

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

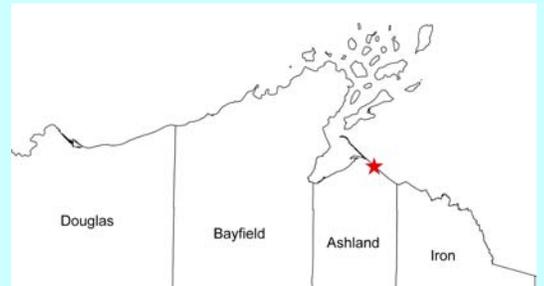
Bad River—Kakagon Sloughs

Approximate Size: 56,180 (wetland area: 17,310 acres)*

Ownership: Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997

GLCWC Classification: Barred & Open Drowned River Mouth



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Site Description

This site is a very large estuarine wetland complex located in northern Ashland County on the Lake Superior coast. It lies on a lacustrine clay plain deposited during the last glaciation. It is a very rich, dynamic and intact mosaic of many natural communities bordering the lower Bad and Kakagon rivers.

The major wetland communities at this site include emergent marsh, coastal fen, coastal bog, tamarack swamp, and shrub swamp. A series of coastal lagoons support beds of submergent and floating-leaved aquatic plants and provides critical habitat for many aquatic animals. These communities are the most extensive and among the least disturbed of their respective types on Western Lake Superior and rank among the most significant in the Great Lakes. Many rare plants and animals have been documented here.

A long coastal barrier spit (see "Long Island-Chequamegon Point") borders the Bad and Kakagon wetlands on the north. South of U.S. Highway 2, the course of the Bad River is confined between steep clay banks. Communities include rich mesic hardwood forests of sugar maple-basswood, floodplain forest of silver maple-green ash, black ash swamp, shrub swamp, hemlock-hardwood forest, and oxbow lakes. A large complex of tamarack swamp, white cedar swamp, black ash swamp, and fen occurs where the river exits the deep clay "canyons" to spread out over the lake plain to the north.

Most of the site is within the Reservation of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. **These are not public lands** and all requests for additional information or visitation must go through the tribal government offices at Odanah, Wisconsin.

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

Additional Comments

This site may be the largest freshwater estuarine system of this size, type and quality in the world. It supports a great diversity of high quality natural communities and rare plant and animal species.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa - <http://www.badriver-nsn.gov/home>

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 Bad River-Kakagon Sloughs. 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 bad river"



This project was funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act.