

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

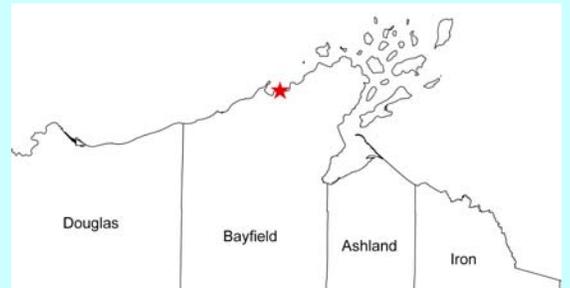
Lost Creek

Approximate Size: 320 (wetland area: 290 acres)*

Ownership: WDNR/Private

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997

GLCWC Classification: Open Drowned River Mouth



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Site Description

This estuarine complex is located at the drowned mouths of three small creeks, just south of Lake Superior. A forested coastal barrier spit separates the wetlands from the lake. Sandstone headlands flank the sandspit and estuary on the east and west. The major communities within the site are coastal fen, coastal bog, and shrub swamp. The lagoon at the junction of the creeks contains significant stands of emergent, submergent, and floating-leaved aquatic macrophytes. The eastern end of the complex is forested with a shrubby second-growth stand of white cedar and black ash. A mature dry forest of pine and spruce occurs on the sandspit, upon which a number of cabins and an access road have been built.

The fen community is well-developed on the west and north sides of the central lagoon. The mat is composed of woolly sedge, livid sedge, buckbean, sweet gale, and alpine cotton grass. Boggier areas with firmly grounded moss peat are composed of *Sphagnum* spp., ericaceous shrubs, and sedges. Community boundaries are quite indistinct between these types. The emergent marsh is composed of lake sedge, water arum, marsh cinquefoil, and broad-leaved cattail. Characteristic submergent and floating-leaved species are floating-leaved bur-reed, water-milfoils, yellow water lily, common bladderwort, water-marigold, and pondweeds.

*Acreages are rough estimates based on GIS and aerial photographs and do not reflect ownership or management boundaries.

Additional Comments

Though Lost Creek is not a large site, at least fourteen rare species of plants, birds, and butterflies were documented here by NHI during a previous study (Epstein et al 1997). Among the rarities is one of only three established Wisconsin populations of the regionally rare plant, lake cress. A portion of this site is designated as a State Natural Area, but increasing developments on the sandspit adjacent to the wetlands could threaten water quality and make the area unsuitable for sensitive species. Increased powerboat traffic in the lagoon could damage the aquatic beds and lead to the inadvertent introduction of invasive species. Promoting awareness of this site's values with local residents should be a priority for those with stewardship responsibilities and interests.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

GLCWC - Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Classification.- http://glc.org/wetlands/pdf/wetlands-class_rev1.pdf

Lake Superior Binational Program - <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/lakesuperior/>

WDNR Coastal Wetlands webpages - <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands"

WDNR/NHI - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Inventory Program.
<http://dnr.wi.gov> , Keyword: "natural heritage"

"Managing Woodlands on Lake Superior's Red Clay Plain" - WDNR publication #PUB-FR-385 2007.
<http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "bmp landowner guides"

Text describing this site was published previously in a 2002 WDNR publication entitled "A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes" by E.J. Epstein, A. Galvin and W.A. Smith. To view this information within the context of the full report, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov> and enter the keywords "coastal wetlands."

Suggested Citation

E.J. Epstein, A. Galvin and W.A. Smith. 2002. Site Description for Lost Creek. In: "A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes." PUBL ER-803 2002. <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands lost creek"



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