



SCUPPERNONG RIVER AREA WETLAND TYPES

Christina Isenring

Fen, low prairie, marsh, sedge meadow, shrub carr, spring runs & seeps

WAUKESHA COUNTY



SCUPPERNONG RIVER

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation 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

The Scuppernon River Area comprises more than 2000 acres within the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, including three State Natural Areas: Kettle Moraine Low Prairie, Scuppernon Prairie and Ottawa Lake Fen. This Wetland Gem supports high quality examples of a variety of wetland types and hosts a great diversity of both plant and animal species. It also is an excellent demonstration of the value of wetland restoration. The Scuppernon River basin once supported a vast low prairie and sedge meadow complex, and WDNR has successfully restored a matrix of wetland habitats around remnant areas of native wetland plant communities. Several rare plants now thrive at this site as a result of these restoration efforts. These wetlands contribute to the high water quality in the Scuppernon River and provide excellent recreational opportunities in close proximity to several population centers in southern Wisconsin.

FLORA & FAUNA

This wetland complex is very flat though some areas feature a gently undulating land surface with low spots that support low prairie and fen species such as bluejoint grass, shrubby cinquefoil, valerian and grass-of-Parnassus. Large areas of low prairie are characterized

by big bluestem, Indian grass, needle grass, prairie dropseed, Virginia mountain mint, cream wild indigo, shooting star, leadplant, compass plant, prairie dock, blue-eyed grass, prairie smoke and prairie blazing star. The Ottawa Lake Fen State Natural Area features two lakes connected and surrounded by wetland habitats including marsh, sedge meadow, shrub carr, and marl flats that support both alkaline and acid-loving plant species. This Wetland Gem supports many uncommon and rare plants including beaked spikerush, few-flowered spikerush, common bog arrowgrass, Ohio goldenrod, small fringed gentian, purple milkweed, prairie Indian plantain and marsh blazing star.

The site supports abundant and diverse wildlife including may rare species. Amphibians and reptiles include pickerel frog, bullfrog, the state threatened Blanding's turtle, eastern hognose snake, and the state threatened Butler's gartersnake. Birds include sandhill crane, green heron, blue-winged warbler, yellow warbler, willow flycatcher, northern harrier, and the state threatened Henslow's sparrow. The site supports a number of rare butterflies and moths, including silphium borer moth, liatris borer moth, and the state endangered poweshiek skipperling. Uncommon mammals using the site include Franklin's ground squirrel and badger.



Sandhill crane courtship display — Dennis Malueg

THREATS

Agricultural runoff from surrounding lands may impact the health of these wetlands. Invasive species and impacts from recreational use are also of concern.

ACCESS

This Wetland Gem offers excellent access and recreational opportunities. For details, visit WDNR's Scuppernon River Area website: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/wildlife\\_areas/scuppernonng.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/wildlife_areas/scuppernonng.htm).

Sources:

- Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)
- Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
- The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)