



RED CLIFF RASPBERRY BAY WETLAND TYPES

Eric Epstein

Fen, coniferous bog, sedge meadow, alder thicket

BAYFIELD COUNTY



RED CLIFF RASPBERRY BAY

Property Owner: Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
 Recognitions & Designations: WI Coastal Wetland Inventory
 Primary Site

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

Raspberry Bay, located on the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation at the northeastern tip of the Bayfield Peninsula, is an exceptional coastal wetland complex at the mouth of the Raspberry River. The site contains fen, coniferous bog, sedge meadow, and alder thicket habitat, each hosting a distinct and diverse plant community. Raspberry Bay wetlands are particularly important because they support significant populations of several rare plant species and the site hosts outstanding examples of wetland communities found only in freshwater estuary settings. The Lake Superior Binational Program, a partnership between Canada and the U.S. to restore and protect the Lake Superior basin, identified Raspberry Bay wetlands as important to the health of the larger Lake Superior ecosystem.

FLORA & FAUNA

Raspberry Bay supports myriad wetland plants; the last survey documented 98 different wetland plant species, not including mosses, lichens and liverworts. The site supports at least 11 rare plant species, including dragon's mouth orchid, round-leaved orchid, common

bog arrowgrass, livid sedge, Michaux's sedge, and sooty beakrush. Many of the plant species present in this area are of cultural importance to the tribal membership.

Raspberry Bay and its wetlands contain important habitat for a diversity of bird species including raptors, waterfowl, shorebirds and landbirds. Spring migration surveys documented the presence of more than 80 species of birds, 16 of which are resident species. Four state-listed species (threatened or endangered) have been documented in this area including American bittern, bald eagle, peregrine falcon and osprey. The site also provides important spawning habitat for many species of Lake Superior fish as well as habitat for amphibians, insects and other wildlife.

THREATS

Wetlands of Raspberry Bay are high quality because the site is protected and access is limited. However, external influences from outside the reservation, including the spread of invasive species as well as watershed agriculture, logging and mining activities, could lead to negative impacts on water quality and habitat in Raspberry Bay. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Declining Lake Superior water levels have altered these and other coastal wetlands in recent years and may continue to do so if this pattern continues with global climate change.

ACCESS

This site is located within the boundaries of the Red Cliff Reservation and is not open to public access. Access to the Raspberry Bay shoreline via boat is also prohibited. All requests for visitation must go through the Red Cliff tribal offices; contact information is available online at www.redcliff-nsn.gov.



Bald eagle — Scott Franke

Sources:

Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes (WDNR)
 Priority Wetland Sites of Wisconsin's Lake Superior Basin (WDNR)
 Red Cliff Natural Resources Department Unpublished Data