

Native Orchid Conservation Inc.
Sandilands Field Trip, May 28, 2016

Sandilands Provincial Forest consists of almost 3000 km² of sand hills, forest, wetlands and mostly unpopulated crown land. The area has been logged for decades, and is popular for hiking, hunting and camping. The large sand eskers and hills were left behind by the last ice age as the glaciers retreated and deposited large rocks, boulders and vast amounts of sand. These sand ridges, sometimes called the Bedford Hills or Cyprus Hills, are the second highest point in Manitoba behind Baldy Mountain.

In 2013 the province readjusted the boundaries of the Pocock Lake Ecological Reserve by removing 39 ha of land with cross-country ski trails in the southeast corner and adding 81 ha of undisturbed wetlands. This reserve, which is the source of the Seine River, has a great variety of plants in a small area, and includes rare vegetation species such as bellwort, yellow birch (first recorded in Manitoba in 1987) and iron wood which are typically found in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes forest region. The east side of the reserve consists of a raised ancient beach ridge which then slopes westward towards Pocock Lake. Along this slope is a clear east-to-west gradient in the vegetation, ranging from drought tolerant to moisture tolerant species. From east to west the vegetation changes from jack pine through white birch to trembling aspen, balsam poplar, black spruce, willow, eastern white cedar and tamarack, and then to bog-lake fringe communities. This great variation in plant communities is an outstanding feature of the reserve. Pocock Lake has a peat shoreline and is surrounded by an extensive fen with a dense cedar bog bordering the fen.

Species List

Road to Pocock Lake

Yellow Lady's-slipper in bud	Yellow Paintbrush	Blueberry
Gaywings	Nodding Trillium	Downy Yellow Violet
Hoary Puccoon	Northern Bedstraw	Starflower
Ironwood tree	Bell flower	Columbine
Starry False Solomon's Seal	Solomon's Seal	Wild Ginger
Chokecherry	Saskatoon	Creamy Peavane
Sarsaparilla	Marsh marigolds	

Bedford Ridge site

Blooming crocus (others gone to seed)	Bishop's Cap	Goldthread
Blue bead lily	Pussy toes	Mustard? Cress?
Sand cherry	Pin cherry	Chokecherry
Bearberry in flower	Blueberry in flower	Dewberry
Alum root		

Birds

Cuckoo, Ovenbird, Black and White Warbler, Yellow Warbler