

Murphy Lake - McConville Lake Wetland Complex is a series of hardwater seepage lakes within a large glacial basin bordered by an extensive wetland complex of a northern, pre-settlement character. Plant communities include shrub-carr, lowland hardwoods, sedge meadow, marsh, and tamarack swamp. Encircling McConville Lake and Beck Lake is a calcareous mat of lake sedge (*Carex lacustris*), aquatic sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa*), and bog birch (*Betula pumila*). Beyond the mat is a vast stand of tamarack (*Larix laricina*) with a shrub layer of poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus alba*), and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*). Numerous uncommon fen and bog associates are present, such as pink shinleaf (*Pyrola asarifolia*), naked mitrewort (*Mitella nuda*), alder buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*), swamp currant (*Ribes hirtellum*), and mountain holly (*Nemopanthus mucronatus*). This natural area also provides habitat for state-listed plants and animals. Malloy and Murphy Lake in the western reaches of the site, connected by the Little Oconomowoc River, border a morainal ridge supporting good-quality dry-mesic forest, adding to site diversity. This natural area in the Town of Erin is partly owned and managed by Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT). The remainder of the natural area is private with partial protection by conservation easement.

Murphy Lake—McConville Lake Wetland Complex is relatively undisturbed apart from past selective cutting and filling along the edges for bordering homes and roads. These developments also degrade the fringes of the site through siltation and sedimentation from stormwater runoff. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) has established in the upland woods while common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is present at low densities throughout. OWLT staff and volunteers manage their parcels through invasive species monitoring and control via manual removal, brushing, and herbicide treatment. Acquisition and management of the entire natural area by OWLT is recommended to secure comprehensive protection and enhancement of the site.

Learn more here:
sewrpc.org/Regional-Planning/Natural-Areas



Southeastern
Wisconsin
Regional
Planning
Commission

Planning Report No. 42, 2nd
Amendment to the Natural Areas &
Critical Species Management &
Protection Plan for the Southeastern
Wisconsin Region (Dec 2025)

Regional Natural Areas



Murphy Lake - McConville Lake Wetland Complex

T09 R18 Sec. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, & 34
Washington County



Natural Areas Rank

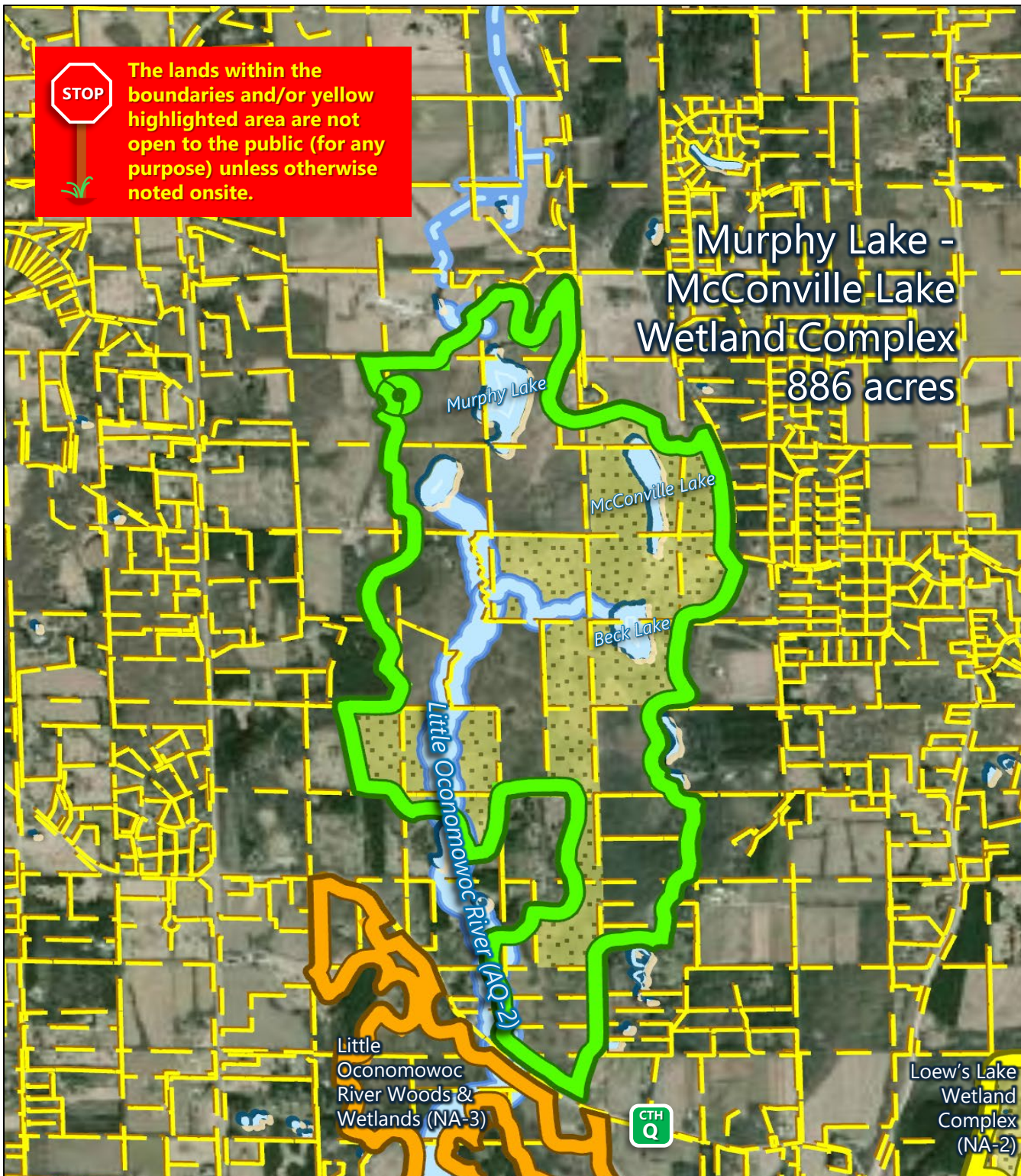


Natural Area of
Statewide Significance

Level of Protection	Medium (Partial Conservation Ownership w/Site Mgmt Plan)
Level of Threat	Medium (Surrounding Land Use)
Size	886 acres
Ownership	Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Private
Site Management Plan	Yes
Number of Native Plant Species	244
Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern Species	Yes, Plant & Animal

The preparation of this natural areas site profile was funded in part by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Grant # NA18NOS4190091, NA20NOS4190092, & NA22NOS4190085





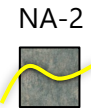
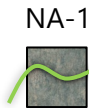
Regional Natural Areas

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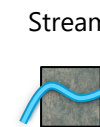
NA-1



Natural Area
Boundaries



Surface
Water



Parcel
Boundaries

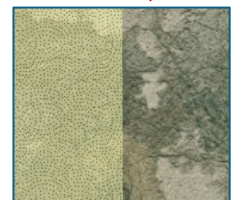


Protected
Highlighted
Yellow

Not
Protected

Protected Lands

Lands owned by Federal,
State, County, and local
units of government or via
conservation easements



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