

Door County Land Trust: 20 acres protected at Washington Island's Big and Little Marsh

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[Washington Island, WI](#) – Door County Land Trust is excited to announce the protection of 20 acres on Washington Island as part of the Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area. This property is home to a northern hardwood forest with mature maples and American beech. The Land Trust's work here adds to the protection of high-quality forest and wetland habitat within this globally significant Northern Lake Michigan coastal landscape.

Door County Land Trust now protects 721 acres on Washington Island, including parts of the Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recognizes these coastal wetlands among the most important wildlife habitat and natural landscapes in Door County.

Additionally, protection of coastal wetlands like those found at Big and Little Marsh rank as top priorities of conservation partners within the Great Lakes region. Coastal wetlands provide habitat for rare plants, animals, and migratory birds, as well as benefit fish by preventing pollution and runoff into the Great Lakes.

Community conservation director Terrie Cooper says, "Our work to protect these special places allows life to thrive far beyond the island. The Great Lakes are all connected and serve as the largest freshwater ecosystem in the world. Protecting Door County's islands and coastal wetlands benefits not only the plants and animals that call this place home, but our entire community."

Protection of this property marks a conservation milestone for Washington Island. This newly protected land connects other conservation land to the east and west, forming a protected corridor of high-quality forest and wetland habitat. Permanent protection of connected natural lands helps to preserve the health of forests and promotes biodiversity by ensuring wildlife the ability to move freely between protected habitats.

Protection of these coastal wetlands helps to preserve the integrity of North America's Great Lakes ecosystems. Big and Little Marsh features critical breeding habitat for the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly and supports the federally threatened dwarf lake iris, as well as more than 30 bird species listed as rare, threatened or of special concern.

Wetlands are among the most complex, productive ecosystems in the world. Wetlands help mitigate climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases. They also protect water quality, reduce flooding, and recharge drinking water aquifers. Funding to protect these lands is provided by Wisconsin's Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program, the Fox River and Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council, and significant support from individuals, families, and Door County Land Trust members.

Door County Land Trust will continue land protection efforts in the area, an important step towards preserving the coastal wetlands, forests, and fisheries that support Great Lakes wildlife. The Land Trust must raise an additional \$200,000 prior to the end of this year to fund remaining conservation costs and long-term care of these properties. Every contribution makes a difference. To donate to land protection efforts or watch stunning videos of Washington Island from the air, please visit www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Vision.