

PROJECT PARTNERS

Funding for this project was provided by a WDNR Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant from the EPA, with site design by Stantec and construction by Ashland Sand and Gravel.



**Town of Port Wing,
Wisconsin**

Other partners included:
Ashland Sand and Gravel, Bayfield County,
Northland College Coastal Wetland Consortium
and South Shore School

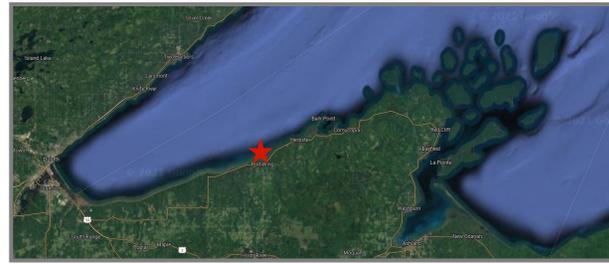


Partners meet at the site during construction.



Plan Your Visit

This site is located just west of Port Wing on State Highway 13, north of Carpo Drive. Wheeler Road, though not maintained during the winter, allows access to parking areas, a haul-in canoe landing, an observation platform and a beautiful view of the estuary. Located just 45 minutes from Ashland and 50 minutes from the Twin Ports, this wetland is a great location to stop and see wildlife while visiting the area.



Town of Port Wing, Wisconsin

<https://townofportwing.com/>

Town Clerk:

715-774-3662

townofportwing@gmail.com

Michele Wheeler Wetland Restoration

PORT WING, WISCONSIN

Reconnecting the links of a freshwater estuary
and a community



Creating Renewed Connections



Flowering Arrowhead thrives in the wetland.

This project, done in partnership with Wisconsin DNR, Stantec and the Town of Port Wing, turned old wastewater ponds back into a native wetland habitat reconnecting to the Flag River Estuary and Lake Superior.

Background

To treat wastewater for the Town of Port Wing, Wisconsin (population 164), settling ponds were



Locally-sourced fill, with a seed-bank of native species, was used to fill in the site.

constructed in the estuary in 1968 on Town property. The ponds were abandoned as part of a facility upgrade in 2011.

WDNR began working with the Town in 2016 to restore the site. A multidisciplinary project team convened to establish project objectives that met both local community and natural resource needs for the site. This included restoring sedge meadow and northern pike spawning habitats and providing public use opportunities for birdwatching, waterfowl

hunting and boat access to Bibon Lake.

The Restoration

Project work included dewatering the site, re-grading the site to elevations that support desired habitats and spreading weed-free organic wetland soils as a seed source.

Creation of an observation area, removal of the berms surrounding the ponds, improvement of access and parking areas were included.



WDNR's Michele Wheeler played an integral role in this restoration project. By developing a shared vision and goals with multiple partners, she ensured both community and ecological needs were met.

Flag River Estuary

The Flag River is a Class I trout stream on the Bayfield peninsula that drains to Lake Superior. The coastal wetland at the mouth of the Flag River estuary is a 530-acre complex providing

important habitat for numerous species of waterfowl and migratory birds. The coastal bog contains a number unique species such as buckbean, mud sedge, white and sooty beak-rushes, livid sedge and speckled alder.

The area supports a rich fishery including panfish and northern pike in the 14-foot-deep Bibon Lake. Twelve species of rare plants and animals have been documented including Wisconsin's only known population of fly honeysuckle.

Community Engagement

The local Port Wing community was involved in planning the layout of the wetland site and the potential uses for recreation.

South Shore School students conducted water quality testing, constructed and installed wood duck houses and created an interpretive sign sharing information about nearby flora and fauna.



South Shore teachers and students use the wetland for education.

Recreation

This beautiful wetland estuary boasts numerous uses— from kayaking and birding to waterfowl hunting to sightings of many other species of wildlife during migrations. Many uncommon birds can be found enjoying the site.



A sign on the observation platform at the wetland shares more about the estuary.



The wetland after construction was completed.