



HUNTING RIVER ALDERS WETLAND TYPES

Alder thicket example — Eric Epstein

Alder thicker, coniferous swamp, shrub carr, marsh

LANGLADE COUNTY



HUNTING RIVER ALDERS

Property Owner: Langlade 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

Hunting River Alders is an extensive wetland complex along an undeveloped, low gradient stretch of the Hunting River just a few miles upstream of its confluence with the Wolf River. The site features high quality alder thicket as well as shrub carr, coniferous swamp and marsh habitats. This Wetland Gem is one of the best examples of the state's alder thickets, which are abundant in the north central region and commonly found along streams and lakes. Unlike many other alder thickets, Hunting River Alders site hydrology has remained largely unaltered, providing stability for this native plant community. These wetlands are important for maintaining healthy in-stream habitat in the Hunting River, a trout stream. The site provides excellent habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife species as well as excellent paddling opportunities for human visitors.

FLORA & FAUNA

Speckled alder is the dominant plant for much of the site with pockets of willow and red osier dogwood dominated shrub carr. A coniferous swamp dominated by black spruce and tamarack is also present. This stretch of river is wide and slow-moving, allowing for

the growth of emergent and floating-leaved marsh vegetation. Common marsh plants include water lilies, duckweed, and a several pondweeds including common, flat-stemmed, and long-leaved pondweed. Wild rice beds are also present in areas. The groundlayer along the stream banks includes many species of attractive flowering plants, including marsh skullcap, spotted joe-pye weed, turtlehead, jewelweed and various asters.

This site provides high quality habitat for many mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds. Examples include river otter, beaver, wood duck, mallard and alder flycatcher. While bird survey information is not available for this site, characteristic breeding birds at high quality alder thickets in this part of the state include tree swallow, gray catbird, veery, golden-winged warbler, yellow warbler, northern waterthrush, common yellowthroat, swamp sparrow and song sparrow.

THREATS

Though this site is well protected, future land use alterations in the Hunting River watershed may lead to hydrologic alterations in the river that would affect the native plant communities, particularly alder thicket, at this site. Invasive species may also pose future problems.

ACCESS

This site is best seen by canoe or kayak. For details, visit the State Natural Areas Program website: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.



River otter— Dave Menke

Sources:

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



Jewelweed — Kate Redmond