



BLUEBERRY SWAMP WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Lowland hardwood swamp, coniferous swamp, coniferous bog, open bog

DOUGLAS COUNTY



BLUEBERRY SWAMP

Property Owner: Douglas County
Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site

Funding for this project provided by The McKnight Foundation, which seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grantmaking, coalition-building and encouragement of strategic policy reform.



ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Blueberry Swamp comprises more than 500 acres of high quality forested wetlands within the Douglas County Forest adjacent to the Brule River State Forest. This wetland complex straddles the watershed divide between the Brule River to the east and Poplar River to the west, both of which flow north to Lake Superior. Blueberry Creek, a headwater to the Brule River, drains the mineral-rich eastern portion of the swamp. The site is relatively undisturbed and features one of the best lowland hardwood swamps in all of northern Wisconsin. Blueberry Swamp's value comes from its size, high quality, and diversity as well as its role in providing clean water to the Brule River, one of the state's top trout streams. These wetlands also support a number of rare plant and animal species.

FLORA & FAUNA

This Wetland Gem features extensive lowland hardwood swamp dominated by black ash. Other canopy trees include white cedar, yellow birch, paper birch and red maple. Under the canopy, alder, red osier dogwood, highbush cranberry and winterberry shrubs thrive. The groundlayer features sensitive fern, cinnamon fern, royal fern, dwarf raspberry, fowl manna grass, marsh marigold,

skunk cabbage and various sedges. The swamp has high structural diversity, including some large trees, standing snags, woody debris, tip-up mounds and pools of standing water up to half a foot deep. The western end of the site features acid peatlands of open bog and coniferous bog dominated by black spruce and tamarack. This wetland complex provides important habitat for numerous rare plants, including a variety of orchids.

Blueberry Swamp supports a diversity of wildlife, including a number of rare species. Birds include yellow-bellied flycatcher, golden-winged warbler, Canada warbler, evening grosbeak, and blue-headed vireo.

THREATS

Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.

ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.



Skunk cabbage — Kate Redmond



Canada warbler — Scott Franke

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
 Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)