



Maidenhair Ferns flourish in the red maple swamp around the upper reaches of Big Inlet. Photo by John Jablonski.

Elm Flats Wetland Preserve

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

What

Red maple swamp at headwaters of Big Inlet, a major tributary of Chautauqua Lake

Where

Town of Chautauqua, 3 miles north of Mayville, Chautauqua County, NY

USGS Quadrangle(s):
Hartfield

Why

Birding, plant and wildlife study

The Elm Flats Wetland Preserve is 83 acres of red maple swamp along Big Inlet and several small tributaries. There are no trails on the site.

Natural History Interest

This site is located on the Lake Escarpment moraine, a glacial debris pile that lies across the boundary between the northern end of Chautauqua Lake and the Portage Escarpment. Here the topography is pitted with wetlands and, further to the northeast, with lakes (Bear Lake and Cassadaga Lakes) that formed when rotting ice broke off the retreating glacier and became buried in glacial debris. The extensive wetland at Elm Flats is typical and is the largest wetland tributary of Chautauqua Lake.

The site is known to harbor a wide variety of native ferns. Among those that have been identified to date are Spinulose Woodfern, Christmas Fern, New York Fern, Lady Fern, Maidenhair Fern, Ostrich Fern, Cinnamon Fern, Interrupted Fern, and Royal Fern. Lycopodia that are known to occur on the site are Shining Clubmoss, Wolfclaw Lycopodium, Running Pine, and Tree Clubmoss. Some of the flowering plants that inhabit the place are Woodland Jack-in-the-pulpit, White Trillium, Painted Trillium, Canada Mayflower, Indian Cucumber-root, Solomon's Seal, Marsh Marigold, Swamp Buttercup, Round-lobed Hepatica, Dwarf Ginseng, and several violets, including Northern White, Smooth Yellow, Round-leaved Yellow, Pale, and

