

Sterling Barrens State Natural Area



Where: South of Grantsburg, Wisconsin

When: Saturday, July 3rd from 4 to 6PM

Leader: Barb Delaney (Professional Botanist)

Located in pitted outwash deposits laid down by glacial melt-water streams, Wisconsin Sterling Barrens State Natural Area contains a jack pine-Hill's oak dry forest interspersed with barrens openings and an extensive wetland of sedge meadow and shrub-carr. The gently rolling barrens openings are interspersed with prairie species. Several rare forbs are at or near their natural eastern range limit.

Included in the natural area are the St. Croix River terrace escarpment and a reach of the St. Croix that contains an excellent diversity of aquatic species. The river is lined with bottomland hardwoods of silver maple, elm, black ash, and cottonwood with willow brush. The dry forest on the sandy uplands and the terrace slope is young but has a diverse groundlayer.

Sterling Barrens is owned by the National Park Service and DNR. The site was originally designated a State Natural Area in 1979 and later expanded to include the St. Croix Scenic Riverway in 2002.