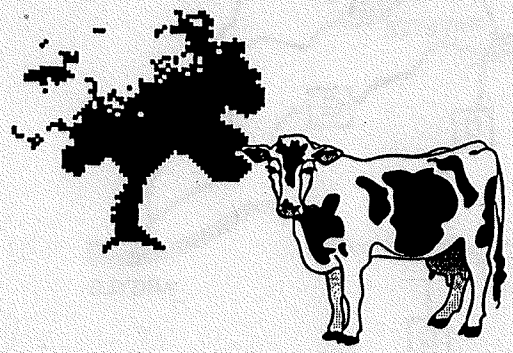
PECATONICA TRAIL

(from Calamine to Belmont)

IN

LAFAYETTE COUNTY



The 10 mile long Pecatonica Trail is on a former branch line of the Milwaukee Road railroad between Belmont and Calamine.

The limestone surfaced trail goes through the scenic valley of Bonner Branch of the Pecatonica River. It slopes very gently from an elevation of 1,010 feet above sea level at Belmont to 824 feet at Calamine.

There is parking for all trail users in Belmont and Calamine.

Bonner Branch, named for an early settler, swings from side to side of the trail; there are 24 bridges totaling about 1,306 feet in length. The bridges have railings and planked decks.

The valley becomes deeper, steeper, and more wooded in the eastern part, and widens into a marshy area near where Bonner Branch joins the Pecatonica River just west of Calamine.

Woods around the trail are mainly white, burr, black and red oak, shagbark hickory, bigtooth aspen and black cherry, with some basswood, maple and elm. In wetter areas there are willow, cottonwood, soft maple and boxelder. There are many prairie plants near the trail, both wet and mesic.

In season, you can pick raspberries, blackberries and wild grapes along the trail.

The trail corridor provides a home for quail, turkey, pheasant, bluebird, heron, and other songbirds, as well as raccoon, fox, woodchucks, squirrels, mink, muskrats, coyote, beaver and deer.

Bonner Branch has smallmouth bass and other fish. Near the Pecatonica River there are channel catfish. The sparkling clear creek can be seen the entire 10 mile ride.

There once was a mill on Bonner Branch near present Highway O and lead mines about a mile west of Calamine near the present trail.

Calamine is a community of about 40 people. St. Michael's Catholic Church is its most prominent landmark. Calamine was platted in 1856 and its first building, a railroad station, was built the same year.

The railroad that is now the Pecatonica Trail was built in 1867-1869 by the Mineral Point Railroad as a branch of its line between Mineral Point and Warren, Illinois, a mile south of the state line. The branch was extended 7.5 miles west to Platteville in 1870 by the Dubuque, Platteville and Milwaukee Railroad. Both companies became part of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1880. The branch became known for frequent washouts. As many as 12 trains a day, mostly combined livestock, freight and passenger trains, used the line.

As the highways were improved, rail traffic declined. On December 21, 1971, the railroad asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon this branch line. The request was granted July 31, 1974, effective September 4, 1974. The Natural Resources Board voted October 24, 1974 to establish the trail.

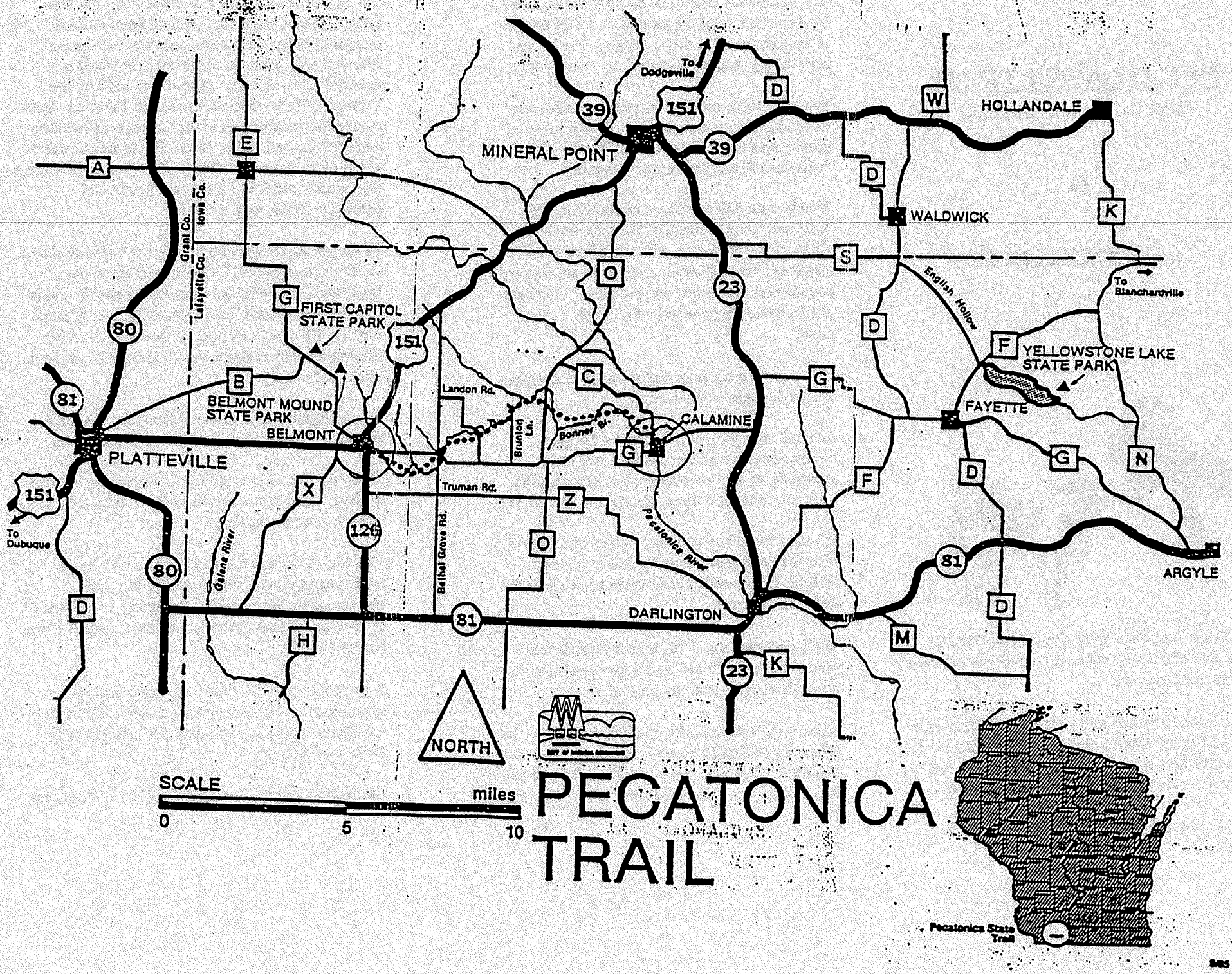
The Pecatonica Trail is one of the many beautiful landscapes to view to experience nature close up.

We'd like you to join us for a bit of history, outdoor recreation and "get-away-from-it-all" relaxation in a beautiful country setting.

This trail is open to hikers, bicyclists and horse riders year around. Cross-country skiers and snowmobilers are permitted December 1st to April 1st and motorcycles and ATV's are allowed April 1st to November 15th.

Snowmobile and ATV have state registration requirements. 18 year old bikers, ATV, Motorcycle and Horseriders need a Cheese Trail Sticker or a DNR Trail Sticker.

Lafayette County, Bluebird Capital of Wisconsin.


PECATONICA TRAIL
MINERAL POINT
HOLLANDALE
WALDWICK
FIRST CAPITOL STATE PARK
BELMONT MOUND STATE PARK
BELMONT
PLATTEVILLE
CALAMINE
FAYETTE
YELLOWSTONE LAKE STATE PARK
DARLINGTON
ARGYLE
To Dodgeville
To Blanchardville
To Dubuque
Grant Co.
Iowa Co.
Lafayette Co.
English Hollow
Landon Rd.
Brunton Ln.
Bonner St.
Truman Rd.
Bethel Grove Rd.
Galena River
Pecatonica River
NORTH
SCALE
miles
0
5
10
Pecatonica State Trail