

Driftless Area Important Natural Features— Large River Systems, Southern Forests, Prairie and Savanna, Springs, Cliffs and Talus Slopes, Relict Conifers, Bog Relicts, and Dendritic Land-

forms.

numerous owing to the diversity and

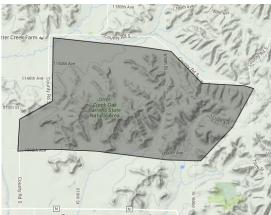
of habitats.

quality

The Driftless Area is a unique unglaciated landscape. The land in this part of the state is ancient compared with 10,000 years of ice

Great Nature Wisconsin LLC

E-mail: greatnaturewi.@gmail.com Web: greatnaturewi.com Phone: 608-790-6821



Otter Creek Barrens

Dunn County

3700 acres

Ecology & Significance

Wisconsin Responsibility – High
Irreplaceable Features – Moderate
Diversity of Natural Features – Moderate
Rare Species – Several
Conservation Concern Species – Mod High
Vulnerability to a Warming Climate – Mod Low
Conservation Status – Some

This site has promising conservation opportunities.

Situated on rolling topography, Otter Creek Oak Barrens contains an undisturbed oak barrens dominated by scattered large black and Hill's oaks with groves of smaller bur, black, and white oak. Jack pine and trembling aspen are also present. The large black oaks are at least 140 years old, and may be over 200 years old. The smaller oaks, 8 to 20 inches in diameter, are 70- to 110 years old.

The State-owned land forms the core of larger landscape area. Private landowners abutting the core area could either thin their woods and apply prescribed fire or rotational thin their forest providing a shifting mosaic of barrens. With help this could be the largest oak barrens anywhere in the state.



Photo courtesy Wisconsin DNR

Flora and Fauna

The shrub layer contains American hazelnut, New Jersey tea, and dogwoods. The groundlayer is quite diverse with a rich assemblage of prairie grasses and forbs including prairie larkspur. Other species are June grass, little blue-stem, leadplant, puccoon, field wormwood, flowering spurge, bastard-toadflax, false Solomon's seal, bird's-foot violet, prairie coreopsis, and wood betony. Pocket gophers are abundant and six-lined race runners are also present.



Photo courtesy Missouri Dept. of Conservation

Otter Creek Barrens offers a unique opportunity—
restoring a model oak barrens habitat. The state needs
to restore its portion, then work with the private adjacent owners to demonstrate the values of a large oak
barrens. The primary reason for owning the land is to
have a place to hunt white-tailed deer. Restoration of
the barrens will not only improve the habitat for deer,
but also provide for outstanding hunting and viewing
of other wildlife such as wild turkey and fox squirrel.
The deep sands provide the structure needed by pocket gophers, whose burrows are the sole locate to find
at least 27 invertebrate species.