

Botany 2018 Field Trip Descriptions

Thursday July, 26

North Fork Whitewater River - rare cold Karst bedrock and rugged Driftless Area topography hike, and scenic tour of the Whitewater valley.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

North Fork Whitewater River in the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area is set in the heart of Minnesota's bluff country. This trip offers a hike into a narrow valley lined with steep 250-foot bluffs. A highlight of the trip is a large moderate (cold air) dolomite cliff with a population of the globally rare *Rhodiola integrifolia* (this population is one of only seven in the world of this glacial relict species). Additional habitats that we may encounter along the way include a variety of dolomite cliffs, globally rare Driftless Area white pine forest, rich maple-basswood forest, alluvial terrace forest, oak woodland, and groundwater seeps. Scenic vistas and a cold water stream are part of this hike as well.



The group will finish the day (time permitting) with a driving tour through additional portions of the Whitewater Valley to see more of the diversity of Minnesota's blufflands including examples globally significant Driftless Area dry bluff bedrock prairie and barrens savanna. Time permitting, the tour may stop at the nearby Elba fire tower where wooden stairs lead from the base of a 280-foot bluff to a 110-foot lookout tower <http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/mn/elba-fire-tower/> where one can see for miles in all directions and get a great feel for the blufflands landscape.

About 2-2.5 miles of mostly off-trail hiking which is moderate to strenuous. July can be warm (highs in the mid 80's is average). Hiking boots or solid hiking shoes, a hat, and long pants are recommended. The hike may include, especially for adventurous folks who want to get up close and personal with the *Rhodiola*, a fording of the stream (hopefully in a spot that is knee deep or less). Participants should bring a quart of water, more if it is hot. Rain gear would be advised if rain is in the forecast. Binoculars would be useful for looking at plants on inaccessible cliff ledges (this site is also a good birding spot). Box lunches and water will be provided.

Trip Leaders: Michael Lee and Welby Smith, Minnesota Biological Survey
Christine Johnson, Whitewater Wildlife Management Area

Big Woods and Cannon River Kayaking

8:00 am – 4:00pm

This trip is repeat of the Saturday Big Woods and Cannon River Kayaking trip. See the Saturday trip information for details.