



2026

NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN: **SNAPSHOT**

The **Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Natural Areas Program** is a vital expression of the Museum's mission. By protecting our region's rare and at-risk plants, wildlife, and habitats, we will safeguard the natural diversity that is essential to our well-being and makes Ohio "home." Through conservation, stewardship, scientific research, and public engagement, the Program transforms the Museum's mission into meaningful action while advancing its vision.



MISSION

To inspire, through science and education, a passion for nature, the protection of natural diversity, the fostering of health, and leadership to a sustainable future.



VISION

To explore, engage, and empower for a better tomorrow.

STRATEGIC PILLARS Strategic priorities supported by interconnected goals, implementation strategies, and performance measures



Protect the lands that define Ohio's local and natural heritage



Restore our region's natural diversity, especially rare, endangered, and threatened species



Inspire a passion for nature



Leverage the Museum's scientific expertise to lead our region toward a sustainable future

CONNECTION

GOAL 1



TEN-YEAR GOAL: Expand and connect preserves — with a focus on conserving core forest blocks, fens, barrens, and bogs — to provide the large, uninterrupted habitats required by prioritized species.

THREE-YEAR GOALS:

GOAL 1A: Habitat-level ecological integrity monitoring for prioritized rare species survival has been completed and informs our preserve portfolio strategy as well as regional conservation priorities.

GOAL 1B: Strategic expansions of existing preserves have been achieved by protecting available parcels according to our preserve portfolio strategy.

AWARENESS

GOAL 3



TEN-YEAR GOAL: Raise awareness of the biodiversity crisis and inspire action by Museum constituents, including preserve neighbors, to protect natural diversity in our region.

THREE-YEAR GOALS:

GOAL 3A: The Natural Areas Program's purpose and value are so well-understood internally that the program's goals and operations are integrated with those of the Museum as a whole.

GOAL 3B: We have forged new partnerships to provide opportunities for stakeholders to connect with the natural world, to understand the importance of conservation, and to appreciate the Natural Areas Program's work.

STEWARDSHIP

GOAL 2



TEN-YEAR GOAL: Slow the rapid decline of regional natural diversity through stewardship efforts on behalf of prioritized rare, endangered, and threatened plants and animals.

THREE-YEAR GOALS:

GOAL 2A: We have documented the status of the top 20% of priority plant and animal populations on our preserves, with a focus on state and federal rankings, and have surveyed and mapped invasive plant cover that threatens priority species and habitats.

GOAL 2B: Increase stewardship investment to manage rare and invasive species, using a phased approach that considers both previously identified management plans and new data.

COLLABORATION

GOAL 4



TEN-YEAR GOAL: Collaborate to implement a research agenda that advances the Museum's mission and conservation priorities through our preserves and collections, and encourage partners to adopt findings to restore prioritized species.

THREE-YEAR GOALS:

GOAL 4A: We have convened internal and external partners to help define a Natural Areas research agenda that advances the Museum's mission and our region's conservation capacity, with the potential for global implications.

GOAL 4B: We have developed the infrastructure for a thriving field research and monitoring initiative that is accessible to partners.