



TOY LAKE SWAMP WETLAND TYPES

Lowland hardwood swamp, coniferous swamp, alder thicket, marsh

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VILAS COUNTY



TOY LAKE SWAMP

Property Owner: WDNR
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

Toy Lake Swamp is a large wetland complex of more than 2,300 acres located within the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest in Vilas County. This Wetland Gem features one of the best examples of lowland hardwood swamp in the state as well as high quality coniferous swamp, alder thicket and marsh habitats. These wetlands surround the shallow, small Toy Lake (124 acres), which supports dense marsh vegetation. This site is important because it provides high quality habitat supporting a diversity of wetland species, including numerous rare plants and animals.

FLORA & FAUNA

Extensive lowland hardwood swamp habitat dominates the wetter areas of Toy Lake Swamp. Black ash, alder and mountain maple dominate these hardwood swamp habitats, which also include many tall shrubs like mountain holly, highbush cranberry and winterberry. The groundlayer includes marsh marigold, jewelweed, two-seeded sedge, rough bedstraw, sensitive fern, marsh blue violet and wild white violet. Golden saxifrage and swamp saxifrage grow in areas of groundwater seepage. Mature coniferous swamp habitat with diverse plant and animal communities lies north and east of Toy Lake. Northern white cedar dominates these areas, which also support balsam fir, yellow birch, hemlock, white spruce and red maple. The groundlayer includes yellow bluebead lily, bunchberry, three-leaved goldthread, wood sorrel, boreal bedstraw, bog goldenrod, American starflower, tussock cottongrass, one-flowered broomrape, winterberry and northern blueflag iris.

This Wetland Gem provides excellent habitat for a diversity of moths and butterflies, including the arctic skipper, bog fritillary, freiga fritillary and silver-bordered fritillary. Birds using this area include black-throated blue warbler, Blackburnian warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, mourning warbler, golden-winged warbler and broad-winged hawk. The site also supports numerous rare birds including black-backed woodpecker, gray jay,

boreal chickadee, yellow-bellied flycatcher, Cape May warbler and spruce grouse.

THREATS

Impacts from watershed forestry practices and recreational use of these State Forest lands may affect sensitive wetland resources at this site. Heavy deer browsing pressure threatens the regeneration of the site's conifer trees. Future invasion by the emerald ash borer beetle threatens the site's ash stands.

ACCESS

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



Black-throated blue warbler — Scott Franke

Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)
Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)
Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Master Plan (WDNR)