



# THE DRIFTLESS TRAIL: WEAVER ROAD SEGMENT

## 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: **1.1 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 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. This layer is rich in quartz, making it ideal for manufacturing glass. Note how exposed rocks in this stretch sparkle on sunny days. As you reach the valley floor, you enter the layer of Prairie du Chien Dolomite.

The trail begins by skirting the perimeter of an agricultural field that is farmed by Seven Seeds Organic Farm, using the contour farming technique developed in Wisconsin's Coulee Region with input from Aldo Leopold. Contour farming helps to hold the soil of these hills in place.

Either direction you travel on the loop portion of the trail, you will enter the woods in a stand of walnuts

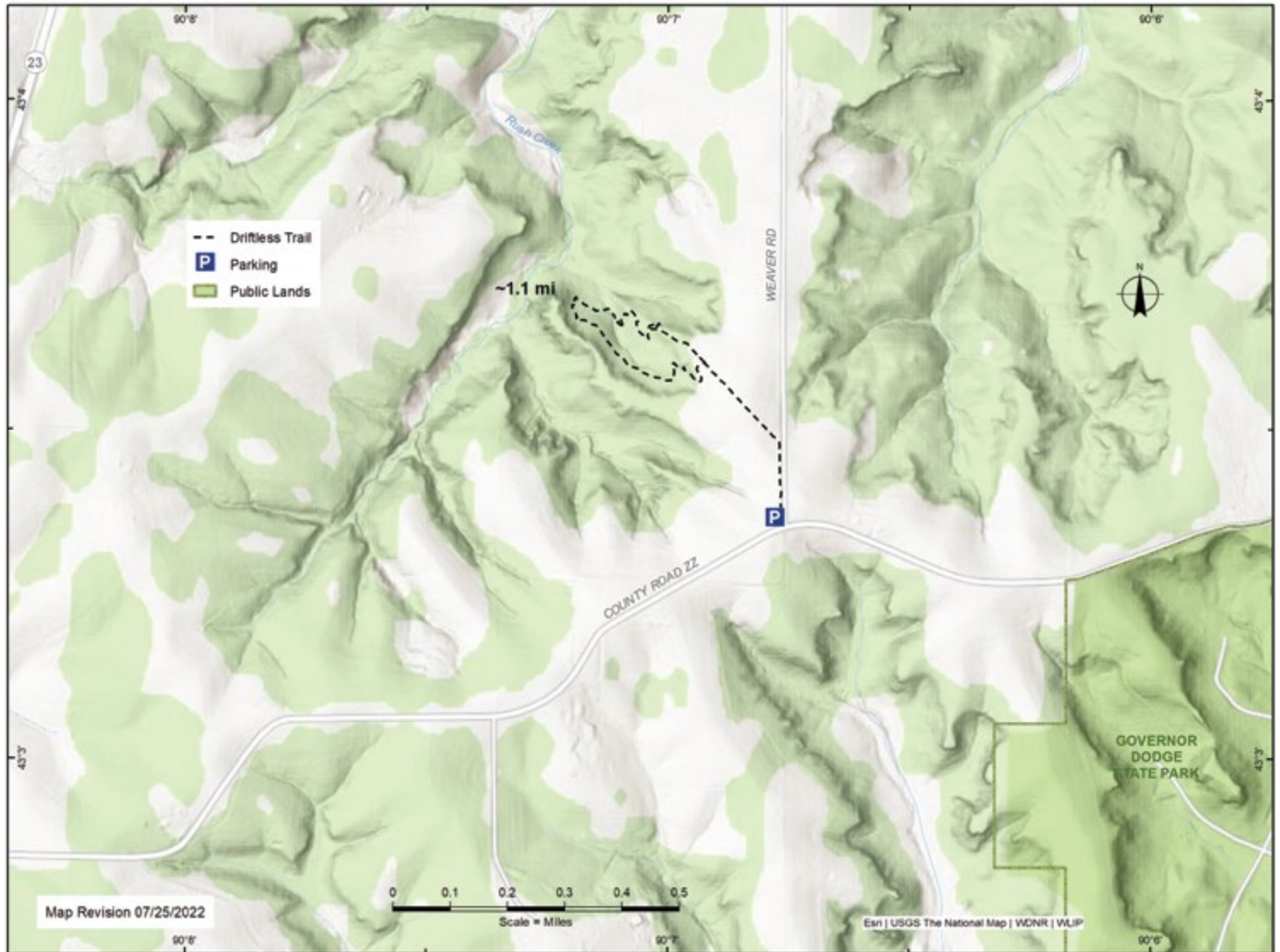
and oaks that are 80-90 years old. Flat, stretched bark on the walnuts and red oaks here indicate the trees grew rapidly, in open conditions. This is likely old pasture. As the trail descends into the valley, older and larger trees begin to appear.

In 2014, a strong tornado ripped through this area. Salvage logging was subsequently done here, so part of the southern half of the loop follows a logging road. As is typical, logging activity spread a large amount of garlic mustard on that side of the valley. We are beginning the long process of getting it under control.

The northwestern part of the loop hugs the base of a 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 kept fire from reaching them as often as the surrounding slopes and valleys. Pine relict plant communities are rare and are scattered throughout the deeper valleys of the Driftless Area.

The trail crosses a dry creek bed just upslope from Rush Creek, a winding spring-fed stream that 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.

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**The fragile environment around the pine relict and other rock outcrops are home to rare wildlife and plants, 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. Signs of black bears have even been seen here.



## **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.