

# Western Patterned Peatlands

**Conservation Challenges:**

- \* Conversion to agricultural uses
- \* Changes in agricultural practices
- \* Increased draitiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater
- \* Fluctuating/ declining river levels
- \* Invasive spp.: Buckthorns, Eurasian honeysuckle, garlic . mustard, leafy spurge, EAB
- \* Habitat fragmentation
- \* Agricultural water pollutants/sedimentation
- \* Fire-dependent communities are likely to decline due to difficulty in restoring natural fire regimes

**Conservation Opportunities:**

- \* Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

**Existing Conservation Network:**

- State Parks:
- State Forests:
- SNAs:
- Wildlife Management Areas:
  - Thief Lake
  - Wapiti
- Aquatic Management Areas:

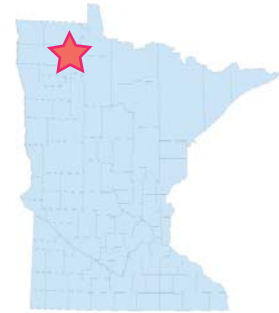
**Rare Species:**

- American Bittern
- Bald Eagle
- Blunt Sedge
- Colonial Waterbird Nesting Site
- Cooper's Milk Vetch
- Dry Sedge
- Forster's Tern
- Franklin's Gull
- Hair-like sedge
- Least Moonwort
- Marbled godwit
- McCalla's Willow
- Nelson's Sparrow
- Northern Androsace
- Northern Pocket Gopher
- Oat Grass
- Prairie Moonwort
- Rock Sandwort
- Sandhill Crane
- Sheather Pondweed
- Short-eared Owl
- Siberian Yarrow
- Small-leaved Pussytoes
- Trumpeter Swan
- Upland Sandpiper
- Yellow Rail

## Western Patterned Peatlands Opportunity Area

**Ecological Significance:**

Located in the one of the coldest parts of Minnesota, the Patterned Peatlands are a vast landscape that is unique to the lower 48 states. Extremely cold winter temperatures limit the growth of some woody species. As extensive wetlands developed on the level bed of Lake Agassiz, peat and sphagnum accumulated to sizable depths to exert influence on the character of the landscape. Since the peatlands are not determined by strong variations in geology or topography, the landscape takes on unique characteristics driven by internal flows and water chemistry. Unique patterns in woodlands, fens, bogs, flarks, and water tracks can be appreciated on a macrolandscape and microlandscape level. The western peatlands are particularly important as they are on the prairie ecotone in the driest region in Minnesota, and may possess qualities that allow them to persist in an area that receives as little as 20 inches of annual precipitation in a temperate latitude. Protection of these landscapes should occur on a landscape scale due to their vast hydrologic extent.



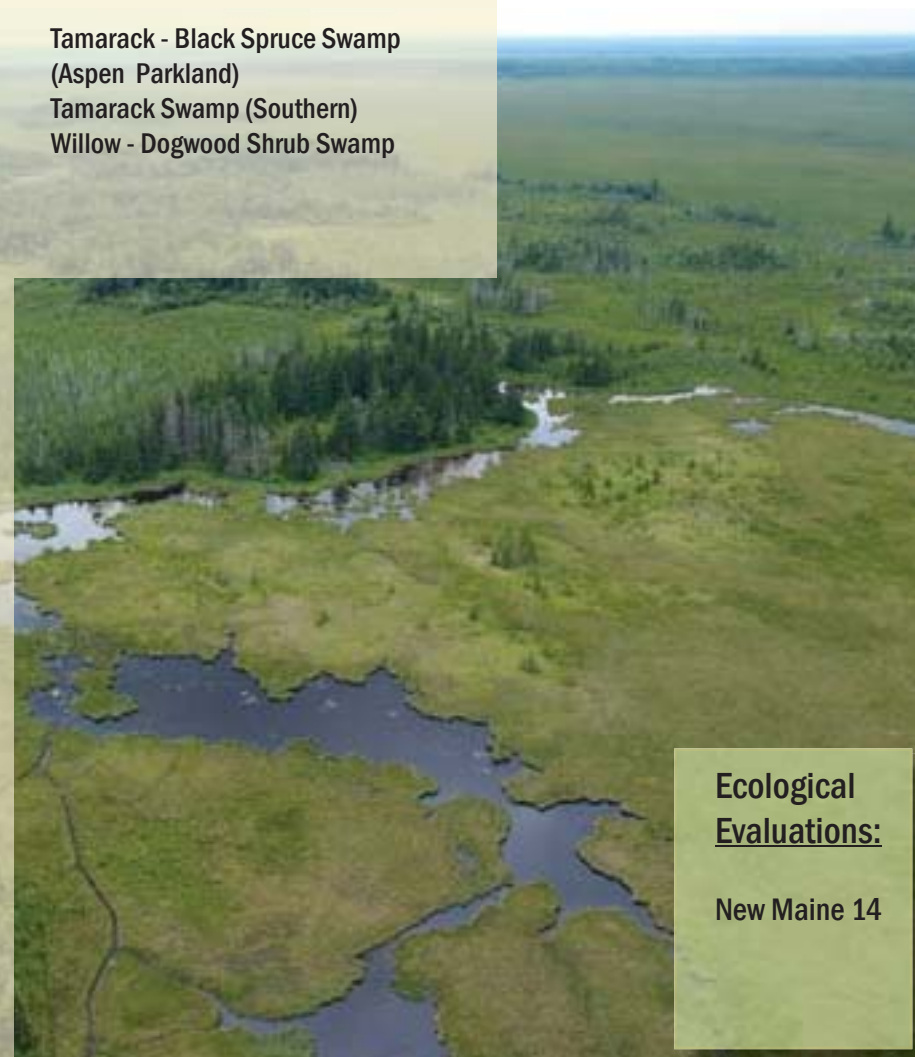
**Counties:**

- Lake of the Woods
- Marshall

**Rare Native Plant Communities:**

- Alder - (Maple - Loosestrife) Swamp
- Aspen (Choke cherry) Woodland
- Aspen - Fir Forest
- Black Spruce Bog
- Bur Oak - (Prairie Herb)Woodland
- Colonial Water bird Nesting Site
- Dry Sand Gravel Oak Savanna (Northern)
- Low Shrub Poor Fen
- Lowland Black Ash - Aspen - Balsam Poplar Forest
- Lowland White Cedar Forest (Northern)
- Native Plant Community, Undetermined
- Northern Poor Conifer Swamp
- Northern Rich Spruce Swamp (Water Track)
- Northern Rich Tamarack Swamp (Water Track)
- Northern Wet-Mesic Boreal Hardwood-Conifer Forest
- Northern Wet Ash Swamp
- Northwestern Rich Conifer Swamp
- Northwestern Wet-Mesic Aspen Woodland
- Poor Tamarack-Black Spruce Swamp, Tamarack Subtype
- Prairie Meadow/Carr
- Prairie Rich Fen
- Rich Fen (Peatland)
- Rich Fen (Prairie Seepage)

- Tamarack - Black Spruce Swamp (Aspen Parkland)
- Tamarack Swamp (Southern)
- Willow - Dogwood Shrub Swamp



**Ecological Evaluations:**

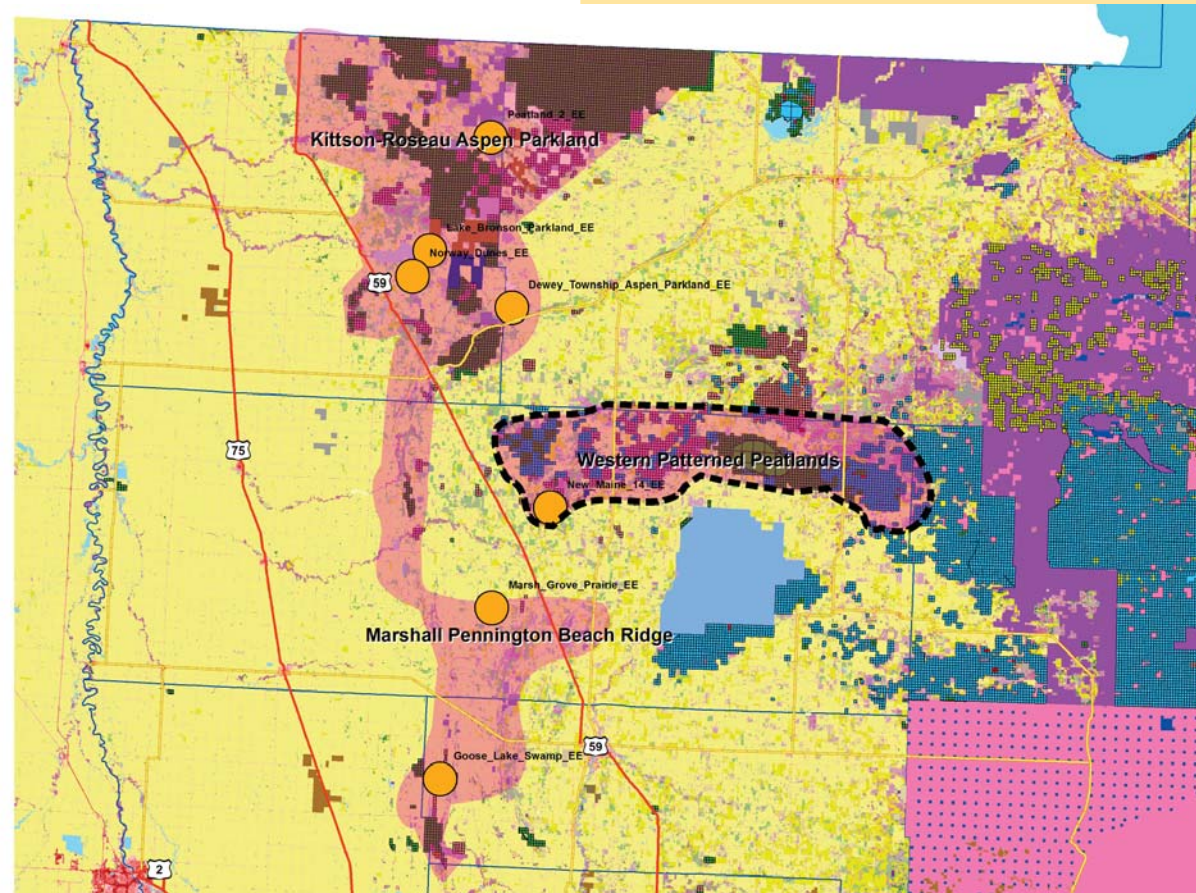
New Maine 14

Photo from Erika Rowe



# Western Patterned Peatlands

Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership



Please see Legend at the front of the Opportunity Area Descriptions for a key to this map

# Western Patterned Peatlands

Marxan Prioritization, Element Occurrences

