



Trail Guide

- Property Boundary
- Primary Trail
- Connecting Pathway
- Woods Road

Cover Types

- Central/Northern Hardwoods
- Oak Savannah
- Upland Grass
- Ash Acres
- Lodge Area
- Hillside Hardwoods
- Upland Brush
- Prairie
- Cattail Marsh
- Wet Meadow

**A Guide to
SAINT BENEDICT'S MONASTERY WOODS**

Sisters of Saint Benedict's Forest Stewardship Goals

- To maintain the old growth forest in a natural state.
- To maintain trails for enjoyment of campus population.
 - To maintain wetlands.
- To consider a land trust for some of the unique areas.
 - To facilitate environmental education for all ages.
- To promote spiritual renewal through interaction with nature.
 - To promote species and age class diversity.
 - Generate small income from forest to support stewardship activities.

Saint Benedict's Monastery Woods consists of about 90-100 acres of mixed woods. The woods evolved on glacial debris and may be the top layer of what was once a lake or bog. It has been the policy of the Sisters of St. Benedict to let nature develop the woods and little is done to "manage" it as a resource.

**TRAIL GUIDE
Description and Distance**

Trillium Trail: the Trillium Trail is named for the white trillium flowers which were once found in large patches in the area. The trail forms a circle of approximately 3/4 mile; beginning and ending at the lodge area.

Sacred Heart Trail: the Sacred Heart Trail travels over Sacred Heart Hill, the highest point of the monastery property. The trail is approximately one mile long.

Woods Ecology:

The woods consist of maple, basswood, oak, and ironwood trees. The understory contains the usual array of spring flowers (showy orchids, blood root, jack in pulpit, trillium, hepatica), and mushrooms. Later in the summer shrubs and ferns will take over. Unfortunately buckthorn and prickly ash have invaded the woods and have become a problem. The woods are home to most of the common birds and animals of the region including an occasional turkey, red fox and many white tail deer.

Central/Northern Hardwoods: red oak, white oak, sugar maple, basswood and ash

Oak Savannah: burr oak, white oak, red oak and cherry

Upland Grass: upland grass and scattered ash or elm

Ash Acres: mixed hardwoods; predominately ash

Lodge Area: sugar maple, basswood, ash, red oak, white oak; predominately spruce, red pine; a few white cedars

Hillside Hardwoods: sugar maple, basswood, ash, red oak, white oak, and birch

Upland Brush: sumac and prickly ash

Prairie: prairie grasses

Cattail Marsh/Wet Meadow: sedges, rushes, and cattails

POINTS OF INTEREST

1: Prairie Restoration Area: An eight acre prairie is in the process of restoration on the north side of the woods and in mid summer and fall it is filled with a host of prairie flowers, big blue stem grass, switch grass, side oats and other grasses. In the center of this is the holding pond for storm water run-off from the monastery and college campuses. Blue bird houses are mounted on posts and provide some excellent viewing for the observant walker.

2: Honey Locust Trees

3: Oak Savannah: In 2004, this 5-acre area was dedicated to oak savannah restoration.

4: Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Here is a lovely statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a donation from the College of St. Benedict, class of 1933.

5: Sisters' Lodge: A recreational lodge built in the 1926 occupies a small clearing and is regularly used by the community for retreats.

6: Water Pump

7: 200+ year-old Swamp White Oak

8: Shrine on the Sacred Heart Hill

9: Lake Sarah Resting Area: The lake is a small spring fed depression that remains filled with water all year. The exact reason for calling the little lake "Sarah" is obscure, but Sister Remberta Westkemper is said to have named it. It is about 20 feet deep at its deepest point and is home to sunfish, water birds, pond turtles, and frogs along with cattails and other wetland plants. History tells us that the shore muck is very sticky and gluey. (Meandering cows had to be fenced out of it and if they got stuck in it had to be pulled out.) From time to time muskrats and beavers move into the pond. They stay a year or two until they eat themselves out of house and home. The little observation point at the lake was built up unintentionally by using that area as a place to dump old concrete. (This would never be done today.)

10: Walz Prairie: Purchased in 2008, this 7-acre area is being restored to native prairie.

11: Ash Acres: This section was purchased in 2006 to ensure a buffer between the established woodland and a housing development to the east.

**For more information, contact:
Sister Margaret Wurm; Director of Physical Plant
320-363-7100**