

CRESCENT CITY MARSH: **Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?**

“This marsh is arguably the most botanically-unique wetland complex in northwest California and perhaps the entire State.”

-U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



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The Crescent City Marsh is home to dozens of plants that are absent or rare elsewhere along California’s coast. Many of these species are more common in high mountains or more northern latitudes. The cool, wet soils of the Crescent City Marsh have allowed these plants to survive in a coastal environment.

The Marsh consists of 335 acres of wetlands, open water, beach and dunes, prairie, scrub and spruce forest. Nearly 200 acres are located within the Crescent City Marsh Wildlife Area, managed by the Department of Fish & Game.

More than two-thirds of this 1500-acre watershed is already developed for residential and commercial uses. A proposal to build a golf course, casino, and resort would eliminate an estimated 50% of the remaining undeveloped watershed.



The Endangered Western Lily

The Marsh’s unique soils and hydrology makes it home to the world’s largest population of the western lily, an endangered plant on the brink of extinction.

The western lily - *Lilium occidentale* - is a federally listed endangered species. More than half of all known flowering plants occur at the Crescent City Marsh, which harbors the only recovery-level population as defined by the federal recovery plan for the species.

The Crescent City Marsh and environs are home to more than 230 plant species, at least a dozen of which are considered rare, threatened, or endangered.

Several rare plant communities occur in the Marsh, at least one of which is found nowhere else in California. Known as buckbean marsh, this plant community is dominated by the buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), more common in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains of Oregon (right).



Threats to the Crescent City Marsh include:

- Illegal filling and dumping in wetlands
- Altered hydrology caused by further development in the watershed
- Pesticide runoff from proposed golf course

What can you do?

- Urge Del Norte County officials to rigorously enforce their Local Coastal Program and protect these important wetlands.
- Make your voice heard on management within the watershed.
- Be on the lookout for illegal filling or other activities in the area.
- Write letters to the editor (tripnews@triplicate.com, letters@times-standard.com, ncjour@northcoast.com).
- Submit letters to the organizations listed below, in support of conserving the Crescent City Marsh wetlands and biodiversity, that will be forwarded during critical comment periods.



California Native Plant Society
North Coast Chapter
P.O. Box 1967, Arcata, CA 95518

Northcoast Environmental Center
575 H Street, Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 822-6918

