

# OTTAWA LAKE Self-Guided Canoe Trail



# WELCOME TO THE OTTAWA

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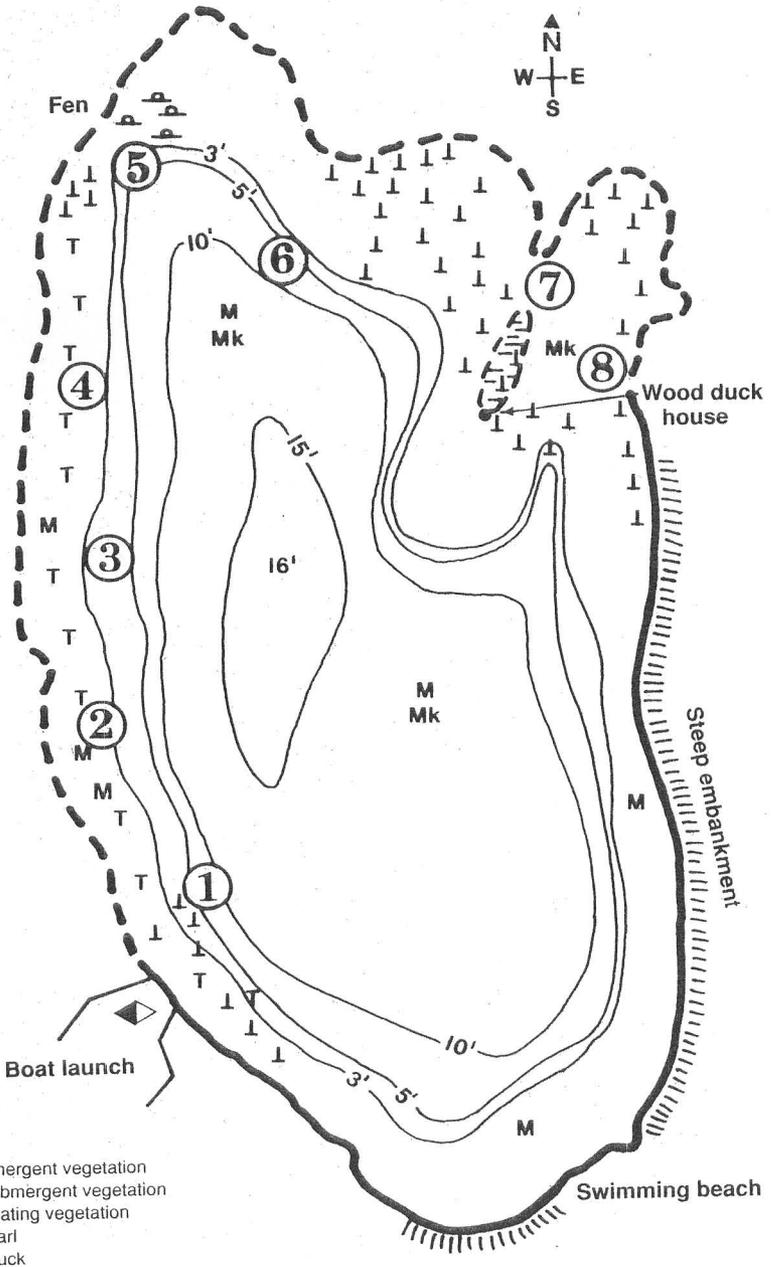
The trail consists of eight stops and takes approximately 30 - 40 minutes to complete. Each stop is marked by a numbered buoy. This pamphlet describes what you might see at a particular buoy, or describes one of the many fascinating features of Ottawa Lake. We hope you enjoy your trip and remind you to please canoe safely.



*"A basic ecological truth which we still ignore, is the interdependence and interaction of all living things, including man"*

– Sigurd Olson

# OTTAWA LAKE SELF-GUIDED CANOE TRAIL



# LAKE CANOE TRAIL

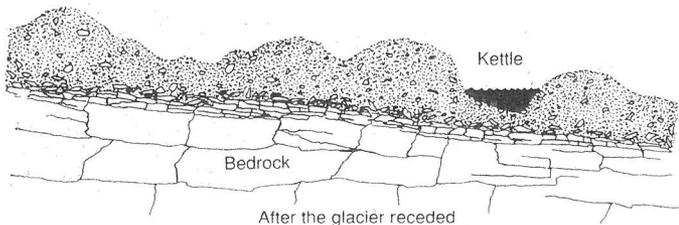
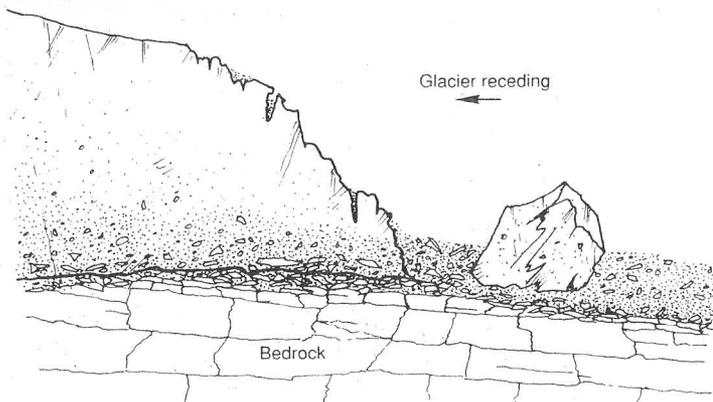


## STOP #1

Ten thousand years ago, the Wisconsin Glacier shaped the Kettle Moraine State Forest area, including Ottawa Lake. Like other kettle lakes, Ottawa Lake was formed when a giant chunk of ice broke off the glacier. Dirt and debris which were dragged along by the glacier covered the stranded ice. When temperatures rose, the chunk of ice melted and the soil that covered it sank to the bottom of the newly formed lake.

Groundwater feeds the lake through bubbling springs, like the one visible at the east end of the swimming beach.

The State of Wisconsin is working hard to preserve this shallow, 27-acre, glacial relic and has purchased all of the surrounding land.

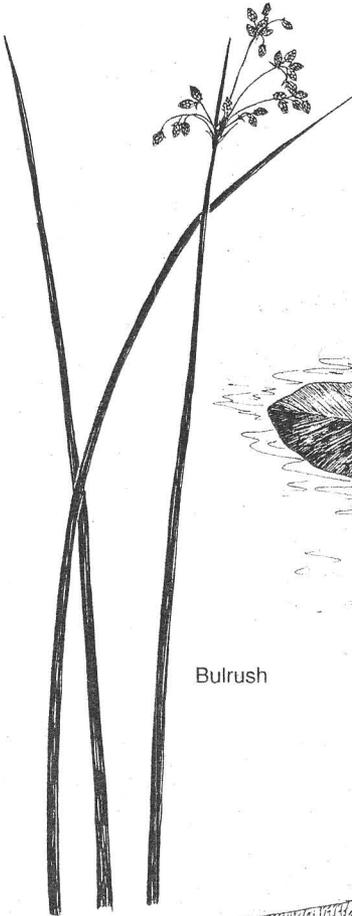




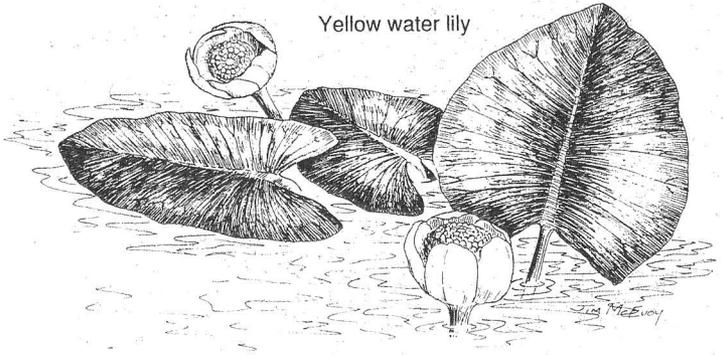
## STOP #2

Aquatic plants are important food sources for many of the animals living in and around the lake. Birds and waterfowl feed on the seeds while muskrats and other mammals eat the leaves, roots and stems. Plants also provide shelter and protection for fish.

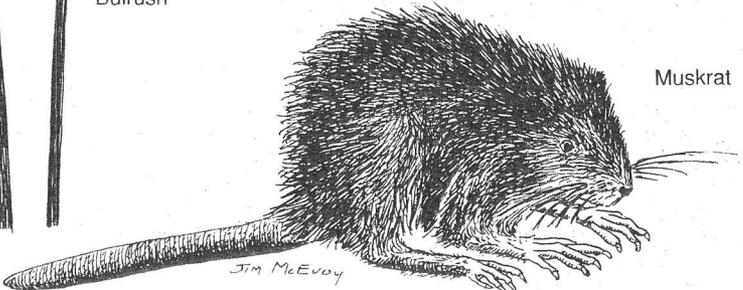
One of the most prominent aquatic plants is the bulrush which has a round stem and emerges about three feet out of the water. Another very visible plant is the yellow water lily, which has floating yellow flowers and oval-shaped leaves.



Bulrush



Yellow water lily



Muskrat

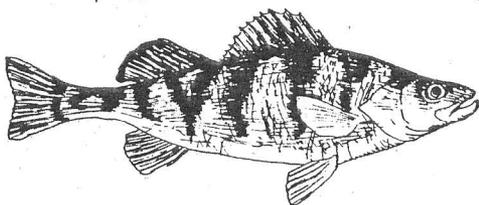


## STOP #3

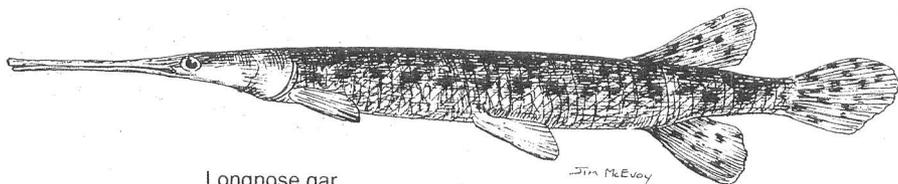
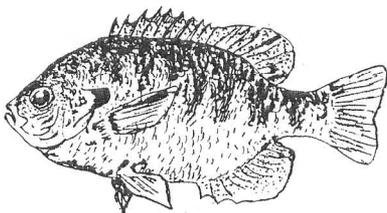
A variety of fish inhabit Ottawa lake including bluegills, yellow perch, black crappies, rock bass, largemouth bass and northern pike. Bluegills are so abundant they outnumber the available food supply. Few ever reach their maximum growth potential. A non-game predator fish called the longnose gar has been introduced to reduce the numbers of bluegills competing for the limited food supply, allowing the remaining fish to grow larger.

In addition to stocking predator fish, fisheries biologists can build up populations of larger game fish by protecting them with bag limits and catch and release fishing rules. A healthy population of predators such as bass, helps keep the prolific bluegill's population balanced.

Yellow perch



Bluegill



Longnose gar

Jim McEvoy

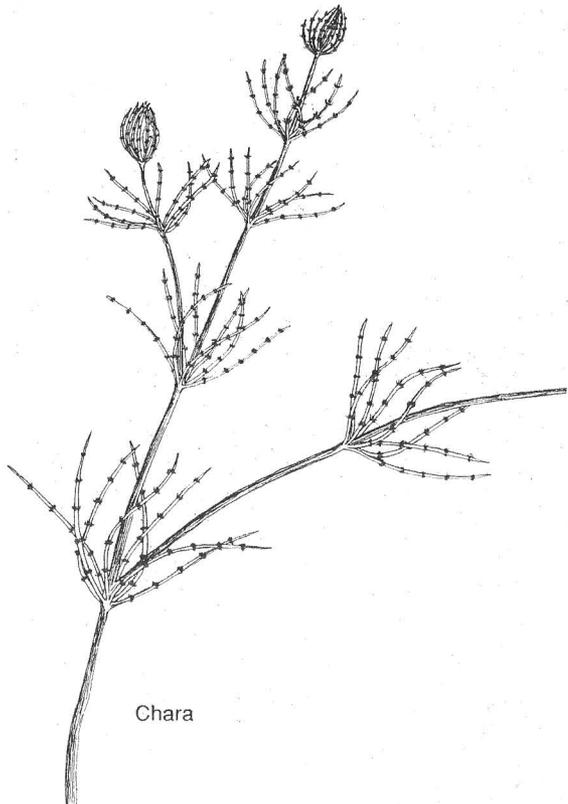


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## STOP #4

The bottom of Ottawa Lake is thick with sediment called marl. Marl looks somewhat like clay, but if you dig into it with your paddle, you will see that, unlike clay, it is very loose and stirs up easily. Marl is formed by the decomposition of shells and the excretion of lime from chara, the small plants covering most of the lake bed.

Marl contains large amounts of calcium carbonate, or lime and at one time was excavated, dried, and sold to farmers as a soil conditioner for their fields. Abandoned marl pits and the remains of an old marl processing plant can be seen across the road from the entrance to Ottawa Lake on the Scuppernong Nature Trail.

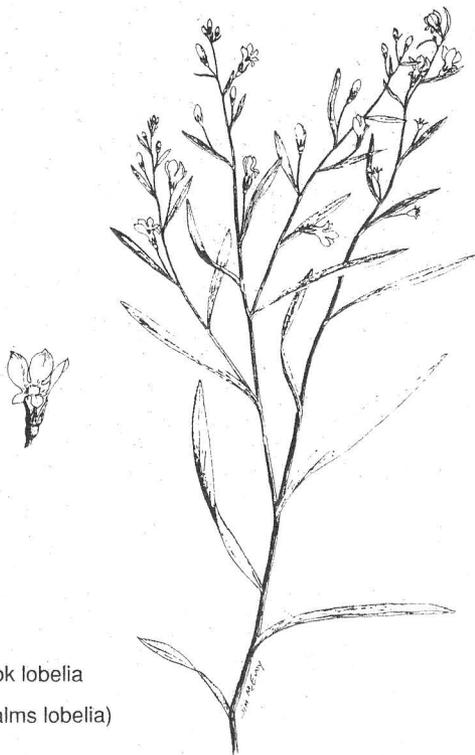




## STOP #5

The land adjacent to the northwest corner of Ottawa Lake is part of a state natural area called the Ottawa Lake Fen. Although a fen looks like a bog, it has characteristics that are all its own. Fens are spring-fed with alkaline water, favorable to plants like the small fringed gentian, grass of Parnassus and Kalms lobelia. Bogwater tends to be acidic and plays host to a different plant community.

In the past, many wetland areas were filled in or drained, for agriculture and development, destroying precious habitat for many unique plants and a variety of wildlife. Today, we recognize the value of wetlands to wildlife, flood control, and their water filtering capabilities and are more inclined to protect them.



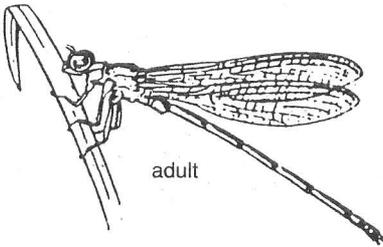
Brook lobelia  
(Kalms lobelia)



## STOP #6

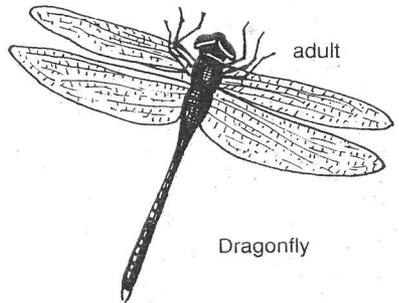
If you paddle through the bulrushes that lie ahead, look closely. On some of them you should see the skins of damselflies and dragonflies. Both of these insects start their lives under the water and breathe through gills. After 3-5 years the nymphs crawl up on the bulrushes, grow wings, and emerge from their skins. As adults, they look like small helicopters and can be seen flying around the lake on sunny days hunting for small insects, like mosquitos.

These insects look similar, but are easy to tell apart. Damselfly nymphs are skinny and have three feathery gills extending from the end of their abdomens. Dragonfly nymphs are fatter and don't have visible gills. Adult dragonflies hold their wings out at their sides when resting, while adult damselflies rest with their wings pulled up behind their backs.



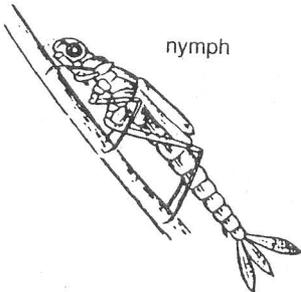
adult

Damselfly

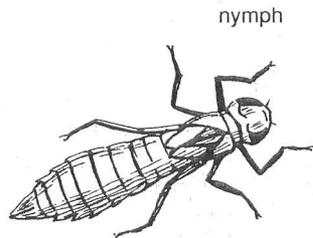


adult

Dragonfly



nymph

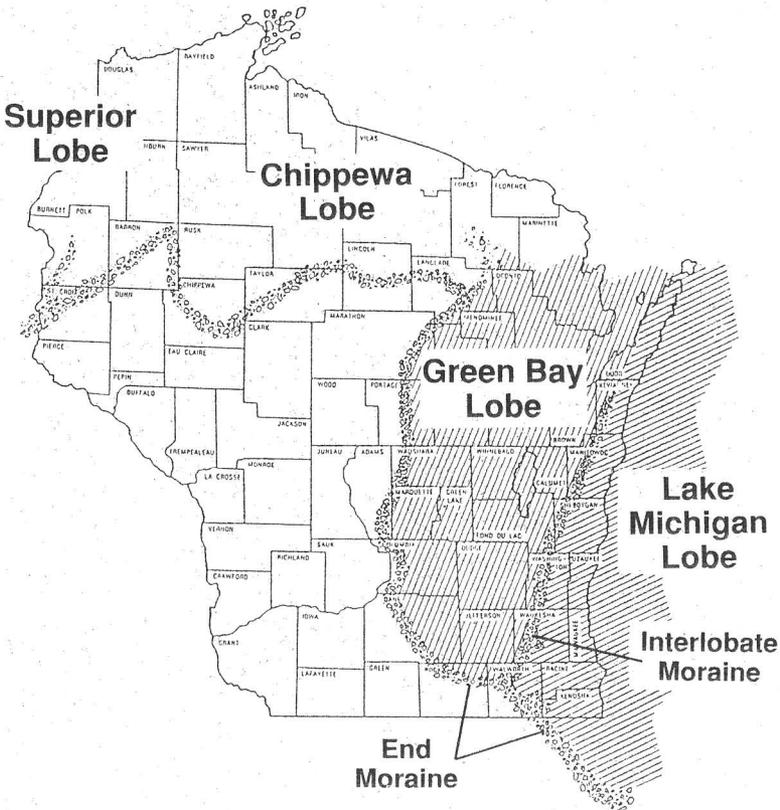


nymph



## STOP #7

Look out over the beach. In the distance you will see a large ridge. This ridge is actually part of the interlobate moraine that stretches over 120 miles from Whitewater Lake to Green Bay. This moraine was created when two parts of the Wisconsin glacier, the Green Bay and Lake Michigan lobes, collided with each other. This collision created such pressure and friction that the two lobes melted back. As the lobes melted, they deposited large amounts of soil and rock that built up and formed this impressive moraine.



The ice sheet that covered most of Wisconsin during the last glacial epoch.



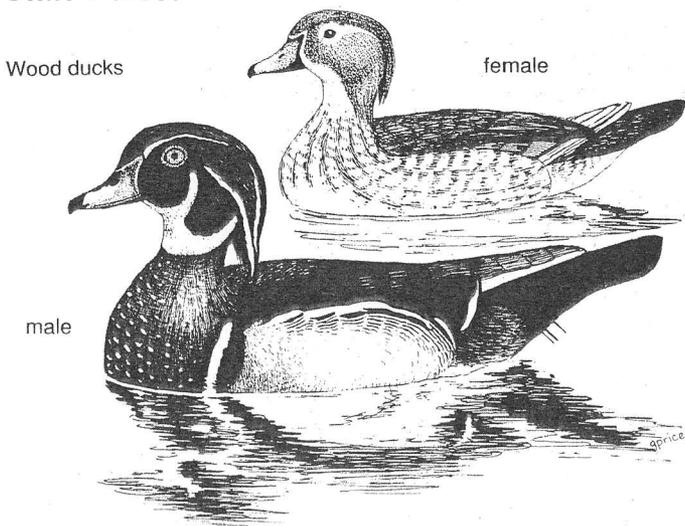
## STOP #8

Between here and the shore you will see a wood duck house. Wood ducks are one of Wisconsin's most colorful ducks and, as their name suggests, are often associated with woodlands. Male wood ducks are easily identified by the long crest of feathers covering its head. The female is grayish-brown and has a bold, white eyespot.

Wood ducks usually live in cavities of trees. Many of the trees they need for nesting, however, have been cut down to answer the demand for lumber, fuel and farmland causing wood duck numbers to decline dramatically. Wood duck houses, like the one you see here, have helped bring this beautiful bird back to abundance.

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Congratulations! You have just completed the Ottawa Lake Canoe Trail. We hope you have enjoyed the trip and encourage you to stop at the ranger station at the entrance to Ottawa Lake, or at the State Forest Visitor Center 3 miles west of Eagle on State Highway 59 to find out about other forest offerings. Enjoy the rest of your visit to the Kettle Moraine State Forest.



## Notes



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