

A Habitat of Naturalized Shoreline & Indigenous Landscape on the Mississippi River



In this illustration, an eagle is flying over a naturalized Mississippi River shoreline featuring long grasses, native species, and oak savanna abutting diverse channels and littoral conditions. The result is an oasis of habitat and biodiversity at the heart of the urban region. It is a habitat restoration rooted in the principle that we are all relatives: *Mitakuye Owas'in*.

Owámniyomni Native Landscape & River Restoration

HRE09

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Restoring Habitat in the Metro Region: Mississippi River Corridor

This project will transform vacant industrial land to restored wildlife habitat on the shoreline of the Mississippi River as it passes through the metro region.

Restoration of urban industrial land is costlier than projects within a suburban or rural setting, but it is precisely in these areas of greatest disturbance and need where restoration can have enormous impacts for wildlife. The Mississippi River National Recreation Area, in which this site is located, supports hundreds of species of fish, mammals, birds, mussels, insects, reptiles and amphibians, including endangered and threatened species such as the Higgen's eye mussel.

The original habitat of the project site was oak savanna mixed with prairie. Based on the information we have, we understand that oak savanna habitat abutted the river all the way to the shore, and the site did not host river floodplain. Savanna was a transitional habitat between hardwood forests and prairie. The prairie habitat in Minnesota is less than 1% remaining, but the oak savanna is less than a tenth of a percent remaining.

The restoration of the land and the industrial shoreline will provide an island of native landscape biodiversity within a national flyway passing through a habitat-scarce urban region. The Mississippi River is an extremely high value corridor for both resident and migratory wildlife, including waterfowl, raptors, mussels, fish, turtles, otters, and more. Our mission is to bring habitat and biodiversity back to this shoreline site.

Commitment of the DNR, & Indigenous Land Management Principles

This project proposal was shaped, and will be managed, in coordination with expert technical advisors from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife. It is informed by adopted state plans and priorities.

The proposal is also guided by an expert advisor from Land & Water within Prairie Island Indian Community. The restoration and project management plan will be rooted in indigenous land management practices. The project is rooted in two important underlying principles: *Mní Wičóni* (water is life) and *Mitakuye Owas'in* (we are all relatives).