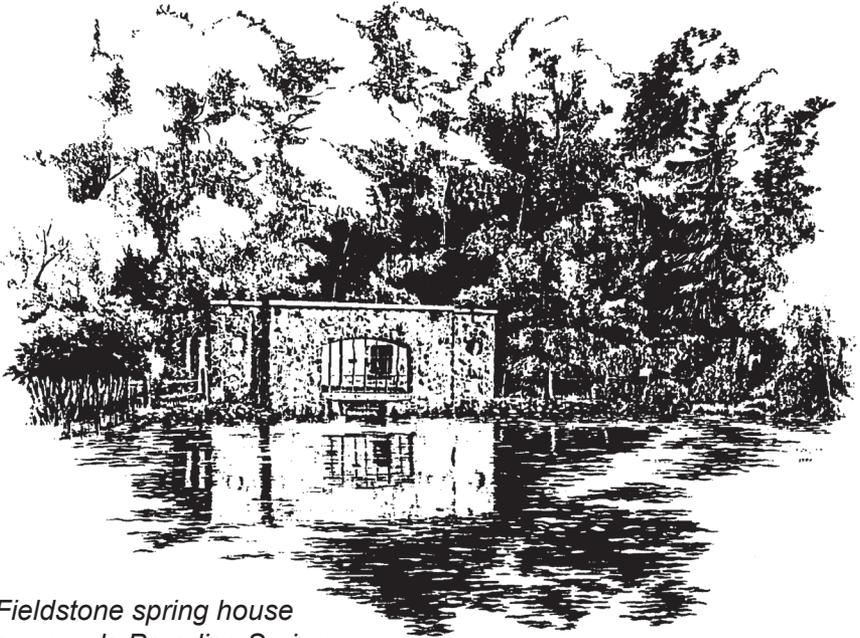


Kettle Moraine State Forest—Southern Unit

# Paradise Springs

Self-Guiding Nature Trail



*Fieldstone spring house  
surrounds Paradise Springs.*

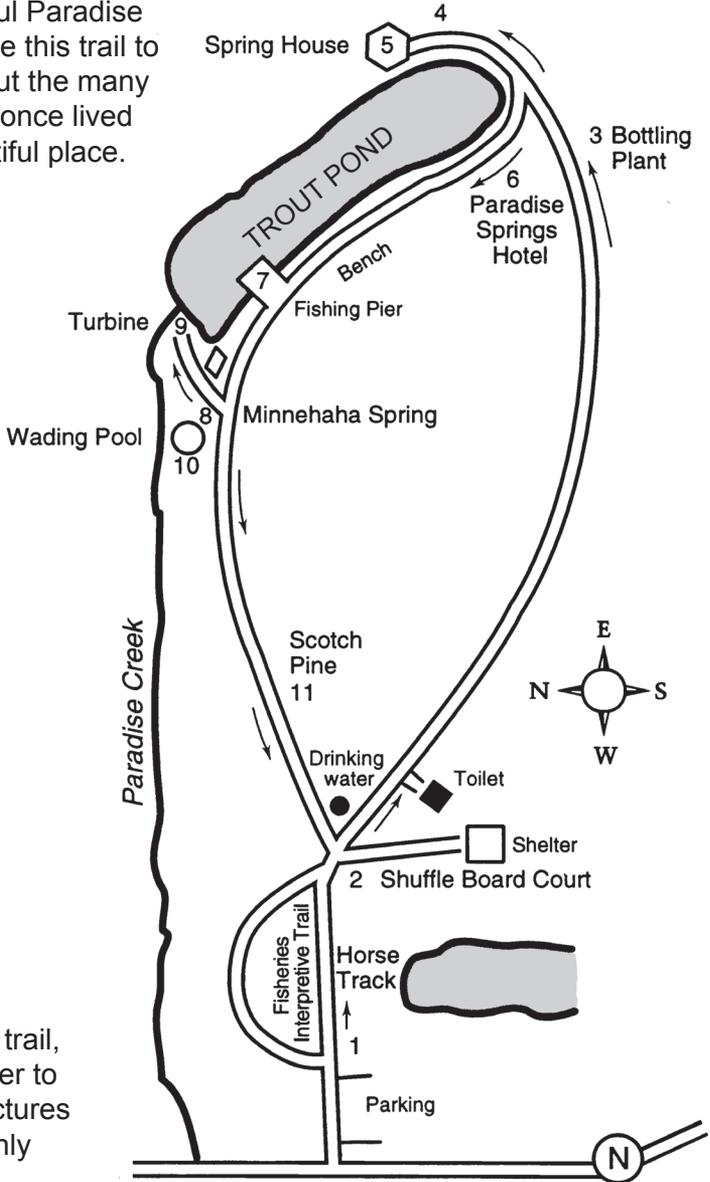
*This flat, asphalt-covered 1/2-mile trail accommodates people  
with disabilities. Accessible versions of this brochure are available  
at the Visitor Center on State Highway 59 west of Eagle.*



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Bureau of Parks and Recreation  
PUB-PR-228 2015

# Welcome to Paradise Springs

This brochure corresponds to numbered markers along the trail. Over the years, Paradise Springs has been owned by many different people. One owner was a millionaire who built a horse track, fishing hole, and an elaborate spring house over beautiful Paradise Springs. Hike this trail to find out about the many people who once lived at this beautiful place.



Enjoy the trail, but remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints.

# 1. Former Entrance and Horse Track



*Former entrance and horse track of Paradise Springs, circa 1930s.*

Welcome to Paradise Springs. The trail you are standing on was once the road shown in the photo. The horse track was in front of you, and the stone pillars were to your right on either side of the trail. Louis J. Petit, a multimillionaire dubbed the “Salt King,” built the track in the 1920s. Petit, who made his fortune in the salt mine business, was by far the wealthiest owner of Paradise Springs. The track was abandoned in 1932 when Petit died and has since grown wild with trees and shrubs. Petit’s grandson, August J. Pabst, who became a beer executive, inherited the property from Petit.

## 2. Tennis and Shuffle Board Court

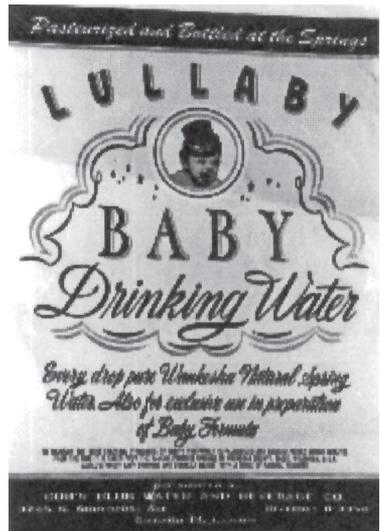
This large 50-foot concrete slab (now a picnic area) was once used as a tennis and shuffle board court. Louis J. Petit built the court in the 1930s.



*Tennis and Shuffle Board Court, circa 1930s.*

## 3. Bottled Spring Water

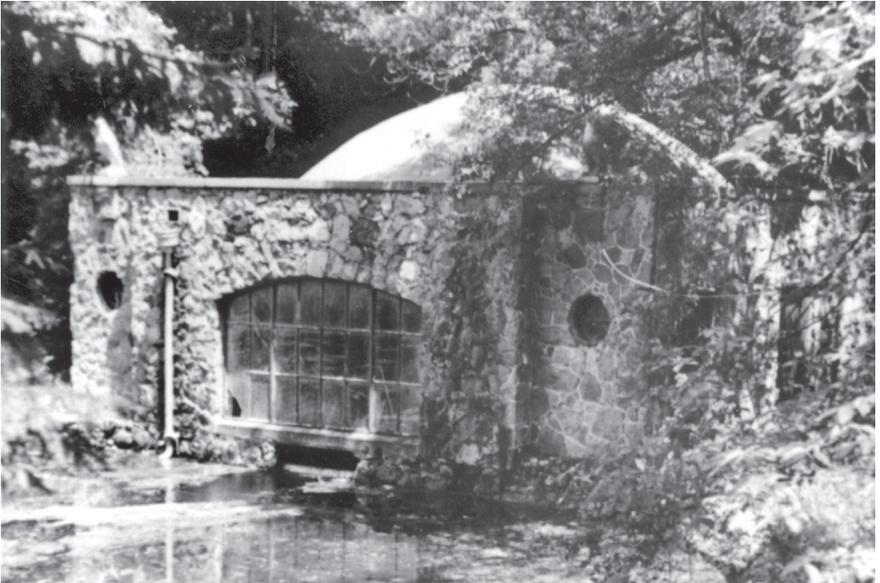
Since the late 1800s, people have enjoyed the pure spring water of Paradise Springs. Early owners called it *Minnehaha* and *Eagle Rock Springs*. The concrete steps and foundation before you are all that remains of the last spring water bottling plant at this site. This plant closed in the late 1960s. Spring water was pumped from the spring house to this building and sold by various companies under the names of *Natural Spring Water* and *Lullaby Baby Drinking Water*.



*Former bottling label*

## 4. Fieldstone Spring House

Most spring houses served a purely functional purpose—to protect the springs and to allow access to the water. This spring house was beautiful as well as functional. Mr. Petit built this spring house in the early 1930s with a wooden-and-copper dome roof and colorful fieldstone walls, no doubt one of the most elaborate spring houses ever built in Wisconsin. Though the roof is gone, the beauty of this spring house remains.

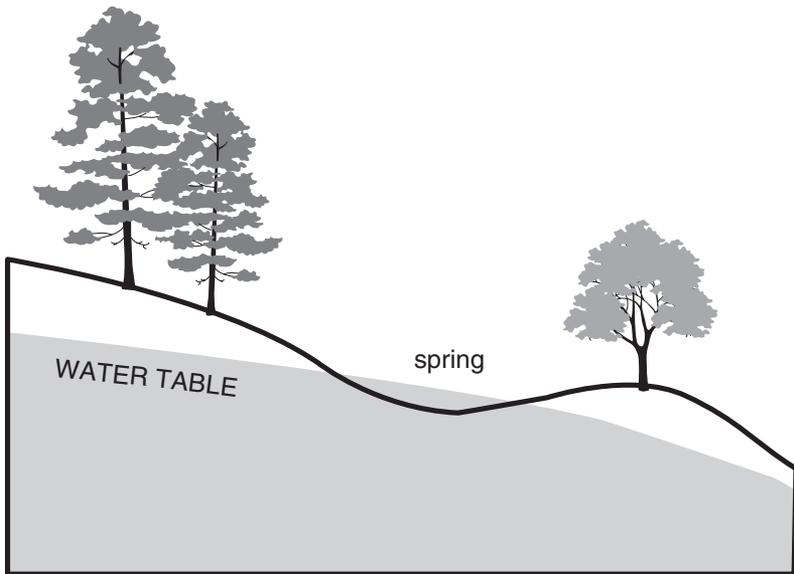


*Spring house with copper dome, circa 1970.*

## 5. Paradise Springs

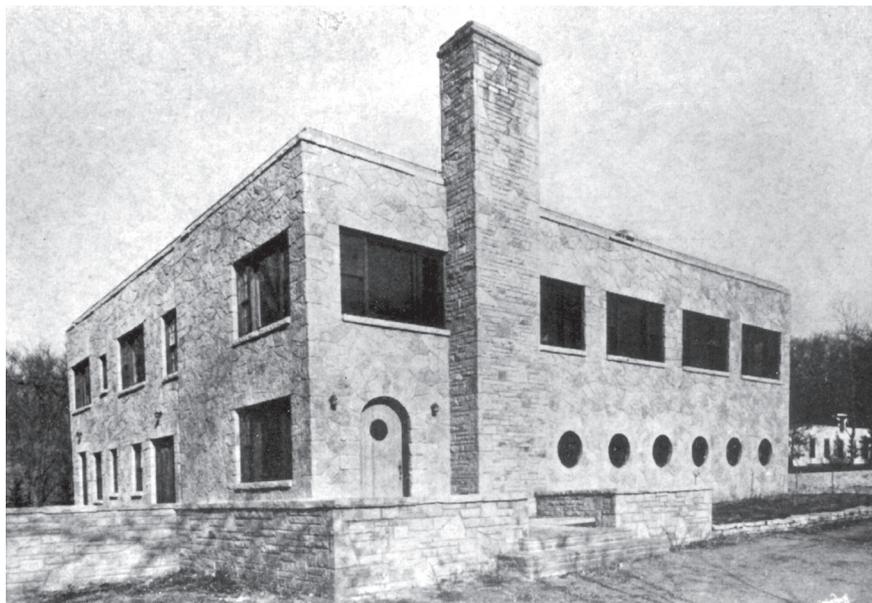
*Keep Paradise Springs clean. Please do not throw anything into the spring; Paradise Springs is not a wishing well.*

Paradise Springs is about 5 feet deep and maintains a temperature of about 47° F. year-round. Over 30,000 gallons of water flow from this spring each hour—that's 500 gallons each minute. Paradise Springs sits in a bowl-shaped depression where the water table reaches the surface.



## 6. Paradise Springs Resort Hotel

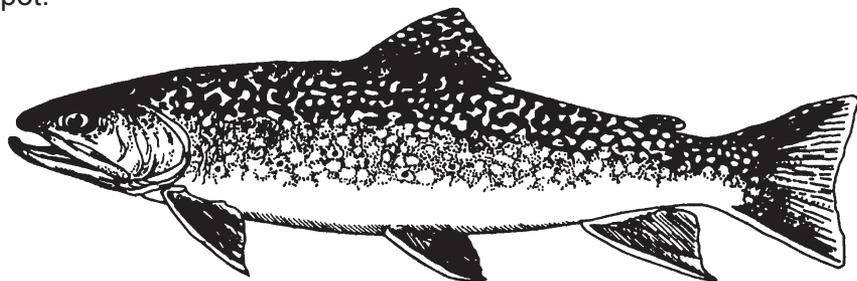
Post number 6 marks the former site of a massive 2-story resort built of locally quarried Lannon stone (Wisconsin dolomite). It had deluxe bedrooms with private, steam-heated tiled baths, a dining room, cocktail bar, and a roof garden with sundeck. An advertisement for the hotel described it as an “ideal vacation and honeymoon resort.” Gordon Mertens finished the hotel in 1948. Mertens acquired the property from Frank Fulton, and Fulton acquired the property from Petit’s grandson, August Pabst Jr. These changes in ownership occurred over just three short months. The building was removed in the 1970s.



*Paradise Springs Hotel, circa 1940s.*

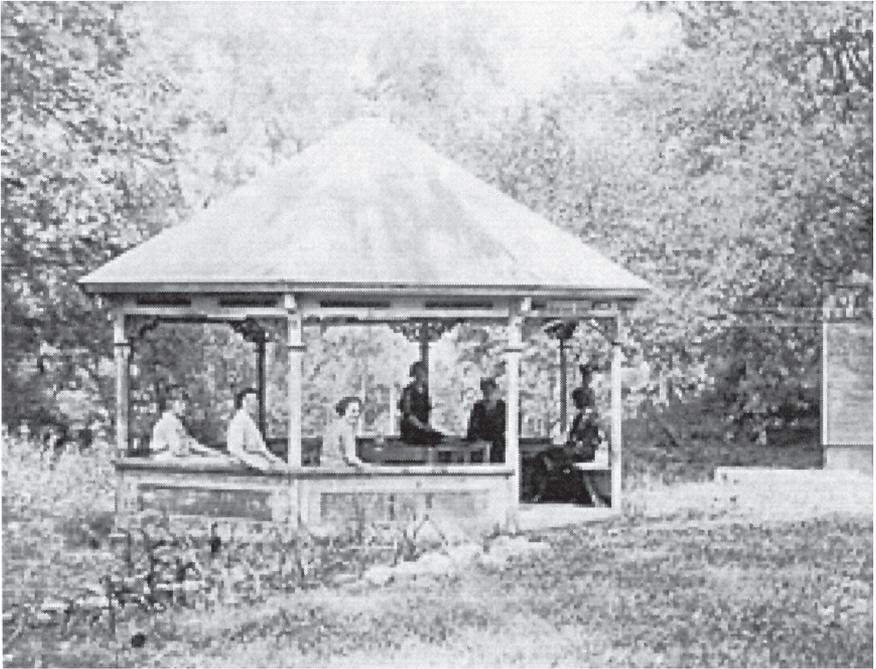
## 7. Brook Trout

In the early 1900s, Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Nichols stocked this pond with trout. They also had a menagerie of animals which included peacocks, monkeys and pheasants. This pond is still stocked with brook trout for your fishing and visual enjoyment. The wooden cribs you see below the surface provide hiding places for young trout. Brook trout are the only trout species native to the Kettle Moraine and are still found in cold spring water ponds and brooks throughout the region. In October, the trout in this pond spawn (lay their eggs) near the spring house on the gravel bottom. When spawning, brook trout turn a vibrant pink color and are easier to spot.



## 8. Minnehaha Spring

In the 1880s, former owner J. August Lins built a pavilion over the spring at this site. Under the pavilion, he installed a small railing around the spring and seats for his guests. Today, the spring is covered with a wooden lid to prevent small animals from becoming trapped in its 4-foot hole. Mr. Lins called this area “Minnehaha Springs.” Today, we refer to this spring as “Minnehaha” in honor of his ownership.



*Guests enjoy the pavilion over Minnehaha Spring, circa 1900.*

## 9. Water-driven Turbine



*Dam and turbine house, circa 1910.*

When L.D. Nichols acquired the property in the early 1900s, he built a water-driven turbine on the east side of the concrete dam. The turbine provided electricity for his house and grounds. The Nichols house was one of the first electrified homesites in the area. You can see the foundation of the turbine house on the other side of Paradise Creek.

## 10. Wading Pool and Trout Holding Tank

Mr. Petit built this pond as a wading pool for his grandchildren. At one time it received its water supply through an underground pipe connected to the large pond you just passed.

The rectangular, water-filled enclosure to the right was used as a holding tank for large trout. The tank kept the trout fresh until they were needed for a guest's supper at Paradise Springs Hotel, at stop number 6.



*Enjoying the wading pool, circa 1930s.*

## 11. Ornamental Plantings

Look for the orange-colored bark of nearby scotch pine trees. A native of Europe, scotch pine were planted about 40 years ago as an ornamental tree. Many of the trees at Paradise Springs are non-natives, such as Norway spruce and Norway maple, that were planted over the years for their ornamental value.

Today, we discourage the planting of non-native varieties because they crowd out native plants and thus become a nuisance.



*Scotch Pine*

# Thanks for Coming

We hope you have enjoyed **Paradise Springs Nature Trail**. To learn more about the cultural and natural history of the **Kettle Moraine State Forest** check out the exhibits at the State Forest Visitor Center on State Highway 59, 3 miles west of Eagle. The complete address and phone are:

Visitor Center  
Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit  
S91 W39091 Hwy 59  
Eagle, WI 53119  
Phone (262) 594-6200

To experience the Kettle Moraine firsthand, hike another interpretive trail. Brochures are available at the trail head or at the Visitor Center.

- Bald Bluff: Native American and natural history theme  
County Highway H, halfway between La Grange and Palmyra
- Lone Tree Bluff: Oak opening and glacial theme  
Esterly Rd, north of Whitewater Lake
- Rice Lake: Wetlands theme  
Kettle Moraine Drive, Southern edge of state forest
- Scuppernong Springs: Cultural history theme  
County Highway ZZ, Southeast of Ottawa Lake
- Stony Ridge: Glacial geology theme  
State Highway 59, State Forest Visitor Center
- Stute Springs and Homestead: Cultural history theme  
County Highway Z, one mile south of State Highway 59



Help us save resources: If you no longer have use for this brochure, please return it to the brochure box at the beginning of the trail.

This brochure is available in accessible formats.

*Front cover illustration by Mary Zacher*

# A Public-Private Success Story

The Department of Natural Resources and the Lions Clubs of Southeast Wisconsin worked together to develop Paradise Springs. Many thanks to Lions District 27-A1. The Lions, Lionesses and Leos contributed more than \$18,000 in cash, plus labor and equipment to help develop this beautiful nature area.

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