Conservation Challenges:

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

Conservation Opportunities:

* Watershed is engaged in natural resource managment planning
* Green Corridors Initiative

Existing Conservation Network:

State Parks:

State Forests:

SNAs:

Wildlife Management Areas:
        Little Lake
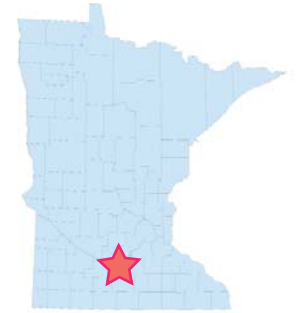   Swan Lake

Aquatic Management Areas:

Swan Lake
Opportunity Area

Ecological Significance:

Swan Lake is one of the largest remaining wetland complexes in southern Minnesota and is the largest prairie pothole wetland in the United States. It represents a landscape type that had a much greater presence in southern Minnesota.   With an average depth of less than four feet, the lake and wetlands demonstrate hydrologic cycles typical of prairie wetlands, when extended periods of inundation up to 10 feet would have drowned emergent vegetation, creating open water lakes. Subsequent droughts would have provided favorable conditions for emergent and herbaceous vegetation to reestablish as mud flats are exposed. Outlet control structures installed in the 1950s removed the long-term fluctuations making the lake a more static system. While the lake's natural fluctuations have been dampened, it still provides an important mosaic of palustrine, lacustrine, and terrestrial habitats. Swan Lake is known for its aquatic and palustrine habitats, but it also contains a remant of Big Woods seldom seen this far into southwestern Minnesota on a level landscape. Most maple-basswood forests in this part of the state are situated in ravines and valleys that provide protection from prairie fires.   Swan Lake and its environs are an Audobon Important Bird Area.

Counties:

Nicollet

Rare Features:

Bald Eagle
Bulrush Marsh (Prairie)
Colonial Waterbird Nesting Site
Forster's Tern
Franklin's Gull
King Rail
Trumpeter Swan

Rare Native Plant Communities:

Elm - Basswood - Black Ash - (Hackberry) Forest
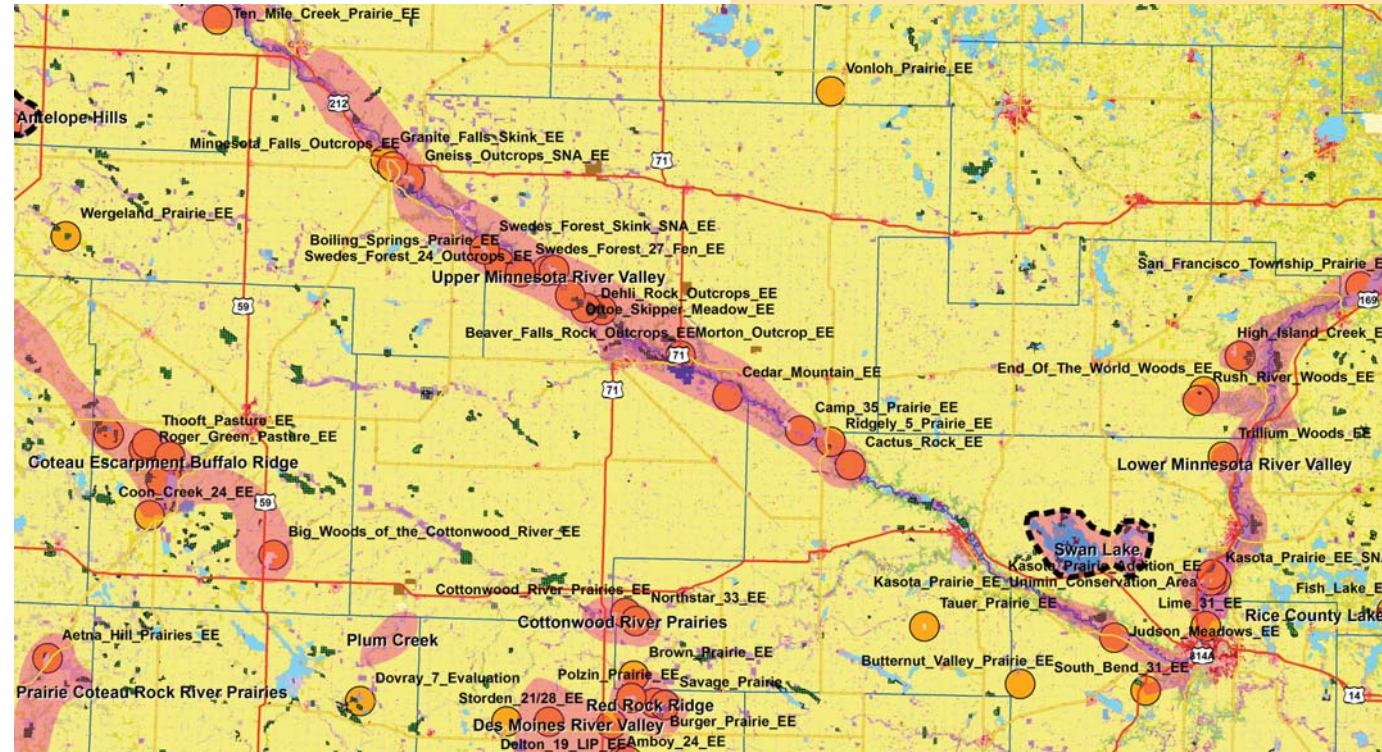Sugar Maple Forest (Big Woods)

Ecological Evaluations:

Photo courtesy of Minnesota River Basin Data Center, MSU Mankato

Swan Lake
Ecological Evaluations, Land Cover, Public Ownership

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

Swan Lake
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