

# Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan

## From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

**M**innesota's wildlife action plan articulates three goals and outlines priority conservation actions that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and partners can adopt and adapt to their unique interests and capacities. Organized within a framework of 25 ecological landscapes, 292 species are identified as in greatest need of conservation, along with their key habitats. Habitat loss and degradation are the most significant problems facing wildlife in Minnesota, which also impact the economic and cultural benefits of a healthy environment, including people's opportunity to enjoy quality outdoor experiences.

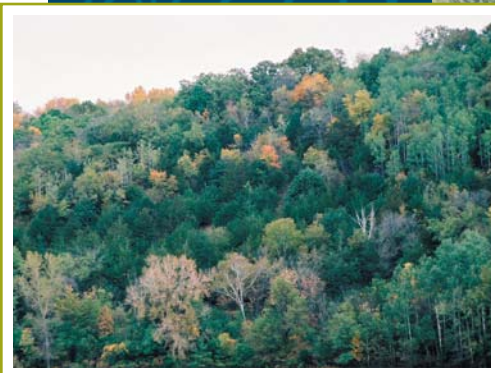
### *Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife*

#### **Preserving and Restoring Bluff Prairie Habitat**

Habitat restoration is a strategy of Minnesota's wildlife action plan Goal I, which is to stabilize and increase species in greatest conservation need. The Blufflands contain remnant goat prairies, steep bluffs, and cold-water trout streams and support the state's richest complement of rare wildlife.

Rural residential development and encroaching woody vegetation are increasingly fragmenting bluff prairies and oak savannas, negatively affecting 156 species in greatest conservation need. A multi-faceted initiative underway will restore and preserve critical habitat for timber rattlesnakes and other wildlife on both public and private lands. Actions include hand-cutting of red cedars and invasive brush, prescribed burning, controlling non-native invasive species, and purchasing conservation easements. These strategies will conserve bluff prairie

*A multi-faceted initiative underway will restore and preserve critical bluff prairie habitat for timber rattlesnakes and other wildlife on both public and private lands, benefiting these natural systems, wildlife, and people.*



Nelson Bluff before cutting/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Nelson Bluff after cutting/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

at a landscape level in southeastern Minnesota, benefiting these natural systems, wildlife, and people.

### ***Gathering Information to Take Action*** **Expanding Butterfly Surveys**

Goal II of Minnesota's wildlife action plan aims to improve knowledge about species in greatest conservation need to inform management and conservation recommendations. A recent butterfly survey in Minnesota's southwest prairies indicated population declines for several species. Imminent increases in mining, wind power, and biofuel activities in southwestern Minnesota necessitate improved data for developing technical guidance on land use and habitat management to conserve species in greatest conservation need. Thus, there is an urgent need for more intensive surveys of rare prairie butterflies to evaluate their status and distribution in the face of continuing habitat loss and possible population collapse. Improved knowledge of these butterflies is essential for effective conservation of wildlife for future generations.

### ***Working with Partners to Bring Back*** ***Wildlife and Natural Areas*** **Promoting Public Education** **of Minnesota's Wild and Rare**

Enhancing public appreciation of species in greatest conservation need is Goal III in the wildlife action plan. Minnesotans can now look into a beaver pond, walk

alongside a forest glade, and experience a treetop bird-watching perch on the Minnesota Zoo's renovated Minnesota Trail. In collaboration with the Minnesota DNR, content from the wildlife action plan was integrated into displays and exhibits, where a "Minnesota's Wild and Rare" logo denotes species in greatest conservation need. A highly popular Wild and Rare embossing activity was developed along the trail with companion resources published on agency and zoo websites. These messages raise awareness that some of Minnesota's wildlife are in trouble and habitat protection is vital, and offer practical steps to begin addressing the challenges. This project will help Minnesota create a conservation-minded public and fulfill its responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

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Wild and Rare logo/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

***Collaboration with the Minnesota Zoo on Minnesota's Wild and Rare will help create a conservation-minded public and fulfill its responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.***



Butterfly and prairie/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources