

Burpee Brook Bog Wetlands Focus Area

Ashland, Portage Lake, Nashville Plt, and T13 R5 WELS

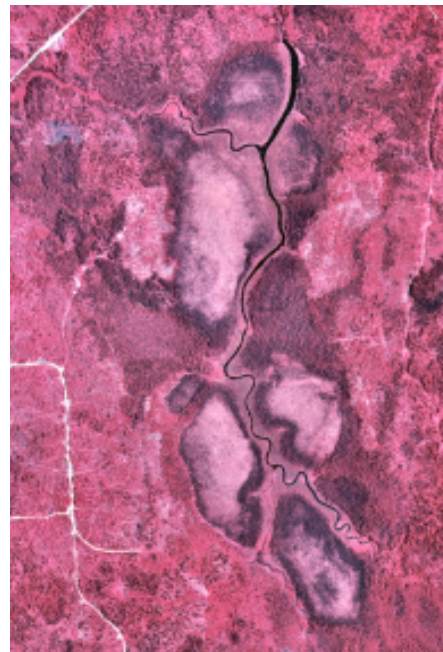


Description:

The Burpee Brook Bog Wetlands Focus Area includes a large multi-unit peatland and several areas of forested wetlands along associated drainages. The large multi-unit peatland is mapped as a **Raised Level Bog Ecosystem** with multiple occurrences of **Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog**. The forested wetlands of the associated drainages are mapped as Significant Wildlife Habitat with large areas of Deer Wintering Area and smaller areas of Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat.

Natural Communities and Rare Plants

One of the largest features of Burpee Brook Bog is a 700 acre **Raised Level Bog Ecosystem**, comprised of Spruce – Larch Wooded Bog and inclusions of six slightly raised **Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bogs** all of which occur in a broad basin bisected by Burpee Brook. The dwarf shrub bogs are characterized by varying amounts of the stunted black spruce (*Picea mariana*) along with a variety of low shrubs including sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), and Labrador tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*). Sedge species including tussock cotton-grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and few-seeded sedge (*Carex oligosperma*) are frequent. Sphagnum moss forms a lush carpet throughout the bogs and the overall peatland.



1992 infrared air photo of Burpee

The bogs support several rare plants. The segment of Burpee Brook that flows through the peatland is a low gradient, slow moving stream. Tall shrubs including speckled alder (*Alnus incana*) and rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*), line either side of the stream. The rare shrub, **swamp birch** (*Betula pumila*), occurs in this area along the brook. Swamp birch tends to grow in minerotrophic (weakly acidic to circumneutral) peatlands, and is a rare species in Maine due to the



Botanist Don Cameron in Burpee Brook Bog (photograph by the Maine Natural Areas Program).

relatively small amount of this type of habitat. The softwood swamp shows no evidence of recent disturbance and was most likely last harvested in the early 1900's.

A third rare plant species, **northern comandra** (*Geocaulon lividum*), occurs in the fringing spruce - larch swamp on the southwest edge of the peatland complex. This species occurs in open to lightly forested northern peatlands and in sub-alpine heaths.

Wildlife

In addition to the peatland ecosystem, there are several areas of Significant Wildlife Habitat mapped in the forested wetland areas that lie to the east and south of the bog. These areas include over 2000 acres of heavily used **Deer Wintering Areas**. These forested riparian areas likely are also important to reptiles and amphibians that use them for habitat and for traveling corridors. Open wetlands along Burpee Brook and Blake Brook also support significant acreages of **Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat**.

The contiguous and concentrated nature of the forested and open wetlands in the vicinity of Burpee Brook Bog enhance the ecological value of the bog and make the area stand out as a focus area of ecological significance.

Rare Features Table for Burpee Brook Bog Wetlands Focus Area:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	S-Rank	G-Rank
Natural Communities				
Raised level bog ecosystem	Raised Level Bog Ecosystem	N/A	S4	GNR
Dwarf shrub bog	Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog	N/A	S4	G5

Rare Plants				
Swamp birch	<i>Betula pumila</i>	SC	S2	G5
Showy lady's slipper	<i>Cypripedium reginae</i>	T	S3	G4
Northern comandra	<i>Geocaulon lividum</i>	SC	S3	G5
Rare Animals				
None documented				

Other Features Mapped by MDIFW:

Deer wintering area
Inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat

Protection Status:

Part of the focus area on the northeast side falls on state owned land managed by the Department of Conservation's Bureau of Parks and Lands. The New England Forestry Foundation holds an easement on the entire unorganized township of T13R5 and a small part of this easement overlaps with the focus area.

Conservation Considerations:

- The integrity of wetlands and the processes and life forms they support including rare plants and animals are dependent on the maintenance of the current hydrology and water quality of the site. Intensive timber harvesting, vegetation clearing, soil disturbance, new roads, and development on buffering uplands can result in greater runoff, sedimentation, and other non-point sources of pollution that can degrade the high quality natural systems that occur here.
- Preserving the natural communities and other sensitive features within the focus area will be best achieved by working to conserve the integrity of the larger natural systems in which these features occur. Conserving the larger systems will help ensure that both common and rare natural features will persist on the landscape in this part of the state.
- In general, threats to peatlands include peat mining, cranberry harvesting, timber harvest around the forest perimeters, and development.
- Peatland systems benefit from establishing and/or maintaining vegetative buffers around their perimeter wherever possible. A buffer of 250 feet or more will serve to limit impacts from adjacent development, help prevent erosion, limit colonization of invasive species, and prevent unnecessary impacts from off road vehicle use.

- Towns should strive to protect inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat (IWWH) areas identified by MDIFW in low density, rural settings by identifying IWWH areas in comprehensive plans and zoning accordingly.

Visit our web site for more information on rare, threatened and endangered species!
<http://www.mainenaturalareas.org>

STATE RARITY RANKS

- S1** Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (five or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the State of Maine.
- S2** Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6-20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3** Rare in Maine (on the order of 20-100 occurrences).
- S4** Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5** Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Note: **State Ranks** are determined by the Maine Natural Areas Program.

GLOBAL RARITY RANKS

- G1** Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (five or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the State of Maine.
- G2** Globally imperiled because of rarity (6-20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- G3** Globally rare (on the order of 20-100 occurrences).
- G4** Apparently secure globally.
- G5** Demonstrably secure globally.

Note: **Global Ranks** are determined by The Nature Conservancy.

STATE LEGAL STATUS FOR PLANTS

Note: State legal status is according to 5 M.R.S.A. § 13076-13079, which mandates the Department of Conservation to produce and biennially update the official list of Maine's endangered and threatened plants. The list is derived by a technical advisory committee of botanists who use data in the Natural Areas Program's database to recommend status changes to the Department of Conservation.

- E** ENDANGERED; Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
- T** THREATENED; Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
- SC** SPECIAL CONCERN; Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be considered Threatened or Endangered.