

**From:** Giffen, Neil R.  
**To:** [Becker, James M](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Question about a former area of "very high biological significance" on the Clinch River Site  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 08, 2017 8:01:11 AM  
**Attachments:** [Nature Conservancy BSR Table.pdf](#)  
[Nature Conservancy BSR Map.pdf](#)  
[Nature Conservancy BSR Descriptions.pdf](#)

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Jim,

This area was originally identified to be of significance in a 1995 Nature Conservancy report that studied biodiversity on the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). You are correct when you say that the area was not noted in the 2009 Baranski report because it is not part of the reservation. However, there is still a portion of that area that is on the reservation (shown as RA22 in the 2009 Baranski Report). The current description of that area in the ORR natural areas database is the following:

### **RA22 GRASSY CREEK SECURITY SITE**

**Location:** Northwest-facing slope of Chestnut Ridge in the Grassy Creek watershed. Grid E5; section 2E.

**Size:** 43.1 acres (17.4 ha)

**General description:** This area contains limestone outcrops on the slope. Two of the species found here, Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*), are uncommon on the ORR.

**Status species present:**

**Rare communities present:**

**Wetlands:**

**Other factors:** The area probably consisted of intact forest in 1935.

**Disturbances and external effects:** Gas line on northeastern edge. Adjacent to private land. Disturbance impacts = Low to Intermediate.

**Previous recognitions:** Part of BSR2-5.

The Nature Conservancy assigned biodiversity significance ranks (BSRs) to areas based on the resources found in the particular area. I have attached the table from the 1995 document that describes those ranks. The full 100 acre area noted in the 2006 Parr report was known as BSR2-5 in the 1995 Nature Conservancy report. I have attached the map and relevant text from that report that describes the site. The description is similar to how we describe the current RA22. Please also note BSR2-6, is another area of significance in that area. The reference for the 1995 Nature Conservancy report is the following:

TNC (The Nature Conservancy). 1995. "Oak Ridge Reservation, Biodiversity, and the Common Ground Process: Preliminary Biodiversity Report on the Oak Ridge Reservation." Unpublished report. TNC, Arlington, Virginia.

I hope this helps. If you have any questions or need anything further, let me know.

Neil

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**From:** Becker, James M [mailto:James.Becker@pnnl.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 03, 2017 8:00 PM  
**To:** Giffen, Neil R.  
**Subject:** Question about a former area of "very high biological significance" on the Clinch River Site

Hi Neil. I was wondering if you can help me with the following.

Parr and Hughes ([2006](#), [see Figures 12 and 13](#)) identified an area of about 100 ac in the eastern portion of the CRN Site that extended from just east of the CRBR footprint to the Clinch River as having "very high biological significance" due to confirmed and potential habitat for (unidentified species of) rare plants and wildlife. It is likely this area contained the (unidentified) rare plant species that were located just beyond the Clinch River Breeder Reactor (CRBR) footprint and which were protected from disturbance during redress (DOE 1984, [DOE et al. 1984](#)). However, Parr and Hughes ([2006](#)) was superseded by [Baranski \(2009\)](#) which does not indicate any important habitats occurring on the Clinch River Site ([see Figure 1](#) in Baranski 2009), including this approximate 100-ac area. [Baranski \(2009\)](#) did not indicate why this area identified by Parr and Hughes ([2006-TN5058](#)) was excluded.

My question is why this 100-ac area was excluded by Baranski (2009). Was it because the species found there (which are not identified) were no longer considered rare or of concern (would be odd given the area probably supported the rare plant species noted by DOE in 1984 and that the area was again referenced for rare plants by Parr and Hughes in 2006 after 20 years)? Was it because suddenly it was decided that since the Clinch River Site was not part of the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) that the area wasn't included (note that the Clinch River Site has not been part of the ORR since before the Clinch River Breeder Reactor and yet the 100-ac area was included in the Parr and Hughes [[2006](#)] document)?

If you could answer this for me, I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you,

Jim

## References

Baranski, M.J. 2009. *Natural Area Analysis and Evaluation, Oak Ridge Reservation*. ORNL/TM-2009-201, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Accession No. ?? TN 5133.

Parr, P.D. and J.F. Hughes. 2006. *Oak Ridge Reservation Physical Characteristics and Natural Resources*. ORNL-2006-G01046/Imh, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge,

Tennessee. Accession No. ?? TN5058.