

Anoka Sandplain Forest and Savanna Conservation

The Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation jointly initiated the Upper Mississippi River Watershed Fund. The Foundation funds projects that benefit the forests of the Upper Mississippi while improving wildlife habitat and water quality.

Background

According to the World Wildlife Fund, less than one percent of the oak savannas that once thrived in the Upper Midwest States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa remain today. Those that have survived have been seriously degraded by invasive plants, fragmentation, intensive grazing, and lack of periodic natural fires. They are considered globally endangered ecosystems and are a State conservation priority.

Oak savannas in the Anoka Sandplain ecoregion subsection mirror this trend: once covering nearly 950 square miles, they survive on just 12 square miles today.

Loss of savanna habitat has dramatically affected biodiversity; 30 species of Greatest Conservation Need in Minnesota rely on oak savannas, including 15 bird species and an array of insect, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species.

Location

Minnesota

Goals

Rebuild oak savanna habitat to benefit birds and other species, and increase biodiversity

Results

The project has been adopted as a pilot program by the East Central Regional Landscape Committee of the State's Minnesota Forest Resources Council. The council is responsible for implementing the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act of 1995, and is the chief advisor to the Governor and legislature on sustainable forestry.

Initial project steps will target a select group of sites where relationships already exist with resource managers, raising awareness about the importance oak savannas.



Project personnel will assess habitat quality and use specific management activities, including prescribed fire, to restore the savannas. A bird population monitoring program will be established on at least one site.

Partners will also implement local outreach programs and evaluate the applicability of the program to other sites in the Upper Midwest.

Outcomes/Accomplishments

- Restore and enhance at least 80 acres of oak savanna through prescribed burning
- Restore and enhance at least 40 acres of oak savanna and/or forest using planting and invasive species management

Outcomes will include improved habitat for important bird populations and demonstration of an innovative, locally based outreach program that builds relationships with nontraditional partners or enhances existing relationships, and offers the potential for replication on other landscapes.

Partners

Great River Greening, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Onanogozie and Mid-Minnesota Mississippi River Resource Conservation and Development Councils, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, County Parks, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, forest industry leaders, and others

Grant Amount

\$50,000



For more information:

Todd Hogrefe, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111
Phone: 612-713-5185
E-mail: todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org

Mike Prouty, Northeastern Area S&PF
1992 Folwell Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: 651-649-5276
E-mail: mprouty@fs.fed.us