

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

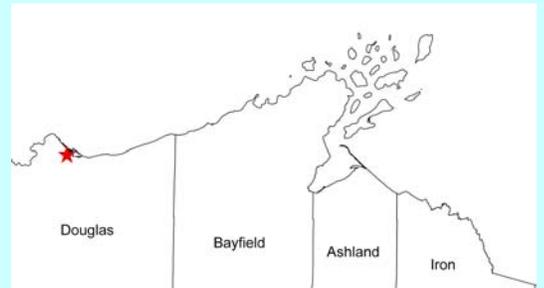
Lower Nemadji River Marshes

Approximate Size: 210 (wetland area: 160 acres)*

Ownership: Douglas County/City of Superior

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997

GLCWC Classification: N.A.



E. J. Epstein

Nemadji River Marshes. Aerial view of lower Nemadji River marshes near Superior Tank Farm. Note cut-off oxbow with pond surrounded by sedge meadow–shrub swamp.

Site Description

The lower stretches of the Nemadji River flow in a narrow steep-sided valley through a heavily industrialized and urbanized portion of the City of Superior before emptying into Allouez Bay. A series of emergent marshes occurs along the inside of the well-developed meanders that are characteristic of this river. These marshes are separated from the main channel by weedy natural levees, which support a mixture of tall wetland shrubs and small lowland hardwoods. The steep clay bluffs confining the valley are generally undeveloped, sometimes forested, and buffer the river system somewhat from the neighboring urban areas.

Important marsh plants include bur-reed, arrowheads, soft-stemmed bulrush, broad-leaved cattail, lake sedge, marsh cinquefoil, water horsetail, and water parsnip. Locally deep, slowly flowing sloughs support stands of wild rice and beds of pondweeds. Drier portions of the wetlands contain patches of sedge meadow dominated by tussock sedge and bluejoint grass, alder thicket, and black ash-dominated hardwood swamp.

*Acreages are rough estimates based on GIS and aerial photographs and do not reflect ownership or management boundaries.

Additional Comments

Though the lower Nemadji system has suffered many abuses, it has retained significant natural features and should be a prime candidate for remedial attention. The marshes are representatively diverse, dominated by native species, appear reasonably functional, and support uncommon resident birds. Exotic plants are still quite localized, associated mostly with the disturbed levees and formerly dredged areas near U.S. Highway 2.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

GLCWC - Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Classification.- http://glc.org/wetlands/pdf/wetlands-class_rev1.pdf

Lake Superior Binational Program - <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/lakesuperior/>

WDNR Coastal Wetlands webpages - <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands"

WDNR/NHI - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Inventory Program.
<http://dnr.wi.gov> , Keyword: "natural heritage"

"Managing Woodlands on Lake Superior's Red Clay Plain" - WDNR publication #PUB-FR-385 2007.
<http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "bmp landowner guides"

Text describing this site was published previously in a 2002 WDNR publication entitled "A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes" by E.J. Epstein, A. Galvin and W.A. Smith. To view this information within the context of the full report, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov> and enter the keywords "coastal wetlands."

Suggested Citation

E.J. Epstein, A. Galvin and W.A. Smith. 2002. Site Description for Lower Nemadji River Marshes. In: "A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes." PUBL ER-803 2002. <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands lower nemadji"



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