

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

Stockton Island Tombolo

Approximate Size: 680 (wetland area: 290 acres)*

Ownership: National Park Service

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 1997

GLCWC Classification: Barrier Beach Tombolo



Site Description

The tombolo is an exceptionally diverse and complex association of rare landforms and natural communities on the southeast end of 10,000 acre Stockton Island. Two sandspits have connected Presque Isle Point, historically an islet, with the main body of the island. The spits enclose a large wetland and lagoon which are traversed by a series of narrow, parallel, sand ridges. The swales between the ridges support a variety of wetland types including submergent aquatic, emergent aquatic, coastal fen, coastal bog, alder thicket, and tamarack swamp communities.

Communities associated with the sandspits include Great Lakes beach, Great Lakes dune, Great Lakes barrens, boreal forest, northern dry-mesic forest, and interdunal wetland. Several small streams drain the island's interior and reach Lake Superior via an outlet through the eastern sandspit into Julian Bay.

The open mat is dominated by sedges, including twigrush, beak-rush, sweet gale, and buckbean. A boggier mat of Sphagnum mosses, ericaceous shrubs, sedges, and scattered small tamarack trees occur in the drier swales and along the wetland margins. An interdunal pond supports an unusual flora that includes many rare plants. An isolated portion of the wetland in the northwestern sector of the site is quite acidic, dominated by ericaceous shrubs, few-seeded sedge, and beaked sedge.

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

Additional Comments

A high concentration of rare species (mostly plants and birds) has been documented here. Apart from the many rare species, the diversity, extent, and quality of the natural communities are reflected in the very high overall species diversity at this site. Stockton Island Tombolo is a designated State Natural Area within the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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/>

National Park Service Apostle Islands National Lakeshore - <http://www.nps.gov/apis/>

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 Stockton Island Tombolo. 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 stockton island"



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