Middle Root River

Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

The Root River has broadened into wide valley in its lower reaches. Narrow gorges a less common than in the headwaters limiting the occurrence of special habitats such as algific talus slopes. Instead, north-facing slopes may harbor mesic hardwood forests instead of relict communities. Southerly aspects can be too steep and xeric to support woodland, and are frequently covered with goat prairies. Wetlands are limited in this landscape, and are found only within valleys adjacent to streams. Many NPCs and species are endemic to the Blufflands subsection, such as twinleaf and shagbark hickory. The landscape contains other unique features such as numerous trout streams, and karst topography containing sinkholes, fractures, and cave systems. *Variations in terrain afford opportunities for a mosaic of community types within a small area.* In addition, a number of eastern hardwood forest species reach their northwesternmost aspects of their native ranges in the Blufflands. Some of the tree species include black oak, honey locust, chinkapin oak, swamp white oak, and shagbark hickory. The Blufflands also are within the Mississippi Flyway and provide essential habitat for migrating birds and waterfowl.

Counties:

Houston
Fillmore
Winona

Rare Native Plant Communities:

Algific Talus, Limestone Subtype
Black Ash - Sugar Maple - Basswood - (Blue Beech) Seepage Swamp
Black Oak - White Oak Woodland (Sand)
Dry Barrens Oak Savanna (Southern), Jack Pine Subtype
Dry Barrens Oak Savanna (Southern), Oak Subtype
Dry Barrens Prairie (Southern)
Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie (Southern)
Elm - Ash - Basswood Terrace Forest
Elm - Basswood - Black Ash - (Blue Beech) Forest
Jack Pine - Oak Woodland (Sand)
Maderate Cliff, Dolomite Subtype
Mesic Limestone - Dolomite Cliff (Southern)
Oak - Shagbark Hickory Woodland
Red Oak - Sugar Maple - Basswood - (Bitternut Hickory) Forest
Red Oak - White Oak - (Sugar Maple) Forest
Red Oak - White Oak Forest
Southern Dry Cliff
Southern Dry Savanna
Southern Dry-Mesic Oak Forest
Southern Mesic Cliff
Southern Wet-Mesic Hardwood Forest
Sugar Maple - Basswood - Red Oak - (Blue Beech) Forest
White Pine - Oak - Sugar Maple Forest
White Pine - Oak Woodland (Sand)
White Pine - Sugar Maple - Basswood Forest (Cold Slope)

Ecological Evaluations:

Peterson Prairie
Rushford Bluffs
Rushford Sand Barrens
Money Creek Bluff
Rush Creek
Pine Hemingway Creek
Upper Diamond Creek Bluff

Conservation Challenges:

*Conversion to agricultural uses
*Changes in agricultural practices
*Conversion to mining
*Deforestation/logging
*Increased draintiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater for algific habitats
*Waterways are more incised, with more alluvium, and higher turbidity
*Invasive spp.: Common buckthorn, Eurasian honeysuckle, garlic mustard, leafy spurge
*Habitat fragmentation
*Valley bottoms prone to high-volume floods
*Fire-dependent communities are likely to decline due to difficulty in restoring natural fire regimes
*Bluff terrain more prone to flash floods

Conservation Opportunities:

*Land Trusts
*Root River Planning

Existing Conservation Network:

State Parks:

State Forests:
Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood
SNAs:
Rushford Sand Barrens
Aquatic Management Areas:
Peterson Trout Hatchery
Cool Ridge Creek
Wildlife Management Areas:
Chisholm Valley WMA

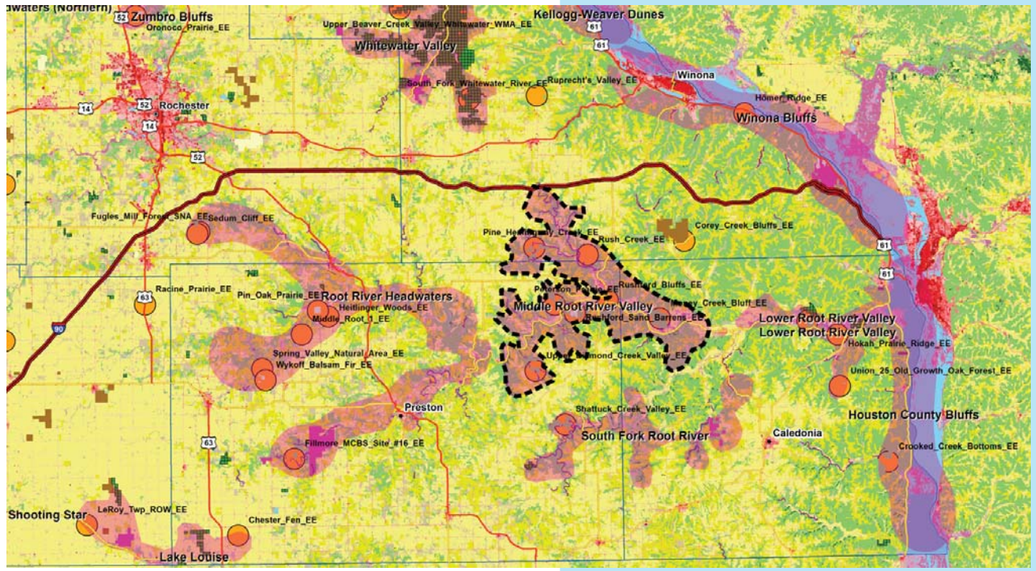
Rare Species:

Acadian Flycatcher
American Beakgrain
American Brook Lamprey
American Ginseng
Bald Eagle
Bat Concentration
Beaked Snakeroot
Big Tick-trefoil
Black Redhorse
Blanchard's Cricket Frog
Blunt-lobed Grape Fern
Broad Beech-fern
Butternut
Canadian Frostweed
Canadian Forked Chickweed
Carey's Sedge
Cerulean Warbler
Clasping Milkweed
Cliff Goldenrod
Clinton's Bulrush
Clustered Broomrape
Common Five-lined Skink
Creek Heelsplitter
Crystal Darter
Dune Grape
Eastern Hognose Snake
Ebony Spleenwort
Elktoe
Ellipse
False Mermaid
Fluted-shell
Glade Mallow
Goat's-rue
Goldie's Fern
Gopher snake
Gravel Chub
Great Indian-plantain
Green Dragon
Green Violet
Hickorynut
Hill's Thistle
Hubricht's Vertigo
Iowa Golden Saxifrage
Iowa Pleistocene Ambersnail
James' Sedge
Jumping Spider
Jewelled Shooting Star
Laurentian Bladder Fern
Leedy's Roseroot
Leonard's Skipper
Lilia-leaved Twayblade
Limestone Oak Fern
Loggerhead Shrike
Louisiana Waterthrush
Long-berded Hawkweed
Midwest Pleistocene Vertigo
Milk snake
Minnesota Pleistocene Ambersnail
Moschatel
Mucket
Narrow-leaved Pinweed
Narrow-leaved Spleenwort
Nodding Wild Onion
North American Racer
Northern Myotis
Old Field Toadflax
One-flowered Broomrape
Ovate-leaved Skullcap
Ozark Minnow
Pickerel Frog
Plains Wild Indigo
Prairie-parsley
Purple Cliff-brake
Purple Rocket
Rattlesnake-master
Red-shouldered Hawk
Reniform Sullivantia
Rhombic-petaled Evening Primrose
Rock Sandwort
Rock Whitlow-grass
Rough-seeded Fameflower
Rough avens
Round Pigtoe
Sandy stream Tiger Beetle
Sea-beach Needlegrass
Sedge Meadow
Shovelnose Sturgeon
Short's Aster
Silverleaf grape
Silvery Spleenwort
Slender-leafed Scurf Pea
Smooth-sheathed Sedge
Smooth Rock Cress
Smooth-sheathed Sedge
Snow Trillium
Snowy Campion
Spike
Splendid tiger beetle
Spreading Sedge
Squirrel-corn
Stemless Tick-trefoil
Sweet-smelling Indian-plantain
Three-flowered melic grass
Three-leaved coneflower
Ticklegrass
Tricolored Bat
Timber Rattlesnake
Tricolored Bat
Tuberous Indian-plantain
Twinleaf
Upland Boneset
Valerian
Variable Pleistocene Vertigo
Western Fox snake
Western Harvest Mouse
White Heath Aster
White baneberry
Witch hazel
Wolf's Bluegrass
Wood's Sedge
Yellow Pimpernel

Middle Root River

Middle Root River Valley

Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership



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

Middle Root River Valley

Marxan Prioritization, Element Occurrences