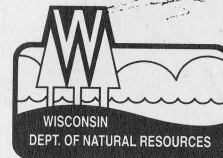Kettle Moraine State Forest—Southern Unit

Scuppernong Springs

Self-Guiding Nature Trail
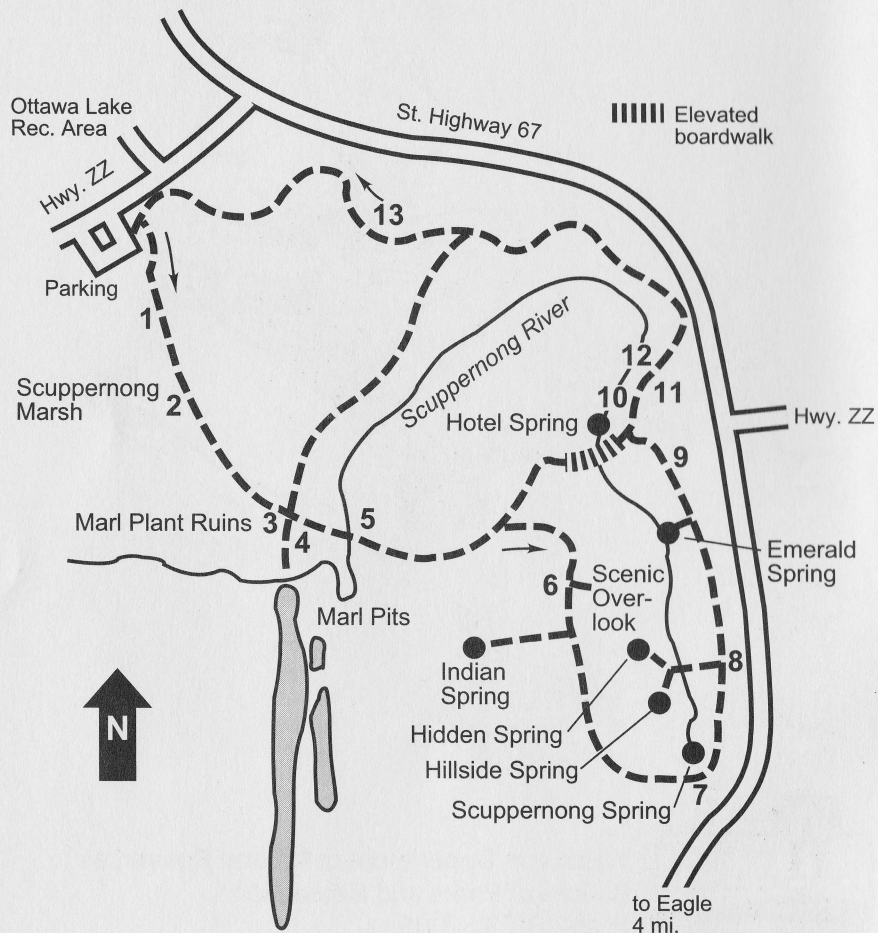
WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Welcome to
Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail

This leaflet is keyed to the numbered posts along this 1½ mile loop trail. Scuppernong Springs is home to wildlife, fish, and clear, clean springs, but it wasn't always this way. Hike this trail to discover a marl plant, hotel, trout pond, sawmill, and cranberry bogs that once existed here.
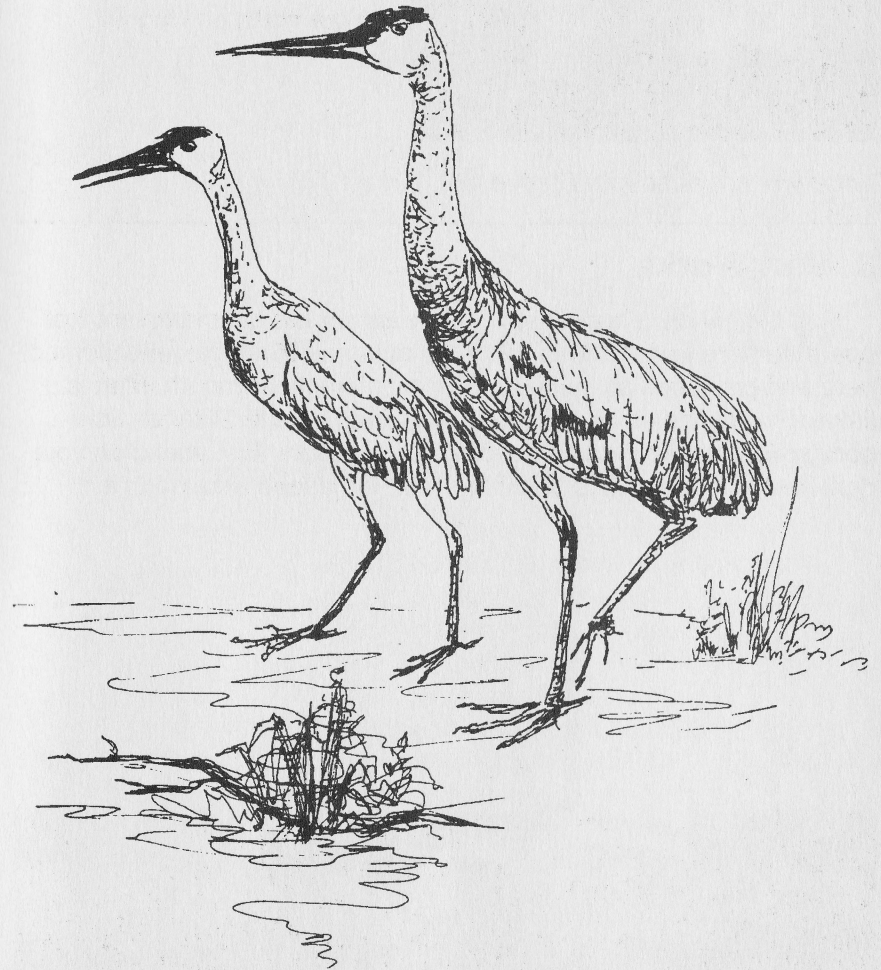
Be prepared! Mosquitoes can be a nuisance on this trail. Wear appropriate clothing and/or use insect repellent.

Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail

Ottawa Lake Rec. Area

Hwy. ZZ

St. Highway 67

|||||| Elevated boardwalk

Parking

13

1

Scuppernong Marsh

2

Scuppernong River

12

10 11

Hotel Spring

9

Hwy. ZZ

Marl Plant Ruins 3

4 5

Emerald Spring

6 Scenic Over-look

Marl Pits

8

Indian Spring

Hidden Spring

Hillside Spring

7

Scuppernong Spring

N

to Eagle 4 mi.

1. Scuppernong Marsh: Wildlife Haven

The name Scuppernong comes from a Ho Chunk word meaning "sweet-scented land." Native Americans camped on the high ground overlooking the marsh where they found plentiful game and fresh water. Before the area was developed for farming, business, and commerce, this marsh extended several miles northwest of Palmyra. Today, Scuppernong Marsh is much smaller, but it remains a haven for wildlife.

Sandhill Cranes have lived in the Scuppernong Marsh for centuries.
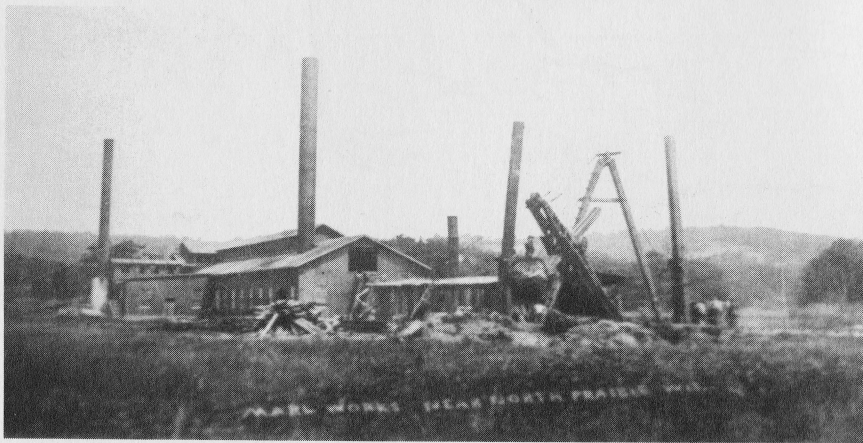
2. Railroad Grade

Local women pose with Engine #61, circa 1910.

You are walking on an old railroad bed that continues to the old marl plant foundation, about 100 yards ahead. From 1909 to 1915 a train hauled marl along this grade to the Eagle Lime Products Company warehouse located in nearby Dousman, 5 miles to the north on Hwy 67.
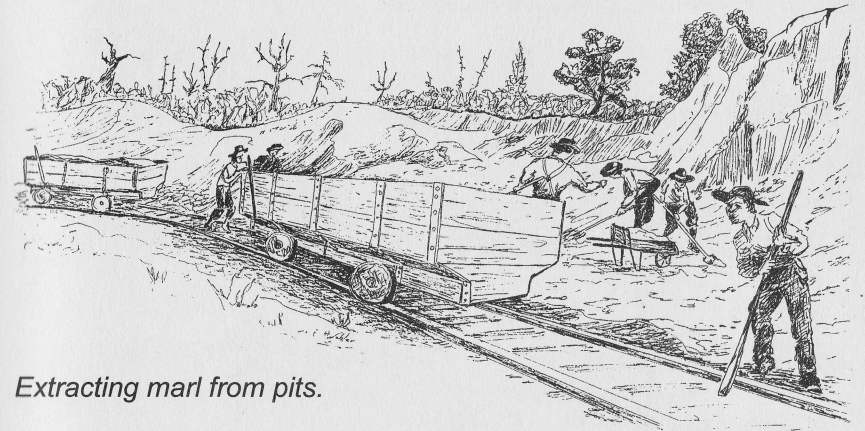
3. Marl Works

This big concrete wall is all that remains of the old marl plant that operated here from 1909 to 1915. As many as 60 employees worked here and produced as much as 20 tons of marl per month. Marl is a lime-rich, grayish-white soil which was used as a fertilizer on lime-poor soils and as mortar in building construction. Just ahead on your right, look for a few piles of chalky marl. Go ahead and touch it.

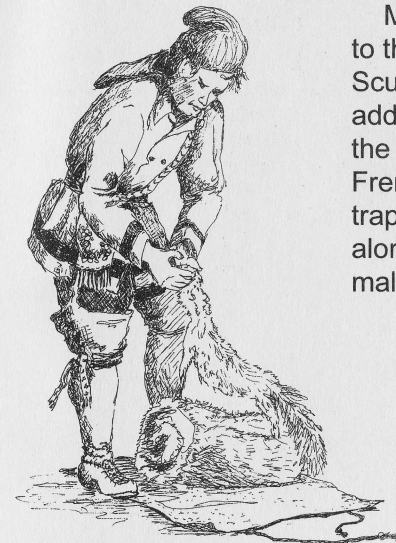*Marl Works, circa 1909.*

4

4. Marl Pit

This narrow water-filled pit was formed by the removal of tens of thousands of tons of lime-rich marl. Marl formed in a glacial lake from an aquatic plant called chara. Chara extracted calcium carbonate from the water and stored it in its brittle branches. When the chara plants died and fell to the bottom of the lake, their remains built up a thick layer of limy-ooze that eventually became the grayish-white soil called marl.

Extracting marl from pits.

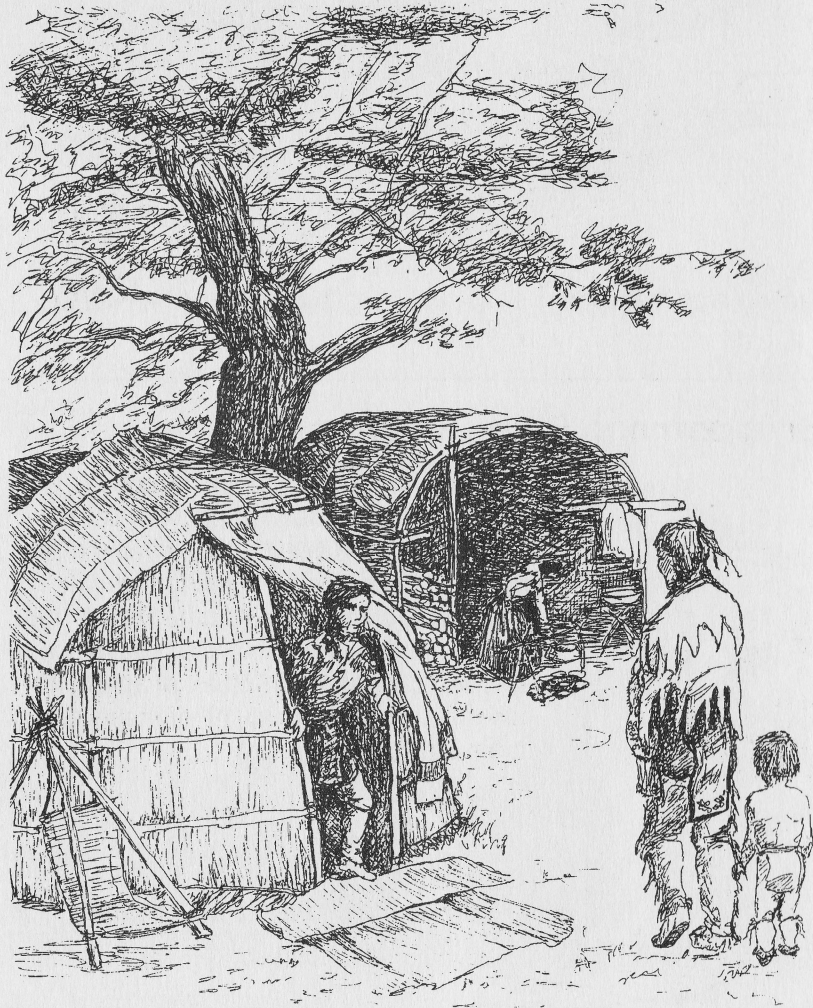## 5. Scuppernong River: Fur Trappers

Many upstream springs contribute to the beautiful, clean, clear flow of the Scuppernong River. Further downstream, additional springs and creeks flow into the river, adding to its volume. Years ago, French fur trappers and Native Americans trapped beaver, otter, muskrat and mink along this watery route. All of these animals still live here today.

French fur trader examines his wares.
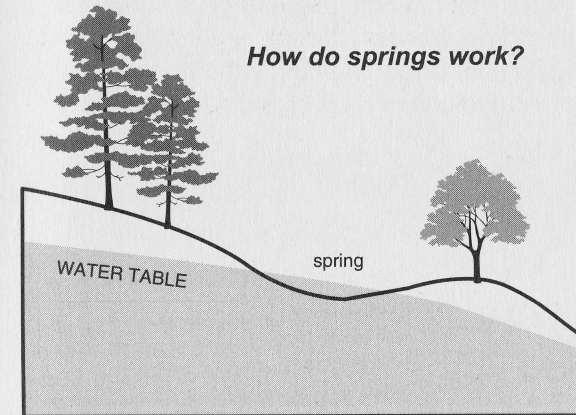
5

6. Native American Campsite

The former residents of this campsite left behind projectile points (arrowheads or spear points) and paper-thin flakes of stone left over from making these points. This site made a perfect campground because of its sandy, dry soil and close proximity to food and water. Nearby springs provided water for cooking, drinking, and bathing. The marsh provided wildlife for food. The pathway ahead that juts off to your right takes you to "Indian Spring." No doubt, this spring was used by generations of Native Americans.
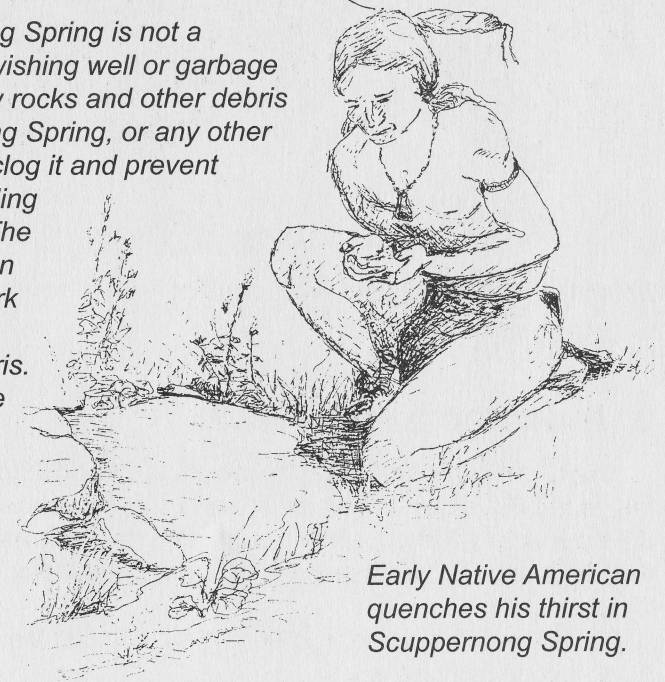
7. Scuppernong Spring

Scuppernong Spring is actually a group of many smaller springs. The water in these springs comes from rainwater and snowmelt and flows at a constant temperature of about 47° F. Scuppernong Spring sits in a bowl-shaped depression where the water table reaches the surface. Several more bubbling springs along the trail ahead are noted by signs.

How do springs work?

WATER TABLE   spring

Does Scuppernong Spring lead to China?

No! Scuppernong Spring is not a bottomless pit, wishing well or garbage can. If you throw rocks and other debris into Scuppernong Spring, or any other spring, you will clog it and prevent water from gurgling to the surface. The spring will remain clogged until park personnel can remove the debris. Please resist the urge!

Early Native American quenches his thirst in Scuppernong Spring.

8. Old Trout Hatchery

A large trout pond, 7 acres in size, filled the marshy creek basin before you. The pond was built by Talbor Dousman in the 1870s and once held about one-million trout. These trout sold for 40-50 cents per pound to Chicago restaurants and upscale fish markets. To create this pond, a large earthen dike was built on the Scuppernong River. In the ponds themselves, one mile of wooden flumes were constructed to separate different age groups of trout. The dike which stood where the elevated boardwalk now stands, was recently removed to improve trout habitat downstream.

Boating between the wooden flumes of the old trout pond, circa 1904.

9. Trout Hatching House

The original trout hatching house, built in the 1880s, stood here. Inside the house, spring water flowed through wooden troughs where the trout eggs hatched. Each trough held as many as 30,000 trout. As they hatched and became large enough, the trout were transferred to the ponds.

A new hatching house was built to the north of the Scuppernong Hotel just ahead on the trail.

Original hatching house as it looked around 1903.

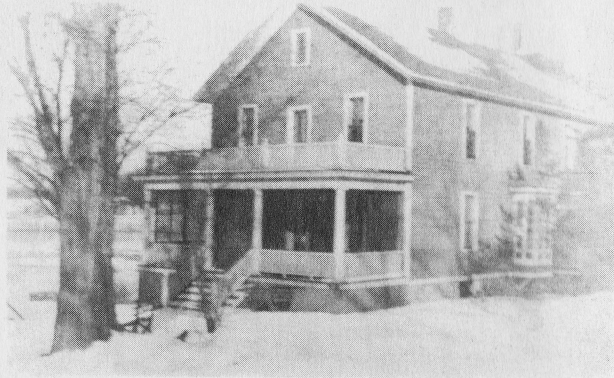*New hatching house, circa 1903.*

10. Trout Feed Mill

This small building was constructed in the 1880s to prepare food for the trout. Four to five barrels of beef and pork liver were purchased at one time, cooked in two large iron kettles, and then chopped into the appropriate sizes. Workers fed coarse pieces to the larger trout and a finer mash to the smaller ones. The elevated boardwalk just ahead of you was once the site of an earthen dam used to create the trout pond mentioned at stop number 8.

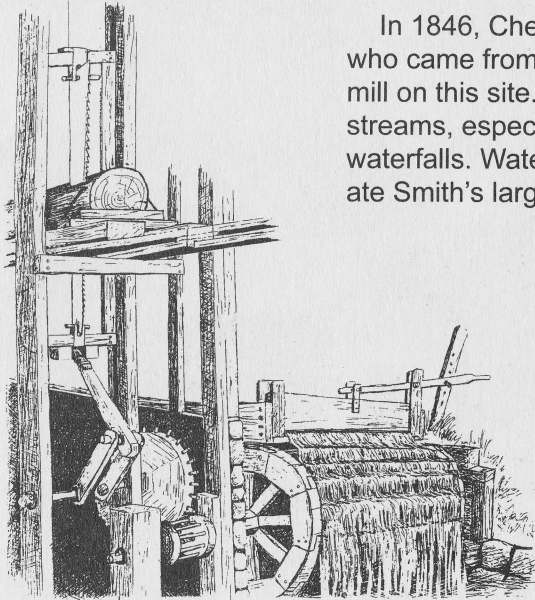*Old trout feed mill, circa 1903.*

11. Scuppernong Hotel

The stone foundation of the Scuppernong Hotel borders the trail just ahead on your right. The building was first constructed in 1870 by Talbor C. Dousman as a cheese factory. In 1880, the building was remodeled into a hotel by Adelbert Jared Pardee, a young Civil War veteran from New York. The Scuppernong Hotel flourished for many years under the ownership of the Weber Brewing Company. In 1934 it became a private retreat. Fire destroyed the building in the 1970s.

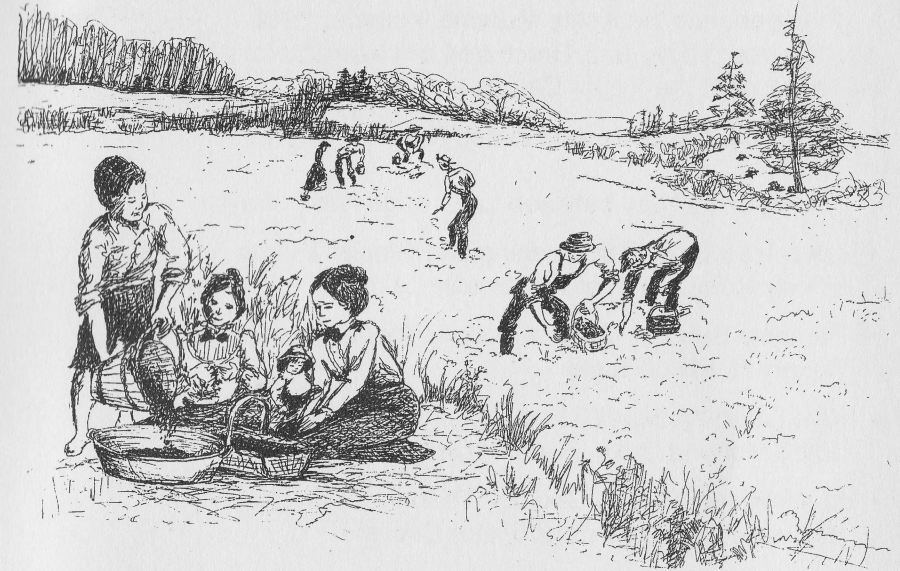*Scuppernong Hotel, circa 1904.*

12. Early Sawmill

In 1846, Chester Smith, a carpenter who came from New York, built a sawmill on this site. Sawmills were built near streams, especially those with rapids or waterfalls. Water power was used to operate Smith's large up-and-down saw.

13. Scuppernong Cranberry Company

In the 1880s, this ditch and others just ahead on the trail, were used to regulate water in commercial cranberry bogs owned by the Scuppernong Cranberry Company. Entire families would come from miles around to pick cranberries. They stayed in tents provided by the company for the duration of the picking season, usually two to six weeks. A good worker could pick a bushel per day and earn $1.00 per bushel. Cranberries sold for about $12.00 per bushel.

Cranberry pickers in the Scuppernong Marsh.

Illustrations by Helen Wehler

Thanks for Coming

It's just a short walk back to the beginning of the trail. We hope you have enjoyed the Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center on Highway 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone is:

Visitor Center
Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
S91 W39091 Hwy 59
Eagle, WI 53119
Phone: (262) 594-6200

To experience the Kettle Moraine firsthand, hike another interpretive trail. Brochures are available at the trail head or at the Visitor Center.

- Bald Bluff: Native American and Natural History Theme
  County H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra

- Lone Tree Bluff: Oak Opening and Glacial Theme
  Esterly Road, north of Whitewater Lake

- Paradise Springs: Cultural History Theme (accessible)
  County N, NE of Eagle

- Rice Lake: Wetlands Theme
  Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of Forest

- Stony Ridge: Glacial Geology Theme
  Highway 59, State Forest Visitor Center

- Stute Springs & Homestead: Cultural history theme
  County Z, one mile south of the intersection with Highway 59.

Help us save resources: If you no longer have use for this brochure, please return it to the brochure box at the beginning of the trail.