

MUSQUASH RIVER A.C.P.F.

UTM Ref. 17TPV033857 and
17TNV982858

Wood Township, Muskoka Lakes
Gibson Township, Georgian Bay
Status: Recommend Heritage Site

Area: 50 ha

Site Characteristics

Two sites are located along the Musquash River adjacent to Hydro Power stations at Ragged Rapids and Big Eddy. Water levels are controlled by dams which regulate flows along this stretch of the river. The topography of the area is rocky with areas of shallow sandy-gravel shorelines supporting emergent marsh vegetation. Three species of Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora were located at these sites yielding a score of 20. While this score constitutes a low representation for significance, all three species are considered Nationally or Provincially Rare.

Fifty species of vascular plants were recorded from the two shoreline sites. Colourful displays of Cardinal Flower and Golden Hedge-Hyssop line the shorelines in the latter part of summer.

Significant Natural Values and Selection Criteria Met

1. **Rare Species** - (B4) Ragged Rapids and Big Eddy sites provide habitat for the following rare vascular plant species:

Panicum rigidulum Panic Grass [NR PR]
Rhexia virginica Virginia Meadow Beauty [NR PR]
Xyris difformis Slender Yellow-eyed Grass [PR]

In addition, two species were recorded as regionally uncommon, including Golden Hedge-Hyssop, which is mainly distributed downstream from Bala Falls and along the inland rivers of Georgian Bay.

Ownership, Disturbance and Sensitivity

These sites are located within the boundaries of the Gibson First Nation lands. The coastal plain flora are maintained in part by fluctuating water levels which are controlled by the Hydro dams. Regulation of water levels by Ontario Hydro should consider impacts on the coastal flora element where possible.