

Rock River Prairies

Conservation Challenges:

- *Conversion to agricultural uses
- *Changes in agricultural practices
- *Deforestation/logging
- *Increased draitiling makes stream flow more flashy, reduces groundwater
- *Fluctuating/declining river evels
- *Invasive spp.: spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, EAB
- *Habitat fragmentation
- *Wind farms
- *Groundwater pumping
- *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 Parks:

State Forests:

SNAs: Prairie Coteau

Wildlife Management Areas:

Buffalo Ridge

Gromer's Draw

Holland

Aquatic Management Areas:

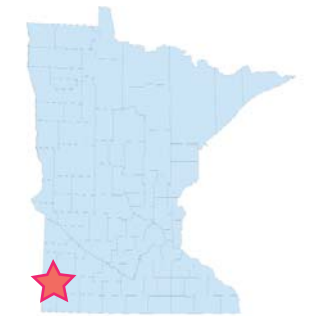
Rare Species:

- Burrowing Owl
- Dakota Skipper
- Few-flowered Spike-rush
- Hair-like Beak-rush
- Iowa Skipper
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Marsh Arrow-grass
- Northern Grasshopper Mouse
- Ottoa Skipper
- Pawnee Skipper
- Phlox Moth
- Plains Topminnow
- Powesheik Skipper
- Prairie Moonwort
- Red Three-awn
- Regal Fritillary
- Short-beaked Arrowhead
- Small White Lady's-slipper
- Topeka Shiner
- Upland Sandpiper
- Western White Prairie-clover

Rock River Prairies Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

The headwaters of the Rock River system contain a number of prairies in southwestern Minnesota. River systems such as the Rock and the Big Sioux have eroded the terrain to create deep valleys not typically seen outside of southeastern Minnesota. The drier climate, lack of forest, and well-drained soils create suitable habitat for drier native plant communities of short and mixed grasses such as dry hill prairies and sand and gravel prairies. Much of the steeper parts of the landscape has remained uncultivated and therefore has the potential to harbor areas of native prairie. Native wetlands may persist in valley bottoms. This OA has importance due to its rare plant communities, rare species, and unusual landforms.



Counties:

Pipestone

Rare Native Plant Communities:

- Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)
- Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)
- Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)

Ecological Evaluations:

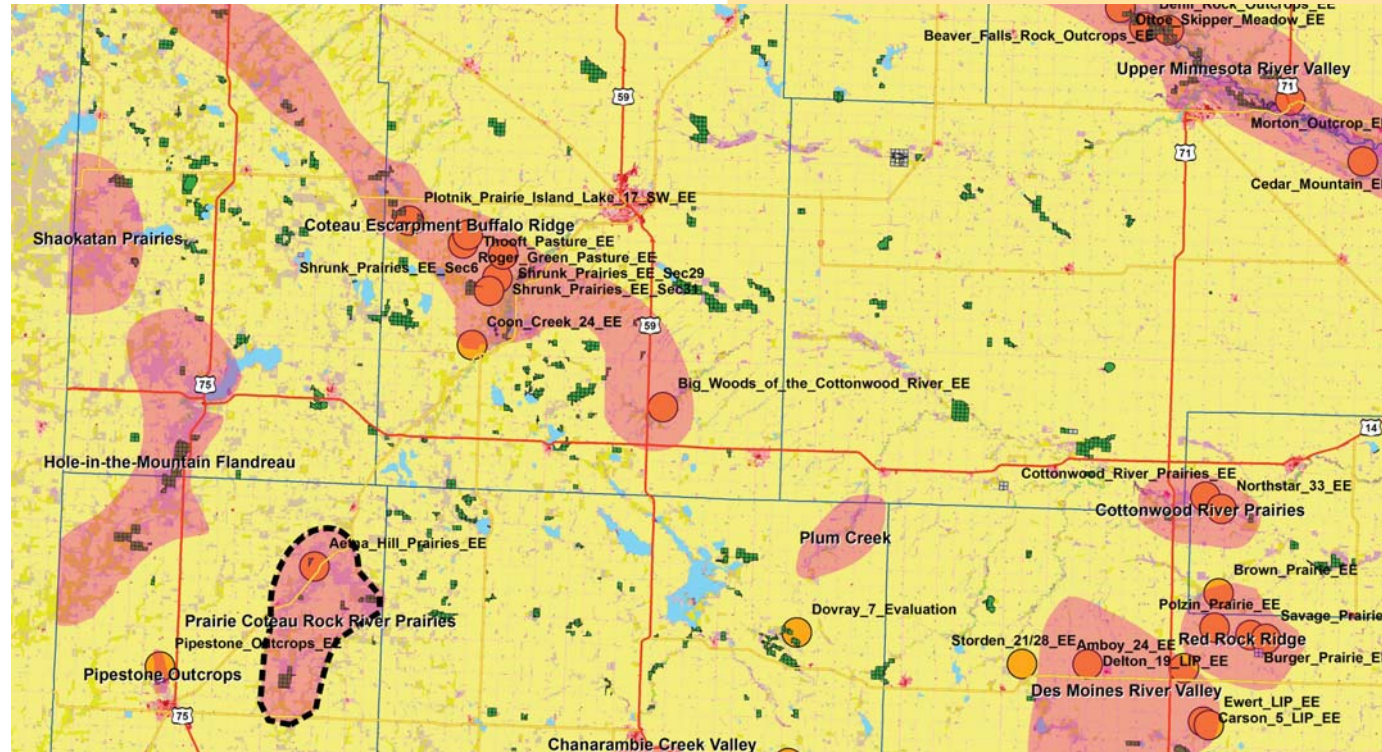
- Aetna Hill Praire
- Pipestone Outcrops (nearby)



Photo from ColdSnap Photography

Rock River Prairies

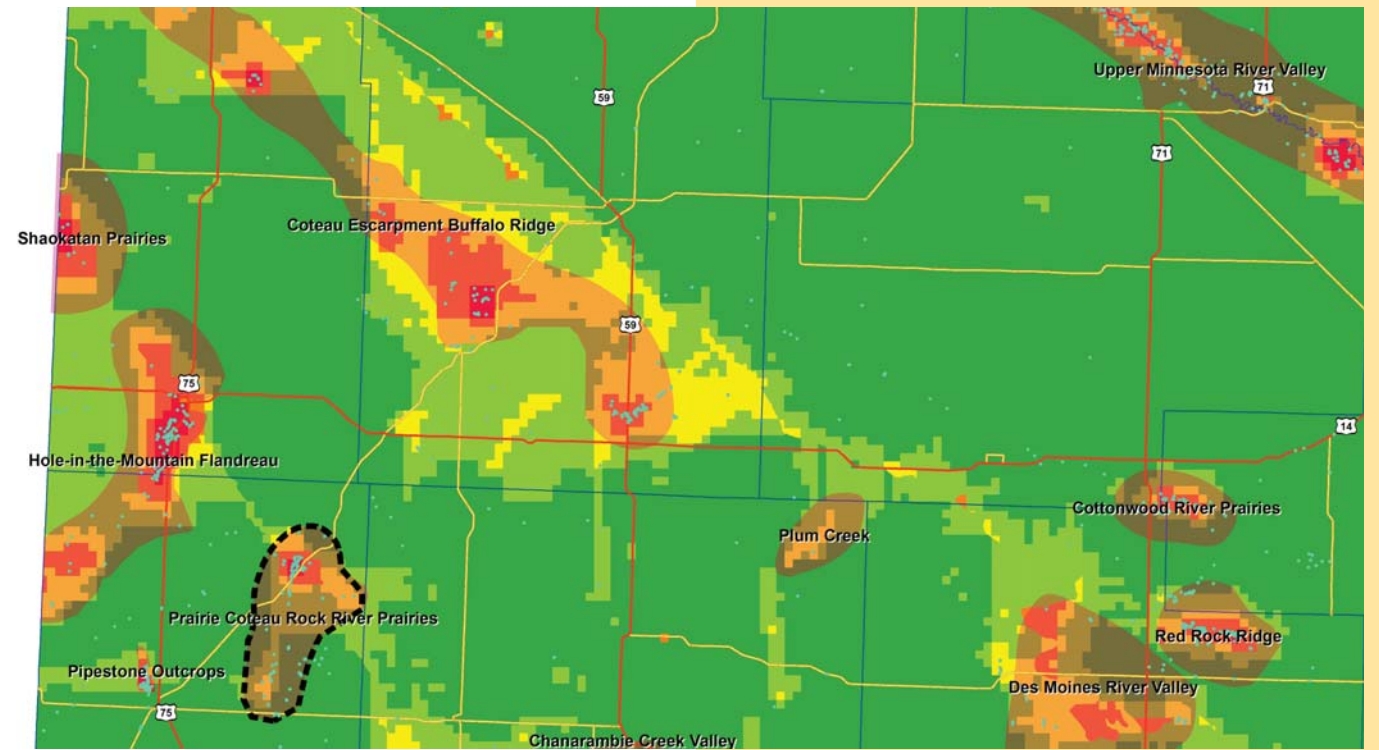
Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership
















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

Rock 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