



GERMANTOWN SWAMP WETLAND TYPES

Coniferous swamp, lowland hardwood swamp

MMSD

WASHINGTON COUNTY



GERMANTOWN SWAMP

Property Owners: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Village of Germantown
Recognitions & Designations: WI Land Legacy Place, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Natural Area of Statewide or Greater Significance

Funding for this project provided 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, Grant #NA07NOS4190064.

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

The Germantown Swamp comprises several hundred acres of forested lowland in the southeast corner of Washington County along the headwaters of the Menomonee River. This site is remarkable and valuable because of its size, high quality condition, and unique combination of species. The swamp is also one of the few large blocks of open space remaining in this highly urbanized area. Several hundred acres of the swamp are protected and additional acreage is proposed for future acquisition. Protection of the Germantown Swamp, and other wetlands in the uppermost reaches of the Milwaukee River Basin, is of critical importance to preventing flooding downstream in the City of Milwaukee.

FLORA & FAUNA

Germantown Swamp contains some vegetation that is rare for this region and more typical of northern regions. The site includes vegetation of both lowland hardwood swamp and coniferous swamp community types. Lowland hardwood swamp areas are dominated by silver and red maple, green ash, American elm and basswood. The site features substantial areas of coniferous swamp vegetation more typical of the northern part of the state.

Dominant canopy species include black ash, white cedar and tamarack. The swamp's understory flora also includes a mixture of northern and southern species.

Little biological inventory work has been conducted at this site; confirmed species lists are not available. Bird species that are likely to be found at this site based on birds documented in the area include wood duck, American woodcock, Acadian flycatcher, winter wren, wood thrush, yellow warbler, northern waterthrush, mourning warbler, common yellowthroat and swamp sparrow.

THREATS

Continued expansion of the suburban zone outside of Milwaukee is replacing agricultural lands and natural habitats with subdivisions and commercial development. While a portion of the Germantown Swamp is protected as public land, many acres remain unprotected. Impacts from local and regional urbanization – including the spread of invasive species and stormwater runoff – may result in alterations that reduce the ecological integrity of the swamp. Groundwater drawdowns are also of particular concern in this area. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.



American woodcock — Scott Franke

ACCESS

Germantown Swamp is part of a Village of Germantown Wilderness Park that is closed to public access in order to protect the Park's sensitive natural resources.

Sources:

Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)
Washington County Park and Open Space Plan