



KISSICK ALKALINE BOG WETLAND TYPES

Thomas Meyer

Open bog, coniferous bog, coniferous swamp

SAWYER COUNTY



# KISSICK ALKALINE BOG

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

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## ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Kissick Alkaline Bog is a 135-acre State Natural Area located within the Kissick Swamp Wildlife Area in Sawyer County along the Washburn County border. The site features a 10-acre backwoods lake surrounded by extensive open bog and coniferous bog habitat. Varying habitat conditions across the site support a wide diversity of plants (more than 100 species) including many species of orchids and rare plants. Many wildlife species make use of these high quality and diverse wetland habitats.

## FLORA & FAUNA

An open bog mat of sphagnum moss surrounds the open water portions of the lake. The mat is hummocky with small wet depressions that support a variety of bog plants like sundews, arrow-grass, northern bladderwort and boreal bog sedge. Bog shrubs like leatherleaf, Labrador tea and bog rosemary dominate the mat as you move inland. Vegetation patterns indicate that there is a pH gradient in the bog mat, varying from a typical shrub-dominated acid bog along the southern edge of the lake to a more alkaline, sedge-dominated bog at the northern edge. Water flows across the sphagnum mat at the northwest corner of the lake into a large area of coniferous

bog grading into coniferous swamp habitat. Black spruce and tamarack dominate the canopy, which also includes white spruce, balsam fir and white cedar. The understory includes bluejoint grass, common lake sedge and broad-leaved cattail. Varying habitat conditions across the site, including the pH gradient from acid to alkaline soils, support a wide diversity of plants. Surveys of the site have documented more than 100 vascular plants, 14 species of orchid, and many rare plant species including marsh willowherb, downy willowherb, common bog arrowgrass, swamp pink and boreal bog orchid.

This Wetland Gem supports a diversity of animal species including mammals like boreal deer mouse and bog lemming. It is an excellent place to view a variety of moths and butterflies and is included in the statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. The site also supports numerous amphibians including leopard frog, green frog and American toad. Rare birds documented at the site include northern harrier, bald eagle and common loon.

## THREATS

Recreational use of the wildlife area may impact this site's sensitive resources. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees.

## ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).



Bog lemming — Phil Myers

## Sources:

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