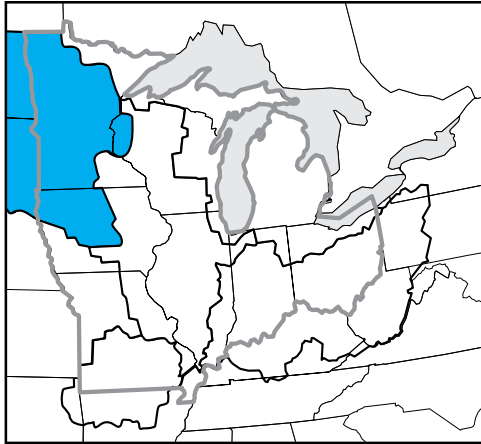




Mississippi Headwaters - Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem



USFWS Field Stations

Twenty-six field stations lie within the ecosystem: 12 National Wildlife Refuges, 7 Wetland Management Districts, 2 Realty Offices, 2 Ecological Services Offices, 1 Law Enforcement Office, and 2 Private Lands Offices.

Partners

Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, and other conservation organizations; State agencies including Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Departments of Natural Resources from Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin; Other Federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Corps of Engineers, U.S. G.S. Biological Resources Division, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Tribal governments and natural resource agencies; Local governments and watershed districts from throughout the ecosystem; colleges and universities; numerous local organizations such as hunting and fishing clubs, schools, and "friends" groups.

Ecosystem Description

The ecosystem includes the majority of the State of Minnesota and portions of Wisconsin and Iowa. It is diverse and situated between the northern tallgrass prairie and the eastern deciduous and northern boreal forests. The ecosystem supports numerous species of neotropical and other migratory birds, migratory waterfowl, endangered species, and inter-jurisdictional fish. Forty-six Region 3 Resource Conservation Priority species are found in the ecosystem.

Landscape Priorities

- *Preserve Native Tallgrass Prairie*
Preservation of remnant native prairie, restoration of degraded prairie, and management to enhance the quality of prairie tracts is a priority both on and off Service lands. An example of the increased coordination that has occurred as a result of the Service's Ecosystem Approach is an effort to coordinate seed harvest and planting to

utilize local ecotype seed in Service restoration activities. This is a more biologically sound approach to prairie restoration in the ecosystem.

■ *Restore Wetlands*

Restoration of drained wetlands is a priority in the ecosystem. Increased coordination and the focusing of restoration projects has resulted in successes such as the completion of over 800 restorations in Northern Minnesota in 2000 (by personnel from across the Region). Restoration of wetlands remains a priority and the team will work to maximize benefit for Regional Conservation Priority species by completing projects in high priority habitats.

■ *Manage Watersheds and Improve Water Quality*

Wetland restoration alone will not bring back healthy aquatic systems. The Ecosystem Team recognizes the importance of cooperative efforts to enhance watershed management activities, and is committed to work in the priority areas of the Red River of the North, Minnesota River, and St. Croix River. Emphasis will be on partnership projects that address the needs of aquatic species such as paddlefish, as well as management needs related to control of exotics such as zebra mussels.

■ *Protect Unique, Rare and Declining Species*

The team will continue cooperative efforts to prevent the decline of imperiled species and restore their populations through habitat preservation, appropriate use of regulatory protection, and programs designed to aid recovery.

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Mississippi Headwaters ecosystem:
<http://midwest.fws.gov/ecosys/mishead.htm>