

Critical Habitat Area Wissota 5 – Stillson Bay

This Critical Habitat Area is a 2-acre bay on the east shore of the Stillson Creek Inlet, extending out to the 5-ft depth contour (Figure 18). It supports important shallow water habitat (Figure 22). The shoreline at this Critical Habitat Area is composed of a mixture of native herbaceous growth, wooded cover, shrub layer and lawn and home development. Large woody cover from fallen trees is common 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 Plant Community:

The plant community at this site includes 11 species of aquatic plants.

Emergent vegetation: sedges and cattails protect the shoreline and provide important food sources, cover and fish spawning habitat.

Floating-leaf vegetation, white water lilies and small duckweed dampen wave action and provide important fish habitat.

The submergent plant community provides many fish and wildlife benefits (Table 10). Slender naiad, elodea, coontail and wild celery occur at this site. The pondweed family is an important food source for fish and waterfowl and is represented at this site by clasping-leaf pondweed, small pondweed and spiral-fruited pondweed.



Figure 22. Lake Wissota Critical Habitat Area 5: Stillson Bay

Table 10. Wildlife and Fish Uses of Aquatic Plants in Critical Habitat Area 5

Aquatic Plants	Fish	Water Fowl	Song and Shore Birds	Upland Game Birds	Muskrat	Beaver	Deer
<u>Submergent Plants</u>							
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	F, I*, C, S	F(Seeds*), I, C			F		
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	C, F, I	F(Foliage) I					
<i>Najas flexilis</i>	F, C	F*(Seeds, Foliage)	F(Seeds)				
<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>Potamogeton spirillus</i>		F(Seeds)	F		F	F	F
<i>Vallisneria americana</i>	F*, C, I, S	F*, I	F		F		
<u>Floating-leaf Plants</u>							
<i>Lemna minor</i>	F	F*, I	F	F	F	F	
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	F, I, S, C	F(Seeds)	F		F	F	F
<u>Emergent Plants</u>							
<i>Carex crinita</i>	S*	F*(Seeds), C	F*(Seeds)	F*(Seeds)	F	F	F
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	I, C, S	F(Entire), C	F(Seeds), C, Nest	Nest	F* (Entire), C*, Lodge	F	

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 small site but provides good habitat for waterfowl feeding. Emergent vegetation, 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

Fish Habitat

The floating-leaf vegetation and submerged vegetation at this site provide critical fish habitat. This site provides:

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

Water Quality

The aquatic plant community at this site provides a biological buffer, reducing the possibility of invasions by exotic species.

Recommendations for Area 5

Recommendations for the terrestrial shoreline buffer:

- 1) Maintain wildlife habitat at this site
- 2) Maintain snag trees and trees with cavity nesting
- 3) Maintain and increase naturally vegetated wildlife corridor on shore
- 4) Shoreline and bank vegetation is sufficient for bank protection. No permits for rip-rap or retaining walls issued.
- 5) No bank grading

Recommendations for the aquatic habitat below the Ordinary High Water Mark

- 6) Maintain current protection of area for fish habitat
- 7) Do not remove fallen trees along the shoreline
- 8) Do not alter the littoral zone except for improvement of spawning habitat.
- 9) 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 issues. Permits required for any vegetation removal.
- 10) Protect emergent vegetation.
- 11) No permit approval for pea gravel beds or sand blankets, except for DNR fishery or wildlife approved projects.
- 12) No dredging or lake bed removal or modifications.
- 13) Pier placement by permit only to minimize number of piers and their size and disturbance; require light-penetrating pier material such as metal grating.
- 14) No boat ramp placement.
- 15) Recreational floating devices sited by permit only.