

# Site #21 – Big Marine Park Reserve

Big Marine Park Reserve is located in northern Washington County, Minnesota, along the southern edge of the St. Croix Moraine, a glacier-influenced geologic feature characterized by hilly terrain and wetland complexes. Portions of the park are scheduled to be developed for recreational use, but most of the park will remain in a natural condition. The southern portion of the Park Reserve (yet to be acquired) has been identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource's (MnDNR) County Biological Survey (MCBS) as containing significant oak forest, maple-basswood forest, rich fen, alder swamp and emergent marsh natural communities. The wetland complexes are known to contain over 100 different plant species and are considered some of the largest, most diverse aquatic ecosystems in the Twin Cities region. About 80% of the park's 1920 acres will be set aside for preservation and protection.

## Quick Facts

### State & County:

Washington County, MN

### Habitat Types:

MCBS Oak Forest  
MCBS Maple-Basswood Forest  
MCBS Rich Fen  
MCBS Alder Swamp  
MCBS Seepage Meadow  
MCBS Emergent Marsh

### Important Plants:

Halberd-leaved Tearthumb  
Lance-leaved violet  
Tuberled Rein-orchid

### Important Wildlife:

Blanding's Turtle  
Red-shouldered hawk

### Protection Designations:

Metro Greenways regional significant ecological area



## Ecological & Cultural Significance:

Most of the land extending four miles east of the park's planned boundary to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is protected as part of the four-mile, 1,965-acre, St. Croix Greenway. Rare species including the Halberd-leave tear thumb and Blanding's Turtle have been observed in the Park Reserve.

## Potential Threats:

The Park Reserve is east of the fast-growing suburbs of Forest Lake and Hugo. Rural, exurban and shoreland development is a primary threat along with nonpoint source pollution and shoreline impacts on water quality.

## Current Activities:

Washington County is actively purchasing land within this park. About 650 acres remain to be acquired. The county has begun developing a portion of the park for recreational use including picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, hiking and active play. Several acres of shoreline have been restored utilizing a MnDNR restoration grant. Buckthorn removal activities have begun with grant assistance from the Washington Conservation District and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Audubon Society (St. Paul Chapter) initiated a bird survey in the summer of 2007.

## Contact Information/Working Partners:

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