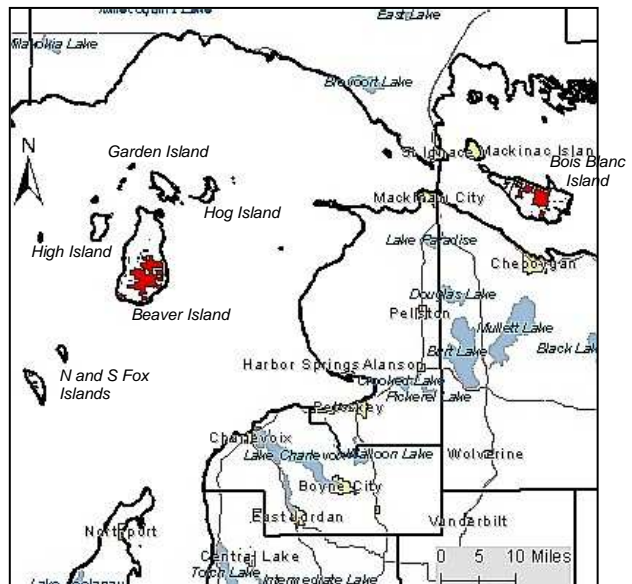
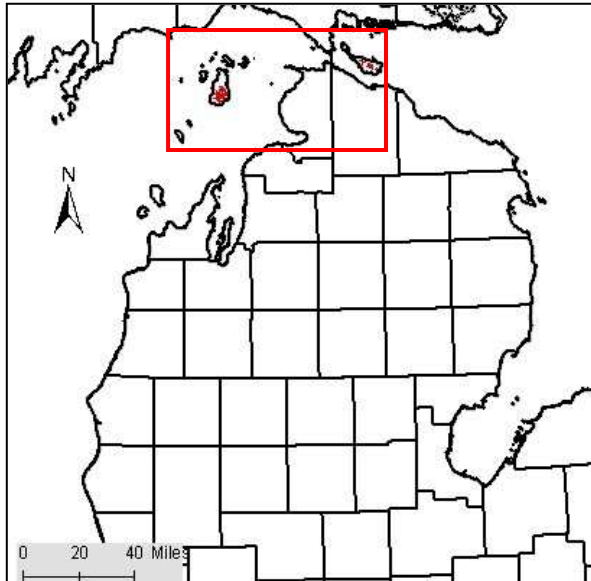


## Great Lakes Islands Management Area



### Attributes

The Great Lakes Islands Management Area includes State of Michigan lands on the Fox Island Group in Leelanau County, the Beaver Island Group in Charlevoix County, and Bois Blanc Island in Mackinac County. All of the Islands, with the exception of Bois Blanc, are Wildlife Research Areas and are administered by the Wildlife Division.

- Ecological Classification – North and South Fox Islands and High Island fall within the Manistee sub-region; Beaver Island falls within the Cheboygan sub-region; and Bois Blanc Island falls within the St. Ignace sub-region as classified by Albert (1994).
- Landform – The Fox Islands and High Island consists of sand dunes or other lacustrine features. Beaver Island is generally similar to other lake plains in the state, much of it a series of beach ridges and adjacent wet depressions. Bois Blanc Island has flat sand or clay deposits where only a few inches of elevation change can alter drainage conditions.

### Ownership and Size:

- Bois Blanc is approximately 23,700 acres in size. The State of Michigan administers about 10,300 acres (43%) of this land. The State land includes three designated Natural Areas: 1) Mixed Forest - 968 acres; 2) Northshore - 817 acres; and 3) Snake Island/Mud Lake - 244 acres. Timber management opportunities on the island are limited due to economics and logistics of travel.
- Beaver Island Group
  - Beaver Island is approximately 36,800 acres in size. The State of Michigan administers about 12,300 acres (33%) of this land. State lands have a history of timber management and opening maintenance, though that history has included some high grading. There are currently 200 acres under timber sale contract. The results of these sales could dictate future management opportunity. The island has an active deer management group that is conducting some habitat management activities. The island has a year-round population of 551. The island group has Piping Plover Critical Habitat.

- High Island is approximately 3,600 acres in size and completely owned by the State of Michigan. It is considered one of the most beautiful islands in the state and contains unique geology and biology. The island is an outcrop of limestone bedrock covered with a relatively thick layer of glacial drift. The central part of the island (a high plain) is separated from the rest by an escarpment ranging in height from a few feet to upwards of 200 or more feet. Parts of the west side of the escarpment are covered with high perched sand dunes (in excellent condition), with mostly open dune vegetation. Further west is an area of sandy beach ridges of former lake levels, which has some interesting and beautiful cedar and upland forests. The island has an array of Michigan shoreline features and associated ecosystems that support a number of rare, threatened and endangered plant and bird species.
- Garden Island is approximately 4,600 acres in size and all but 107 acres is owned by the State of Michigan. The island has specific significance to Native Americans.
- Hog Island is approximately 2,300 acres in size and completely owned by the State of Michigan. It is one of the least disturbed islands in the Beaver Island group and is a natural, scenic, recreational and scientific gem. The island is largely forested (including pockets of old-growth northern hardwood), but includes extensive great lakes marshes that are important spawning grounds for perch and smallmouth bass, inter-dunal wetlands and uncut coniferous swamps and bogs. The island provides habitat for the state-threatened common tern, and three state-threatened plant species that are found only on the shores of the Great Lakes: Lake Huron tansy, Pitcher's thistle and Houghton's goldenrod.
- Fox Island Group
  - North Fox Island is 820 acres in size. It was purchased by the State of Michigan in the year 2000. The island is classified as Piping Plover Critical Habitat.
  - South Fox is 3,433 acres in size. The island includes a cemetery where members of the Grand Traverse Band of Native Americans are currently buried. Deer were introduced onto the island in 1915. Hunting is permitted on state land by permit only. There is a lighthouse on South Fox that was built in 1867 and operated until 1959.

### **Concepts of Management**

All of the Islands, with the exception of Bois Blanc, are administered by Wildlife Division. The State Forest land on Beaver Island will continue to be inventoried and be subject to forest management as economics and logistics allow. The other Great Lakes islands in the MA are Wildlife Research Areas administered by the Wildlife Division.

The State Forest land on Bois Blanc Island will continue to be inventoried, and with the exception of the Natural Areas, be subject to forest management as economics and logistics allow.

Many vegetative communities on these islands have good potential for designation as Biodiversity Stewardship Areas (BSAs).