

# ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

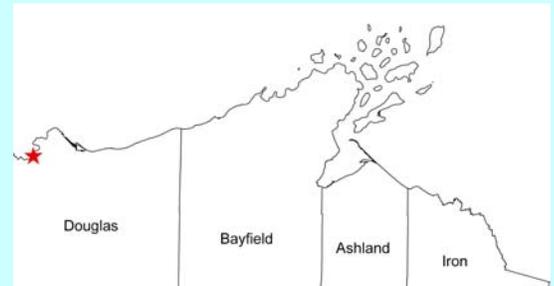
## Superior Municipal Forest

Approximate Size: 2,050 (wetland area: 610 acres)\*

Ownership: City of Superior

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997

GLCWC Classification: N.A.



E. J. Judziewicz



E. J. Epstein

### *Site Description*

The City of Superior Municipal Forest contains a wealth of natural features unusual in the context of an urban-industrial center. Among the most significant of these are stands of mature coniferous forest, extensive emergent marsh, and wet clay flats supporting a mixture of shrub swamp and wet meadow. The site borders the St. Louis River Estuary, which dissects the uplands into a series of narrow, steep-sided ridges.

The extensive emergent marsh borders both sides of the Pokegama River (which is really an arm of the St. Louis River Estuary). Marsh composition is very similar to that of stands found along the lower stretches of the St. Louis. Dominants include bur-reed, bulrushes, arrowheads, and cattail. Deeper waters support submergent and floating-leaved macrophyte species. The invasive exotic purple loosestrife is uncommon but widespread in the marsh. Efforts to control it should begin as soon as possible.

The shrub swamp and meadow complex provides habitat for several rare plants. The dominant plants are typical of Lake Superior region stands on red clay and include speckled alder, willows, lake sedge, and bluejoint grass. This wetland is the southwesternmost portion of a former large and contiguous wetland that was partially destroyed and greatly disrupted by growth of the City of Superior. Rare animals such as Forster's Tern, Bald Eagle, and Merlin forage here.

The coniferous forests are composed primarily of species often associated with the boreal regions. Throughout the Lake Superior Clay Plain Ecoregional Subsection, this forest type has been greatly fragmented and often replaced by more monotypic stands of aspen. Thus the stands within this site have regional conservation significance. They could also provide a template for restoration actions considered elsewhere.

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

### *Additional Comments*

The Superior Municipal Forest is a large natural community complex connected to a major fresh water estuary. A significant portion of this site was designated as a State Natural Area in 1996. This designation encompassed much of the mature forest and marsh, and also included a part of the wet red clay flats where rare plants occur.

### *Abbreviations and Helpful References*

GLCWC - Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Classification.- [http://glc.org/wetlands/pdf/wetlands-class\\_rev1.pdf](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"

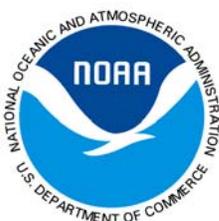
"Managing Woodlands on Lake Superior's Red Clay Plain" - WDNR publication #PUB-FR-385 2007.

<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 Superior Municipal Forest. 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 superior municipal forest"



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