

## **WARNECKE WOODS NATURAL AREA TRAIL INFORMATION & SITE HISTORY**

Welcome to the Warnecke Woods Interpretive Trail! Please use this brochure as your guide to enjoy our Natural Area. Warnecke Woods contains a Forest fragment and a 5-acre restored Prairie. For your enjoyment, we have created hiking/walking trails in the forest but use caution as some stretches are steep. There are no facilities at this location.

In 1984, Mrs. Fred (Marie) Warnecke and her two daughters donated a 28.0 acre tract to the District, now known as a Warnecke Woods. This site is located in Dover Township, section 32, about 2 miles Northwest of Princeton near the Red Covered Bridge. In 2003, we had an Outdoor Education Center built. Every year the District hosts a 5th Grade Conservation Kids Day at Warnecke Woods. Several educational tours and activities are also available throughout the year. Contact us for scheduling.

**WILDFLOWERS:** Spring woodland wildflowers are a big draw at Warnecke, but that is not the only place you can find wildflowers. The prairie is also home to many species of wildflowers. There is always something in bloom at Warnecke Woods!

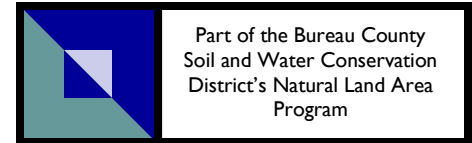
**MAMMALS:** Whitetail deer, squirrels, chipmunks, deer mice, raccoons, opossums call Warnecke Woods their home. Be careful not to get too friendly with the animals!

**BIRDS:** Warnecke is a great place to birdwatch. The habitat diversity gives the birdwatcher many opportunities to see and hear birds. From migrating birds that stop for a "fill up" to year-round birds that call Warnecke their home, this site is worth the visit!

**REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS:** Be careful not to step on any of these little creatures! If you are quick enough to spot them, there is a great variety of turtles, snakes, salamanders, frogs, and toads at Warnecke Woods.

**WATERSHED:** We all live in a watershed. Warnecke Woods is located in the Big Bureau Creek Watershed. Water from this site eventually flows to the Illinois River, then into the Mississippi River and on to the Gulf of Mexico! Realize then, what happens at this location affects many things.

*The Bureau County SWCD is an  
Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. Enjoyed this Natural Area? We have  
more!! Contact the Bureau Co. SWCD Office for more information,  
312 East Backbone Road, Princeton, IL 61356  
815/875-8732 ext. 3*



## **WARNECKE WOODS NATURAL AREA**

# TRAIL GUIDE



Bureau County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
(815) 875-8732 ext. 3

**Warnecke Woods Natural Area**  
41-1835 NORTH AVENUE  
PRINCETON, IL 61356

Explore the Nature of Warnecke Woods!

## INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

1. Oak/Hickory Forests are the major forest type in Illinois. Biologists describe many of the smaller tracts of forest we now have in Illinois as forest fragments. This Tuliptree is an example of a tree that was introduced to this forest fragment and is well established although it is not usually found here.

2. Most forests have been altered by man. Sugar Maples do extremely well in shaded forests. They often out-compete native oaks and hickories for sunlight. Sugar maples can shade out wildflowers on the forest floor.

3. Making brush piles for wildlife is a good way get rid of unwanted downed limbs. Brush piles provide habitat for small wildlife such as rabbits, mice and snakes.

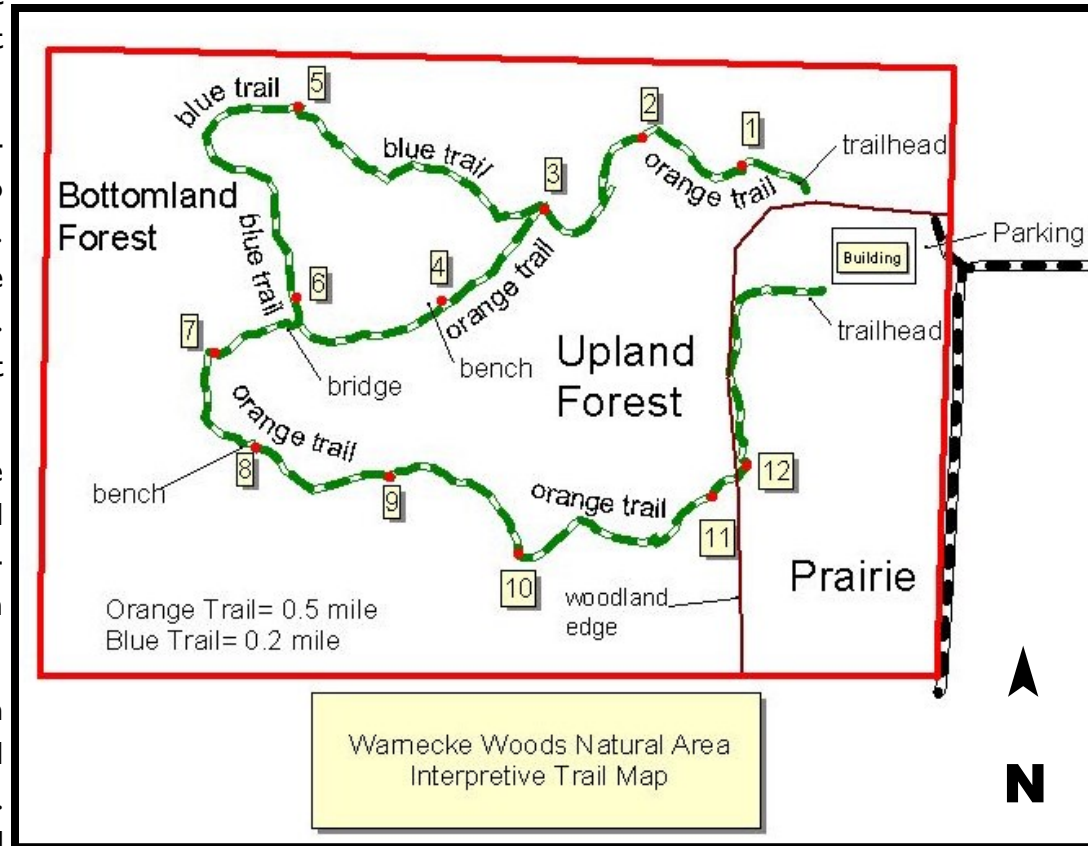
4. Notice the transition from Upland Forest to Bottomland forest as you descend the big hill. Upland forests are characterized

by Oaks and Hickories, while forests that contain Black Walnut, Green Ash, and Silver Maple are usually bottomland forests.

5. Skunk cabbage is the earliest spring flower at Warnecke Woods. It can be

found off the trail near the fence to the North. Nettles have their own way of saying “hi”! Watch for these plants as you’re hiking.

6. Erosion is a natural process where soil particles are moved by wind or water. Southeast of the bridge, a natural channel has formed bringing soil down from the hill above to the flatland below. This is example of soil being moved by



water. This sedimentation fills the channel and causes the water to overflow the banks.

7. Beyond this sign to the West, is a native stand of Swamp White Oak. This species likes to have its feet wet and is one of the few native stands in

this area.

8. Larger wildlife, like whitetail deer, tend to bed down in dense cover and dead trees are left to be used for nest cavities for smaller animals.

9. Invasive plants, such as Garlic Mustard, are common to Bureau County’s forests. Learn to ID and pull them before they flower and set seed.

10. Openings in the forest canopy are created by storm damage and provide opportunities for young trees to grow. Northern Orioles and Wood Pewees are two species of bird that like open forests. Listen and look for them!

11. The forest edge is a niche that is inhabited by many species. In this transition area, the wildlife worlds collide and much activity can usually be found!

12. Prairie and old field meadows are very important habitats. Many species of insects can be found here; watch for butterflies and damselflies. In Spring, you will see this area blackened from a prescribed burn.

Burning is a management tool the District uses to maintain this habitat type.

*IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 911.  
Site address is on front of brochure!!*