

# Great Sidney Bog

Sidney, Augusta



## Description

Great Sidney Bog is a 605-acre Raised Level Bog lying between the Belgrade Lakes chain and the Kennebec River. Much of the bog is clearly raised above the water table, relying on atmospheric deposition for its nutrients (ombrotrophic). As is typical in raised bogs, Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog vegetation covers most of the highly raised acidic area, and the abundant rhodora and sheep laurel create an outstanding floral display. Spruce – Larch Wooded Bog, Red Maple Wooded Fen, and Bog Moss Lawn communities make up the remainder of the peatland. Small streams drain into the bog from the north and west, and exit the bog on the northeast and south sides. The open peatland has typical hummocks and hollows in the sheep laurel – rhodora – leatherleaf vegetation, but no other obvious patterning. No state-listed rare plants have been documented here, but the unusual orchid *Arethusa bulbosa* has been noted, as well as other typical bog orchids. Because of its size, vegetation, and relatively undisturbed nature, it is considered a very good example of this peatland type. Its ecological importance is augmented by its location in the southern third of the state, where raised bogs become much more scarce than they are further north. Dr. Ronald Davis, peatland expert at the University of Maine, notes that “this is one of the best examples of a raised bog in southwestern Maine and in an area so far south in eastern North America... The easy access to this peatland in the Waterville – Augusta area enhances its value for education and research.” The peatland is visited a few times yearly by local school field trips.

*Rare Species and Natural Communities Summary Table*

Common Name	Latin Name	EO Rank	Global Rank	State Rank
Raised Level Bog Ecosystem	--	B		S4

**Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW**

Much of the bog is mapped as wading bird / waterfowl habitat, and deer yards about the bog on the north and west sides.

**Protection Status**

Sidney Bog is at this point unprotected, and ownership is rather complex. The bog proper encompasses all or part of 14 lots in the towns of Sidney and Augusta. As of 1990, the city of Augusta held one lot, and the Town of Sidney another; the remainder were in private ownership. Peat mining rights are held on several of the lots by General Peat Resources. A 1990 survey of landowner attitudes showed that all but two landowners supported conservation of the bog.

**Conservation Considerations**

Great Sidney Bog is largely surrounded by mid-successional woods, and bordered on the east by the Bog Road. In places, Bog Road is immediately adjacent to the peatland. Rt. 27, the south end of the Pond Road (Rt. 23), and Quaker Road border the bog on the west. Much of the roadside land is houselots.

The major threat, as yet unrealized, to the bog would be peat mining. The peatland contains sufficient peat resources that peat interests hold mining rights there, with one lot (as of 1990) owned by a peat company. Less pervasive, but more likely to occur, is degradation of the peatland from incidental uses related to the increasing residential development in the area. Buffers can play a major role in protection here. ORV use of the peatland when the ground is not frozen could seriously degrade portions of the bog; this has been a problem in some other bogs in southern Maine.

An adequate buffer should be retained between developed lots or timber harvest areas and the wetland. The state minimum shoreland zoning standards restrict harvest and clearing within 250' of the wetland border. Because different species can have different buffering requirements, better protection will be afforded to the collective wetland plants and animals with larger buffers. Any timber harvesting within and adjacent to the wetland should be implemented with strict adherence to state or local Shoreland Zoning guidelines and Maine Forest Service Best Management Practices.

Appropriate conservation strategies include tree growth and open space treatments, conservation easements, and fee ownership.