



The Glacial Outwash Plains and Glacial Lakebeds Area is concentrated in four distinct areas. The deep glacially-ground sand and gravel soils provide the base for natural community development. Many rare species are limited to this landscape.

Glacial Outwash Plains and Glacial Lakebeds Area Important Natural Features—Xeric Pine-Oak Forests, Pine-Oak Barrens, and Vast Peatlands. Pine Barrens are global important, and Wisconsin has a vast majority of the pine barrens on earth. We are uniquely responsible.

Ecology & Significance

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

Dunbar Barrens features a Pine Barrens community that is part of a large, open landscape located on a gently rolling pitted glacial outwash plain. The site is similar in composition to presettlement barrens with broad sweeping prairie vistas and a distinctive panorama. Logging, grazing, and periodic fires have maintained the open character of the barrens in addition to the action of frost in low pockets. Today, aspen, oak, and jack pine forest surround the opening and low granitic outcrops are found scattered through the area. Several thousand additional acres could be placed in barrens management.

Flora and Fauna

The dominant vegetation consists of grasses and sedges, and a well-developed shrub layer is present including blueberry, bearberry, prairie willow, and sweet fern. Herbaceous plants include rice grass, poverty oat grass, wintergreen, barren strawberry, and hawkweeds. The area also harbors a diverse and unusual lichen flora.

Butterfly species abound with great populations of two rare species. The rare Harris checkerspot has been photographed on site (see below).



Photo courtesy Wisconsin Butterflies



Photo courtesy Wisconsin DNR

Originally recognized as being attractive habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, the bird is today absent from the barrens after a population peak in the 1950's. The last recorded observation was in 1976. Common barren birds include the eastern bluebird, eastern towhee, vesper, field, and clay-colored sparrow, and the upland sandpiper, a species of special concern in Wisconsin. Black bear are occasionally seen foraging on abundant blueberries.



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