

## GIBSON RIVER VALLEY

UTM Ref. 17TPV034776

Baxter Township, Georgian Bay  
Status: Recommend Heritage Site

Area: 90 ha

### *Site Characteristics*

This site is located along the northern boundary of the existing Gibson River Provincial Nature Reserve. It consists of a section of the floodplain of the Gibson River Waterway which flows through a well-defined valley that is partially filled in with alluvial deposits.

The vegetation along the river floodplain complex is described as a large wet meadow surrounded by rock barrens and upland deciduous forest on deep soils (Kamstra, 1992). The floodplain appears to be an important Eastern Massassauga rattlesnake habitat. Two snakes were observed on one day in July, 1991.

### *Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met*

1. **Diversity / Rare Species** - (B4) There were more species of reptiles (9) and amphibians (9) recorded in the Gibson River area than in any other area within the Severn River Corridor. This includes the observation of the nationally threatened (COSEWIC) Eastern Massassauga rattlesnake which moves between floodplain wet meadow and adjacent dryland sites.

### *Ownership, Disturbance and Sensitivity*

The area along the Gibson River Valley is crown land and is located adjacent to approximately 380 ha of protected land - the Gibson River Provincial Nature Reserve. Disturbance to the area is minimal with only few ATV/snowmobile trails in the reserve. The sensitivity of the site is related to the protection of suitable floodplain wetland and adjacent upland habitat for the Eastern Massassauga rattlesnake and other herptiles.