**Natural Heritage Program**

The Natural Heritage Inventory Program maintains a GIS database containing information on the distribution and ecology of rare plants, animals, and ecological communities across Tennessee.

The parent organization is NatureServe: [homepage](https://www.natureserve.org/)

They use the methodology outlined by NatureServe: [found here](https://www.natureserve.org/conservation-tools/standards-methods/natureserve-core-methodology)

This ensures that there’s a standard procedure for gathering, managing, and representing data for species and ecological systems – and allows for multiple individuals and institutions throughout the Western Hemisphere to contribute. The methodology has evolved with time but has basic continuity over the last 40 years.

**“elements of biodiversity”** refers to both species and ecological communities