



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®

Rock Island District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sponsor: The Nature Conservancy of Iowa
505 5th Avenue, Suite 630
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Issued: June 23, 2023

Expires: July 22, 2023

Corps Project Number: CEMVR-RD-2023-0799

Proposed Project: Land of the Swamp White Oak (Maurer)
Wetland Mitigation Bank

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 Section 31, Township 79 North, Range 2 West, Cedar County, Iowa. See attached location maps. Latitude: 41.602181 Longitude: -91.119108.

2. **Bank Objectives:** The fundamental objective of compensatory mitigation is to offset environmental losses resulting from unavoidable impacts to waters of the United States (WOTUS) authorized by Department of the Army Permits. Other Objectives include the support of the national goal of no net-loss of wetlands, the enhancement of wildlife habitat within the Pee Dee Creek-Cedar River watershed, to compensate for wetland losses in a manner which contributes to the long-term ecological functioning of the watershed where the bank is located, the reduction of temporal losses of wetland functions, and to restore and enhance water quality and habitat within the Land of the Swamp White Oak Preserve.

3. **Project Description/Bank Establishment:** The bank sponsor proposes to complete activities on 96-acres of property owned by The Nature Conservancy of Iowa (TNC), which is within TNC's Land of the Swamp White Oak Preserve. This project would result in the generation of wetland compensatory mitigation credits. The goal of this project is to restore 22.7-acres of wetland, enhance 23.3-acres of existing wetland, and enhance 45.4-acres of buffer to generate an initial estimate of 45.68 wetland credits. The bank sponsor proposes to use different construction methods to aid in the completion of this project. Hydrologic restoration will include plugging existing on-site ditches in addition to light grading of specific areas. Improvements to the vegetative community include management to remove and control invasive species while promoting the growth of native species. Specifically, management may include chemical or mechanical removal of invasives and/or the use of periodic prescribed burns. Establishment of native plant communities will focus on herbaceous wet prairie species within wetland areas and will include interspersed tree planting. Wetland buffer areas will be planted with an upland prairie seed mix again with interspersed tree plantings. A wetland delineation, and additional information on construction techniques, target plant community types, and detailed planting plans will be completed prior to the submission of the draft Mitigation Banking Instrument.

4. **Service Area:** The proposed primary bank service area will be the Mississippi Service Area.

5. **Bank Need/Technical Feasibility/Ecological Suitability:** Based on an analysis of historic demand in the proposed service area for the Bank, it is anticipated that wetland mitigation needs will continue, with transportation, infrastructure, and municipal projects, in addition to residential and commercial development. This project represents an opportunity to conduct high-quality compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands through restoration and enhancement of unique wetland resources and associated habitats in an ecologically sensitive region. The site's location within the 4,500-acre Land of the Swamp White Oak Preserve provides an opportunity to expand corridors of healthy functioning aquatic systems in this important area.

6. **Long Term Management:** TNC intends to manage the Bank perpetually as the long-term manager, but at any time TNC may choose to assign this role to a USACE and IRT-approved entity. It is anticipated that after five or more years of ecological restoration, enhancement, and management, the mitigation efforts will transition into a long-term management program. The long-term management program is critical for maintaining the value of the investment, perpetuating the plant community, and maximizing the ecological and aesthetic benefits of the native plant communities. The long-term manager will be responsible for implementing management activities, as necessary. Management tasks will be guided by annual site assessments. These assessments will provide the necessary feedback on the success of the restorations and enhancements to the long-term manager. Site assessments identify developing problems and can be used to modify management techniques to achieve a higher success rate.

7. **Sponsor Qualifications:** The Bank Sponsor, TNC, is a global environmental nonprofit organization working to create a world where people and nature can thrive. Since 1963, TNC's Iowa chapter has worked to preserve the state's natural landscapes through the advancement of land and water conservation, resulting in protection of more than 20,000 acres of land. TNC has a rich history and deep technical expertise with conducting mitigation projects across the organization. TNC Iowa plans to tap into this collective knowledge to achieve project success at the proposed bank.

8. **Water Rights:** There are no water rights severances or restrictions in this project area. 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 Engineers is participating in this matter as the chair of an Interagency Review Team (IRT). The IRT consists of the Corps of Engineers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), 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 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:** Based on a review of historic and current aerial photos, topographic maps, and available cultural resource databases, it is the opinion of the Corps that the permit area may have the potential to contain historic properties, which may be potentially eligible

for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Corps will require the applicant to submit a 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: This proposal will be coordinated with the USFWS. 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.

12. Who Should Reply: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, state, and local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes, and other interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered in determining whether to approve the proposed bank. Received comments will be distributed to the members of the IRT. Comments should be submitted on or before the expiration date specified at the top of page one. 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 Wendy Frohlich via phone (309/794-5674), email (Wendy.m.frohlich@usace.army.mil), or by writing to the following address: US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, ATTN: Wendy Frohlich - 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=107:278:::RP,278:P278_BANK_ID:6622. Hard copies are also available by request.

Attach
Plan

Mrs. Wendy M. Frohlich
Project Manager, Special Projects Branch
Regulatory Division

Exhibit 1. Project Location

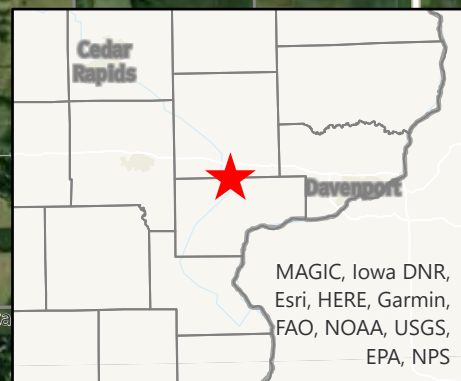
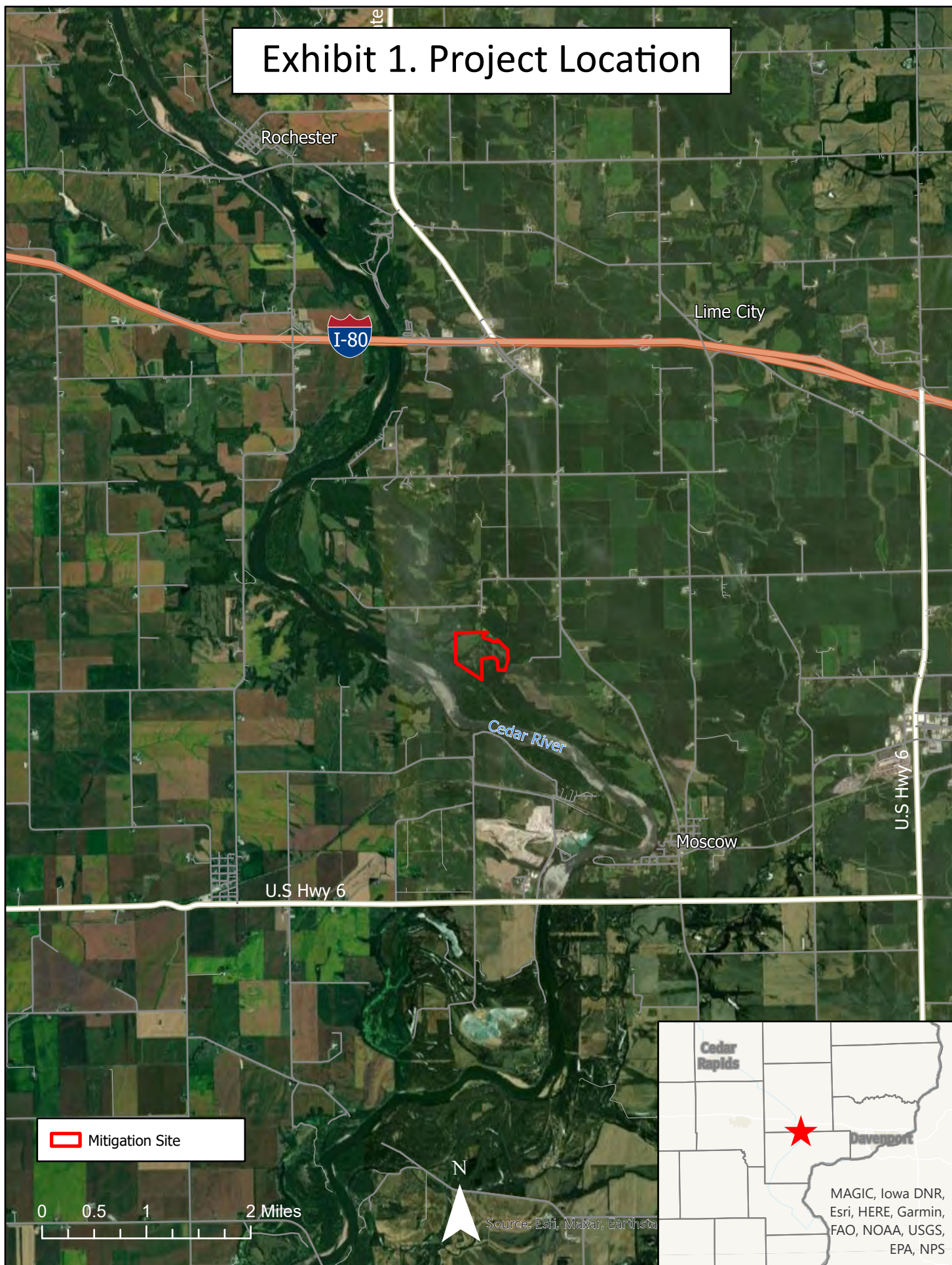


Exhibit 6. Aerial Map

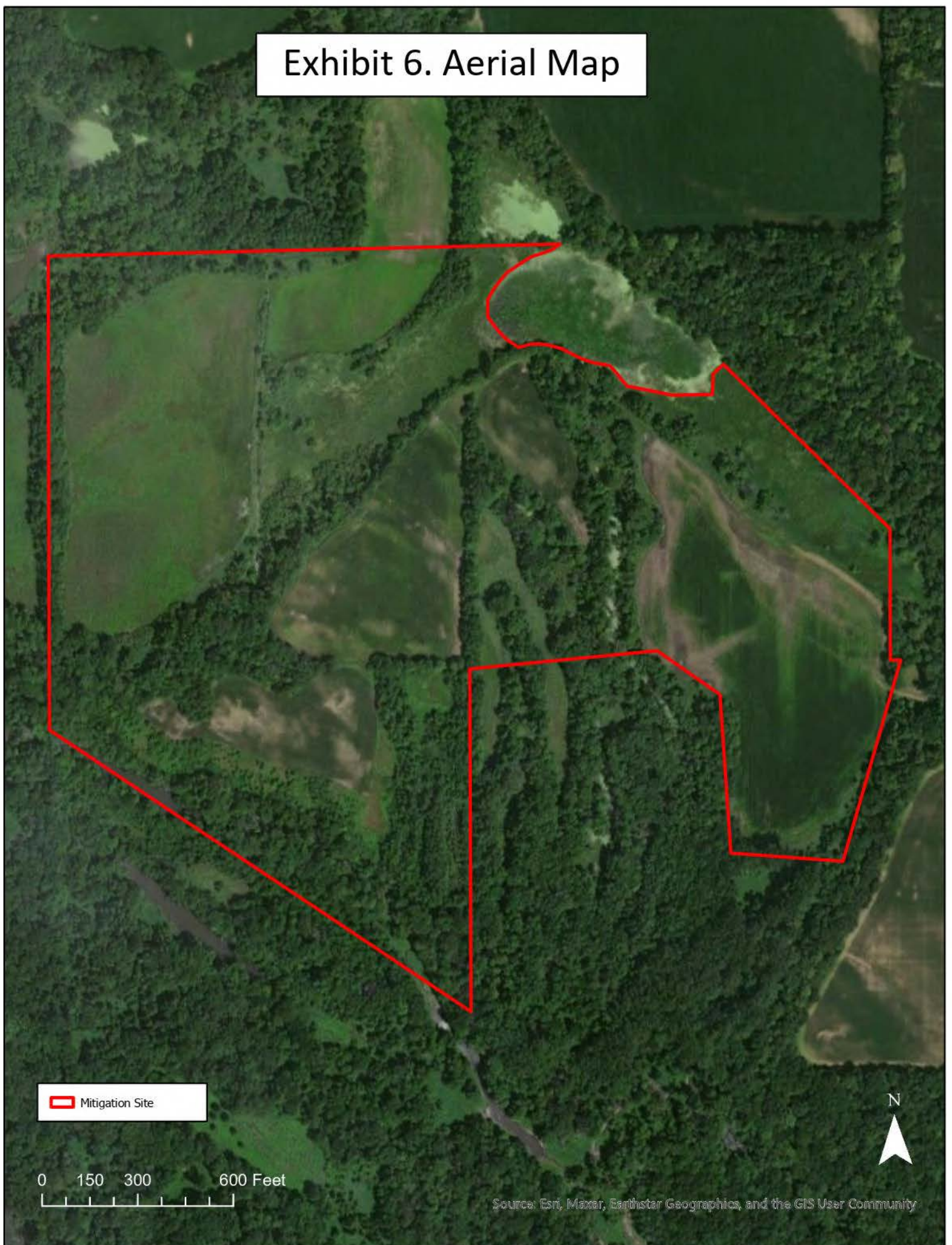


Exhibit 8. Proposed Mitigation Activities

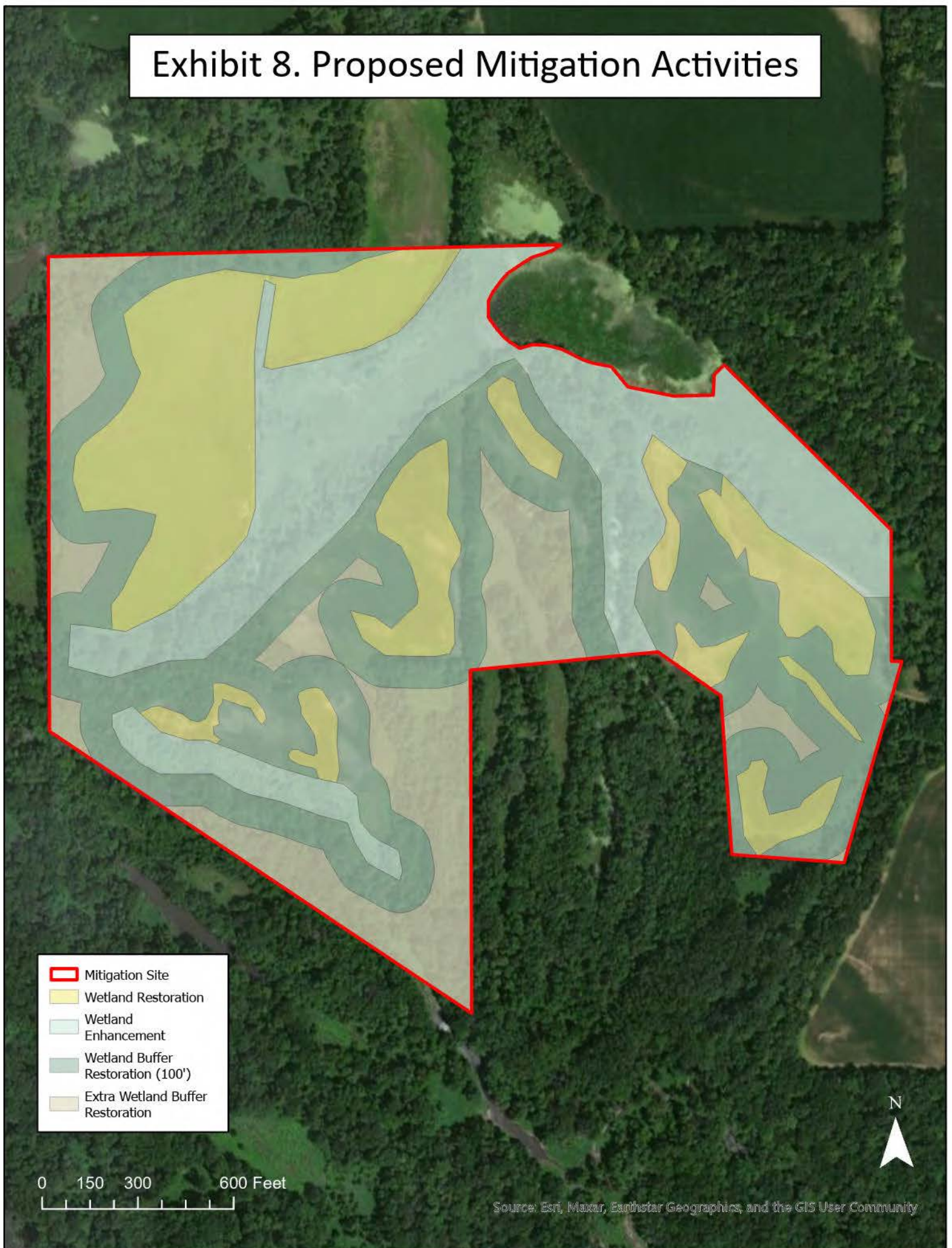


Exhibit 9. Service Area

Mitigation Bank Service Areas in Iowa

