

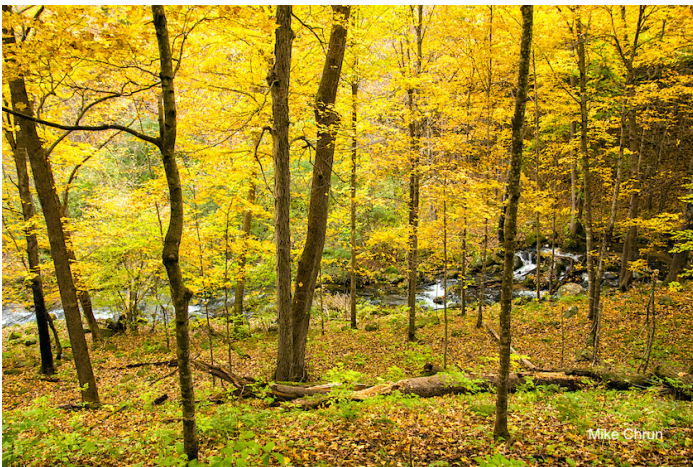
## Ginny Gaynor

My all-time favorite must-go-every-year spot for woodland wildflowers is the Osceola Loop (Ridgeview Trail) I'm going to try approaching it from the bottom of creek like Mike suggests. Typically I follow the Osceola loop (maplewood basswood forest) in early spring for the hepatica and hundreds of dutchman's breaches in the first 1/4 of that trail. Then a week or so later I do the Chisago loop (oak, bedrock savanna, and some pine) for the mats of spring beauty and the rue anemone. There are trout lily on both loops. <https://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/upload/2010%20hiking%20sb.pdf>

## Mike Chun

**Osceola Loop (Ridgeview Trail):** Out of Osceola going north on Hwy 35 take the first left on County C or the Wisconsin Rustic Road. In a little over a mile, you will come to the parking for the Osceola Loop and its many photo opportunities during all seasons. There are several different paths you can take. The first is to follow the trail to the left over a small creek. This is the Osceola Loop trail hikeable in all seasons. Much of it goes through a **mature maple forest with wild flowers, lichen covered logs, mushrooms, and ferns** depending on the season. Early in the hike, after going between the pines you go along the edge of a steep slope that goes down to a creek. Often you hear the

**cascading creek** flowing towards the St. Croix River. In the fall on a sunny day one can easily imagine being on the Appalachian Trail. There is a path down to the creek right in the area where you first get a good view of it. The creek on that side has many large boulders. In the spring are clumps of **Dutchman's breeches** and very early you can find emerging **skunk cabbage** in the wet spots. In the fall you can work with the fallen leaves. In the winter I love to go there to capture the **unique ice formations** the creek forms. To get to the other side of the creek, rather than taking that first left, simply go straight ahead. You quickly are at a bridge that crosses the creek. Right away there is



a spot where quite easily you can get a shot looking straight down the creek. In the spring the many rocks in the creek are covered with bright green moss. In the winter the rocks are usually snow covered. In both seasons they are a nice contrast to the water. One can follow the creek all the way down to the St. Croix River on that side although there is a steep grassy bank, a couple of narrow spots, and an area that can be a little muddy. But there are many places to set up a tripod. If you want to see the stretch described I'd recommend going to the bottom of it and working your way up. Instead of veering to the left after crossing that bridge, simply continue on the path. It's an old road to the farmstead that was once there. As you reach the bottom of the trail, there is an open grassy area to the left. The trail isn't marked but enough people go on it that you can see it. You come to the creek where it goes over a little dam and cascades down. Simply follow the creek back up. In places it's a little bit of a bushwhack but well worth it. (To the right of the trail down is the Chisago Loop: lots of lichen covered rocks and logs under mostly maple trees. Personally, I think it doesn't come close to the Osceola Loop.)

