

Hawn State Park (Whispering Pine Trail)

December 15, 2025

What? No Species List? Nope. We usually don't make species lists for our winter hikes because most plants are dormant. Trying to determine the species of a dormant plant from its dried-up remains is not always reliable. It serves little purpose to create unreliable species lists. So, we'll just give an overview of things that happened on our walk today.

WHERE WE WALKED: Not quite sure. Usually after crossing the 2 bridges from the parking lot, we identify the hazelnut shrub at the end of the bridge and then make a right turn and head westward towards the rhododendrons. But not today. After identifying the hazelnut by its winter buds, we turned left and followed the Whispering Pine Trail eastward. We only followed it a short while before going off-trail to explore the many Lamotte sandstone outcrops, looking for its special, acid-loving plants, especially its ferns.

But it was cold. Although the temperature was hovering around the freezing mark at walk time, it had been way down in the low teens just hours earlier. Still, the hearty bunch that showed-up on this frigid morning found quite a few interesting plants. Here are just a few:

- all 5 Betulaceae species (Musclewood, Hophornbeam, Alder, Hazelnut, and River Birch)
- several ferns, including the Christmas Fern, the Marginal Wood Fern, Rock Polypody, Hay-Scented Fern, and Bracken Fern.
- the *Goodyera pubescens* orchid
- Farkelberry and Lowbush Blueberry
- Partridgeberry
- Shortleaf Pine
- St. Andrews Cross
- Azalia
- Scarlet Oak (with its "snow on the mountain" buds)
- *Grimmea* – a black moss
- Shining Bedstraw (and it was still green!)
- Dittany with a frost flower!

PARTICIPANTS:

There were 11 of us botanists today, who are (in alphabetical order):

Kathy Bildner, Steve Bizub, Wayne Clark, Mike Colegrove, Michael Laschober, Len Meier, Burt Noll, John Oliver, David Steinmeyer, Kathy Thiele, and Laura Yates