

Jack Pine

Pinus banksiana

-Jack Pine is the shortest of all of Wisconsin's native pine trees, and it also has the shortest needles. A mature Jack Pine will only be approximately 60-70 feet tall. Jack Pine's have very interesting cones. If you look at them, they are put together very tightly; so tightly in fact that seeds can stay in the cones for 30 years. It is possible for there to be 2 million seeds per acre tied up in sealed cones. The reason that the cones are so tight is because the Jack Pine evolved in fire prone ecosystems, and therefore, its cones had to have protection to ensure that there could be another generation of Jack Pines. However, fire is a friend of the Jack Pine. Fire heats up the cones and therefore will help to open them up. Although fire is the best way to open the cones, direct sunlight, and certain animals seem to do a pretty good job too.

-Kirtland's Warblers need Jack Pines. It's the only tree they'll nest in. And not just any Jack Pine will do. There must be eighty or more acres of Jack Pines, all less than 20 years old with their branches reaching down to a dense ground cover. Where do the Kirtland Warblers find such a place? They nest only in the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The largest colony is in Grayling. U.S. Forest Service naturalists give tours to birders hoping to add this rare warbler to their life lists.



Please, I don't want to go the way of the dodo and the dinosaurs.



Nature is not more complicated than we do understand, it is more complicated than we can understand!

-Anonymous