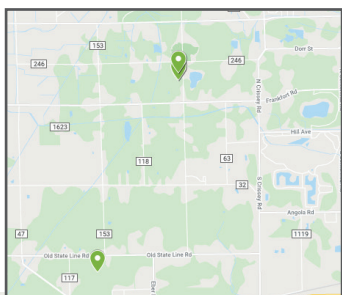


Oak Openings Habitat

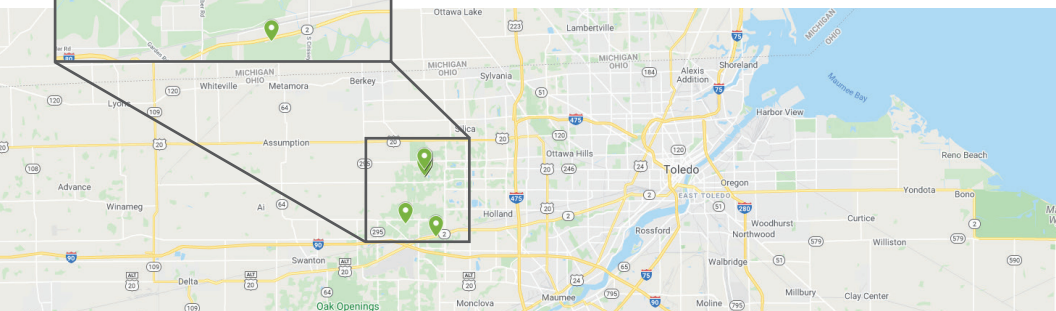
Protection within Priority Conservation Areas

WHAT'S BEING
ADDRESSED:

BUI 14: Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat



Through this project, Metroparks Toledo acquired 31 acres of land featuring high quality habitat within the Oak Openings Region of western Lucas County, Ohio. Four separate tracts of land were acquired within targeted areas designated as Priority Conservation Areas by the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative. These are areas where scientists have determined that additional habitat protection/restoration will provide the most benefit to plant and animal species of greatest conservation concern.



Photos courtesy of Metroparks Toledo

PARTNERS:

This project was a collaborative effort between Metroparks Toledo, The Nature Conservancy, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with financial support provided through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Learn more at maumeeaoc.org



Photos courtesy of Metroparks Toledo

PROJECT BENEFITS:

The Oak Openings is widely regarded as one of Ohio’s most biologically diverse regions, with one-third of the state’s rare plant and animal species found within an area representing just 0.5% of Ohio’s total land area. Historically, the Oak Openings region was dominated by expansive oak savannas and wet prairie swales. Since European settlement, the region’s natural communities have been systematically altered through drainage, agriculture, fire exclusion, and urban expansion. Protection and restoration of Oak Openings habitat provides the following benefits:

- Provide habitat protection for threatened and endangered wildlife species,
- Enhance habitat connectivity by creating corridors between existing protected parks and preserves, and
- Improve water quality within the Lake Erie watershed through the protection of wetlands, floodplains, and uplands draining into the region’s rivers and streams.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Acquire at least 30 acres of existing high quality habitat in the Oak Openings Region of Ohio;
- Enhance/restore additional high quality habitat to address the loss of wildlife habitat Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) in the Maumee Area of Concern; and
- Permanently protect this habitat from future redevelopment.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

- To prepare the project areas for native plantings, woody invasive plants such as glossy buckthorn that are encroaching on prairie and savanna habitats, were removed using hydro-ax mowing and application of selective herbicides.
- To enhance existing high quality habitat, prescribed fire, mowing and other best management practices were conducted.
- To ensure a clean and safe environment for wildlife and people, trash and debris left behind by previous landowners was removed.



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