

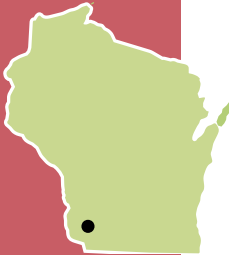


**SNOW BOTTOMS WETLAND TYPES**

Fen, forested seep, shrub carr, alder thicket

Thomas Meyer

GRANT COUNTY



# SNOW BOTTOMS

Property Owner: WDNR

Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, The Nature Conservancy Priority Conservation Area

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**Wisconsin Wetlands**  
ASSOCIATION

wisconsinwetlands.org

## ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Driftless Area Wetland Gem features an extraordinarily scenic valley with the meandering Blue River flanked by fens, forested seeps and other wetland habitats. Sandstone cliffs bound the valley and hold snow in the bottoms well into the spring, giving the site its name. The Blue River and its tributaries are high quality trout waters that flow into the Wisconsin River in northeast Grant County. While the valley is perhaps better known for its geological formations and upland habitats, including the most significant remaining pine relicts in Wisconsin, the valley's wetlands are also significant because calcareous fens are uncommon in this region of the state. With a mosaic of high quality wetland and upland habitats, Snow Bottoms supports many rare species and diverse wildlife. WDNR plans to expand protection efforts in the valley to preserve these native plant communities and water quality in the Blue River system.



Yellow-throated vireo — Scott Franke

## FLORA & FAUNA

Numerous groundwater seeps spring from the base of the valley's sandstone cliffs and flow through oak-dominated forests underlain with ferns and mosses. Groundwater springs emerge throughout the valley and feed calcareous fens that in turn feed the tributaries of the Blue River. These diverse fens feature numerous calciphilic (calcium-loving) plants such as shrubby cinquefoil, Kalm's lobelia, boneset, swamp thistle, the uncommon Ohio goldenrod and the state threatened grass-of-Parnassus. Shrub swamp habitats dominated by speckled alder, dogwoods and willows are also present.

More than 50 species of birds have been documented in the Snow Bottoms State Natural Area. The forest interior supports species like barred owl, pileated woodpecker, wood thrush, scarlet tanager, and several warblers and vireos. Fen vegetation supports a variety of butterflies. Aquatic insects that hatch from the wetlands and stream channels support thriving trout populations in the Blue River and its major tributaries.

## THREATS

Invasive species concerns require monitoring and control efforts. Prescribed burns are necessary to prevent woody vegetation from encroaching into open areas at this site.

## ACCESS

Visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).

## Sources:

Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)  
Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)  
The Prairie-Forest Border: An Ecoregional Plan (TNC)