



Welcome to Crex Meadows



Crex Meadows is a 30,000 acre wildlife area with wetlands, brush prairies, and forests scattered across a gently rolling landscape. The area is home to many kinds of plants and wildlife. Visitors appreciate the natural, wide-open landscapes of Crex.



Six thousand acres of restored wetlands provide habitat for many species of aquatic wildlife.

These marshes are "left-overs" from when the glacier carved out an ancient lake called Glacial Lake Grantsburg.

When Euro-Americans first arrived, the sandy soil produced scattered red and jack pines, brush and a variety of prairie grasses and flowers. Naturally occurring wildfires maintained these plant communities. Since wildfires were no longer common after settlement, the landscape grew into an oak-jack pine forest. Beginning in the mid-1800's, settlers tried to farm the sandy soil, but most soon gave up. The lack of wildfires and clearing of the land for farming resulted in the near elimination of brush prairie.

Large-scale drainage of wetlands in the 1890's, caused a decline in the number of nesting and migrant waterfowl and other wetland animals.

Location

Crex Meadows is located in Burnett County, just north of Grantsburg, Wisconsin. You can get there from Highway 70 in Grantsburg. Directional signs will guide you through Grantsburg to the Crex Meadows Wildlife Education and Visitor Center, which is located on County Road D. The Center contains a sales area, information center, library, auditorium, exhibits, and classrooms.

Crex Meadows History

Crex Meadows is part of the Northwest Wisconsin Pine Barrens. The "Barrens" extends from northern Polk County to southern Bayfield County and covers 1,500 square miles. This large, sandy plain was left when the glacier retreated about 13,000 years ago. The southern portion of the "Barrens", where Crex is located, contains huge marshes.



Crex Meadow derived its name from the Crex Carpet Company which operated three camps in the area from 1911-1933

Wildlife Recreational Opportunities

Crex receives more than 100,000 visitors each year. Most of the visitors come to view wildlife. The popularity of Crex is attributed to its large size, spectacular vistas, and great diversity of plants and wildlife. A system of well maintained roads, observation areas, and a rest area provide excellent access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Some of the visitors come to hunt or trap. With the exception of the 2,400 acre refuge, the entire area is open to hunting and trapping. Crex provides abundant hunting opportunities for deer, bear, waterfowl, and a variety of small game. It is one of the few places in Wisconsin that offers good opportunities for sharp-tailed grouse hunting. Trappers have opportunities for nearly every furbearer found in Wisconsin.

Crex Meadows is open year round, with something to do and see during every season. We hope that you have enjoyed your visit.



The rest area, overlooking the refuge, is a great place to picnic and view wildlife.

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In 1912, the Crex Carpet Company purchased 23,000 acres of what is now Crex Meadows. The carpet company was an eastern corporation that produced grass rugs. Three carpet "camps" were located in the area. The grass rug industry continued successfully until the development of linoleum for floor covering. The Crex Carpet Company went bankrupt in 1933, but the name "Crex" remained.

During the depression and drought years of the 1930's, further drainage and agricultural attempts failed. By 1940, nearly two thirds of the land in the area was tax delinquent. In 1946, the state purchased 12,000 acres of this tax delinquent land to start the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area.

Land Management



Prescribed burning is used to restore and maintain brush prairie habitat.

Management focuses on restoring wetland and brush prairie habitats. Beginning in 1947, dikes were constructed to flood drained

marshes. Since then, twenty-three miles of dikes were constructed to create twenty-nine flowages. These flowages flood six thousand acres.

Brush prairie restoration also began in the late 1940's. Norm Stone, the "father of Crex Meadows", pioneered prescribed burning as a way to restore brush prairie (prescribed burning is a controlled fire used to restore and maintain prairies). The first prescribed burns resulted in the return of more than 200 kinds of prairie plants.

Fire control and planted pine forests had almost eliminated the brush prairies in Wisconsin. The existing remnants now occur principally on state owned lands, like Crex Meadows. The value of Crex Meadows may, in the long term, be greater for its native plants and restored lands than for its abundant and well-known wildlife.

Crex Meadows Wildlife Area



Thousands of Sandhill Cranes use Crex during the fall migration.

Wildlife

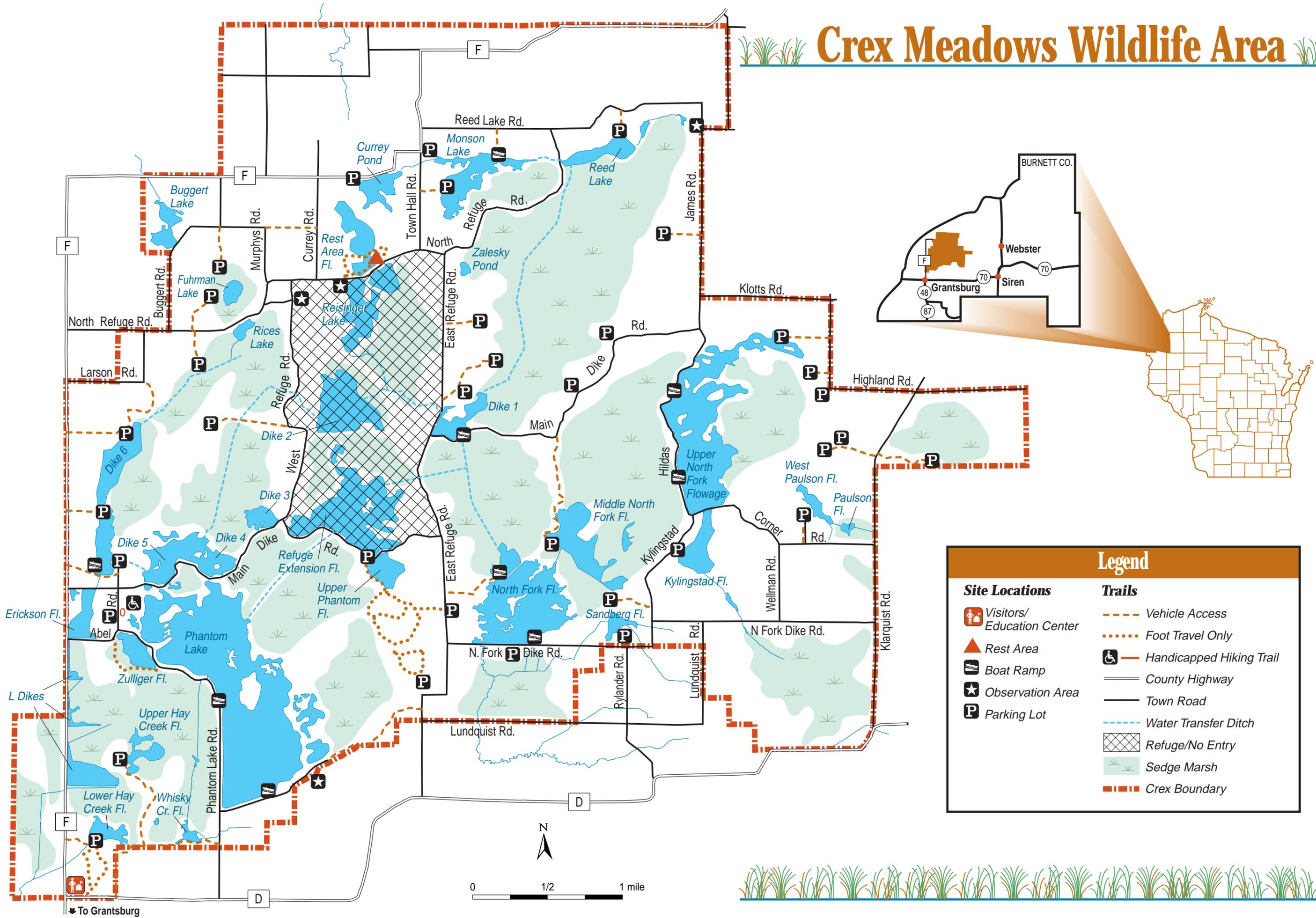
The American Bird Conservancy includes Crex as one of the top 500 Globally Important Bird Areas in the United States. Crex Meadows is home to 270 different kinds of birds, nearly every mammal found in Wisconsin and a good variety of reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

One of the highlights of Crex is the number of endangered and threatened animals present. Crex has breeding populations of ospreys, eagles, trumpeter swans, Karner blue butterflies, Blandings turtles, and red-necked grebes. Timber wolves use the property on a regular basis and a breeding pack, "the Crex pack", has been present since 1995. Seasonal endangered and threatened birds include the peregrine falcon, common and Caspian tern, and great egret.

During the fall migration you can see as many as 50 bald eagles, 8,000 sandhill cranes, 12,000 Canada and snow geese, 20,000 coots, and thousands of ducks. The spring migration is less spectacular with fewer birds, but a much greater variety.



Crex Meadows Wildlife Area



Legend	
Site Locations	Trails
Visitors/ Education Center	Vehicle Access
Rest Area	Foot Travel Only
Boat Ramp	Handicapped Hiking Trail
Observation Area	County Highway
Parking Lot	Town Road
	Water Transfer Ditch
	Refuge/No Entry
	Sedge Marsh
	Crex Boundary