



Thompson Valley Woodland
Trempealeau County
700 acres

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-free land in the rest of the state. Rare species are numerous owing to the diversity and quality of habitats.

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

Ecology & Significance

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

This site has promising conservation opportunities.

The Thompson Valley Oak Woodland opportunity area has few equals in this region.. One of the largest remaining acres of restorable oak woodland known in the state, Thompson Valley has an abundance of gnarly bur oaks on the slopes. A thin layer of dolomite overlays thick sandstone. On the lower slopes are thick deposits of eroded sands. These steep rugged hills support an overgrown oak woodland, but exposed ridge-tops and southwest-facing steep slopes still have prairie species holding on.

Flora and Fauna

The large complex of oak dominated woodland has changes in composition depending on slope and aspect. The herb layer is potentially diverse, including some members of the prairie, oak savanna, and oak forest communities, but also featuring grasses, legumes, composites and other forbs that are best adapted to light conditions of high filtered shade. Canopy dwelling birds such as Cerulean Warblers find this habitat suitable.



Photo courtesy Wikipedia.com

The Thompson Valley Oak Woodland opportunity area presents a real challenge for conservation. The land is mostly owned by farmers and recreationists. Their primary and sometimes sole reason for their love of the land is white-tailed deer hunting, although ridge-top mining for frack sand occurs near-by. Recent studies have shown that better nutrition means bigger deer and the combination of thinning the forest along with frequent prescribed burning provides as much if not better nutrition than supplements.



Photo Courtesy Michigan State Univ.



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