

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

Long Island—Chequamegon Point

Approximate Size: 640 (wetland area: 150 acres)*

Ownership: National Park Service/Private/Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997



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Site Description

Western Lake Superior's most extensive and least disturbed coastal barrier spit separates the waters of Chequamegon Bay from Lake Superior. The natural dynamics of erosion and deposition are expressed in the changing size and shape of the spit over time. An especially vivid example of this occurred following a severe November storm in the late 1970s when Long Island and Chequamegon Point were joined.

Important communities at the site include Great Lakes beach and dune, xeric forest, interdunal wetland, open bog, shrub swamp, and wet sand flats. While wetlands cover only a very small percentage of the site, the interdunal ponds located near the western end of Long Island are a very rare community statewide and also provide habitat for several rare plants. The bogs of the ridge and swale system on the Chequamegon Bay side of the island generally contain a subset of the common bog ericads and sedges. Wet sand flats occur along Chequamegon Bay at the former gap between the point and the island. The flora is an interesting mix of plants from many wetland communities. This area attracts significant numbers of migrating shorebirds when water levels are favorable. The beach and dune system is best developed where active deposition of sand is occurring. Owing to wind, wave, and ice exposure the beaches are unvegetated. The dune vegetation is composed mostly of marram grass and beach-pea. The island continues to attract large numbers of gulls, terns, and sometimes shorebirds and raptors. Rare dune insects, absent from other dune systems on western Lake Superior, occur here. Most of Long Island is forested with mature stands of jack, red and white pine, as well as Hill's oak.

During the spring, large numbers of passerines and raptors migrate through this area.

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

Additional Comments

This site comprises the most intact coastal barrier spit system on western Lake Superior. Included are excellent examples of both rare and widespread natural communities. A number of rare species are resident here, some of them specialized to dune environments. The site is used heavily by migratory birds. Of great added significance is the role this coastal barrier spit plays in protecting the vast wetlands of the Bad and Kakagon river systems just to the south.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

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

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa - <http://www.badriver-nsn.gov/home>

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

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<http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands long island"



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