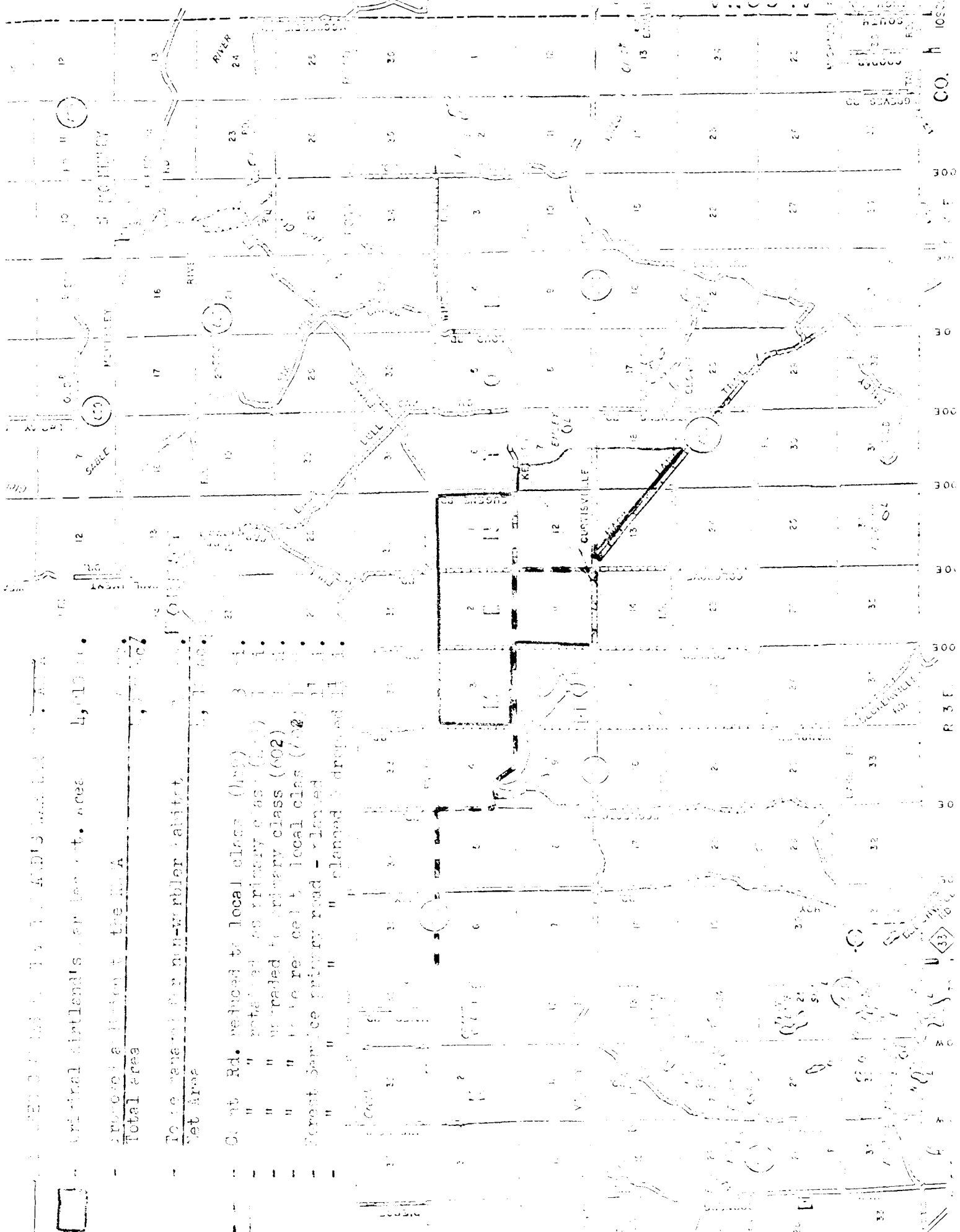
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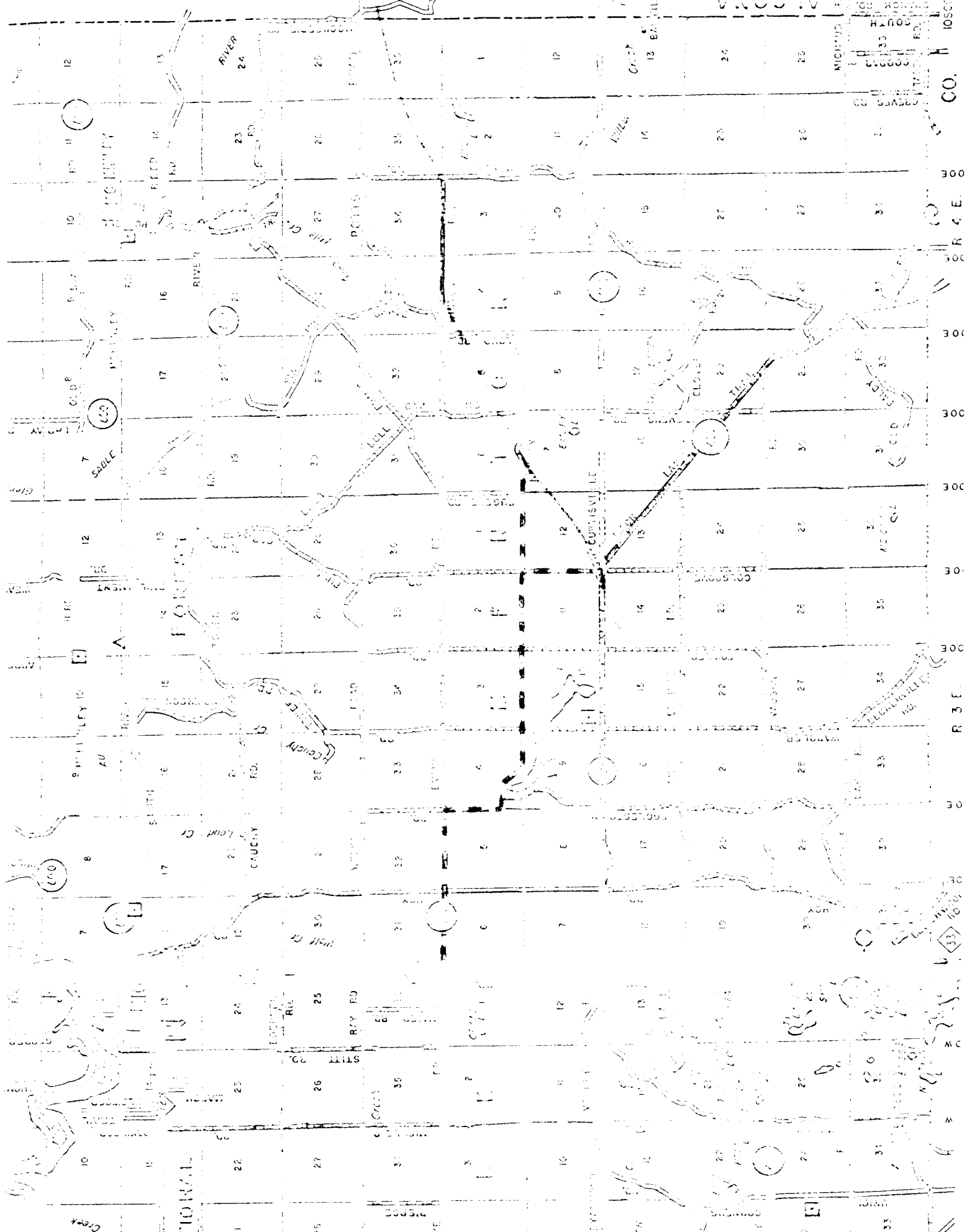
Original dipthend's per hect. area 4,100

Improved addition to the W.A. Total area 4,100

To be removed for run-walker habitat Net Area 4,100

- Court Rd. reduced to local class (100)
- " " retained as primary class (100)
- " " upgraded to primary class (602)
- " " to be reduced to local class (100)
- Forest Service primary road - retained
- " " planned & dropped





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