

Wisconsin Scientific Areas Preservation Council
 Scientific or Natural Area Report

29 Aug. 1974

22 Oct. 1974

Name of Area Ottawa Lake Fen Inspection Date 29 May 1975Quarter SE County Waukesha Twsp. T6N Range R17E Sections 34

Boundaries and acreage of proposed or established area and buffer Part of W1/2 NW1/4; see attached map for exact boundaries. Scientific area about 50 acres (including lake); buffer zone about 6 acres.

Access to area From small gravel road off west side of Wisconsin 67, about 3/4 mile north of Wisconsin 67-CTH ZZ intersection. Access very easy.

Description of area: Outstanding features, primary and secondary biotic communities, dominants, understory and rare species, topography, soils, geology and archeology.

Ottawa Lake consists of two depressions connected by a deep marsh and shallow marl flats. The smaller, northern lake (3.2 acres, 6' deep) is largely undeveloped and is supplied by numerous seepage springs, small boiling springs, and several cold inlet streams. The water flow is south into the larger lake depression which has an extensive recreation area on its southern end. An unusually large number of wetland and aquatic plant communities occur within the 60 acres of interest around the northern lake: submergent aquatic (lake and stream), emergent aquatic (mainly cattail and hard-stemmed bulrush), southern sedge meadow, shrub carr (dogwood-shrubby cinquefoil-willow dominant), tamarack swamp, and fen-marl flats. More extensive than any known in the state, the fen-marl flats contain unusual and rare plants such as pitcher plants in a highly alkaline situation, beaked spike rush (*Eleocharis rostellata*), small bladderwort (*Utricularia* minor), marsh club-moss (*Selaginella apoda*), and fringed gentian (*Gentiana procera*). The upland wooded buffer area to the east consists of locust-box elder-aspen and basswood-oak woods. Besides the high quality plant communities, the tract is rich in animal life. Clams, snails, water snakes, pickerel frogs, bull frogs, blundings turtle, midland painted turtle, green heron were noted on spring inspection. Wading birds and waterfowl frequent the shallows and a bird observation tower has been built on the northern lake edge.

History of land use and limiting factors: Ottawa Lake Recreation Area at south end of lake receives heavy use but little use on northern lake. Abandoned, overgrown gravel road has been placed on north edge of lake. Seepage springs on eastern shore are fragile, susceptible to foot damage.

Administrative information: Landowner and administrator, existing and proposed management, degree of scientific, educational and recreational use of area, adjacent lands and compatibility. Part of Southern Unit-Kettle Moraine State Forest. Area is used lightly for interpretive programs--canoe access boardwalk on western shore, bird observation tower. Suggested management is to maintain area in wild condition. Establishment of buffer area on east side is important to protect springs and fen.
Ottawa Lake chemical characteristics (January 1961): pH 7.8, alkalinity 265 ppm CaCO₃, specific conductance 741.

Reference information: person recommending area, references, quadrangle and other publications and date of action taken toward designation of area. Recommended by Kettle Moraine Naturalist, Ron Kurowski. References: Surface Water Resources of Waukesha County (1963); Recent Wisconsin Records for Some Interesting Vascular Plants in the Western Great Lakes Region. Mich. Bot. 14:137-138. Quadrangle: Eagle 7.5'. Vascular plant species list available in SAPC files. Established as Scientific Area No. 128 in April, 1976.

Report by: Robert H. Read, William Tans Date: 4 June 1975

OTTAWA LAKE FEN SCIENTIFIC AREA

