Prepared in cooperation by the Dodge County Historical Society, Dodge County Environmental Services and the Goodhue County GIS Office

Devil's Staircase

LOCATION: Northwest side of Wildwood Cemetery near Wasioja

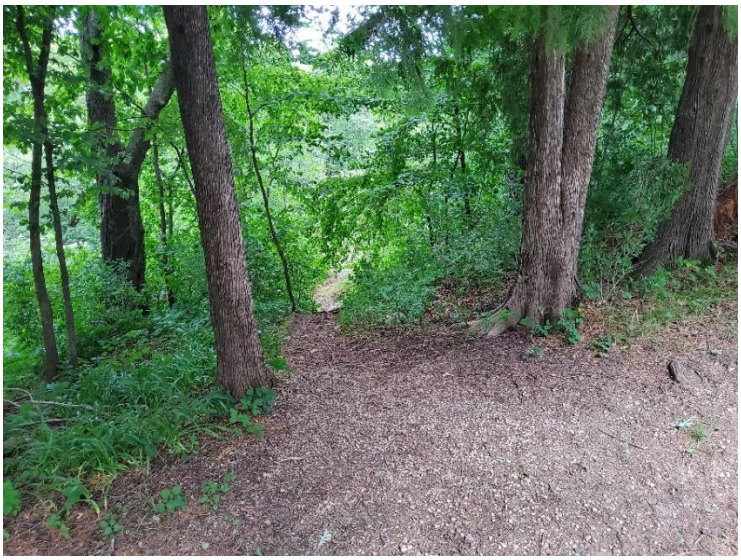
STATUS: Public, accessible through Wildwood Cemetery

TYPE: Historic, American Indian

HISTORY: Devil's staircase is a limestone cliff face overlooking the south branch middle fork of the Zumbro River inside Wildwood Cemetery. Three legends of this site are still discussed to this day. In summary, the first legend talks of two American Indian tribes battling, with one chief walking up the "staircase" bloodied and wearing a buffalo cape and skull, appearing to look like the devil. The second legend talks of Native Americans being chased by federal soldiers and were forced to jump off the cliff where they drowned. People say that if you look into the water you can only see a black hole or "the gateway to hell." Lastly, the third legend is that of a Native American chief who lost his daughter and buried her in the cemetery. He would visit her grave wearing a buffalo cape and antler headgear as the sun went down. This image made early settlers feel like they were seeing the devil. It is said that once a year at sundown you can see the shadow of the old chief. These local legends have changed many times over the years and historical evidence of this site has not been confirmed to this point.

OTHER RESOURCES:

PROPERTY PICTURES:



Devil's Staircase entrance, 2021



Devil’s Staircase, 2021



Devil’s Staircase overlook, 2021