

Ohio Oak Openings (OHOO)

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Location within Domain:

History: The oak openings region has a research base for many ecological studies in the past 100 years. The sand lies above a layer of clay that retards water penetration and the perched water table tends to be close to the surface, creating unique dry, fire-prone ecosystem types in the region.

Key Characteristics: The oak openings region occupies a band of sandy soil that was deposited along an ancient lakeshore during glacial retreat about 11,000 years ago. It is a landscape that provides diverse habitats for plants: high exposed spots are xeric and provide conditions suitable for dry prairie communities whereas low spots are moist and may even contain standing water for much of the late winter and spring. Two endemic ecosystem types are found in the oak openings: 1) Black oak savannas are confined to a few sites in the Midwest (a globally endangered ecosystem, TNC), and 2) dry prairies are common in the western Great Plains but are very unusual in the Midwest. There has a remarkable number of rare and endangered species ($\approx 1/3$ of the rare, threatened and endangered in the Great Lakes region), including 145 plants that are listed as potentially threatened, threatened or endangered in Ohio. Nearly 40 species of amphibians and reptiles and some 160 bird species are present. A number of state-listed insect species and