

Open Responses to Member Comments

The ASP Partnership is sharing our responses to all member comments in an open format in the spirit of efficient exchange of information given the modified hearing presentation time and format. We thank members for sharing their review comments.

Rare Plant Rescue

Blended Funding and Amount

ACD is requesting \$400,000 of the \$5,838,200 total ASP7 request (6.8%). LCCMR did not select the ASP Rare Plant Rescue program for funding, so there will be no blended funding.

Root Washing

We agree that soil microbes can make a significant difference in success of transplants. Going forward, root washing will now be considered on a case-by-case basis, balancing the benefit of transporting soil and its microbes with the threat of transporting invasive species in attached soil. We will account for weed, earthworm, pathogen, and pest condition of the matched donor and recipient sites; the species being transplanted and its known and/or observed reliance on soil microbes; and compliance with DNR Op Order 113 regarding transporting invasive species materials. In addition to Anoka Conservation District and the individual landowner representatives, the U of M Landscape Arboretum, Critical Connections Ecological Services Inc (a local expert), and the DNR through their permitting process, will comprise the core team making the case-by-case decisions regarding root washing.

Transplant Success Rate

Two pilot plant rescues have been completed (with other funds) using the root washing method. ACD staff and volunteers mobilized to rescue and transplant more than 5,000 MN Threatened Lance-leaved violet (*Viola lanceolata*) and 17 MN Threatened Swamp Blackberry (*Rubus semisetosus*) from two development sites in the Anoka Sand Plain. On 9/20/2019, 24 1-meter plots were each planted with 200 individual VILA transplants, resulting in approximately 30 - 40% VILA cover at the protected Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. The 5/29/2020 monitoring result summary revealed:

- Transplant survival rate was greater than 60%.
- VILA present in all of the 24 – 1-meter plots.
- Cover ranged from 4% - 40%, average of 16%
- No weeds from the development site were present in the plots.

In June 2020, over 3,000 MN Threatened Lance-leaved violet (*Viola lanceolata*) and 10 MN Threatened Swamp Blackberry (*Rubus semisetosus*) were rescued from a proposed development site and transplanted into Woolans Park, a permanently protected site adjacent to the development. Transplanted populations were monitored in July 2020 with over 95% survival.

Recipient Roles

Background

The Anoka Sand Plain Partnership project boundary (DNRs ASP ecoregion with intersecting watershed buffer) is a large area, over 2MM acres, and boasts a habitat mosaic. ASP encompasses 3 LSOHC sections, and has opportunities in a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and hosts several large terrestrial habitat cores and 3 Wild and Scenic Rivers. Many habitat types are of high importance in the ASP, and the challenges and opportunities cover a wide range from north to south. Our proposal has a level of complexity that reflects this mosaic – we have identified parcels and several programs, and are proposing R/E as well as easement protection, in a variety of habitats. Guiding us through the complexity of our multi-pronged approach is our 10-year Strategic Plan (summary page which is found below). All of our parcels and programs are identified and developed in partnership with landowners and then vetted by the recipients. The Anoka Sand Plain ecoregion is a priority area for a number of organizations, many of them joining as direct recipients in this proposal; we consider our partnership and multiple direct recipients to be an overall strength in delivering, while recognizing the complexity that it adds to our proposal.

Recipients and Their Roles

This proposal brings together 5 direct recipients, each bringing their own organizational capacity, existing relationships, and leverage opportunities to bear on this body of work.

Roles, expertise and deliverables by recipient are summarized here for your reference:

1. ACD: Rare plant rescue, Anoka Co. expertise and outreach, watershed expertise 176ac/4 sites/\$526,000 + 100,000 rare plant rescue/\$400,000
2. GRG: Region-wide R/E expertise, wild rice, pollinator habitat, community engagement, partnership lead 651ac/7 sites/\$1,265,400
3. MLT: Easement protection, R/E on private lands 540ac/\$2,858,000
4. NWTF: Turkey habitat and hunting, oak communities, woodland burn contracts 278ac/3 sites/\$288,800
5. TNC: Wetland restoration, regional water issues, watershed expertise, mapping and GIS analysis 150ac/\$500,000

Working together toward a common goal greatly increases information exchange between partners and brings greater organizational resources to the work.

Anoka Sand Plain Partnership

10 - Year Strategic Conservation Action Plan - summary

PARTNERSHIP

Coalition of federal, state, and local agencies, non-profit organizations and academic institutions that come together to protect and restore critical habitat and water resources in the ASP Ecoregion.

VISION

Protection, restoration and enhancement to increase biological diversity, habitat connectivity and landscape resilience in the Anoka Sand Plain.

URGENCY

State-wide projected growth through 2045 is estimated at 13% while growth in Anoka, Isanti and Sherburne counties is 16%, 20% and 32% respectively.

PRIORITIES

Protect, restore and enhance habitat cores and conservation corridors to minimize the impacts of new development and enhance native plant communities and wildlife resiliency.

Ensure the long-term supply of clean drinking water by protecting and enhancing water resources including surface water and groundwater that are important for the recharge of regional aquifers.

Increase public access to and use of public lands to increase appreciation of conservation activities.

Engage citizens in natural resource management projects and decisions to create a deeper understanding of and support for habitat and water resource management.

Strengthen the ASP Partnership aiming to increase ecosystem resilience, wildlife habitat and watershed health and function.

Ecological Analysis Source Layers

Wildlife Action Network
- DNR, 2015

Habitat Connectivity (Local)
- TNC, 2017

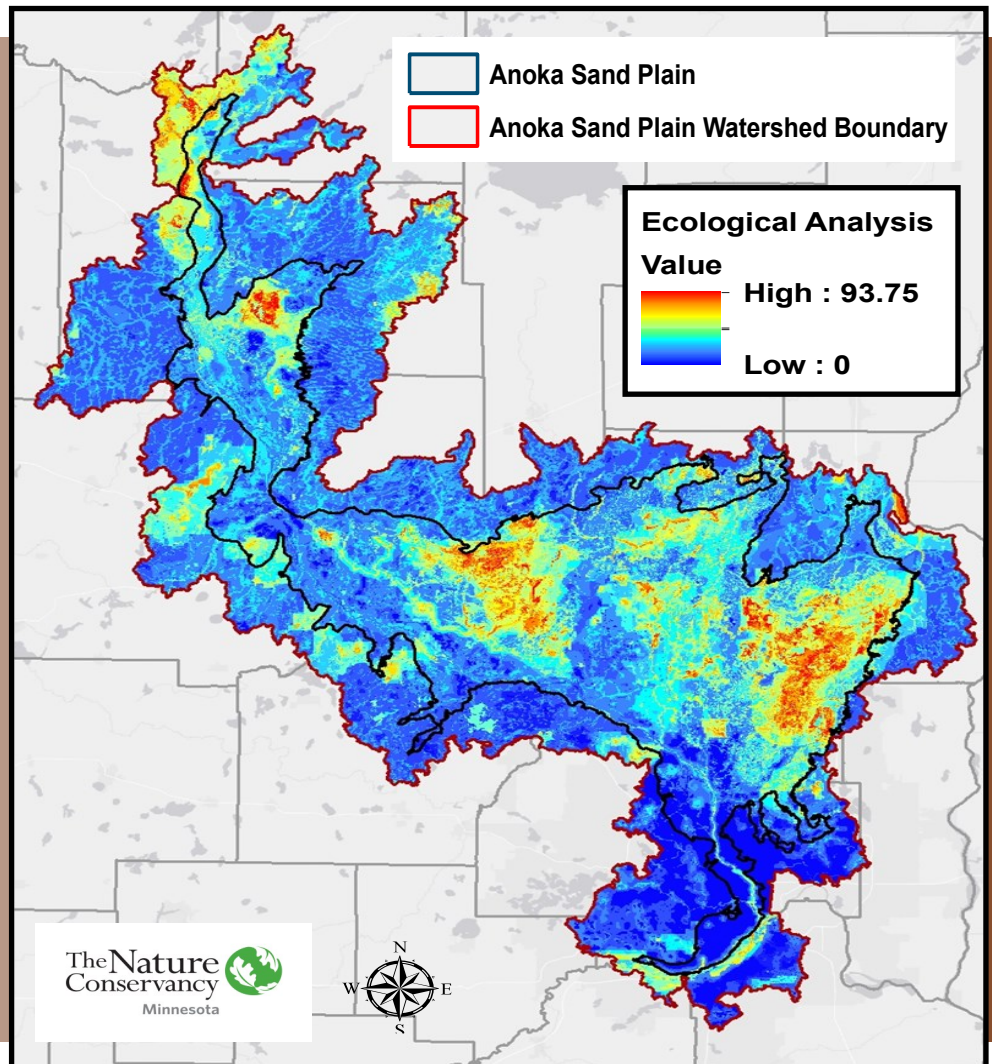
Groundwater Influenced Shallow
Wetlands - Jason Husveth, 2016

Native Plant Communities
- MN DNR, 2016

Active River Area
- TNC, 2017

Pre-Settlement Vegetation
- Marschner (selected)

Priority areas for protection, restoration, and enhancement are based on local knowledge and GIS multiple-criteria decision analyses.

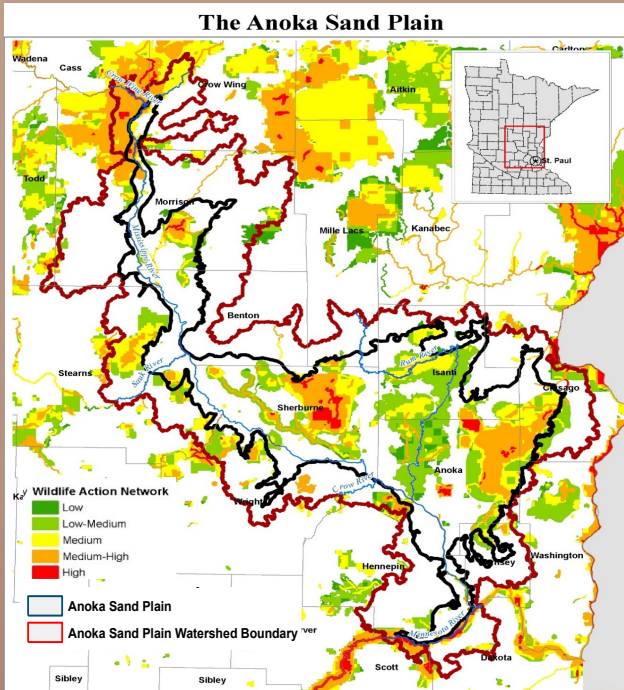


Anoka Sand Plain Partnership

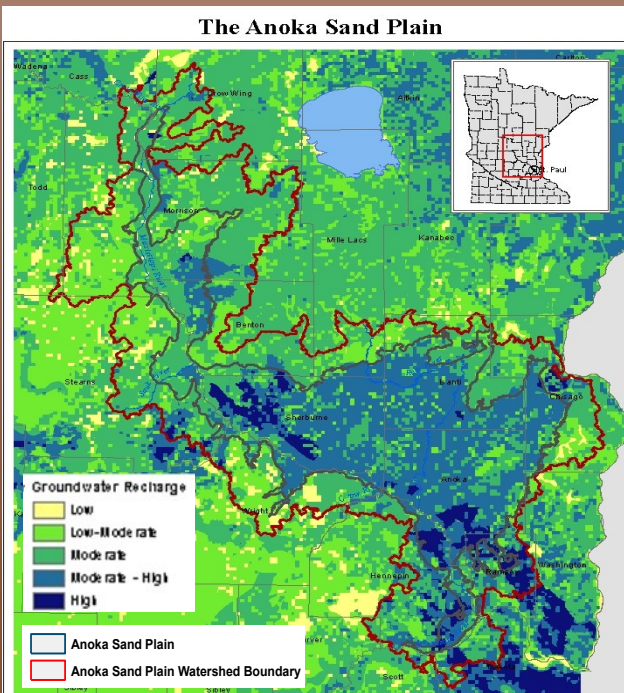
10 - Year Strategic Conservation Action Plan - summary

ANOKA SAND PLAIN

The Anoka Sand Plain (ASP) region is defined by the broad, flat, sandy lake plain and is bounded on the south and west by the Mississippi River. Historically, the landscape consisted of a patchwork of oak savanna, upland prairies, and forests interspersed within wetland complexes.



The Minnesota DNR Wildlife Action Plan Analysis



Groundwater recharge potential

OUTSTANDING ECOLOGY AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

- ◇ Over 150,000 acres in the ASP Ecoregion are ranked Outstanding or High Biodiversity by the Minnesota County Biological Survey.
- ◇ The ASP provides habitat for 97 known or predicted Species of Greatest Conservation Need, 39 of which are federally or state endangered, threatened, or special concern.
- ◇ The ASP contains some of the best examples of the critically imperiled oak savanna, sand dunes, and shallow wetland plant communities.
- ◇ Sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, red-headed woodpeckers, Blanding's turtles, and wild turkey make their home in the ASP.

CLOSE TO HOME RECREATION

- ◇ Notable ASP public open space include Sherburne NWR, Carlos Avery WMA, Crane Meadows NWR, Hellen Allison Savanna SNA, Sand Dunes State Forest, and Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Preserve.
- ◇ The Mississippi and Rum River, and the many lakes are destination for paddling and fishing.

QUALITY SURFACE WATER, GROUNDWATER AND DRINKING WATER

- ◇ The ASP is a primary recharge area for the aquifers of the Twin Cities Metro Area due to its infiltration rates and geologic intersection with aquifer exposures.
- ◇ The Minneapolis and St. Paul Source Water Protection Area for drinking water is composed largely of the ASP.
- ◇ Numerous wetlands in the ASP provide flood protection, water purification, shoreline stabilization, groundwater recharge, and streamflow maintenance.

