

SENSITIVE AREAS

Environmentally Sensitive Areas are identified in our master plan as resources that could be permanently altered or destroyed if human disturbance activities occurred on these lands. The degree of sensitivity in response to type and intensity of disturbance varies across the continuum. Protection of diversity, whether plants or animals, is the foundation of the public land ethic.

Human activity represents the greatest threat to maintaining this diversity. Many factors contribute to areas within the Saylorville Lake project being identified as sensitive. Examples of sensitivity are best demonstrated by sample descriptions. This poster shows just some of the examples of sensitive areas worthy of protection at Saylorville Lake.

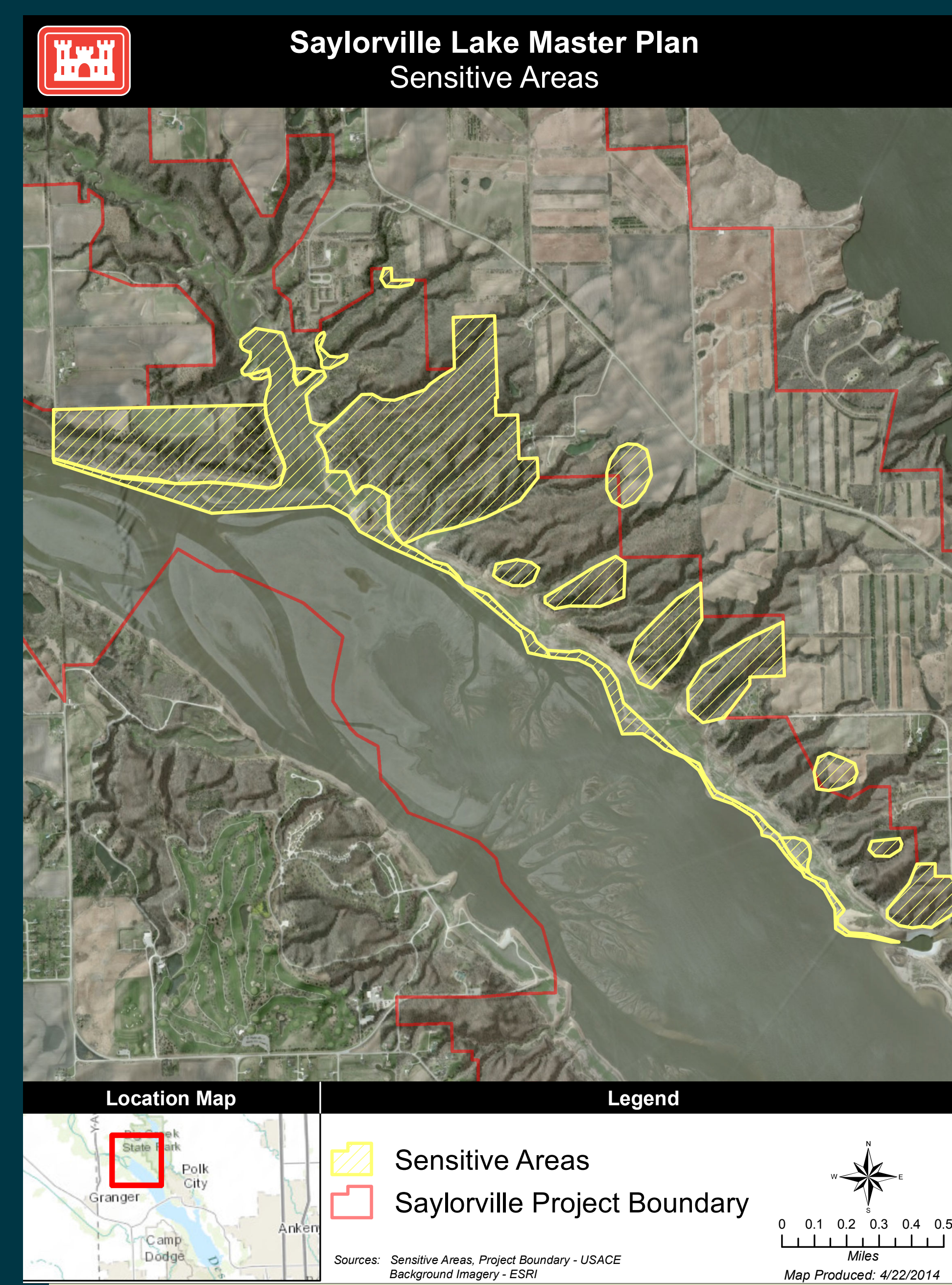


ECOSYSTEMS DESERVE PROTECTION

Great Blue Herons are colonial tree nesters attracted to the Saylorville Lake environment. They often nest in large groups high in the crowns of Cottonwood and Silver Maple forests. These birds are very sensitive to disturbance while nesting. The colony and surrounding lands should be free from human disturbance throughout the nesting season. Excessive disturbance to Great Blue Heron rookeries can cause the birds to abandon the colony site.

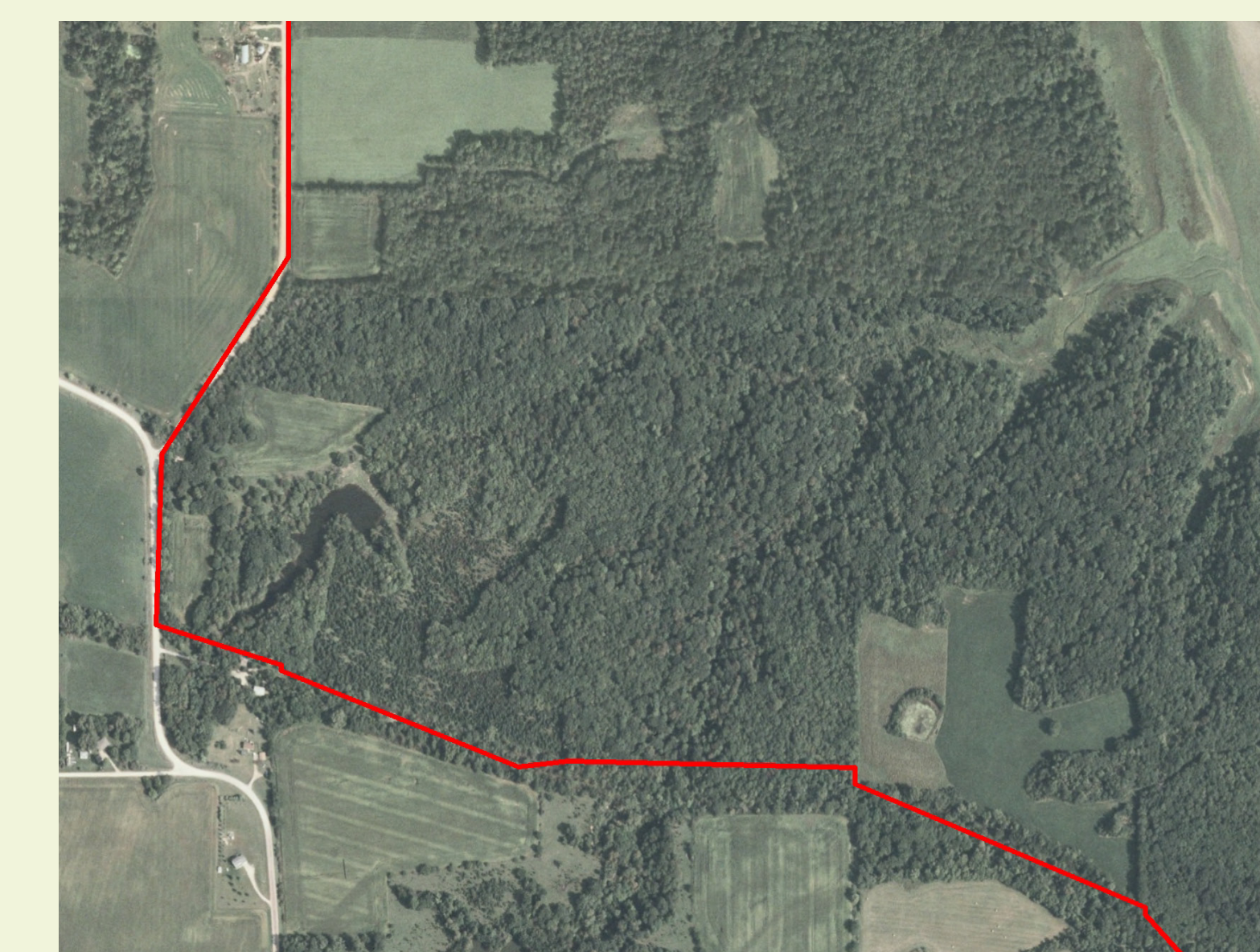


Tall grass prairie is essentially gone from Iowa but once covered two-thirds of the state. The plants and animals that occupied this once magnificent ecosystem have declined dramatically. The few remnant prairies found at the lake and the larger prairie restorations contain plant and animal species deserving protection. Prairies from small to large are considered environmentally sensitive.



HELP PRESERVE OUR CULTURAL RESOURCES & LARGE BLOCK HABITAT

Cultural resources are abundant in the Des Moines River valley and protection of these resources is mandated by law and regulation. One hundred fifty eight of the discovered sites at the Saylorville Lake Project are eligible for the National Historic Register. Exploration of cultural resources was extensive prior to construction of the reservoir and new discoveries continue as more is learned about the resource. Protecting the location of these cultural resource sites is paramount. Adequate buffering is required for these sites. Similar to federally endangered plant and animal locations, obligatory protection of the location of these sites is imperative.



Large block habitat refers to larger unbroken tracts of land that could be covered by forests, grasslands or wetlands. Many of Iowa's threatened, endangered or declining species are dependent on large tracts of continuous habitat. Red Shouldered Hawk, Henslow's Sparrow and the Bobcat are examples of animals dependent on large tracts of habitat. Fragmentation of these tracts pose a significant threat. When roads, utility lines and other human disturbance activity disrupt or fracture these large blocks of habitat, negative impacts occur. Large blocks of forest or prairie are particularly rare in Iowa and when they occur on public lands, their protection is vital to maintaining diversity and managing this public resource.