



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 – Several
 - Conservation Concern Species – Mod High
 - Vulnerability to a Warming Climate – Mod Low
 - Conservation Status – Unknown
- This site has promising conservation opportunities.

The Center Creek Oak Woodland opportunity area is like no other landscape in the state. The largest acreage of restorable oak woodland known in the state, A thin layer of dolomite overlays thick sandstone. On the lower slopes are thick deposits of eroded sands. These steep rugged hills support a few goat prairies, but mostly the entire drainage is covered with overgrown oak woodland.

The 1940 air photo shows a much less forested landscape with oak woodland being the predominant cover type

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



Photo Courtesy wikipedia.com

The Center Creek 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. 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.



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