



JAY CREEK

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area,

WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site

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.



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Eric Epstein, Thomas Meyer



JAY CREEK WETLAND TYPES

Coniferous swamp

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This riverine Wetland Gem features a high quality coniferous swamp exemplifying a plant community that is rare and found only in the bed of the extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin – white pine-red maple swamp. These wet woods flank Jay Creek, a fast-moving, cold, softwater stream that supports brook trout. While this is a relatively small site (360 acres), it is located in close proximity to expansive public lands like the Black River State Forest. Jay Creek wetlands support a number of rare plant and animal species.

FLORA & FAUNA

High quality coniferous swamp with a canopy of white pine and red maple grows on gently sloping sands at this site. The shrub layer is dominated by winterberry and also includes blueberry, huckleberry and alder. The ground layer is dominated by cinnamon fern on a dense mat of sphagnum moss. Other plants include three-leaved goldthread, American starflower, Canada mayflower and yellow bluebead lily. Near the stream, black spruce, paper birch, yellow birch and tamarack are mixed in the canopy. American eelgrass and floating-leaved bur-reed grow within the stream channel. Several rare plants, including northern long sedge and Massachusetts fern, grow at this site.



Cinnamon fern — Kate Redmond

These forested wetlands support diverse and abundant wildlife. Bird species include broad-winged hawk, pileated woodpecker, veery, ovenbird, red-breasted nuthatch, pine warbler, Canada warbler and black-throated green warbler. Mature coniferous swamps of this type in the Central region support a number of rare animals, including northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk and four-toed salamander. Jay Creek itself supports brook trout and a diverse assemblage of macroinvertebrates, including two rare dragonflies.

THREATS

Agriculture and other land uses in the Jay Creek watershed may affect the health of the creek and associated wetlands. 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.



Ovenbird — Brian Hansen

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
Biotic Inventory and Analysis of the Black River State Forest / Meadow Valley Landscape (WDNR)