Self-Guided Nature Trails
Self-Guided Nature Trails

The KMSF-SU features seven self-guided nature trails. These trails are family friendly and highlight unique land formations. However, pets are NOT allowed on these trails, but are welcome on hiking trails. Self-guided nature trail booklets are available at the trailheads, forest headquarters, and Ottawa Lake and Whitewater Lake Contact Station.

1. **Scuppernong Springs Trail**  
   *cultural history theme*  
   Hike along an old railroad bed and discover the cultural history of scuppernong springs, including muri plant ruins, an old railroad grade and more. 1.5 miles.

2. **Paradise Springs Trail**  
   *cultural history theme*  
   An old spring house, trout pond and other ruins indicate the former life of Paradise Springs. Hike this half-mile trail to discover history. Wheelchair accessible.

3. **Stony Ridge Trail**  
   *glacial geology theme*  
   Walk in the shadow of the glaciers as you discover glacial features such as kettles, erratics and cobblestone paths on this half-mile trail.

4. **Stute Springs & Homestead**  
   *cultural history theme*

5. **Bald Bluff Trail**  
   *cultural and natural history theme*  
   Hike a half-mile to the top of Bald Bluff to discover a natural prairie and an historic Indian dancing ring.

6. **Lone Tree Bluff Trail**  
   *natural history theme*  
   Hike up 89 steps through oak openings and then walk a quarter-mile for a view of glaciated outwash plain. You'll also ponder the fate of the lone tree.

7. **Rice Lake Trail**  
   *wetland wildlife theme*  
   Discover the plants and animals that live along a lake on a half-mile walk. Wildlife viewing platform available.
Welcome to Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail

This leaflet is keyed to the numbered posts along this 1½ mile loop trail. Scuppernong Springs is home to wildlife, fish, and clear, clean springs, but it wasn't always this way. Hike this trail to discover a marl plant, hotel, trout pond, sawmill, and cranberry bogs that once existed here.

Be prepared! Mosquitoes can be a nuisance on this trail. Wear appropriate clothing and/or use insect repellent.

Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail
1. Scuppernong Marsh: Wildlife Haven

The name Scuppernong comes from a Ho Chunk word meaning “sweet-scented land.” Native Americans camped on the high ground overlooking the marsh where they found plentiful game and fresh water. Before the area was developed for farming, business, and commerce, this marsh extended several miles northwest of Palmyra. Today, Scuppernong Marsh is much smaller, but it remains a haven for wildlife.

Sandhill Cranes have lived in the Scuppernong Marsh for centuries.
2. Railroad Grade

You are walking on an old railroad bed that continues to the old marl plant foundation, about 100 yards ahead. From 1909 to 1915 a train hauled marl along this grade to the Eagle Lime Products Company warehouse located in nearby Dousman, 5 miles to the north on Hwy 67.

*Local women pose with Engine #61, circa 1910.*

3. Marl Works

This big concrete wall is all that remains of the old marl plant that operated here from 1909 to 1915. As many as 60 employees worked here and produced as much as 20 tons of marl per month. Marl is a lime-rich, grayish-white soil which was used as a fertilizer on lime-poor soils and as mortar in building construction. Just ahead on your right, look for a few piles of chalky marl. Go ahead and touch it.

*Marl Works, circa 1909.*
4. Marl Pit

This narrow water-filled pit was formed by the removal of tens of thousands of tons of lime-rich marl. Marl formed in a glacial lake from an aquatic plant called chara. Chara extracted calcium carbonate from the water and stored it in its brittle branches. When the chara plants died and fell to the bottom of the lake, their remains built up a thick layer of limy-ooze that eventually became the grayish-white soil called marl.

Extracting marl from pits.

5. Scuppernong River: Fur Trappers

Many upstream springs contribute to the beautiful, clean, clear flow of the Scuppernong River. Further downstream, additional springs and creeks flow into the river, adding to its volume. Years ago, French fur trappers and Native Americans trapped beaver, otter, muskrat and mink along this watery route. All of these animals still live here today.

French fur trader examines his wares.
6. Native American Campsite

The former residents of this campsite left behind projectile points (arrowheads or spear points) and paper-thin flakes of stone left over from making these points. This site made a perfect campground because of its sandy, dry soil and close proximity to food and water. Nearby springs provided water for cooking, drinking, and bathing. The marsh provided wildlife for food. The pathway ahead that juts off to your right takes you to "Indian Spring." No doubt, this spring was used by generations of Native Americans.
7. Scuppernong Spring

Scuppernong Spring is actually a group of many smaller springs. The water in these springs comes from rainwater and snowmelt and flows at a constant temperature of about 47° F. Scuppernong Spring sits in a bowl-shaped depression where the water table reaches the surface. Several more bubbling springs along the trail ahead are noted by signs.

Does Scuppernong Spring lead to China?

No! Scuppernong Spring is not a bottomless pit, wishing well or garbage can. If you throw rocks and other debris into Scuppernong Spring, or any other spring, you will clog it and prevent water from gurgling to the surface. The spring will remain clogged until park personnel can remove the debris. Please resist the urge!

Early Native American quenches his thirst in Scuppernong Spring.
8. Old Trout Hatchery

A large trout pond, 7 acres in size, filled the marshy creek basin before you. The pond was built by Talbor Dousman in the 1870s and once held about one-million trout. These trout sold for 40-50 cents per pound to Chicago restaurants and upscale fish markets. To create this pond, a large earthen dike was built on the Scuppernong River. In the ponds themselves, one mile of wooden flumes were constructed to separate different age groups of trout. The dike which stood where the elevated boardwalk now stands, was recently removed to improve trout habitat downstream.

Boating between the wooden flumes of the old trout pond, circa 1904.

9. Trout Hatching House

The original trout hatching house, built in the 1880s, stood here. Inside the house, spring water flowed through wooden troughs where the trout eggs hatched. Each trough held as many as 30,000 trout. As they hatched and became large enough, the trout were transferred to the ponds.

A new hatching house was built to the north of the Scuppernong Hotel just ahead on the trail.
10. Trout Feed Mill

This small building was constructed in the 1880s to prepare food for the trout. Four to five barrels of beef and pork liver were purchased at one time, cooked in two large iron kettles, and then chopped into the appropriate sizes. Workers fed coarse pieces to the larger trout and a finer mash to the smaller ones. The elevated boardwalk just ahead of you was once the site of an earthen dam used to create the trout pond mentioned at stop number 8.
11. Scuppernong Hotel

The stone foundation of the Scuppernong Hotel borders the trail just ahead on your right. The building was first constructed in 1870 by Talbor C. Dousman as a cheese factory. In 1880, the building was remodeled into a hotel by Adelbert Jared Pardee, a young Civil War veteran from New York. The Scuppernong Hotel flourished for many years under the ownership of the Weber Brewing Company. In 1934 it became a private retreat. Fire destroyed the building in the 1970s.

Scuppernong Hotel, circa 1904.

12. Early Sawmill

In 1846, Chester Smith, a carpenter who came from New York, built a sawmill on this site. Sawmills were built near streams, especially those with rapids or waterfalls. Water power was used to operate Smith's large up-and-down saw.
13. Scuppernong Cranberry Company

In the 1880s, this ditch and others just ahead on the trail, were used to regulate water in commercial cranberry bogs owned by the Scuppernong Cranberry Company. Entire families would come from miles around to pick cranberries. They stayed in tents provided by the company for the duration of the picking season, usually two to six weeks. A good worker could pick a bushel per day and earn $1.00 per bushel. Cranberries sold for about $12.00 per bushel.

Cranberry pickers in the Scuppernong Marsh.

Illustrations by Helen Wehler
Thanks for Coming

It's just a short walk back to the beginning of the trail. We hope you have enjoyed the Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center on Highway 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone is:

Visitor Center
Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
S91 W39091 Hwy 59
Eagle, WI 53119
Phone: (262) 594-6200

To experience the Kettle Moraine firsthand, hike another interpretive trail. Brochures are available at the trail head or at the Visitor Center.

- Bald Bluff: Native American and Natural History Theme
  County H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra
- Lone Tree Bluff: Oak Opening and Glacial Theme
  Esterly Road, north of Whitewater Lake
- Paradise Springs: Cultural History Theme (accessible)
  County N, NE of Eagle
- Rice Lake: Wetlands Theme
  Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of Forest
- Stony Ridge: Glacial Geology Theme
  Highway 59, State Forest Visitor Center
- Stute Springs & Homestead: Cultural history theme
  County Z, one mile south of the intersection with Highway 59.

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Kettle Moraine State Forest—Southern Unit

Paradise Springs
Self-Guiding Nature Trail

Fieldstone spring house surrounds Paradise Springs.

This flat, asphalt-covered 1/2-mile trail accommodates people with disabilities. Accessible versions of this brochure are available at the Visitor Center on State Highway 59 west of Eagle.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Parks and Recreation
PUB-PR-228 2010
Welcome to Paradise Springs

This brochure corresponds to numbered markers along the trail. Over the years, Paradise Springs has been owned by many different people. One owner was a millionaire who built a horse track, fishing hole, and an elaborate spring house over beautiful Paradise Springs. Hike this trail to find out about the many people who once lived at this beautiful place.

Enjoy the trail, but remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints.
1. Former Entrance and Horse Track

*Former entrance and horse track of Paradise Springs, circa 1930s.*

Welcome to Paradise Springs. The trail you are standing on was once the road shown in the photo. The horse track was in front of you, and the stone pillars were to your right on either side of the trail. Louis J. Petit, a multimillionaire dubbed the “Salt King,” built the track in the 1920s. Petit, who made his fortune in the salt mine business, was by far the wealthiest owner of Paradise Springs. The track was abandoned in 1932 when Petit died and has since grown wild with trees and shrubs. Petit’s grandson, August J. Pabst, who became a beer executive, inherited the property from Petit.
2. Tennis and Shuffle Board Court

This large 50-foot concrete slab (now a picnic area) was once used as a tennis and shuffle board court. Louis J. Petit built the court in the 1930s.

3. Bottled Spring Water

Since the late 1800s, people have enjoyed the pure spring water of Paradise Springs. Early owners called it Minnehaha and Eagle Rock Springs. The concrete steps and foundation before you are all that remains of the last spring water bottling plant at this site. This plant closed in the late 1960s. Spring water was pumped from the spring house to this building and sold by various companies under the names of Natural Spring Water and Lullaby Baby Drinking Water.

Former bottling label
4. Fieldstone Spring House

Most spring houses served a purely functional purpose—to protect the springs and to allow access to the water. This spring house was beautiful as well as functional. Mr. Petit built this spring house in the early 1930s with a wooden-and-copper dome roof and colorful fieldstone walls, no doubt one of the most elaborate spring houses ever built in Wisconsin. Though the roof is gone, the beauty of this spring house remains.

Spring house with copper dome, circa 1970.
5. Paradise Springs

Keep Paradise Springs clean. Please do not throw anything into the spring; Paradise Springs is not a wishing well.

Paradise Springs is about 5 feet deep and maintains a temperature of about 47° F. year-round. Over 30,000 gallons of water flow from this spring each hour—that’s 500 gallons each minute. Paradise Springs sits in a bowl-shaped depression where the water table reaches the surface.

6. Paradise Springs Resort Hotel

Post number 6 marks the former site of a massive 2-story resort built of locally quarried Lannon stone (Wisconsin dolomite). It had deluxe bedrooms with private, steam-heated tiled baths, a dining room, cocktail bar, and a roof garden with sundeck. An advertisement for the hotel described it as an “ideal vacation and honeymoon resort.” Gordon Mertens finished the hotel in 1948. Mertens acquired the property from Frank Fulton, and Fulton acquired the property from Petit’s grandson, August Pabst Jr. These changes in ownership occurred over just three short months. The building was removed in the 1970s.
7. Brook Trout

In the early 1900s, Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Nichols stocked this pond with trout. They also had a menagerie of animals which included peacocks, monkeys and pheasants. This pond is still stocked with brook trout for your fishing and visual enjoyment. The wooden cribs you see below the surface provide hiding places for young trout. Brook trout are the only trout species native to the Kettle Moraine and are still found in cold spring water ponds and brooks throughout the region. In October, the trout in this pond spawn (lay their eggs) near the spring house on the gravel bottom. When spawning, brook trout turn a vibrant pink color and are easier to spot.
8. Minnehaha Spring

In the 1880s, former owner J. August Lins built a pavilion over the spring at this site. Under the pavilion, he installed a small railing around the spring and seats for his guests. Today, the spring is covered with a wooden lid to prevent small animals from becoming trapped in its 4-foot hole. Mr. Lins called this area "Minnehaha Springs." Today, we refer to this spring as "Minnehaha" in honor of his ownership.

Guests enjoy the pavilion over Minnehaha Spring, circa 1900.
9. Water-driven Turbine

![Image of dam and turbine house, circa 1910.]

When L.D. Nichols acquired the property in the early 1900s, he built a water-driven turbine on the east side of the concrete dam. The turbine provided electricity for his house and grounds. The Nichols house was one of the first electrified homesites in the area. You can see the foundation of the turbine house on the other side of Paradise Creek.
10. Wading Pool and Trout Holding Tank

Mr. Petit built this pond as a wading pool for his grandchildren. At one time it received its water supply through an underground pipe connected to the large pond you just passed.

The rectangular, water-filled enclosure to the right was used as a holding tank for large trout. The tank kept the trout fresh until they were needed for a guest's supper at Paradise Springs Hotel, at stop number 6.

*Enjoying the wading pool, circa 1930s.*

11. Ornamental Plantings

Look for the orange-colored bark of nearby scotch pine trees. A native of Europe, scotch pine were planted about 40 years ago as an ornamental tree. Many of the trees at Paradise Springs are non-natives, such as Norway spruce and Norway maple, that were planted over the years for their ornamental value.

Today, we discourage the planting of non-native varieties because they crowd out native plants and thus become a nuisance.
Thanks for Coming

We hope you have enjoyed Paradise Springs Nature Trail. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center on State Highway 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone are:

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Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
S91 W39091 Hwy 59
Eagle, WI 53119
Phone (262) 594-6200

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• Bald Bluff: Native American and natural history theme
  County Highway H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra
• Lone Tree Bluff: Oak opening and glacial theme
  Esterly Rd, north of Whitewater Lake
• Rice Lake: Wetlands theme
  Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of state forest
• Scuppernong Springs: Cultural history theme
  County Highway ZZ, Southeast of Ottawa Lake
• Stony Ridge: Glacial geology theme
  State Highway 59, State Forest Visitor Center
• Stute Springs and Homestead: Cultural history theme
  County Highway Z, one mile south of State Highway 59

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This brochure is available in accessible formats.

Front cover illustration by Mary Zacher
A Public-Private Success Story

The Department of Natural Resources and the Lions Clubs of Southeast Wisconsin worked together to develop Paradise Springs. Many thanks to Lions District 27-A1. The Lions, Lionessses and Leos contributed more than $18,000 in cash, plus labor and equipment to help develop this beautiful nature area.
Stute Springs and Homestead Nature Trail

The Stute Springs and Homestead Nature trail has about 2 miles of hiking trail running through an old farm homestead. The trail incorporates a self-guided tour illustrating farm life in the early 1900s. It's a mix of wide mowed trail and narrow natural surfaced hiking rail, and intersects in several places with the McMiller Cross Country Ski Trail system. Some of the old buildings are still standing and maintained, and there are numbered markers along a one-mile self-guided nature trail designating specific historic points of interest. There is also an optional trail (adds about a mile) leading to the "Big Hill Overlook".

The Stute Springs and Homestead was formerly a 180 acre farm settled by German immigrant Anton Stute in the 1850's and remained in the family for three generations until 1943. On December 2, 1981, the State of Wisconsin DNR purchased the home from the Estate of Ivy A. Welch. Your journey will begin on the old farm lane leading up to the Homestead. There is a Homestead Trail that is a 1 mile loop that will allow you to discover how the Stute family farmed this rugged glacial landscape in the early 1900's. Joseph Stute built this springhouse to keep animals, leaves and debris from contaminating the fresh spring water. They pumped the cold spring water by hydraulic ram to the house, milkhouse and livestock watering troughs. The spring also served as the Stute's refrigerator. Agatha Stute put her butter, milk, lard and other perishables in the big heavy crocks and set them on flat stones in the cold water inside the Spring house to keep them from spoiling.

Stute Springs and Homestead Trail Map

From the parking area, you just follow the dirt/gravel road to the homestead clearing. Along the way you should notice a mowed grass trail on your right, this is the return trail. Once at the homestead clearing, you will see the various buildings that make up most of the self-guided tour. To get to the trail (shown Red on the map), you need to walk all the way to the far side of the clearing (far North corner) where the trail starts next to the Springhouse. The trail can be a bit of a mudhole at the springhouse, so as an alternative you can access the McMiller ski trail (shown Light Blue the map) at various points along the southeast edge of the homestead clearing. The McMiller ski trail and the Nature trail will intersect shortly ahead at the Ski Trail Shelter. From this point on, take the Nature trail (the narrower trail).

You'll eventually encounter a side trail heading off to your left at the top of a small hill. This short side trail goes down to a natural spring. Back on the main trail at the top of the hill, follow the trail to the right and down the small hill where it intersects with the ski trails. You'll recognize the ski trails because they are very wide (a good 12' or so). You need to go right on the ski trail briefly until you see the nature trail (narrower trail) heading off on your left (South). Take this trail a short distance until you see another trail on your right. This is the return portion of the nature trail loop. Take this to return to the parking area, otherwise continue on the trail to the Big Hill Overlook.
If you take the trail to the Big Hill Overlook, you will intersect with another section of the wide ski trail. Go left on the ski trail and look for a narrow trail on your right. This narrow trail leads up to the "Big Hill Overlook", and yes, it's all uphill. After the overlook, just retrace your steps back to the return trail intersection.

The return trail takes the high ground above the swamp area and works back towards the parking area. You will intersect with the ski trail one more time, go right on the ski trail, then left on the return trail. Shortly thereafter you will be back on the dirt/gravel road. Go left to go back to the parking area.

**Key to the Numbered Markers on the self-guided tour**

1. The Milkhouse
2. The Stone Chicken Coop
3. The Stute Farmhouse foundation
4. The Log Smokehouse
5. The Springhouse
6. Stone Fence
7. Natural Springs
8. Stute's Ancient Woods
9. Wagon and Native American Trail
10. The Big Hill
11. Cropland
12. The Stock Shelter
Bald Bluff
Scenic Overlook and State Natural Area
Self-Guiding Nature Trail

This painting depicts the south wind as it draws Prairie Potawatomi to Bald Bluff. This and other paintings by Helen Wehler are on display at the Visitor Center.

Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
PUB-PR-231 98 Rev.
Welcome to Bald Bluff

This leaflet is keyed to numbered posts along this 1/2 mile trail. At 1,050 feet, Bald Bluff is one of the highest points in Jefferson County. Its prominence made it attractive to Native Americans, pioneers, and the U.S. Military during the Black Hawk War. Hike this trail to discover the history of Bald Bluff.

1. Bald Bluff— An Early Name

Pioneers named this hill Bald Bluff because it lacked trees and was covered by prairie grasses and flowers. Though the bluff has grown over in recent years, a small portion of prairie has been preserved as a State Natural Area. It is burned periodically to keep brush and trees from shading out prairie plants. You will see this prairie at the top of the bluff.
Bald Bluff, circa 1904. Photo taken from the Skoponong Cemetery and Church. The cemetery still exists on Young Road (see map).

2. General Atkinson’s July 7th Encampment

On July 7, 1832, at the height of the Black Hawk War, General Henry Atkinson and 3,500 cavalry and infantry troops camped on the prairie just northwest of this bluff. Every military brigade under Atkinson’s command came together at this encampment, among whose members were the future presidents Abraham Lincoln and Zachary Taylor.

This painting by Helen Wehler depicts Atkinson’s troops as they marched across the Kettle Moraine prairies in pursuit of Chief Black Hawk and his 1,000 followers.
3. General Atkinson's July 19th Encampment

On July 19, General Atkinson and a small number of troops returned to the Bald Bluff region based on a lead from the Winnebago Chief, White Crow. However, White Crow's lead proved false, and on the evening of July 19, 1832, White Crow's followers confused Atkinson by stampeding his horses. The next morning, a messenger brought word that Black Hawk's trail had been located near Madison. Atkinson quickly moved out of the area. The Black Hawk War ended on August 2, 1832 at the Battle of the Bad Axe just north of Prairie du Chien. The Black Hawk War was the last major Indian war in Wisconsin. Rapid settlement of the Kettle Moraine region followed.

General Henry Atkinson,
Leader of the Black Hawk War
4. Indian Signal Hill

"...It was the custom of the Indians, when the wind blew continually for several days from the south, to build large fires on the top of Bald Bluff that could be seen for miles around at night and all day a heavy black cloud of smoke could be seen for hundreds of miles rising from this bluff..."

—From the Whitewater Register, January 31, 1895

Painting by Helen Wehler depicts the south wind (shown as a giant Indian) drawing Prairie Potawatomi to Bald Bluff. The people in the foreground are preparing to build a fire.
5. Dry Prairie

This is a fragile area. Protect rare plants by staying behind the fence.

The small dry prairie in front of this fence is one of 18 sites in the Cliff Messinger Dry Prairie and Oak Savanna Preserve—a State Natural Area within the Kettle Moraine State Forest. The preserve protects rare dry prairie plants such as little bluestem, puccoon, harebell and blazing star. Before European settlement, fire was common on prairies. Fire kept trees and brush from taking root and shading out prairie plants. Today, this site is burned periodically to maintain its prairie habitat.

**Little bluestem**
Grows in bunches
Turns purplish-blue
in late summer

**Puccoon**
Hairy stems
Orange flowers
bloom in spring

**Blazing Star**
Purple flowers
Blooms in late summer
6. Native American Ceremonial Dance Area

Bald Bluff's flat top and great view made it a likely place for Native American ceremonial and war dances. Indian dance rings were usually circular in shape and had a smooth, somewhat depressed surface where the dancing took place. The dance area was one of the most sacred locations in an Indian village.

On a quiet day, you can almost imagine these colorful dances taking place.
Thanks for Coming

This is the end of the self-guiding portion of the trail. Beyond this point is a one-way section of the Ice Age Trail that eventually leads to the Visitor Center some 8 miles away.

We hope you enjoyed your hike up Bald Bluff. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center located on Hwy 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone is:

Visitor Center
Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
S91 W39091 Hwy 59
Eagle, WI 53119
Phone: 414-594-6200

To experience the Kettle Moraine firsthand, hike another interpretive trail. Brochures are available at the trail head or at the Visitor Center.

- **Lone Tree Bluff**: Oak Opening and Glacial Theme
  Esterly Road, north of Whitewater Lake

- **Paradise Springs**: Cultural History Theme (accessible trail)
  Cty N, NE of Eagle

- **Rice Lake**: Wetland Theme
  Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of forest

- **Scuppernong Springs**: Cultural History Theme
  Cty ZZ, SE of Ottawa Lake

- **Stony Ridge**: Glacial Geology Theme
  Hwy 59, State Forest Visitor Center

- **State Springs & Homestead**: Cultural history theme Cty Z, one mile south of the intersection of Hwy 59.

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This brochure is available in accessible formats.
This photo shows Lone Tree Bluff as it appeared in 1905. Notice the lack of trees on top and on the west side of the hill.
Welcome to Lone Tree Bluff Scenic Overlook

This interpretive brochure corresponds to numbered markers along the trail. Hike uphill 89 steps and then walk 1/4 mile to get a bird's-eye view of the glacial landscape. On the way, you'll learn how this bluff earned its name and how the landscape has changed since pioneer days.
1. Kettle Moraine

The Kettle Moraine formed in a narrow corridor between the Lake Michigan and Green Bay lobes of the glacier. When the lobes began to melt some 10,000 years ago, the glacier deposited its load of rock and soil into a series of hills, ridges, and depressions that stretched over 100 miles in length. Lone Tree Bluff is part of this moraine. The bluff stands some 1,050 feet above sea level.
2. Oak Openings

Bur oaks, kittentails, and pasque flowers grow in this oak opening relic. Oak openings were once the most common plant community in the Kettle Moraine region. Oak openings look like grassy parks with bur and white oak scattered about. Wildfires kept these openings free from shrubs and other trees, but as pioneers arrived in the mid-1800s and built homesteads and farms, the fires stopped. Without fire to maintain openings, they grew into oak woodlands. With prescribed burning and brush cutting on this hillside, the Department of Natural Resources hopes to again re-establish this rare plant community.

Pasque flowers bloom in April on rocky southern exposures throughout the Kettle Moraine.
3. The Lone Tree?

The story goes that pioneers named this bluff after a very large bur oak tree that once grew here. Could this stump be the remains of that "Lone Tree"? You be the judge. Based on wood core samples, we know that this tree was the largest and oldest tree on the bluff. Estimates indicate that this tree was 100 years old when the first settlers arrived in the 1830s. This once majestic oak tree died in the 1960s, but its descendants grow strong nearby. Bur oak are easy to spot because of their thick, gnarly bark and "fringe-rimmed" acorns. Look for these unusual acorns on the ground.
4. Outwash Plain

At the base of this bluff is an outwash plain which formed some 10,000 years ago when the Wisconsin glacier melted. These meltwater streams flowed in front of the glacial ice, carrying huge amounts of sand and gravel. In many outwash areas, large fertile prairies developed. These prairies were later plowed and used for agricultural purposes, like this one.

*Outwash plain in the making.*
5. Heart Prairie

In 1837, pioneer James Holden stood at this lookout and saw a wide-open prairie with a distinct heart-shaped outline. That's how the name Heart Prairie originated. Farm fields, pasture and woodlands now stand where prairie once stood, but we keep the name Heart Prairie in honor of its original vegetation.
Thanks for Coming

We hope you enjoyed Lone Tree Bluff Scenic Overlook. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center located on Hwy 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone is:

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  Cty H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra

- **Paradise Springs**: Cultural History (accessible trail)
  Cty N, NE of Eagle

- **Rice Lake**: Wetlands Theme
  Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of Forest

- **Scuppernong Springs**: Cultural History Theme
  Cty ZZ, SE of Ottawa Lake

- **Stony Ridge**: Glacial Geology Theme
  Hwy 59, State Forest Visitor Center

- **Stute Springs & Homestead**: Cultural History Theme
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Printed on Recycled Paper  CP11/01
Welcome to Rice Lake Nature Trail

This brochure corresponds to numbered markers along this moderately-sloping 1/2 mile trail. What kind of animals live along lakeshores? What do they eat? What kind of plants grow here? Hike along this quiet undisturbed section of Rice Lake to find out. An elevated wildlife observation blind is located along the trail. Don’t forget your binoculars.

Front cover illustration by Helen Wehler.
1. Wetland Songs: Bull Frog

In summer and especially in June, listen for the low-pitched foghorn bellow of the male bull frog—the loudest song in the wetland. Bullfrogs are also Wisconsin’s largest frog and can grow as large as a softball. Young tadpoles take two years to develop into adults. Look for these giants of the frog world along the shoreline.

“Jug-O-Rum Jug-O-Rum”
Bullfrog by Helen Wehler.

2. Cattails: a Very Useful Shoreline Plant

Cattails grow abundantly in front of you. Notice their long, sword-like leaves and brown, cylindrical seed heads that look like the stiff, upright tail of a cat. Muskrats and beaver eat the rich starchy roots and lower parts of the stems, while ducks, grebes, and yellow-headed and red-winged blackbirds nest in dense cat:ail patches. Cattails also help stabilize the mucky bottoms of wave-washed shorelines.

Red-winged blackbird

Young spike

Mature spike
3. The Glacier: The Beginnings of Rice Lake

10,000 Years Ago
After the glaciers receded, two large isolated ice blocks remained in this area. When the ice blocks melted, they left behind two deep kettle lakes and a large wetland. These "kettles" were named Whitewater Lake and Bass Lake.

10,000 years ago

Today
In 1947 and 1954, two dams were built on Whitewater Creek. Rice Lake was formed from Dam 1. Whitewater Lake was formed from Dam 2.

4. Great Blue Heron: Shoreline Bird
Red-winged blackbirds and long-billed marsh wrens are commonly seen at Rice Lake. Less common are great blue herons which hunt along the shoreline's dense vegetation. These birds prefer the safety of dense vegetation rather than the open water of the lake. Quiet observers will have a better chance of spotting a great blue heron as they silently search for fish along the shoreline.
5. Shoreline Mammals

Rice Lake teems with wildlife because there is plenty of food. At night, raccoons hunt along the water's edge for tadpoles, crawfish and fish. Mink search the shoreline for crawfish, snakes, fish, frogs and muskrats, while muskrats dine on cattails and bulrushes. Muskrats are the most common mammal at Rice Lake. Look for them swimming in the lake from the wildlife observation blind.

6. Jewelweed: Shoreline Plant

Jewelweed grows along wet shorelines throughout the state. It was named "jewel" because its leaves are covered with a waxy coating that causes water to bead and glisten in the sun. The name "weed" comes from the fact that this plant can dominate an area if wet conditions prevail. Jewelweed has orange, trumpet-like flowers that bloom in late July and August. When the seeds ripen in early September, pinch one of these flowerheads between your fingers and watch the seeds propel themselves 3-4 feet ahead of you!
7. Waterfowl

Mallards, blue-winged teal, shovellers, ring-necked ducks, wood ducks, black ducks, and Canada geese can be seen in this area, especially during spring and fall migration. Of these, mallards, wood ducks, blue-winged teal, and Canada geese nest here. Look for their broods paddling and feeding on this lake throughout the summer.

8. Red-Osier Dogwood: Wildlife Food

Red-osier dogwood has red stems and twigs and big round leaves. Can you spot this shrub in front of you? Red-osier dogwood is an important wildlife food. Songbirds, ruffed grouse and pheasants eat its berries in fall. Beaver cut its stems and eat the nutritious red bark, while deer browse on its twigs in winter. In winter, its red stems appear even more vivid against a snowy backdrop and add color to the winter scene.

White berries ripen in fall.

9. Painted Turtles

Painted turtles are common to Rice Lake. Look for them sunning themselves on logs and rocks along the shoreline. In spring, females dig a hole 4 to 5 inches deep on sunny hillsides and lay their eggs. Though you probably will not see these holes, you may see the remains of turtle eggs that have been eaten by skunks and raccoons. Eggs incubate in the warm sun and hatch in September.

Yellow-striped black head 6 inches in size
10. Dragonflies: Dragons of the Airways

Zzzzzzip, Bzzzzz, Zzzzzzoom. Dragonflies are big, fast and harmless, to you that is. To other insects, dragonflies are truly "dragons" of the insect airwaves. Watch how dragonflies patrol the shoreline, scoop up mosquitoes and other flying insects, and chew them to pieces with their powerful jaws. Dragonfly nymphs live underwater for 3-5 years until ready to emerge as flying adults.

11. Aspen: Beaver Food

Though there are no beaver dams on Rice Lake, beaver do visit Rice Lake to feed on aspen. Quaking aspen grow all around this sign post. Aspen is important beaver food. One beaver can easily cut down a large tree and feed upon it over a long period of time. In fall, beaver increase their tree cutting activity by cutting trees and storing them in deep water for food during the winter.

Look for beaver dams at the Scuppernong and Whitewater Creeks.
Thanks for Coming

We hope you enjoyed your visit to the Rice Lake Nature Trail. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center located on Hwy 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone is:

Visitor Center
Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
S91 W39091 Hwy 59
Eagle, WI 53119
Phone: 262-594-6200

To experience the Kettle Moraine firsthand, hike another interpretive trail. Brochures are available at the trail head or at the Visitor Center.

- **Bald Bluff**: Native American and Natural History Theme Cty H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra.
- **Lone Tree Bluff**: Oak Opening and Glacial Theme Esterly Road, north of Whitewater Lake.
- **Paradise Springs**: Cultural History Theme Cty N, NE of Eagle.
- **Scuppernong Springs**: Cultural History Theme Cty ZZ, SE of Ottawa Lake.
- **Stony Ridge**: Glacial Geology Theme Hwy 59, State Forest Visitor Center.
- **Stute Springs & Homestead**: Cultural History Theme Cty Z, one mile south of the intersection of Hwy 59.

Help us save resources: If you no longer have use for this brochure, please return it to the brochure box at the beginning of the trail.

This brochure is available in accessible formats.