

BIRDING NINESTONE LAND TRUST

Directions to Ninestone Land Trust in southern Carroll County:

1. For those coming from Berryville or North: From intersection of Hwy. 62 E & Hwy. 21 S just east of Berryville, take Hwy. 21 South for 10 + miles to the site of the former Cedar Creek Country Store (now converted to a residence) on the RIGHT. Immediately after the store & parking lot turn RIGHT onto the gravel road marked CR 512. Do not cross the bridge over Cedar Creek! Continue on gravel road CR 512 for 1 MILE, staying to the LEFT at any choices. You will pass 3 mailboxes on the LEFT, one a large blue mailbox. Continue on down the drive to our log cabin on the LEFT.

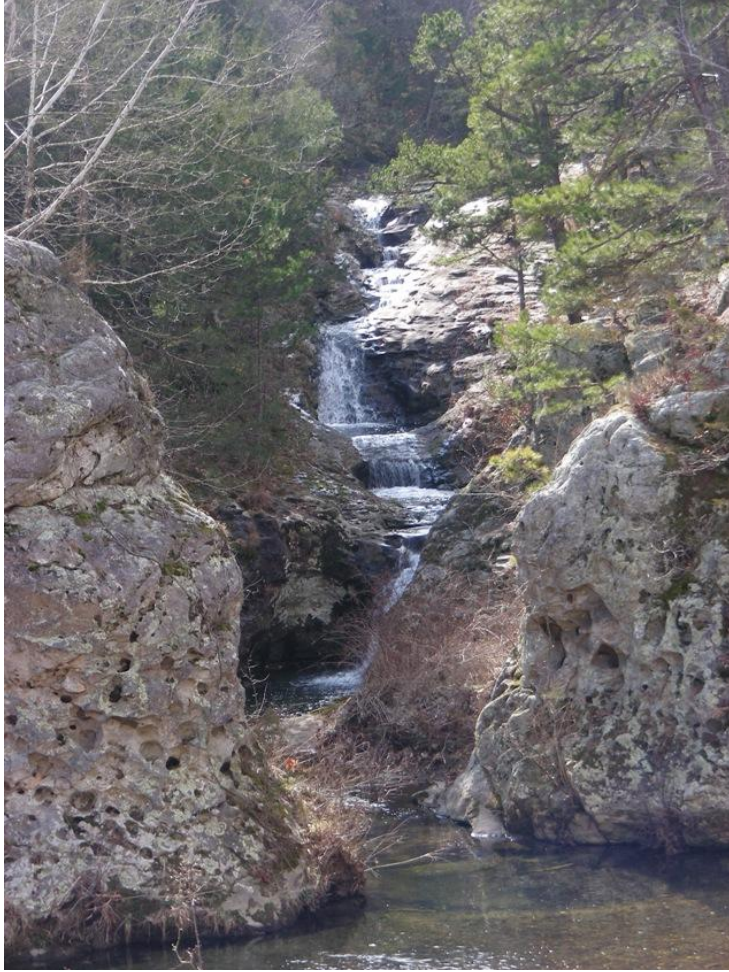
2. For those coming from Fayetteville or South: From intersection of Hwy. 412 & Hwy. 21 N, take Hwy. 21 North for about 7 + miles. Cross the Cedar Creek Bridge & immediately turn LEFT onto the gravel road CR 512 before you get to the site of the former Cedar Creek Country Store (now converted to a residence) on the LEFT. Continue on gravel road CR 512 for 1 MILE, staying to the LEFT at any choices. You will pass 3 mailboxes on the LEFT, one a large blue mailbox. Continue on down the drive to our log cabin on the LEFT.

Please note: Ninestone Land Trust is private property. The public is welcome on organized field trips. Visits at other times are usually welcome, but must be arranged in advance. For more information, contact: Judith Ann Griffith & Don Matt, Ninestone Land Trust, 870-545-3559. Email: 9waterfall9@gmail.com.

Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society hosts regular field trips to Ninestone. We usually start these trips at 9 AM in order to allow for travel time. All trips are free & open to the public. Everyone is welcome! You do not need to be an Audubon member or an experienced observer to participate. Birders are welcome, of course, but so are botanists, hikers, and those who just want to explore the rural Ozarks. We often have a pot luck style lunch, accompanied by the waterfalls, so plan to bring your own lunch or something to share with others.

Ninestone features a wide variety of habitats: a series of fine waterfalls that cascade over sandstone kettles, Piney Creek, classical Ozark upland fields, sandstone glades, soaring bluff lines (we'll see them from on top and see them from below), stands of both mixed hardwood





species and native shortleaf pines, and the Ozark birds and transients associated with the many different habitat types. Slow walking through these habitats provides an excellent way to get a feel for the birds and plants of the region.

During winter 2012-2013, a flock of Red Crossbills was seen and heard regularly in the shortleaf pines at Ninestone. Audio recordings demonstrated these were call type 3 crossbills with small bills associated with small cones.

Black Vultures & Great Horned Owls nest in grottoes in the bluff face. Louisiana Waterthrushes are common along Piney Creek. Forest nesting birds include Kentucky Warblers, Ovenbirds, Yellow-throated Warblers, Northern Parula Warblers, Acadian Flycatchers, Summer Tanagers, Pine Warblers, Barred Owls

and Pileated Woodpeckers . Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers nest in the glades. In addition to Hermit Thrushes, Bald Eagles are commonly seen all winter at Ninestone, often in impressive numbers. The long list of Ninestone birds also includes many transients passing through the Ozarks during the migration periods of spring and fall.

The 412 acres of Ninestone are being preserved to protect unique ecological values. The land is an affiliate of the Ozark Regional Land Trust.

Two of the largest glades at Ninestone are being restored with the help of grants through Arkansas Game & Fish Commission & the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This will ultimately benefit the native communities of glade plants which include *Coreopsis lanceolata*, *Talinum* - aka Fame Flower, Ladies Tresses - a tiny native orchid, Hairy Lip Ferns, Indian Plantain, Barbara's Buttons, *Liatris hirsuta*, as well as Big Bluestem & other grasses. More native seeds are expected to germinate as the



restoration proceeds. If then deemed suitable habitat, Collared lizards may even be reintroduced to the sandstone bluff top glade.



At the waterfalls, numerous special wildflowers grow from crevices in the sandstone that has been eroding for eons to form the pools or kettles. The leaves & white blooms of Ozark Wake Robin crowd from cracks next to the largest pool in spring along with *Collinsea violacea* & Birdfoot Violets. There, *Coreopsis trypteris* flowers in summer followed by *Rudbeckia fulgida* & Great Blue Lobelia which grow among a fascinating array of Lichens, Mosses, Ferns & Liverworts. One of the lichens, *Usnea* - aka

Old Man's Beard, is used for nesting material by Parula Warblers.

Ninestone is located just south of Berryville, off highway 21, about one hour drive northeast of Fayetteville. Depending upon weather conditions, Ninestone field trips include several shallow creek crossings. If you have rubber boots (Muck boots, barnyard boots, etc), they might be helpful. The creek, a traditional body of water in the Ozarks, also gladly accepts tennis shoes & bare feet.

NWAAS sponsored field trip works quite well regardless of your mobility situation. If extensive walking & hiking doesn't work for you, there is plenty of high quality scenery right where we park, at the home of Don Matt & Judith Ann Griffith. The amazing waterfalls are easily seen there and heard as well. Piney Creek is just below, with its waterthrushes plus migrants passing through the Ozarks. So you don't need to be very mobile to enjoy all of this, plus the big native pine grove and farm yard. This is all fun & fulfilling stuff to do while everyone else is "off to the woods & fields."



Photographs of Prairie Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, and Eastern Towhee courtesy of Jacque Brown.