

# Wisconsin, *naturally*



## KISSICK ALKALINE BOG LAKE STATE NATURAL AREA

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State Natural Areas Program

Native orchids donning flowers in an impressive array of exotic shapes, alluring colors and differing strategies to attract pollinators find refuge in the wetlands surrounding Kissick Alkaline Bog Lake just west of Hayward in Sawyer County. Nodding ladies'-tresses, dragon's-mouth, grass pink, boreal bog orchid and 10 other species in the family *Orchidaceae* are known to grow in the natural area. Blooming from early spring until autumn, the diversity of orchids is believed to be fostered by the unusual combination of both acidic and alkaline waters flowing through the wetland system and creating an equally diverse range of substrates and habitats. Anchoring the site is a 10-acre wild lake encircled by a floating, quaking mat of living sphagnum moss and grass-like sedges. The mat harbors not only orchids, but also a rich variety of other bog-dwelling plants, including marsh fern, bog bean and carnivorous pitcher plant, sundew and bladderwort. To the north, the sunny, open mat grades into a thick, shady conifer swamp dominated by black spruce, tamarack, white cedar and balsam fir. A transition zone between the two holds low-growing shrubs like leather-leaf, bog rosemary, Labrador tea and bog birch. Look for a different suite of orchid species in the swamp, including coral root, moccasin flower and twayblade, growing among Canada mayflower, goldthread, starflower and fringed polygala. Perhaps you'll also spy a boreal deer mouse, bog lemming or one of the many species of birds, reptiles and amphibians that inhabit the preserve.



Kissick Alkaline Bog Lake is owned by the DNR and was designated State Natural Area No. 191 in 1983. There are no designated trails or other facilities on the

property other than a parking area on the south end. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Kissick Alkaline Bog Lake" for a map, access directions and more information about this site and the State Natural Areas Program.

