



BRADLEY CREEK SWAMP CONIFERS STATE NATURAL AREA

Thomas A. Meyer
State Natural Areas Program

Clear, cold, spring-fed Bradley Creek provides the lifeblood for this small, but diverse, nature preserve in Portage County. The Class I trout stream is a tributary to the Little Wolf River and features a sand and rubble bottom interspersed with large, glacially-rounded granite boulders. The aquatic larvae of stone flies, caddisflies and mayflies inhabit its alkaline waters and provide food for the population of native brook trout. Fringing the creek and providing dense shade to the understory flora is a northern wet-mesic forest of white cedar, balsam fir, hemlock, white pine, yellow-bud hickory and red maple. The wet, mossy ground layer supports the delicate three-leaved goldthread, nodding trillium, partridgeberry, wild ginger, naked miterwort, wild sarsaparilla and maidenhair fern. In spring, marsh marigolds add a splash of yellow to wet pockets along the creek. Cuckoos – both yellow-billed and black-billed – along with hermit thrush, Nashville warbler, ovenbird and black-throated green warbler are among the birds that nest here.

Bradley Creek State Natural Area is owned by the DNR and lies within the Little Wolf River Fishery Area. It was designated SNA No. 585 in 2008. There are no designated trails or other facilities on the property. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Bradley Creek Swamp Conifers" for a map, access directions and more information about this site and the rest of the State Natural Areas Program.

