

Conservation Challenges:

- *Urbanization
- *Conversion to agricultural uses
- *Changes in agricultural practices
- *Increased draitiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater
- *Fluctuating/declining groundwater levels
- *Invasive spp.: Buckthorns, Eurasian honeysuckle, garlic mustard, leafy spurge, EAB
- *Habitat fragmentation
- *Agricultural water pollutants/sedimentation
- *Fire-dependent communities are likely to decline due to difficulty in restoring natural fire regimes

Conservation Opportunities:

- * Watershed is engaged in natural resource management planning

Existing Conservation Network:

State Parks:

State Forests:

SNAs:

Avon Hills Forest
Cold Spring Heron Rookery
Partsch Woods
Quarry Park
St. Wendel Tamarack Bog

Wildlife Management Areas:

Legacy Marsh

Private:

St. John's University/College of Saint Benedict

Rare Species:

A Jumping Spider
Acadian Flycatcher
American Ginseng
Bald Eagle
Blanding's Turtle
Bullfrog
Cerulean Warbler
Henslow's Sparrow
Hill's Thistle
Humped Bladderwort
Katahdin Sedge
Least Darter
Matricary Grape fern
Pugnose Shiner
Ram's Head Lady's Slipper
Red-shouldered Hawk
Sandhill Crane
Sterile Sedge
Tuberclad Rein-orchid
Vasey's Pondweed

Avon Hills Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

Avon Hills are one of the most prominent features in the Central Minnesota landscape. The Hills rise 300 feet above the surrounding plains, and their terrain creates a variety of microclimates and habitats that allow species more frequently found in northern Minnesota to find suitable sites much farther south. Along with the northern communities such as tamarack swamps, the hills host a rich forest mosaic of different kinds of oak and oak/maple forests. Species such as paper birch and tamarack proliferate here as well. There is hydrologic variety as several types of prairies occur in the OA, as do several types of fens, including calcareous fens. The OA has significance due to its visual presence of its landform, and for the intact forest, wetland, and prairie cover that exists throughout much of the OA.



Counties:

Stearns

Rare Native Plant Communities:

Alder - (Maple - Loosestrife) Swamp
Black Ash - (Red Maple) Seepage Swamp
Calcareous Fen (Northwestern)
Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)
Low Shrub Poor Fen
Lowland White Cedar Forest (Northern)
Mesic Prairie (Southern)
Oak - (Red Maple) Woodland
Prairie Rich Fen
Sedge Meadow
Sedimentary Bedrock Outcrop (Southeast)
Silver Maple - Green Ash - Cottonwood Terrace Forest
Tamarack Swamp (Southern)
Wet Prairie (Southern)
Willow - Dogwood Shrub Swamp

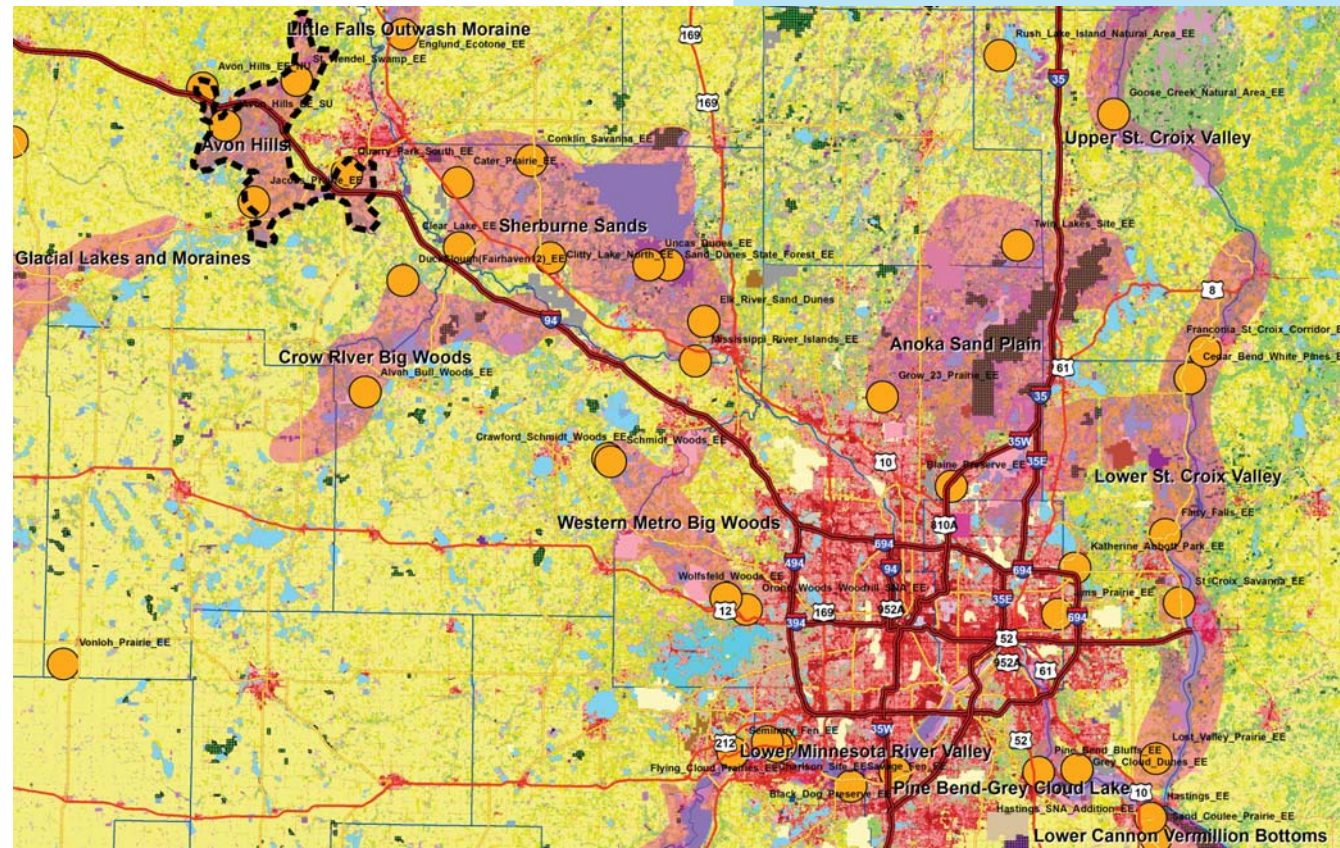
Ecological Evaluations:

Avon Hills
Jacob's Prairie
Quarry Park South
St. Wendel Swamp



Avon Hills

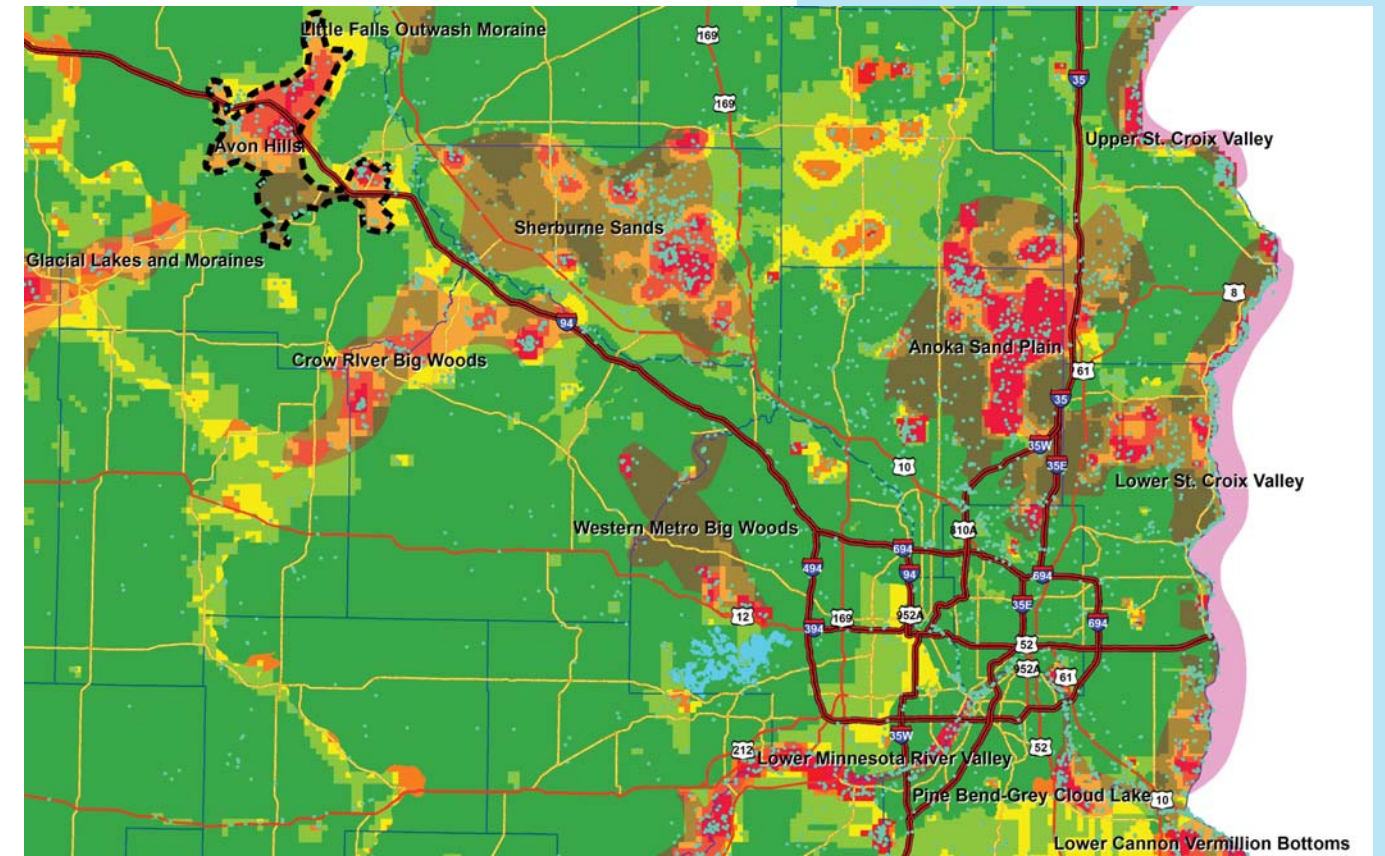
Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership



Please see Legend at the front of the Opportunity Area Descriptions for a key to this map

Avon Hills

Marxan Prioritization, Element Occurrences



Legend

- Profiled COA
 - Conservation Opportunity Area
 - Rare Feature
 - County Boundary
 - Large Lake
- Marxan Conservation Prioritization**
- Lowest Priority
 - Low Priority
 - Medium Priority
 - High Priority
 - Highest Priority
 - Interstate Highway
 - U.S. Trunk Highway
 - MN Trunk Highway