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# Post-glacial vegetational history of the Great Bog, Belgrade, Maine

John Dawson Colby College

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# **POST-GLACIAL VEGETATIONAL HISTORY OF**

# **THE GREAT BOG, BELGRADE, MAINE**

by

**JOHN P. DAWSON** 

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Senior Scholars' Program

COLBY COLLEGE

1995

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#### ABSTRACT

# POST-GLACIAL VEGETATIONAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT BOG, BELGRADE, MAINE

#### By John P. Dawson

A 6-m vibracore taken from the Great Bog in Belgrade, Maine, was sampled for pollen analysis at 10-cm intervals. Samples were processed in the laboratory using standard techniques developed by Faegri and Iversen. The sediment in the sample was reduced to a residue of pollen which was mounted on microscope slides. A minimum of 300 pollen grains was identified and counted at each level using a compound microscope at 400x magnification. Five radiocarbon dates were taken from the core at stratigraphic boundaries. Lastly, pollen concentration and pollen accumulation rates were calculated.

The uppermost 3.8 m of the core is fine peat; this overlies 1.5 m of lacustrine clay below which are additional organic deposits. Approximately 1.5 m of silty clay was lost from the bottom of the core during coring. <sup>14</sup>C dates from above and below the clay are statistically equivalent, suggesting very rapid deposition; a basal date on the core is also statitically equivalent in age, but is probably contaminated. Rapid deposition of the clay could have been caused by mass wasting or upland denudation. Dramatic erosion of the uplands could be caused by clearing of vegetation by a forest fire, but this is not supported by any significant charcoal in the core. Additional work is

planned to delimit the areal extent of the clay unit and resolve the apparent dating anomalies in the lower core.

Although the post-glacial pollen record generated in this study at Great Bog is incomplete, it is highly detailed. The pollen record indicates that the Great Bog was an open embayment of Great Pond from 8,500 to 6,500 b.p. The change in the aquatic vegetation at the site from the open-water taxa *Nuphar, Nymphaea,* and *Brasenia* to *Eriocaulon* and abundant *Sphagnum* spores suggests that the water level at Great Bog may have dropped and subsequently allowed a *Sphagnum* rnat to develop. It is possible that this occurred at the same time as a mid-Holocene drop in water level of lakes throughout Maine.

*Pinus* dominated the regional vegetation also until 6,500 b.p. when *Tsuga* and *Fagus* appeared in significant percentages. *Tsuga* had a temporary demise around 4,000 b.p. that is recorded regionally and was possibly caused by a pathogen. At 30-cm depth, there was an increase in *Ambrosia,* which reflects agricultural clearing at the start of European colonization of this region.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS



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## *DEDICATION*

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*This* is *dedicated to my mom. Without her strength and* joy *of life, none of this would have been possible.* 

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The post-glacial vegetational history of central Maine is only known from a few detailed pollen records (Figure 1 and Table 1). Pollen analyses performed in Maine during the 1940s and 19505 (Deevey, 1951; Potzger and Friesner, 1948; Graham, 1948) did not have radiocarbon dates to aid in reconstructions of the timing in the changes in the post-glacial vegetational history, nor were they as detailed as more recent research (Anderson *ei al.,*  1992; Davis *et* al., 1975).

Today, the vegetation at the Great Bog is highly variable from one area to another. Ferrini (1995) studied the pollen in 12 surface samples from Great Bog. She was able to show that the modern pollen rain at Great Bog is statistically the same at all sites, despite the variability in the vegetation throughout the bog. This implies that any changes in the pollen record of major taxa at Great Bog will represent changes in the regional vegetation and not small variations in the local vegetation. Although the pollen record reflects changes in the regional vegetation, elements that make up the local vegetation do appear as minor elements in the record. These plants (aquatics, heaths, etc.) produce very little pollen compared to upland plants, so their long-term presence or absence can be the only basis for interpretation. More to the point, any minor to moderate fluctuations in pollen percentages of open-water aquatics cannot be interpreted with any certainty.

The primary objective of this study was to obtain a well-dated and detailed post-glacial pollen record at Great Bog that could augment existing records in central Maine. Along with the changes in the regional vegetation, it is hoped that changes in the vegetation at Great Bog itself can be understood better. The final objective of this study was to understand better the stratigraphy of Great Bog.



Figure 1: Map of Maine showing selected sites that are mentioned in this paper. Site 1 is the location of this study at Great Bog, Belgrade. See Table 1 for description of each site.



Table 1: List of sites in figure 1 with their locations and references.

## LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SITE

Great Bog is located in Belgrade, Maine, bordering Great Pond, and covers an area of 0.5 square miles. It is approximately 1.5 miles long (north to south) and 0.5 miles wide (east to west). It is bordered to the west by Horse Point, an esker segment, and to the east by Bickford Hill (Figure 2). Great Bog may have been created through a process called paludification, in which the boundaries of a lake are flooded due to climate or geologic change (BOFEA, 1991).



The vegetation in Great Bog today mainly consists of a *Sphagnum* mat

Figure 2: A map of Great Bog, which is adjacent to North Bay of Great Pond. The ''X'' marks the approximate location from which the core was taken. (Adapted from the USGS Rome, Maine 7.5-minute quadrangle with scale 1: 24,0000.)

with *Osmunda cinnamomea* (cinnamon fern), *Picea mariana* (black spruce), *Nemopanihus mucronatus* (mountain holly), and *Chameadaphne catqculata*  (leatherleaf). The uplands immediately around the bog are covered mostly by *Tsuga canadensis* (hemlock) and *Pinus strobus* (white pine) with

Lycopodium spp. (club mosses), Betula spp. (birch), Corylus sp. (filbert), *Osmunda cinnamomea,* and *Acer rubrum* (red maple). *Acer saccharum,*  (sugar maple), *Quercus rubra* (red oak) and *Fagus grandifolia* (beech) are major hardwoods farther away from the bog margins.

#### **METHODS**

## *Field Methods*

In the summer of 1993, Assistant Professor Paul Doss and students from the Colby College Department of Geology collected a 6-m core from Great Bog using vibracoring techniques (Thompson et al., 1991). For vibracoring, a concrete vibrator is used to make an oscillation in a 3D-ft section of 3-inch diameter aluminum irrigation pipe while it is held upright with the aid of a 14-ft tripod. The base of the pipe liquefies the sediment below it and sinks into the ground under its own weight. Afterwards, it was capped off at the top and removed from the ground. While in the field, the 6 m core was cut into smaller sections, sealed, and transported to the laboratory.

#### *Laboratory Methods*

In the laboratory, the irrigation pipe was cut lengthwise using a circular saw. The core was sampled at lO-cm intervals and two to three cubic centimeters of sediment removed at each level using a paring knife. To avoid contamination by airborn particles in the laboratory the surface layer at each level was scraped off before extracting the sample. In addition to this, five samples for radiocarbon dating were taken at the major stratigraphic boundaries: at the bottom of the core, at the bottom of the day unit, at the top of the clay unit, at the 1.93-m depth, and at the 0.42-m depth, where there was

a slight change in the coloration of the peat unit. All samples were placed in sterile plastic bags, sealed, and stored in a refrigerator until final processing.

The sediment samples were processed in the laboratory using techniques developed by Faegri and Iversen (1989) which reduce the volume of the sediment down to a pollen-rich residue. The basic steps are:

1) dissolve the amorphous organic decomposition products with 5% potassium hydroxide in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes, 2) remove particles larger than pollen grains by coarse sieving with a 250µm mesh,

3) dissolve any carbonates with 10% hydrochloric acid in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes,

4) dissolve silicates with 48% hydrofluoric acid in a boiling water bath for 30 minutes, and

5) dissolve some of the cellulose through acetylation, a process that uses a mixture of one part suJfuric acid and nine parts acetic anhydride, in a boiling water bath for five minutes.

Samples that were composed mostly of clay were sieved using a  $10~\mu m$  mesh (Cwynar *et al.,* 1979), and were treated by hydrofluoric acid in a boiling water bath for one to two hours. The remaining residue of mostly pollen was mounted on microscope slides. Due to expected low pollen abundance's in the clay unit, samples were processed only at the top, bottom, and approximate middle of this unit.

In order to compute pollen accumulation rates, the initial volume of the sample, the final volume of the sample, and the amount of sediment placed on each slide were recorded. Final residues were kept in a tert-butyl

alcohol (TBA) at a ratio of one part sample to three parts TEA (1:1 for the levels 1-50 cm). There were approximately  $4.17 \mu$  (7.14  $\mu$  for samples 1-50 cm) of sediment in each drop placed on the study slides, based on measurements made in the laboratory that counted the number of drops of residue there are in a milliliter.

Pollen grains in each sample were identified and counted using a binocular compound microscope at 400X magnification. A modern reference collection and various guides and keys were used to help in the identification of pollen grains (Kapp, 1969; Moriya,1976; McAndrews ei *al.,* 1973). Samples were examined until a minimum of 300 pollen grains were identified and counted. The number of identified non-aquatic pollen grains was used as the basic pollen sum, from which were to calculated the percentages of different pollen and spore types in each sample. At first, all of the pollen grains on the microscope slide were identified and counted, because pollen accumulation rates were being computed. This proved to be very time consuming since some slides had 1,000 to 2,000 pollen grains on them. To avoid having to count 1,000 to 2,000 pollen grains, only one-half or one-quarter of a slide was examined. In addition to identifying and counting the pollen in the samples, charcoal was examined for any qualitative changes throughout the core.

The computer program TILIA was used to create a pollen diagram, to calculate the pollen accumulation rate, and to perform a cluster analysis on the data. Microsoft Excel was used to record the raw pollen counts and to calculate pollen concentrations in the samples (see Appendices). To calculate the pollen concentration the following formula was used:

$$
P_c = \Sigma \, P / (n_s \, x \, n_d \, x \, sed \, ) \, x \, V_f / V_i
$$

Where  $P_c$  is the pollen concentration (number of pollen grains per cubic centimeter of sediment),  $\Sigma$  P is the basic pollen sum,  $n_S$  represents the percentage of the microscope slide counted, nd is the number of drops on the slide, sed is the number of cubic centimeters of sediment in each drop, and Vf and V<sub>i</sub> represent the final and initial volumes of the sample in cubic centimeters respectively. Finally, average sedimentation rates were calculated based on sediment thickness between the radiocarbon dates.



Figure 3: The basic stratigraphy of the core showing location of the radiocarbon dates.

#### Results

#### *Stratigraphy of the Core and Radiocarbon Dates*

At the bottom of the core there is approximately 60 cm of clayey organic sediments (Figure 3). Around 5.4 m a transition from the clayey organic sediment to a lacustrine clay begins and ends around 4.9 m where the organic component of the sediment declines. Overlying the day is another transition layer from 3.8 m to 3.6 m into a peat unit at the top of the core.

While extracting the core from the bog, it was estimated in the field that approximately 1.5 m of silty clay was lost from the end of the core. This probably broke off at a stratigraphic boundary. Another core taken from Great Bog at a location that was closer to the margin than the core used in this study has a thicker unit of clay in it (Doss, personal communication).

Due to rapid drying in the laboratory, the core contracted about 10 em before sampling was completed; therefore the sample marked 590 em probably represents 600 em.

<b>TELEDYNE</b>	Sample Depth		Age in Years
Sample number	(cm)	$-8^{14}C$	B.P.
$I - 17,827$	$42.0 - 43.0$	$146 \pm 8$	$1270 \pm 80$
$I - 17,828$	$193.5 - 195.0$	$513 \pm 7$	$5780 \pm 120$
$I - 17,829$	$360.5 - 363.5$	$657 \pm 8$	$8590 \pm 200$
$I - 17,830$	$538.0 - 540.0$	$658 \pm 9$	$8620 \pm 240$
$I - 17,831$	$588.0 - 590.0$	$645 \pm 9$	$8320 \pm 240$

Table 2: Table of radiocarbon dates for Great Bog core. Dates are based on the Libby half-life of 5568 years; ages are  $\pm$  1  $\sigma$ .

An average sedimentation rate of 0.331 mm/yr. was calculated between the top of the core and the radiocarbon date at 0.42-m depth, an average sedimentation rate of 0.335  $mm/yr$ . was calculated between the radiocarbon date at 0.42-m depth and the radiocarbon date at 1.93-m depth, and an average sedimentation rate of 0.594 mm/yr. was calculated using the radiocarbon date at 1.93-m depth and the radiocarbon date above the clay unit at S.38-m depth. All ages for the major changes in the pollen record were estimated using these average sedimentation rates. With the standard errors included the bottom three radiocarbon dates (1-17,829 to 1-17,831) are statistically the same.

## *The Pollen Record*

In the pollen record at the bottom of the core, *Nuphar* (pond lily), *Nsjmphaea* (water lily), *Potamogeion* (pondweed), *Brasenia* (watershield), and Cyperaceae (sedges) are present (Figure 4). The total for these aquatics at the bottom of the core is between 2.5% and 8% of the basic pollen sum up until the 5.4-m depth, at the beginning of the transition from the organic unit to the clay unit, where the percentage drops. Above the clay unit the aquatics increase again.

At the 2.3-m depth *Sphagnum* appears in the record. There is an overlap between the open-water aquatics and the *Sphagnum* until the 2.0-m depth where the total percent of the aquatics declines to less than 2%. This overlap is mainly due to the presence of *Eriocaulon* (pipewort), and this is the only time *this* pollen taxon is present in the record. *Sphagnum* is present in varying percentages throughout the rest of the pollen record. In addition to *Sphagnum, Myrica* (sweet gale) and Ericales (e.g. bog laurel and Labrador tea)



 $\mathbf{g}_\mathrm{S}=-\frac{2\pi\mathbf{S}}{4\pi\mathbf{S}}$ 

Pollen Percentage Diagram of Core from Great Bog, Beilde, Maine<br>by John P. Dawson, Dept. of Geology. Colby College.<br>April 1995

Figure 4: Pollen percentage diagram from Great Bog made using Tilia.

are present in the record from the 2.3-m depth to the top of the core. Finally, *Osmunda* is sporadically present in the record in low abundance.

Early in the pollen record *Pinus* is present in percentages ranging from 45% to 80%. *Quercus* (oak) is also found in the record early on, but in percentages ranging from 4% to 10%. At the 3.6-m depth, *Betula* declines from greater than 10% to less than 5%. *Picea* is aJso present early in the pollen record, but without any dramatic changes. Hardwood taxa such as *Acer, Ulmus* (elm), *Corylus* and *Fraxinus* (ash) are aJso present throughout the pollen record. *Populus* (poplar) is also present throughout the core, but in values less than 2.5%.

At the 2.3-m depth *Pinus* and *Quercus* decline and there is a dramatic increase in *Tsuga* percentages. Along with the increase in *Tsuga, Betula*  increases and Fagus (beech) appears for the first time in the record in significant abundance. *Tsuga* has a peak at the 2.1-m depth with subsequent decline from 1.3 to 0.9 m. There are increases in *Pinus* and the total nonarboreal pollen during the *Tsuga* decline. With very low percentages, *Caryn* (hickory) and *Tilia* (linden) are present in the upper part of the record.

At the 3D-em depth, there is a spike in *Ambrosia,* Poaceae (grasses), Tubuliflorae (e.g. *Aster* or goldenrod), and Liguliflorae (e.g. dandelion) with declines in *Pinus, Picea, Tsuga, Fagus,* and *Fraxinus .* Poaceae has a secondary spike at the top of the core along with a small increase in percent for *Pinus, Picea,* and *Tsuga* and decline in *Ambrosia. Fagus* and *Fraxinus* do not have any subsequent increases.

### *Pollen Concentration and Pollen Accumulation Rates*

The pollen concentration (Figure 5) throughout the core is highly



Figure 5: The change in the pollen concentration (# pollen grains/cm<sup>3</sup> of sediment) in the record.

variable. There is a dramatic decline in pollen concentration in the clay unit starting at the 5.2-m depth. Following this decline, there is a rapid increase in the pollen concentration at 3.6 m which is followed by a decline. There are also peaks in the concentration at 2.3 m, 1.7 m, 1.2 m, and 0.7 m. After the final peak at 0.7 m, the pollen concentration continually decreases to the top of the core. Overall, the pollen concentration seems to increase with depth in Pollen Accumulation Rates for Core from Great Bog, Belgrade, Maine<br>John Dawson, Dept. of Geology, Colby College



Figure 6: Pollen accumulation rates (# grains/cm2 of sediment/yr) for a core from Great Bog.<br>Note that the horizontal scales are not the same for each pollen taxon.

the core, except in the clay unit where concentrations were orders of magnitude lower than in the organic sediments.

Because the bottom three radiocarbon dates are statistically the same, pollen accumulation rates were only calculated above 3.6 m (Figure 6). For the overall accumulation rate, there are peaks at  $2.3$  m,  $1.2$  m, and  $0.7$  m with the rest of the graph being relatively unchanging. For the last 0.5 m the pollen accumulation rate has very low values.

The pollen accumulation rates follow the same general trends as the pollen percentages for the major taxa in the record. *Pinus* has a high accumulation rate until 2.3 m where it starts to decline. *Betula* has a low accumulation rate until the 2.3-m depth where it increases along with an increase in the accumulation rate for Poaceae. The *Tsuga* accumulation rate starts to increase at the 2.5-m depth and peaks around the 2.3-m depth with a subsequent decline from 1.5 to 0.9 m. During the *Tsuga* decline, there are increases in *Pinus* and the total nonarboreal pollen accumulation rates. At the 0.3-m depth, there is an increase in the *Ambrosia* accumulation rate with drops in rates for *Pinus, Tsuga, Betula,* and *Fagus.* Finally, at the very top of the core rates for *Pinus, Tsuga,* and Poaceae increase, and *Ambrosia* decreases.

#### **DISCUSSION**

#### *The Clay Unit*

The post-glacial sedimentation record at Great Bog is unusual for Maine. It has an organic unit that was deposited around 8,500 years ago, based on the radiocarbon dates. On top of this organic unit there is a lacustrine clay unit, which in turn is overlain by a peat unit.

15

The bottom three radiocarbon dates are statistically the same (Table 2). The date above the clay unit and the date below the day unit are believable, because it is conceivable that an inorganic unit could be deposited very rapidly. Very low pollen concentration (Figure 5) throughout the clay unit supports this interpretation. The basal radiocarbon date is highly suspect, because the radiocarbon dates suggests rapid deposition of the O.6-m organic unit at the bottom of the core, yet sediments such as this are usually deposited over a longer period of time. The sample submitted for analysis was most likely contaminated by younger organics from the higher in the core during coring operations in the field.

The rapid deposition of the clay unit could have been the result of a slumping of the uplands. Another core taken closer to the margin of the bog than the core in this study had a thicker unit of clay and supports this hypothesis (Doss, personal communication). It is interesting to note that Horse Point, an esker segment, does not have any the marine Presumpscot clays on it (Mostoller, 1994), which are typically found in the stratigraphic record throughout lowland coastal Maine (Bloom, 1963; Stuiver and Borns, 1975). Therefore, the clay unit found in the stratigraphy of Great Bog could have originated from Horse Point to the west of the bog. Also, rapid erosion of the uplands around the bog can be the result of a forest fire that may have destroyed the vegetation. This is, however, not supported by the sparse charcoal evidence in the core. Overall, it is difficult to interpret charcoal data from any core, since presence of charcoal could represent local or regional forest fires, but a high abundance of charcoal would likely represent a major fire in the region. In the record at Great Bog, there does not appear to be a

16

peak in charcoal abundance at the same time as the start of deposition of the clay unit.'

### *Development of Great Bog*

Great Bog has had an exciting history over the past 8,500 years. Early in the pollen record *Nupltar , Nymphaea, Poiamogeion,* and *Brasenia* were present, which indicates that Great Bog had open water and was relatively shallow. In fact, Great Bog was an open embayment of Great Pond.

Around 6,500 b.p. Eriocaulon appears in the record with the first appearance of *Sphagnum.* At the same time, *Nuphar*, *Nymphaea*, and *Brasenia* disappear from the record. *Eriocaulon,* since it is a submergent aquatic, exists in very shallow water depths or very clear bodies of water, while *Nymphaea, Nuphar,* and *Brasenia,* which are emergent aquatics, can exist in slightly deeper waters. *Eriocaulon* is found in Great Pond today in water depths up to 2 m. The presence of *Eriocaulon* indicates that it is possible that the depth of the water in Great Bog had decreased. This could be caused by the natural process of sediment filling in the lake or by a mid-Holocene lake level drop recorded in some lakes of Maine between 6,700 and 8,800 b.p, (Northrop, 1995). The latter possibility is consistent with late-glacial arid conditions seen in eastern North America prior to 6,000 b.p, (Harrison, 1989). Whatever the case may be, a decrease in water depth in the basin undoubtedly helped facilitate the development of the *Sphagnum* mat.

*Eriocaulon,* along with other aquatics at the site, disappeared around 6,000 b.p., which indicates that the *Sphagnum* mat of the bog had completely closed in. The small tree and shrub zone at Great Bog, which is typically found at the margin of most bogs today, started to develop with the appearance of *Myrica* and Ericales.

## *Regional Vegetation*

By visually inspecting the diagram (Figure 4), zonation of the major trends in the vegetation was made. The period where *Pinus* has high percentages, from the bottom of the core to the 2.3 m depth, was named Zone GB-1. A subzone of this, GB-2A, marks the brief decline in *Betula.* Zone GB-2 is marked by maximum values for *Tsuga,* and Zone GB-3 starts at the decline of *Tsuga* and ends with the start of Zone GB-4, where the abundance of *Tsuga*  increases again. The final zone, GB-5, is from the 0.3-m depth to the top of the core, where *Ambrosia* dramatically increased. The cluster analysis that was performed using TILIA supports this zonation.

The pollen record at Great Bog starts with Zone GB-l which represents a conifer-hardwood forest with high amounts of *Pinus* and *Quercus.* Also, *Picea had relatively low percentage of abundance during this period. This* zone can be correlated to Zone IIA at Moulton Pond (Davis *et al.,* 1975), to the White Pine and Hardwoods Zone at Gould Pond (Anderson *et al.,* 1992), and to the "pine period" zones of early researchers (Deevey, 1951; Graham, 1948; Potzger and Friesner, 1948). During this period the climate in the region could have been warm and dry. Davis ei *al.* (1975) also suggested that *Pinus*  could also be found at locations where the soil is poor, since it is a pioneer. At Moulton Pond the "pine period" lasted from 9,700 to 7,100 b.p., whereas at Gould Pond it lasted from 10,550 to 7,300 b.p. Around 8,600 b.p., at the beginning of Subzone GB-1B, *Betula* declines in abundance in the region. This decline in *Betula* is seen in all locations in Maine (Anderson *et al., 1992;*  Davis and Jacobson, 1985; Davis *ei al.,* 1975; Deevey, 1951; Graham, 1948; Potzger and Friesner, 1948). At Great Bog, the end of this period came at ca. 6,500 b.p.

At the start of Zone GB-2, about 6,500 b.p., *Tsuga* and *Betula* increased in abundance as *Pinus* declined . Also, *Fagus* appears in the record for the first time in significant amounts. This period could represent a time when the climate in the region was cooler and more moist than earlier. *This* zone correlates well with Zone II (7,100 - 4,700 b.p.) at Moulton Pond and the early part of the hemlock and hardwood zone (7.300 - 200 b.p.) at Gould Pond.

In Zone GB-3, *Tsuga* experienced a dramatic drop in abundance between 4,000 and 2,700 b.p. At the same time *Pinus,* Poaceae, and other taxa show slight increases, which were probably due to space being opened up in the forest for them to grow during the *Tsuga* demise. Some researches attribute this demise of *Tsuga* to a pathogen that is similar to the chestnut blight and Dutch elm disease of modern times (Allison *ei al.,* 1986), but almost none of the studies in Maine mention this as a cause. In fact, many believe that this was just a change to warmer and drier climates (Deevey, 1951; Graham, 1948) while others neither attributed much importance to it (Davis *ei al.,* 1975) or did not know what to make of it (Potzger and Friesner, 1948).

This decline in *Tsuga* at Great Bog apparently occurred more recently than at other sites in Maine, where it was recorded from 5,500 to 4.300 b.p. (Anderson *et al.,* 1992; Davis *et at.,* 1975). However, this discrepancy could merely be a reflection of errors in estimated timing based on the calculated average sedimentation rates. In general, deposition and compaction of sediments are non-linear processes and discrepancies in the estimated dates can be attributed to this. With additional radiocarbon dates, it would be easier to estimate sedimentation rates and hence the time when the changes occurred, or to date the critical horizon directly.

As for correlation of Zone GB-3 to other pollen records, neither Davis *et al.* (1975) nor Anderson *ei al.* (1992) make a zonation that includes the decline in *Tsuga.* Davis *et al.* (1975) do have Zone III that lasted from 4,700 to 200 b.p., which extends from approximately the middle of the *Tsuga* demise to the beginning of the European period.

In the Great Bog record, when *Tsuga* increases in abundance again and *Pinus* and Poaceae decrease, Zone GB-4 begins. This period lasted from 2,700 to 200 b.p. and is marked by the forest returning to the composition it had before the *Tsuga* demise. At the end of this time period there is a peak in *Ambrosia* and a smaller peak in Poaceae. Concurrently, most of the arboreal taxa experience decreases in abundance. This is typically interpreted as the beginning of European colonization of this region around 200 b.p., when the forests were cleared for agriculture. Sedimentation rates yielded a date of around 900 b.p . for the peak in *Ambrosia,* but this inconsistency in the date is likely due to differential compaction of the sediments.

Lastly, at the top of the core, there were slight increases in *Pinus* and *Tsuga,* which indicates that the forests started to return their condition during pre-European times as agriculture declined in the latter half of the twentieth century. In addition to this, *Ambrosia* drops and Poaceae has a large peak in percentage, which could reflect the growing dominance of dairy pasture and hayfields as agricultural practices shifted in the past half-century to dominance by dairying. *Ambrosia* does not flourish in such relatively stable herbaceous environments, but Poaceae, Tubuliflorae, and Liguliflorae do.

The pollen record at Great Bog does not represent all of post-glacial time even for this local area. Radiocarbon dates on wood fragments taken from kettles near Horse Point suggest that this area was ice-free as early as 12,000 b.p. (Stuiver and Borns, 1975). The basal radiocarbon date on the Great

Bog core is about 8,300 b.p. , but correlation of the pollen record at Great Bog to other sites in Maine (Anderson *ei al.,* 1992; Davis *et al.,* 1975) suggest that the basal sediments in the core could be as old as 10,500 b.p. or as young as 9,000 b.p.

### *Transitions of the Forests*

Generally, pollen accumulation rates can let a researcher know when the forest have started to change while the pollen percentages only reflect what the relative composition of the forest at a giving time (Faegri and Iversen, 1989). At Great Bog, the pollen accumulation rates basically follow the same major trends as the pollen percentages. Therefore, the forests in Maine do not experience rapid changes and in fact, they slowly change from one type to another.

An instance when the forests appear to change rapidly is at the beginning of Zone GB-2 around 6,500 b.p., when *Tsuga* increased. Here the pollen accumulation rate of *Tsuga* started to increase and actually peaked earlier than in the pollen percentages. Also, during the *Tsuga* demise and subsequent revival, most of the major elements in the forests, including *Pinus* and *Betula,* had accumulation rates that rapidly increased. Pollen accumulation rates peak for *Ambrosia* and Poaceae during European colonization of this region, while accumulation rates for *Tsuga, Pinus, Betula,*  and hardwood taxa have decreased.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The stratigraphy of Great Bog is unusual for post-glacial sediments in Maine in that there are organic-rich sediments beneath a thick lacustrine clay. Radiocarbon dates and low pollen abundance suggest that this clay unit was very rapidly deposited. This local anomaly could have been due to mass wasting or upland denudation. Forest fires, that would result in clearing of the vegetation in the uplands around Great Bog, making the sediments more susceptible to erosion, but are not supported by definitive charcoal evidence in the record.

The basal radiocarbon date on the sediment and pollen records is about 8,300 b.p. Correlation to other pollen records in the region (Anderson et al., 1992; Davis et al., 1975) suggest that the true basal age is probably at least 9,000 b.p., but no older than 10,500 b.p.

Presence of open-water aquatics, such as *Nuphar*, *Nymphaea*, and *Brasenia,* indicates that Great Bog was an open embayment of Great Pond, up until 6,500 b.p. when a *Sphagnum* mat developed. A change from *Nuphar, Nymphaea,* and *Brasenia* to *Eriocaulon* could possibly be caused by a mid-Holocene lowering of lake levels throughout Maine (Northrop, 1995). It took about 500 years for the *Sphagnum* mat to become complete, as indicated by the disappearance of open-water aquatics.

The pollen record indicates that the region around Great Bog was dominated by *Pinus* and *Quercus* up until 6,500 b.p.. when *Tsuga, Betula, Fagus* and other hardwoods increased in abundance and the *Sphagnum* mat developed. From 4,000 to 2,700 b.p. *Tsuga* experienced a demise in prevalence in the regional vegetation, while *Pinus* and Poaceae increased in abundance. This decline in *Tsuga* could be the result of a pathogen that attacked only this taxon in the forest (Allison *ei al.,* 1986). This demise of *Tsuga* at Great Bog is later than at other sites in Maine (Anderson et. al., 1992; Davis *ei.* al., 1975). *Tsuga* had a subsequent increase in abundance, while *Pinus* and Poaceae declined.

At 30 em depth, *Ambrosin* peaked in abundance along with Poaceae. This represented the beginning of European colonization in the area. Average sedimentation rates suggest that this occurred 900 b.p., but the average sedimentation rates are undoubtedly in error over this brief section of the core due to differential compaction of the sediments in the record. Peaks in *Pinus, Tsuga,* and Poaceae and an *Ambrosia* decline within the last 50 years record the historical agricultural shift from row crops to production of hay and pasture, with reforestation of much previously farmed land.

Each of the zones at Great Bog, which represent major changes in the regional vegetation, correlate well with other pollen records in central and coastal Maine. The changes in the regional vegetation around Great Bog apparently occurred later than at other sites in Maine (Anderson et al., 1992; Davis et al., 1975).

Pollen accumulation rates in the record do not show many rapid transitions from one forest to another. During the changeover from a *Pinus*and Quercus-dominated forest to a *Tsuga* and *Betula* forest, pollen accumulation rates are very high. Also, during European colonization, the accumulation rates are relatively high and indicate that the forests rapidly changed to adjust for deforestation.

Overall, the pollen record at Great Bog does not represent all of the post-glacial vegetational history, but the record obtained is highly detailed and reasonably well-dated. Future research needs to be done at Great Bog to delimit the areal extent of the clay unit in the stratigraphy, to resolve the question of the problematic basal radiocarbon date, and to obtain a complete post-glacial pollen record. In addition to this, more modern palynological studies need to be performed in Maine in order to understand better the dynamics of the post-glacial vegetational history in the region.

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APPENDIX A

RAW POLLEN DATA








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APPENDIX **B** 

POLLEN CONCENTARTION DATA

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