

Medora Township, Muskoka Lakes
 Status: Recommend Heritage Site

Area: 2 ha

Site Characteristics

The Gaunt Bay A.C.P.F. site is situated along a portion of undeveloped shoreline in Gaunt Bay below Bala Falls. The substrate consists of glaciolacustrine lake-bottom deposits of sand and clay. The shoreline is shallow and has considerable annual water fluctuations. These conditions are ideal for the development of Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora (A.C.P.F.). In this small stretch of shoreline a total of 15 coastal plain species were recorded, yielding a high score of 78, which ranked second of the ten areas meeting the criteria for coastal plain flora representation.

In addition, this small 2 ha site supported 4 species of herpetofauna, 3 mammals, 159 species of native vascular plants and 16 introduced plant species.

Jim Goltz (1992) reported on three other small areas below Bala Falls. The Upper Moon River A.C.P.F. site encompasses little more than 300 metres of shoreline which supports a number of rare and uncommon shoreline and coastal plain species. These including many of the species listed below plus Pale Green Orchis (*Platanthera flava*) which is considered Regionally Rare.

Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met

1. **Biogeographic Significance/Rare Species** - (B4) The Gaunt Bay A.C.P.F. site provides habitat for the following rare species of vascular plants:

- Bulbostylis capillaris* Hair Rush [PR]
- **Carex folliculata* Long Sedge [PR]
- **Elatine minima* Water Wort [PR]
- Eleocharis tenuis* Elliptic Spike Rush [RR]
- **Linum striatum* Ridged Yellow Flax [NR PR RR]
- Panicum spretum* Eaton's Grass [PR]
- Panicum flexile* Wiry Witch Grass [RR]
- **Panicum rigidulum* Panic Grass [NR PR]
- **Rhexia virginica* Virginia Meadow Beauty [NR PR]
- **Triadenum virginicum* Marsh St. John's Wort [PR]
- **Xyris difformis* Slender Yellow-eyed Grass [PR]
- *Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora

In addition, ten species of vascular plants were recorded as regionally uncommon. The site contains high representation of Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora, a disjunct flora with biogeographic significance.

Ownership, Disturbances and Sensitivity

The shorelines of the upper Moon River and Guant Bay below Bala Falls are heavily developed with private cottage properties. Shoreline alterations for recreational use are the greatest threat to the significant flora in the area. Private stewardship initiatives have the greatest potential to protect the natural shoreline areas. Management guidelines for the protection of coastal plain flora are being developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.