

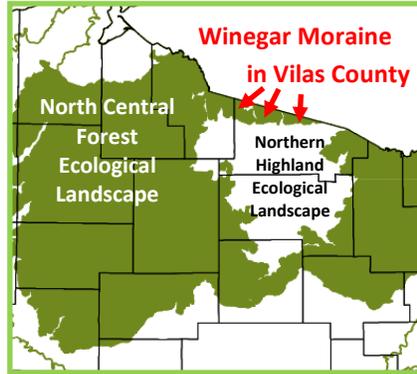


Shoreland Protection Initiative

Vilas County — Focusing on the Winegar Moraine

The Winegar Moraine is a special place that is located in northern Vilas County (and eastern Iron County and Upper Michigan). It is in the 'North Central Forest Ecological Landscape' area as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

This area is notable for its dense forests, kettle lakes and streams that feed some of the state's largest river systems. The last glacial ice sheet 12,000 years ago created the moraine that sits up to 1,700 feet above sea level. Its nutrient-rich soils support old-growth forests and its swamps and wetlands host diverse plants and animals. It marks a subcontinental



Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources "The Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin"

divide where all waters north of it flow into Lake Superior and waters south flow into the Mississippi River.

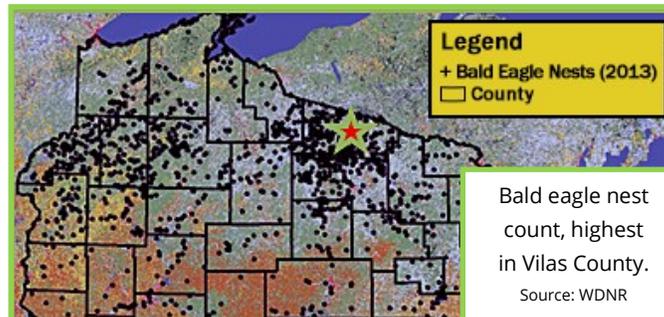
Forested watersheds keep soils in place, lessening sedimentation and nutrient loading into our waters. The rate of development has increased dramatically over the past few decades in Vilas County. Shoreland and woodland areas are becoming more 'urbanized,' negatively impacting the very waters and woods that draw people here. This pattern will continue as our planet warms and populations increase. It is vital that we act today to ensure there's a balance between development and conservation so that future generations have the opportunity to experience the northwoods as we do today.

The Winegar Moraine—Why It Deserves Our Protection

- ⇒ Significant concentration of glacial landforms including moraines, drumlins and eskers; other similar landforms across the state have been mined for gravel and stone.
- ⇒ Soils that support a high number of old-growth forests.
- ⇒ High concentration of freshwater lakes and ponds. With surrounding wetlands, they provide safe havens for sensitive species like frogs, turtles, salamanders and bats.
- ⇒ Large numbers of nests sites that host the iconic common loon and bald eagle.
- ⇒ The area links the Ottawa National Forest in Upper Michigan to the Northern-Highland American Legion State Forest in Wisconsin, serving as a natural route for wide-ranging mammals and providing a variety of recreational opportunities in a remote setting.
- ⇒ In an era of changing climate, northern Wisconsin will see an influx of new residents and development that will forever change the northwoods' character and health.



Photo by: Ron Eckstein (above); Bev Engstrom (below)



Bald eagle nest count, highest in Vilas County. Source: WDNR

The portion of the Winegar Moraine located just over the border in Upper Michigan hosts the densest populations of nesting loons found in all of Michigan.