



DEWEY MARSH

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI
Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, The Nature Conservancy
Priority Conservation Area

Funding for this project provided by The McKnight Foundation, which seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grantmaking, coalition-building and encouragement of strategic policy reform.


wisconsinwetlands.org


DEWEY MARSH WETLAND TYPES

Sedge meadow, coniferous bog, open bog,
coniferous swamp, shrub carr

Sedge meadow example — Christina Isenring

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem comprises nearly a thousand acres within the Dewey Marsh State Wildlife Area just north of Stevens Point in Portage County. Dewey Marsh is not a marsh at all, but rather is a large peatland featuring high quality sedge meadow, coniferous bog, open bog, coniferous swamp and shrub carr habitats. Current plant communities are influenced by recovery from a large fire in 1976 that burned large areas of coniferous bog and shrub carr. The eastern portion of the site is characterized by acidic soil conditions while the western and southern portions are more alkaline. The headwaters of Hay Meadow Creek, a slow, warm, soft-water tributary to the Wisconsin River, form here. This extensive and diverse wetland complex is relatively undisturbed and supports an abundance of wildlife and rare species. Large adjacent areas of upland forest increase the wildlife value of these wetlands. The Dewey Marsh State Wildlife Area is a popular destination for hunting and wildlife watching.

FLORA & FAUNA

Dewey Marsh features a large, intact sedge meadow with moderate species diversity. Dominant plants

include common lake sedge, yellow lake sedge, tussock sedge, wire-leaved sedge and bluejoint grass with some cattails and bur-reed. Within the meadow are islands of coniferous bog, open bog and coniferous swamp. Black spruce and tamarack cover about half of the coniferous bog areas. Underneath this open canopy, leatherleaf, Labrador tea and bog rosemary shrubs are abundant. The ground layer includes few-seeded sedge, creeping sedge and sphagnum mosses. Open bog areas are dominated by bog rosemary, leatherleaf and sphagnum mosses. Small patches of speckled alder shrubs and islands of aspen, birch and white pine are also present within this wetland.

An abundance and diversity of animals use this site, including some rare species. Dewey Marsh is considered a high priority bird conservation site for this region. Bird species include golden-winged warbler, Nashville warbler, sedge wren, common yellowthroat, swamp sparrow, sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie chicken, red-shouldered hawk, northern harrier, sandhill crane and the state threatened Henslow's sparrow.

THREATS

Recreational use of this site as well as low density development and agricultural practices on nearby lands may impact this site. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees.

ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State
Natural Areas Program website:
dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.



Common yellowthroat — Scott Franke

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest
Conservation Need (WDNR)
The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)