Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

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WISCONSIN
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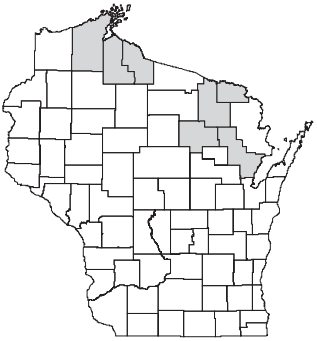
Braun's Holly Fern

(Polystichum braunii)

Federal Status: Not Listed
State Status: Threatened

Description: Braun's holly fern is distinctive among ferns. It grows in clumps from short, scaly rootstocks. The fronds (fern leaves) are a lustrous dark green and feather-shaped, tapering at both ends from a wide middle. The frond's midrib also resembles the rib of a feather. The midrib of the fern is chaffy with light brown papery scales. The undersides of the frond leaves are pale green and dotted with clusters of rust-colored spores which ripen in mid-summer.

Habitat: Braun's holly fern grows in the shade of rich woods, along rocky streambanks, in

glades, on shaded rock slides and among the shattered rocks in ravines. It prefers soil with abundant organic matter. In Wisconsin, this unusual fern has been found only in northern counties.

Forestry Considerations: Single-tree selection silviculture which maintains a closed canopy is compatible with the continued existence of Braun's holly fern. Clearcut harvest or heavy thinnings that open the canopy should be avoided.