Flora and Fauna

Location & Facilities
Programs
Staff
Rice Creek Associates
Field Station Biology
Vertebrates
Butterflies
Plants
Fungi

Rice Creek Field Station
Biology of Rice Creek Field Station

Ecology and Environment

Rice Creek Field Station is located near the eastern end of the Lake Ontario coastal plain. Local weather conditions are strongly influenced by Lake Ontario with cool to warm summers and cold winters. The average annual temperature is 8-9 degrees C and the average annual precipitation is about 90 cm. Typical manifestations of the influence of the lake on local climate are late autumns, late springs, and lake-effect snowfall. The Field Station is located 2.4 km south of Lake Ontario on approximately 130 ha of varied habitats, including open fields, mature forests, a 10.4-ha pond, and fields, shrub lands, and woods representing several stages of succession. Most of the second growth vegetation on the property is now nearly forty years old. Current management practices at the field station are aimed at the maintenance of maximum habitat diversity.

The mature forest in the immediate area includes beech-maple and hemlock-northern hardwood communities which are widespread in New York State plus maple-basswood forests which contain a mixture of species with both northern and southern affinities. The landscape in the vicinity of the city of Oswego contains small patches of mature woods intermixed with successional woodlands, shrub lands, and fields, agricultural properties, and rural and suburban residential areas. Oswego itself is a port city located on Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Oswego River. The Oswego River drains one of the largest watersheds in New York State. A unique area of drumlin topography extends west from Oswego through neighboring Cayuga, Wayne, and Seneca Counties. Along the shore of Lake Ontario this topography has eroded to form bluffs alternating with a series of interdrumlin wetlands consisting of bays, lagoons, marshes, swamps, and fens. Eastern and northern Oswego County contains one of the largest collections of wetland habitats in New York State. The county also includes transitional habitats marking the outer reaches of the Tug Hill Plateau. A unique area of coastal sand dunes extends along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario from Oswego County north into Jefferson County.