



GRANDMA LAKE WETLAND TYPES

Coniferous bog, open bog, fen, marsh

Gary Shackelford

FLORENCE COUNTY



GRANDMA LAKE

Property Owner: USDA Forest Service
Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area,
WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, USDA Forest Service
Research Natural Area

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

Grandma Lake, located within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Florence County, is a pristine, soft-water bog lake surrounded by an open bog mat and an outer ring of coniferous bog. While the lake itself is only 44 acres, with its wetlands the site comprises nearly 500 acres. This Wetland Gem site hosts an unusual and diverse collection of native plants including a number of rare species. A wide variety of wildlife species use these wetlands, including several rare birds. Grandma Lake wetlands are valuable because of their diversity and their largely undisturbed character, and the site provides an excellent example of bog lakes common in northern Wisconsin.

FLORA & FAUNA

Grandma Lake is surrounded by a wide, open bog mat of sphagnum moss, sedges, rushes and low shrubs. The mat's soils are peaty and hummocky, providing conditions that support an unusual diversity of

plant species. Plants common in the sphagnum mat include bog clubmoss, swamp laurel, bog rosemary, leatherleaf, Labrador tea, speckled alder, cranberry, muck sedge, star sedge, boreal bog sedge, bulrush and alpine cottongrass. Surrounding the open bog is a ring of coniferous bog habitat dominated by tamarack and black spruce with occasional northern white cedar. Several rare plants are found at Grandma Lake, including bog arrowgrass, dragon's mouth orchid, livid sedge and small-headed bog sedge. The site supports a large population of boreal rush, a state endangered species that was unknown in Wisconsin until 1982. Insectivorous plants species are quite common, including pitcher plant, narrow-leaved sundew, round-leaved sundew, and several bladderworts.

Several mammal species make use of Grandma Lake wetlands, including snowshoe hare, mink, muskrat, beaver, black bear and white-tailed deer. Bird species found at Grandma Lake include Lincoln's sparrow, white-throated sparrow, Nashville warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, common yellowthroat, mallard, American black duck and cedar waxwing. The site also supports several rare and interesting bird species, including black tern, common loon, merlin and American bittern.

THREATS

Deer browsing pressure may threaten regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Climate change may lead to altered plant community composition in this and other northern bog wetlands.

ACCESS

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



Snowshoe hare — John Huff

Sources:
USDA Forest Service
Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)