

White Lake ANSI -- Report on site visit August 28, 1998

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The purpose of the site visit was twofold:

1. to discuss MNDM concern about the inclusion of part of a high quality calcite deposit within the ANSI (and proposed CR) boundary.
2. to look at the upland forest on Crown land (lot 21, con. XI) along the south edge of the ANSI and evaluate its representativeness.

Findings:

1. A small portion of a marble deposit which has been tested as having a high calcite purity level extends north of the township road which was used to define the south boundary of the ANSI. An outcrop of this marble occurs between the township road and the powerline on the north side of the road (UTM 18-38345-501443). It is a well banded grey marble but is reported to be very pure. We followed a forest access road northwest from the township road. At about 80 m from (the centreline of) the township road an outcrop was considered to be of questionable quality and at 106 m another outcrop was considered by Pam to be of low quality due to sulphide inclusions. Thus the high quality marble appears to occur only near the road, although a more detailed subsurface survey would be required to precisely map its extent. It should be noted that the presently mapped high quality deposit is mostly (considerably more than 90 %) outside the ANSI, with much of it on Crown land south of the township road.
2. The following vegetation types were documented during a short circuit through the eastern part of the Crown land at this location:
 - a) Trembling aspen--large-leaved aspen--white birch--white pine forest; selectively logged ca. 15 years ago. Shallow sandy soil over marble bedrock. Balsam fir--white pine--ash regeneration, characteristic ground cover species include: *Cornus rugosa*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Aster macrophyllus*, *Rubus allegheniensis*
 - b) White pine--cedar forest with varying amounts of white spruce and some mature red pine. Shallow loam over marble bedrock. Ground cover similar to a)
 - c) Private land north of the Crown land (gate on road) appears to have a much younger mixed coniferous forest, with little or no pine.
 - d) Marsh, occupying a former beaver pond. Portions have standing dead trees and cedar regeneration with: *Carex spp*, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, *Thelypteris palustris*, *Carex lasiocarpa*, *Polygonum natans*, *Eupatorium maculatum*, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, *Campanula uliginosa*, *Iris versicolor*, *Solidago rugosa*. Wetter section with some standing water between tussocks has: *Carex lasiocarpa*, *Carex aquatilis/stricta*, *Scutellaria galericulata*, *Polygonum natans*, *Campanula uliginosa*, *Acorus calamus*, (incomplete list).
 - e) Cedar--black ash--balsam fir swamp. Rich ground cover typical of cedar swamps, includes: *Mitella nuda*, *Cystopteris bulbifera*, *Carex gracillima(?)*, *Aralia racemosa*, *Sium suave*, *Viola spp.*,

Lycopus uniflorus, *Circaea alpina*, *Glyceria striata*, *Pilea pumila* (incomplete list). Transition zone to upland forest has some large cedar mixed with balsam fir.

Evaluation

1. The small area involved is relatively insignificant in terms of the ANSI. However changing the ANSI (and eventually the protected area) boundary would require both geological and land surveys which no-one is presently prepared to pay for. Also, although the quality of the marble in this area has been known for some time, the mining industry has expressed no interest (i.e. no staking or exploration). The general consensus was that if at some point in the future, the small portion of the high quality marble deposit north of the township road was considered sufficiently valuable to warrant relocation of the township road and power line, then a small boundary change to the protected area could be considered at that time.
2. The upland mixed forest on thinly mantled marble bedrock landform is generally in good condition and should be considered representative. It appears to be the only such forest on Crown land within the ANSI (most of the ANSI is privately owned) and its removal would considerably reduce the diversity of landform-vegetation types present. It may be possible to pick up similar representation by extending the ANSI boundary to the south (to include the west side of Lowney Lake) but this option has not been investigated and in any event would only increase the conflict over the high quality marble deposit.