

# Spring Butterfly Trek

## Crex Meadows to the Namekagon Barrens

When: Saturday May 13 or 20, 2023 (9:00 AM to 4:00PM)

Leader: Dean Hansen, local butterfly enthusiast



For over a dozen years now, Stillwater butterfly enthusiast Dean Hansen has led a day-long trip to look for spring butterflies in the jack pine/oak barrens in northwest Wisconsin's Burnett County.

The trip will start at the Visitors' Center at the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area just north of Grantsburg, WI, and will end up on the Namekagon Barrens in far northeast Burnett County. This area in Wisconsin is very sandy, lightly populated, and with square miles of county land to explore. And there is a fine component of the spring butterflies to see. The dry plant communities here feature lots of lupines, blueberries, bearberries, jack pines, and New Jersey tea. All of these (and other) native plant species are the specific host plants for the larvae of various species of butterflies. A beautiful bog with cotton grass and wild cranberries will also be explored to look for its unique butterfly fauna.

What butterfly species might be seen? Four species of "blues," four species of elfins, five species of dusky winged skippers, and the Olympia Marble are very likely, and a host of others butterflies are strong possibilities. Several of these species are in flight only in early May to early June, and if one doesn't see them then, one won't see them for the rest of the year. Hopefully, some of the overwintering butterfly species will still be in flight. The best viewing year was 2012, when 18 butterflyers saw a total of 31 butterfly species. 2017 was, well, a dismal failure; spits of snow at 9 AM kept butterfly numbers seen to zero. That's butterflying in May up here on the tundra. But we still had fun!

We will start at the Crex Meadows Visitors' Center at 9 AM and end up somewhere on Gomuluk Fire Lane on the Namekagon Barrens about 4 PM. Most of the viewing is within 100' or less of the road, so don't let any mobility issues keep you from joining us.

You **MUST** have had two Covid-19 vaccinations to participate. There will be a limit of eight participants from the MNNPS sign-up for each day.