Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

This publication was produced in 2000 as a joint project of:
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry and the Bureau of Endangered Resources,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
The Nature Conservancy,
International Paper,
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WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Northern Monkshood

(Aconitum noveboracense)

Federal Status: Threatened
State Status: Threatened

Description: When mature, this wild plant reaches a height of almost 3 feet. In mid-summer the northern monkshood sports a spire of twilight-blue flowers. Each one is shaped like a helmet or hood—hence the plant's name. A single flower stalk may have as many as 15 blossoms held above broad, coarsely toothed, lobed leaves.

Habitat: It thrives and reproduces well on or near the bases of cool, shady, moist cliffs in

southwestern Wisconsin. The moisture on such cliffs results from underground water seeping to the rock surface. Composed of limestone or sandstone, these cliffs are usually north-facing and often found along small streams or rivers.

Forestry Considerations: Trees that provide the required shade for the monkshood and the surrounding cliff habitat should not be harvested. Single-tree selection silviculture in the area surrounding these sites generally will have little effect on the survival of this rare wildflower. Clearcutting is not advisable, as it would reduce the humidity of the air and increase the likelihood that winds would dry out the cliff face. Forestry activities in such woods should be limited to the November-to-March winter season. Following *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality* would be beneficial.