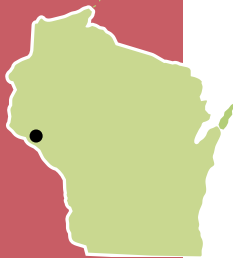




BIG SWAMP WETLAND TYPES

Christina Isenring

Coniferous swamp, sedge meadow, shrub carr



ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem comprises about 850 acres within the Big Swamp State Wildlife Area in Buffalo County between Mondovi and Durand. These wetlands drain into Bear Creek, a tributary to the Chippewa River that runs along the southwest portion of the site. The site features a relatively large coniferous swamp, a wetland type that is rare in this region. Other wetland types include sedge meadow and shrub carr. While little biological survey work has been done at this site, Big Swamp is recognized as an important wetland site by the state, The Nature Conservancy and Wisconsin Wetlands Association because it is a rare intact example of coniferous swamp in the western region of the state.

FLORA & FAUNA

The main wetland type present is coniferous swamp dominated by tamarack and red maple growing on deep organic soils. The shrub layer is thick and dominated by poison sumac. Groundwater inputs in some areas provide minerals and influence the composition of herbaceous plants in the ground layer. Other wetland

habitats include sedge meadow with a variety of sedges and flowering plants like spotted joe-pye weed and shrub carr dominated by dogwoods.

Comprehensive biological survey work has not yet been conducted here, but the site is expected to harbor a diversity of plant and animal species. These wetland community types typically support a variety of wildlife species including many songbirds and small mammals. The Big Swamp State Wildlife Area is a popular public hunting ground and is managed for pheasant and deer.

THREATS

Runoff from the agricultural lands in the Bear Creek watershed threatens water quality in these wetlands. The site has some hydrologic alteration due to ditching. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Invasive species are also of concern.

ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State Wildlife Areas website: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/wildlife_areas.

BIG SWAMP

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area

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Wisconsin Wetlands
ASSOCIATION

wisconsinwetlands.org



Willow catkins — Brynda Hatch



Yellow warbler — Brian Hansen

Sources:

Wisconsin State Wildlife Areas Program (WDNR)
The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)
Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)