



OAK WOODLAND SAVANNA

A Mix of Prairies and Woodlands

Indigo Bunting
Passerina cyanea
♂



Monarch Butterfly
Danaus plexippus

SAVANNA FLOWERS SUN AND SHADE

Flowers of the Savanna habitat are well suited to a range of sunlight needs from the full sun of open prairie to the full shade of the oak tree canopy.



White Wild Indigo
Baptisia alba



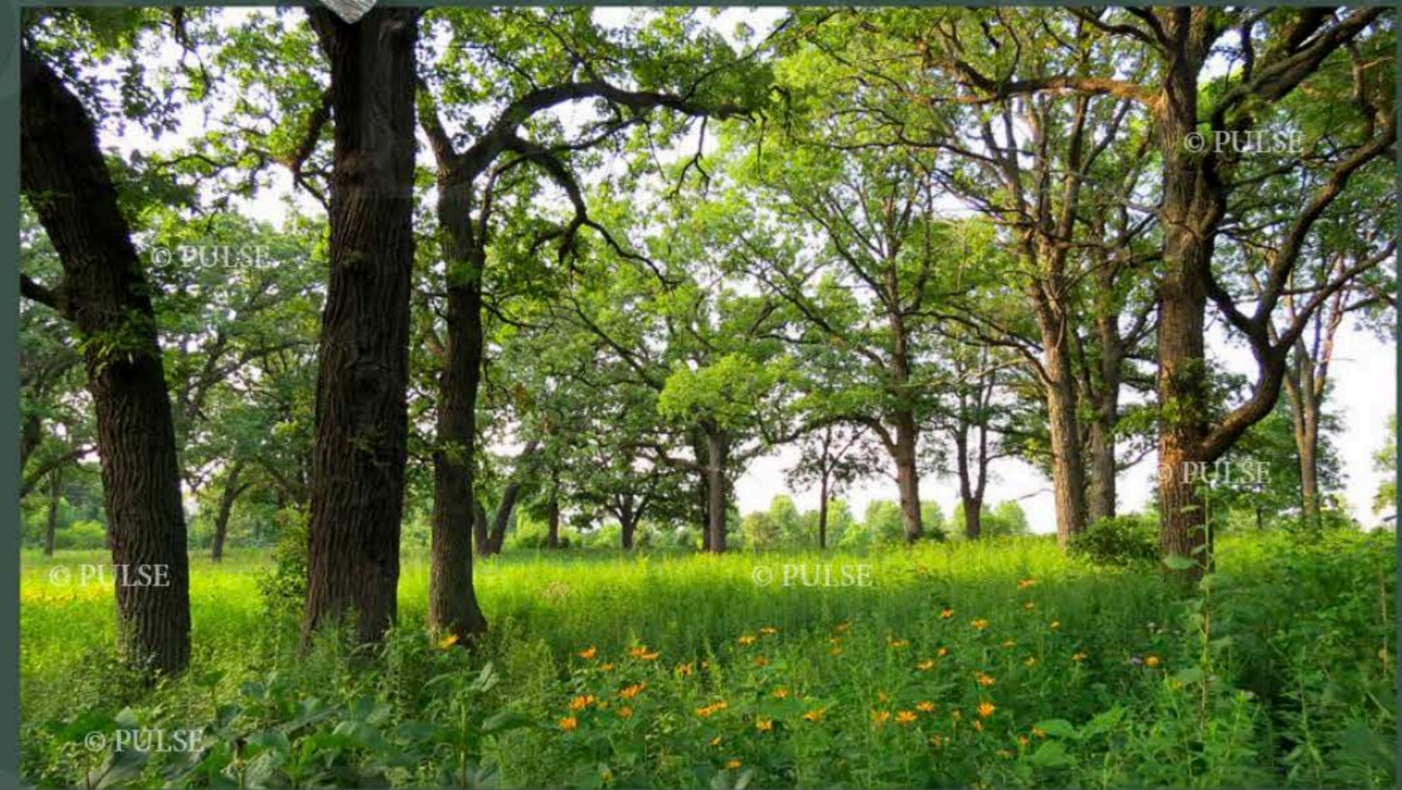
Butterfly Weed
Asclepias tuberosa



Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium



Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardi



Late summer in the Hickory Oak Savanna.

Savannas are open landscapes featuring widely spaced trees and a diverse mix of shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers that grow in both prairies and forests. Savanna trees have broad crowns, an indication that they grow in places with space to spread out. In the past century, savannas and woodlands have become scarce because of conversion to agriculture, development, and fire suppression. We are restoring this area to an oak woodland savanna as a living example of one of Arkansas' rare plant communities. Restoring oak woodlands and savannas will help to expand the distribution of rare natural communities, conserve biodiversity, create a more diverse landscape, and provide habitat for wildlife species of concern.



Post Oak
Quercus stellata
Post oak is a medium sized tree with slower growth than most other oak species. The wood was sought after for fence posts by early settlers, hence the name. The acorns also provide food for many species of wildlife.



White Oak
Quercus alba
This large, long-lived tree, can grow up to 150 feet tall. Acorns are eaten by many animals including mice, squirrels, turkey, quail, raccoons, deer, and bear.

HABITAT FOR MANY

Wildlife and pollinators flourish in the open understory of the woodland savanna. Nut bearing trees and nectar producing plants provide rich food sources and nesting sites for a wide variety of pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.



Barred Owl
Strix varia



Wild Turkey
Meleagris gallopavo



Northern Bobwhite
Canis latrans



Raccoon
Procyon lotor



Red-headed Woodpecker
Melanerpes erythrocephalus



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Archilochus colubris



Eastern Chipmunk
Tamias striatus



Garter Snake
Thamnophis sirtalis



Prescribed burn helps make plants grow.

FIRE PROMOTES DIVERSITY

Throughout history, fire has played a significant role in shaping the plant and animal communities of the Ozark Highlands. Native Americans and early settlers used fire for a variety of purposes, shaping and maintaining park-like, oak-hickory and pine woodlands with a rich mix of wildflowers and grasses.

Prescribed burning starts the restoration process by opening the woods, allowing native plant and animal community recovery while removing hazardous fuels.

Mechanical thinning, including timber sales, firewood cutting, and non-commercial methods allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor. This increases native grasses and wildflowers while improving forest health and diversity.



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OAK WOODLAND

A Deciduous Wooded Landscape with Mesic Soil

Northern Long-eared Bat
Myotis septentrionalis

This is a threatened species in Arkansas. It needs this habitat to survive.



Cecropia Moth
Hyalophora cecropia

WILDLIFE OF THE OAK WOODLANDS



Red-tailed Hawk
Buteo jamaicensis



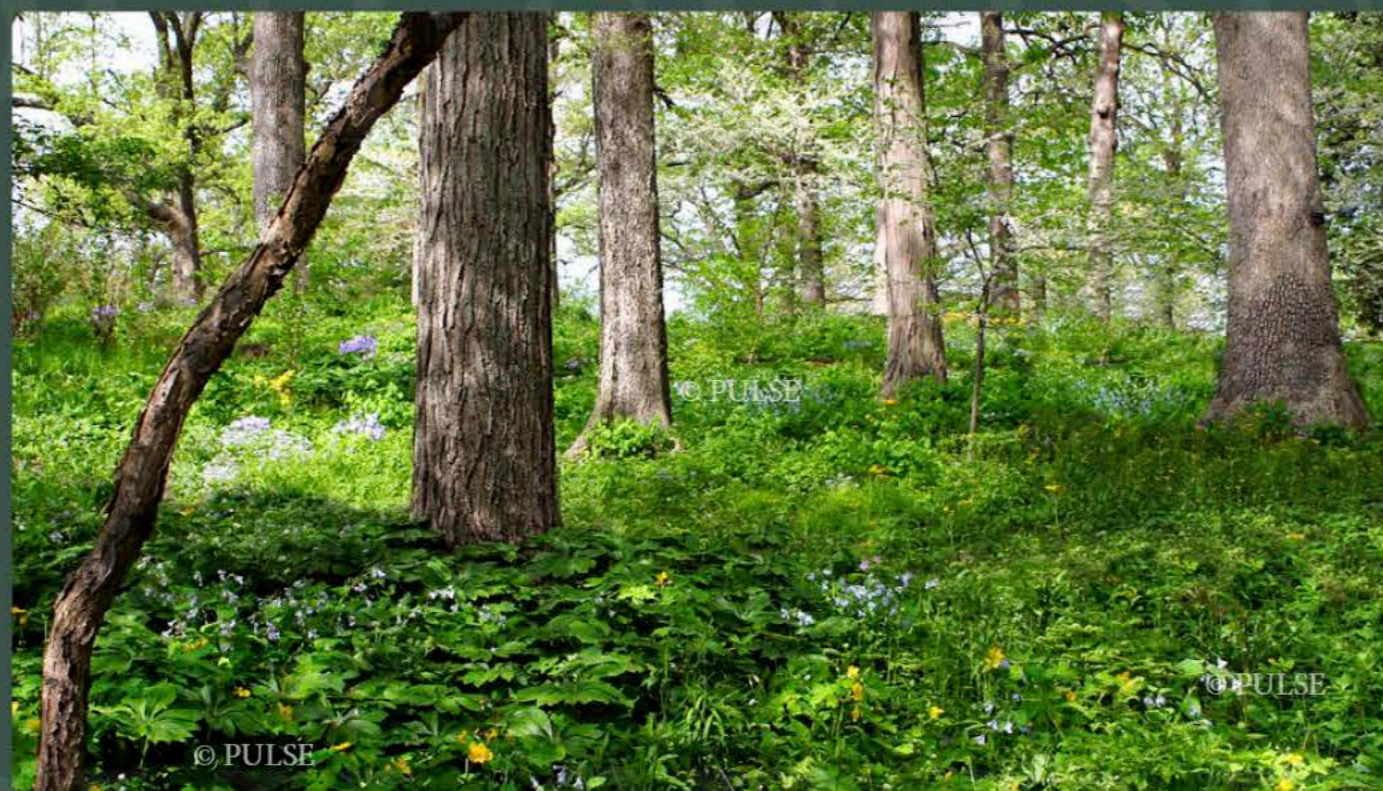
Red Fox
Vulpes vulpes



White-tailed Deer
Odocoileus virginianus



Pileated Woodpecker
Dryocopus pileatus



Spring oak woodland wildflowers.

An oak woodland has a crown closure range of 50-95% with a more open understory. Historical oak woodlands were comprised of larger mature trees and a diverse ground layer of grasses and forbs. Decades of fire suppression have resulted in dense overgrown forests with ground layers consisting mostly of leaf litter offering very little value to wildlife and pollinators. Over time, historical oak woodlands have disappeared and the forest is at risk for developing insect and disease infestations. This area is being restored using thinning, prescribed fire, and treatments to control non-native invasive species.

Mockernut Hickory
Carya tomentosa



Post Oak
Quercus stellata



White Oak
Quercus alba



Red Oak
Quercus rubra

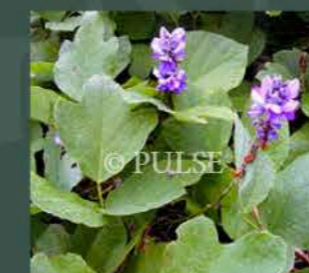


INVASIVES ELIMINATE HABITAT DIVERSITY

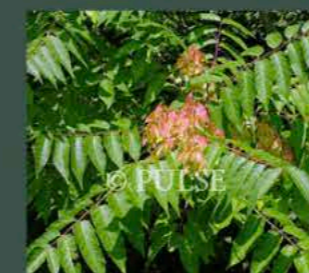
Plants and trees that are not native to Arkansas are invading our forests. These invasives need to be controlled to prevent native species from being eliminated. A healthy woodland supports a wide range of living organisms. But, when native plant communities are replaced by non-native species, the entire ecosystem is affected. These non-native species out-compete native species, block sunlight from reaching the forest floor, and use up valuable nutrients. They also produce lower quality habitat and forage for wildlife. This site is undergoing control efforts to stop the invasion of these non-natives.



Chinese Privet
Ligustrum sinense



Kudzu
Pueraria montana var. lobata



Tree-of-Heaven
Ailanthus altissima



Princess Tree
Paulownia tomentosa



Prescribed burns help native plants grow.

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PINE WOODLAND

Open Pine and Grass Dominated Forests



Monarch
Danaus plexippus



Pine Warbler
Setophaga pinus
♂

RESTORATION IN THE INTERIOR HIGHLANDS

The Interior Highlands are a center of biodiversity in North America. They are dominated by an ecosystem of pine and oak woodlands. Over 150 species of animals and plants are only found in the Interior Highlands and nowhere else on earth.

For more than 12,000 years, this open landscape has been shaped and maintained by frequent surface fires. The landscape is also the epicenter of the range for shortleaf pine, a rapidly declining fire-adapted species.



Shortleaf Pine
Pinus echinata

The US Forest Service is a proud participant in the Shortleaf Pine Initiative, a five-year plan to help re-establish shortleaf pine dominant forests throughout the Southeastern United States. www.shortleafpine.net



Spring woodland wildflowers.

Historical pine woodlands contained an open, two-layered structure of canopy and diverse groundcover, including grasses. Millions of acres of pine woodlands once covered a large portion of the Midwest but through intense logging and fire suppression, the woodlands gave way to dense forests with thick leaf litter and tree species that were less fire-resistant, leading to more intense and unpredictable wildfires as well as the loss of native bird habitats.

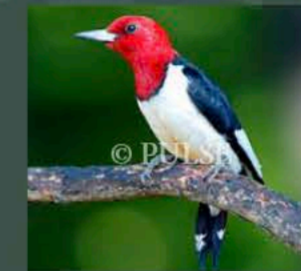
Research has shown that restoration of pine woodlands, through the combined use of prescribed fire and strategic thinning of tree density, has a strikingly beneficial effect on a diverse array of birds and other species.

This site is being restored to a pine woodland through thinning and prescribed fire treatments.

WOODLAND WILDFLOWERS HELP BIRDS & POLLINATORS



Bobwhite Quail
Colinus virginianus



Red-headed Woodpecker
Melanerpes erythrocephalus



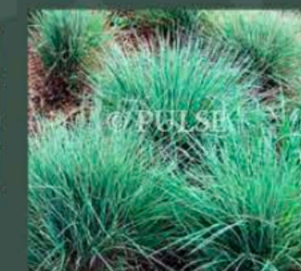
Bochman's Sparrow
Peucaea aestivalis



Prairie Warbler
Setophaga discolor



Blazing Star
Liatris spicata



Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium



Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardi



Purple Coneflower
Echinacea purpurea

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

Great Spangled Fritillary



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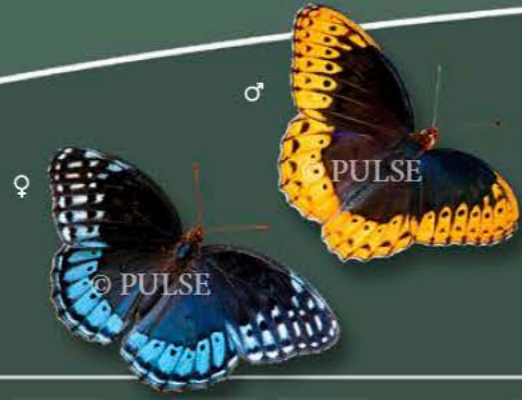


OAK-PINE WOODLANDS

Open Forests With a Diversity of Wildlife

Diana Fritillary
Speyeria diana

These butterflies live in the moist mountain areas of Arkansas. Males are orange and females are blue.



Tiger Swallowtail
Papilio glaucus

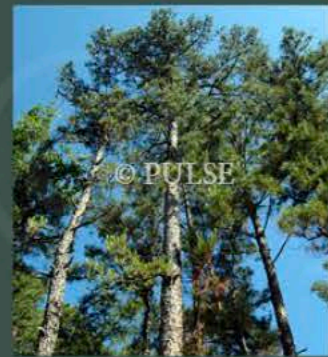
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Late summer in the Oak-Pine Woodland.



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Flowering Dogwood
Cornus florida

Often mistaken for spring flowers, white "bracts" are modified white leaves that surround the tree's small, green flower clusters. Fall foliage and fruit turns red.



Shagbark Hickory
Carya ovata

This Midwest native is named for its bark, which peels away in large, flat, curving plates, giving the tree a shaggy appearance. Its sweet, edible nuts were once a staple food for Native Americans.



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Strix varia



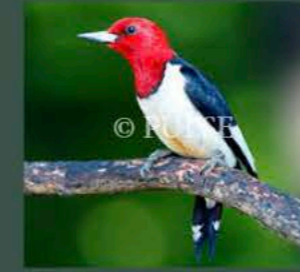
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Meleagris gallopavo



Bobwhite Quail
Aquilegia canadensis



Red Fox
Vulpes vulpes



Red-headed Woodpecker
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Eastern Bluebird
Sialia sialis



Eastern Chipmunk
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