

## LION'S HEAD

UTM Ref. 17TPV238666

Wood Township, Muskoka Lakes  
Status: Recommend Heritage Area

Area: 4 ha

### *Site Characteristics*

This small site is located on a south-facing slope adjacent to the Severn River. This warm dry microclimate supports a rich complement of southern species, with some prairie elements. The greatest concentration of southern species grow in open locations just above the wave wash zone.

The vegetation on Lion's Head consists primarily of open White Oak and Red Oak woodland, with many gaps resulting from bedrock outcrops. Open outcrops with sandy deposits occur along the shore. A somewhat moister woodland of Red Oak and Red Maple grows where soil is deeper.

### *Flora and Fauna*

Total numbers of species recorded were:  
Vascular Plants 159 native; 11 introduced

### *Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met*

1. **Representation** - (B1) Lion's Head contains two communities which are of limited distribution elsewhere in Muskoka - a *Spartina* Dry-sand Prairie community (warmer/sand/arid), and a South-facing Rock Shoreline association (warmer/rock/wet). This site was identified as the most significant example of these habitats along the Severn corridor (Kamstra, 1992).

2. **Rare Species** - (B4) The Lion's Head area provides habitat for the following rare species:

#### Vascular Plants:

*Acalypha virginica* Three-seeded Mercury [RR]

*Allium canadense* Wild Garlic [RR]

*Bromus kalmii* Kalm's Chess Brome [RR]

*Carex conoidea* Field Sedge [PR RR]

*Ceanothus herbaceus* Narrow-leaved New Jersey [RR]

*Cyperus diandrus* Two Stamen Umbrella Sedge [RR]

*Desmodium canadense* Showy Tick Trefoil [RR]

*Elymus virginicus* Virginia Rye [RR]

*Hypericum punctatum* Spotted St. John's Wort [RR]

*Juncus secundus* One-sided Rush [NR PR RR]

*Panicum virgatum* Switch Grass [RR]

*Penstemon hirsutus* Hairy Beard Tongue [RR]

*Platanthera psycodes* Smaller Purple Fringed Orchis [RR]  
*Selaginella apoda* Meadow Spike Moss [RR]  
*Sporobolus asper* Rough Dropseed [NR PR RR]  
*Sporobolus heterolepis* Northern Dropseed [PR RR]

In addition, 18 species of regionally uncommon vascular plants were documented.

**3. Biogeographic Significance** - (B7) Lion's Head includes among its flora many species at the northern edge of their range, including two species (One-sided Rush and Northern Dropseed) previously unknown in Muskoka.

**4. Scenic Landscapes** - (C7) The Severn River, which incorporates the Lion's Head area, has been identified as a corridor of high scenic value.

#### *Ownership and Disturbance*

The area is privately owned, and is likely to be under heavy pressure for future cottage development. Although there are cottages nearby on both sides of Lion's Head, the site is little disturbed at present.

#### *Sensitivity*

The significant plant species associated with this site are sensitive to trampling and mowing, and would almost inevitably be destroyed by cottage or residential development. Protection of the limited watershed area reaching to the top of the ridge will provide buffering to the small but highly significant plant concentrations closer to the shoreline.

#### *Major Sources of Information*

Kamstra, 1992.