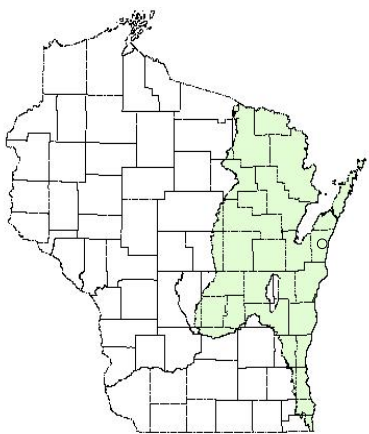


West Alaska Lake

A lake gem in Kewaunee County



West Alaska Lake is a lake formed by a piece of melting glacial ice about 10,000 years ago in east-central Kewaunee County, ½ mile from the Lake Michigan shoreline. This 20-acre lake harbors native plant species and has an important cedar swamp that borders the lake. Public access is available on the northern edge with a boat launch, pier and picnic area. An electric motor policy is in place to help protect the lake bottom's fragile fish spawning beds from being smothered out and to keep the lake's fishery productive.



Legend:
■ Priority Conservation Site
■ Lake Michigan Watershed Boundary

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Ecological Significance:

The cedar forest that surrounds West Alaska Lake serves as a shoreland buffer to protect the lake's good water quality by filtering out pollutants that may drain from farms and homes. This forest buffer also helps maintain the lake's natural plant community. Native plants such as chara, coontail, northern watermilfoil, nitella, white water lily and spatterdock continue to thrive in the lake's ecosystem. Clean water translates to good fishing as well. Bluegills, sunfish, black crappie, yellow perch and largemouth bass have been caught in this lake. In addition, the Lake Michigan shoreline is acknowledged as being one of the most important migratory bird flyways, known as the Lake Michigan Flyway. Many migrating birds use the lake as a stopover on their journey.

Potential Threats:

West Alaska Lake is affected by the activity on the land in its 248-acre watershed. Non-point pollution sources include farm runoff, broken septic systems, and old tile lines that carry harmful substances directly to open waters. Pressure to develop and remove the natural buffer that protects the lake could also affect its water quality. Another pressing threat is the spread of a variety of invasive species. Though still a small percentage, curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil have arrived at the lake.

Current Activities:

Glacial Lakes Conservancy has identified this lake gem as a *Conservation Priority Site*. For many years, the all-volunteer, non-profit Tri-Lakes Association has been working to protect West Alaska, East Alaska and Krohns lakes from pollutants and invasive plant species. TLA has conducted water quality studies, species research and invasive control measures in order to be good lake stewards. With grants and partnerships with the Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership and University of Wisconsin – Cooperative Extension, TLA continues its healthy lake education campaign. Glacial Lakes Conservancy joins this effort to offer land protection options to willing landowners that will protect the conservation values of the land while maintaining it in private ownership.



Aerial photo of West Alaska Lake

Glacial Lakes Conservancy is a private, non-profit land trust serving Sheboygan ▪ Manitowoc ▪ Kewaunee ▪ Calumet ▪ Fond du Lac Counties providing enduring solutions for land conservation in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin