

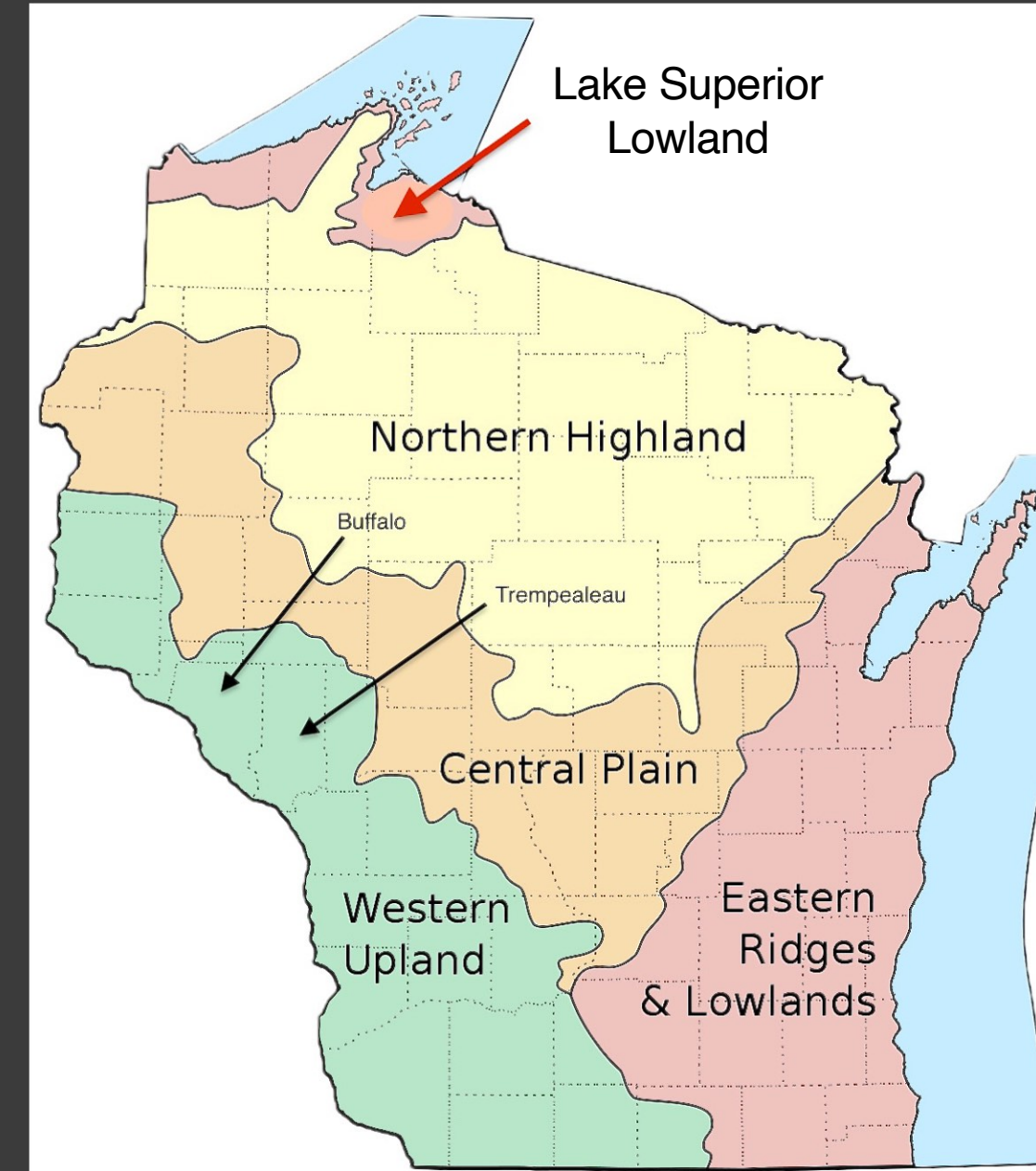


## Wisconsin's Western Upland

By Edward Marek



Wisconsin's Western Upland is a geographic region of the state. It can be rugged, with steep ridges, rolling hills and valleys, winding creeks, major and minor rivers, outcroppings, and caves. The region is in the state's Driftless Area, untouched by prehistoric glaciers. The Western Upland is arguably the most beautiful part of Wisconsin.



## Introduction

Professor Lawrence Martin, an American geographer, authored "The Physical Geography of Wisconsin" in which he divided Wisconsin into five Geographic Provinces or Regions: the Western Upland, Eastern Ridges and Lowlands, Central Plain, Northern Highland, and Lake Superior Lowland.

The Western Upland is the theme of this book.

Twenty-one Wisconsin counties lie in whole or in part in the Western Upland.

I have chosen to whittle these down to two counties, Buffalo and Trempealeau, though you might watch for one or two others.



This photo says a lot about the Western Upland. You see the forested ridge, the rolling hills, the winding road, the farm in-between growing and cultivating crops up and down the hills, the corn rows spaced with specialized technologies, all with an artistic flair! The next pages show more of these wonders.





To the left, a small farm house sits in the valley below the Montana Ridge in Buffalo County. Note the fields are farmed right up to the forest's edge. Above is a road coming down the Turner Valley lined with corn, also in Buffalo County.



**Contour farming like this in Trempealeau County, for me, is poetic. It is also a good conservation strategy. It minimizes erosion, and stores the rainfall and forage. Topographic technologies contribute to such precision farming. The photo to the right is from a Trempealeau ridge. Can you imagine farming this hilly land? Our farmers do it!**





Amazing to see how those farm buildings were nestled between the corn and the forest on that Trempealeau ridge. Then the lineup of trees guarding the path up the hill lends some majesty to another farm. To the right, the sun sheds its light on the Upland's hills in Buffalo County.



When I feel down and out, I have often gone to this park bench near Eleva, Buffalo County, overlooking the ridges afar, to rest, refresh, and move on. To the right, an automobile drives along a Buffalo County highway, amidst all the splendor.





**This bridge is historic and rare, a cantilever through truss bridge, stretching westbound across the Black River to the Mighty Mississippi, from La Crosse to Barron Island. It is stately, a dignified bridge.**



**This view from the ridge-top of Welch Coulee Rd. in Trempealeau County gives you a distant view of one of Wisconsin's famous trademarks, the red barn. They are disappearing, being replaced by the mundane but more cost effective pole barns. Enjoy the state's red barns while they last.**





There is a place perched 500 ft. above Alma called Buena Vista. Walking through the park toward the river you will see this imposing tree, as I did, in early November. I call the photo to the right, "Majesty in the Valley."





This narrow red barn is well suited to Irvins Coulee Rd. in Trempealeau County, discovered by me on one of my "get lost rides." A coulee is less than a valley, more a deep ravine carved out by water. In French, coulée, means "to flow."



Now you are in a valley, on Cooke Valley Rd. in Buffalo County.

Quite by chance, I came upon this troupe of cattle in the stream, gathered to enjoy some respite on a hot day.

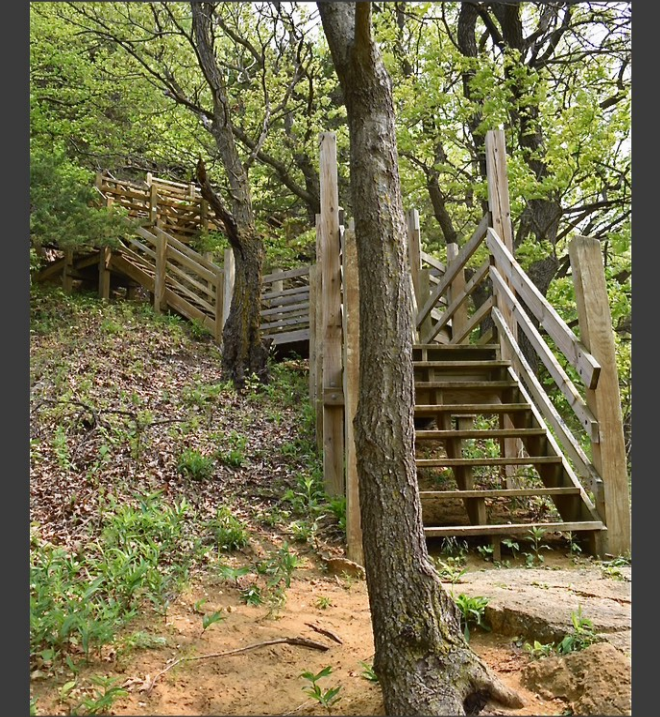
Once I came, they marched smartly down the stream to get away. Some got out of the stream up to "terra firma" to do the same.

It is always enjoyable to see farm animals freely grazing instead of being cooped up in barns.



**It's late October near Pigeon Falls in Trempealeau County and the leaves are turning, the wondrous spectacle of autumn in the Upland. But on the next page, it's still summer, and the horses are out in the pasture. Happily for me, they marched over toward my camera.**





I love Wisconsin's Western Upland Geographic Province. I could spend the rest of my life exploring the area.

The "get lost ride" is a fun way to do it. My motto is to take the road more narrow than the one you're on.

The stairs? Up to Brady's Bluff on the Mississippi River.

