Root Systems of Prairie Plants

The fundamental basis for encouraging use of native plant species for improved soil erosion control in stream and stormwater facilities lies in the fact that native plants have extensive root systems which improve the ability of the soil to infiltrate water and withstand wet or erode conditions. Native plant species, like those listed in this Guide, often have greater biomass below the surface. In this illustration, note the Kentucky Bluegrass shown on the far left, which, when compared to native grass and forb species, exhibits a shallow root system. Illustration provided by Heidi Natura of the Conservation Research Institute.