



Nemadji Floodplain

Douglas County

Great Lakes: Important Natural Features — Ridge and Swale, Level Bedrock Communities, Estuaries, Beaches and Dunes, Green Bay Marshes, Boreal Clay Plain Forests, Sandscapes, Red Clay Wetlands and Apostles Islands.

The Great Lakes ecosystems are of global importance. Even though the lakes themselves have been changed over the years, many of the shoreland communities have not. Rare species are numerous owing to the diversity and quality of habitats.

Ecology & Significance

- Wisconsin Responsibility – High
 - Irreplaceable Features – High
 - Diversity of Natural Features – Moderate
 - Rare Species – A Few
 - Conservation Concern Species – Mod Low
 - Vulnerability to a Warming Climate – Mod High
 - Conservation Status – Some
- This site has promising conservation opportunities.

Flora and Fauna

The forest canopy is composed of black ash, green ash, basswood, red maple, silver maple, balsam poplar, American elm, and bur oak. Scattered conifers - white spruce, white cedar, white pine, and balsam fir - are also present in the canopy, making for an unusual mix of tree species. The deep, red clay alluvial soils support an herb layer that is exceptionally rich, with a species composition reminiscent of maple-basswood forests far to the south.

Nemadji River Floodplain Forest, along the banks of the Nemadji River, supports a type of forest unusual in composition and perhaps unique in the state. Floodplain forests are very rare along rivers flowing north into Lake Superior, most being located along major rivers emptying into the Mississippi or Lake Michigan. The natural area lies in a steep-sided valley cut through the Lake Superior clay plain, on terraces about fifteen feet above normal water levels. Above the terrace the red clay banks rise another 40 feet to the flat clay plains characteristic of Glacial Lake Duluth.



Spring ephemerals and their associates are especially well-represented, and include sessile-leaved bellwort, downy yellow violet, tall meadow-rue, spring-beauty, bloodroot, yellow trout-lily, wild ginger, Dutchman's-breeches, cut-leaved toothwort, blue cohosh, wild leek, and American starflower. Resident birds include the common raven, Nashville warbler, northern waterthrush, ovenbird, red-eyed vireo, hermit and wood thrush, and rose-breasted grosbeak.



Photo courtesy Wisconsin DNR



E-mail: greatnaturewi@gmail.com
 Web: greatnaturewi.com
 Phone: 608-790-6821