



To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Black to the Land Coalition, we write in strong support of the effort to protect and preserve Sibley Prairie as an ecologically significant and culturally meaningful landscape.

Prairies are among the most imperiled ecosystems in North America, yet they play a critical role in carbon sequestration, water filtration, pollinator support, and soil health. Working class and urban communities deserve access to high quality ecosystems. The protection of Sibley Prairie represents a commitment to safeguarding these essential ecological functions for present and future generations.

For BIPOC communities and other historically marginalized peoples, access to and relationship with land has too often been shaped by dispossession, exclusion, and environmental harm. Black to the Land Coalition works to reconnect Black people with land stewardship, food sovereignty, conservation, and outdoor spaces as a pathway toward healing, empowerment, and environmental justice. As an organization centered in Detroit, Wayne County, we see tremendous value in ensuring this land is protected. In Wayne County—one of Michigan’s most populous, predominantly working-class, home to over 1.7 million residents and among the most racially and ethnically diverse counties—the protection of a rare lakeplain prairie like Sibley ensures that high quality ecosystems are not reserved only for affluent communities, but remain accessible to the people most impacted by environmental loss. Preserving places like Sibley Prairie ensures that conservation is not only about protecting nature, but also about expanding who belongs in and benefits from these landscapes.

While a handful of prairie remnants persist in Wayne County, Sibley Prairie is unique for its continuity as an open landscape—having survived waves of agriculture, industrialization, and suburban development that erased most native prairies from the county. **Over 99% of lakeplain prairies have been destroyed.** Sibley Prairie is the largest *and highest-quality remnant of historic lakeplain prairie in the state, specific to clay-rich lakebeds left behind by the prehistoric Great Lakes (like Lake Erie and Lake Maumee).*

We believe Sibley Prairie holds tremendous potential as a site for education, community engagement, and intergenerational learning rooted in respect for Indigenous land histories, ecological knowledge, and inclusive stewardship practices. Its protection aligns with broader goals of equitable conservation, climate adaptation, and the shared responsibility to care for land in ways that honor both people and place.

We urge decision-makers, partners, and community stakeholders to take decisive action to save Sibley Prairie and ensure it remains protected from development and degradation. Doing so affirms a vision of conservation that is inclusive, forward-thinking, and grounded in long-term ecological and social well-being.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We are grateful for the opportunity to stand in support of this vital effort.

In solidarity and stewardship,

Antonio R. Cosme  
On behalf of the Black to the Land Coalition  
Program Lead