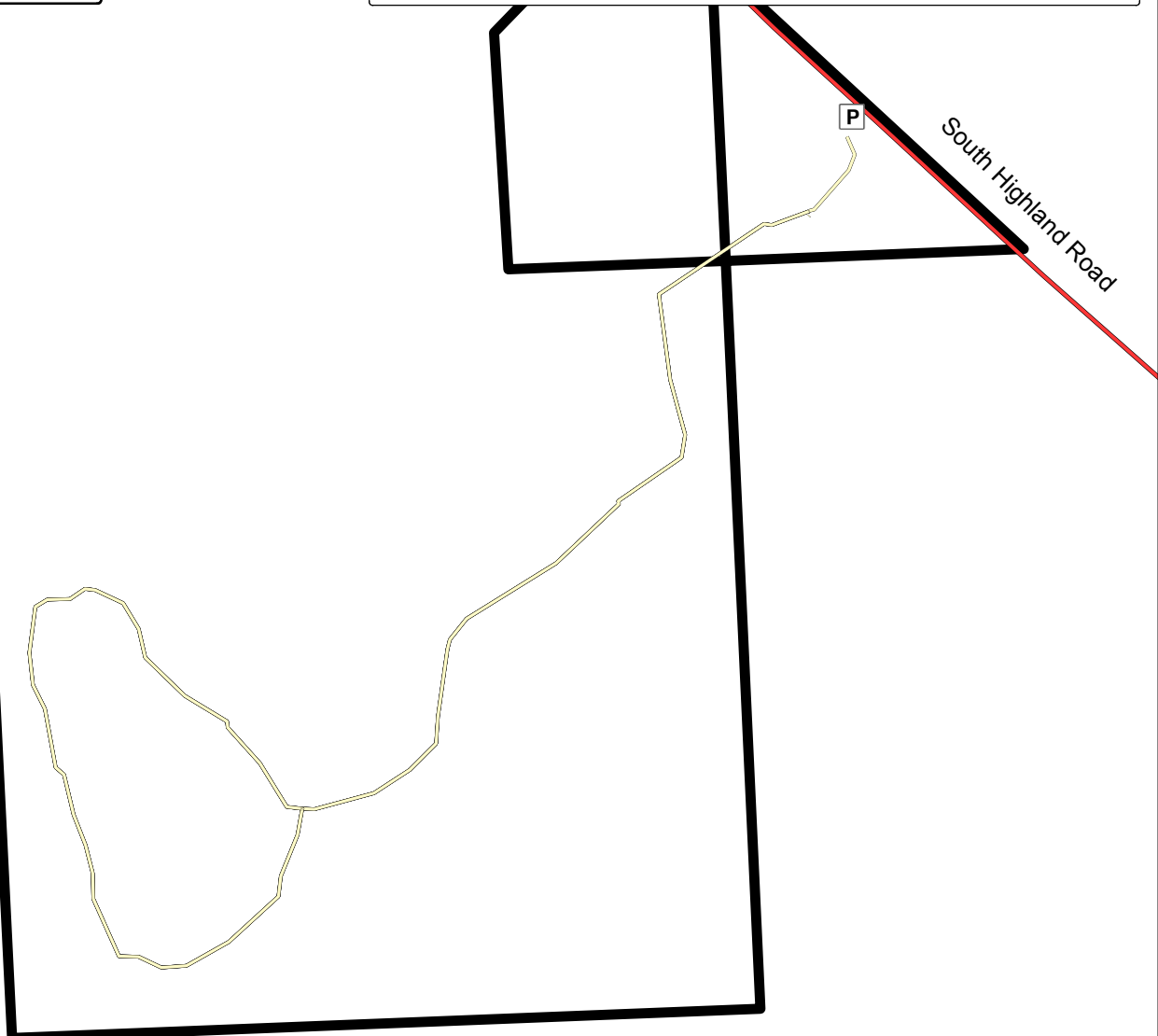


# Judy Abert Meissner Memorial Wetlands Preserve



Directions: From Bailey's Harbor, take County Highway F northwest for about 1.5 to 2 miles to the intersection of South Highland Road and County Hwy F. Take the left fork at the intersection (straight ahead) onto South Highland Road. Travel about 1.5 miles on South Highland Road to the preserve entrance on the left side of road. You will see a small parking area and preserve sign.

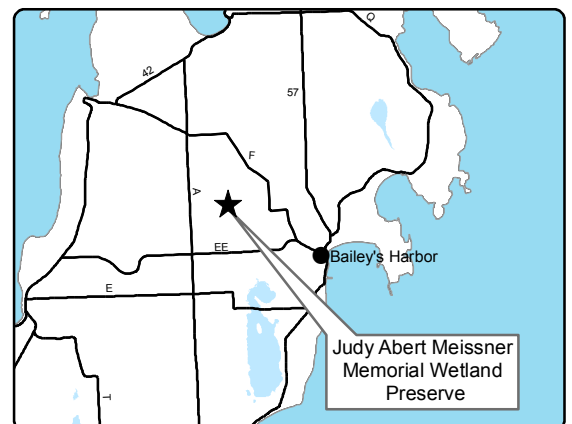
— South Highland Road

**P** Parking area

— Preserve trail  
1 mile, some hills, moderately easy

▭ Preserve boundary

0 250 500 750 1,000 Feet





The Judy Abert Meissner Memorial Wetlands Preserve (Meissner Preserve) holds a significant portion of the headwater wetlands of Peil Creek, which flows into Kangaroo Lake. This complex of wetland communities harbors rare plants, a rare land snail, an endangered dragonfly, and is a spawning site for northern pike.

The acquisition of this 42 acre parcel in 2005 by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was made possible by a generous gift from the family of Judy Abert Meissner. The parcel was named the Judy Abert Meissner Memorial Wetlands Preserve in her memory. A subsequent purchase has enlarged the protected lands to approximately 65 acres.

## Hours and Conditions

The preserve is open year-round, dawn to dusk, for passive recreation only; this includes hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, bird-watching, nature study and photography. Deer hunting is allowed during regular seasons; please call TNC at 920-743-8695. A walking trail allows for viewing of the diverse plant communities and wildlife found on the property.

The Nature Conservancy asks all visitors to clean their boots on the boot brush provided at the parking area before entering the preserve. Invasive non-native plants can be transported on footwear or clothing, and rapidly gain a foothold in the preserve if care is not taken.

## Conservation Significance

The Peil Creek-Kangaroo Lake basin is a distinctive ecosystem, located in a shallow trough of the Niagara Escarpment (a dolomite ridge with rock outcrops extending from Wisconsin to New York). This trough was submerged intermittently by the higher waters of post-glacial lakes (Lake Algonquin 8,000 BP; and Lake Nipissing 4,000 BP). Dune deposition, receding lake levels, and regional post-glacial land rebound formed an embayment contributing to what is now Kangaroo Lake and the Peil Creek Lowlands. Peil Creek, and the complex of wetland communities in its headwaters, drive the water quality and quantity, biodiversity, and nutrient cycling in Kangaroo Lake.

The Meissner Preserve is crucial in protecting the water quality and biodiversity of Peil Creek, and thus Kangaroo Lake. Because of the unique hydrology and post-glacial geology, the plant communities which occur here are rare.

Furthermore, this area is one of a few in the world known to provide habitat for the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly.

## What to See: Plants

The dominant wetland plant community on the preserve is fen-marl marsh, which forms by a combination of hard water springs percolating through the soil and decay of calcium-carbonate-extracting algae. The wetland also includes a mosaic of distinct wetland communities such as sedge meadow and emergent marsh. Plants occurring in the wetland complex include slender bog arrow grass, shrubby cinquefoil, bog willow, elliptic spike rush, hoary and twig-rush, wire-leaved sedges, and cotton grass sedge.

Small stands of white cedar grading into black ash forest are adjacent to the open wetlands. These have a sparse understory where shin-leaf, star flower, and possibly showy lady's slipper orchid can be found.

The hill in the southwest corner of the preserve is currently being re-forested with white birch, cedar, pine and spruce.

## What to See: Wildlife

The basin provides habitat for several threatened, endangered or species of concern including:

- Bald eagle
- Osprey
- Hine's emerald dragonfly
- Black terns
- Dorcas copper butterfly
- Caspian terns

Sandhill cranes and Canada geese are also common at the preserve. During the breeding season, blue-winged and golden-winged warblers have been spotted in nearby marshes.

## What the Conservancy Has Done/Is Doing

Since 1995, TNC has acquired over 360 acres around Kangaroo Lake and the Peil Creek watershed. Grants from the State of Wisconsin and Ducks Unlimited have funded land acquisition. The Conservancy manages these lands to protect groundwater and wildlife habitat.

To further protect the basin, the Conservancy is working with two local conservation organizations, the Door County Land Trust and the Kangaroo Lake Association.

For more information about the Judy Abert Meissner Memorial Wetlands Preserve, contact our Sturgeon Bay office:

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