

The importance of geomorphic setting and soils in understanding
conservation opportunities for wetland wildlife.

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Conservation initiatives, with a focus on wildlife habitat, generally have been implemented because there was an association between a group of target animals and a general habitat type such as hardwood forest, prairie pothole, or floodplain. Recognition that a general habitat type might be distributed across different geomorphic regions with different soils was not commonly used in acquisition strategies or in restoration planning. For example, developments for intensive management, or more general wetland management strategies, usually were based on the tradition of using certain approaches or techniques commonly used by managers within a political or geographic region. With new spacial technology, there is great potential to develop abiotic layers based on geomorphology, soils, and hydrology that are determinates of the type and distribution of plant communities. In turn these plant communities determine the presence, distribution, and abundance of wildlife. We provide examples of the heterogeneous distribution of habitats for wetland wildlife that serve as the basis for contemporary restoration strategies.