



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®  
Rock Island District

# PUBLIC NOTICE

**Sponsor:** Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation  
505 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 444  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Issued: June 21, 2022  
Expires: July 20, 2022

**Corps Project Number:** CEMVR-RD-2022-0757  
**Proposed Project:** INHF Pearey Mitigation Bank

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## WETLAND COMPENSATORY MITIGATION BANK PROPOSAL

This notice is issued in accordance with the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule (the Mitigation Rule) described in the Federal Register dated April 10, 2008 (33 CFR Parts 325 and 332).

- 1. Project Location:** The proposed site is located within Sections 33 and 34, Township 82 North, Range 23 West in Story County as well as the NE ¼ Section 3, Township 81 North, Range 23 West in Polk County, Iowa. See attached location map. Latitude: 41.864778 Longitude: -93.511231.
- 2. Bank Objectives:** The fundamental objective of compensatory mitigation is to offset environmental losses resulting from unavoidable impacts to waters of the United States authorized by Department of Army Permits. Other Objectives include: Support the national goal of no net-loss of wetlands, enhancement and creation of additional wildlife habitat, restoration of native vegetation within emergent wetlands and upland buffer, provide additional flood storage within watershed, and to sell wetland mitigation credits for projects developed by other entities.
- 3. Project Description/Bank Establishment:** The bank sponsor proposes to complete activities on 180 acres of privately owned property that would result in the establishment of emergent wetland mitigation credits. The goal of the bank is to enhance/create wetlands to generate approximately 109 wetland credits. Wetland enhancement/creation will include the following: grading of farmed upland areas, plugging culverts and/or installing stoplog/weir structures to restore hydrology, removal and management of invasive species and seeding with native wetland vegetation. A wetland delineation will be completed in 2022 to help determine current conditions and the determination of credits prior to the submission of the draft mitigation banking instrument. Please see the detailed project description and drawings located within the bank Prospectus on RIBITS (link in #14, below).
- 4. Service Area:** The proposed primary bank service area will be the Iowa Service Area.
- 5. Bank Need/Technical Feasibility/Ecological Suitability:** The bank sponsor has considered the development and wetlands impacts that are anticipated within the Iowa service area in the future to determine the need for wetland mitigation. The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT)

five-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and capital improvement programs (CIP) for the cities of Ames, Marshalltown, and Oskaloosa were reviewed to provide justification to the current and future need for wetland mitigation within the service area. The sponsor determined that the site is technically feasible for a mitigation bank. The site is almost entirely within the 100-year floodplain of the South Skunk River and the majority of soils found within the site are mapped hydric which should easily retain wetland hydrology. The site is hydrologically connected to the South Skunk River. Groundwater will also be a source of hydrology to sustain the created wetlands onsite. The Bank will be appropriately designed to ensure natural hydrology and landscape position will support long-term sustainability and function as a self-sustaining system. This bank would aid in restoring a riparian coordinator along the South Skunk River which is in desperate need of habitat. Restoring these areas to mimic historic conditions is likely to improve habitat for a multitude of species including white tail deer, fox, coyote, amphibians, reptiles, and migratory birds.

**6. Long Term Management:** Post bank closure management would include ongoing plant management which may require herbicide and fire treatment additional seeding, as well as general site maintenance. The responsibility for long term management is held by the bank sponsor/landowner. A conservation easement will be required in perpetuity and will be held by a third-party grantee to ensure the conservation value of the property is protected. A long-term management fund will be established, and available to the grantee, to ensure funds are available should the sponsor fail to properly maintain the site.

**7. Sponsor Qualifications:** The Sponsor, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, is a statewide nonprofit conservation organization whose mission is to protect and restore Iowa's land, water, and wildlife. INHF owns other properties along the South Skunk River floodplain and has worked with Iowa DNR and Story County Conservation to restore several oxbows and wetlands within the watershed. Their land stewardship team is comprised of staff, volunteers, and interns. INHF completes their own restoration practices such as prescribed fire and invasive species control. INHF holds over 200 conservation easements throughout Iowa, complete monitoring, and ensure the properties are protected annually.

**8. Water Rights:** Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation currently owns the property associated with the bank proposal. The sponsor would not have complete control of upstream practices that may alter flows to the project area.

**9. Agency Review:** Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineer is participating in this matter as the chair of an Interagency Review Team. The Interagency Review Team consists of the Corps of Engineers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The project would require Section 404, Clean Water Act authorization prior to the proposed construction. If approved, the proposed bank could provide stream and wetland credit for future, Section 404, authorized projects that require compensatory mitigation. Formal authorization of the bank proposal occurs through Corps approval of a Mitigation Banking Instrument.

**10. Historical/Archaeological:** A Phase I archaeological and cultural resources assessment was conducted on the site in April of 2022. The study showed the following: no evidence of archaeological sites within the Bank. The District will require the applicant to submit two (2) copies of this Phase I archaeological survey and geomorphological evaluation report covering the permit area. Geomorphological investigation must extend at least 50 centimeters below the

proposed depths of soil disturbance or to a depth below which no possibility of historic properties exists. The applicant, in addition to this Phase I report, may be required to conduct additional Phase II test excavations to evaluate sites for eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP as well as other studies, site avoidance, or data recovery as may be the case.

**11. Endangered Species:** District staff has performed a preliminary review of this bank for the potential impact on threatened or endangered species pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended. Any comments USFWS may have concerning Federally-listed threatened or endangered wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work. There will be no tree removal as part of this project, therefore, the Corps has determined there will be no effect on both the northern long-eared bat and the Indiana bat. The project site does not contain dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soils; therefore, the Corps has determined there be no effect on the Prairie Bush-clover. The project site does not contain mesic to wet unplowed tallgrass prairies and meadows; therefore, the Corps has determined there will be no effect to the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. Accordingly, our preliminary determination is subject to change should further information become available. Our determination will be coordinated with USFWS separately.

**12. Who Should Reply:** The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to approve the proposed bank. Any comments received will be distributed to the members of the Interagency Review Team. Comments should be submitted on or before the expiration date specified at the top of page 1. Comments should bear upon the adequacy of plans and suitability of locations and should, if appropriate, suggest any changes considered desirable. Any person may also request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.

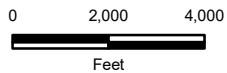
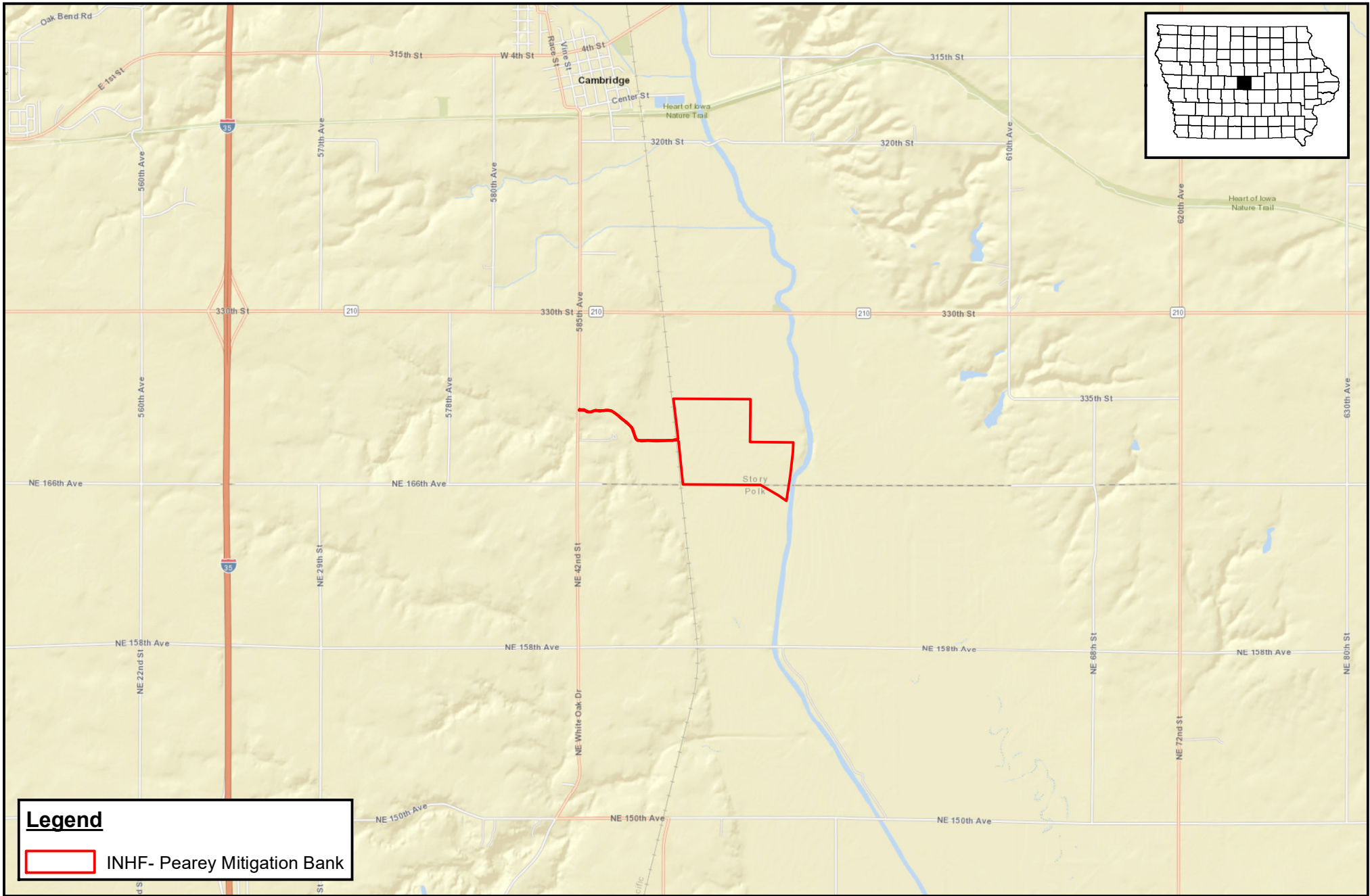
**13. Reply to the Corps of Engineers:** Comments or questions concerning this notice may be directed to Abby Steele (309/794-5377) (Abigail.a.steele@usace.army.mil), US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, ATTN: RD, Clock Tower Building - Post Office Box 2004, Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004.

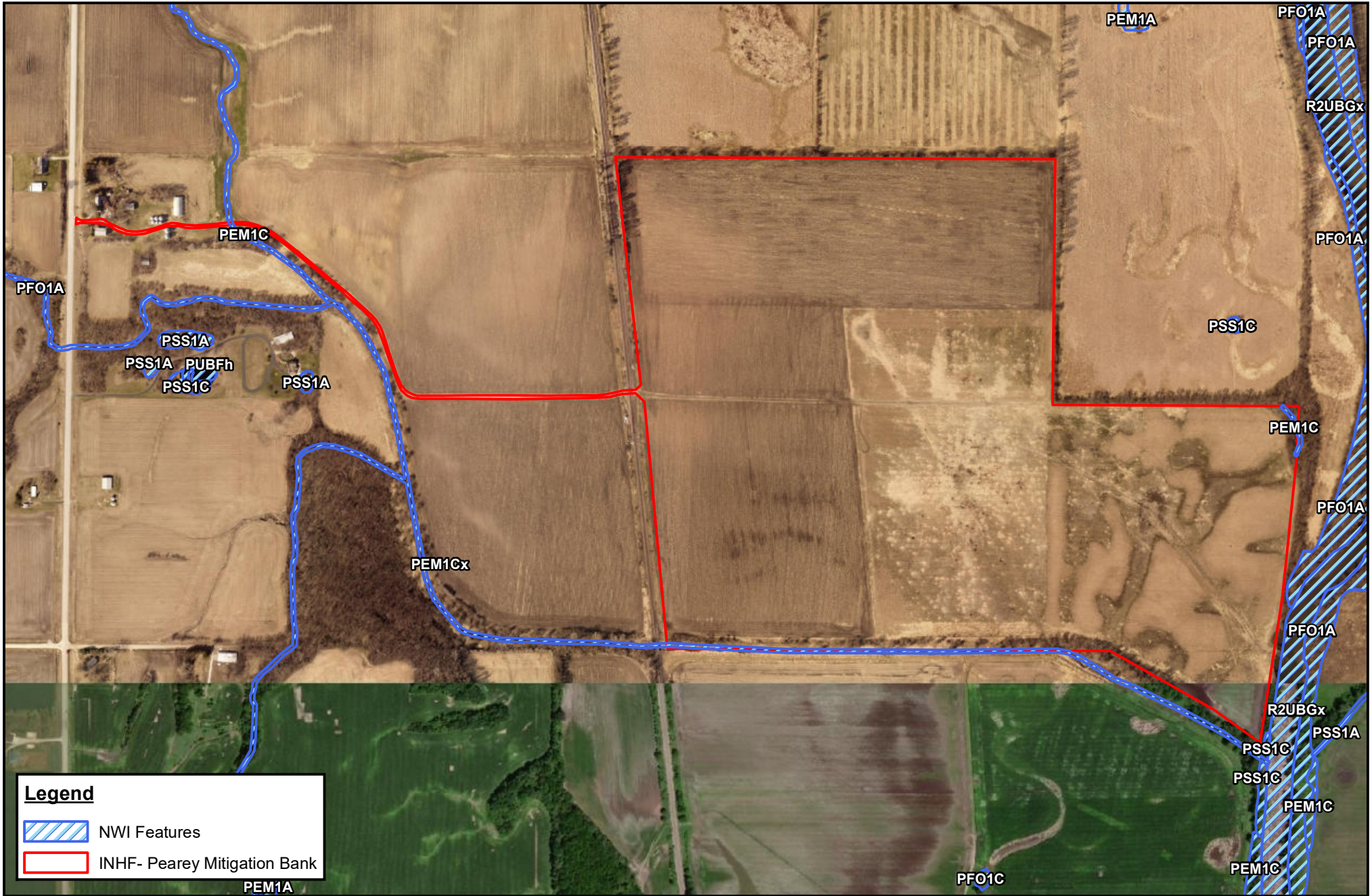
**14. Complete Prospectus:** The complete prospectus can be found on our public website at: [https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:10:10332512183402:::P10\\_BANK\\_ID:6350](https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:10:10332512183402:::P10_BANK_ID:6350)  
Hard copies are also available by request.

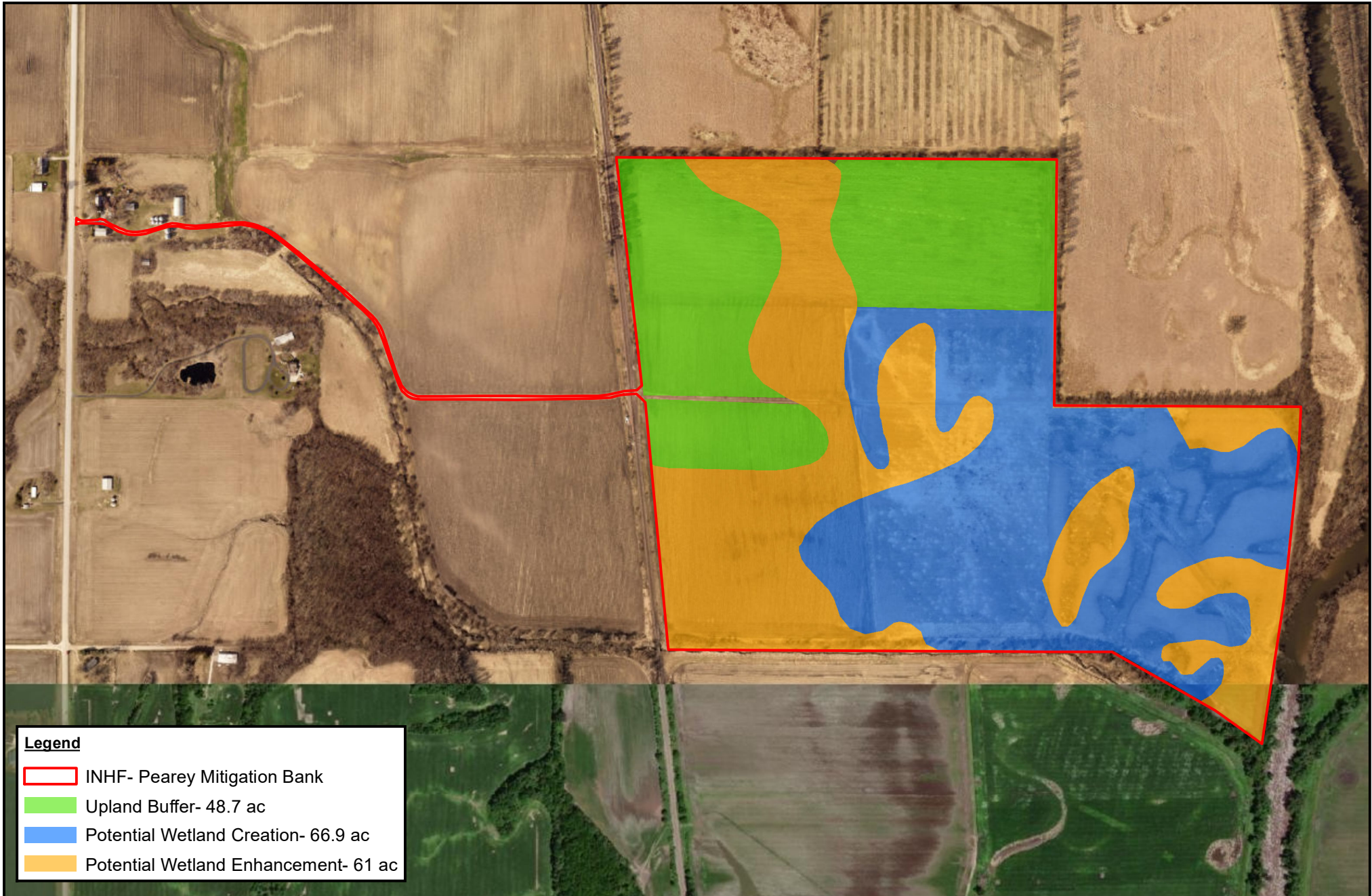
*Abigail A. Steele*

Attach  
Plan

Ms. Abigail A. Steele  
Iowa Mitigation Bank Manager  
Western Branch  
Regulatory Division







**Legend**

- INHF- Pearey Mitigation Bank
- Upland Buffer- 48.7 ac
- Potential Wetland Creation- 66.9 ac
- Potential Wetland Enhancement- 61 ac

