



Wisconsin, naturally

KELLER WHITCOMB CREEK WOODS STATE NATURAL AREA



Thomas A. Meyer
State Natural Areas Program

Note: A diversity of ferns and fungi greet autumn visitors to Keller Whitcomb Creek Woods, owing to the site's array of native plant communities coupled with an undulating landscape molded by the passing of the last glacier. The 128-acre natural area sits in a depression of glacial till, through which the sandy-bottomed south fork of Whitcomb Creek flows. The Class 1 trout stream receives water from spring seeps and spring runs that line the banks, providing cool conditions for naturally-reproducing brook and brown trout. Wet forest of white cedar, black ash, balsam fir, white pine and red maple is found in low pockets, while the uplands support hemlock, yellow birch, white birch, red oak and white oak. The ground layer of plants is rich and diverse, with at least 18 species of native ferns present — among them cinnamon, maidenhair, bulblet, lady and crested wood fern. The “macro-fungi” — those types with large fruiting structures like mushrooms, puffballs and brackets — are especially abundant here in wet years. The preliminary list of fungi includes 136 species, some with wonderful colloquial names like tawny grisette, false death cap, bitter bolete, golden waxy cap, velvet fairy fan and turkey tail.

How to get there: Within the DNR's Whitcomb Creek Fishery Area. From the intersection of County Highways E and G south of Big Falls, go west and south on G for 2.3 miles, then west on Boelter Road for 1.7 miles to a small parking area on the south side of the road. The site lies to the south. There are no established trails here. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search “Keller Whitcomb Creek Woods” for a map and more information.

