

MOOSE LAKE

UTM Ref. 17TPV252673

Morrison Township, Gravenhurst
Status: Recommend Heritage Area

Area: 105 ha

Site Characteristics

Moose Lake is a small lake, about 20 ha in size, which drains south into the Severn River via a slow-flowing creek blocked by a beaver dam. In the tea-coloured, acidic waters of the lake, the abundant submersed vegetation is dominated by Purple Bladderwort, with other species in shallower waters. Atlantic Coastal Plain species occur along the shorelines, with Water Wort and Two-cupped Pond Weed along sandy shorelines on the south and east sides of the lake. Several floating mats around the perimeter of the lake support Slender Yellow-eyed Grass and White Fringed Orchis.

The surrounding upland is rolling gneissic ridges with thin or non-existent soils. Most of this upland supports an open savannah-like woodland of White and Red Oak and White Pine, with a fairly large stand of Jack Pine near the south end of the lake.

Flora and Fauna

Total numbers of species recorded were:

Vascular plants	225 native; 15 introduced 10 A.C.P.F. with a score of 49 (High)
Birds	47 observed during breeding season
Mammals	4
Herpetofauna	10
Butterflies	13

Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met

- 1. Representation** - (B1) The Jack Pine Rock Barrens community (normal/sand/dry) found south of the lake is the only example of this ecological association recorded within the Muskoka Heritage Areas system.
- 2. Diversity** - (B2) The total number of native plant species recorded for the Moose Lake area related to its size is higher than expected for Muskoka, as shown in Figure 1.
- 3. Rare Species** - (B4) The Moose Lake area provides habitat for the following rare species:

Wildlife

Buteo lineatus Red-shouldered Hawk [NR PR]
Clemmys guttata Spotted Turtle [NR PR RR] *
Heterodon platirhinos Eastern Hognose Snake [PR] *
Euphyes dion Dion Skipper [PR RR]
Hesperia leonardus Leonardus Skipper [PR]

Vascular Plants

- Elatine minima* Water Wort [PR]
 - Panicum spretum* Eaton's Grass [PR]
 - Platanthera blephariglottis* White Fringed Orchis [PR]
 - Potamogeton bicupulatus* Two-cupped Pond Weed [NR PR]
 - Triadenum virginicum* Marsh St. John's Wort [PR]
 - Xyris difformis* Slender Yellow-eyed Grass [PR]
- * reported by landowners

In addition, 14 species of vascular plants, three birds, and one snake were recorded as regionally uncommon.

4. Biogeographic Significance - (B7) The Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora associated with this area ranked highly in a uniform scoring system (10th of all sites in Muskoka), demonstrating good representation of these disjunct eastern seaboard species.

As well, the Jack Pine stand found within this area is of particular interest because of its southern location and isolation from other Jack Pine populations.

Ownership and Disturbance

The area is 90% privately owned, with several cottages clustered along one section of the lakeshore. The remainder of the lake, and the watershed which is included within the Heritage Area, has seen little recent disturbance.

Sensitivity

The specialized vegetation of the lake shore is vulnerable to disturbance by further cottage development, particularly in the pockets of sandy shoreline. Some of the known rare species, such as Spotted Turtle, are also considered intolerant of disturbance. The rock barren communities are also sensitive to excessive disturbance by logging or other activities that could affect the shallow overburden, most notably in the Jack Pine area.

Major Sources of Information

Kamstra, 1992.