

PURPOSE and GOALS

Purpose

To identify high priority areas for resource enhancement in the River Valley, and to recommend management strategies and approaches.

Goals

Maintain and Enhance Existing Accomplishments



In the areas around Pond Dakota Mission, the City has worked to restore the oak savanna habitat. This year, the City has monitored and maintained to prevent the spread of undesirable species, thinned trees to the west of Pond Dakota Mission, and will incorporate goat grazing along the nearby slopes this summer.

Foster the Growth of Desirable, Native Species



This bur oak is being shaded out by other faster growing, weedy species and will not survive with limited sunlight. Like elsewhere in the Bloomington bluffs, oak trees are not regenerating.

Provide Educational Opportunities



Much of the River Valley feels natural. However, the River Valley today bears little resemblance to its pre-settlement character, and is a product of human alteration within an urban setting. Educational programs can help build awareness of the River Valley and its current condition, communicate the approaches and desired outcomes of the different management strategies, and empower people to become stewards that proactively promote the ecological health of the River Valley.

Establish Continuous Ground-Level Vegetation



A continuous layer of ground-level vegetation helps to prevent soil erosion, and the deep root systems of native species sequester nutrients into the soils. While woody species tend to store nutrients above ground, grasses and other ground-level vegetation tend to store nutrients below ground.

Reintroduce Natural Disturbances



Historically, disturbances such as grazing, fire, and other biological controls occurred naturally. Today, these disturbances have been highly suppressed in the River Valley in order to avoid impacts on nearby urban development. This has resulted in the prevalence of woody, weedy vegetation, a lack of biodiversity, and a lower quality food source and habitat for wildlife. The objective is to mimic natural disturbances in order to reestablish and maintain healthy, native ecosystems.

Strengthen the Potential for Biodiversity



More diverse ecosystems are found to be more resilient and provide a higher quality habitat. The spread of invasive and undesirable species often results in two or three species fully dominating a site, which threatens biodiversity.