

LANGMAID'S ISLAND

UTM Ref. 17TPA498082

McLean Township, Lake of Bays
Status: Recommend Heritage Area

Area: 55 ha

Site Characteristics

This island is situated just off the mainland north of Baysville in Lake of Bays. The narrow island is formed by three large hills which rise up to 50 metres above the elevation of the water (315m ASL). The geology is mainly bedrock-drift complex, with deeper soils on the slopes and lowlands supporting early successional White Birch-Trembling Aspen deciduous forests and late successional Sugar Maple-Yellow Birch-Eastern Hemlock mixed forests. The two highest peaks are of exposed bedrock outcrops with very thin soils supporting semi-open Red Oak-White Pine-White Ash treed woodland barrens. Exposed cliffs on the south side of the island are sparsely vegetated with an open graninoid and low shrub assemblage consisting of some uncommon plant species.

The undeveloped rocky shoreline is mainly coniferous fringe forest dominated by Eastern Hemlock and Eastern White Cedar with some areas of White Spruce, and White Pine on the more exposed slopes. Two long sandy beaches are present in isolated bays along the southern shoreline, while one small marshland occupies a tiny, protected bay along the northern shore at the narrowest point of the island.

Between Langmaid's Island and Joli Point of the mainland is a small rocky island, Seagull Island, which was included as part of this site because of the presence of nesting Canada Geese (considered regionally uncommon) and its function as a Herring Gull loafing area.

Flora and Fauna

Total numbers of species recorded were:

Vascular Plants	134 native; 3 introduced
Birds	28 observed during the breeding season
Mammals	3
Herpetofauna	4
Butterflies	1
Dragonflies	4
Mushrooms	14

Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met

- 1. Diversity - (B2)** For an island of its size, Langmaid's Island supports a diversity of habitats, including coniferous fringe forest, early successional deciduous forests, late successional mixed forests, rocky shorelines, sandy beach, marshland, steep rocky ridge exposed cliff faces and semi-open treed barrens.
- 2. Quality and Disturbance - (B3)** The island contains biotic communities showing little recent disturbance. In particular, it supports long stretches of undeveloped shoreline and natural beaches on a lake otherwise heavily developed for recreational property.

The successional sequence following a natural disturbance (70-80 years ago) by fire on the eastern section of the island is of interest to compare with the late successional (120-140 year old) forests on the western section of the island.

The use of this island by Fisher (reported by Towle, 1989) would attest to its quality of forested communities and lack of disturbance. The island was evaluated by Brunton (1991 b) as a regionally significant forest and recommended as a candidate ANSI.

3. Fish and Wildlife Concentrations - (B5) Langmaid's Island supports a deer wintering area as well as potential Lake Trout spawning school. The proximity of the island to the mainland allows for a wildlife migration opportunity for many species.

4. Scenic Landscapes - (C7) Seagull Island was identified as having high scenic value. In addition, the view from the summit of the hills on Longmaid's Island provide a commanding and highly scenic vista of the Lake of Bays.

Ownership and Disturbance

The island is privately owned by one individual who wishes to maintain the island in a natural state. Development of the island is restricted to a cluster of buildings on the small peninsula separating the western and eastern island sections and a limited network of paths. The sandy beaches are frequented by boaters who stop to picnic and swim. While some disturbance to the adjoining forests is occurring, the beaches remain relatively clean.

Natural disturbances to the island show evidence of a fire on the eastern section in the past. There were old burned stumps in the understory of the early successional forest dominated by White Birch with Trembling Aspen and Eastern White Cedar.

Sensitivity

The sensitivity of this site is related to natural quality of this forested island as wildlife habitat and undisturbed shoreline. Private land stewardship with the landowner should go far to ensure its continued protection. Posting of the island as private conservation area may help to limit unregulated uses.

Major Sources of Information

Bergsma, et al., 1993; Brunton, 1991b; District Municipality of Muskoka, 1985 Sensitive Areas Schedules; OMNR, 1989 Deer Mapping; Reid, & Berney, 1993; Towle, 1989.