



POKEGAMA-CARNEGIE WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Alder thicket, marsh, sedge meadow

DOUGLAS COUNTY



POKEGAMA-CARNEGIE WETLANDS

Property Owners: WDNR, Douglas County, City of Superior
Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Coastal Wetland Inventory Primary Site, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area, National Estuarine Research Reserve (proposed)

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Wisconsin Wetlands
ASSOCIATION

wisconsinwetlands.org

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Located at the headwaters of the Pokegama and Little Pokegama Rivers, this site comprises Dwight's Point & Pokegama Carnegie Wetlands State Natural Areas, which include portions of the Superior Municipal Forest. Pokegama-Carnegie is the state's most expansive and intact example of red clay flat wetlands, found only in the Superior area in Wisconsin. The site's wetland complex of alder thicket, sedge meadow and marsh on slightly undulating clay soils supports considerable floristic diversity including numerous and sizable populations of rare plants, some of which are only found locally. Continued protection of this site is critical to the persistence of several rare plant species. The size and quality of the site's wetland communities make it excellent habitat for a diversity of amphibians and birds.

FLORA & FAUNA

Shrubby areas of the site are dominated by speckled alder and willows while the sedge meadows are dominated by coarse-leaved sedges and bluejoint grass. Small pools support a variety of marsh vegetation. The wetlands are stippled with small "islands" of trees including tamarack, white pine, white spruce, red pine, trembling aspen and balsam poplar. Riverside shallow marsh areas support bur-reed, cattail, bulrushes, wild rice and arrowheads in shallow areas and coontail, pondweeds and water lilies in deeper waters. Rare plants found at the site include the endangered clustered bur-reed and small yellow water crowfoot as well as the threatened sweet colt's foot.

Amphibians found at the site include the wood frog, spring peeper, green frog, leopard frog, eastern gray tree frog and American toad. This site is known to support many bird species, including yellow warbler, golden-winged warbler, alder flycatcher, white-throated sparrow, swamp sparrow, song sparrow, sora, Virginia rail, common snipe, American woodcock, sharp-shinned hawk, northern goshawk and common raven.

THREATS

Regional growth and development and growing site use by motorized recreational vehicles increase the probability of human impacts on the site. Monitoring is needed to detect and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species as well as to assess the hydrologic impacts of several right-of-ways crossing these wetlands. A spill from an existing petroleum pipeline crossing the site would be catastrophic for wetland species. Proposed expansion of a nearby oil refinery may result in indirect impacts due to the extensive development that would be necessary to support this project.

ACCESS

Parts of the site are accessible by trail and others are accessible from the water; see the State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna and the Parks & Recreation Department section of the City of Superior's website: www.ci.superior.wi.us.

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
 Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes (WDNR)
 Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
 Superior Mixed Forest Ecoregion: A Conservation Plan (TNC)
 Douglas County Natural Areas



Cope's gray tree frog — Allen Blake Sheldon