

BATTLE FOR THE LANDSCAPE

An Invader Wins the Fight.

By the early 1900's the vast pine and hardwood forests covering the Lake Superior region were cut. European immigrants settled the "cut over" land. They found the soil poor; much of it too wet or sandy for productive farming.

This open field was once a shrubby swamp. It was home to native wetland plants and animals, but provided little food for livestock. Farmers planted Reed Canarygrass to convert the wetland to a hayfield. Many farm families still make a living feeding it to their livestock.



Reed Canarygrass
Art by Amelia Hansen Illustration

Reed Canarygrass spreads aggressively, crowding out a diversity of native plants. The field became a battleground between native wetland plants and invasive Reed Canarygrass; and Reed Canarygrass won the fight. Birds and other animals moved on in search of richer wetland communities where the refugees sought food and shelter that were no longer available here.



Can you spot these non-native plants growing in the old hayfield? They can also be invaders.



Canada Thistle



Bird's-foot Trefoil



Ox-eye Daisy