Harbor Country's Glacial and Vegetative History

Peg Kohring

Galien River’s Great Outdoors
• Journey thru
  – Drowned river mouth
  – Coastal marshes
  – Beach maple forest
  – Emergent Forest
  – Oak Savanna
  – Peat bogs
Galien Marsh between Red Arrow and New Buffalo
Welcome to the Galien River Marsh Water Trail

The marsh represents an ecosystem that was once prevalent along the coast, but is now rare.

Great Lakes Marsh: Synchronized to the Rhythms of Lake Michigan
The marsh ecology and the plants and animals found there are influenced by the climate and water levels of Lake Michigan.

In addition to being closely linked to a great lake, a great lakes marsh has the following communities:

1. A deep marsh with submerged plants, largely under water.
2. An emergent marsh with plants whose roots are above water, but leaves extend out from the water.
3. A wet marsh whose soil may be traversed with deep pools, excluding other plants except those growing in the water.
4. A shrub boundary between the marsh and the forest.
5. A dry forest containing oaks, hickory, black cherry and other trees.

Migration Rest Stop
The coast of Lake Michigan is a migration route for waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. As the days lengthen in the spring and fall, the marsh provides a resting and feeding area. The salt marsh, protected from disturbance, serves a vital function for many species.

Lake Michigan

MDNR/Boat Launch

River Trail Tips
Length: A paddle trip is 10 miles.
MDNR level floats to the City launch & Wawa Buffalos.
Time: approximately 10 minutes
Conditions: The flood current is slow and the water has few eddies and riffles. Most paddlers will have no problems paddling upstream. Marsh banks make paddling along the route difficult.

Now Buffalo
City Boat Launch
Pre-settlement Vegetation

Dominant-green-beech maple
“Originally Weesaw Township was heavily timbered with beech, whitewood, & black walnut. The twp. was delayed many years in its settlement from this fact.”

1836-1880 History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties
• Between Avery Road and Three Oaks Road North of Spring Creek Road in Three Oaks Township
Dayton Lake-formed by glacier
Cranberries Bog
Flats between Galien and Three Oaks
What has happened since settlement?
Pre-settlement Vegetation
Dominant-green-beech maple
Where do you live?

Questions?

Thanks for photos:

Twin Cities Camera Club

Berrien Springs Camera Club