Oswego County Coastal Wetlands

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NY Natural Heritage

• Partnership between NYS DEC and The Nature Conservancy
• We have been tracking rare species and significant natural communities since 1985
• Monitor 166 natural communities, 755 rare plants, 417 rare animals at over 10,000 locations
Oswego County

• Approximately 23% of the Oswego County is regulated wetlands
• Towns along the lake shore cover ~25% of the County but have about 41% of the population
• Initiated project in 2000
Wetland Selection

• Bio-Inventory Committee selected 11 wetland complexes
• Sites dispersed along the 33 miles of shoreline
• 11 wetlands cover ~2,850 acres that’s 2% of regulated wetlands and 0.5% of the County
• Range in size from 33 to 984 acres and average 250 acres
Goals of the Project

For each Site

- Provide full delineations of all palustrine communities
- Identify all rare plants, rare animals, and significant natural communities located in the wetlands
- Provide an assessment of viability
Community Delineation

- Review digital orthophotos
- Regulated wetland boundary as a starting point
- Conducted field surveys in 2001 and 2002 to collect data
- Delineate communities
- Determine significance of mapped communities
Shrub swamp
Full Community Delineations
Significant Communities
Medium fen
Additional Information

• Threats assessment and management considerations

• Informational fact sheets for each significant community and rare species documented

• Database “dump” containing information on all rare species and significant natural communities within the wetlands
**Informational Fact Sheets**

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**Carex livida var. radiata**

**LIVID SEDGE**

**STATUS**
- Global Rank: 0.575
- Federal Status: Unprotected
- State Status: Endangered

**DESCRIPTION**
- Evergreen, robust sedge native to the northeastern U.S. and rare in Michigan, occurring in wetland habitats.
- Leaves are lanceolate, stiff, and dark green, forming a dense clump.
- Flowers are small, greenish-white, and clustered in a loose, open spike.
- Spikelets are slender and linear, with dark green scales.

**ECOLOGY**
- Prefers wet, meadow-like habitats, often found in bogs, swamps, and marshes.
- flowering from April to June.

**HABITAT**
- Wetlands, especially those with high water levels, including bogs, marshes, and swamps.

**DISTRIBUTION**
- New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

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**Dwarf shrub bog**

**STATUS**
- Global Rank: G4
- Federal Status: Unprotected
- State Status: S3

**DESCRIPTION**
- A habitat characterized by dwarf shrubs, such as blueberry, cranberry, and huckleberry, typically found in peatlands with a water table close to the surface.
- The ground cover is dominated by mosses and sedges, creating a carpet-like appearance.

**ECOLOGY**
- Typically found in acidic, boggy areas with well-drained soils.
- Plant species are adapted to low light and nutrient-poor conditions.

**DISTRIBUTION**
- Found in the northeastern United States, particularly in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

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Results

• New or updated information for 14 communities, 28 plants, and 32 animals
• Wetlands account for 34% of significant communities and rare species in the county
• 38% of the different types of communities and rare species in the county
Deep emergent marsh
Interesting Community Finds

• Second largest medium fen in the state
  ~150 acres

• The only red maple-hardwood swamps
  and red maple-tamarack peat swamps
  along Lake Ontario shoreline
Red maple-tamarack peat swamp
Interesting Plant Finds

• One of the best populations of *Arethusa bulbosa*

• The only population of *Scirpus heterochaetus* the region
Scirpus heterochaetus
Interesting Animal Finds

• Evidence of *Clemmys muhlenbergii*
• The best populations of *Hemileuca* sp. 1 in the state
Hemileuca sp. 1
Additional Work

- Inventory effort bias
- Only 6% of the wetlands are in the towns along Lake Ontario
- In 1950 the towns accounted for 49% of the population. In 2000 it was 41%
- None-the-less this should be a model for other counties
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