

Selinger Marsh, Allegany County



Thousands of years ago, Town Creek flowed over what is now Selinger Marsh. Located on the river bend, the current slowly cut into the shale slopes. As the bend became deeper, the river eventually straightened itself by taking a more direct course. Today Selinger Marsh is located in this abandoned river bend, or oxbow. It is situated in the Ridge and Valley physiographic region in central Allegany County. Allegany County receives the lowest rainfall in the state, because it lies within the rain shadow of the Appalachian Mountains. Inland wetlands such as this are thus unusual in the area. Springs on the surrounding slopes, however, provide the water for the sedge wetland, making it a unique natural community in an otherwise very dry region. In addition to the sedge marsh, the preserve encompasses steep ravines and ridge lines. The wetland is open and contains more than 10 species of sedge.

Key Elements

- Fringe-tipped gentian
- Arrowhead
- Upland chorus frog
- Jefferson salamander

The preserve is small, but the watershed is completely protected and provides an important breeding ground for amphibians, including the upland chorus frog and Jefferson salamander. Fringe-tipped gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) is a rare plant species in Maryland that grows

here. Other wetland plants include arrowhead, monkey-flower, and cardinal flower. The wetland opening is surrounded by a dense stand of silky dogwood, alder, and elderberry. Portions of the preserve lie outside the watershed of the wetland and these may be tradeland possibilities in the future.

Visiting

- No facilities, trails or convenient parking
- A compass may help you keep your bearings
- 2 hour drive from Baltimore and D.C.

This area was selected for conservation because it is a rare wetland in this dry region of the state. Its importance as a breeding ground for amphibians makes the site a

priority in order to maintain viable populations of these species in this part of Maryland. It has been protected by the Conservancy since 1985. The marsh continues to be an area for research and monitoring, and the Conservancy acts as a steward to ensure that the site maintains its ecological viability. Management at this 85-acre preserve focuses on controlling deer populations and invasive plants.



Chris Fye

The state-rare Fringe-tipped gentian, a beautiful flower found in Selinger Marsh.

Directions (GPS Coordinates: 39.657220,-78.565083)

From Washington:

Take the Capital Beltway (I-495) to I-270 North. From I-270 North take I-70 West. Near Hancock, take I-68 West / US-40 West. Take the Flintstone exit. From the center of Flintstone continue about .5 mile east to intersection at Town Creek Road. Turn right across metal bridge onto Town Creek Road. In about 1.5 miles bear left (stay on pavement) and cross a second metal bridge. The preserve is 2 miles on the right. There is no parking lot; please park carefully on the roadside.

Contact

The Nature Conservancy of Maryland/DC
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P: 301-897-8570
For more information:
www.nature.org/Maryland

Watch Out For!

- Mosquitoes
- Muddy passages
- Ticks and biting insects

Mason Brock



White turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) is one of the many wetland plant species native to Selinger Marsh.