

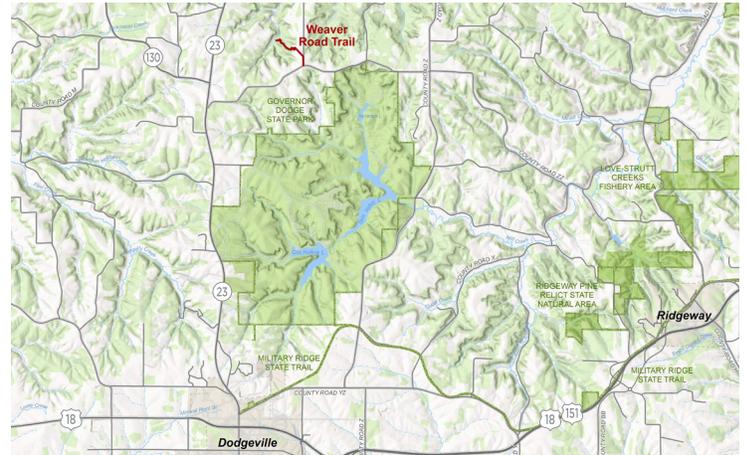


# THE DRIFTLESS TRAIL: WEAVER ROAD TRAIL

## LOCATION & PARKING

**LOCATION:** Six miles north of Dodgeville. From Highway 23, turn east on County ZZ for 1.8 miles, then north on Weaver Road. Trailhead is on the northwest corner of this junction.

**PARKING:** A strip of mowed grass connecting Weaver Road and County ZZ accommodates 3-4 vehicles. If that is full, park on the east shoulder of Weaver Road near the trailhead.



## THE HIKE

DIFFICULTY: **MODERATE**

LENGTH: **1.5 MILES ROUND-TRIP**

The trailhead sits at one of the highest points in the region, offering a spectacular view. Ten miles to the north is the Wisconsin River Valley and 13 miles to the southeast is Blue Mounds, the region's highest point. From here you see the area covered by the Driftless Trail, from Tower Hill State Park on the Wisconsin River to Blue Mound State Park to Governor Dodge State Park, directly to the south.

From the main trailhead to the stream on the valley floor, this trail winds through four geologic formations, all from the Ordovician period. The trailhead sits on Decorah Dolomite and the ag field is on Platteville Dolomite. Shortly after entering the woods, the layer of St. Peter Sandstone begins. As the trail wraps around the base of the pine relict, St. Peter Sandstone is uphill of the trail and Prairie du Chien Dolomite is downhill. St. Peter Sandstone is rich in quartz, making it ideal for manufacturing glass. Note how the rocks along this stretch sparkle on sunny days.

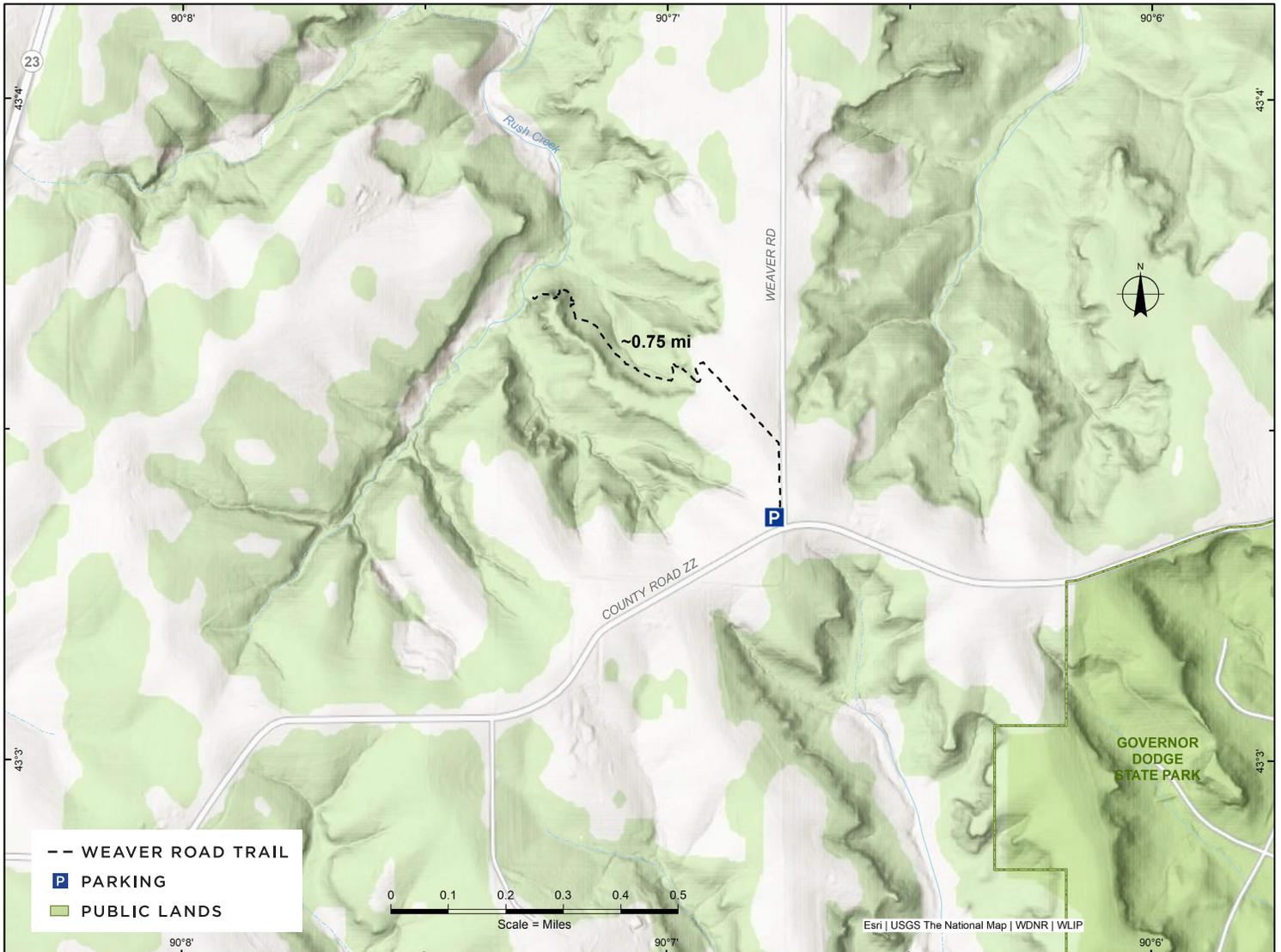
The trail begins by skirting the perimeter of an agricultural field that will be farmed by Seven Seeds Organic Farm beginning in 2022. When used for hay, this field is often full of Bobolinks and Meadowlarks during May and June.

The trail enters the woods in a stand of walnuts and oaks that are 80-90 years old. Flat, stretched bark on the walnuts and red oaks here indicate the trees grew rapidly, in open conditions. This is likely old pasture. As the trail descends into the valley, older and larger trees begin to appear.

In 2014, a strong tornado ripped through this area. Salvage logging was subsequently done here, so the trail follows a logging road for a while. It turns into a narrow footpath at the base of the pine relict – a long, narrow ridge that is topped with pines and other vegetation that are typically found in northern forests. They have survived here because the steep, rocky topography has prevented fire from reaching them. Pine relict plant communities are rare and are scattered throughout the deeper valleys of the Driftless Area.

As the trail wraps around the base of the pine relict, hikers are offered the unique experience of looking up at towering trees on the ridge above them. Several large, pre-settlement white oaks are close to the trail. Large red pines are here, as well. Since they require sun to grow, this area must have been a more open savanna when these pines were young. Note the fire scars on a few of the red pines near the stream.

# THE DRIFTLESS TRAIL: WEAVER ROAD TRAIL



The trail currently ends at the banks of Rush Creek, a winding stream that originates in springs southwest of here and flows into the Lower Wisconsin River five miles west of the Taliesin Estate. The Driftless Area hosts the largest concentration of cold water springs in the world.

The fragile environment around the pine relict is home to rare wildlife, so it is critical for hikers to stay on the trail. Listen for the calls of deep-forest birds like Wood Thrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Ovenbird, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Keep an eye out for snakes among the rocks. Tracks of black bears have been seen here, as well.

## SPECIAL NOTES:

- There are no toilets or water available at this trail.
- Wild parsnip is common along the edge of the ag field. This plant contains photo-toxins that can cause a severe rash, so know how to identify this plant and please avoid it.
- This trail will be closed during the nine-day gun deer season, which is the week of Thanksgiving including both weekends.
- Pets are welcome but **MUST** remain on a leash.

**Enjoy your hike and leave no trace - the best way  
to preserve this trail forever!**

Our thanks to those who have made enjoying this trail possible: the landowner, WisCorps program, John C. Bock Foundation, Alliant Energy Foundation, James E. Dutton Foundation, Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and many individual volunteers and donors.