

Critical Habitat Area Wissota 4 – Paint Creek Bay

This Critical Habitat Area encompasses approximately 1500 feet of shoreline in the southeast corner of Little Lake Wissota, extending to the 10-ft depth contour (Figure 18). It supports important shallow water habitat (Figure 19, 20). The shoreline at this Critical Habitat Area is composed of some shrub growth with abundant wooded cover and home and lawn development on the top of the bank. Large woody cover from fallen trees is present in the shallow water. This woody cover provides important habitat for fish cover and wildlife resting areas.

This site was selected for its fishery and wildlife value and its aquatic plant community. The site offers visual and audible buffers from boat and road noise.

The Plant Community:

The plant community at this site includes 8 species of aquatic plants.

A diverse submergent plant community provides many fish and wildlife benefits (Table 8). Slender naiad, elodea and water stargrass occur at this site. The pondweed family is an important food source for fish and waterfowl and is represented at this site by small pondweed, long-leaf pondweed and clasping-leaf pondweed. Turf-forming vegetation colonizes the lake bottom, anchoring the substrate. The turf-like needle spikerush is found here.



Figure 18. Lake Wissota Critical Habitat Areas #3, #4, #5, #6.



Figure 19. Lake Wissota Critical Habitat Area #4; Paint Creek Bay



Figure 20. Close up of large woody debris habitat at CHA #4

Table 8. Wildlife and Fish Uses of Aquatic Plants in Critical Habitat Area 4

Aquatic Plants	Fish	Water Fowl	Song and Shore Birds	Upland Game Birds	Muskrat	Beaver	Deer
<u>Submergent Plants</u>							
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	C, F, I	F(Foliage) I					
<i>Najas flexilis</i>	F, C	F*(Seeds, Foliage)	F(Seeds)				
<i>Potamogeton nodosus</i>	F, I, S*,C	F*(Seeds)			F*	F	F
<i>Potamogeton pusillus</i>	F, I, S*,C	F*(All)			F*	F	F
<i>Potamogeton richardsonii</i>	F, I, S*,C	F*(All)			F*	F	F
<i>Zosterella dubia</i>	F, C, S	F(Seeds)					

F=Food, I= Shelters Invertebrates, a valuable food source C=Cover, S=Spawning

***=Valuable Resource in this category**

*Current knowledge as to plant use. Other plants may have uses that have not been determined.

After Fassett, N. C. 1957. A Manual of Aquatic Plants. University of Wisconsin Press. Madison, WI

Nichols, S. A. 1991. Attributes of Wisconsin Lake Plants. Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Info. Circ. #73

Wildlife Habitat

This bay is a good waterfowl feeding and loafing area. Floating-leaf vegetation, shoreline shrubs and brush and fallen logs provide this critical habitat. This site provides:

- 1) shelter, cover and feeding areas for ducks
- 2) shelter, cover, nesting and feeding areas for mink, songbirds, frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles and snakes
- 3) feeding areas for geese and eagles.

Fish Habitat

Large woody cover and submerged vegetation at this site provide critical fish habitat. This site provides:

- 1) feeding areas for walleye
- 2) year-round nursery areas, feeding areas and protective cover for northern pike, musky, largemouth bass, bluegill and yellow perch

Water Quality

The aquatic plant community at this site:

- 1) provides a nutrient buffer, the plants at the shore and in the water acting as a nutrient sink, absorbing nutrients and reducing algae blooms
- 2) provides a biological buffer, reducing the possibility of invasions by exotic species
- 3) is within an area where cold water inflows from Paint Creek provide temperature gradients that provide for higher diversity

Recommendations for Area 4

Recommendations for the terrestrial shoreline buffer:

- 1) Maintain wildlife habitat at this site
- 2) Maintain snag trees and trees with cavity nesting
- 3) No permits for rip-rap or retaining walls, not needed at this site
- 4) No bank grading

Recommendations for the aquatic habitat below the Ordinary High Water Mark

- 5) Maintain current protection of area for fish habitat
- 6) Do not remove fallen trees along the shoreline
- 7) Do not alter the littoral zone except for improvement of spawning habitat
- 8) Maintain the aquatic vegetation (emergent, floating-leaf and submergent) in an undisturbed condition for wildlife habitat, fish cover and as a buffer for water quality protection. Limit removal to navigation channels. Permits required for any vegetation removal.
- 9) No permit approval for pea gravel beds or sand blankets, except for DNR fishery or wildlife approved projects. No dredging or lake bed removal or modifications.
- 10) Pier placement by permit only to minimize number of piers and their size and disturbance; require light-penetrating pier material such as metal grating.
- 11) No boat ramp placement.
- 12) Recreational floating devices sited by permit only
- 13) Recommend slow-no-wake in the bay
- 15) Boat houses on the shore are a zoning compliance issue at this site