

St. Olaf Natural Lands Afternoon Adventure: Norway Valley

● **Access Points:** Access Norway Valley either from the [roundabout near Hill-Kitt](#) or from the [west end of the RNS parking lot](#)

Length: 0.4 miles

Time: 15 minutes

Accessibility: The Norway Valley trail is narrow and made of gravel and dirt, at most no more than 4 feet wide. The trail meanders up a steep hill with short steps.

Trail Description: The oldest existing woodland area on campus, Norway Valley is a 15-acre parcel containing native hardwood tree species as well as understory species of wildflowers and shrubs that were in the original maple-basswood forest ecosystem. Norway Valley is considered a secondary-growth forest. Before this land was sold to St. Olaf in the nineteenth century, the owner logged all the large trees. So what we see now is a woodland that grew back from the natural seeding of the smaller trees that weren't cut at that time. While the mature trees in Norway Valley are now over 100 years old, they are still smaller than old-growth trees that would have been here before colonization.

Natural History Notes: As you wander through Norway Valley, watch as the type of plants change depending on where you are. On the south slopes looking over Highway 19 you will find lush hillsides of [sedges](#) and

[bottle brush grass](#) mixed with upland flowers such as [zigzag goldenrod](#), [white snakeroot](#), and a few vestigial [american bellflowers](#). In the lower shadier and wetter areas, you will see a wide carpet of [wood nettle](#) that is also in flower. Look for [bumble bees](#) and other pollinating insects as they visit these nondescript white and green flowers. Our resident [deer](#) also enjoy spending time here, along with chatty red, gray, and fox squirrels. If you are quiet and look up into the [Norway spruces](#) in the bottom of Norway Valley, you may also see the silhouette of a [barred owl](#) watching your lunchtime office escape.



More information at stolaf.edu/naturallands



