



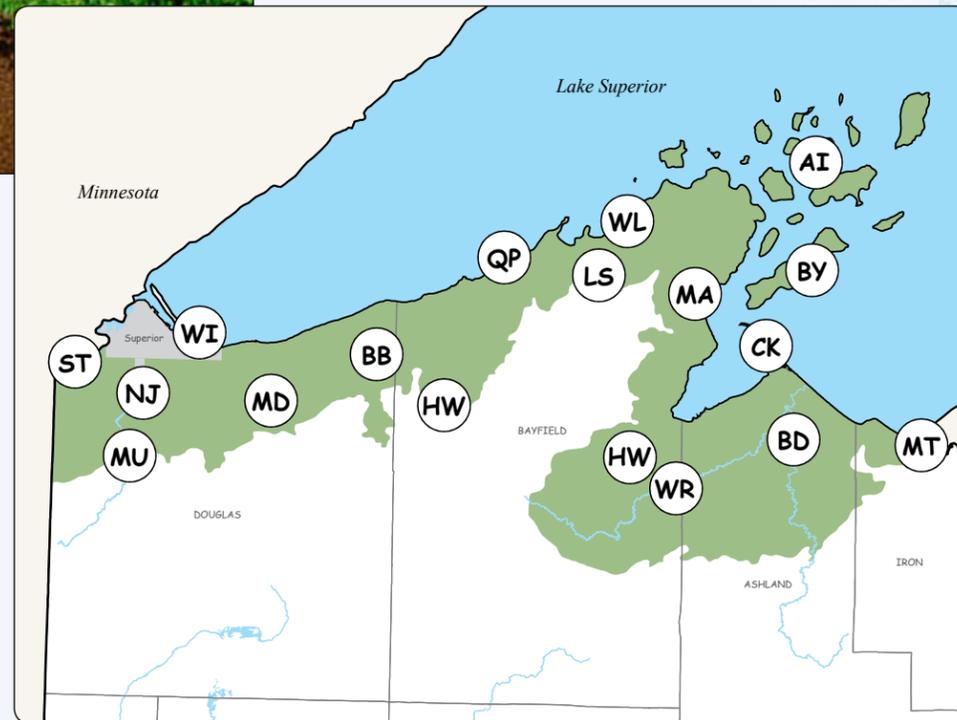
Whittlesey Creek

# Superior Coastal Plains

## *ecological landscape*

### Attributes and Characteristics

This ecological landscape is centered on the low plains of Lake Superior's south shore. Two large pockets of this low plain occur in Wisconsin: one between the City of Superior and Port Wing and the other between Ashland and the Montreal River. The Bayfield Peninsula ridge splits these low plains. This ecological landscape includes the near-lake portion of the ridge as well as the Apostle Islands. An escarpment, rising several hundred feet above the plain, marks this ecological landscape's southern boundary. Underlying this landscape is a very thick band of clay deposited when lake levels were considerably higher. Outcroppings of sandstone bedrock occur along the northern margin of the Bayfield Peninsula and along the shores of some of the Apostle Islands.



### Legacy Places

- BD Bad River
- BB Bois Brule River
- HW Highway 2 Grasslands
- LS Lake Superior South Shore Streams
- MU Manitou Falls-Black River
- MD Middle River Contact
- MT Montreal River
- MA Mt. Ashwabay
- NJ Nemadji River and Wetlands
- ST St. Louis Estuary and Pokegama Wetlands
- WR White River

### Along the Lake Superior shoreline

- AI Apostle Islands
- BY Big Bay
- CK Chequamegon Point-Kakagon Sloughs
- QP Quarry Point to Bark Point
- WL Western Lake Superior Drowned River Mouths
- WI Wisconsin Point

### Key characteristics:

- » Coastal estuaries
- » Sandscapes
- » Boreal conifer-hardwood forest
- » Shoreline cliffs
- » Red clay soils
- » Bottomland hardwood forest in the major rivers
- » Migratory bird concentration sites

### Size:

- » 1,415 square miles
- » 905,800 acres (2.5% of Wisconsin)

### Population:

- » 56,000 (1.1% of Wisconsin's population)

### Notable species:

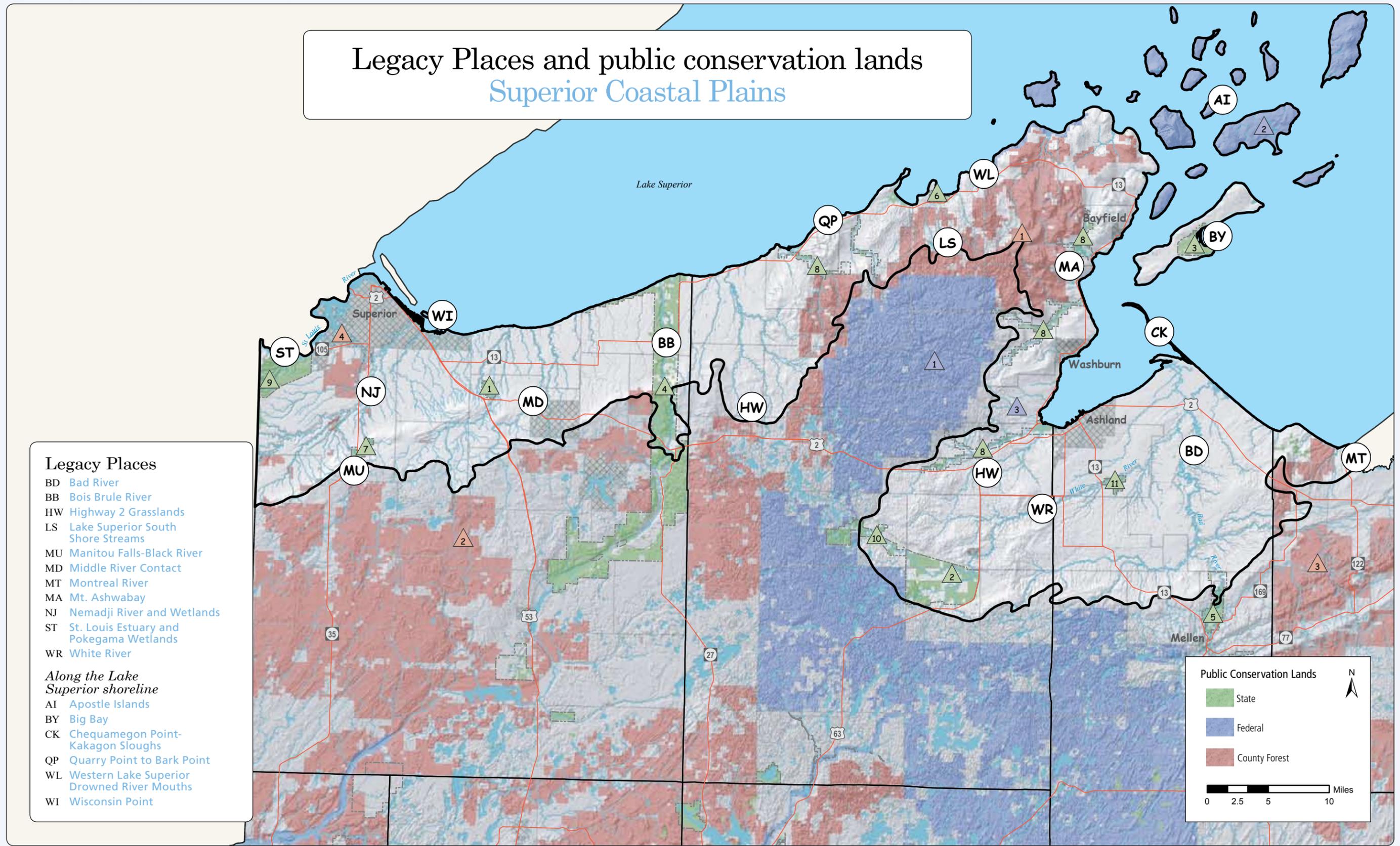
- » Anadromous fish
- » Lake whitefish
- » Lake herring
- » Ninespine stickleback
- » LeConte's sparrow
- » Piping plover
- » Common tern
- » Auricled twayblade orchid
- » Butterwort
- » Wild rice
- » Vasey rush

### Natural communities:

(See Appendix B for descriptions)

- » Bedrock shore
- » Boreal forest
- » Dry and moist cliffs
- » Emergent aquatic
- » Great Lakes barrens
- » Great Lakes beach
- » Great Lakes dune
- » Interdunal wetland
- » Open bog
- » Shore fen
- » Submergent aquatic
- » Surrogate grasslands

Figure 41: Legacy Places and public conservation lands of the Superior Coastal Plains



## Legacy Places and public conservation lands Superior Coastal Plains

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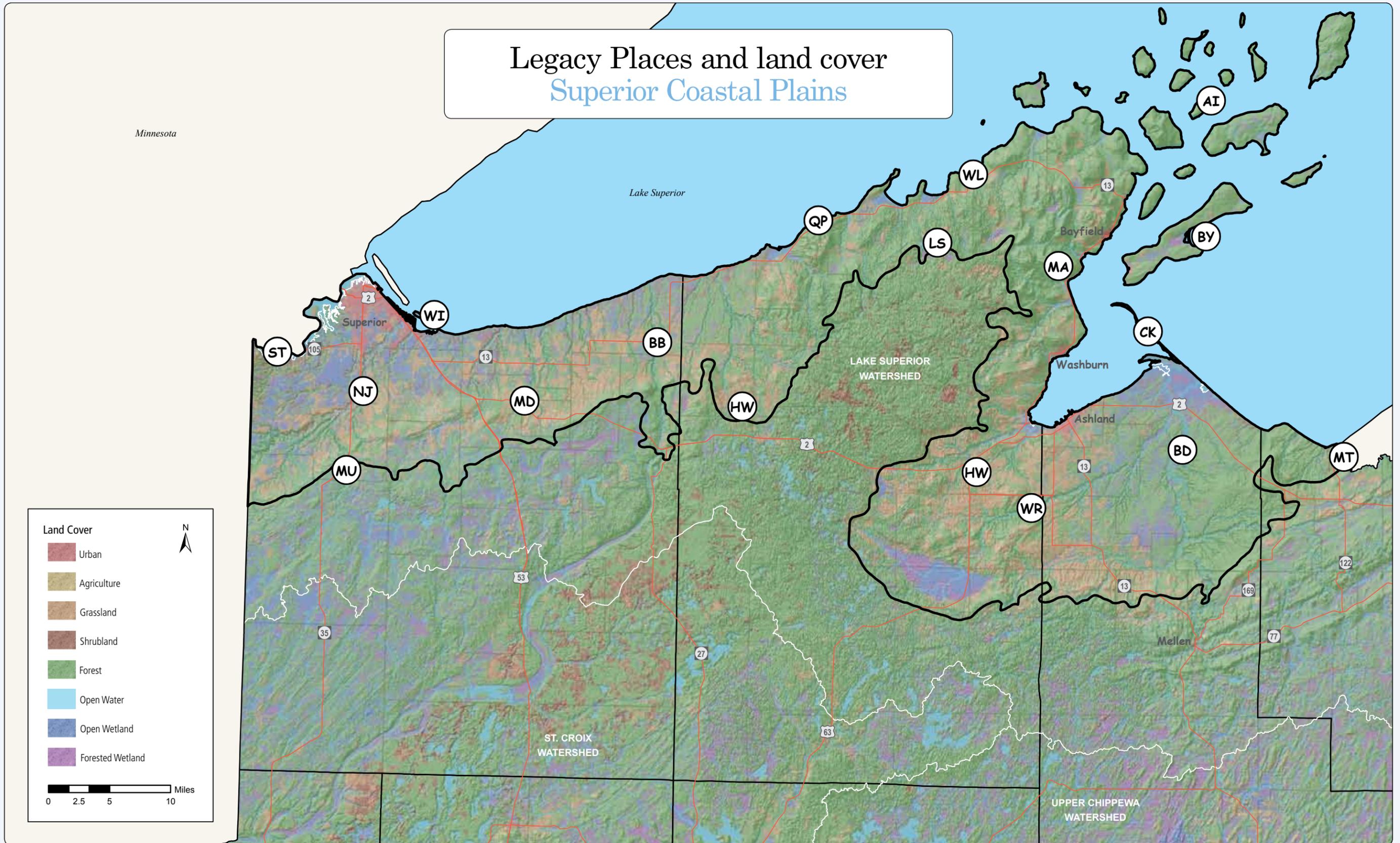
**Public Conservation Lands**

- State
- Federal
- County Forest

0 2.5 5 10 Miles

N

Figure 42: Legacy Places and land cover of the Superior Coastal Plains



## Superior Coastal Plains *ecological landscape*

There are very few natural lakes within this landscape but many small rivers and streams flowing north to Lake Superior dissect the lake plain and peninsula. Soils are moderately well drained (on the peninsula) to poorly drained (where the red clay is near the surface). Before European settlement, white pine, white spruce and paper birch were the dominant trees on uplands in the area and this was the only area in the state to support sizable tracts of boreal forest. Tamarack and white cedar were dominant on the forested lowlands. Trembling (quaking) aspen is now dominant throughout the landscape as a result of past disturbance and the succession of idle farmland, as well as active management for earlier succession forests. Boreal forest remnants consisting of spruce, fir, white pine and associated hardwoods (aspen, balsam poplar, white birch, and red maple) still exist.

The majority of this ecological landscape remains forested, with only a small amount of the land being used for agriculture. Urban development threatens some coastal wetlands. The Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs are of special ecological interest. Public lands within this area include the Apostle Island National Lakeshore,

Chequamegon National Forest, Brule River State Forest, St. Louis River Streambank Protection Area, Superior Municipal Forest, and several State Parks and Natural Areas.

### Conservation Needs and Opportunities

The area's extensive, high quality coastal wetlands and estuaries provide critical habitat for many Neotropical migratory songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and rare plants. Of particular conservation value are the Apostle Islands, Chequamegon Bay and Point, and the St. Louis River estuary. In addition to wetlands, the shoreline also consists of many sandstone cliffs and clay bluffs that harbor rare plant species.

Wisconsin is at the southern limit of the range of boreal forests and, as such, they have always been a rare element in the state. They were, however, a dominant community type in the Superior Coastal Plains. Today, remnants, none larger than 300 acres, exist at several scattered locations with the best potential restoration sites located near the Brule River and the Pokegama wetlands. Although not native to this area, a swath of grassland habitat running roughly between Superior and Ashland on fallow farm fields provides important habitat for many northern grassland birds, mammals, waterfowl, and amphibians.



Mouth of the Bois Brule River

ROBERT QUEEN

Figure 43: Land cover of the Superior Coastal Plains

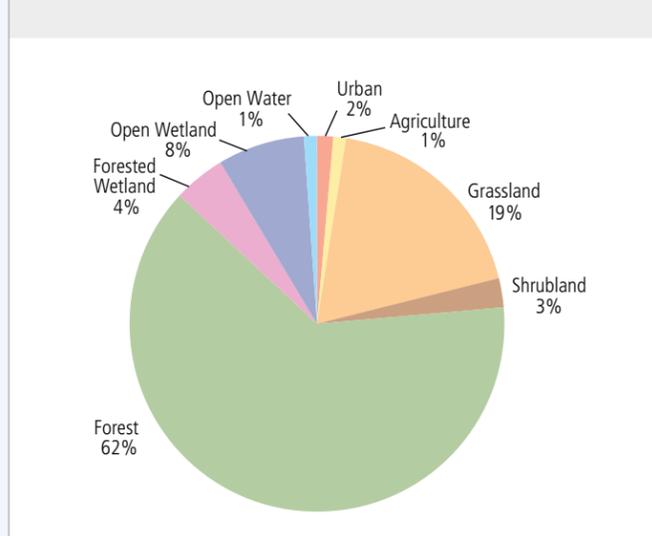


Figure 44: Public conservation and other land ownership in the Superior Coastal Plains

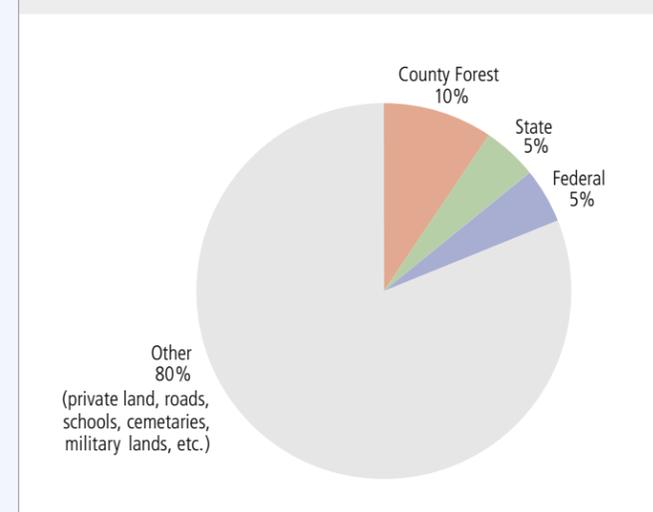
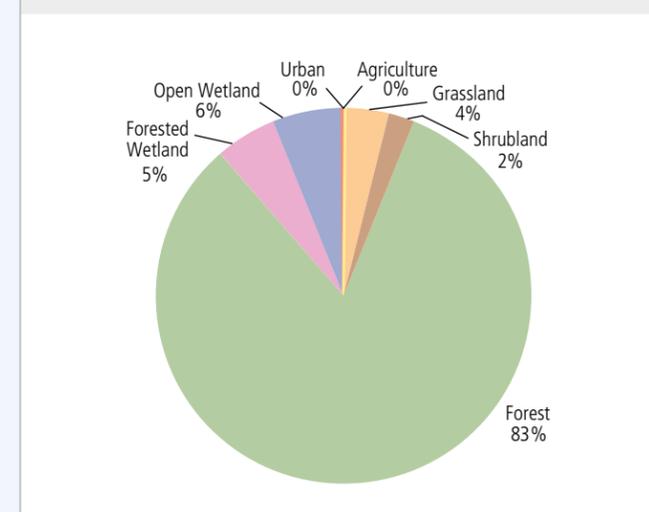
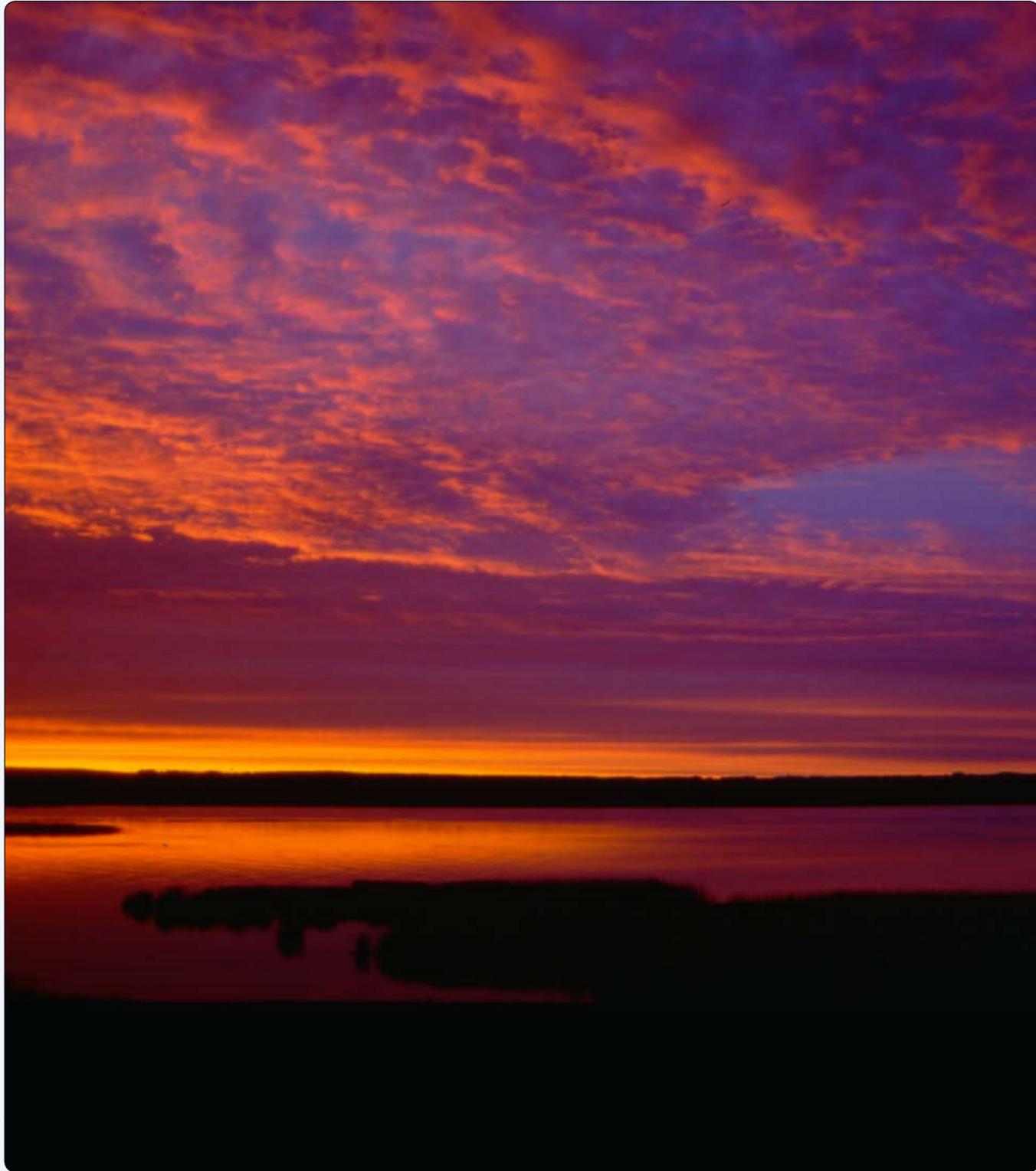


Figure 45: Land cover of public conservation land in the Superior Coastal Plains





Sunset on Chequamegon Bay

## Recreation Uses and Opportunities

Lake Superior and its shoreline draw visitors from throughout North America. The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore includes 21 islands and 12 miles of mainland shoreline, featuring pristine stretches of sand beach, spectacular sea caves, remnant old-growth forests, resident bald eagles and black bears, and the largest collection of lighthouses anywhere in the National Park system. With a series of primitive campsites scattered throughout the islands, the area offers a boating and paddling experience unparalleled in the Midwest.

The many streams and rivers flowing off the surrounding uplands through the Superior Coastal Plains offer excellent fishing, particularly for trout and salmon. Several of the rivers are popular paddling waters, notably the Brule and the Montreal. Chequamegon Bay hosts a very productive and diverse fishery including trout, salmon, pike, walleye and bass. Exceptional concentrations of migratory birds (waterbirds, songbirds, and raptors) occur at the western end of Lake Superior and attract bird watchers from across the region. Camping and hiking are popular in the several state and local parks situated along the string of waterfalls that runs along the escarpment at the southern edge of this ecological landscape. The North Country Trail passes through many of these parks but remains incomplete.

Given the heavy snowfall the area typically receives, snowmobiling is a very popular activity in the Superior Coastal Plains. Maintaining the long linear trail network here, and connections to adjacent ecological landscapes, remains a priority. Given the remote nature and low population density of much of the area, hunting is also a popular activity here.

## Public Conservation Lands

Map#	Property Name	Size (acres) <sup>1</sup>
<b>State</b>		
1	Amnicon Falls State Park	830
2	Bibon Swamp State Natural Area <sup>2</sup>	7,880
3	Big Bay State Park	2,300
4	Brule River State Forest <sup>2</sup>	15,090
5	Copper Falls State Park <sup>2</sup>	600
6	Lost Creek Bog State Natural Area	460
7	Pattison State Park <sup>2</sup>	1,100
8	South Shore Lake Superior <sup>2</sup> State Fish And Wildlife Area	5,390
9	St. Louis River Stream Bank Protection Area	6,230
10	White River State Fishery Area	1,430
11	White River State Wildlife Area <sup>2</sup> Miscellaneous Lands <sup>3</sup>	950 2,900
<b>Federal</b>		
1	Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest <sup>2</sup>	2,150
2	Apostle Islands National Lakeshore	41,100
3	Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge	300
<b>County Forest<sup>4</sup></b>		
1	Bayfield County Forest <sup>2</sup>	69,870
2	Douglas County Forest <sup>2</sup>	9,130
3	Iron County Forest <sup>2</sup>	7,630
4	Superior Municipal Forest	4,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>179,540</b>

<sup>1</sup> Actual acres owned in this Ecological Landscape.

<sup>2</sup> This property also falls within adjacent Ecological Landscape(s).

<sup>3</sup> Includes public access sites, fish hatcheries, fire towers, streambank and non-point easements, lands acquired under statewide wildlife, fishery, forestry, and natural area programs, small properties under 100 acres, and properties with fewer than 100 acres within this Ecological Landscape.

<sup>4</sup> Locations and sizes of county owned parcels enrolled in the Forest Crop Law are presented here. Information on locations and sizes of other county and local parks in this Ecological Landscape is not readily available and is not included here, except for some very large properties.

Superior Coastal Plains  
ecological landscape

# Legacy Places



Bad River

## BD Bad River

Size ..... Large  
Protection Initiated ..... Substantial  
Protection Remaining ..... Limited  
Conservation Significance ..... ★★★★★  
Recreation Potential ..... ★★

The Bad River flows through a wide variety of habitats in a relatively short span. Starting at the forested heights of the Penokee-Gogebic Range it quickly drops through deep forests. Copper Falls State Park, where the river drops over the escarpment, hosts spectacular canyons, streams and waterfalls. The park draws visitors year round and is popular with photographers, hikers, campers, and cross-country skiers. Many high quality waters feed the system, notably the White, Marengo, Brunsweler, Potato and Tyler Forks Rivers.

Below Copper Falls, the Bad River flows through lowland forests and then out to sloughs where it meets Lake Superior. Here, the Bad and White Rivers flow through the Bad River Indian Reservation. The Bad River tribe manages most of the land within the Reservation and because of their strong stewardship ethic this area retains significant natural resources.

## BB Brois Brule River

Size ..... Large  
Protection Initiated ..... Substantial  
Protection Remaining ..... Limited  
Conservation Significance ..... ★★★★★  
Recreation Potential ..... ★★★★★

The Bois Brule is one of the best known rivers east of the Mississippi for fishing, paddling, and beautiful scenery. The Brule contains resident brook, brown and rainbow trout. Lake, brown, and rainbow (steelhead) trout, along with coho and chinook salmon, migrate up the Brule annually from Lake Superior. Native Americans and early Euro-American settlers used the Brule, with a portage to the St. Croix River, as a critical travel link between Lake Superior and the Mississippi River.

The river itself has two distinct personalities. The upper river (the southern portion) flows through miles of coniferous bog and is fed by numerous springs. Where the river crosses the Copper Range, it begins a fall of 328 feet in the 18 miles to Lake Superior. Here, flashing cascades tumble over rocks and ledges between steep river bluffs forested with aspen, spruce, and balsam fir.

The Brule River State Forest, a long, narrow band of public land centered around the river, harbors a greater diversity of birds and mammals than any other northern Wisconsin area of similar size. The forest has many distinct landscapes that allow for a wide range of species such as deer, ruffed grouse, geese, bald eagle, osprey and songbirds. Hunting, camping, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are all popular activities on the State Forest. Within and adjacent to the State Forest, near where the Brule enters Lake Superior, there are opportunities to restore and manage significant stands of boreal forest. Much of the land outside the State Forest is within industrial forest ownership.

## HW Highway 2 Grasslands

Size ..... Small  
Protection Initiated ..... Limited  
Protection Remaining ..... Moderate  
Conservation Significance ..... ★★  
Recreation Potential ..... ★

Straddling US Highway 2 from Ashland to Superior is a series of grasslands that provide important habitat for many northern birds, mammals, waterfowl, and amphibians. These grassland communities are not native to the red clay plain but are the result of the conversion of forests to farmland after the northern forest was originally logged. Much of this area was once farmed for hay, pasture, and some small grains; however, now only a fraction is still actively used for agriculture. Fallow farmland is reverting to brush and forest, either naturally or by planting. Where wetlands have reverted to native vegetation or have been restored, they are well utilized by waterfowl from Lake Superior for resting and nesting. The adjoining old fields provide excellent feeding areas.

## LS Lake Superior South Shore Streams

Size ..... Large  
Protection Initiated ..... Substantial  
Protection Remaining ..... Moderate  
Conservation Significance ..... ★★★★★  
Recreation Potential ..... ★★★★★

A series of streams originate within the Bayfield sand barrens and make their way through the Superior Coastal Plains before entering Lake Superior. They provide a valuable corridor for a vast variety of wildlife species by connecting headwater reaches with extremely rare coastal estuaries. The high quality spawning beds of these streams produce an abundance of trout and salmon that attract large numbers of anglers to the streams and Lake Superior.

As development has occurred in the area, there has been an adverse impact on the water flow of many of these streams resulting in damaged in-stream habitat conditions. Some state lands occur along these streams, but a greater area is in need of protection, particularly in the headwaters, if the quality of the fisheries is to be maintained. Some of these important streams and rivers include the Iron (where the Orienta Dam was recently removed), Flag, Cranberry, Bark, Siskiwit, Raspberry, Onion, Pike, and Sioux Rivers and their tributaries.

## MU Manitou Falls - Black River

See the Northwest Sands ecological landscape.

## MD Middle River Contact

Size ..... Small  
Protection Initiated ..... Limited  
Protection Remaining ..... Moderate  
Conservation Significance ..... ★  
Recreation Potential ..... ★★

Located in Douglas County where the Middle River drops over the escarpment, this scenic area includes waterfalls and interesting geologic features. Lying between Amnicon Falls State Park and the Brule River State Forest, this area provides an opportunity to connect the two, as well as the grasslands to the north of USH 2. Several types of outdoor recreation that take advantage of the topography are possible here.

**MT Montreal River**

Size .....Large  
Protection Initiated .....Moderate  
Protection Remaining .....Moderate  
Conservation Significance.....★★★  
Recreation Potential .....★★★

Two main forks draining out of the northern highlands feed the Montreal River. After cutting through the Penokee-Gogebic Range, the river's considerable drop provides a spectacular valley studded with whitewater, waterfalls, and steep cliffs. Of particular note is a two mile stretch, the Montreal Canyon, where the river has cut through conglomerate, shale and sandstone, forming steep cliffs over 200 feet high. The Saxon and Superior Flowages lie upstream and downstream, respectively, from the canyon and directly influence water levels. Primary hardwood species in the valley include red oak, aspen, sugar and red maple, paper and yellow birch, and basswood. The most common conifers include red and white pine, white cedar, hemlock, fir, and spruce. The canyon harbors several rare species, with some cedar and spruce clinging to the sides of the canyon walls.

From the Penokee-Gogebic Range downstream to Lake Superior there is little access to the river and as a result it has considerable wilderness character. The river's fast moving water supports an excellent coldwater fishery of brook, brown, and rainbow trout. During the spring, steelhead and salmon move into the stretch from Lake Superior to Superior Falls. Warmwater species, particularly northern pike, muskellunge, and walleye, may be found in the vicinity of the two flowages. The river is a popular whitewater kayaking and canoeing destination.

**MA Mt. Ashwabay**

Size .....Small  
Protection Initiated .....Substantial  
Protection Remaining .....Limited  
Conservation Significance.....★★  
Recreation Potential .....★★

The sides of Mt. Ashwabay contain a core area of old-growth hemlock-hardwood forest (including a large sugar bush) that is important habitat for many northern bird species. There is an opportunity to manage a larger area for old-growth forest. The forest, on the slopes of Mt. Ashwabay, provides a scenic backdrop for residents and visitors to Bayfield and provides excellent habitat for Neotropical migrant birds.

**NJ Nemadji River and Wetlands**

Size .....Medium  
Protection Initiated .....Limited  
Protection Remaining .....Moderate  
Conservation Significance.....★★★  
Recreation Potential .....★

The river and its tributaries flow through areas of sand, loamy tills, and glacial outwash primarily in Minnesota and glacial lake-laid clays in Wisconsin. The pre-settlement vegetation was typical transition boreal forest, dominated by super-canopy white pine, main canopy spruce and balsam fir and white cedar. The deciduous component was white birch, aspen, and black ash. Current tree cover is dominated by deciduous trees but is slowly succeeding to conifer cover typical of pre-settlement conditions. Clay plain meadows and marshes are common in the upper reaches of the watershed. Terraces along the lower Nemadji support significant floodplain forest and marsh communities.

The Nemadji River and Wetlands drain into Lake Superior near the Superior municipal water system intakes and may affect the raw water quality of that system. The Superior system provides drinking water to approximately 29,600 customers.

**ST St. Louis Estuary and Pokegama Wetlands**

Size .....Large  
Protection Initiated .....Substantial  
Protection Remaining .....Moderate  
Conservation Significance.....★★★★  
Recreation Potential .....★★★

The St. Louis River estuary is a unique combination of industrial use and high quality natural resources. Given its deep river channel, the Superior-Duluth area has long played an important role in the country's rail and shipping transportation infrastructure. As a result, much of St. Louis Bay is heavily developed for industrial purposes. However, further upstream, particularly on the Wisconsin side, the river retains much of its wild character and provides habitat for a very large number of diverse plant and animal species.

The south side of the river contains substantial public ownership with many high quality habitats. The 4,500-acre Superior Municipal Forest harbors significant stands of mature coniferous forest, extensive emergent marsh, and wet clay flats supporting a mixture of shrub swamp and wet meadow. The coniferous forests here are composed primarily of species often associated with the boreal regions, with canopy dominants including white spruce, white pine, balsam fir, balsam poplar, and paper birch. Resident birds include many species associated with mature conifers, such as Blackburnian, black-throated green, pine, yellow-rumped, parula, and Cape May warblers. In addition to its significant natural resources, the Municipal Forest hosts an extensive network of motorized and non-motorized trails.

Further west lies the state-owned St. Louis River Streambank Protection Area, a large block of rough, deeply dissected, red clay landscape drained by the Red River and its tributaries. Some of the small terraces in the ravine bottoms contain mature stands of large white spruce, black ash, and balsam poplar. Upper portions of the St. Louis River Estuary, from Fond du Lac downstream to Oliver, feature extensive emergent marshes. Immediately adjacent to the state line lies Minnesota's 8,800-acre Jay Cooke State Park, which also contains extensive forests and marshes. To the south of the Municipal Forest and the Streambank Area lies the large Pokegama wetland

complex which contains a mix of open sedge meadows, forested wetlands, and pockets of small uplands supporting aspen, pine, birch, and fir. The wetland complex harbors many rare plants.

The St. Louis Estuary and Pokegama Wetlands drain into Lake Superior near the Superior municipal water system intakes and may affect the raw water quality of that system. The Superior system provides drinking water to approximately 29,600 customers.

**WR White River**

Size .....Large  
Protection Initiated .....Moderate  
Protection Remaining .....Moderate  
Conservation Significance.....★★★★  
Recreation Potential .....★★

Originating from a series of spring fed lakes that feed many tributaries, the White River flows from the Chequamegon National Forest, through Bibon Swamp, and via the Bad River into Lake Superior. The headwater streams are cold, fast, and highly productive. At Bibon Swamp, the river and its surroundings change; the flow slows, the river's course meanders extensively, and the valley floor widens. The vegetation types found in Bibon Swamp are unusually varied for such a topographically uniform basin. Natural communities present range from open bog to muskeg to wet conifer swamp. Because of the size and varied vegetation, the area hosts a variety of wildlife and is a vital connecting link between the extensive forests of the south and west and the Bad River corridor downstream. Downstream from this vast wetland, the river flows through a large forest block before entering the White River Flowage. From this impoundment, the river slowly winds through high quality forests and wetlands before joining the Bad River near its confluence with Lake Superior on the Bad River Indian Reservation.

The White River and its tributaries support a very productive cold water fishery. In its upper reaches of the watershed, brook and brown trout are abundant. Below the flowage, the river supports anadromous runs of trout and salmon. These significant runs, along with the quality fishing in the upper reaches, draw anglers from throughout the Midwest.

Superior Coastal Plains  
ecological landscape

# Legacy Places

## along the Lake Superior Shoreline



Lake Superior shoreline

*Extending roughly 150 miles from the City of Superior to the Montreal River, the Lake Superior shoreline is Wisconsin's wildest and least-developed segment of Great Lakes shore. Although urban development is limited to Superior, Ashland, and smaller settlements such as Washburn and Bayfield, scattered housing occurs along the shore. Along the undeveloped portions of the shore are drowned river mouths, sandy and rocky beaches, slumping clay bluffs, wave cut sandstone cliffs, and large sloughs containing wild rice. A multitude of streams flow across the coastal plain and empty into Lake Superior. Most are small with steep sides, but contain resident trout and also serve as important spawning waters for lake-run trout and salmon.*

*In response to the melting of the last glacier, Lake Superior's western end has been slowly tilting downwards toward the south and west. As a result, a series of "drowned" river mouths has formed. One of the best examples can be seen at the St. Louis River estuary, where the former river channel has been flooded by the lake, now enabling large ships to move upriver 11 miles to Gary, Minnesota. Most of the Douglas County shoreline is rather low and heavily forested. About nine miles of the shore is within the project boundary of the Brule River State Forest.*

*The Bayfield County shoreline becomes more rugged and undeveloped. East of Quarry Point are actively eroding clay bluffs, some rising over 100 feet. A stretch from Squaw Bay to Sand Bay is part of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and contains sculptured, multi-colored, sandstone bluffs and some impressive sea caves. The Red Cliff Indian Reservation, at the tip of the Bayfield Peninsula, also contains extensive bluff lands. Just west of Ashland is the newly-established Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Whittlesey Creek is an important spawning ground for coho salmon and there is hope that it might someday serve as a point of reintroduction for the nearly-extinct strain of lake-run brook trout known as "coasters."*

*The Ashland County shoreline is dominated by the Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs, an extensive estuary with very significant ecological values that lie entirely within the Bad River Indian Reservation. The lake shore of Iron County is fairly wild and roadless and characterized by extensive red clay bluffs. Saxon Harbor is a popular boat launching and recreational spot. The Montreal River forms the border between Wisconsin and Michigan, with Superior Falls located very close to the river's mouth.*

## Superior Coastal Plains *ecological landscape*

### AI Apostle Islands

Size . . . . . Large  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Substantial  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Limited  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★★★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★★★

Ice, wind, and waves have carved the 22 islands that make up the Apostles for over a million years. The result is a dramatic shoreline featuring sandstone cliffs, sea caves, and miles of pristine sand beaches. The Apostle Islands display a rich assemblage of scenic features and natural and cultural resources. The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was established in 1970 and now includes 21 of the islands in the group, as well as a 12-mile strip of shoreline on the mainland.

The islands' many habitats harbor an exceptional diversity of plants and animals. White and yellow birch, red and sugar maple, balsam fir, and white cedar now dominate the island forests. Limited stands of old-growth white pine and hemlock also remain. Thirty-five mammal species and over two hundred forty birds have been identified within the Lakeshore. The Islands provide a unique remote experience for boaters and paddlers. Camping opportunities range from developed sites near docks to minimal-impact wilderness camping. All sites are located on islands in Lake Superior; none are accessible by road. Although a considerable distance from large population centers, the National Lakeshore draws visitors from throughout the country.

### BY Big Bay

Size . . . . . Small  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Substantial  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Limited  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★★★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★

This large embayment on the eastern coast of Madeline Island contains a coastal barrier spit, beach and dunes, xeric pine forest, lagoon,

and a diverse array of peatlands. Coastal fen, coastal bog, shrub swamp, and tamarack swamp border the lagoon. An abandoned sandspit, now three-quarters of a mile inland from Lake Superior, separates a much more acid complex of peatland types, including open bog, muskeg, and black spruce swamp, from the more mineral rich types to the east. The primary coastal spit is mostly forested, with all three pine species native to Wisconsin present. This mosaic of natural communities is one of the most unusual, diverse, and pristine in the Great Lakes. The entire embayment is protected within the Big Bay State Park.

### CK Chequamegon Point/ Kakagon Slough

Size . . . . . Small  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Substantial  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Limited  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★★★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★

At the mouth of the Bad River are some of the largest and highest quality coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes. This vast wetland complex of sloughs is also an important spawning and nursery area for many fish species. Along with these wetlands is a long narrow sand spit, Chequamegon Point-Long Island, which provides critical nesting and resting habitat for many migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. The Bad River tribe manages much of this area in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, and is the primary reason this area harbors such outstanding natural resources.

### QP Quarry Point to Bark Point

Size . . . . . Small  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Limited  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Moderate  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★★

Running about 15 miles between these two points is one of Wisconsin's most rugged sections of Lake Superior coast. West of Herbster are high clay bluffs that are actively "slumping" into the lake and limit development potential. Many steep ravines cut back up these bluffs. East of Herbster, the shore flattens as it approaches Bark Bay but remains relatively undeveloped.

### WL Western Lake Superior Drowned River Mouths

Size . . . . . Medium  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Moderate  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Moderate  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★★★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★

In addition to the St. Louis Estuary are a number of small, drowned river mouths that occur in Bayfield County. Examples include Port Wing, Bark Bay, Lost Creek, Sand Bay, and Raspberry Bay. These bays and their surrounding uplands support mosaics of high quality natural communities including: coastal fen, coastal bog, tamarack swamp, dry pine forest, sand spit, beach, and dune. In addition to providing important spawning habitat, these areas harbor many rare plants, birds, and insects. Collectively, these river mouths provide critical habitat for many birds during the spring and fall migrations.

Because it is situated at the south end of Chequamegon Bay, the coastal wetlands at Fish Creek Bay are flooded and exposed as the "seiche tides" move in and out of the Bay. When the mud flats are exposed, the area attracts tens of thousands of shorebirds. Much of the area is owned by the DNR.

### WI Wisconsin Point

Size . . . . . Small  
 Protection Initiated . . . . . Limited  
 Protection Remaining . . . . . Moderate  
 Conservation Significance . . . . . ★★  
 Recreation Potential . . . . . ★

Wisconsin Point is the eastern portion of a long coastal barrier spit separating the waters of Lake Superior from Allouez Bay. Major site features include several miles of open sand beach and dunes, small interdunal wetlands, and a xeric forest of white and red pines. Although partially developed, the point and adjacent Allouez Bay receive heavy visitation by migrating birds in the spring.

## Other Areas of Interest

### Houghton Falls and Point (Bayfield County)

This small, scenic site is unique in having a waterfall dropping into a finger of Lake Superior, which extends up a small gorge. Some boreal forest remains here. Recreation use could focus on the waterfalls and gorge.

### Sultz Swamp (Bayfield County)

This acid peatland occupies a depression high on the Bayfield Peninsula approximately six miles inland from the Lake Superior coast. Although there are other, similar wetlands in this part of the basin, Sultz Swamp is the largest and is embedded within vast stretches of county-owned forest. The major features of this insular peatland include a mature forest of black spruce, an extensive muskeg/open bog, and large populations of several rare species. Disturbances to the interior of the site have been minimal, with the exception of a maintained power line corridor that crosses the area.

### Superior Airport Wetlands (Douglas County)

A large wetland complex of shrub swamp and open meadow, with a few small patches of emergent marsh, surrounds the Superior airport. Despite the disturbances that have altered the composition, structure, function, size, and configuration of these wetlands, they harbor significant populations of rare plants, some of which are only known to occur in a few locations in the state.

### Tern and Interstate Islands (Ashland and Douglas Counties)

Located in Chequamegon Bay near Ashland, Tern Island is a former wooden pier remnant that was re-built as a Common Tern colony site in 1986. It contains the most important and oldest colony of this state-Endangered species in western Lake Superior. First discovered in 1974, this site has been managed exclusively for Common Terns with over 1,000 tern young banded at the island since 1981. Due to the long-term stability of the colony, birds produced at Tern Island have helped pioneer a new colony at Interstate Island in the St. Louis River estuary. Interstate Island now contains the largest Common Tern colony (>200 nesting pairs) in the state. The long-term protection of these small islands is critical to the population viability of Common Terns in Wisconsin.