Conservation Challenges:

*Conversion to agricultural uses
*Changes in agricultural practices
*Increased draintiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater
*Waterways are more incised, with more alluvium, and higher turbidity
*Invasive spp.: Buckthorns, leafy spurge, EAB
*Habitat fragmentation
*Valley bottoms prone to high-volume floods of increased frequency
*Fire-dependent communities are likely to decline due to difficulty in restoring natural fire regimes

Conservation Opportunities:

* Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Existing Conservation Network:

State Forests:

SNAs: Cottonwood River Prairie

Aquatic Management Areas:
        Sanborn
Wildlife Management Areas:
        Vogel
Reinvest in Minnesota:

Rare Species:

Black Sandshell
Buffalo Grass
Fluted-shell
Henslow's Sparrow
Loggerhead Shrike
Mucket
Prairie Bush Clover
Regal Fritillary
Round Pigtoe
Small White Lady's-slipper

Cottonwood River Prairies
Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

The Cottonwood River Prairies provide a special juxtaposition of upland prairies with riparian habitats. The landscape also provides a rare amount of topographic relief in a portion of the state known for its level terrain. The hills in this OA provide special character to the land, and more diversity of types of plant communities that includes examples of dry hill prairie and dry sand - gravel prairies. This OA is also in very close juxtapostion to the Red Rock Ridge OA and Des Moines River Valley OA, and anchors the southern end of the Coteau Escarpment Prairie Plan Corridor.

Counties:

Brown
Cottonwood
Redwood

Rare Native Plant Communities:

Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)
Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)
Wet Prairie (Southern)

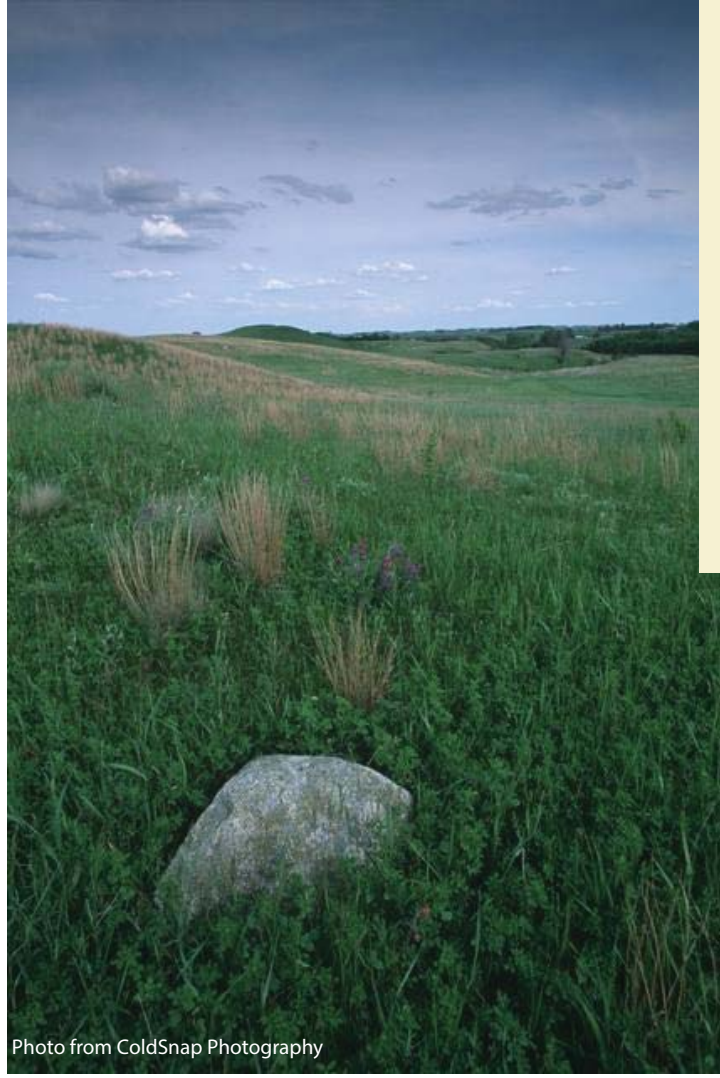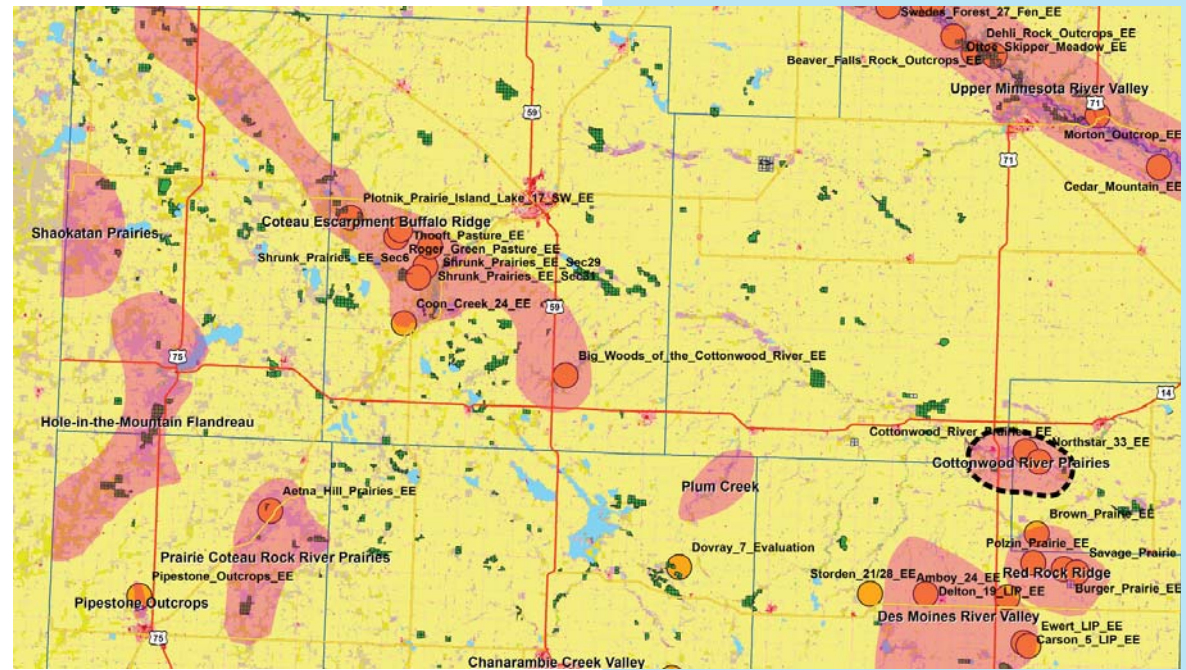### Ecological Evaluations:

Cottonwood River Prairies
Northstar 33

Photo from ColdSnap Photography

Photo from ColdSnap Photography
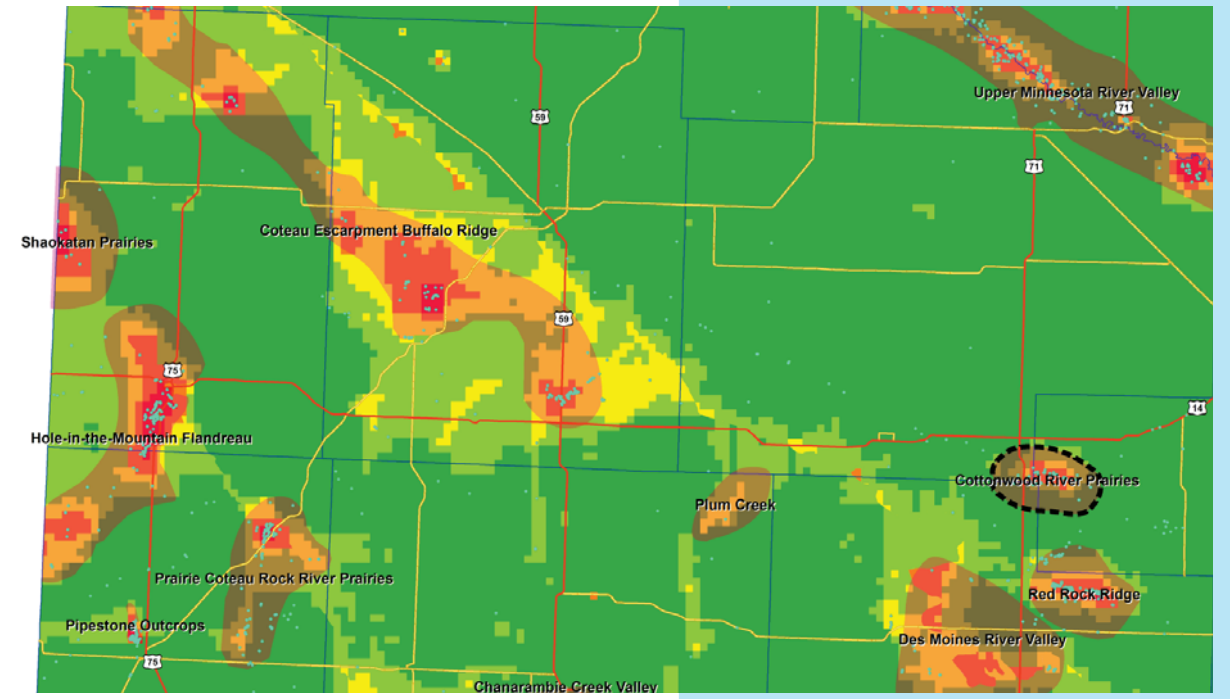
Cottonwood River Prairies
Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership

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

Cottonwood River Prairies
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