

Interesting Facts About Our Spider Chain of Lakes Watershed

A watershed, as described by scientist geographer John Wesley Powell, is "that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community."

*The Spider Chain of Lakes ("Spider Lake") is a 1,659 acre seepage lake located in the Town of Spider Lake in northern Sawyer, County. It is comprised of five interconnected lakes: Big Spider (763 ac), Little Spider (471 ac), Clear (258 ac), North (138 ac), and Fawn (29 ac). The maximum depth is 64 ft., mean depth is 14 ft., and elevation is 1,398 ft.

*Named Spider Lake because of its shape and with Spider Creek as the outflow, the Spider Creek watershed is a headwaters watershed of the Mississippi and Chippewa River systems.

*Consisting of only 20,000 acres, this watershed starts as rain or snow. There are no creeks or rivers or springs from middle earth entering the lake. Therefore, no pollution, phosphorus or mercury from other lakes enters our chain. Any pollution comes from ourselves.

*Our watershed starts at 1,470 ft. sloping gently from the north of Seeley Hills and heads to the south end of the lake where elevation lowers to 1,398 ft.

*The engine of the watershed, water stored and filtered by 50 to 150 ft. of sand and gravel north of Spider Lake, is largely protected public land; primarily Sawyer County forest and portions of Bayfield County forest, Chequamegon National Forest and Wisconsin State forest, plus 3,600 acres that are part of a private conservation effort established in the 1920s called "No Pi Ming."

*Rain and snowmelt percolate through sand and gravel, a portion held by vegetation or small infill pothole lakes and wetlands, before seeping clear and cool into the sunlight where the water table meets the sky forming a lake. Our small, secluded watershed means little or no flooding and minimal changes in lake levels.

*Once in the lake, each raindrop or snowflake that has not evaporated continues its journey from North Lake through Fawn Lake, and from North Bay and East Bay of Big Spider Lake, southward through a shallow, narrow s-curve channel into Little Spider and Clear Lake. Eventually, it rambles out the southern end of Little Spider through a natural outflow, lightly managed by a small (25") dam built in 1938, which is also the head of Spider Creek.

*The water ebbs onward down Spider Creek and is joined by water from tiny Dead Creek

watershed spawning multiple beaver dams and two miles of pristine wetland before forming Tiger Cat, Mud Lake, Callahan Lake and tumbling down the Chief River into Musky Bay of the Chippewa Flowage.

*Our chain of lakes is a microclimate impacted by the cool waters of Lake Superior and the Seeley Hills to the north and west, making this resource even more special, with more snow and colder temperatures than the town of Hayward 15 miles to the east.

*By comparison, nearby Round Lake with twice the surface acreage and more than twice the human population has 25% less shoreline, so that those enjoying Spider Lake see less than half the shoreline development of Round Lake. However, Round Lake is a deep bowl and contains more than twice the volume of Spider Lake with its shallow bays. As a result, Spider Lake suffers the same human influence per gallon.

*Along with Smith Lake, a small wilderness lake in our watershed, Spider Chain of Lake is one of 97 lakes out of 15,000 in the state to be designated in 2008 as an Outstanding Resource Water "ORW". These lakes and approximately 25 other named lakes (all smaller than 50 acres) lie in the Spider Creek Watershed.

WE are fortunate and privileged to be a part of nature's pristine watershed. Let us work together as a community to keep it that way!