



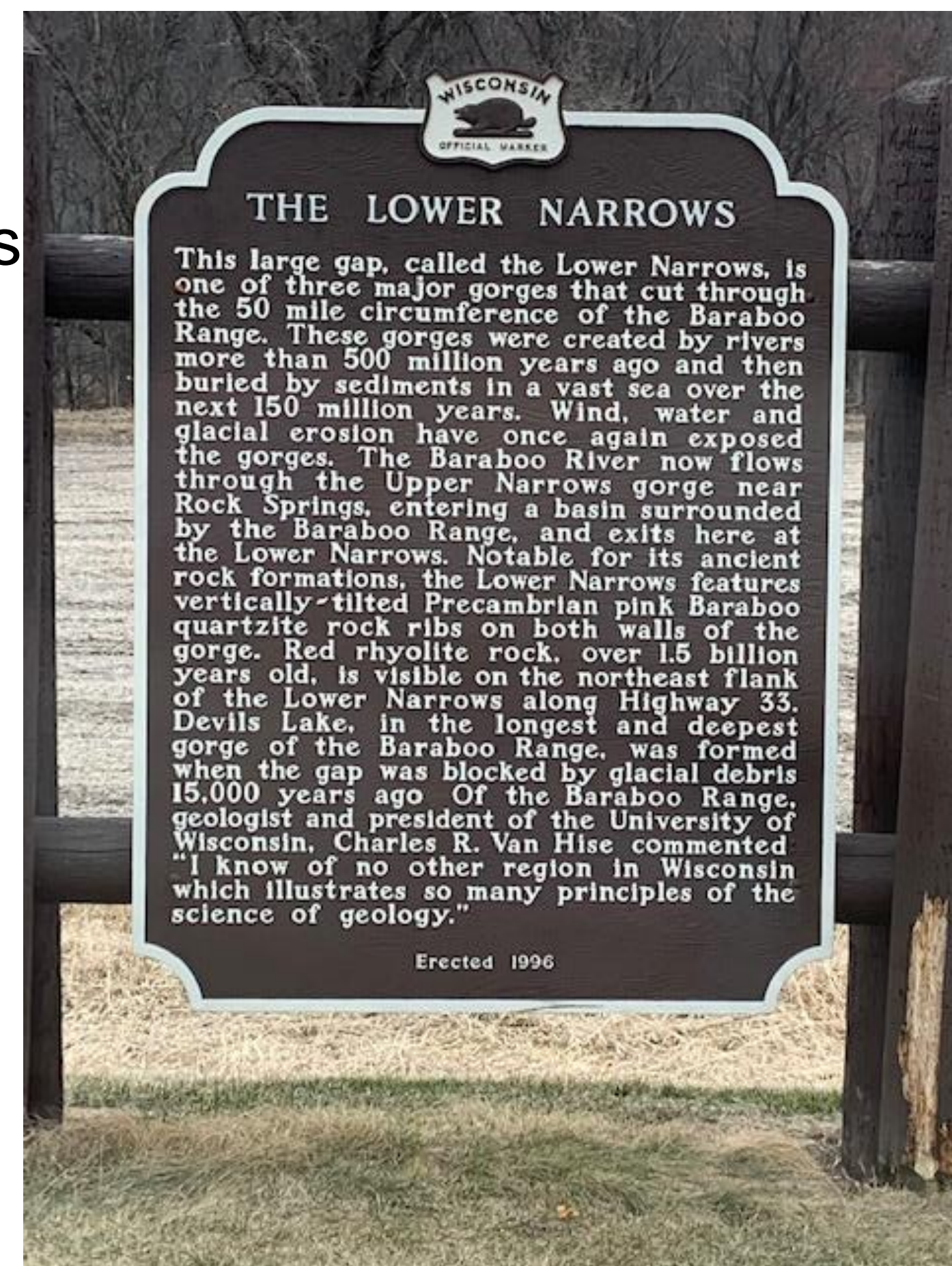
A Trip to Lower Narrows

Brooke Foye

Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI

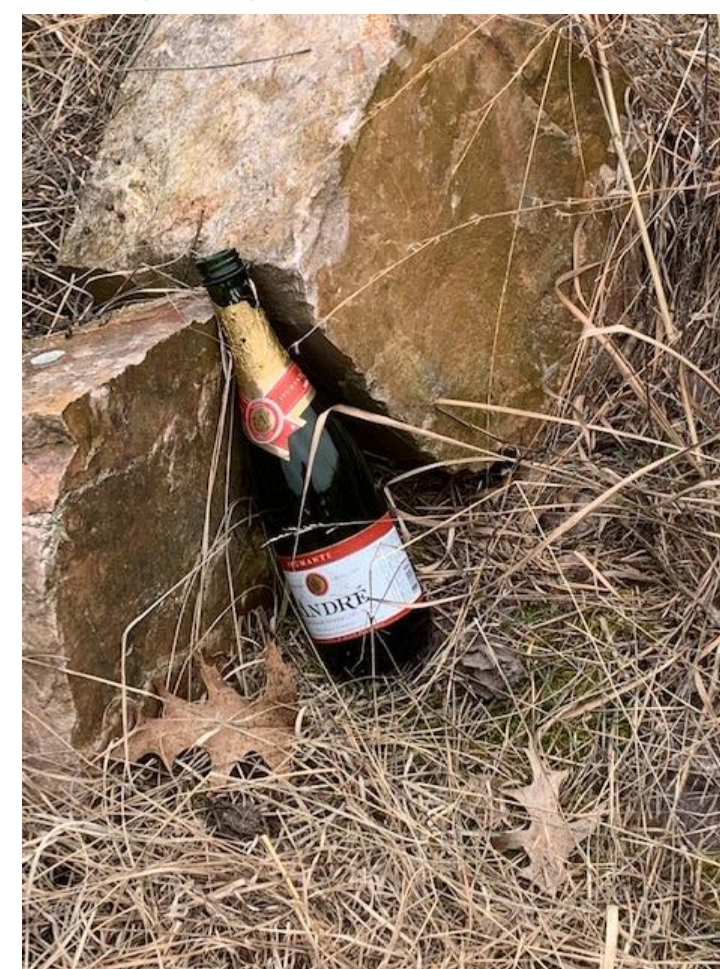
About Lower Narrows:

Lower Narrows, located in Sauk County, is approximately 146 acres of rock and wood. The Narrows represents a historic break in the Baraboo Range through which the Baraboo River now flows. The area today is used predominantly for hiking, hunting, dog walking, and environmental education.



Human Interaction:

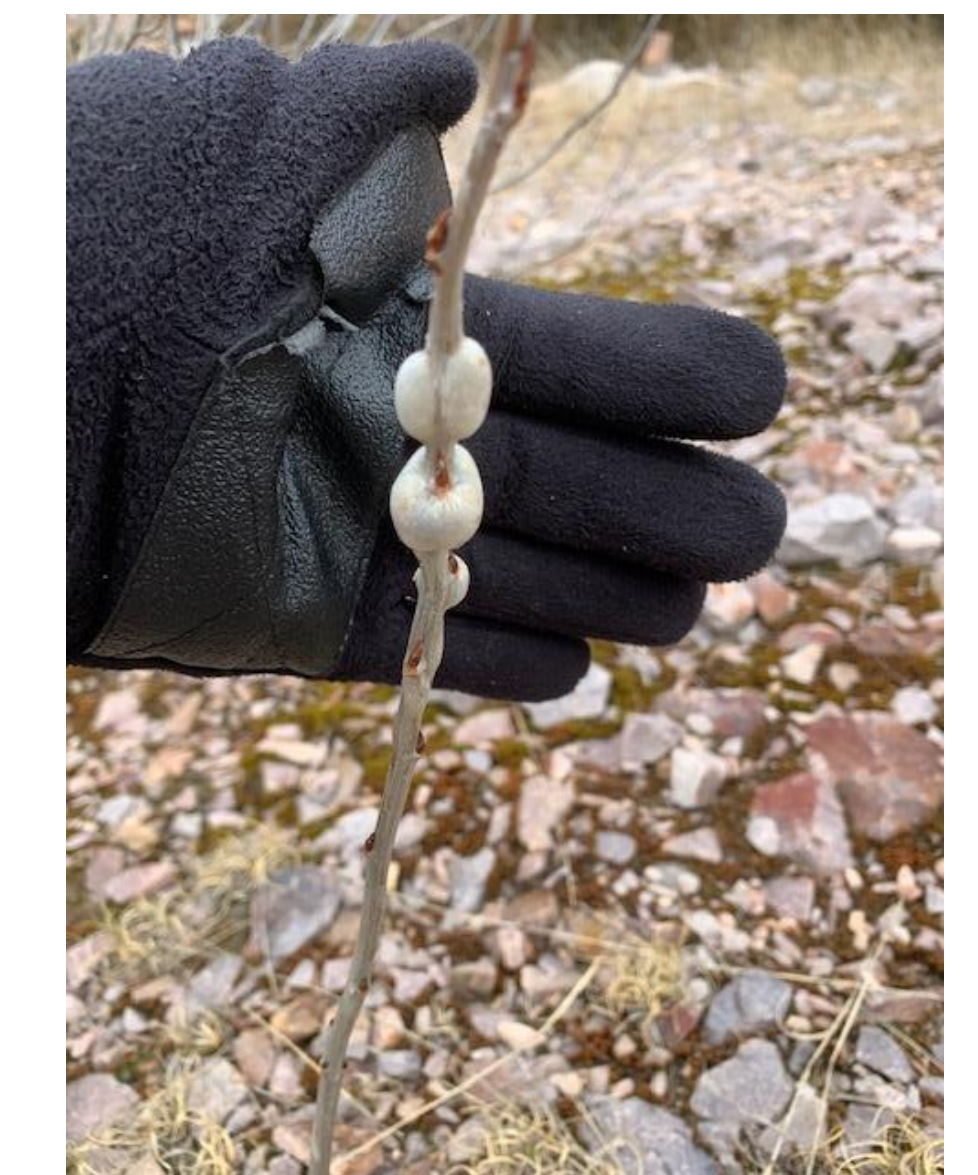
SNAs, as open to the public, are subject to human interaction, and tampering. Lower Narrows, in particular, is rather barren in comparison to other SNAs, and so those who visit the site who do not hunt or go hiking find other uses for the property. Copious amounts of trash and human interaction which violates the Leave No Trace initiative was found.



Visiting This SNA:

In trying to find this SNA, take the DNR's directions with a grain of salt. They are very much a locals directions, in that there is no set address to use with a GPS until one looks online at other sources. In addition, the walkable area of the Natural Area is rather small, meaning one can walk it's entirety in an hour and a half. At first, every trail looks as though it was made by people walking all over the place, and some very well were, but much of it is gravel and rock.

The area has no recreational facilities or any other facilities of any kind. There is a wire fence and sign next to the dirt parking, and then nothing official after that, just open space. One more well-used trail up the side of a cliff was marked with tissue paper on the trees by other patrons, not any official. The parking can fit a perceived maximum of 8 cars. The marker (see upper left photo) isn't actually at the site at all, but rather across the street at a historical marker.



Common Plants Found:

As a designated SNA, due to the site's historical importance, since 2006. Lower Narrows sports a unique combination of plant species. Along the west flank of the Narrows is a southern dry-mesic forest dominated by red oak, white oak, and basswood. The ground flora contains wildflowers including Dutchman's-breeches, rue anemone, wild geranium, bloodroot, shooting star, and large-flowered bellwort. Other species include common ninebark, red elder, wild columbine, maidenhair fern, white baneberry, and black snakeroot. Though few were visible on March 23, when most of the area that wasn't covered in snow was coated in dead leaves.

Uncommon Plants Found:

The area is quite scenic and supports several rare and uncommon species including maidenhair spleenwort and eastern prickly-pear cactus. Though again, none or few were found on this particular trip, as the weather was not ideal.

Invasive Species:

One plant which was found, and carefully avoided, in this particular visit to Lower Narrows was Poison Ivy, merely one strain of it, off the trail and growing next to a tree, but which will no doubt spread if not dealt with.



What Do We Do?

This site hasn't so much been neglected as it has never been cared for in the first place. The small size limits any manmade objects that can be added, however, proper railings over the rocky cliffs, and marking the correct trails would be an excellent start. In addition a dumpster at the entrance for people to correctly dispose of waste would do wonders to clean up the area, if for no other reason than to take away people's excuses for not taking the trash home. The site is also a valuable resource for Geological research and teaching, so perhaps a program targeted towards that would be apt. However, above everything, the site must first be given a proper address so that patrons can find it more easily.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my mother, for helping me find plants, human interaction, and finding the site itself.

References

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index.asp?SNA=533>



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