



HUIRAS LAKE WETLAND TYPES

Coniferous swamp, open bog, lowland hardwood swamp, marsh

Thomas Meyer

OZAUKEE COUNTY



HUIRAS LAKE

Property Owner: Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
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.

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Huiras Lake is a 26-acre pristine seepage lake surrounded by several hundred acres of forested wetlands within the Milwaukee River Basin. This is considered the least disturbed hardwood swamp in this region and is unusual because of the lack of exotic invasive species. Few coniferous swamps and bogs of this quality remain in southern Wisconsin; the site features many species more typical of northern Wisconsin wetlands. This Wetland Gem provides excellent habitat for migratory waterfowl and a diversity of other wildlife species in one of the fastest growing regions of the state where little high quality habitat remains.

FLORA & FAUNA

This Wetland Gem features a lake with emergent and floating-leaved marsh vegetation as well as bog and shrub carr shoreline habitats in a matrix of coniferous swamp and lowland hardwood swamp. The bog habitat consists of a narrow band of sphagnum moss with associated bog species, many of which are uncommon in southern Wisconsin. These include round-leaved sundew, purple pitcher plant, leatherleaf, huckleberry, small cranberry, round-leaved shinleaf, bog St. John's wort and bog bean.



Mallards — Dennis Malueg

Extensive lowland hardwood swamp habitat on the eastern edge of the lake is dominated by black ash, green ash, red maple, silver maple, yellow birch, paper birch and basswood. Coniferous swamp of large tamarack and white cedar features a groundlayer with a diversity of both southern and northern species including Canada mayflower, yellow bluebead lily, Jack-in-the-pulpit and marsh fern. The white pine population in these forested wetlands may be the southernmost natural population of this species in Wisconsin.

Huiras Lake's lush vegetation provides excellent waterfowl nesting and stopover habitat. The wild character of this Wetland Gem makes the site highly valuable wildlife habitat in the rapidly urbanizing southeastern portion of Wisconsin.

THREATS

Most of the land surrounding this natural area is privately owned; potential for future development and degradation of these wetlands is high. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.

ACCESS

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

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)
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust



White water lily — Kate Redmond