

## McLEAN BAY WETLAND

UTM Ref. 17TPV271667

Morrison Township, Gravenhurst  
Status: Recommend Heritage Area

Area: 65 ha

### *Site Characteristics*

McLean Bay is a shallow bay of clear, relatively calcareous water in the northwesternmost part of Sparrow Lake. Because of the influence of the Severn River waters arising largely in the limestone-based watersheds to the south, Sparrow Lake has a rich submersed aquatic flora. The shallow waters of McLean Bay support a community that is rich in pondweeds, Water Starwort, Water Mil-foils, Waterweed, and Eel Grass.

Along the shore is a narrow marsh fringe of emergent species, with sections of taller marsh supporting cattails and shrubs such as Buttonbush, Sweet Gale, Winterberry, and Silky Dogwood. On the fine-grained glaciolacustrine deposits that extend inland from the end of the bay along South Beaver Creek, a Silver Maple-Red Maple swamp forest is found.

### *Flora and Fauna*

Total numbers of species recorded were:

Vascular Plants 143 native; 8 introduced  
1 A.C.P.F. with score of 4 (Insignificant)

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

1. **Representation** - (B1) McLean Bay Wetland provides an excellent example of a Neutral Mesotrophic Shallow Open Water community (warmer/sand/open water), which is not well represented elsewhere in Muskoka.

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

#### Vascular Plants

*Carpinus caroliniana* Blue Beech/Hornbeam [RR]  
*Platanthera flava* Pale Green Orchis [RR]  
*Scirpus fluviatilis* River Bulrush [RR]  
*Scirpus heterochaetus* Slender Bulrush [NR PR RR]

In addition, 15 species of regionally-uncommon plants have been identified within this site.

3. **Fish and Wildlife Concentrations** - (B5) McLean Bay Wetland is locally known as a migratory staging area in spring and fall for significant numbers of waterfowl.

4. **Scenic Landscapes** - (C7) McLean Bay Wetland is part of the Severn River system, which has been identified as a corridor of high scenic value.

### *Ownership and Disturbance*

The land-based sections of McLean Bay Wetland are entirely privately owned, primarily by one family who have protected its significant natural features. Boat traffic along the Severn brings some degree of disturbance to the site, and the adjacent uplands along the bay are heavily cottaged. Otherwise, the area shows little recent disturbance.

### *Sensitivity*

The natural values of this area could be destroyed by dredging or filling associated with development within the wetland or the bay. However, the aquatic and shoreline sections are included within the Sparrow Lake Marsh class 1 wetland (Ferguson and Boyd, 1986), so should be protected by provincial policy. Development within the adjacent wooded swamp should also be discouraged.

### *Major Sources of Information*

Kamstra, 1992; Ferguson and Boyd, 1986; Bajc and Paterson, 1992 a.