

DRAFT

GUIDE TO STATE NATURAL AREAS



Scientific and Natural Areas

Minnesota's natural areas were established for a variety of purposes. They are places where the public can view rare plant and animal species or quietly appreciate and study nature in an unspoiled setting.

They also serve as outdoor classrooms for teaching and research in the natural sciences.

Scientists use natural areas to gain insights into natural processes, to gather information on environmental contaminants, and as bench marks or reference points against which to measure changes in our environment.

Nature preserves also serve as genetic storehouses of plant and animal material that could someday be used to provide breakthroughs in medicine, agriculture, or industry.

Last, natural areas protect the best and/or last remaining occurrences of rare plant and animal species, plant communities, and unique geological features.

Our responsibility to protect these features is a recognition of the need to perpetuate all species and a moral obligation to ensure their existence for future generations.

Principle activities which are UNLAWFUL in the use of most Scientific and Natural Areas are listed below: Further information is available at Department of Natural Resources Offices.

Collecting plants, animals, rocks or fossils.

Camping, picnicking and swimming.

Horses, dogs and other pets.

Snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles.

Hunting, trapping, fishing and boating.

Entry into restricted areas and sanctuaries.

INDEX TO DESIGNATED SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

- Agassiz Dunes - Page 11.
- Bicentennial Prairie - Page 5.
Black Dog Preserve - Page 6.
Black Lake Bog - Page 10.
Blazing Star Prairie - Page 5.
Bluestem Prairie - Page 4.
Bonanza Prairie - Page 4.
Boot Lake - Page 3.
Botany Bog - Page 7.
Butterwort Cliffs - Page 5.
- Caldwell Brook Cedar Swamp - Page 8.
Cannon River Turtle Preserve - Page 7.
Chamberlain Woods - Page 8.
Clear Lake - Page 13.
Cold Spring Rookery - Page 13.
Crookston Prairie - Page 11.
- Eagles Nest Island #4 - Page 12.
- Felton Prairie - Page 5.
Foxboro Prairie Unit - Page 11.
Frenchman's Bluff - Page 10.
- Greenwater Lake - Page 3.
- Hastings - Page 6.
Helen Allison Savanna - Page 3.
Hemlock Ravine - Page 4.
Hythecker Prairie - Page 6.
- Iron Horse Prairie - Page 6.
Iron Springs Bog - Page 5.
Itasca Wilderness Sanctuary - Page 5.
- Kellogg-Weaver Dunes - Page 14.
Kettle River - Page 10.
King's & Queen's Bluff - Page 14.
- Ladies-Tresses Swamp - Page 7.
Lake Johanna Rookery - Page 11.
- Malmberg Prairie - Page 11.
Mary Schmidt Crawford Woods - Page 14.
McGregor Marsh - Page 3.
Mississippi River Islands - Page 13.
Moose Mountain - Page 12.
- Osmundson Prairie - Page 6.
Ottertail Prairie - Page 10.
- Partch Woods - Page 13.
Pembina Trail Preserve - Page 11.
Pembina Trail Unit - Page 11.
Pennington Bog - Page 4.
Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery - Page 12.
Pine & Curry Islands - Page 8.
Prairie Bush Clover - Page 8.
Prairie Coteau - Page 11.
Purvis Lake-Ober - Page 12.
- Racine Prairie - Page 9.
Rice Elliotte Prairie - Page 14.
Ripley Esker - Page 9.
Roscoe Prairie - Page 13.
Rush Lake Island - Page 4.
- Santee Prairie - Page 9.
Savage Fen - Page 12.
Shooting Star Prairie - Page 9.
Shrike Unit - Page 5.
- Townsend Woods - Page 12.
Twin Valley Prairie - Page 10.
- Uncas Dunes - Page 13.
- Western Prairie South - Page 14.
Wild Indigo - Page 9.
Wolsfeld Woods - Page 7.
Wykoff Balsam Fir - Page 7.
- Yellow Bank Hills - Page 8.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

MCGREGOR MARSH SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 400.00 Acres
Aitkin County Twp 047N Rng 23W Sec 05

Located from McGregor 2 mi S on MN Hwy 65 on E side of highway.

McGregor Marsh is a site within the very extensive marsh land in the former bed of Glacial Lake Aitkin. The site contains the very specific habitat requirements of the rare bird species yellow rail and sharp-tailed sparrow. Bird watchers have visited this area to look for these rare birds and other more common species for many years. The best time to visit this site is in early summer when the songs of territorial birds reveal their locations, and during the winter to look for northern hawk-owls or other visiting winter birds.

BOOT LAKE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 400.00 Acres
Anoka County Twp 033N Rng 22W Sec 17, 18, 19, 20

Located from MN Hwy 65 in Bethel 6.5 mi E on Co Rd 22.

Boot Lake site contains a diverse array of flora in a noteworthy succession of vegetation types. The site is significant geologically as part of a chain of ice-block lakes within a tunnel valley system. Tunnel valleys were formed by enormous hydraulic pressure and erosion of subglacial rivers. The site contains a continuum of plant community types which range from oak forest, through aspen-shrub thickets, wooded bog, wet meadows, floating mats, emergent aquatic plants, duckweed and algal communities in deep water. Sandhill cranes and Blanding's turtles occupy the site. The rare plant species water willow, long-bearded hawkweed, and sea-beach triple-awn grass are present on the site. The best time to visit the site is late spring when woodland wildflowers are blooming. A portion of the site is closed to visitation and is posted as a sanctuary because of rare bird species' nests there.

HELEN ALLISON SAVANNA SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 80.00 Acres
Anoka County Twp 033N Rng 23W Sec 02

Located from MN Hwy 65 in Bethel 1 mi E on Co Rd 24, then S and E 4 mi on Co Rd 26.

Helen Allison Savanna was named for Helen Allison Irvine, "Minnesota's grass lady". The site is adjacent to the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Natural History Area and within the Anoka Sand Plain. The site contains an excellent example of sand dune plant succession, with blowouts and dunes in various stages of stabilization by pioneer species. Community types found on the site include oak savanna, dry prairie, and sedge marshes in scattered depressions. The rare plant species found here are sea-beach triple-awn grass, long-bearded hawkweed, rhombic-petaled evening-primrose, and tall nut-rush. The best times to visit this site are when the pasque flowers bloom in the spring and late summer when the prairie grasses are at their finest.

GREENWATER LAKE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 815.00 Acres
Becker County Twp 141N Rng 38W Sec 28, 33, 34

Located from Ponsford 5 mi W on Co Rd 35.

Greenwater Lake is a pristine spring-fed lake which has a diatom flora of which nearly half is dominated by a single species. The diatom species which is so abundant in Greenwater Lake has been recorded as a very rare component only in other lakes. The presence and dominance of this diatom species may indicate that the lake is meromictic or chemically stratified. These features and the low nutrient levels make Greenwater Lake of great interest in research about eutrofication of lakes. The undeveloped shoreline and surrounding hills are a mixed forest dominated by aspen and birch. The uncommon butterfly species Appalachian brown, mustard white, and pine elfin have been found on the site. The best time to visit this site is during the blooming period of spring wildflowers.

PENNINGTON BOG SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Beltrami County Twp 146N Rng 30W Sec 03

107.80 Acres

Located from Bemidji 15 mi E on Co Rd 12, then 1 mi N on Co Rd 39.

Pennington Bog is noted as a virtually undisturbed tract of native vegetation, providing critical habitat for a diverse assemblage of plant species. A wide assortment of beautiful and unusual plant species grows beneath a dense canopy of white cedar, balsam fir and black spruce. The best time to visit the site is early summer. Visitation is by permit only, with permits available from the DNR SNA Offices in St. Paul or Bemidji.

BONANZA PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Big Stone County Twp 123N Rng 48W Sec 21, 22, 27

85.00 Acres

Located 14 mi NW of Ortonville on MN Hwy 7, then 0.5 mi W, in the Bonanza Unit of Big Stone Lake State Park.

Bonanza Prairie is an example of undisturbed glacial till hill prairies found in the state. The gravelly, well-drained soils support dry prairie, dry to mesic prairie, and bur oak savanna plant communities. Prairie plants include little bluestem, purple coneflower, Floodman's thistle, prairie clover, silverleaf scurfpea, big bluestem, and grama grasses. In addition, the state endangered prairie moonwort and rare Missouri milkvetch occur on this site. The best time to visit this site is in late summer to see the prairie plants in bloom.

HEMLOCK RAVINE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Carlton County Twp 048N Rng 16W Sec 03

50.20 Acres

Located from Carlton 4 mi E on MN Hwy 210, then 0.5 mi N on Co Rd 39.

Hemlock Ravine is a wooded site with northern hardwoods, white pine and eastern hemlock. More than 25% of the hemlock trees which grow in the state are on this site. This is the extreme western edge of the range of hemlock and they are considered rare in the state. The site is centered on a very steep-sided ravine which contains a small spring-fed stream. The best time to visit the site is in the spring to view blooming trillium, hepatica, bloodroot, and dutchman's breeches. The ravine itself is designated a sanctuary due to severe soil limitations and is closed to visitation except by permit.

RUSH LAKE ISLAND SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Chisago County Twp 037N Rng 22W Sec 21, 28

21.00 Acres

Located from Rush City 7 mi W on Co Rd 7, then N about 1 mi on Co Rd 4 to Rush Lake Haven resort.

Rush Lake Island is a site with one of the largest heron rookeries in the state. The site is accessible by boat. Rush Lake Haven resort charges a small fee for boat launching but is the closest launching ramp to the island. The rookery may have as many as 500 great blue heron nests active each year. A few great egrets have begun to nest on the island in the last decade. The best time to view the island is in the spring and early summer. Landing on the island is not permitted between April 15 and July 15 in order to protect the young herons, so all viewing must be done from a boat.

BLUESTEM PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Clay County Twp 139N Rng 46W Sec 10, 22, 23

1,296.00 Acres

Located from Moorhead 11 mi E on US Hwy 10, then 1 mi S on MN Hwy 9, then 1 mi E on Co Rd 79.

Bluestem Prairie is one of the largest remnants of what was once described as "a vast sea of natural grassland" that at one time covered the entire Red River valley. The site lies within the bed of Glacial Lake Agassiz and contains two significant shorelines, the Norcross and Campbell Standlines. The rare plant species, false asphodel, alkali cord-grass, small white lady slipper and scirpiform sedge occur on this site. Rare animals include regal fritillary, melissa blue, prairie vole, northern grasshopper mouse, Henslow's sparrow, upland sandpiper, and greater prairie chicken. The best times to visit this site are in early spring for pasqueflower blooming and prairie chicken booming, and again in late summer to see blazing stars and sunflowers in bloom.

FELTON PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA	410.00 Acres
BICENTENNIAL PRAIRIE UNIT	(160.00 Acres)
BLAZING STAR PRAIRIE UNIT	(160.00 Acres)
SHRIKE UNIT	(90.00 Acres)

Clay County Twp 141N Rng 45W Sec 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 17, 18, 19, 20
 Twp 142N Rng 45W Sec 31, 33
 Twp 141N Rng 46W Sec 12, 13, 24
 Twp 142N Rng 46W Sec 36

Located from Felton 2 mi S on MN Hwy 9, then E on Co Rd 108. Continue on to the gravel road .25 miles.

The Felton Prairie complex is composed of three units which all lie within a large beach ridge complex of Glacial Lake Agassiz. Several rare plants and animals occur here. The endangered butterflies Assiniboia skipper and Dakota skipper may be found here. Rare birds include greater prairie chicken, upland sandpiper, marbled godwit, Sprague's pipit, Baird's sparrow, and chestnut-collared longspur. The best times to visit this site are early spring to see blooming prairie smoke and pasque-flowers and prairie birds, and again in the late summer to view blooming blazing stars and sunflowers.

IRON SPRINGS BOG SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA	320.00 Acres
Clearwater Cnty Twp 144N Rng 36W Sec 28	

Located from Park Rapids 20 mi N on US Hwy 71, then NW on MN Hwy 20 to 1 mi W of the N entrance of Itasca State Park.

Iron Springs Bog is named for the iron-oxide rich springs on the site which have created a raised bog conifer swamp. The springs issue from a gravelly moraine. The site contains a mosaic of conifer swamp forest, boreal forest, and pine forest. Within the conifer swamp two of Minnesota's rarest plant species grow. The best time to visit this site is in early summer to view woodland wildflowers.

ITASCA WILDERNESS SANCTUARY SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA	1,580.00 Acres
Clearwater Cnty Twp 143N Rng 36W Sec 03, 04, 08, 09, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17	

Located from Park Rapids 17 mi N on US Hwy 71, then 6 mi W on Hwy 1 into Itasca State Park on Wilderness Drive.

Itasca Wilderness Sanctuary is a site which contains a large virgin stand of white and red pine, which is predominantly 100 to 300 years old. The site contains habitat for two of the state's rarer plant species, bog adder's mouth and matricary grape-fern, and two bird species of special concern, bald eagle and northern goshawk. Through an agreement between the Minnesota Academy of Science and the Conservation Commission in 1938 the Itasca Wilderness Sanctuary became the first site in Minnesota set aside for research and interpretation of its natural attributes. The Bohall Wilderness Trail leads to an overlook on Bohall Lake in the site. The best time to visit this site is early summer when woodland wildflowers are blooming, though a walk through the majestic pines is rewarding anytime.

BUTTERWORT CLIFFS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA	53.00 Acres
Cook County Twp 061N Rng 01W Sec 32, 33	

Located from Grand Marais 8 mi W on US Hwy 61 in Cascade River State Park.

The 50 acre Butterwort Cliffs SNA consists of a narrow strip of wet, rock shore natural community on Lake Superior, and aspen-birch forest extending from the rock shore to the northern border of the SNA. The cold, wet rocks near the lake provide habitat for a unique assemblage of rare arctic-alpine plants, including butterwort and northern eyebright. This SNA is closed from May 1 to August 15 to protect a herring gull nesting colony.

BLACK DOG PRESERVE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Dakota County Twp 027N Rng 24W Sec 27, 34

129.60 Acres

Located from I-35W in Burnsville 1/4 mi E on Cliff Rd to the Ride and Park lot beside the City recreation field.

Black Dog Preserve contains excellent examples of mesic prairie and calcareous fen plant communities, both of which are among the rarest plant communities in the state. A calcareous fen is an endangered grass-sedge dominated plant community with vegetation adapted to its unusual calcium-rich groundwater. The mesic prairie is the finest known in the metropolitan area. The rare plant species false asphodel, hair-like beak-rush, whorled nut-rush, beaked spike-rush, seaside arrow-grass, sterile sedge, twig-rush, and valerian are found on the site. Part of the site is designated as a sanctuary and may be visited by permit only. An interpretive sign marks the end of a trail through the site. The best time to visit this site is late summer when goldenrods and asters are in bloom.

HASTINGS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Dakota County Twp 115N Rng 17W Sec 27, 34, 35

69.40 Acres

Located in Hastings on MN Hwy 291 near the northern city limit.

The Hastings site is a combination of an upland hardwood forest dominated by red oak, sugar maple, and basswood, and a floodplain forest dominated by American elm, cottonwood, green ash, and silver maple. A wide diversity of plant species occur on this site, including the rare snow trillium. Talus slopes and steep escarpments of dolomitic limestone in the uplands provide habitat for specialized plants, which include certain mosses, lichens, liverworts, and ferns. The best time to visit this site is late spring when woodland wildflowers like hepaticas, bloodroots, dutchman's breeches, and trilliums are in bloom.

HYTHECKER PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Dodge County Twp 107N Rng 18W Sec 31

40.00 Acres

Located from Claremont 1 mi S on Co Rd 1, then 1.5 mi W.

Hythecker Prairie is an excellent example of mesic tallgrass prairie. Because tallgrass prairie soils are well suited for cropland, very little original prairie plant communities remain undisturbed. This site contains the rare plant species valerian, rattlesnake master, and compass plant. The best times to visit this site are in the spring to view valerian in bloom and in the late summer to view blooming rattlesnake master, blazing stars and sunflowers.

IRON HORSE PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Dodge County Twp 105N Rng 17W Sec 27

35.00 Acres

Located from Hayfield 2 mi S on MN Hwy 56, then 1/2 mi E on Co Rd M to old railroad grade.

Iron Horse Prairie is a triangular shaped site between two diverging railroad spurs. The site is the best example of mesic tallgrass prairie remaining in Minnesota. Species diversity is very high on this site and include the rare plant species Sullivant's milkweed, Indian plantain, wild quinine, and valerian. The best times to visit this site are late spring to view blooming swamp saxifrage, valerian and prairie smoke, and again in late summer to view wild quinine, blazing stars, sunflowers, and other prairie plants in bloom.

OSMUNDSON PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Faribault County Twp 101N Rng 24W Sec 36

6.00 Acres

Located from Kiester 2 mi S on MN Hwy 22, then 3 mi E on the State Line Road, then about 0.5 mi N on Co Rd 3.

Osmundson Prairie is a small site containing mesic blacksoil prairie, which is rare in this primarily agricultural region. The site is located in the rolling topography of the Emmons-Faribault moraine. The plant community is dominated by grasses like Indian grass, big bluestem and grama grasses. The forbs gray coneflowers, purple prairie-clover, rattlesnake master, and tuberous Indian plantain occur here, of which the last two are rare. The best times to visit this site are during the spring blooming of pasque flowers and prairie smoke, and in the late summer when blazing stars, rattlesnake masters and sunflowers bloom.

WYKOFF BALSAM FIR SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Fillmore County Twp 103N Rng 12W Sec 17, 20

62.00 Acres

Located from Spring Valley 5 mi NE on Co Rd 8, then about 0.8 mi SE.

Wykoff Balsam Fir is a site with a steep, moist north-facing talus slope with cold air drainage. The unique micro climate conditions provide habitat for a plant community commonly found much further north. Balsam fir, yellow birch, sugar maple, basswood, and American yew are among the woody plants which dominate here. Rare plant species include golden saxifrage, panicked bluebell, moschatel, bulbet fern, and alpine nightshade. The special conditions which support these plants are found only in the Driftless Area in steep north-facing talus slopes from which cold air constantly drains from crevasses. A few species of rare land snails also occur on this site. Part of the site is designated as a sanctuary and entry is not allowed without a permit from the DNR. The best time to visit this site is early summer when woodland wildflowers are in bloom.

CANNON RIVER TURTLE PRESERVE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Goodhue County Twp 113N Rng 15W Sec 19

196.00 Acres

Located 5 mi W of Red Wing on US Hwy 61.

Cannon River Turtle Preserve is a site on the lower Cannon River which contains floodplain forest dominated by silver maple, American elm and cottonwood. The site provides habitat for the state threatened wood turtle. The sand bars used by nesting turtles are closed to public use for a portion of the summer. The best time to visit this site is in the spring before mosquitoes become too abundant or during fall leaf color season. Access is best along the Cannon Valley bike trail.

WOLFELD WOODS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Hennepin County Twp 118N Rng 23W Sec 26, 27

442.00 Acres

Located from Long Lake 0.5 mi N on Brown Rd to Co Rd 6 and the Trinity Lutheran parking lot.

Wolsfeld Woods is a large mature stand of hardwoods. A wide variety of tree species, including red oak, ironwood, butternut, maple, elm and basswood cover the gently rolling topography. This site is a premier example of the original "Big Woods" forest which once covered the southeastern part of the state. Very few remnants remain due to urban expansion, agriculture, and industrial development. Visitors to the site are required to stay on the marked trails. A trails map is available. The best time to visit this site is in late spring to view blooming woodland wildflowers like trilliums, hepaticas, bloodroots, and dutchman's breeches, and in fall for the outstanding color display.

BOTANY BOG SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Itasca County Twp 056N Rng 26W Sec 01, 02

127.00 Acres

Located from Grand Rapids 10 mi N on MN Hwy 38, then about 1 mi W on Twp Rd 44.

Botany Bog is a site which contains small ponds, bog and upland woods. The ponds and bog have four rare plant species which are at the extreme limits of their ranges. The rare species are the four angled water-lily, humped bladderwort, olivaceous spike-rush, and yellow-eyed grass. The bog contains a great diversity of plant species. The best time to visit this site is early summer during the blooming period of bog laurel and rosemary, and again in late summer when joe pye-weed and swamp milkweed are blooming.

LADIES-TRESSES SWAMP SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Itasca County Twp 060N Rng 25W Sec 04

40.00 Acres

Located from Bigfork 8 mi SE on Co Rd 7, then 2.3 mi NE on Co Rd 344, then 0.5 mi NW on a trail.

Ladies Tresses Swamp is a site which contains an excellent example of lowland conifer forest dominated by northern white cedar, black ash, and black spruce. The best time to visit is early summer when woodland wildflowers are blooming.

PRAIRIE BUSH CLOVER SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

25.00 Acres

Jackson County Twp 103N Rng 35W Sec 17

Located from Windom 8.5 mi S on Co Rd 17, then 1.5 mi E on Co Rd 24, in Kilen Woods State Park.

Prairie Bush Clover is a site which contains one of the world's largest populations of the rare plant, prairie bush clover. The site contains glacial till hill prairie and a small calcareous fen, both of which support plant communities which are easily disturbed. Some of Kilen Woods State Park trails pass through the site. The best time to visit this site is late spring to view blooming pasque flowers and late summer when purple coneflowers, blazing stars, and sunflowers are blooming.

CALDWELL BROOK CEDAR SWAMP SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

80.00 Acres

Koochiching Cnty Twp 152N Rng 25W Sec 33

Located from Big Falls 23.3 mi SW on US Hwy 71, then 8 mi SE on Gemmill Rd, then 5 mi NE on Caldwell trl, 2 mi S on a winter trl, then 1/2 mi SE.

Caldwell Brook Cedar Swamp is an excellent example of undisturbed northern white cedar forest. White cedars do not regenerate after being logged off. This site will serve as an important bench mark for research purposes in the future. The site protects vulnerable habitat for boreal plants. The best time to visit this site is during the winter when skiing or snowshoeing is possible.

YELLOW BANK HILLS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

80.00 Acres

Lac Qui Parle Co Twp 118N Rng 46W Sec 04

Located from Nassau 1 mi E on Co Rd 24.

Yellow Bank Hills contains a glacial till hill prairie, with a geological feature called a Kame, a type of hill deposited by a glacier. The site provides habitat for four rare plant species which occur there. They are Missouri milkvetch, Nuttall's violet, cutleaf ironplant, and soft golden rod. The best time to visit this site is early spring and late summer to view blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and sunflowers in bloom.

PINE AND CURRY ISLAND SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

80.60 Acres

Lk of the Wds Co Twp 162N Rng 31W Sec 06

Twp 162N Rng 32W Sec 01, 10, 11, 12

Located from Baudette 13.5 mi W on MN Hwy 11, then 8.2 mi N on Co Rd 4 to Lake of the Woods, then by boat a few miles east.

Pine and Curry Island and Morris Point to the southwest form a conspicuous sandspit approximately 4 miles long. The site provides nesting habitat for the endangered bird species, piping plover, and the special concern bird species, common tern. Only about 25 pairs of piping plovers nest in the state. The species is very vulnerable to disturbance for nesting success. For this reason the nesting areas are designated as sanctuaries and are closed to public use during nesting season. The best time to visit the site is in the fall after piping plovers have left.

CHAMBERLAIN WOODS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

254.00 Acres

Le Sueur County Twp 111N Rng 26W Sec 21, 22, 27

Located from LeSueur 3 mi S on MN Hwy 36, then 1/4 mi W on Twp Rd.

Chamberlain woods protects a mosaic of vegetation types fronting the Minnesota River. Giant cottonwood, basswood, and elm trees dominate the seasonally wet floodplain forest next to the river. The topography reflects the old banks of the river through a series of "point bars". The "point bars" provide a visual history of changes in the river's route throughout time. The uplands support oak savanna vegetation, while the slopes closer to the river support deciduous forest species. The best times to visit this site are in the spring when early wildflowers are blooming and in fall when the area is open and dry enough to walk down to the river's edge.

SANTEE PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Mahnomens County Twp 145N Rng 41W Sec 06, 07

442.00 Acres

Located from Mahnomens 5 mi N on US Hwy 59, then 2.5 mi E.

Santee Prairie is a mosaic of vegetational types including native prairie, marsh and sedge meadow, and aspen thickets. The site contains several rare plant and animal species among them, the greater prairie chicken, marbled godwit and Wilson's phalarope. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and sunflowers in bloom.

RIPLEY ESKER SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Morrison County Twp 042N Rng 31W Sec 18, 19

235.60 Acres

Located from Little Falls 7 mi N on MN Hwy 371, then .7 mi E on Co Rd 48, then 1 mi N on Co Rd 282.

Ripley Esker contains an excellent example of a glacial feature called an esker. An esker is a deposit of stream sand and gravel in a meandering steep-sided ridge which was deposited by a stream inside wasting glacial ice. The esker on the site is approximately .75 mile long and is part of a 4.75 mile long esker system. Eskers are mined for the valuable gravel and sand they contain, and are becoming increasingly rare. The plant communities on this site range from oak savanna on the south side, to a diverse deciduous woodland on the north. Visitors to this site are requested to stay on the trails. The best time to visit this site is early spring or late fall when trees are without leaves, to view the topography.

RACINE PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Mower County Twp 104N Rng 14W Sec 11, 22, 23

6.50 Acres

Located 1 mi N of Racine on US Hwy 63.

Racine Prairie is a site along the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad right-of-way which contains a remnant of mesic prairie. Mesic prairie has become quite rare because the valuable soil on which it grows has mostly been converted to agricultural land. This site contains 4 rare plant species, wild quinine, white false indigo, rattlesnake master and compass plant. The best times to visit this site are early spring to view blooming pasque flowers and prairie smoke, and late summer to view blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and sunflowers in bloom.

SHOOTING STAR PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Mower County Twp 101N Rng 15W Sec 13

8.40 Acres

Located from Leroy 4 mi NW on MN Hwy 56.

Shooting Star Prairie is a site which contains mesic tallgrass prairie on an abandoned Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way. Tallgrass prairie is very rare in this primarily agricultural region. This site contains a number of rare plant species, two of which are found no where else. The prairie shooting star, the site's namesake, is one of these. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view sunflowers, asters, goldenrocks, and blazing stars in bloom.

WILD INDIGO SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Mower County Twp 103N Rng 16W Sec 15, 16, 17

150.00 Acres

Twp 103N Rng 17W Sec 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18
Twp 103N Rng 18W Sec 13, 23, 24

Located in a 12 mile long strip of abandoned railroad right-of-way between Ramsey and Dexter.

Wild Indigo is on an abandoned Chicago-Milwaukee right-of-way in the southeastern part of Minnesota. The site contains mesic prairie which is rare in the state due to conversion of the tallgrass prairie to agricultural land. The site contains the rare plant species wild quinine, compass plant, white wild indigo, and large-bracted wild indigo among others. The best time to visit this site is late spring when valerian is blooming and in late summer to view wild indigo, compass plant, and blazing stars in bloom. Parking lots located where Co Rds 16 and 19 cross the right-of-way.

FRENCHMAN'S BLUFF SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Norman County Twp 143N Rng 43W Sec 18

52.00 Acres

Located from Syre 4 mi E on MN Hwy 113, then 1.1 mi N on Co Rd 36.

Frenchman's Bluff is a prominent glacially deposited hill which overlooks the broad expanse of the Red River Valley to the west. Rare plants and animals found at the site include Dakota skipper, northern grasshopper mouse, plains reed grass and Nuttall's ground-rose. The best time to visit this site is in the spring when pasque flowers and prairie smoke are in bloom, and during late summer and early fall when many prairie plants bloom.

TWIN VALLEY PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Norman County Twp 143N Rng 45W Sec 23

240.00 Acres

Located from Twin Valley 5 mi S on MN Hwy 32, then 4.5 mi W on Co Rd 39.

Twin Valley Prairie is a site which contains a prominent beach ridge of Glacial Lake Agassiz. The plant communities range from wet to dry prairie. Rare plant and animal species include Dakota skipper, sandhill crane, marbled godwit, upland sandpiper and prairie vole. The best time to visit this site is in late summer when blazing stars, sunflowers, asters, and goldenrods are blooming.

OTTERTAIL PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Otter Tail Cnty Twp 131N Rng 44W Sec 17

320.00 Acres

Located from Fergus Falls 7 mi S of I-94 on Co Rd 1, then 6 mi W on Co Rd 112.

Ottertail prairie is a low, wet prairie site which may be totally flooded for short periods during some springs. The rare plant downy gentian occurs here. Greater prairie chickens, upland sandpipers, and marbled godwits are found on this site. The best time to visit this site is late summer when blazing stars and sunflowers are blooming.

BLACK LAKE BOG SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Pine County Twp 045N Rng 15W Sec 18, 19, 30
Twp 045N Rng 16W Sec 13, 24, 25, 36

1,414.00 Acres

Located from Sandstone 25 mi E on Co Rds 30 and 141, then 13 mi N on Co Rd 31 to the abandoned town of Beldon, 1.5 mi N on the abandoned Soo Line.

Black Lake Bog is an interstate natural area located in Pine County, Minnesota and Douglas County, Wisconsin. The Minnesota portion of the site contains black ash swamp, fen, forested bog, and open bog plant communities. The open bog community contains pitcher plants and round-leaved sundews, which are insectivorous plants. The site may also be entered from Wisconsin by canoeing in on the Black River. The best times to visit this site are early summer to view wet woodland wildflowers in bloom, in early fall for the tremendous diversity of color, and again in mid-winter to see timber wolf tracks in the snow.

KETTLE RIVER SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Pine County Twp 041N Rng 20W Sec 10, 15, 22, 23

801.00 Acres

Located from Hinckley 3 mi E on MN Hwy 48 to the public water access.

Kettle River is a site which contains a mosaic of plant communities including fen, forested bog, floodplain forest, upland hardwood forest, and pine forest. The largest known population in the state of bog bluegrass is found on this site. Northern goshawk have been known to nest here and a small great blue heron rookery is present. A series of natural springs supports a diversity of flora and fauna. A several hundred million year old geologic feature, the Douglas fault, runs northeast through the site. With vertical movement of perhaps as much as 2.5 miles, the fault has placed the 1.1 billion year old Chengwatana basalt on a level with the 700 million year old Hinckley sandstone. A small creek conceals the fault, but the two rock formations are exposed on opposite banks of the creek. The best time to visit this site is in late spring to view spring beauties, Dutchman's breeches, and trilliums in bloom.

PRAIRIE COTEAU SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Pipestone County Twp 108N Rng 4W Sec 29, 32

110.00 Acres

Located 10 mi NE of Pipestone on MN Hwy 23.

Prairie Coteau is a site which contains the threatened plant community glacial till hill prairie. The rolling topography bears dry prairie on the higher elevations and wet prairie in the lowlands. Rare plant and animal species found here include the Dakota skipper and Ottoe skipper. The best times to visit this site are late spring to view puccoons and prairie smoke in bloom, and late summer to view blooming blazing stars, asters, goldenrods and sunflowers.

AGASSIZ DUNES SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

417.40 Acres

Polk County Twp 146N Rng 44W Sec 05, 06
Twp 147N Rng 44W Sec 31, 32

Located from Fertile 1 mi S on MN Hwy 32, then .4 mi W.

Agassiz Dunes is a site with large undulating sand dunes, which are part of the only dunefield in Minnesota associated with Glacial Lake Agassiz. The site is a mosaic of plant community types which include oak savanna, aspen thickets, dry prairie and blowout pioneers. The site is situated on the prairie forest border and contains both eastern and western species. Rare plant and animal species include upland sandpiper, lark sparrow, greater prairie chicken, white-tailed jackrabbit, lesser spiked sedge, bent grass, Indian rice grass, and rush pink. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view blooming blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and sunflowers.

MALMBERG PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

60.00 Acres

Polk County Twp 149N Rng 48W Sec 16

Located from Crookston 9 mi W on Co Rd 9, then 2 mi S on Co Rd 56.

Malmberg Prairie is a site within the former southern basin of Glacial Lake Agassiz, and is one of the last remaining tracts of undisturbed vegetation in the heavy soils of this intensively farmed area. The site contains both dry and wet prairie plant communities. Rare plant and animal species on the site include prairie vole, white-tailed jack rabbit, and sharp-tailed sparrow. The best time to visit this site is late summer when asters, goldenrods, sunflowers, and blazing stars are in bloom.

PEMBINA TRAIL PRESERVE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

2,362.00 Acres

PEMBINA TRAIL UNIT
CROOKSTON PRAIRIE UNIT
FOXBORO PRAIRIE UNIT

(1,653.00 Acres)
(549.00 Acres)
(160.00 Acres)

Polk County Twp 149N Rng 44W Sec 18, 19, 30, 31
Twp 148N Rng 45W Sec 01, 02, 03
Twp 149N Rng 45W Sec 13, 25, 36

Located 9 mi W of Mentor on Co Rd 45.

Pembina Trail Preserve is a site which contains an excellent example of tallgrass prairie which demonstrates the great diversity of forb and grass species typical of this habitat. The site contains patches of forest and spring-fed wetlands. Rare plant and animal species which occur on this site are hair-like beak rush, marsh arrow-grass, false asphodel, upland sandpiper, yellow rail, marbled godwit, greater prairie chicken, Wilson's phalarope, and Dakota skipper. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view asters, sunflowers, blazing stars, and goldenrods in bloom or spring for its animal diversity.

LAKE JOHANNA ROOKERY SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA

5.60 Acres

Pope County Twp 123N Rng 36W Sec 17

Located from Brooten 3 mi W on Co Rd 8, then 3 mi S on Co Rd 34 to gravel pit. The lake is a 3/10 mi walk to the NW.

Lake Johanna rookery is on a small island. The rookery is notable for being one of the largest and most diverse nesting sites for colonial water birds in the state. Large numbers of great blue herons, great egrets, double-crested cormorants, and black-crowned night-herons nest here. The state rare bird species little blue heron, snowy egret, yellow-crowned night heron, snowy egret and cattle egret have been present or nested at the site. Green-backed heron are also known to nest here.

FIG'S EYE ISLAND HERON ROOKERY SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 100.00 Acres
Ramsey County Twp 028N Rng 22W Sec 15, 22, 23

Located in SE St. Paul on the Mississippi River.

This site is notable for being a very large site for colonial waterbirds within the metropolitan area. Species which nest in the rookery are great blue heron, great egret, black-crowned night-heron, double-crested cormorants, and yellow-crowned night heron. This is one of the four places in the state where yellow-crowned night herons are known to nest.

TOWNSEND WOODS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 73.00 Acres
Rice County Twp 109N Rng 22W Sec 18

Located from Morristown 3 mi W on MN Hwy 60, then 3 mi N through Sakatah Lake State Park on MN Hwy 99, then .3 mi E on Co Rd 14.

Townsend Woods is an excellent example of the "Big Woods" which used to cover parts of southeastern Minnesota. The site contains a beautiful virgin forest of sugar maple, basswood, and oak. The soil on the site is loose and rich. The understory has few shrubs but is rich with spring ephemerals. The best time to visit this site is mid to late spring to view woodland spring wildflowers like hepaticas, bloodroots, trilliums, Dutchman's breeches, and spring beautys.

EAGLE'S NEST-ISLAND NO. 4 SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 4.00 Acres
St. Louis County Twp 062N Rng 14W Sec 24

Located from Ely 11 mi SW on US Hwy 169 just N of Bear Head Lake State Park on island in Eagle's Nest Lake No. 4.

This island site is noted for its old growth red pine forest and its scenic beauty. The site can be visited during any season.

MOOSE MOUNTAIN SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 55.00 Acres
St. Louis County Twp 051N Rng 13W Sec 22

Located just N of Duluth: from US Hwy 61, 3 mi N on Lester River Road (Co Rd 12).

Moose Mountain is an excellent example of old growth northern hardwood forest. Sugar maple, basswood, and yellow birch dominate this site. The rare plants white baneberry and moschatel are found here. The best time to visit this site is during spring wildflower blooming season and late fall for the fall color.

PURVIS LAKE-OBER FOUNDATION SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 140.30 Acres
St. Louis County Twp 062N Rng 13W Sec 28, 33

Located from Ely 12 mi W on MN Hwy 1, then 4 mi S on Hwy 128, then 2 mi E on a forest road.

Purvis Lake-Ober Foundation is a site which contains a diversity of plant communities. The topography reflects the effects of numerous glacial advances with a pattern of alternating lakes, bogs, and rocky ridges. The site has not been extensively logged and it has been a long time since the last fire swept through the area. A beautiful forest of white and red pine is present on the site. The best time to visit this site is during winter and early spring for skiing or snowshoeing into the site.

SAVAGE FEN SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 45.00 Acres
Scott County Twp 115N Rng 21W Sec 17

Located in Savage: from MN Hwy 101, 0.5 mi S on MN Hwy 13, then 1/4 mi E on 128th St.

Savage Fen is notable for its rare wetland plant community. A series of alkaline seeps and springs emerge from the base of a bluff which contains the calcareous glacial deposits left by the Des Moines lobe at the end of the Wisconsin Glacial period. The plant community and the alkaline peat on which it grows is very sensitive to disturbance.

CLEAR LAKE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 62.00 Acres
Sherburne County Twp 034N Rng 30W Sec 14, 22, 23

Located from Clear Lake 2.5 mi W and S on Co Rd 57.

Clear Lake is a site which contains a mosaic of oak forest, floodplain forest, and old field sumac thicket. A small population of the rare Hill's thistle is found on the site. This site has the distinction of being the first land parcel acquired under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program. The best times to visit this site are early summer when puccoons and beard-tongues are blooming, and late summer when asters, goldenrods, and sunflowers are blooming.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER ISLANDS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 72.90 Acres
Sherburne County Twp 032N Rng 26W Sec 04
Twp 032N Rng 27W Sec 02

Located in the Mississippi River upstream from Elk River.

Mississippi River Islands is a site made up of five islands which are made of water-deposited outwash and alluvium, and rise as much as 30 feet above the river level. The site is in various stages of succession because the islands are frequently altered by processes from flooding, erosion, and sedimentation. The site contains a mosaic of wet floodplain forest, drier floodplain forest, and sandbar plant communities. The best time to visit this site is outside of the seasons of peak mosquito densities, and when stinging nettles are large in size.

UNCAS DUNES SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 152.00 Acres
Sherburne County Twp 034N Rng 27W Sec 21, 22, 28, 29

Located from Zimmerman 4 mi W on Co Rd 4, then 1.5 mi S to the Sand Dunes State Forest Campground, then a short walk south.

Uncas Dunes is a site within the Anoka Sandplain which contains a relic dunefield associated with Glacial Lake Grantsburg. The site contains a mosaic of oak savanna, oak forest, wetland, and red pine forest. The rare plant and animal species uncas skipper, sea-beach needlegrass, and annual skeleton-weed occur at this site. The best time to visit this site is late summer when asters and goldenrods are in bloom.

COLD SPRING HERON COLONY SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 63.50 Acres
Stearns County Twp 123N Rng 30W Sec 13

Located from Cold Spring 2 mi NE on MN Hwy 23.

Cold Spring Heron Colony is a site in which one of the largest nesting colonies of great blue herons occurs. The site contains an open floodplain meadow, a levee, a floodplain forest, and an observation point on a small prairie hill. The area which the rookery occupies is designated as a sanctuary and must not be entered without a permit from the DNR. The best time to visit this site is late spring and early summer to view the great blue herons.

PARTCH WOODS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 80.00 Acres
Stearns County Twp 125N Rng 29W Sec 19

Located from St. Joseph 4.5 mi N on Co Rd 3.

Partch Woods is a site which contains a fine example of climax maple-basswood forest near the western border of the hardwood forest at this latitude. The site harbors a great variety of spring ephemerals and a spring-fed stream which flows into a wet meadow. The best time to visit this site is from late spring to early summer when trilliums, bellworts, hepaticas and bloodroots are blooming.

ROSCOE PRAIRIE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 56.30 Acres
Stearns County Twp 123N Rng 32W Sec 35

Located from Roscoe 2 mi W on Co Rd 16, then .2 mi S.

Roscoe Prairie is a site which contains a mosaic of prairie plant community types which include wet, mesic, and dry prairie in an area with very little variation in topography. The rare butterfly species, the Dakota skipper occurs here, along with several other uncommon butterfly species. The best times to visit this site are in the spring to view pasque flowers and puccoons in bloom, and again in late summer to view the abundant purple coneflowers and leadplants in bloom.

KELLOGG-WEAVER DUNES SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA
Wabasha County Twp 109N Rng 09W Sec 06

697.00 Acres

Located from Kellogg 4.3 mi SE on Co Rd 34.

Kellogg-Weaver Dunes is a site which contains a rolling sand dune topography on the Mississippi River terrace well above flood level. The site has a diversity of successional stages which range from blowouts with bare sand to mature dry, mesic, or wet prairies. The largest known population of the rare Blanding's turtle in the state uses this site. The rare plant and animal species, yellow-fruited sedge, and ottoe skipper occur here. The best times to visit this site are in the mid to late spring to view pasque flowers in bloom, and again in the fall to view blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and sunflowers in bloom.

RICHARD M & MATHILDE RICE ELLIOTTE SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 320.00 Acres
Wilkin County Twp 136N Rng 45W Sec 17, 21

Located from Rothsay 7 mi NW on MN Hwy 52, then 1.5 mi E on MN Hwy 188.

Richard M. and Mathilde Rice Eliotte is located within the lake bed of Glacial Lake Agassiz. The site contains tallgrass prairie and prairie wetland. Rare animal species include the marbled godwit, upland sandpiper, greater prairie chicken, and the prairie vole. Ventian, glasswort and alkali grass are rare plants found on the site. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view sunflowers and asters in bloom.

WESTERN PRAIRIE SOUTH SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 320.00 Acres
Wilkin County Twp 135N Rng 46W Sec 12

Located from Rothsay 5 mi W on Co Rd 26, then 4 mi N on Co Rd 15, then .5 mi W on Co Rd 182.

Western Prairie South is located within the lake bed of Glacial Lake Agassiz between two former lake shorelines. The site contains moist sedge meadows, tallgrass prairie and prairie wetlands, as well as a small saline (high mineral salts) area, rare animal species include the greater prairie chicken, upland sandpiper, marbled godwit, Wilson's phalarope, sharp-tailed sparrow, and the regal fritillary butterfly. One rare plant, alkali grass, also occurs in the site. The best time to visit is late summer to view prairie grasses and wildflowers in bloom.

KING'S AND QUEEN'S BLUFF SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 178.00 Acres
Winona County Twp 106N Rng 05W Sec 26, 27

Located from Winona 12 mi SE of US Hwy 61.

King's and Queen's Bluff is a site which contains a mosaic of plant community types which include mixed oak forest, second growth forest, goat prairie, and moist shaded cliff. At least fifteen rare species of plants occur on this site. Queen's Bluff is designated as an educational unit and requires an entry permit from the DNR. The best time to visit this site is late summer to view asters, goldenrods, and coneflowers in bloom.

MARY SCHMIDT CRAWFORD WOODS SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA 120.00 Acres
Wright County Twp 120N Rng 25W Sec 25

Located from Buffalo 4 mi E on Co Rd 35, then .5 mi S on Twp Rd 126.

Mary Schmidt Crawford Woods is a site which contains an excellent remnant of the Maple-basswood forest called the "Big Woods". The site supports a mosaic of old growth maple and basswood, regenerating forest, and small wetlands. A primitive trail leads from the parking lot. The best time to visit this site is late spring to view trilliums, hepaticas, and false rue anemones in bloom.