

Houston County Bluffs

Conservation Challenges:

- *Conversion to agricultural uses
- *Changes in agricultural practices
- *Conversion to mining
- *Deforestation/logging
- *Increased draintiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater
- *Waterways are more incised, with more alluvium, and higher turbidity
- *Invasive spp.: Buckthorns, Eurasian honeysuckle, garlic mustard, leafy spurge, EAB
- *Habitat fragmentation
- *Valley bottoms prone to high-volume floods of increased frequency
- *The Mississippi Valley is a portal for new species to migrate into the state (native to N. America and non-native)
- *Fire-dependent communities are likely to decline due to difficulty in restoring natural fire regimes
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Conservation Opportunities:

- * Conservation partners along Mississippi Flyway

Existing Conservation Network:

State Forests:

Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood

SNAs:

Aquatic Management Areas:

Wildcat Creek
Crooked Creek

Wildlife Management Areas:

Mound Prairie
Root River
Winnebago Creek

Reinvest in Minnesota: Yes

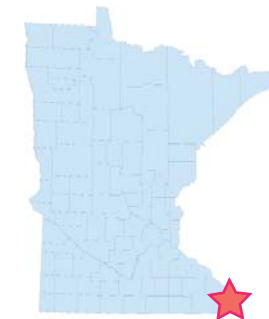
Rare Species:

American Brook Lamprey	Fluted-shell	Purple Cliff-brake
Bald Eagle	Ebonyshell	Purple Sand-grass
Beaked Snakeroot	Gopher snake	Red-shouldered Hawk
Beard-tongue	Gray's Sedge	Rock Pocketbook
Bell's Vireo	Green Dragon	Rough Avens
Black Buffalo	Hickorynut	Round Pigtoe
Black Sandshell	Higgins' Eye	Sandhill Crane
Blanchard's Cricket Frog	Jewelled Shooting Star	Sheepnose
Blue Sucker	Kentucky Coffee-tree	Shovelnose Sturgeon
Bluntnose Darter	King Rail	Silvery Spleenwort
Broad Beech-fern	Lake Sturgeon	Skipjack Herring
Bullfrog	Lilia-leaved Twayblade	Smooth Softshell
Butterfly	Marginal Shield-fern	Spike
Buttonbush	Mild Water Pepper	Swamp White Oak
Catchfly Grass	Milk snake	Sweet-smelling Indian-plantain
Cattail Sedge	Monkeyface	Timber Rattlesnake
Cerulean Warbler	Mucket	Upland Boneset
Christmas Fern	Muskingum Sedge	Virginia Water Horehound
Clasping Milkweed	North American Racer	Walter's Barmyard Grass
Cliff Goldenrod	Northern Cricket Frog	Wartyback
Common Gallinule	Northern Cricket Frog	Washboard
Davis' Sedge	Old Field Toadflax	Western Fox snake
Ebony Spleenwort	One-flowered Broomrape	Western Harvest Mouse
Ebonyshell	Ovate-leaved Skullcap	Western Prairie Fringed Orchid
Elephant-ear	Paddle fish	Western Rat Snake
Elktoe	Pallid Shiner	White Baneberry
Fawnsfoot	Peregrine Falcon	Widgeon-grass
Flat Floater	Pickrel Frog	Witch-hazel
	Pirate Perch	Yellow Bass
	Pistolgrip	Yellow Sandshell
	Plains Wild Indigo	
	Pugnose Minnow	

Houston County Bluffs Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

The Houston County Bluffs provide some of the greatest vertical relief in southern and central Minnesota. *Steep north-facing and south-facing slopes and rock outcrops provide a setting for a variety of forest, savanna and prairie communities in very close juxtaposition.* Southerly aspects frequently have goat prairies, mixed hardwoods occupy east-and west-facing slopes, and mesic hardwoods are found on north-facing slopes. Wetlands are primarily found in the Mississippi floodplain. Several species currently are endemic to the Houston County Bluffs area, such as chinkapin oak, and rat snake. Variations in terrain afford opportunities for a mosaic of community types within a small area. These species and others from adjacent states to the south may expand northward with climate change, The Blufflands also are within the Mississippi Flyway and provide essential habitat for migrating birds and waterfowl. Unlike other parts of Minnesota, watersheds define the landscape much more strongly due to the dissected bluff terrain that separates the watersheds with bluffs exceeding 500 feet in height.



Counties:

Houston

Rare Native Plant Communities:

- Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie (Southern)
- Mesic Sandstone Cliff (Southern)
- Northern Bulrush-Spikerush Marsh
- Oak - Shagbark Hickory Woodland
- Red Oak - White Oak - (Sugar Maple) Forest
- Red Oak - White Oak Forest
- Sand Beach/Sandbar (River)
- Seepage Meadow/Carr
- Silver Maple - (Virginia Creeper) Floodplain Forest
- Silver Maple - Green Ash - Cottonwood Terrace Forest
- Southern Dry Cliff
- Swamp White Oak Terrace Forest
- White Pine - Oak - Sugar Maple Forest

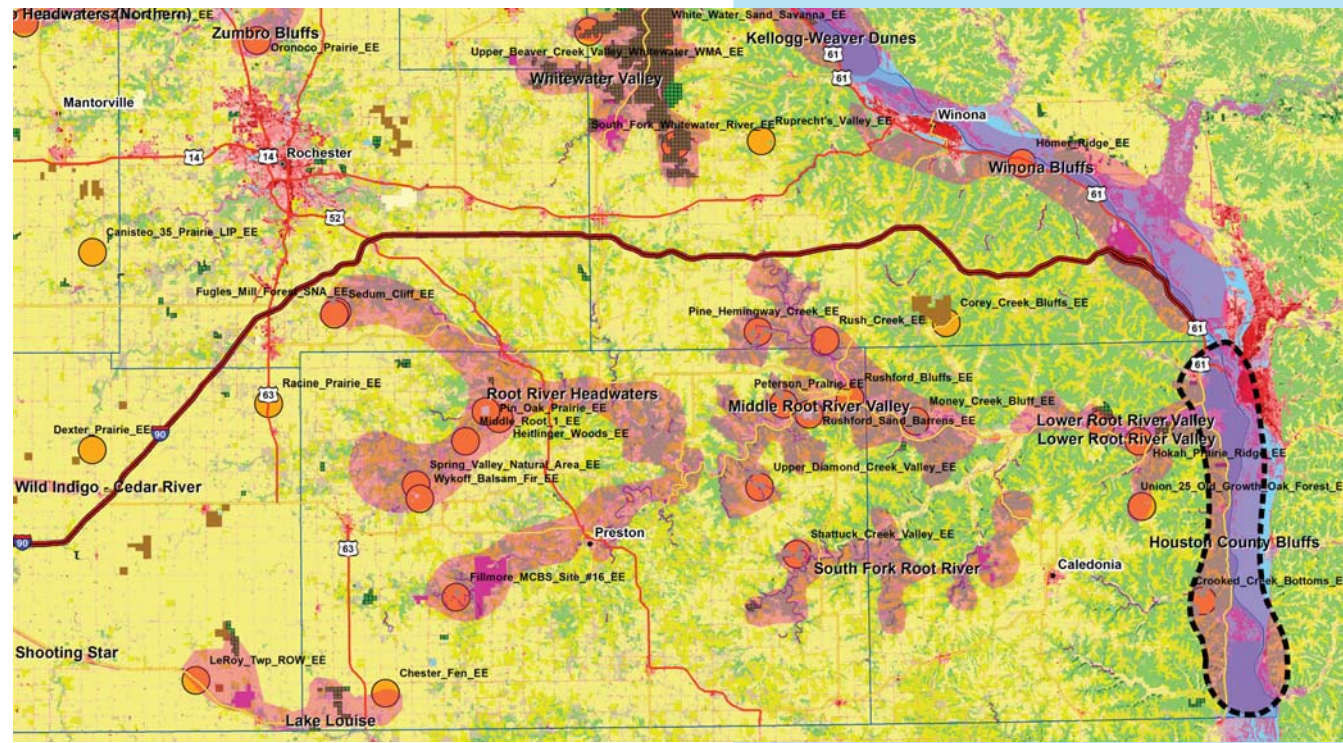
Ecological Evaluations:

Crooked Creek Bottoms



Houston County Bluffs

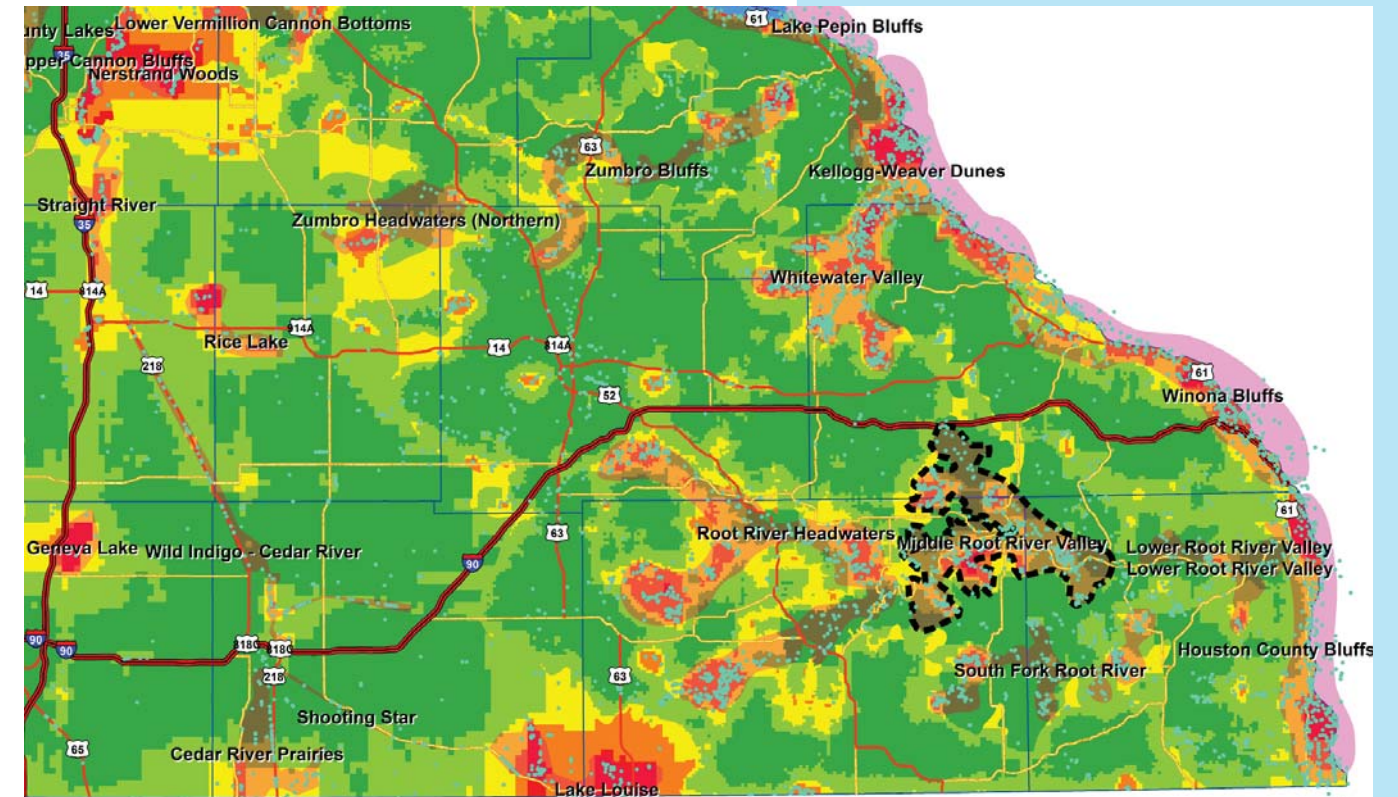
Element Occurrences, Land Cover, Public Ownership



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

Houston County Bluffs

Marxan Prioritization, Ecological Evaluations



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