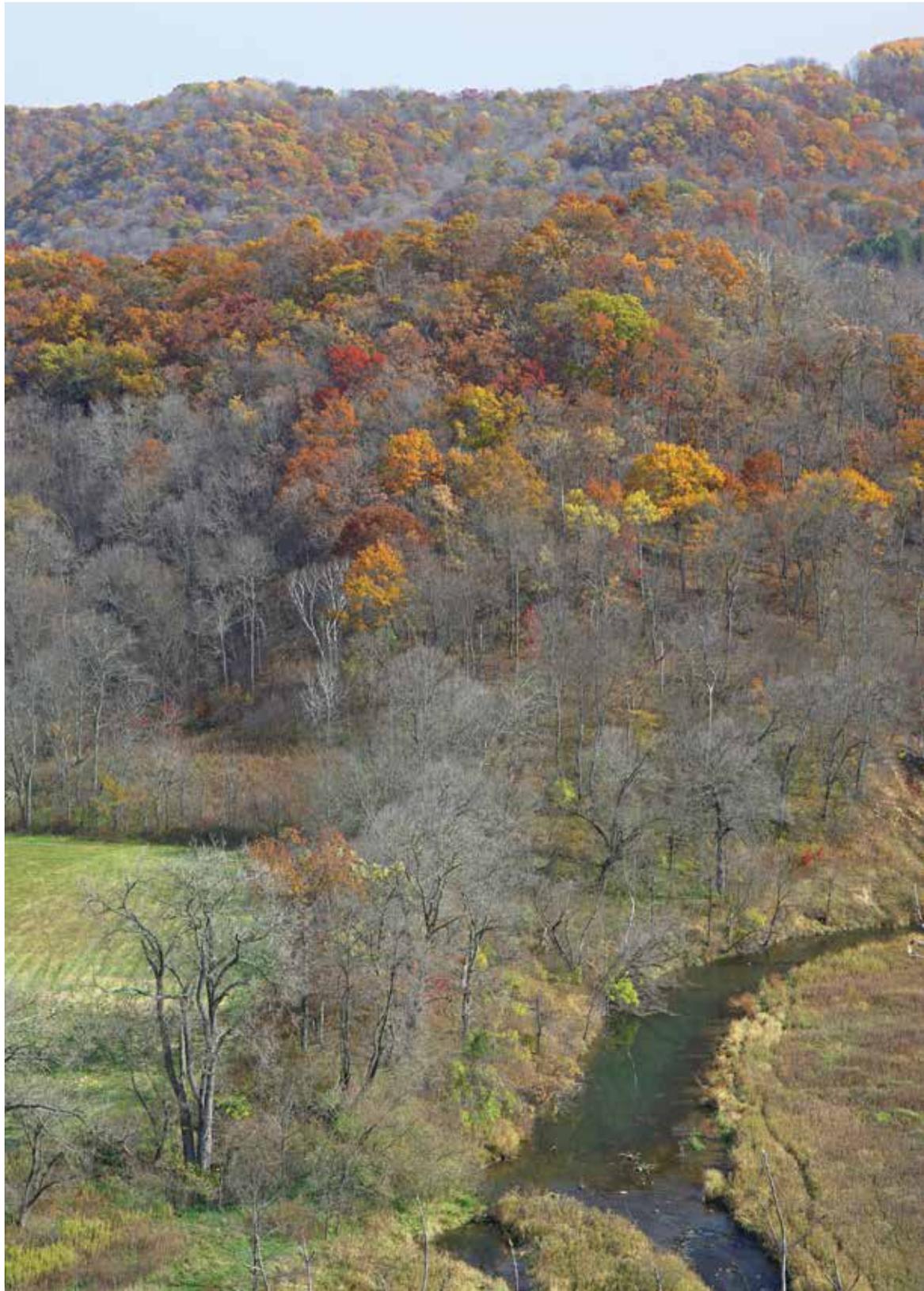




EAGLE EYE STATE NATURAL AREA

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State Natural Areas Program

This preserve, deep in the Driftless Area of Vernon County, gets its name from a narrow, horizontal slit weathered from a sandstone outcrop perched atop the summit of a curving ridge, 250 feet above the river floodplain. The bedrock ridge is forested with restorable oak woodland and oak savanna, and small pockets of dry prairie are still present on the ridge's spine. Prescribed fire and brushing to remove woody understory species are expanding the prairie areas and improving the quality and diversity of the woodland and savanna complex. Low cliffs and small rock shelters add diversity to the site and provide habitat for cliff-dwelling plant species. At the base of the ridge, a thread of the North Fork of the Bad Axe River meanders through wetlands and former agricultural fields slated for restoration. The river is a Class II trout stream, holding a diverse fishery that includes brown and rainbow trout, northern pike, smallmouth and largemouth bass, and panfish. Although the ecological values of the site are noteworthy, the natural area is known primarily for its cultural significance. Eagle Eye lies within the Cade Archaeological District, a site on the National Register of Historic Places. Seven Native American effigy mounds are found on the south-facing flank of the ridge facing the river. They include a bear, panther, turtle, a pair of birds and two linear mounds, all of which date to approximately A.D. 1050. An adjacent, elevated terrace above the river floodplain shows evidence of historic agriculture.



Eagle Eye is owned by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and was designated State Natural Area #675 in 2016. It was protected through a partnership between MVC, the

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, the Archaeological Conservancy and DNR. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided matching funds to acquire the land. There are no designated trails or other facilities on the property. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Eagle Eye" for a map, access directions and more information about this site and the State Natural Areas Program.