



Historical Vegetation

The vegetation information shown here is derived from township maps made by the General Land Office (GLO) surveys beginning in 1836 through 1859. The vegetation information was digitized in 1996 as a resource for natural resource management and is useful "...for the study of long term ecological processes and as baseline data for the study of present day communities."¹

The names of plant communities mapped by the GLO surveyors varied. The original terminology used by the surveyors who made maps has been preserved in the original data, but we have re-named these types on this map to reflect names used to describe contemporary ecological vegetation communities.

Not all communities will have all vegetation types, because various conditions that effect vegetation- such as geology, exposure to wind, seasonally high water or ground water, and frequency of fire- differ from place to place.

The following types have been mapped :

1. Forest: Tree dominated, with a mostly closed canopy. Ground vegetation shade tolerant. developed under infrequent fire.
2. Savanna: Scattered trees, with an open canopy, and prairie below. Fire dominated.
3. Wetland: Perennial non-woody plants, water and fire dominated.
4. Prairie: Perennial non woody plants, fire dominated.

¹ J.E. Ebinger, "Presettlement Vegetation of Coles County, Illinois," Transactions of the Illinois Academy of Science (1987): 15-24, quoted in Michael Charles Miller, "Analysis of historic vegetation patterns in Iowa using Government Land Office surveys and a Geographic Information System" (master's thesis, Iowa State University, 1995), 8.

Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

Calamus
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Bioregional Context
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