

The Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan & Strategy Version 2.0 (the next 20 years)

Conservation Opportunity Areas

Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) were presented in Illinois' original Wildlife Action Plan (IDNR 2005) as geographically bounded areas that contained key **natural heritage features** that were supported by the conservation community. They were conceptualized to act as "step-down" conservation planning areas and defined as locations with high importance for conserving Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Initially delineated from a natural resources and human dimensions perspective over 30 COAs were identified as part of Illinois' Wildlife Action Plan. However, most of these areas lacked the full set of qualifying features to meet all the ideal criteria for a Conservation Opportunity Area. These criteria included (1) Conservation Partners willing to plan, implement, and evaluate conservation actions, (2) significant existing or potential wildlife and habitat resources, (3) financial and human resources, (4) an agreed-upon conservation purpose and set of common objectives (IDNR 2015, IDNR 2022). As such Illinois' COAs should not be considered priority areas based solely on resource distributions or relative conservation importance. Instead they are places with cooperatively identified conservation objectives with the potential to coordinate resources and thus are areas with the greatest opportunity for integrated local conservation action.

The existing COA Network consists of geographical areas containing a combination of natural heritage features, conservation partners, and common priorities focused on the protection, enhancement, and management of the Native Species and Natural Communities that comprise these features (Figure V1). Over 10.8 Million Acres, or just over 30% of Illinois is included within the COA Network at this time (Table V1). Despite identified COAs often focusing on protecting and enhancing the Natural Lands that occur within them over 65% of their total area occurs within the Working and Developed Lands Sectors (Figure V2, Table V1). These lands include a high proportion of potential Prairie, Savanna, and Woodland Natural Communities suggesting important opportunities for their conservation and that of associated Native Species within the Working and Developed Lands of the COA Network (Figure V3, Table V2).

It is our intent to nurture this Network of Conservation Opportunity Areas to provide a mechanism for public participation in the conservation of Illinois' Native Species and Natural Communities. COAs are intended to function as a forum for community members and organizations to identify and initiate Conservation Actions that meet local priorities while supporting regional goals. We view COAs as geographical areas with common threats to key species and habitats with defined common goals, objectives, and actions to be carried out cooperatively through co-generated work. In some cases geospatial overlap occurs between existing COAs. We do not view this as a problem when conservation priorities and objectives differ between them as this increases opportunities for public participation.

COAs are expected to be dynamic, flexible, and responsive to locally identified conservation needs. We anticipate implementation of conservation actions that support Native Species and Natural Communities within COAs to shift over time to reflect a refinement of conservation objectives, local successes and changing priorities, and the availability of resources to support these actions. Such shifts may also result in the formation of new COAs, elimination of existing COAs, and changes in their boundaries and active

partners. Due to this dependency on local conservation activity and coordination some COAs are more fully developed than others at this time.

In this Section we will present brief descriptions of each Conservation Opportunity Area currently included within the COA Network. For each COA we will provide a summary of key Natural Heritage Features, Species of Greatest Conservation Need, common Objective(s), primary Threats/Stressors, identified Conservation Action Strategies, and Conservation Partners. Improving the development of the COA Assessments and increasing their implementation are priorities for the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

References

Illinois Department of Natural Resources 2005. Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan & Strategy. Version 1.0.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources 2015. 2015 Implementation Guide to the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources 2022. 2015 Implementation Guide to the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. 2022 Minor Revision.

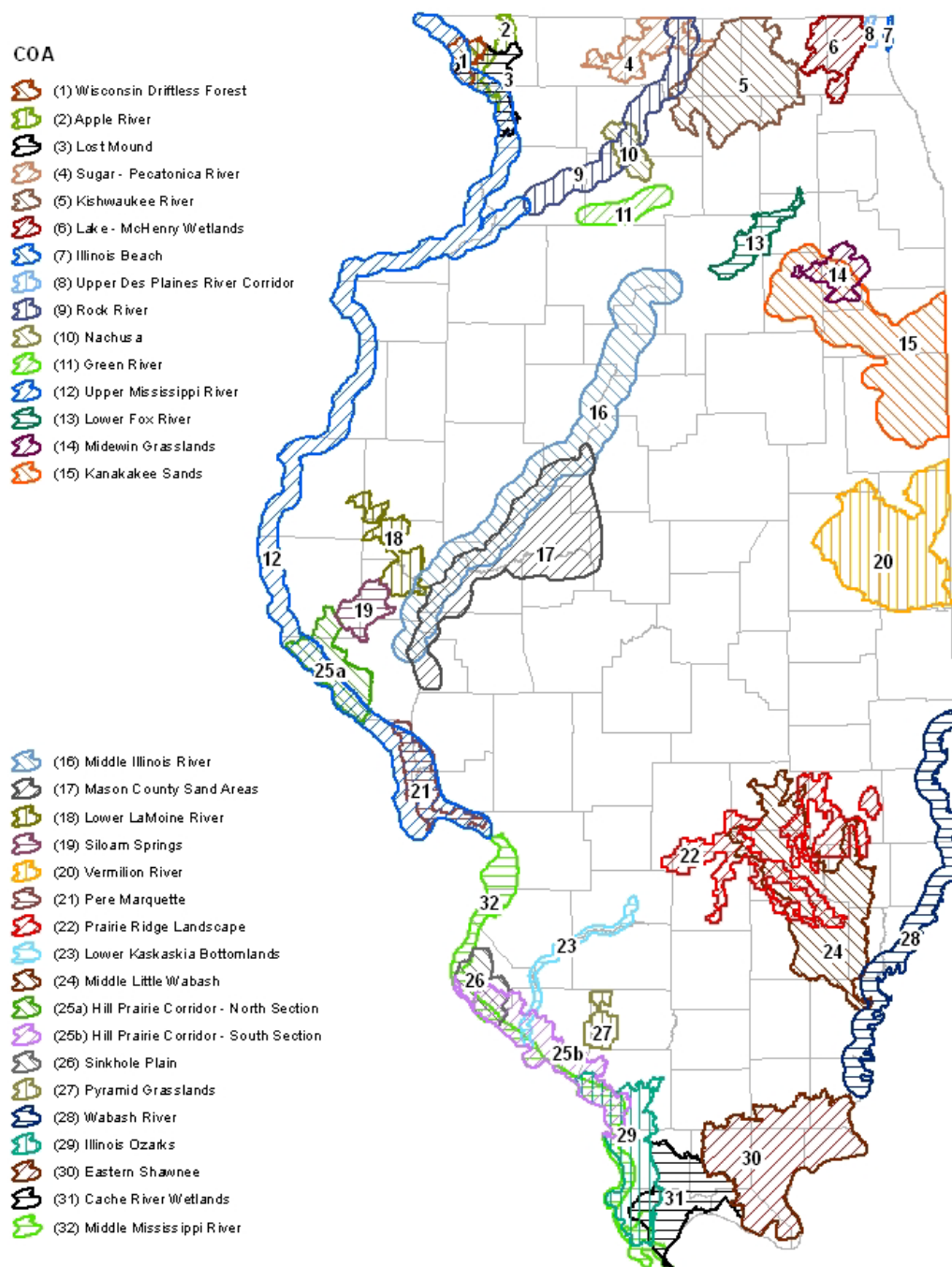


Figure V1. Conservation Opportunity Areas identified as part of Illinois' Wildlife Action Plan. Note that the draft boundaries of these COAs are subject to change during the active duration of this Plan.

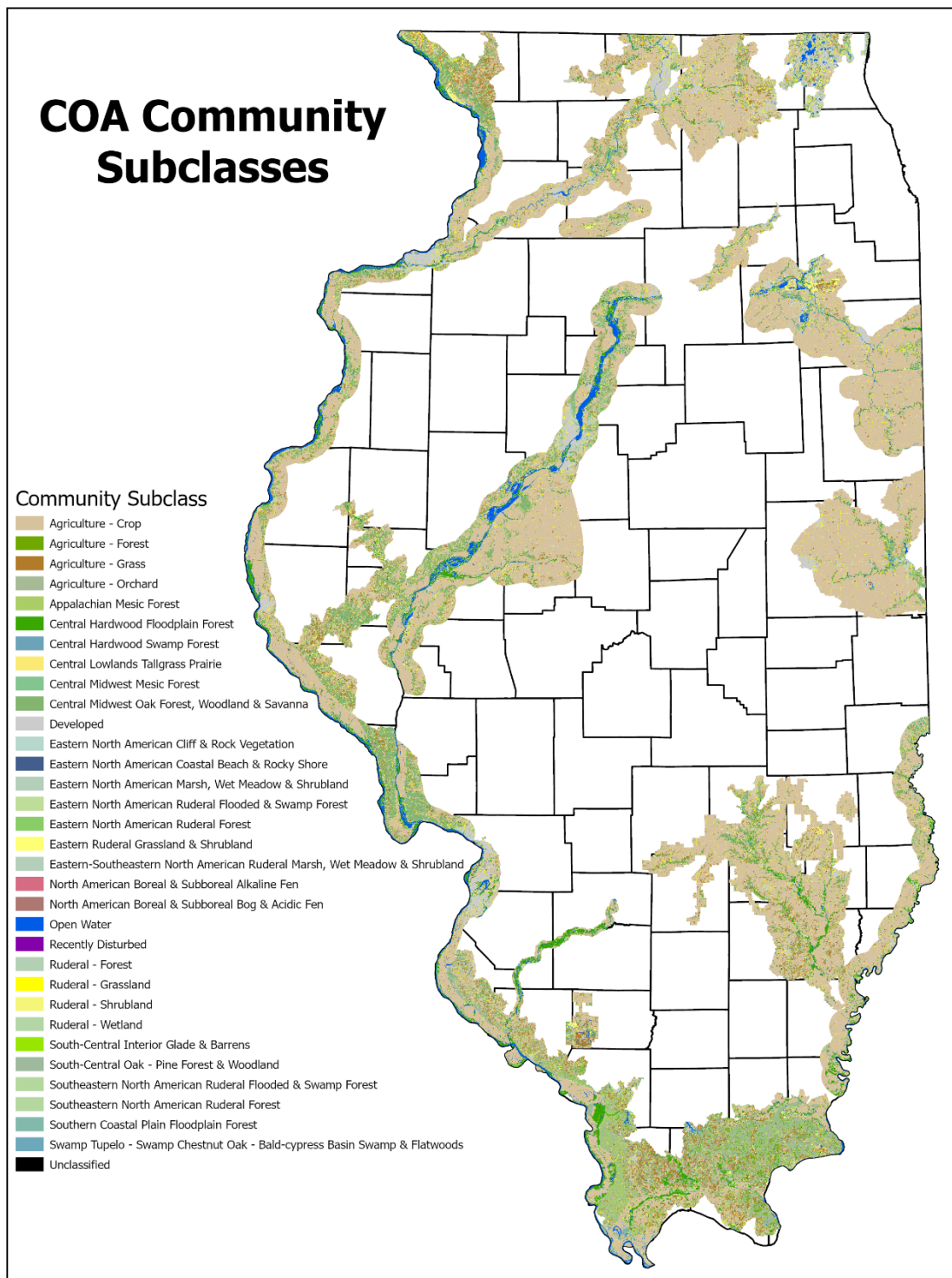


Figure V2. Conservation Opportunity Areas current land cover. Based on the National Vegetation Classification 3.0. “Unclassified” includes all cells that did not have a Subclass value assigned.

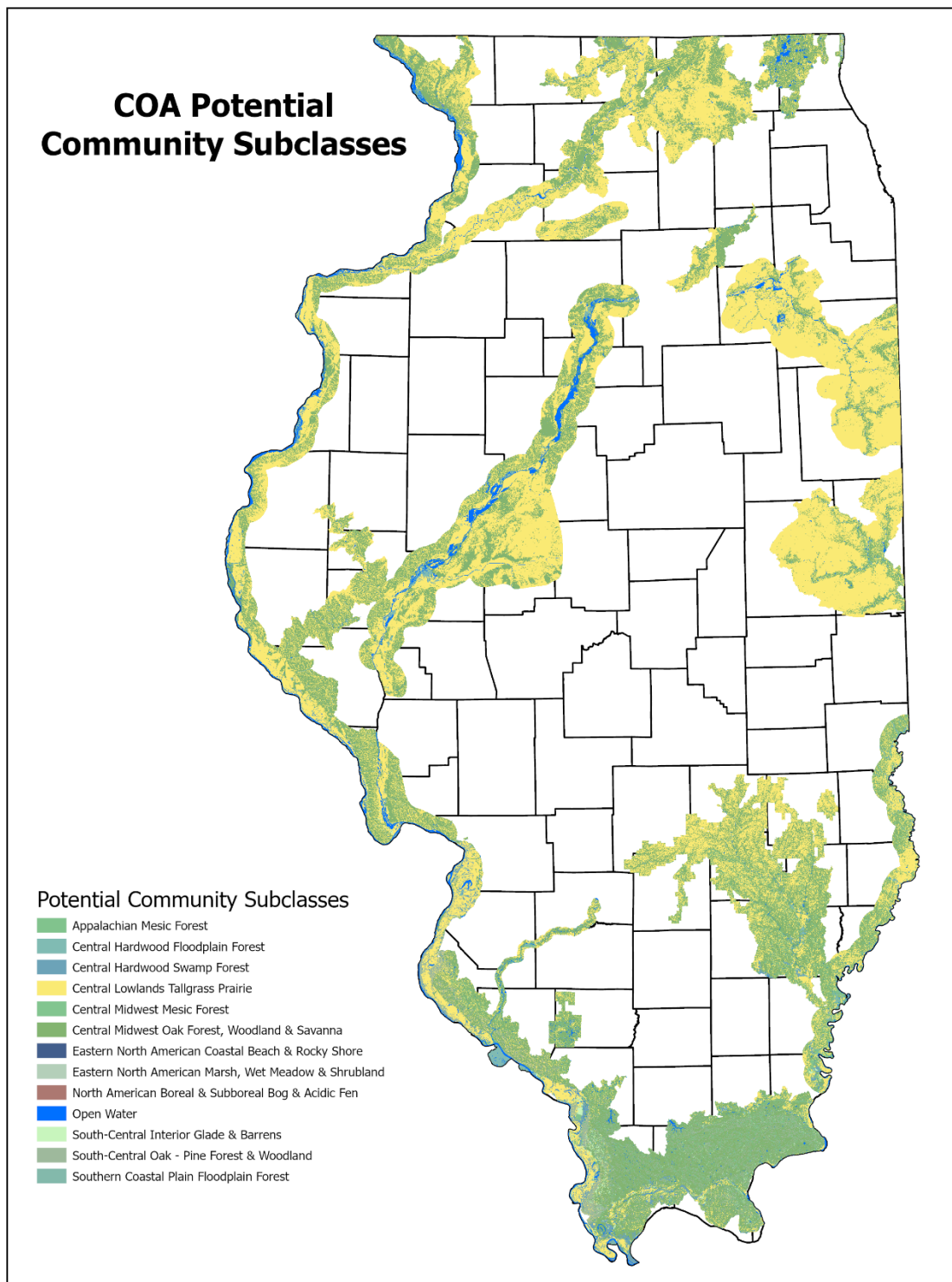


Figure V3. Potential Natural Community Subclasses within Illinois Conservation Opportunity Network.

Table V1. Landcover within Conservation Opportunity Areas. “Other” includes Subclasses (Recently Disturbed, Eastern North American Cliff & Rock Vegetation, and Eastern North American Coastal Beach & Rocky Shore) that do not fit into a standard Class. “Unclassified” includes all cells that did not have a Class value assigned.

All COA's			
Community Class	Area (km ²)	Acres	Percent of All COA's
Agriculture (Row Crop)	22,979.1	5,678,258.6	52.2
Forest	6,095.0	1,506,097.5	13.8
Oak Woodland & Savanna	3,831.2	946,711.0	8.7
Developed (Urban)	3,465.2	856,280.5	7.9
Prairie	2,842.4	702,378.1	6.5
Agriculture (Other)	2,520.1	622,721.6	5.7
Open Water	1,514.3	374,192.8	3.4
Wetland	672.6	166,198.2	1.5
Unclassified	82.0	20,269.9	0.2
Other	6.6	1,619.0	<0.1
Total	44,008.5	10,874,727.0	100.0

Table V2. Potential Terrestrial-based Natural Community Classes within the Conservation Opportunity Area Network. The Class “Other” includes a Subclass (Eastern North American Coastal Beach & Rocky Shore) that does not fit into a standard Class. Totals reflected here are lower than in Table V1 due to differences in the amount of area that was able to be classified between the assessments. Potential Wetlands also appear lower than Wetlands in Table V1 because some semi-aquatic Natural Community Types were not included as Wetlands in the Potential Terrestrial Class assessment.

All COA's Potential			
Community Class	Area (km ²)	Acres	Percent of All COA's
Prairie	22,171.0	5,478,563.1	50.4
Oak Woodland & Savanna	15,963.2	3,944,596.3	36.3
Forest	3,990.5	986,060.3	9.1
Open Water	1,522.2	376,151.6	3.5
Wetland	349.6	86,381.4	0.8
Other	0.7	182.6	<0.1
Total	43,997.2	10,871,935.3	100.0

Conservation Opportunity Area Assessments – Active COAs

Here we present Standardized Assessments for the twelve most active and well developed Conservation Opportunity Areas. When available we describe their conservation philosophy, key conservation features, important SGCN, common conservation objectives, major threats/stressors, conservation actions, and the identified and prospective Conservation Partners associated with the COA. Information included in these COA Assessments was derived from the Conservation Partners of the COA.

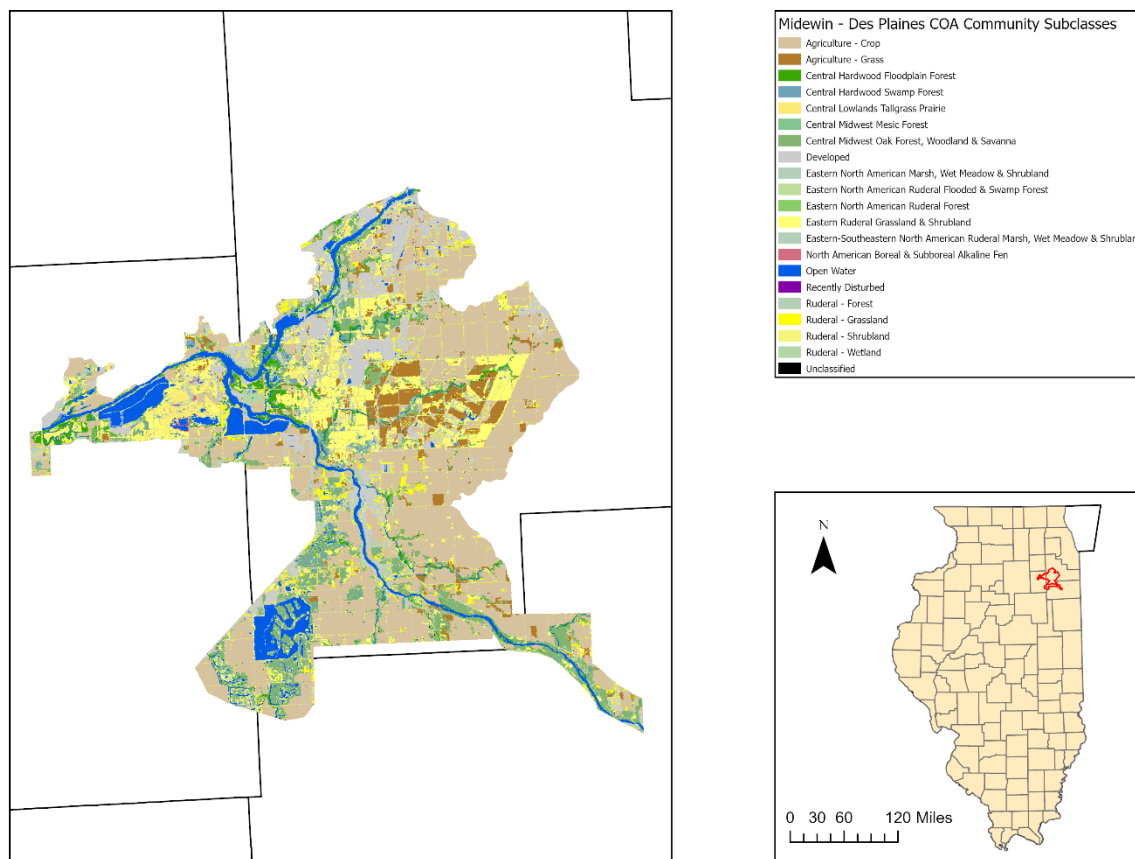
Notes: Several COAs have developed more detailed planning information for their own use than what is presented in these Assessments. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and has been excluded from the Partners Lists but should be considered a partner for each of the COAs identified in this Plan.

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4-Rivers COA Assessment

(Formerly the Midewin – Des Plaines – Goose Lake Prairie Macrosite COA)

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 165,000 acres within the Grand Prairie Natural Division (Northeast Region); Grundy, Will, and Kankakee Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: To protect and restore the last, best hope for saving the tallgrass prairie ecosystem east of the Mississippi River. Protection and Stewardship of high-quality Natural Areas

Key Conservation Features: Lands protected within the Illinois Nature Preserves System; High-quality Prairie and Savanna remnants; Wetland remnants; Kankakee River, Des Plaines River, DuPage River, Illinois River

Native Species: Grassland Birds, Native Plant Species, Threatened and Endangered Species (126 T&E species records including 84 Wildlife Species + 42 T&E plants) and other SGCN including Rattlesnake-master Borer Moth, Henslow's Sparrow, Ellipse, Red-headed Woodpecker, Blanding's Turtle

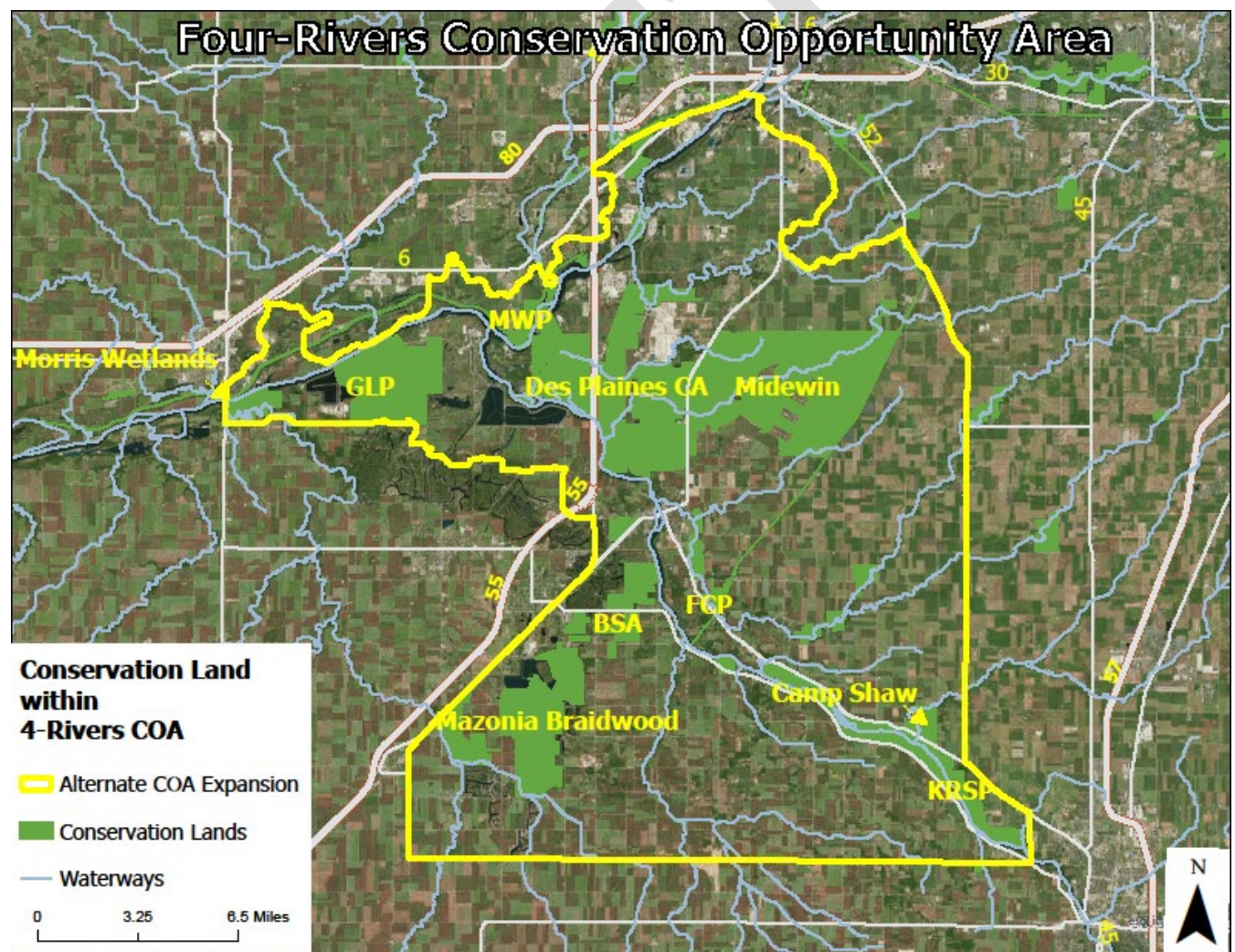
Objectives of COA: promote awareness and support for conservation; promote land management; enhance, restore and expand each natural community class; promote land protection

Threats/Stressors: urban development, lack of management, poor preserve design; habitat loss and invasive species

Conservation Actions: establish a Friends of 4-Rivers COA Land Trust; engage in outreach activities; promote access, development, and use of sites in ways that protect Natural Areas and Native Species; promote land management activities including prescribed fire and invasive species control; promote standardized monitoring for SGCN, Natural Communities, and Invasive Species; enhance, restore, and expand natural communities

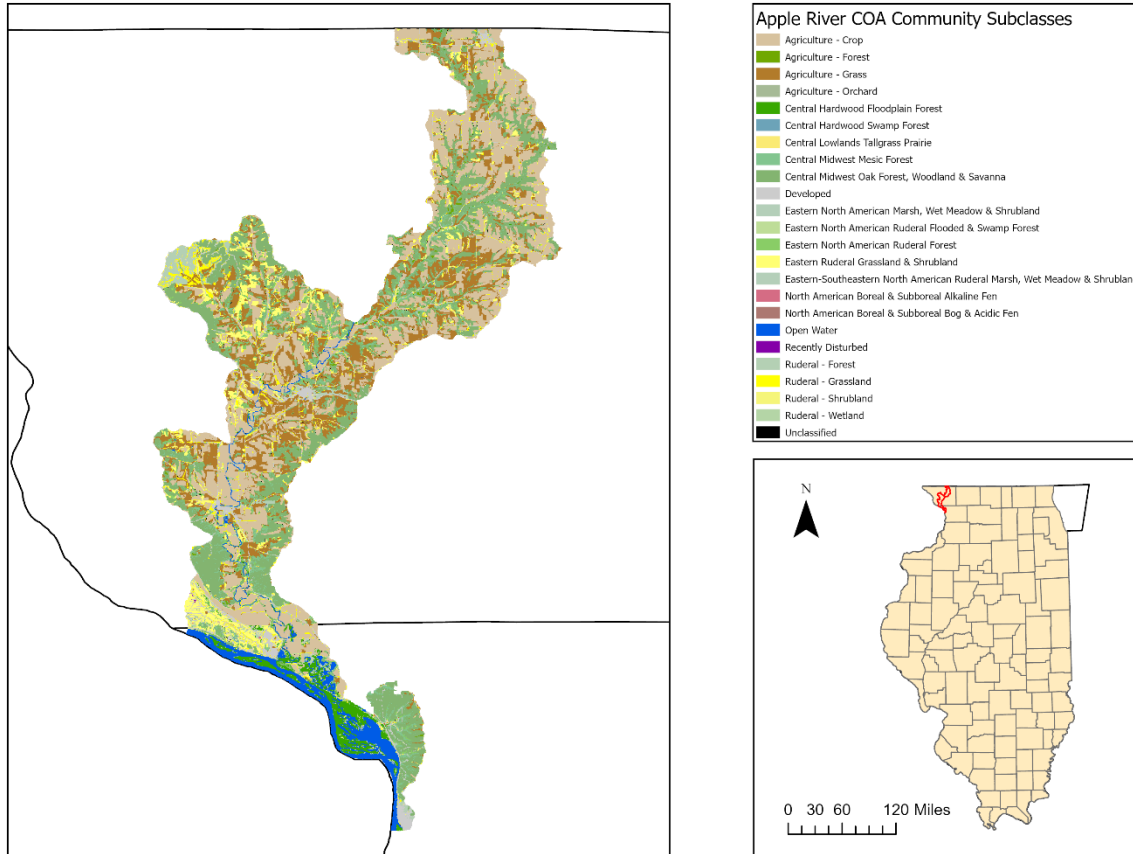
Partners: Illinois Audubon, Openlands, Friends of the Nature Preserves, Society for Ecological Restoration, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Foundation, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Illinois Native Plant Society, Forest Preserve District of Will County

Proposed 4-Rivers COA Boundary adjustment:



Apple River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 83,000 acres within the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division (Northwest Region); Jo Daviess County, Carroll County.



Conservation Philosophy: Protect, manage and restore connectivity between Natural Communities along the Apple River Corridor while providing for compatible recreational activities.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Lands protected in the Nature Preserves System, Coolwater Streams, Cliff, Barrens, Glade, and Hill Prairie Natural Communities

Native Species: freshwater mussels; Endangered and Threatened Species (62 T&E Species records including 23 wildlife species and 39 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Maintain High-Quality Natural Communities and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Invasive species, Fragmentation

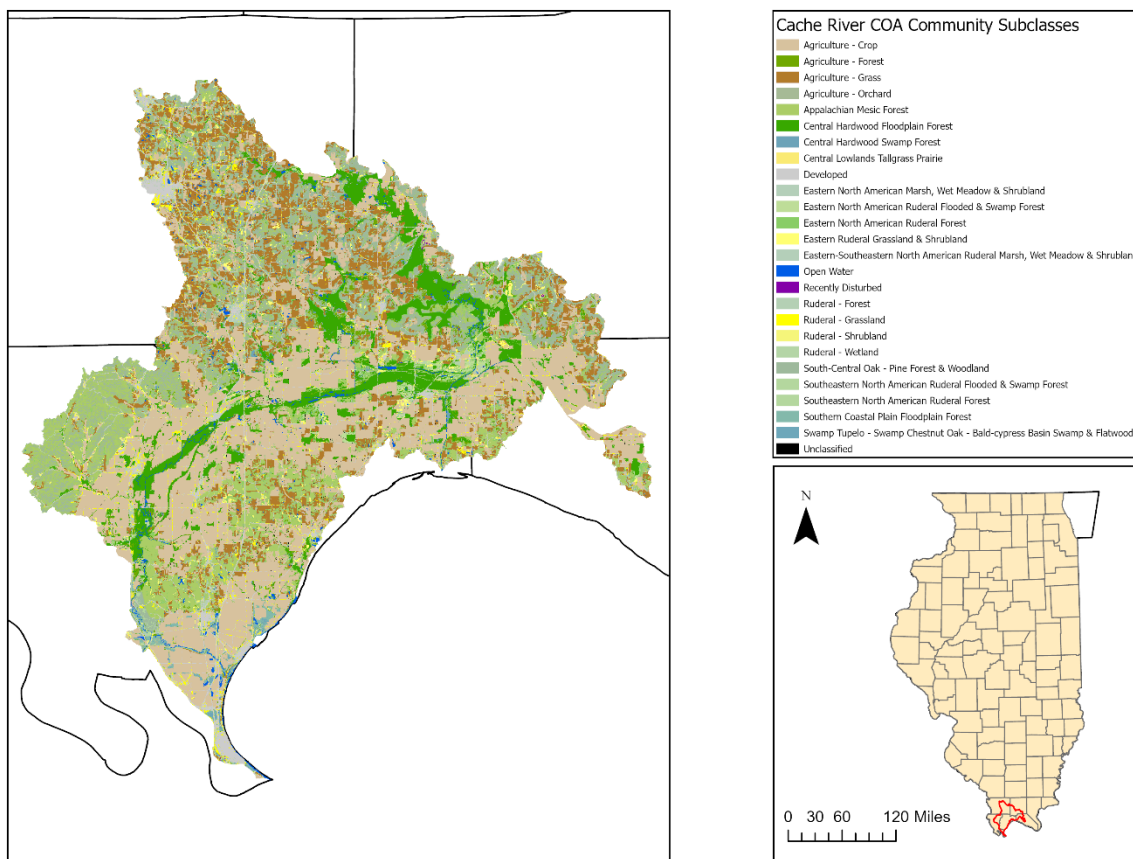
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: The Prairie Enthusiasts, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Trout Unlimited, TNC, Jo Daviess Natural Areas Guardians, Driftless Area Partnership, Natural Lands Institute, Blufflands Alliance, National Wild Turkey Federation, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

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Cache River Wetlands COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 343,000 acres within the Coastal Plain Natural Division (Southern Region); Johnson, Union, Massac, Pulaski, Alexander Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Restoration, preservation, and management of bottomland hardwood forests, swamp forests, and riparian aquatic habitat.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Land protected in the Nature Preserves System, Bottomland Hardwood Forest, Migratory Birds

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (83 T&E species records including 43 wildlife species and 40 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Increase the amount of public lands; partially reconnect the Upper and Lower Segments of the Cache River; reduce peak flows

Threats/Stressors: modified hydrology, agricultural runoff, Invasive Species

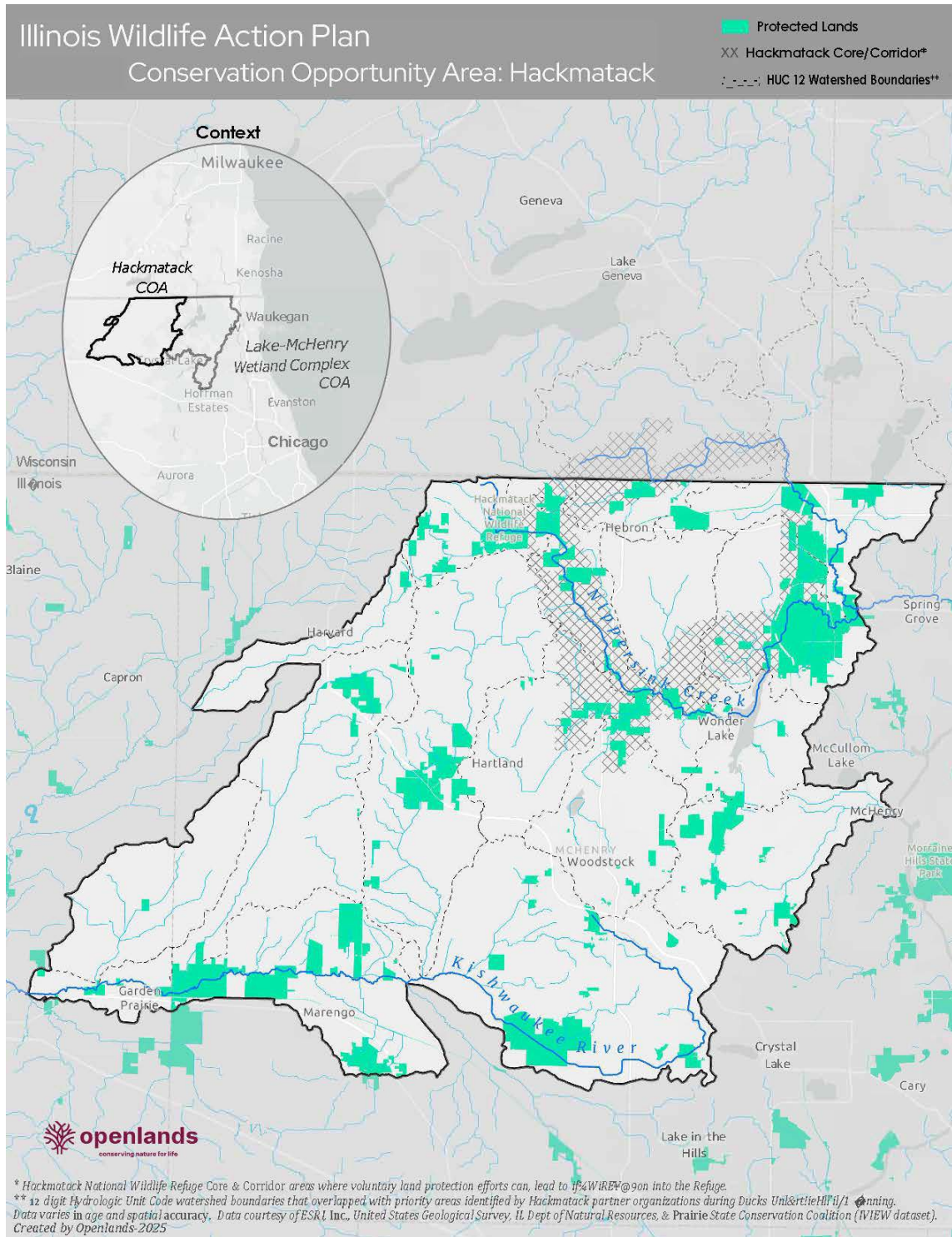
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Acquisition, Reconnection of Cache River, Reforestation and Wetland Restoration

Partners: Friends of the Cache River Watershed, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Cache River Joint Venture Partnership

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Hackmatack COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: follows the Conservation Focus Area identified by partners during the development of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. This extends far beyond the Hackmatack Core/Corridor Area. Adjacent and west of the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex COA.



Conservation Philosophy:

- Create an interconnected landscape of wetlands, prairie, savanna, and forests for wildlife and recreation.
- Expand and connect core areas of high priority habitats with corridors of protected habitat.

2025 Conservation Opportunity Area Goals and Tasks

- Prioritize protection of SGCN through easements, fee simple acquisition, and participation in Farm Bill Programs.
- Increase quality of SGCN habitat on protected land through increased volunteerism and quality of land management practices.
- Coordinate infrastructure development within the COA to protect SGCN and promote conservation organizations and landholdings.
- Increase coordination of activities, programs and media output by conservation organizations within the COA through cooperation and communication.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Streams, Savanna, Upland Forest, Prairie, Wetlands

Native Species: Black Sandshell, Central Mudminnow, Mottled Sculpin; Eastern Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker; Rusty-patched Bumblebee, American Bumblebee, Blue-winged Warbler, Ovenbird; Smooth Greensnake, Monarch Butterfly, Silver-bordered Fritillary, Grasshopper Sparrow; American Bittern, Common Gallinule, Wilson's Snipe, Blanding's Turtle

Objectives of COA:

- Protect and restore sensitive remnant habitats (prairie, sedge meadow, fens, savanna, woodlands)
- Acquire and convey land to create a protected and continuous landscape level Refuge
- Restore wetlands and prairies
- Conduct stewardship to ensure oak regeneration
- Expand conservation practices on private lands to improve water quality and habitat

Threats/Stressors: Inadequate stream buffers, Pesticides, Loss of suitable habitat, Fragmentation

Conservation Action Strategies:

- Survey for SGCN within COA boundaries
- Protect 1,000 additional acres within the COA boundaries
- Restore 140 acres of remnant oak woodlands and savanna within the COA boundaries
- Restore 280 acres of de-novo wetlands within the COA boundaries
- Restore 400 acres of de-novo prairie and grasslands within the COA boundaries
- Increase Farm Bill (USDA) Program participation by adding 100 new contracts within the COA boundaries

Partners: Hackmatack Conservation Partnership, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Openlands, Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Ducks Unlimited, The McHenry County Conservation District, The McHenry County Conservation Foundation

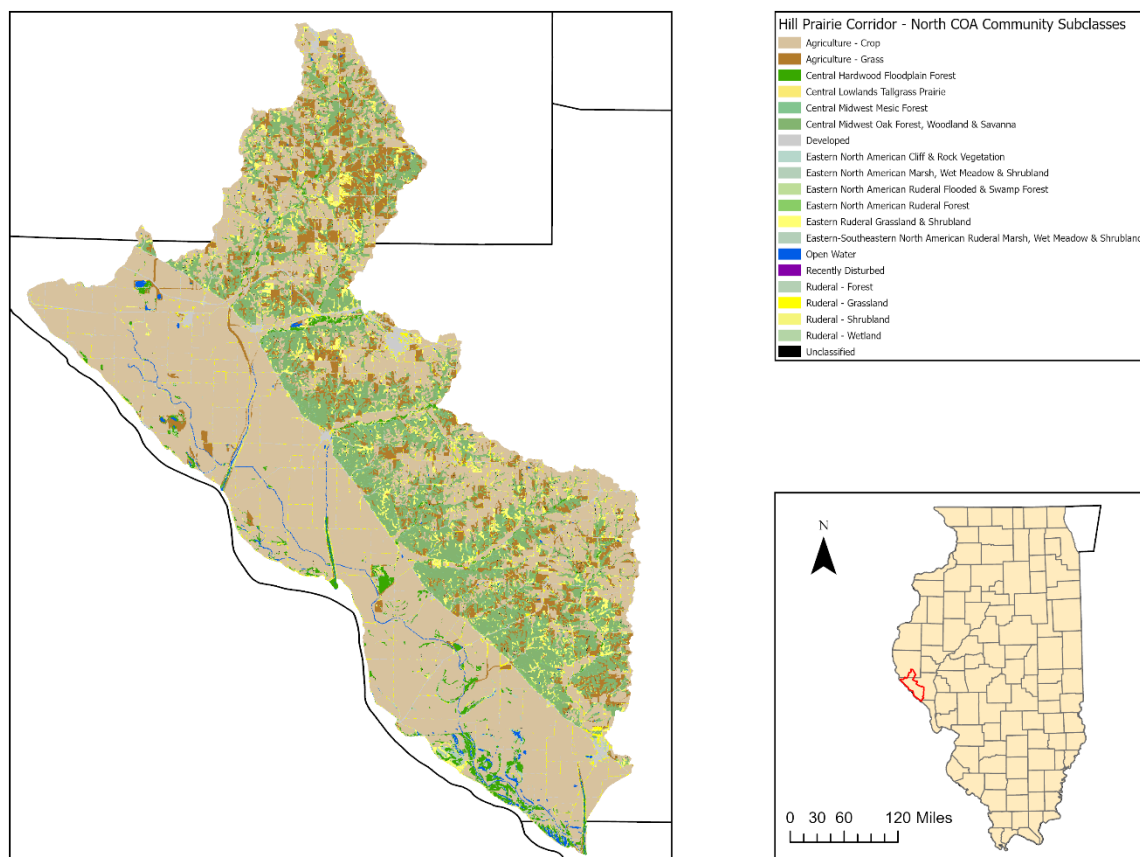
- This COA also maintains partnerships with organizations in Wisconsin: Geneva Lake Conservancy, Kettle Moraine Land Trust

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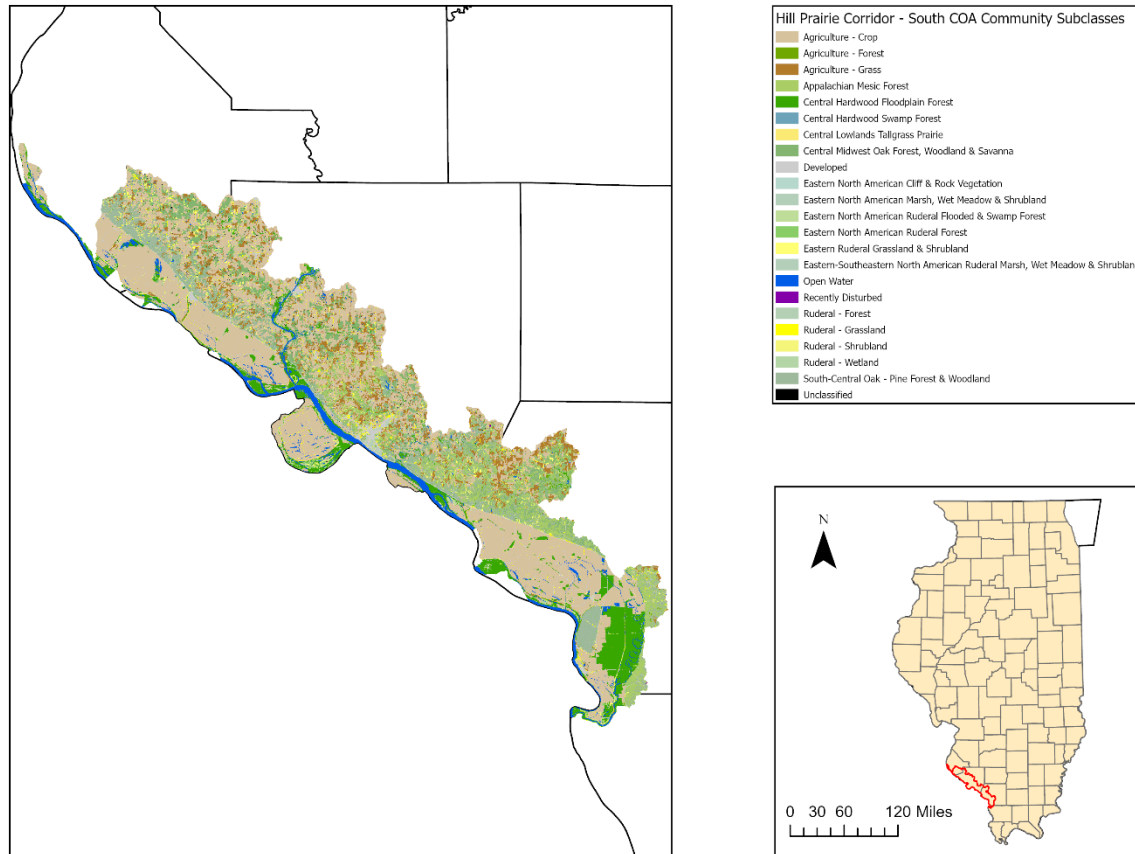
Hill Prairie Corridor COA Assessment

The Northern Hill Prairie Corridor COA and the Southern Hill Prairie Corridor COA Assessments are jointly presented as they collectively focus on the conservation of Hill Prairies and adjacent Natural Communities along with the Native Species that they support within the Illinois Ozark Natural Division.

Description and Geographical Location (Northern Hill Prairie Corridor COA Assessment): Roughly 231,000 acres within the Ozark Natural Division (West Central Region); Calhoun, Pike, and Adams Counties.



Description and Geographical Location (Southern Hill Prairie Corridor COA Assessment): Roughly 355,000 acres within the Ozarks Natural Division (Western and Southern Region); Jackson, Union, Monroe, and Randolph Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Restore, maintain, and protect the fragmented hill prairies that exist on these areas to prevent their closing in by woody encroachment; protect and proactively manage for the unique flora and fauna native to these blufftop ecosystems; use sound management decisions guided by historical conditions.

Key Conservation Features: Hill Prairies and adjacent Forest & Woodlands, Bedrock (Glades and Cliffs), and Cave Natural Communities; High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species:

- Northern: Threatened and Endangered Species (17 T&E Species records including 9 wildlife and 8 plant species)
- Southern: Threatened and Endangered Species (79 T&E Species including 36 wildlife species and 43 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Expand boundaries of Hill Prairies to historical extent, enroll unprotected Hill Prairies and critical habitats for endangered/threatened species into long term protection programs

Threats/Stressors: declining habitat quality, Invasive Species

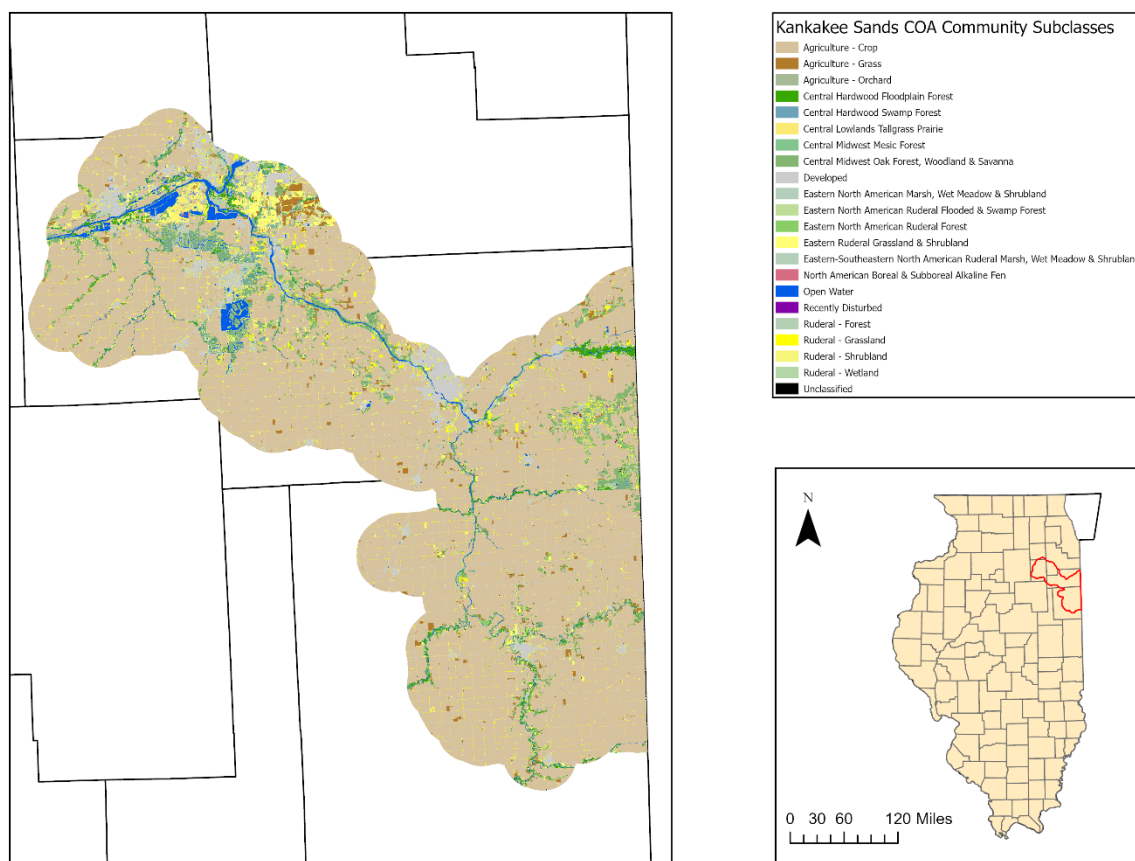
Conservation Action Strategies: Use prescribed burning to manage hill prairies, glades, barrens, and upland forests; support permanent protection of available parcels of high-quality community types; create connectivity within the hill prairies system along the Mississippi River bluffs.

Partners: Great Rivers Land Trust, Prairie Land Conservancy, Clifftop, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Illinois Speleological Survey, Subterranean Ecology Institute, Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society, Illinois Audubon Society, Illinois Ornithological Society, Illinois Native Plant Society, Southwestern Illinois College, HeartLands Conservancy, TreeHouse Wildlife Center

- This COA also maintains a partnership with the World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri.

Kankakee Sands – Pembroke Savannas – Kankakee River – Momence Wetlands COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 1,067,000 acres within the Grand Prairie Natural Division (Northeast and East Central Region); Kendall, Will, Grundy, Kankakee, and Iroquois Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Protect remnant high-quality habitats, improve connectivity and management, people focused stuff (education and outreach)

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Momence Wetlands, Sand Savanna and Sand Prairie, Bottomland Forest

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (111 T&E Species Records including 49 wildlife species and 62 plant species)

Objectives of COA: restore/manage Black Oak Savanna, Sand Prairie, and Sand Flatwoods; restore/manage Momence Wetlands

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Loss, Agricultural pressure, Succession, Invasives, Development and use of Enter Pivot Irrigators

Conservation Action Strategies: protect and restore remnant savanna, sand prairie and wetland habitat.

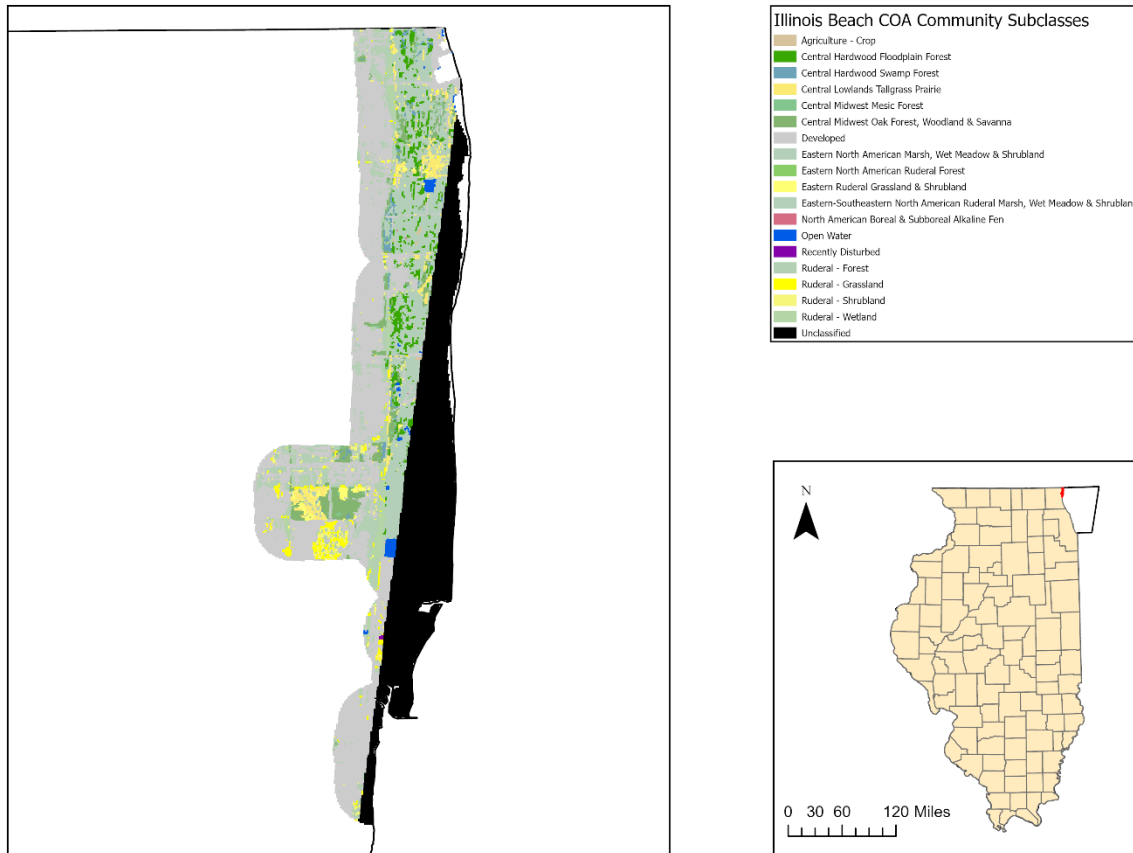
Partners: The Conservation Foundation, Grand Prairie Friends, Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, Northern Illinois Anglers Association, Pembroke Preservation Alliance, Community Development Corporation of Pembroke-Hopkins Park, Friends of the Kankakee, The Field Museum, USFWS Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge, Openlands

- This COA also expects to coordinate work with partners across state boundaries in Indiana to restore channelized streams, stabilize stream banks, manage drainage practices to moderate water flows, and develop minimum flow standards

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Lake Plain Partnership COA
(Formerly Illinois Beach – Chiwaukee Prairie COA Assessment)

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 13,000 acres within the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division (Northeast Region); Lake County



Conservation Philosophy: To conserve the ecological integrity of the Lake Plain Ecosystem through collaborative landscape management and public education and outreach.

Key Conservation Features: Shore Natural Community Class, adjacent wetlands and prairies; High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species: Blanding's Turtle, Piping Plover, Mudpuppy, Rusty-patched Bumblebee, plants. Threatened and Endangered Species (68 T&E species records including 19 wildlife species and 49 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Limit expansion and prevent new introductions of invasive species; Increase the abundance and quality of functional habitats and rare Natural Community Types; Develop public support through outreach and recreational access.

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Habitat Loss; altered wetland hydrology, lack of fire, fragmentation, high abundance of mesopredators, shoreline erosion, wildlife diseases

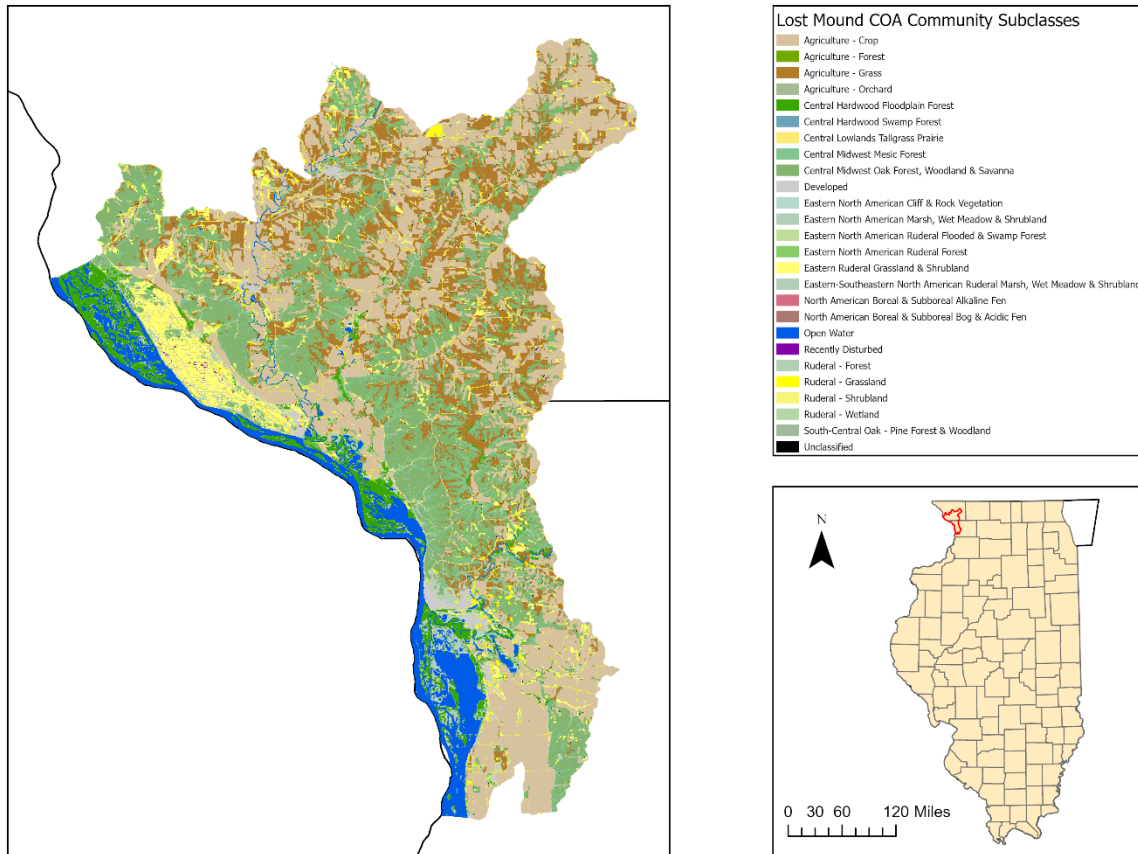
Conservation Action Strategies: Strategic Plan Development, Outreach and Education, Expand Capacity for Invasive Plant Control, Habitat protection and stewardship including prescribed fire; Invasive Species Control, Biological Monitoring, Biodiversity Enhancement

Partners: Land Conservancy of Lake County, Lake County Forest Preserve District, Friends of the Illinois Nature Preserves, Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society, Zion Park District, Exelon/Constellation Energy, Zion Solutions/Midwest Energy LLC, Johns-Manville Corp., City of Waukegan, Village of Winthrop Harbor, Waukegan Park District, Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group, Lake County Health Department, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, Northern Illinois University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Plants of Concern Program, Lake Forest Open Lands Zion Park District, Lake Plain Partnership

- This COA maintains partnerships within the State of Wisconsin that are also active within the Lake Michigan Lake Plan: Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Village of Pleasant Prairie, City of Kenosha, The Nature Conservancy Wisconsin, The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Lost Mound – Hanover Bluff – Mississippi Palisades COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 165,000 acres within the Sand Areas, Upper MS/IL River Bottomlands Natural Division (Northwest Region); Jo Daviess County and Carroll County



Conservation Philosophy: restoration of the continuum of riverine, prairie, and upland forest as a functional and connected landscape.

Key Conservation Features: Cliff and Glade Natural Communities; High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species: viable populations of grassland species; Threatened and Endangered Species (63 records of T&E Species including 32 wildlife species and 31 plant species records)

Objectives of COA:

- Restoration of the continuum of riverine (Mississippi River bottomlands), prairie (Lost Mound), and upland forest (Hanover Bluff, Mississippi Palisades) as a functional and connected landscape.
- Restoration of a sand prairie/sand savanna ecosystem capable of maintaining viable populations of grassland species while allowing compatible recreational activities.

Threats/Stressors: Fragmentation, Invasive Species

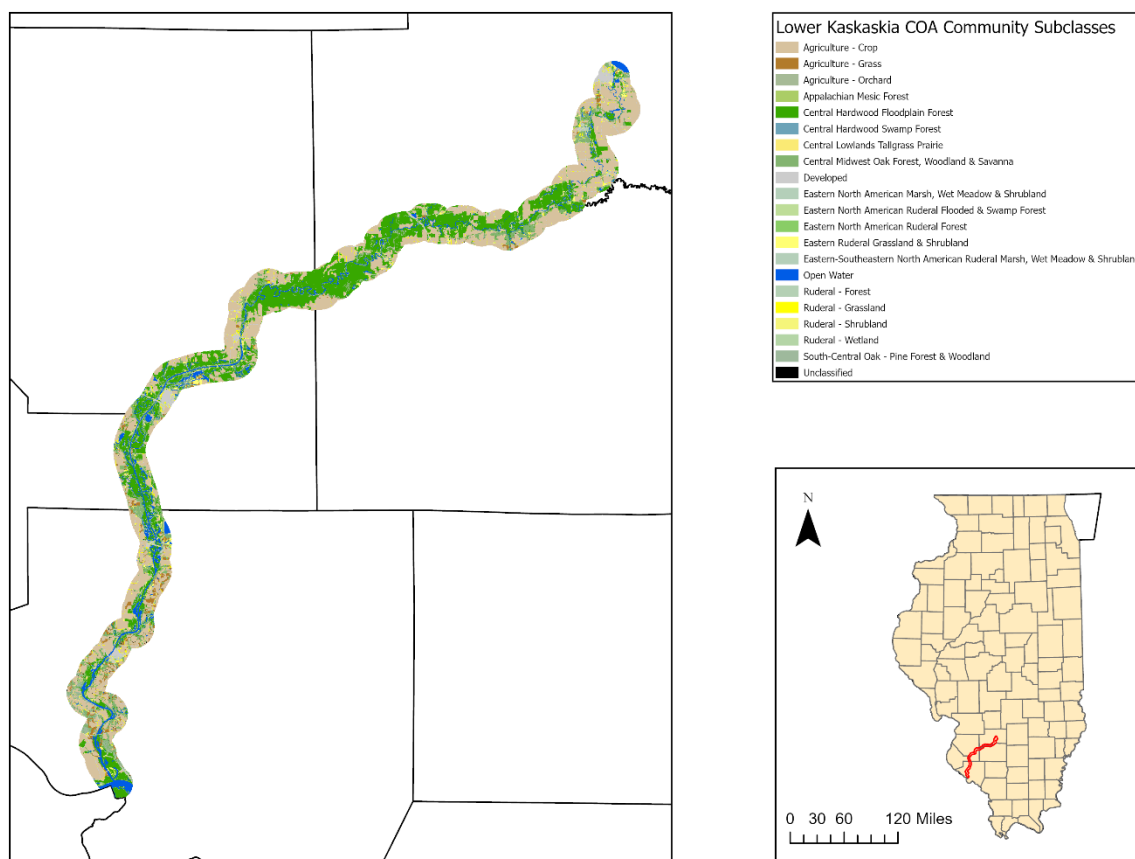
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Natural Community Connectivity

Partners: The Friends of the Depot, The Northwest Illinois Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, The Nature Conservancy, Jo Daviess Natural Areas Guardians, Driftless Area Fish Habitat Partnership, Natural Lands Institute, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Blufflands Alliance, Illinois Natural Land Institute, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, Jane Addamsland Park Foundation

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Lower Kaskaskia Bottomlands COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 100,000 acres within the Southern Till Plain Natural Division (West Central Region); Clinton, Washington, St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct targeted stewardship work to maintain habitats for Native Species

Key Conservation Features High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Bottomland Hardwood Forest, High-Quality Flatwoods

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (17 T&E Species Records including 13 wildlife species and 4 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Maintain High-Quality Natural Communities and Habitats for Threatened and Endangered Species.

Threats/Stressors: Hydrology, Pollution/Sediment, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Kaskaskia Watershed Association, Heartlands Conservancy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kaskaskia Watershed Association, Heartlands Conservancy, St. Clair County Greenspace Foundation, Clifftop, Original Kaskaskia Area Wilderness Inc.

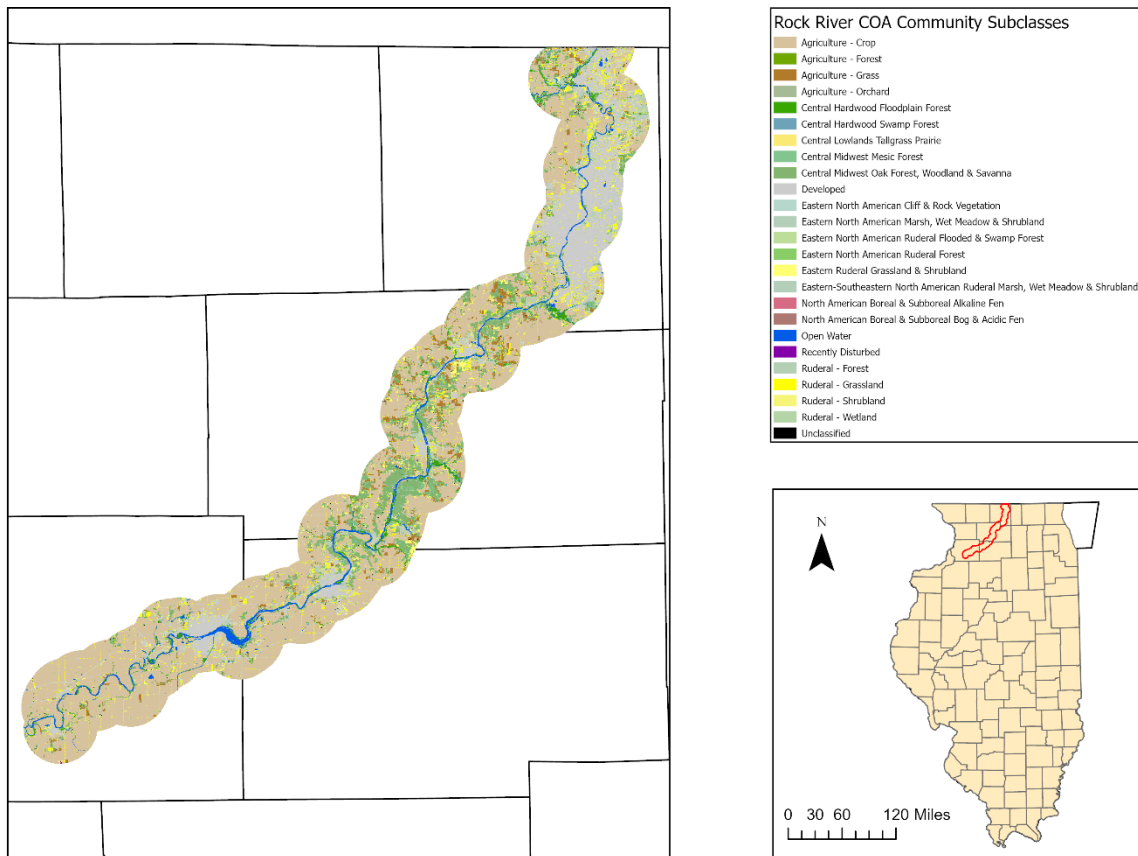
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Middle Rock COA Assessment

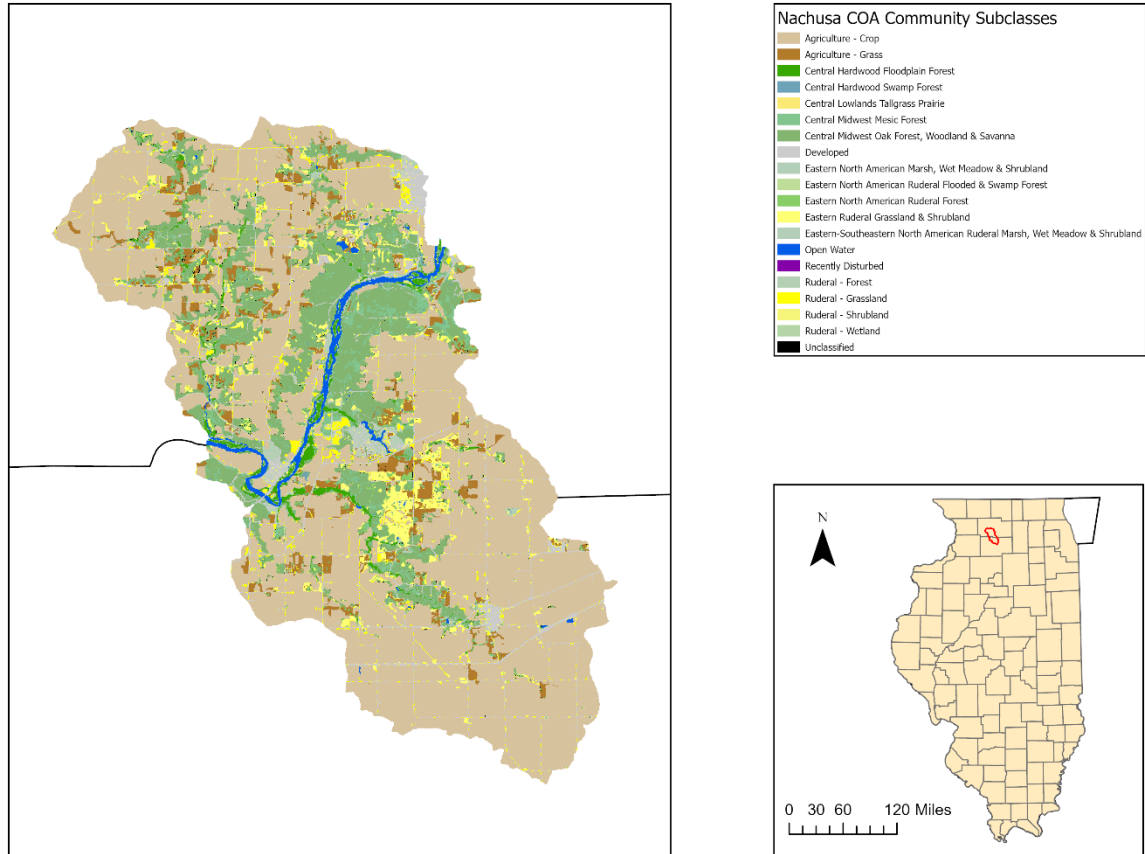
(former Rock River COA, Nachusa – Franklin Creek – Castle Rock – Lowden Miller COA, Green River COA)

The Rock River COA, Nachusa – Franklin Creek – Castle Rock – Lowden Miller COA, and the Green River COA Assessments are combined here as they overlap in geographical area, primary purpose, and share Conservation Partners.

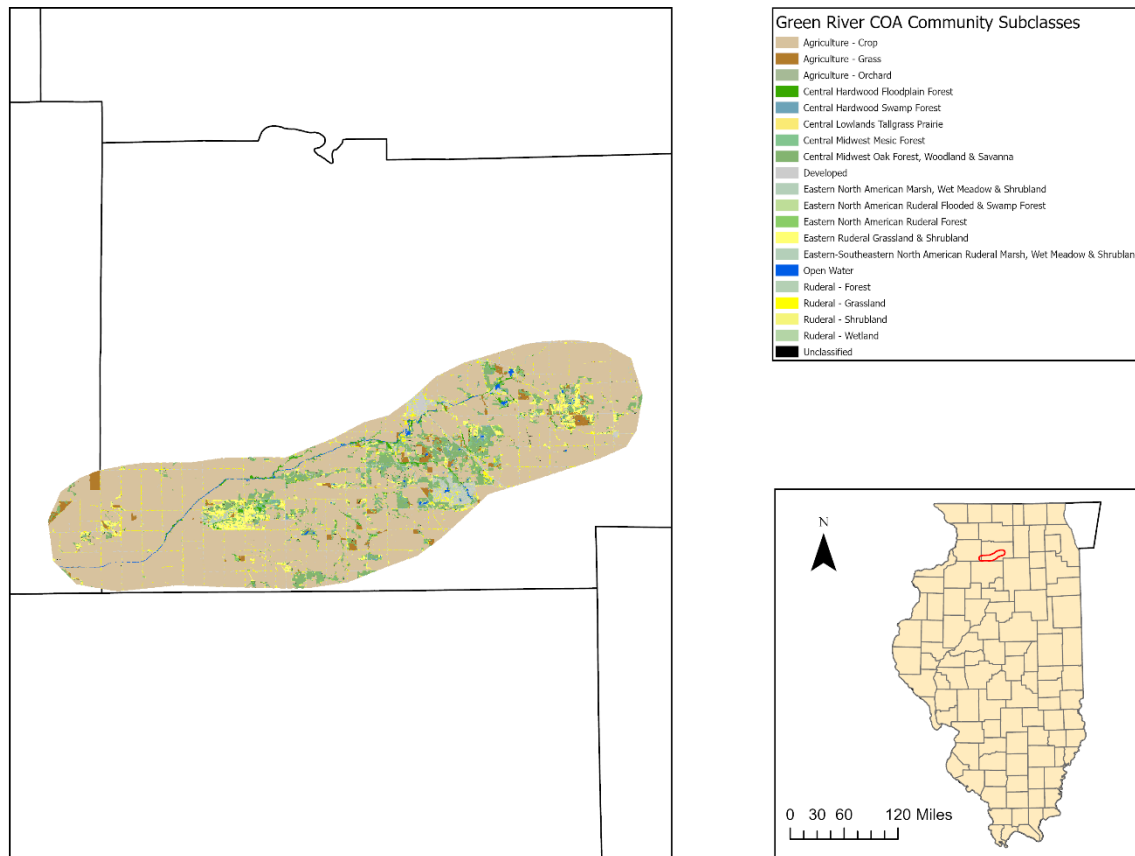
Description and Geographical Location: Rock River COA – Located in the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division (Northwest Region); Winnebago, Ogle, Lee, and Whiteside Counties



Description and Geographical Location: Nachusa – Franklin Creek – Castle Rock – Lowden Miller COA –
 Roughly 91,000 acres within the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division (Northwest Region); Ogle
 County, Lee County



Description and Geographical Location: Green River COA – Located in the Grand Prairie Natural Division (Northwest Region); Lee County, Whiteside County



Conservation Philosophy: Prairie and wetland complex restoration and reconstruction, active management of Natural Communities using fire regime, thinning, and other practices; Land Acquisition

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species; Sand Forest, Upland forest/prairie, Sand/gravel prairie, Sand prairie/savanna, Marsh, Sedge Meadow

Native Species:

- Rock River COA – Threatened and Endangered Species (84 T&E records from 37 wildlife and 47 plant species);
- Nachusa – Franklin Creek – Castle Rock – Lowden Miller COA – Threatened and Endangered Species (53 T&E species records including 19 wildlife species and 34 plant species records);
- Green River – Threatened and Endangered Species (37 T&E species records including 17 wildlife species and 20 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Natural Community Restoration; Land Protection; Land Stewardship

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Degradation, Invasive Species, Herbicide Drift, Fragmentation, conflicts between land users priorities; hydrologic alterations

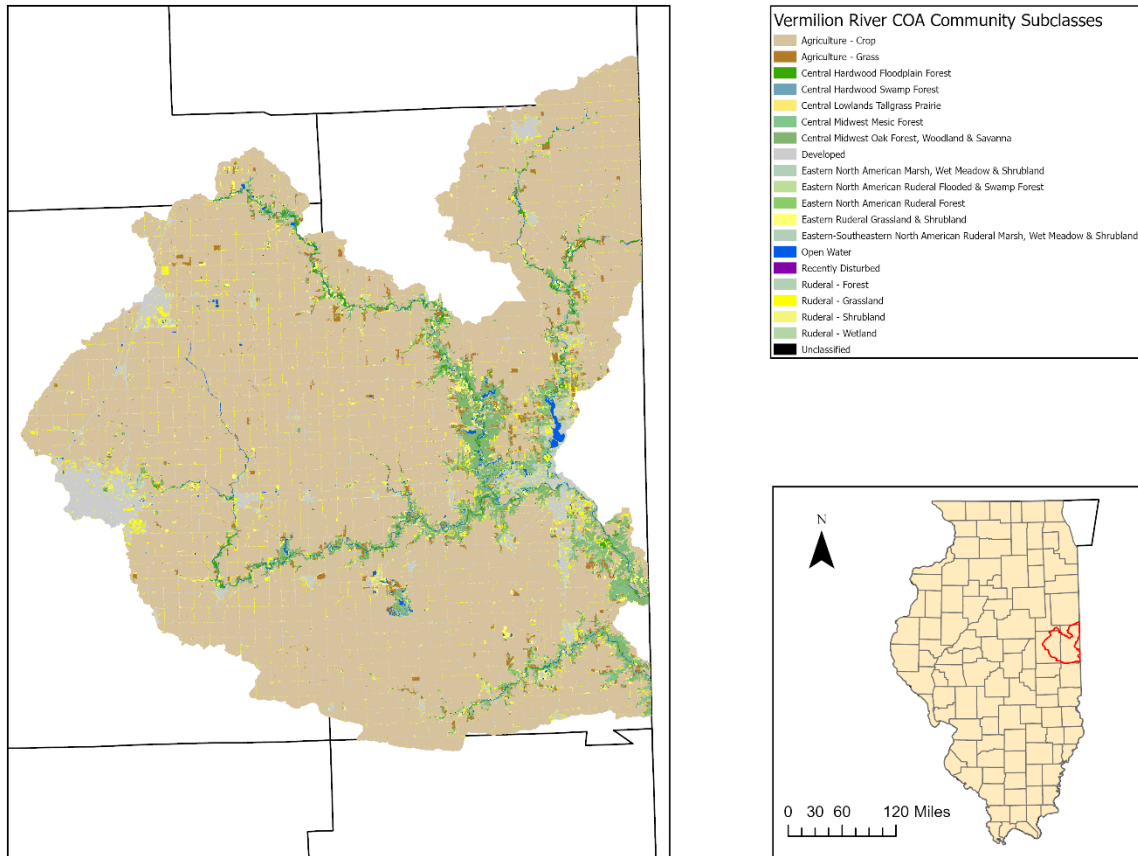
Conservation Action Strategies: Natural Areas Protection and Stewardship; Prairie Restoration & Protection, Forest Restoration & Protection, Fire, Exotics Control, Surveys, Land acquisition;

Partners: Augustana College, Oregon Park District, Friends of Nachusa Grasslands, Bureau County Soil and Water Conservation District, Kickapoo Mud Creek Nature Conservancy, Dixon Park District, National Wild Turkey Federation, Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Lands Institute, Kickapoo Land Conservancy, Northern Illinois University, Prairie Preservationists Society of Ogle Co., Byron Forest Preserve, Illinois Audubon, Richardson Wildlife Area, Blackhawk Community College, Middle Rock Conservation Partners

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Vermilion River & Little Vermilion River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 794,000 acres within the Wabash River Border Natural Division (East Central Region); Iroquois, Ford, Vermilion, Champaign, and Edgar Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Maintain and enhance Scenic River Corridor and buffer areas, utilize historic vegetation conditions as a guide for a mosaic of prairie, shrubland, savanna, and open woodland on sandy terraces and flat uplands, dry-mesic and mesic forest in ravines, emphasizing forest establishment and enhancement.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Fish, Mussels, Geographically restricted amphibians

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (43 T&E species records including 42 wildlife species and 12 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Assess streambank erosion and stabilization needs; protect and restore terrace wetlands and all seeps, maintain 3-5 forested tracts >200 acres; develop channel evolution model for river to help identify future management needs; enhance oak recruitment in existing wooded tracts; decrease amount of hard' habitat edges through burning, invasive species control, and planting.

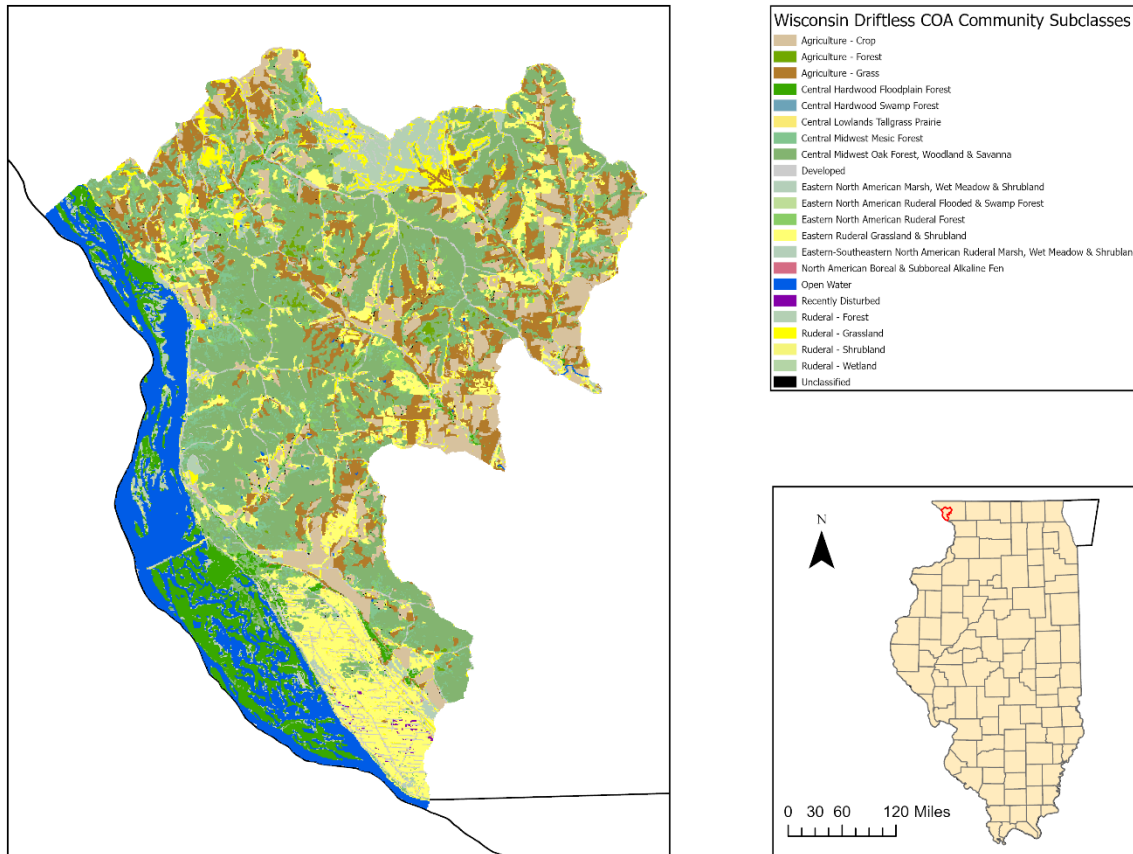
Threats/Stressors: Habitat Loss, Agricultural pressures

Conservation Action Strategies: Hydrologic analysis and plan (especially vis-a-vis streambanks and channel stability); restoration of degraded habitats using historical vegetation conditions as a guide; landowner contact for all rare resources in database; establish amphibian breeding habitat adjacent to existing woodlands, forests, and woodland/forest restorations; control/remove exotic species; reduce remove hard habitat edges; increase prescribed burning, especially in oak woodlands and forests; perform biotic inventories and establish monitoring protocols.

Partners: Vermilion County Conservation District, Vermilion County Soil & Water Conservation District, Illinois State Water Survey, Illinois State Geological Survey, Prairie Rivers Network; National Park Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Volunteer Stewardship Network, Land Conservation Foundation, Grand Prairie Friends, Openlands

Wisconsin Driftless Forest COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 63,000 acres within the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division (Northwest Region); Jo Daviess County and Carroll County



Conservation Philosophy: Implement conservation strategies to protect, enhance, or recover the benefits of Natural Communities and Native Species

Key Conservation Features: Oak-hickory forests, Savannas & Woodlands, Prairie, Cliff and Glade Natural Communities; High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species: Migratory and Breeding Birds, Threatened and Endangered Species (54 T&E species records including 29 wildlife species and 25 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Protect, manage, and restore Natural Communities, habitats for endangered and threatened species, and provide compatible recreational activities

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Degradation, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: National Wild Turkey Federation, Jo Daviess Natural Areas Guardians, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Driftless Area Partnership, Natural Lands Institute, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Blufflands

Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, Jane Addamsland Park Foundation, Driftless Area National Fish Habitat Partnership

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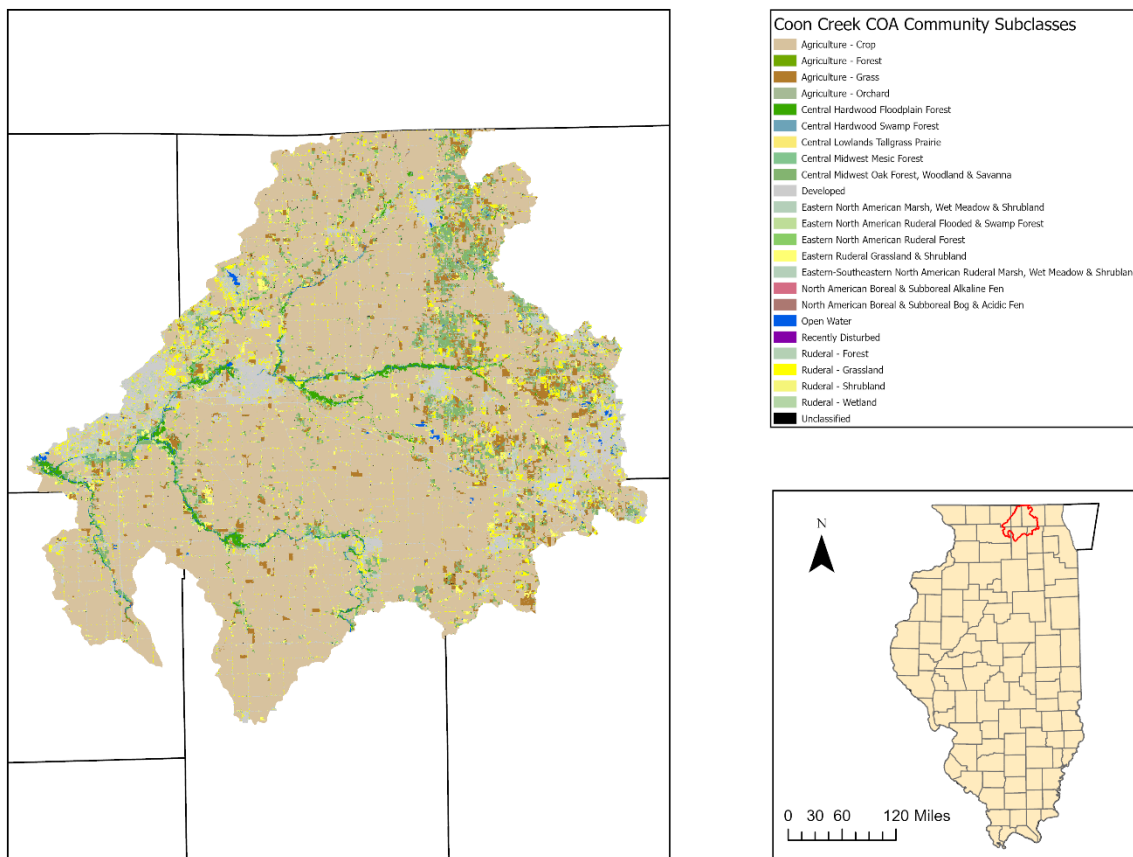
Conservation Opportunity Area Assessments – Less Developed COAs

Here we present brief assessments for identified Conservation Opportunity Areas that are less well developed at this time. When available the assessments include the conservation philosophy, key conservation features, SGCN, common conservation objectives, major threats/stressors, conservation action strategies, and identified and potential Conservation Partners associated with the COA. **Note:** The Illinois Department of Natural Resources should be considered a partner for each of the COAs identified in this Plan and has been excluded from the COA Partners Lists.

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Crow's Foot Marsh – Coon Creek – Kishwaukee River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 611,000 acres within the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division (Northwest and Northeast Regions); Winnebago, Ogle, DeKalb, Boone, McHenry, and Kane Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Preserve and enhance habitat along the Kishwaukee River and its tributary, Coon Creek to maintain biodiversity in the watershed.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Unique Aquatic Resource (Class A Stream); Wetlands, Floodplain Forest, Upland Forest

Native Species: Native Bird Species, Freshwater Mussels, Fish, Franklin's Ground Squirrel, Blanding's Turtle, Mudpuppy; Threatened and Endangered Species (55 T&E species records including 22 wildlife and 33 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Protect, restore, and manage habitat in targeted species habitat restoration areas within the watershed.

Threats/Stressors: Fragmentation, Invasive Species, Flooding, Lack of Stewardship, Hydrologic Alteration, Impervious Surfaces, Nutrient Inputs to surface waters

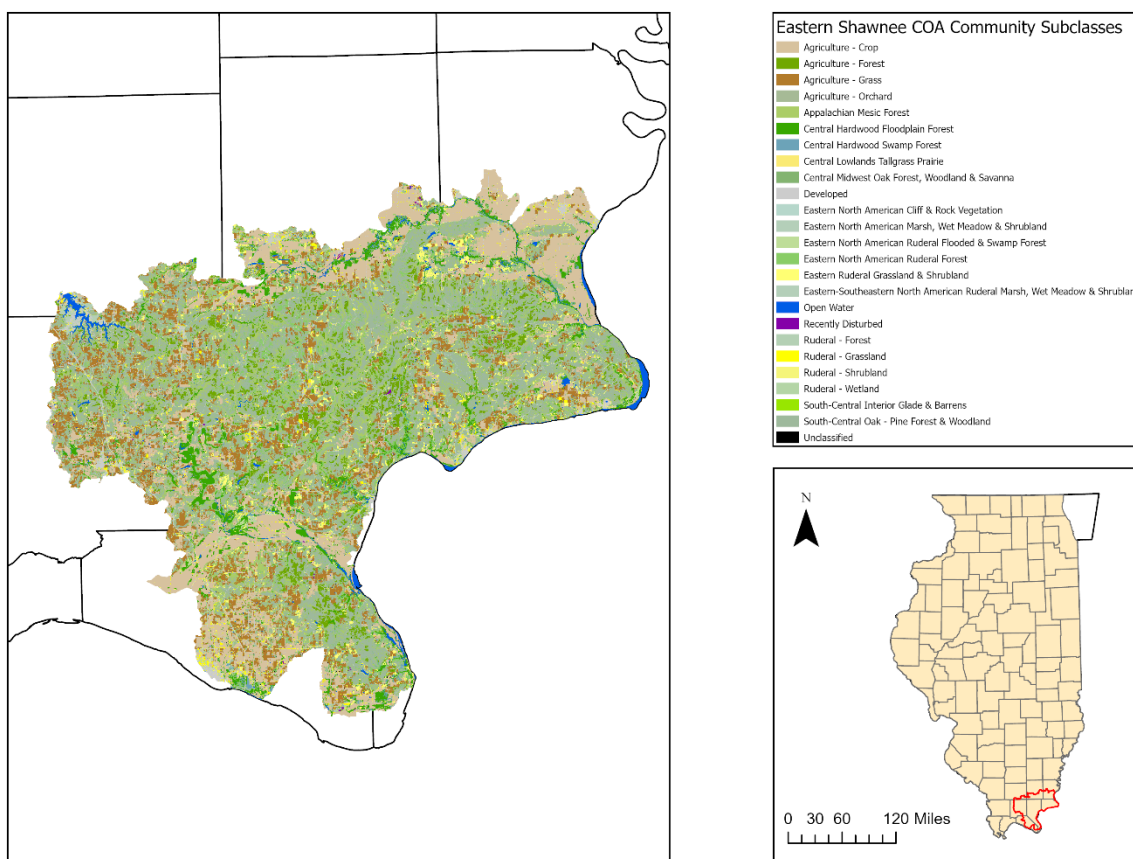
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Boone County Conservation District, McHenry County Conservation District, Open Land Trust, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Natural Land Institute, Middle Rock Conservation Partners, Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County, The Conservation Foundation, Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, Northern Illinois University, McHenry County Farm Bureau, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, Openlands, Rockford Park District, Sierra Club

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Eastern Shawnee COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 748,000 acres within the Shawnee Hills Natural Division (Southern Region); Gallatin, Saline, Williamson, Hardin, Pope, Johnson, and Massac Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Manage the area for the long-term sustainability and protection of Natural Communities and Native Species, Forest Ecosystem Health, and recreational benefits.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, High-quality Streams, Neotropical Migratory Birds, Barrens, Glades, and Cliff Natural Communities

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (133 T&E species records including 48 wildlife species and 85 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: restoration and management of large forest blocks; proactively manage Natural Communities to maintain and enhance their quality

Threats/Stressors: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Conservation Action Strategies: Use prescribed fire to manage fire climax communities of glades, barrens, and upland forests; land acquisition of available target parcels of high-quality community types; reforestation to create larger patches

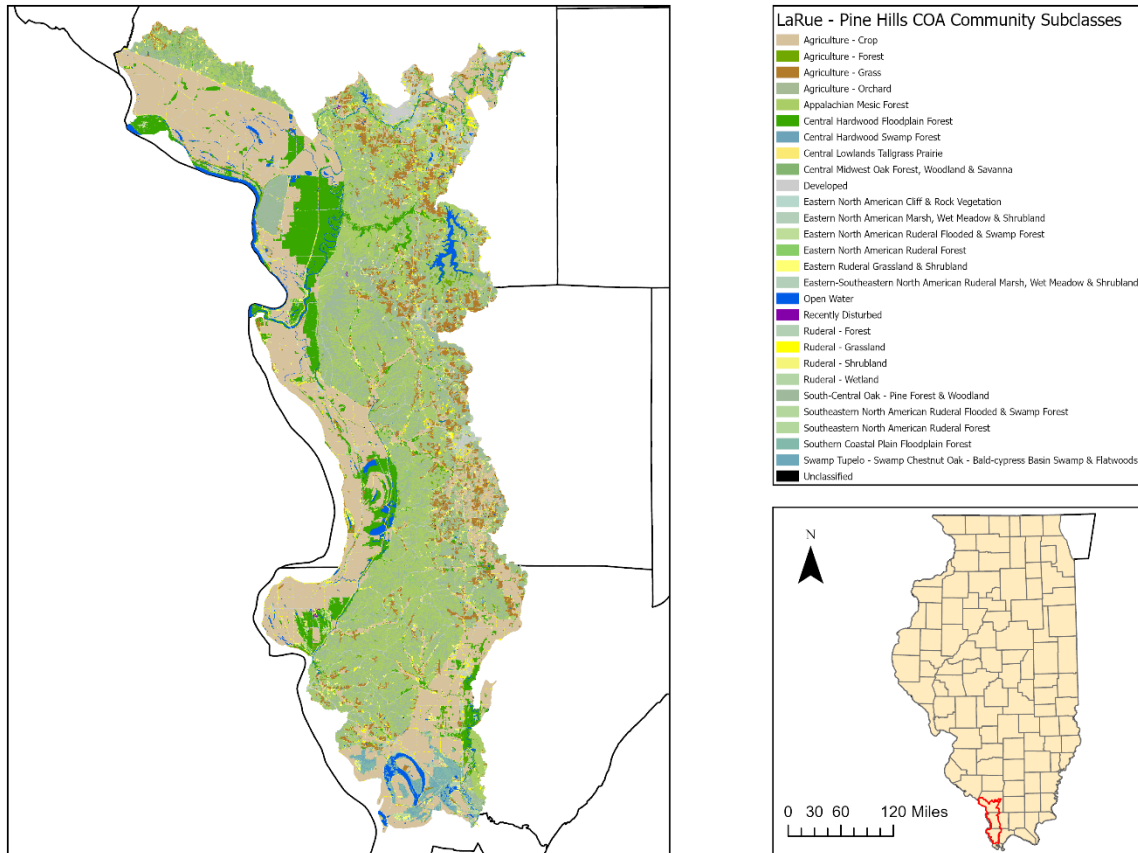
Partners: U.S. Forest Service (Shawnee National Forest), Heartlands Conservancy

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Illinois Ozarks COA Assessment

(Formerly LaRue – Pine Hills – Western Shawnee – Trail of Tears COA Assessment)

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 412,000 acres within the Shawnee Hills Natural Division (Southern Region); Jackson, Union, Pulaski, and Alexander Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Maintain connectivity among Ozark, Shawnee Hills and Lower Mississippi River Bottomlands Natural Divisions with riverine, swamp, bottomland forest, bluff, and upland forest, glade and barrens communities. Protect and proactively manage for the unique flora and fauna native to these ecosystems. Use sound management decisions, with historical conditions as a guide.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Barren and Glade Natural Communities, High diversity of herpetofauna, Large Forest Blocks

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (109 T&E Species records including 44 wildlife species and 65 plant species)

Objectives of COA: Enroll unprotected critical habitats for endangered/threatened species into long term protection plans; generate funding to increase biologist positions to help with personnel needed to proactively manage these communities.

Threats/Stressors: Invasives, Agriculture, Flooding (Climate Change), Equestrian Use, Urban Development

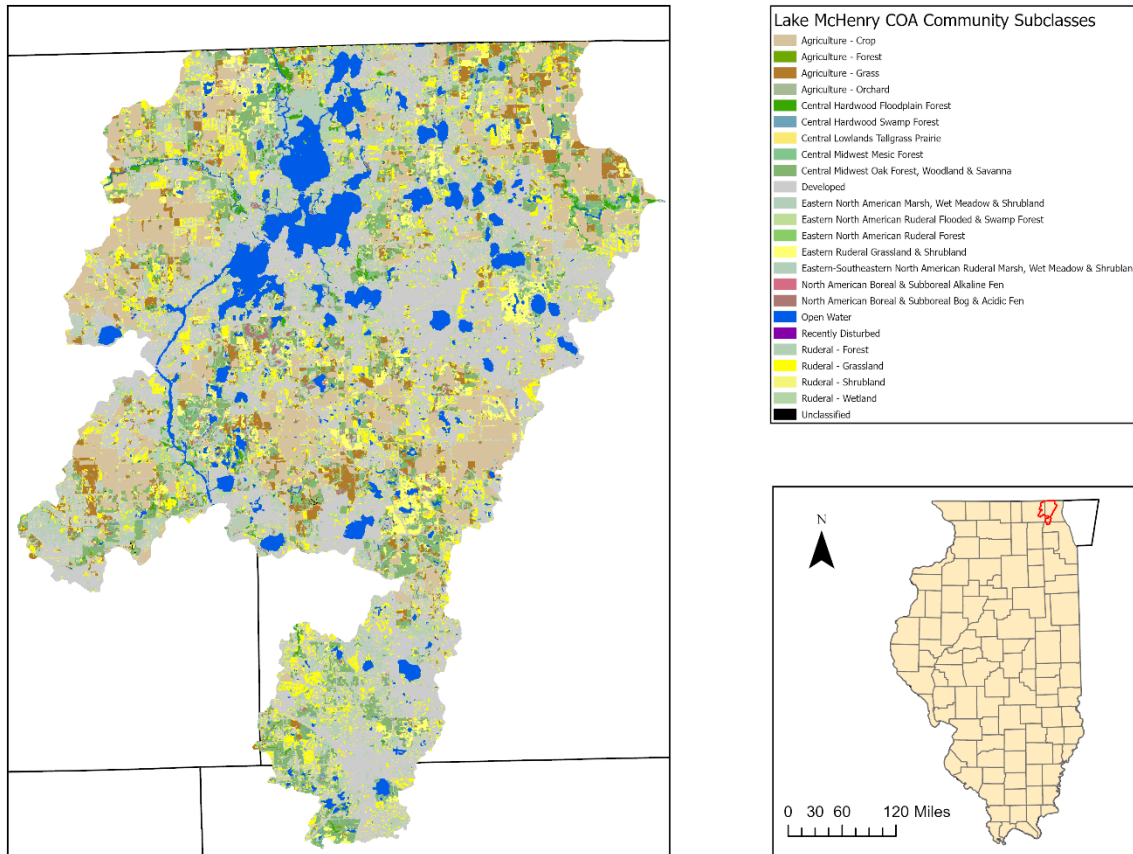
Conservation Action Strategies: Use prescribed fire to manage fire climax communities of glades, barrens, and upland forests; land acquisition of available target parcels of high-quality community types; reforestation to create larger patches.

Partners: The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service (Shawnee National Forest); National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Heartlands Conservancy

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Lake – McHenry County Wetland Complex COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 190,000 acres within the Northeast Region; McHenry, Lake, and Cook Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Rare Wetland Types, Rare Wetland & Grassland Species

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (101 T&E species records including 28 wildlife species and 73 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Habitat Degradation

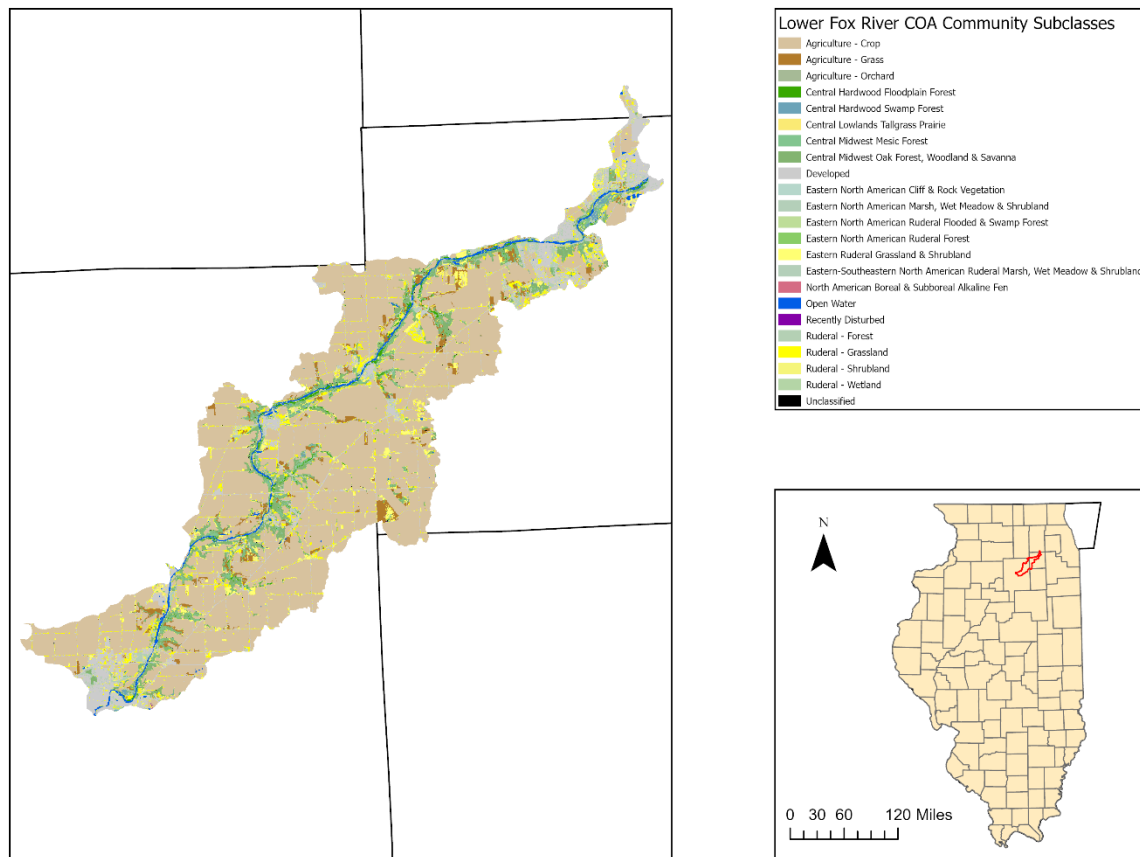
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species & Disease Control, and Native Species Recovery

Partners: Forest Preserve District of Lake County, McHenry County Conservation District, Openlands, Land Conservancy of Lake County, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Citizens for Conservation

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Lower Fox River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 122,000 acres within the Grand Prairie Natural Division (Northwest and Northeast Regions); Dekalb, Kendall, Grundy, Kane, and LaSalle Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (24 T&E species records including 8 wildlife species and 16 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

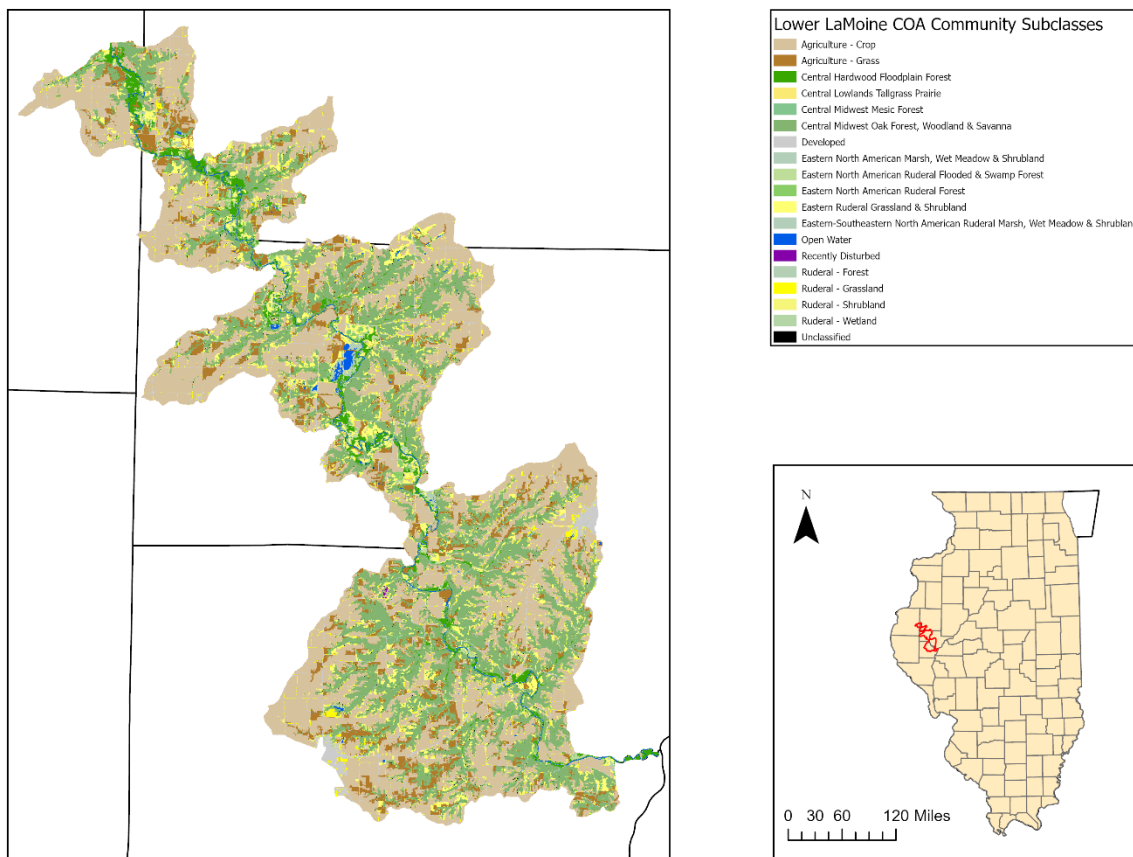
Threats/Stressors: Habitat Degradation, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Pollution Reduction

Partners: The Conservation Foundation, Openlands

Lower LaMoine River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 171,000 acres within the Western Forest-Prairie Natural Division (Northwest and West Central Regions); Hancock, McDonough, Schuyler, and Brown Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources of the LaMoine River Watershed.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Upland Oak-Hickory Forest, Open Woodland/Savanna

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (7 T&E species records including 6 wildlife species and 1 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Protect, manage, and restore Natural Communities while enhancing their biodiversity, protect and improve water resources, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, conduct outreach to raise awareness of ecosystem management issues and Best Management Practices

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Habitat Fragmentation, Lack of Stewardship, Overgrazing

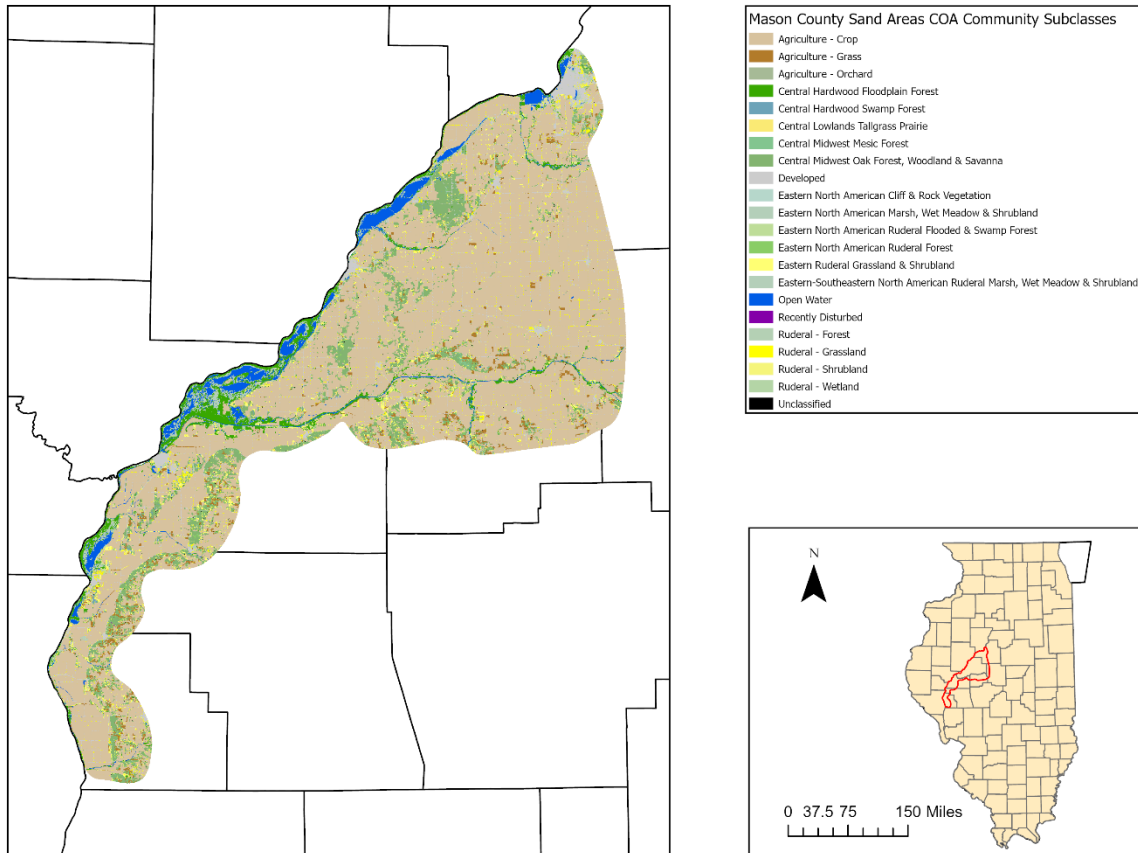
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship focused on application of Prescribed Fire, Invasive Woody Plant Control, Invasive Species Control, and erosion control.

Partners: LaMoine River Watershed Partnership, LaMoine River Ecosystem Partnership (C2000), Natural Resource Conservation Service, Prairie Land Conservancy, Quail Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation

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Mason County Sand Areas COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 867,000 acres within the Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas Natural Division (Northwest and West Central Regions); Tazewell, Fulton, Morgan, Scott, Mason, Menard, Cass, and Logan Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Sand Prairie/Savanna, Ephemeral Wetlands, Sand-restricted Wildlife; Sand Prairies, Hill Prairies

Native Species: Illinois Chorus Frog; Threatened and Endangered Species (66 T&E species records including 35 wildlife species and 31 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Protect and enhance High-Quality Natural Communities and habitats for Endangered or Threatened Species.

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Fragmentation, Habitat Degradation

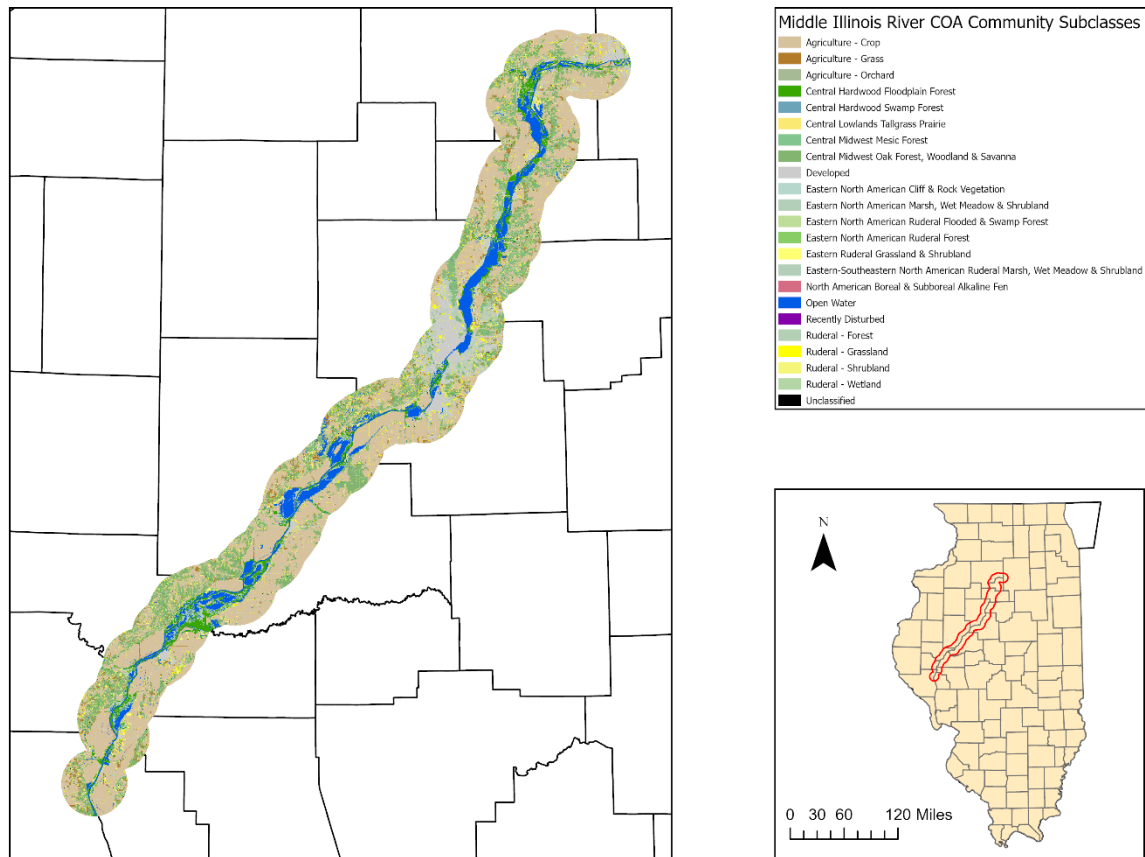
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Prairie Land Conservancy, The Sangamon Conservancy Trust, Friends of the Sangamon Valley

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Middle Illinois River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 1,060,000 acres within the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois River Bottomlands Natural Division (Northwest and West Central Regions); LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Fulton, Schuyler, Brown, Morgan, Pike, Scott, Mason, and Cass Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Floodplain Forest, Fish, Mussels, Migrating/Wintering Waterfowl & Shorebirds, Deep-water Habitat, Emergent/Moist Soil/Submergent Wetlands

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (88 T&E species records including 41 wildlife species and 47 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Establish aquatic plants in 20% of backwater Lake surface area, establish deep water fish habitat in 50% of backwater lakes in the Pool

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Quality Degradation, Invasive Species

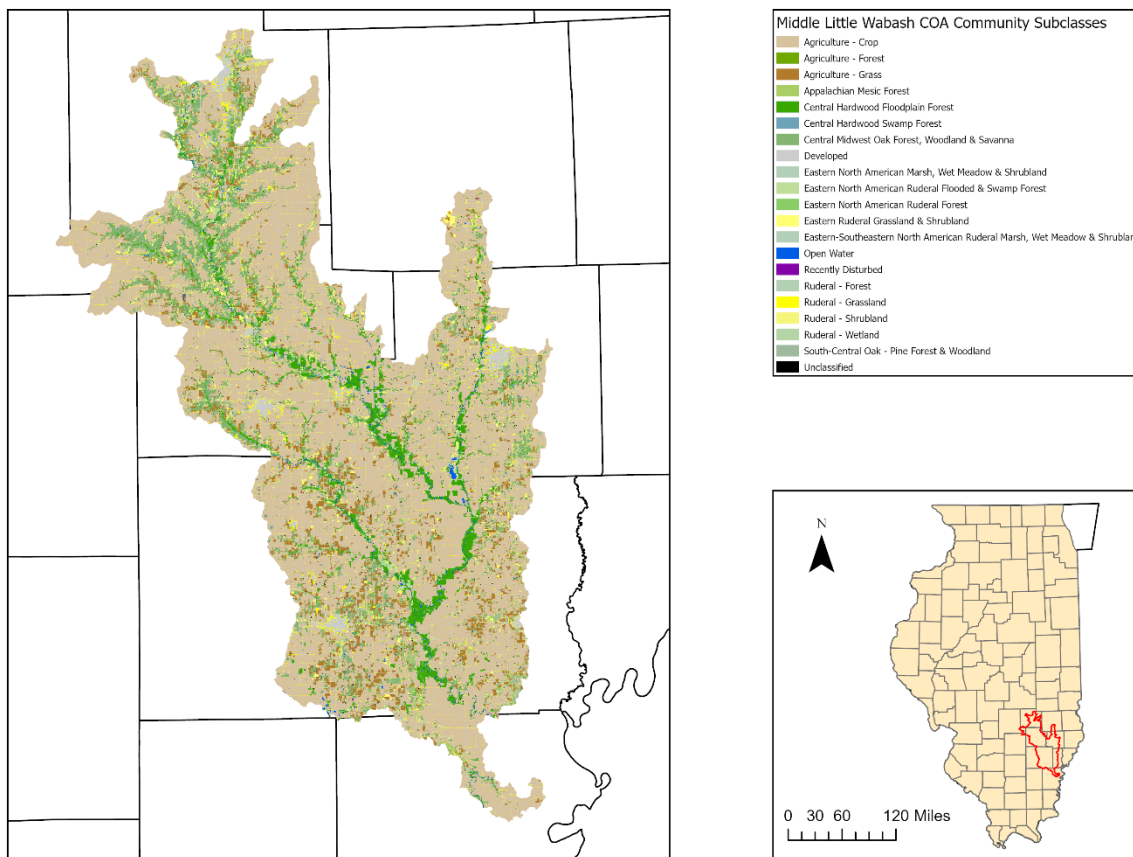
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: The Wetlands Initiative, The Nature Conservancy; Great Rivers Trust, Prairie Land Conservancy, The Sangamon Conservancy Trust, Friends of the Sangamon Valley, Peoria Wilds, Natural Land Institute, The Conservation Foundation

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Middle Little Wabash River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 878,000 acres within the Wabash River Border Natural Division (Southern Region); Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Clay, Richland, Marion, Wayne, Edwards, and White Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Birds, Bottomland Forest, Wetlands

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (36 T&E species records including 24 wildlife species and 12 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

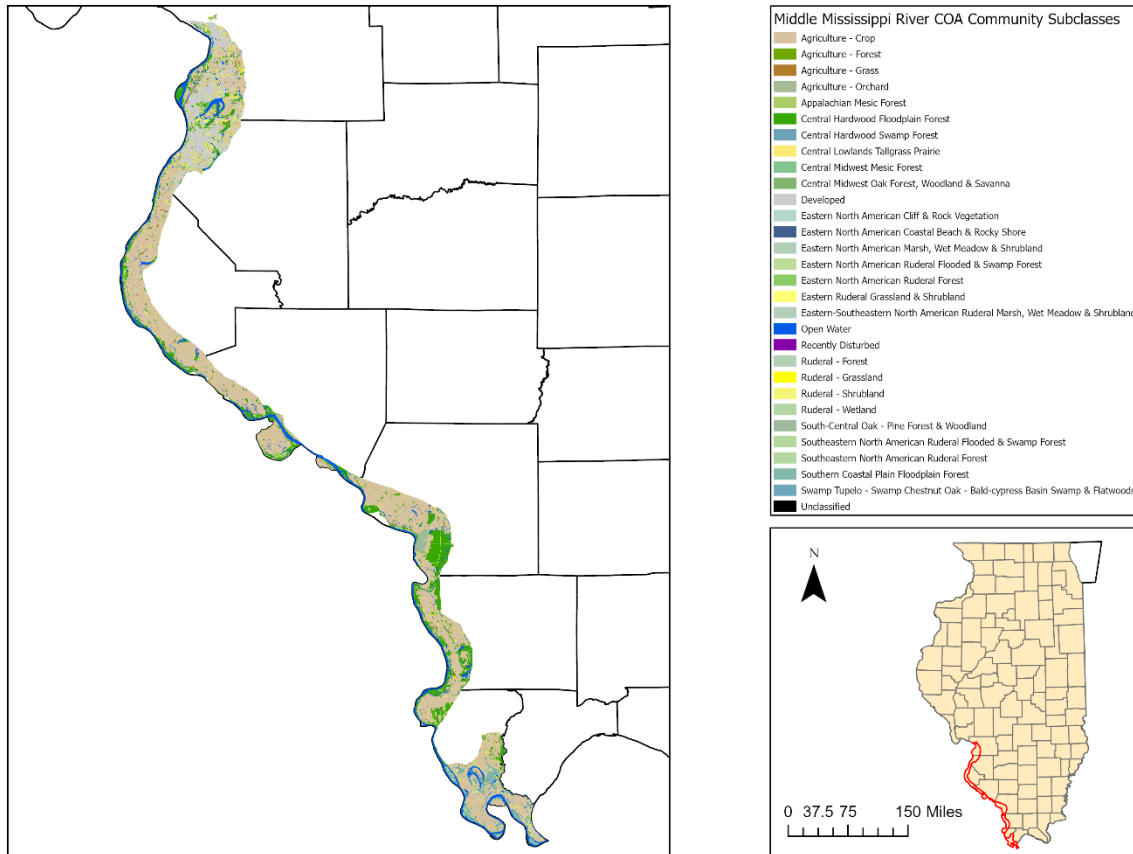
Threats/Stressors: Habitat Quality Degradation, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

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Middle Mississippi River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 717,000 acres within the West Central Region; Madison, Jackson, Union, Pulaski, Alexander, St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Fish, Mussels, Migratory Birds

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (108 T&E species records including 57 wildlife species and 51 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain habitats for Native Species through directed Stewardship

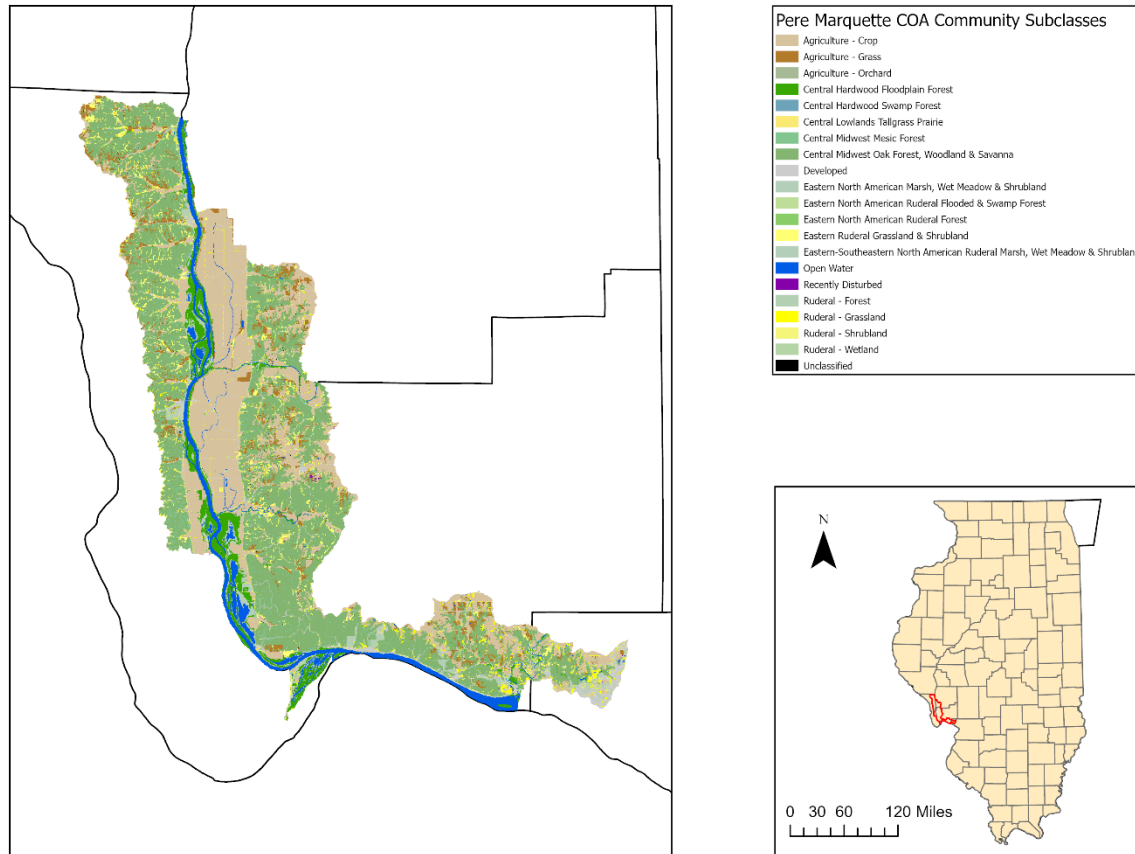
Threats/Stressors: Habitat Quality, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Heartlands Conservancy, St. Clair County Greenspace Foundation, Great Rivers Land Trust

Pere Marquette State Park COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 169,000 acres within the Middle Mississippi River Border Natural Division (West Central Region); Madison, Jersey, Calhoun, and Greene Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct Land Management activities to maintain Natural Communities and Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Hill Prairies, Birds, Glade and Cliff Natural Communities

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (31 T&E species records including 20 wildlife species and 11 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain High-Quality Natural Communities through active stewardship; Support Endangered and Threatened Species by maintaining their habitats

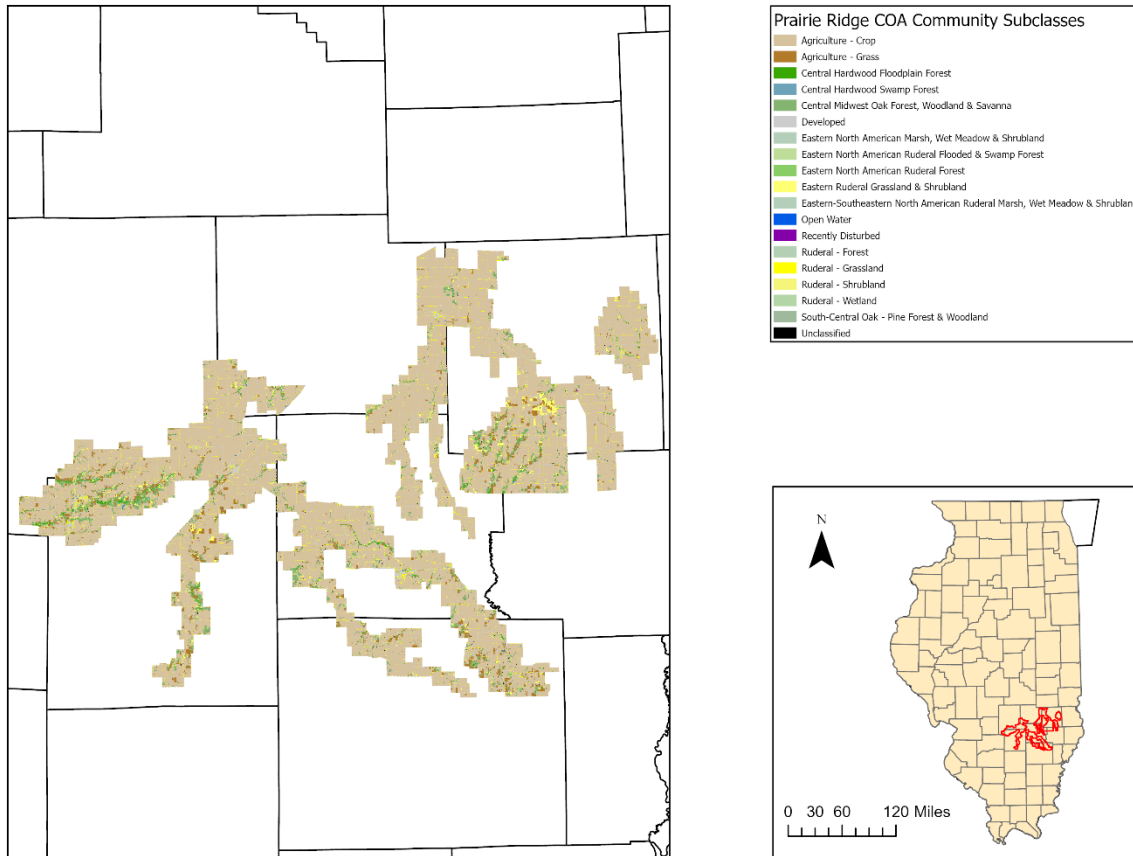
Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Lack of Stewardship

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Great Rivers Land Trust, Heartlands Conservancy

Prairie Ridge Landscape COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 546,000 acres within the Southern Till Plain Natural Division (Southern Region); Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Clay, Richland, Marion, and Wayne Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: The primary goal is development of a grassland ecosystem capable of maintaining viable populations of grassland species, including both permanent residents and migratory species, with emphasis on threatened and endangered species. A secondary goal is the development of a prairie preserve characteristic of the presettlement flora of the Southern Till Plain natural division of Illinois.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Grassland Birds, Remnant Prairie Communities

Native Species: Greater Prairie Chicken, Threatened and Endangered Species (26 T&E species records including 18 wildlife species and 8 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Protect core habitat areas; Maintain habitats for Threatened and Endangered Species through direct management

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Fragmentation

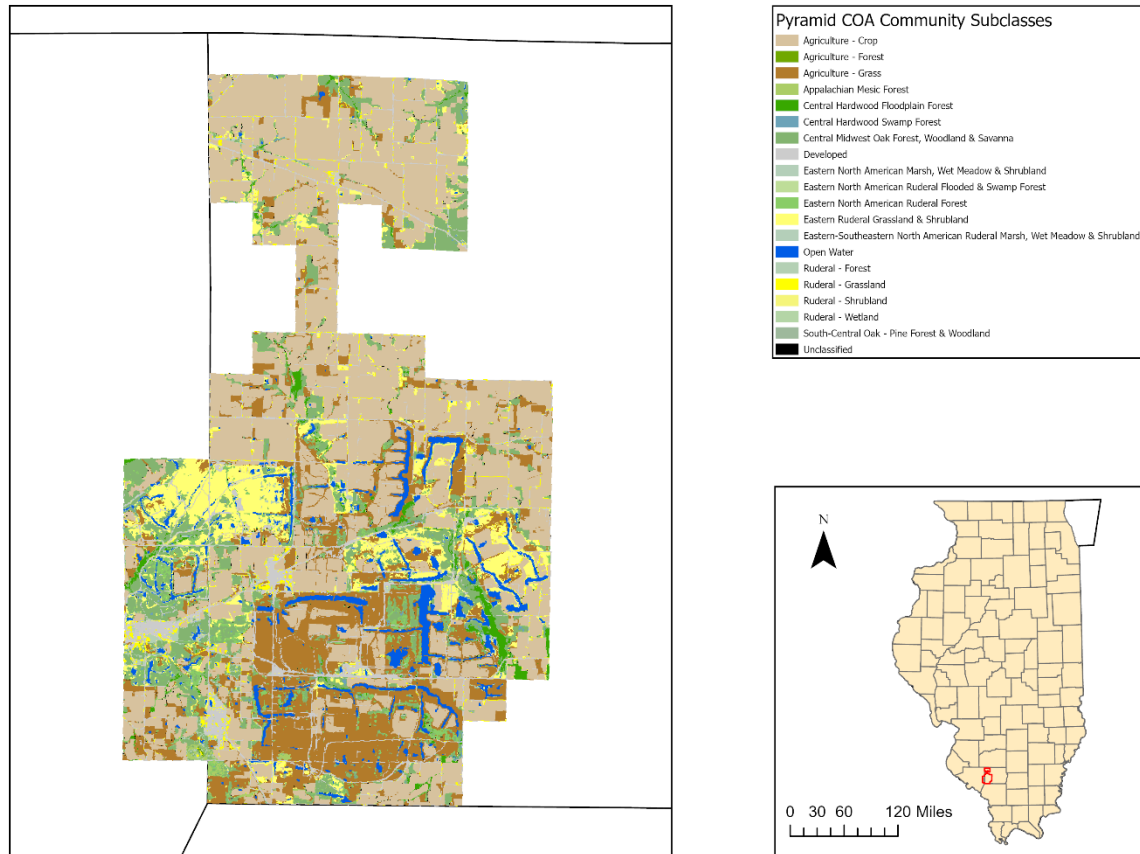
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control; Outreach and Education to promote agricultural practices that are compatible with COA Objectives (e.g., managed grazing, small grains, legumes, idle/fallow areas, and field borders)

Partners: Illinois Audubon Society, Ameren-CIPS, TNC, Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, Eastern Illinois University, UIUC, INHS, SIU-C; Heartlands Conservancy, NRCS, ESPB, INPC

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Pyramid – Arkland Landscape COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 77,000 acres within the Southern Till Plain Natural Division (West Central and Southern Region); Randolph, Jackson, and Perry Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Manage at a landscape scale to provide habitat for area sensitive grassland species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, habitat for migratory and overwintering birds

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (11 T&E species records including 10 wildlife species and 1 plant species record)

Objectives of COA: Develop and maintain a large grassland complex that supports Native Species that require large contiguous habitats. Develop site management plans that balance natural resource conservation with recreational demands.

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Fragmentation

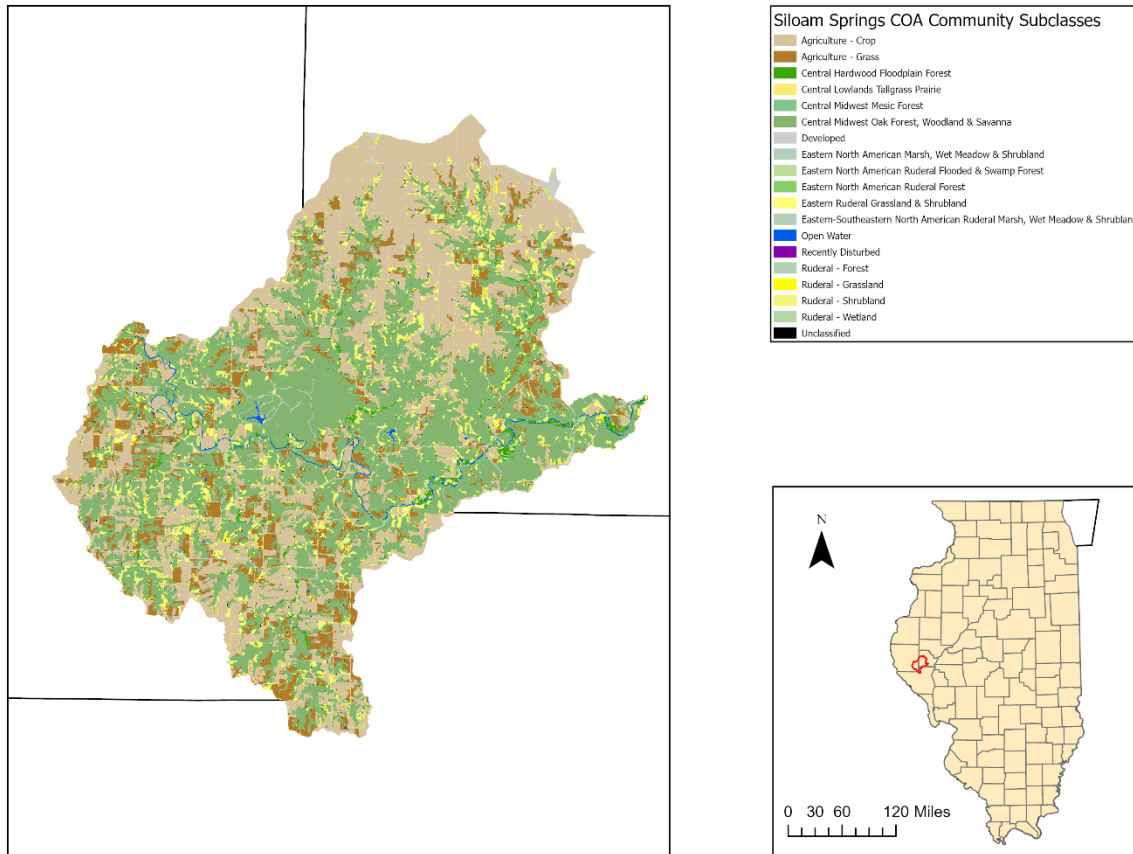
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Natural Community Connectivity

Partners: Heartlands Conservancy, Illinois Audubon

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Siloam Springs Complex COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 109,000 acres within the Western Forest-Prairie Natural Division (West Central Region); Pike, Adams, and Brown Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct land management activities to maintain habitats for Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Upland Oak-Hickory Forest, Savannas and Woodlands, Prairie Remnants

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (13 T&E species records including 6 wildlife species and 7 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Determine the extent of Prairie, Woodland and Forest Natural Communities; restore Savannas and Woodlands

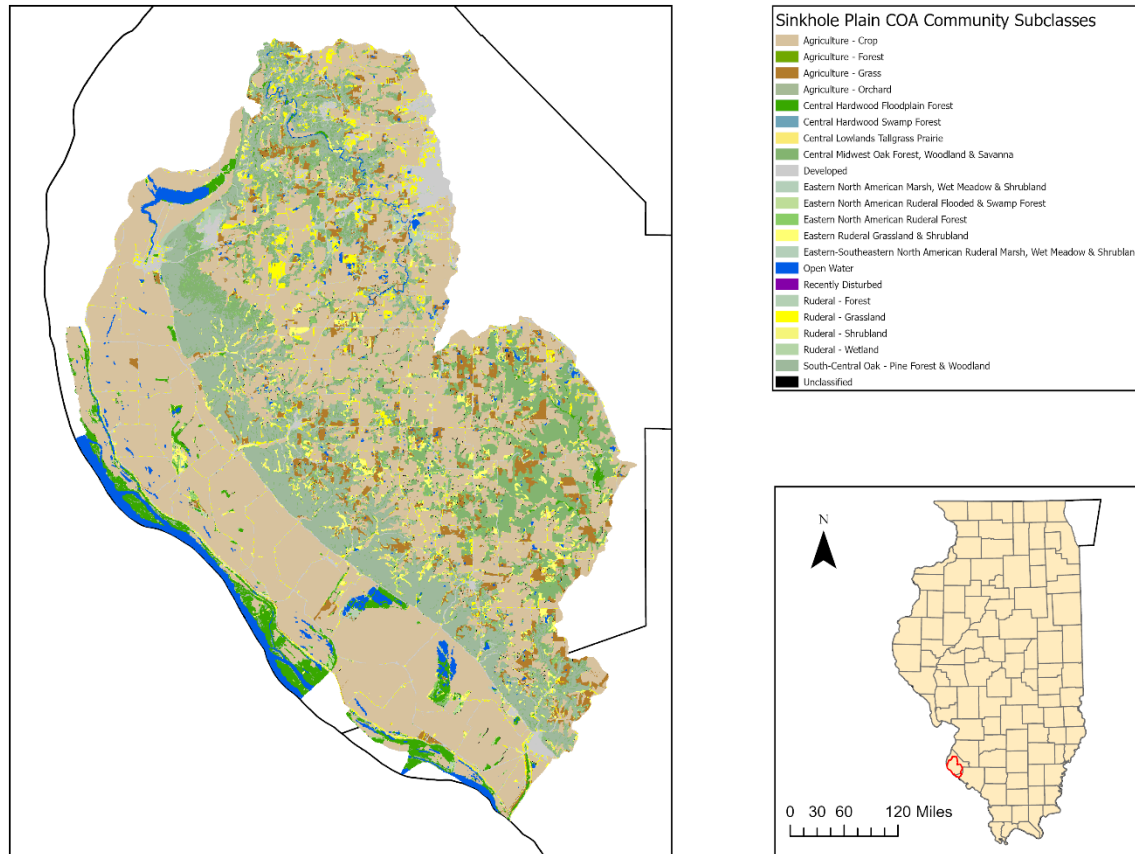
Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Quail Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Prairie Land Conservancy, Great Rivers Trust

Sinkhole Plain COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 152,000 acres within the Ozarks Natural Division (West Central Region); Monroe County, Randolph County



Conservation Philosophy: Maintain and protect in perpetuity the karst topography and underlying subterranean ecosystems; protect and proactively manage for the unique flora and fauna native to these cave ecosystems; use sound management decisions guided by historical conditions.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Cave Natural Communities

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (43 T&E species records including 24 wildlife species and 19 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Establish buffers around sinkholes and critical groundwater recharge areas to protect water quality; increase education and technical assistance for the protection of sinkhole and cave habitat

Threats/Stressors: Fragmentation, Invasive Species, Non-point Source Pollution

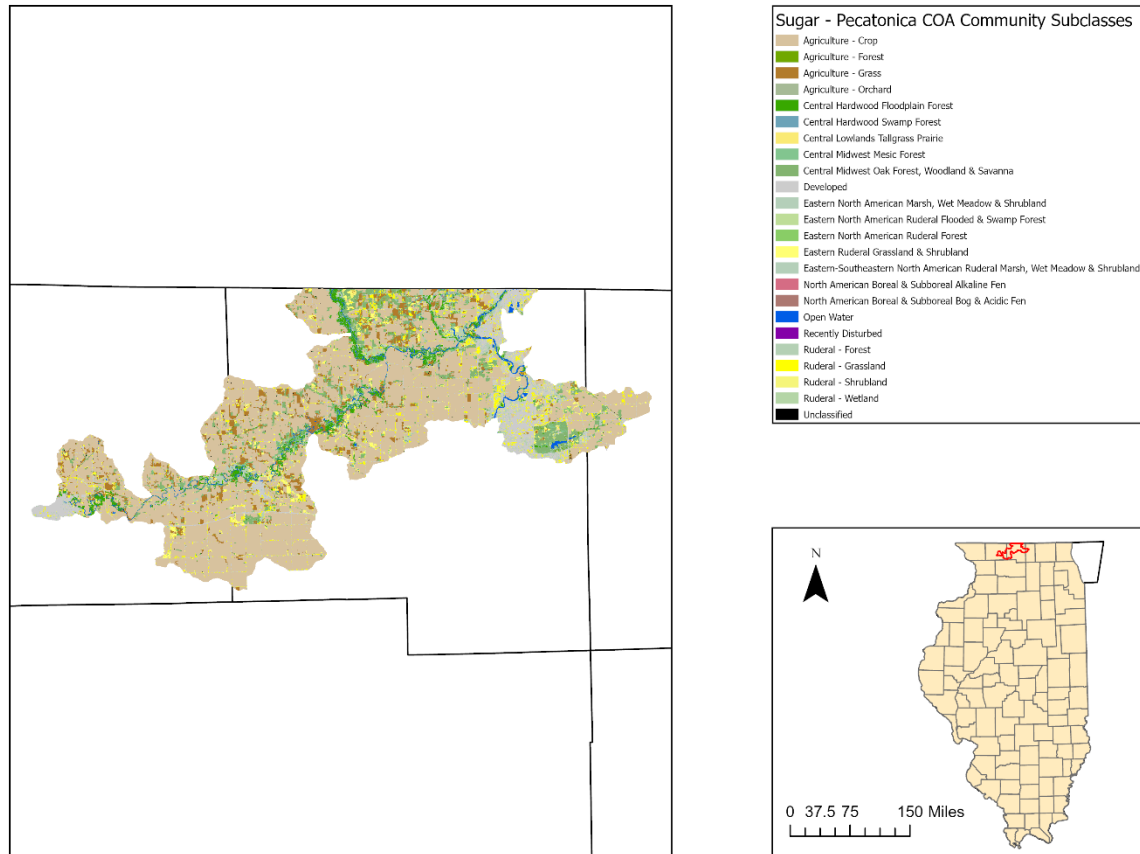
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Protection, Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Pollution Reduction

Partners: Sinkhole Plain Ecosystem Partnership, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Clifftop, Heartlands Conservancy

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Sugar – Pecatonica River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 194,000 acres within the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division (Northwest Region); Stephenson County, Winnebago County, and Boone County.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct land management activities to maintain habitats for Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: high quality stream, wetlands; High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (54 T&E species records including 26 wildlife species and 28 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Quality, Invasives

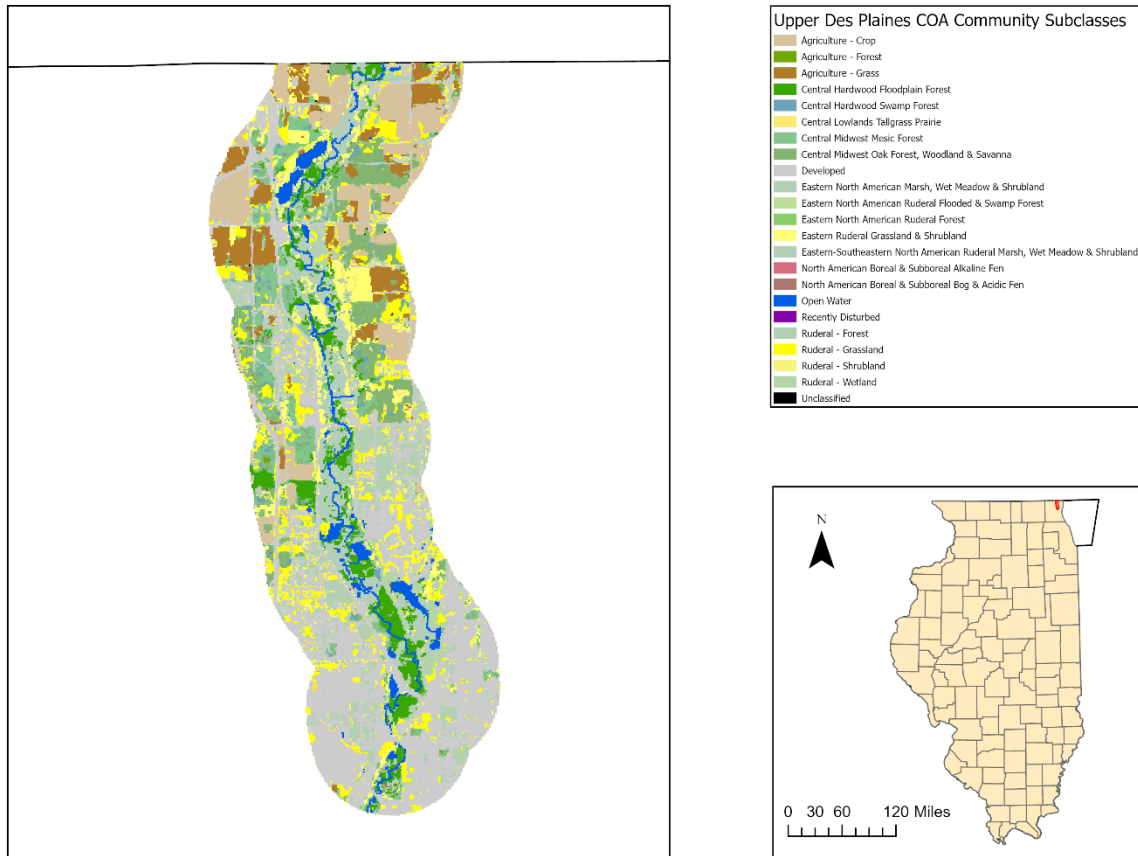
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, The Natural Land Institute, Sugar-Pecatonica Ecosystem Partnership, Openlands, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Jane Addamsland Park Foundation, The Prairie Enthusiasts

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Upper Des Plaines River Corridor COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 15,000 acres within the Northeastern Morainal (Northeast Region); Lake County.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct land management activities to maintain habitats for Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, Des Plaines River, Wetlands, Savanna, Sedge Meadow, Floodplain Forest

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (15 T&E species records including 9 wildlife species and 6 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Invasive Species, Water Quality

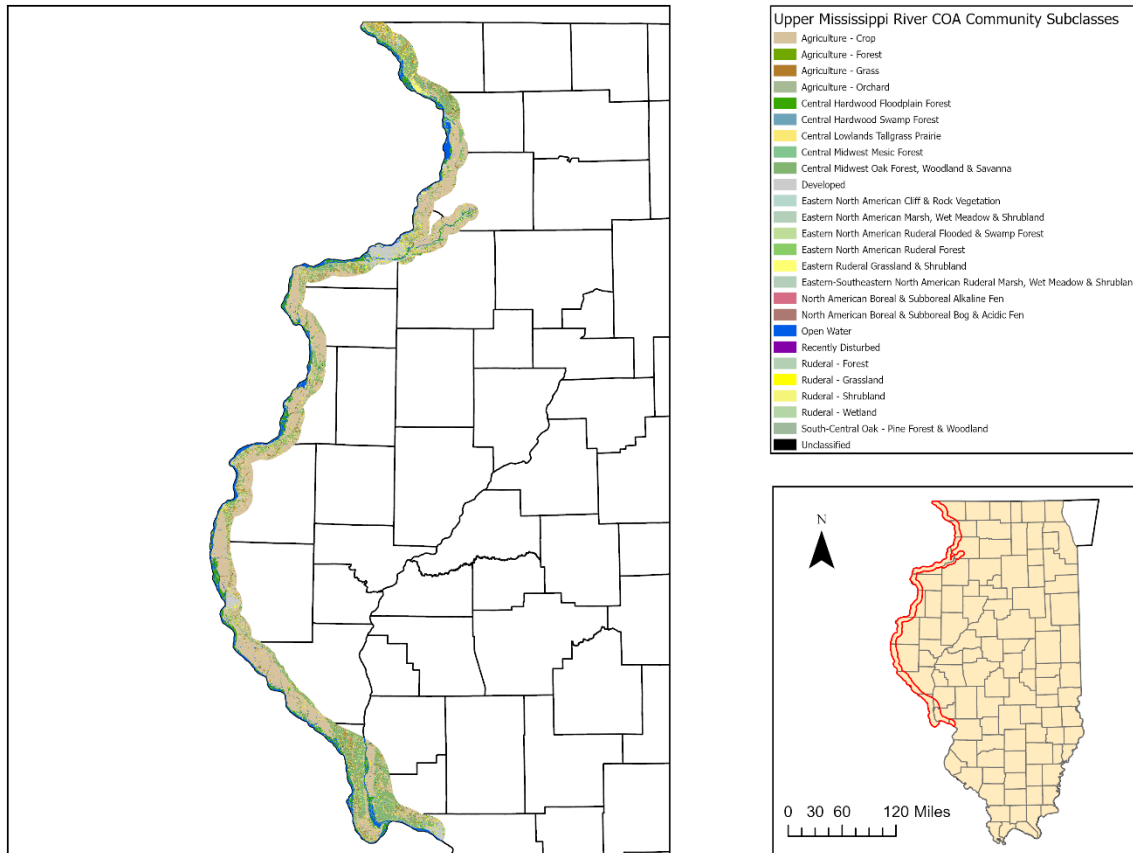
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Pollution Reduction

Partners: Forest Preserves of Cook County, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago Wilderness, The Wetlands initiative, The Field Museum, Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lake County Forest Preserve District

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Upper Mississippi River COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Located in the Mississippi River and Illinois River Bottomlands Natural Division (Northwest and West Central Region); Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Henderson, Hancock, Adams, Pike, Greene, Calhoun, Jersey, and Madison Counties



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct land management activities to maintain habitats for Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Mussels, Fish, Migratory Birds

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (119 T&E species records including 62 wildlife species and 57 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Habitat Quality, Pollution/Sediments

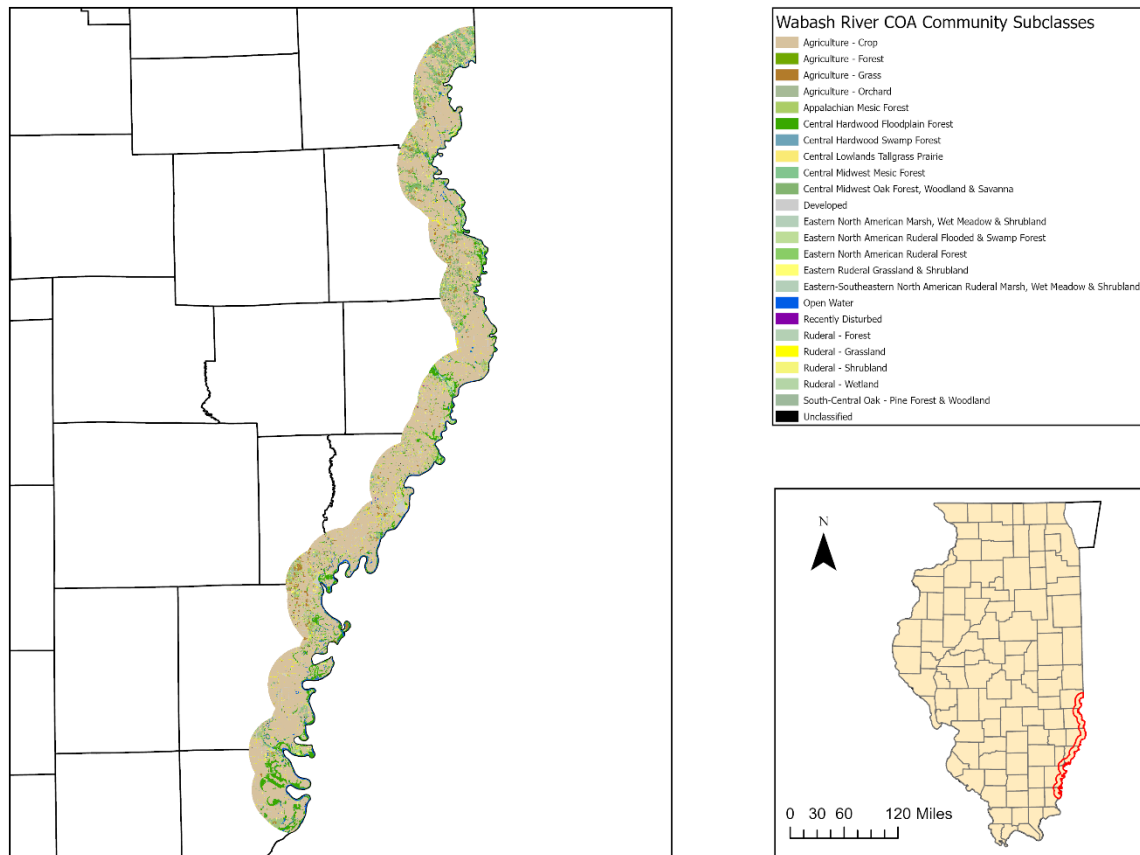
Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control, Pollution Reduction

Partners: Great Rivers Trust, Heartlands Conservancy, Prairie Land Conservancy, Natural Lands Institute, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, The Prairie Enthusiasts

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Wabash River, Floodplain & Backwater Ponds COA Assessment

Description and Geographical Location: Roughly 490,000 acres within the Wabash River Border Natural Division (East Central and Southern Region); Clark, Crawford, Lawrence, Wabash, Edwards, White, and Gallatin Counties.



Conservation Philosophy: Conduct land management activities to maintain habitats for Native Species.

Key Conservation Features: High-Quality Natural Communities, Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species, Mussels, Fish, Birds; Wabash River, Bottomland Forest, migratory birds, shallow water wetlands

Native Species: Threatened and Endangered Species (53 T&E species records including 44 wildlife species and 9 plant species records)

Objectives of COA: Maintain examples of High-Quality Natural Community Types and habitats for Native Species

Threats/Stressors: Declining Habitat Quality, Invasive Species

Conservation Action Strategies: Land Stewardship, Invasive Species Control

Partners: Heartlands Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Lower Wabash Partnership

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