

Critical Habitat Area Wisconsin 6 – Upper Stillson Inlet

This Critical Habitat Area is the 2-acre inlet of Stillson and Frederick Creeks, south of State Highway 29 (Figure 18). It supports important near-shore terrestrial habitat, shoreline habitat and shallow water habitat (Figure 23). The shoreline at this Critical Habitat Area is composed of some native herbaceous growth, lawn development and some shrub layer with abundant wooded cover. 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 and terrestrial vegetation.

The Plant Community:

The plant community at this site includes 9 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, small duckweed, provide fish and wildlife food.

The submergent plant community provides many fish and wildlife benefits (Table 11). Elodea 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 long-leaf pondweed. Turf-forming vegetation colonizes the lake bottom, anchoring the substrate. The turf-like needle spikerush occurs here.



Figure 23. Lake Wissota Critical Habitat Area 6; Upper Stillson Inlet

Table 11. Wildlife and Fish Uses of Aquatic Plants in Critical Habitat Area 6

Aquatic Plants	Fish	Water Fowl	Song and Shore Birds	Upland Game Birds	Muskrat	Beaver	Deer
<u>Submergent Plants</u>							
<i>Eleocharis acicularis</i>	S	F			F		
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	C, F, I	F(Foliage) I					
<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>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	
<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 quiet bay provides good wildlife cover. Emergent vegetation, floating-leaf vegetation, shoreline shrubs and brush, snag and perch trees 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 beaver, otter, mink, songbirds, frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles and snakes
- 3) Feeding areas for geese

Fish Habitat

The large woody cover, emergent vegetation 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 largemouth bass, bluegill and yellow perch
- 3) spring spawning, year-round nursery areas, feeding area and protective cover for northern pike and musky

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) provides a physical buffer that protects the shoreline against erosion
- 4) is within an area where cold water river inflows provide temperature gradients that provide for higher diversity

Recommendations for Area 6

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 needs to be restored in areas with native vegetation. No rip-rap or retaining walls
- 5) No bank grading
- 6) Stormwater management needed on some shoreline sites

Recommendations for the aquatic habitat below the Ordinary High Water Mark

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