



Chiwaukee Prairie Illinois Beach Lake Plain—A Wetland of International Importance

The Ramsar Convention is designating 3,716 acres of land owned by eight public landowners along Lake Michigan in southeast Wisconsin and northeast Illinois as a Wetland of International Importance. The designated area starts north within the Village of Pleasant Prairie and continues south to the City of Waukegan, including: *Kenosha Sand Dunes, Chiwaukee Prairie State Natural and Scientific Area, Carol Beach Parks and Open Space, Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, Fossiland/Novotny Park, Dead Dog Creek, Illinois Beach State Park and Nature Preserve, Hosha Prairie, Bowen Park and Glen Flora Tributary.*

The Lake Plain Meets Three Ramsar Designation Criteria

This coastal landscape, covering approximately 15 miles of coastline, contains the highest quality coastal dune and swale ecosystem in the region. The Lake Plain supports six globally rare representatives of fen, sedge meadow, freshwater marsh and seep wetland communities, as well as critical sand savanna and dry prairie upland habitat. The publicly and privately protected ecosystem connects 14 different community types, seven of which are wetland communities:

- 1) The Lake Plain contains six representative community types of exemplary high quality, which are designated with a global conservation status ranking of imperiled or vulnerable.
- 2) The Lake Plain supports two federally protected wetland dependent species, including the only highly viable population of eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) in the region, as well as 1,236 acres designated as critical habitat area for the federally endangered piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*).
- 3) The Lake Plain serves as important breeding habitat for many wetland dependent bird species and provides critical migratory stopover habitat for at least 310 migratory bird species. A portion of the Lake Plain (2,039 acres) is designated an Important Bird Conservation Area by the National Audubon Society.

Further, the Lake Plain provides additional noteworthy ecological and socio-economic services:

- The Lake Plain wetlands and associated upland prairie and savanna complex provide habitat for over 930 native plant species and 300 animal species, including 63 state protected species.
- The Lake Plain provides critical ecosystem services, including protection of Lake Michigan water quality. Five major tributaries and several minor tributaries flow through the Lake Plain prior to reaching Lake Michigan.
- The Lake Plain provides significant tourism opportunities for local communities, supporting over two million visitors a year, engaging community members in volunteer conservation stewardship, and providing high quality examples of coastal wetland communities for education and scientific research.

The Lake Plain Conservation Partners:

Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund
City of Waukegan
Exelon / ZionSolutions
Friends of Illinois Beach
Illinois Department of Natural Resources*
Johns Manville
Lake County Forest Preserve District*
Lake County Health Department
Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
Midwest Generation LLC

The Nature Conservancy
Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
University of Wisconsin-Parkside*
The Village of Pleasant Prairie*
Village of Winthrop Harbor*
Waukegan Harbor Citizens' Advisory Group
Waukegan Park District*
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*
Zion Park District*

*Landowners within the Ramsar Designation Area