

NATIVE PLANTS

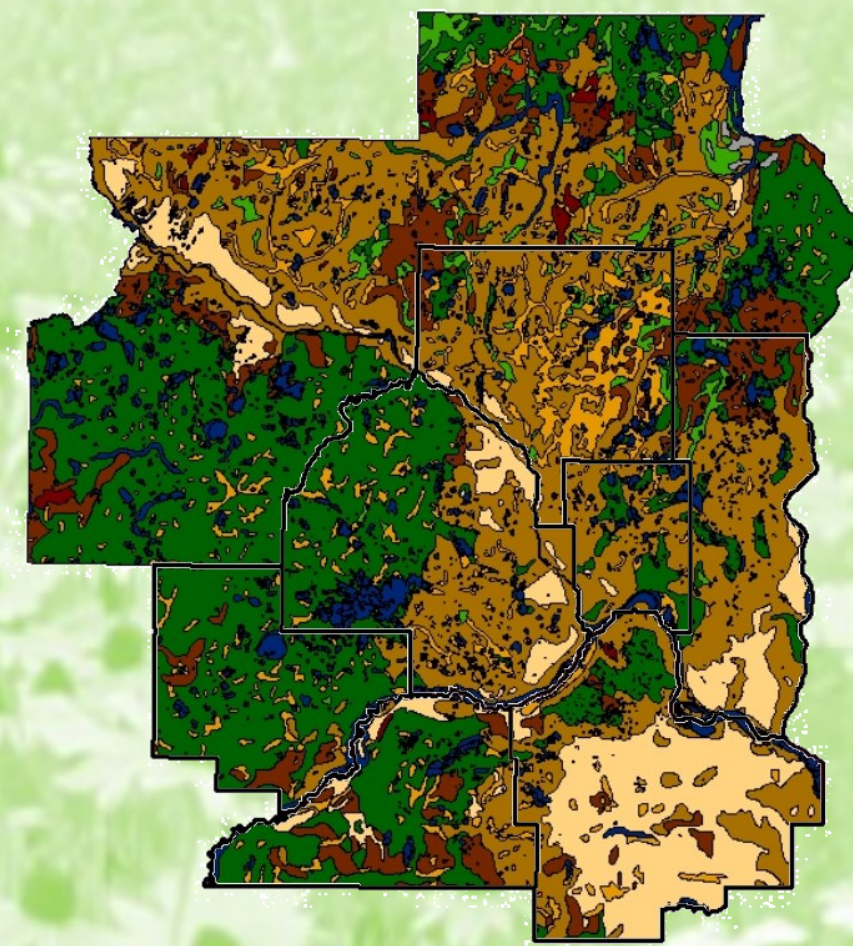


Restoring Habitat for Local Wildlife

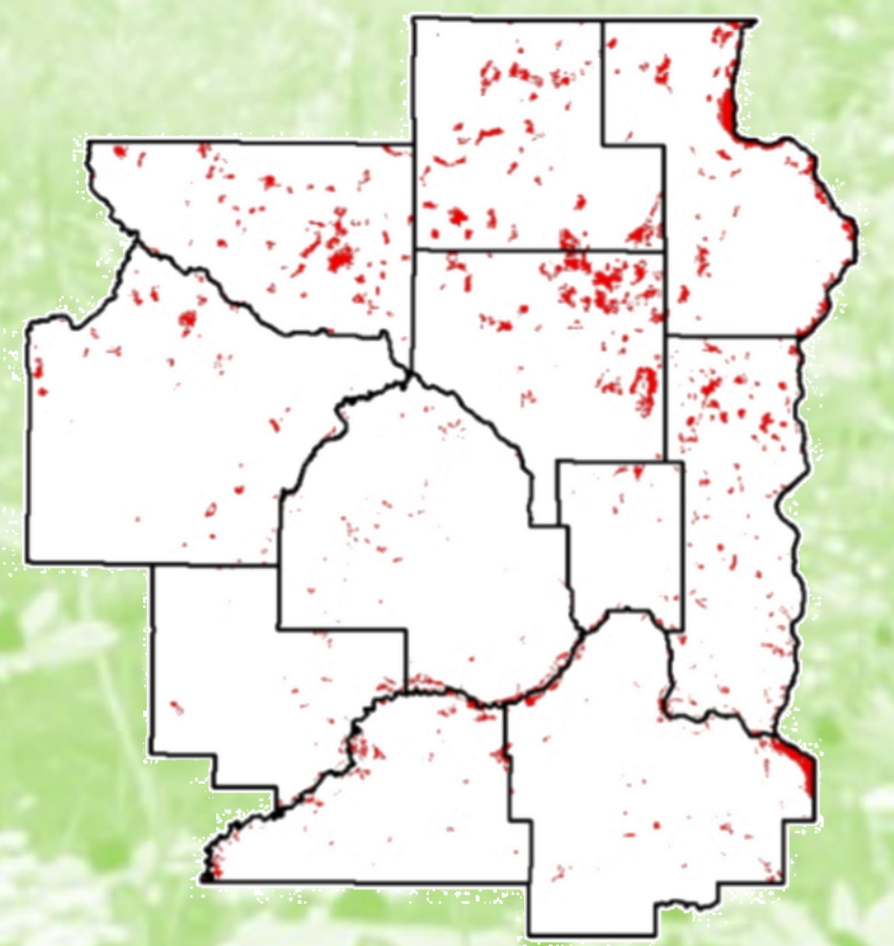


Restoring our native plant communities slows erosion, infiltrates water, and provides food and shelter for wildlife.

The eleven-county metro once supported a mosaic of oak savannas, tallgrass prairies, wetlands, maple-basswood forests, and more. Although native plant communities are adapted to thrive in our topography, soils, climate, and hydrology, they can be destroyed by land development or displaced by invasive species.



Pre-European Settlement



Present Day

Over the last 200 years, the majority of native plant communities have been lost or severely fragmented. Today, they remain in only 3.5% of the eleven-county metro area. We must focus our efforts on creating connected habitat, restoring degraded habitats, and protecting the remaining native plant communities so they are a feature of our landscape for generations to come.

The Benefits of Native Plants:

Native plants provide many benefits to the ecosystem. Diverse native plant communities have deep, complex root systems that hold soil in place and create pore spaces that help water soak in. In addition, they provide shelter and food sources for a variety of pollinators and other wildlife.



Black-eyed Susan



Bloodroot



Marsh Milkweed



Boneset



Wild Columbine

Plants differ in their requirements for sunlight, moisture, and nutrients. Always consider the factors below when selecting which native plant species will be well-adapted to your site.

	Sunlight	Moisture	Nutrients	Explanation
North/South Orientation	X	X		North facing slopes receive a lower amount and intensity of sunlight than south facing slopes.
Canopy Cover	X	X		Dense canopy cover creates shaded conditions, also influencing evaporation rates.
Slope		X		Steep slopes result in lower water retention.
Soil Type		X	X	Soil properties influence moisture retention and nutrient availability. Various soil types include dry sands, rich loams, heavy clays, and wet organics.
Water Availability		X		Increased soil moisture is common close to water bodies, in depressions, in areas with high water tables, and in areas with heavy soils or clay.