



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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sponsor: WFI Holdings, LLC

Issued: September 28, 2022

Expires: October 27, 2022

Corps Project Number: CEMVR-RD-2022-0976

Proposed Project: Zuma Woods 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. **Sponsor.** WFI Holdings, LLC, 248 Southwoods Center, Columbia, Illinois, 62236.
2. **Project Location.** Section 22, Township 18 North, Range 2 East, Rock Island County, Illinois. UTM NAD-83 Zone 15, Latitude 41.53908821 Longitude -90.2502346, located within the Zuma Creek Rock River Watershed.
3. **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 Army Permits. Other Objectives include: increase habitat for wildlife; increase bottomland hardwood diversity, quality and hard mast tree dominance; reduce forest fragmentation for “area sensitive” neo-tropical species; maintain and enhance the wetland hydroperiod to increase wetland functions and values; reduce nutrient loading and increase nitrate fixation; restore, enhance and preserve a forested habitat adjacent to Zuma Creek and its tributaries that are connected to the flood pulse of the Lower Rock River; restore woody and herbaceous vegetation to create a continuum of plant species, and provide an appropriate form of wetland compensation where no feasible on-site mitigation opportunity exists.
4. **Project Description.** The sponsor proposes to establish the Zuma Woods Wetland Mitigation Bank to generate approximately approximately 89 forested wetland and 14 emergent wetland credits for use by the regulated public to mitigate for unavoidable wetland impacts within the service area of the bank. The proposed service area encompasses the following watersheds: Apple-Plum (HUC 07060005), Cooperas-Duck (HUC 07080101), Upper Rock (HUC 07090001), Pecatonica (HUC 07090003), Sugar (HUC 07090004), Lower Rock (HUC 07090005), and Kishwaukee (HUC 07090006) which lie within the boundaries of the Rock Island District. The existing site attributes lend themselves to the establishment of hardwood forest and emergent wetland within the Rock River floodway. The mitigation bank will be utilized in the future, when appropriate, to compensate for unavoidable aquatic impacts by future

projects through the purchase of credits from the bank sponsor, WFI Holdings, LLC. The property has been utilized for agricultural purposes over the last 30+ years. A wetland delineation was completed August of 2022. One emergent wetland and two farmed wetlands were identified in the proposed bank area.

5. 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 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois 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.

6. Historical/Archaeological. The District consulted with the Illinois online geographic information systems archeological site and survey databases. The review indicates that the permit area has not been previously surveyed. In addition, online soil maps were also reviewed. Based on the presence of previously identified historic properties on similar landforms in the vicinity it is the opinion of the District Archaeologist the project area has the potential to contain historic properties that may be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The District will require the applicant to submit two (2) copies of 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.

7. Endangered Species.

a. District staff performed a preliminary review of this application for the potential impact on federally threatened or endangered species pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended. The federally threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) potentially occurs statewide in a wide variety of habitats, from mesic prairie to wetlands such as sedge meadows, marsh edges, and bogs. Rock Island County is within the range of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). Both species will roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. The Northern long-eared bat will also utilize barns, sheds, caves, mines, and bridge structures as summer roosts. Federally endangered mussels Higgins eye (*Lampsilis higginsii*) and Spectaclecase (*Cumberlandia monodonta*) potentially occur in Rock Island County. Both mussel species are usually found in larger river systems. Since the majority of the project area was intensively farmed, there will be no tree clearing, and no large rivers are located in the project area the Corps has determined the proposed permit action will have no effect on the four listed species.

b. At this time, we are coordinating this application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the respective resource agencies through this public notice. Accordingly, our preliminary determination is subject to change should further information become available.

c. Effective August 9, 2007, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was removed from the List of Threatened and Endangered Species due to successful recovery efforts. However, the bald eagle continues to be protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There are no known active eagle nests or winter roosts within the action area.

8. 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 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.

9. Public Hearing Requests. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. A request may be denied if substantive reasons for holding a hearing are not provided.

10. Reply to the Corps. Comments concerning the Corps permit should be addressed to the District Engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, ATTN: Wendy Frohlich RD-E, Clock Tower Building - Post Office Box 2004, Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004 or through email: wendy.m.frohlich@usace.army.mil. Mrs. Wendy Frohlich may be contacted for additional information via phone at 309/794-5674.

11. Complete Draft Mitigation Banking Instrument: The complete draft mitigation banking instrument can be found on our public website at: https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:278:1229792170279::::P278_BANK_ID:6434#. Hard copies are available by request.

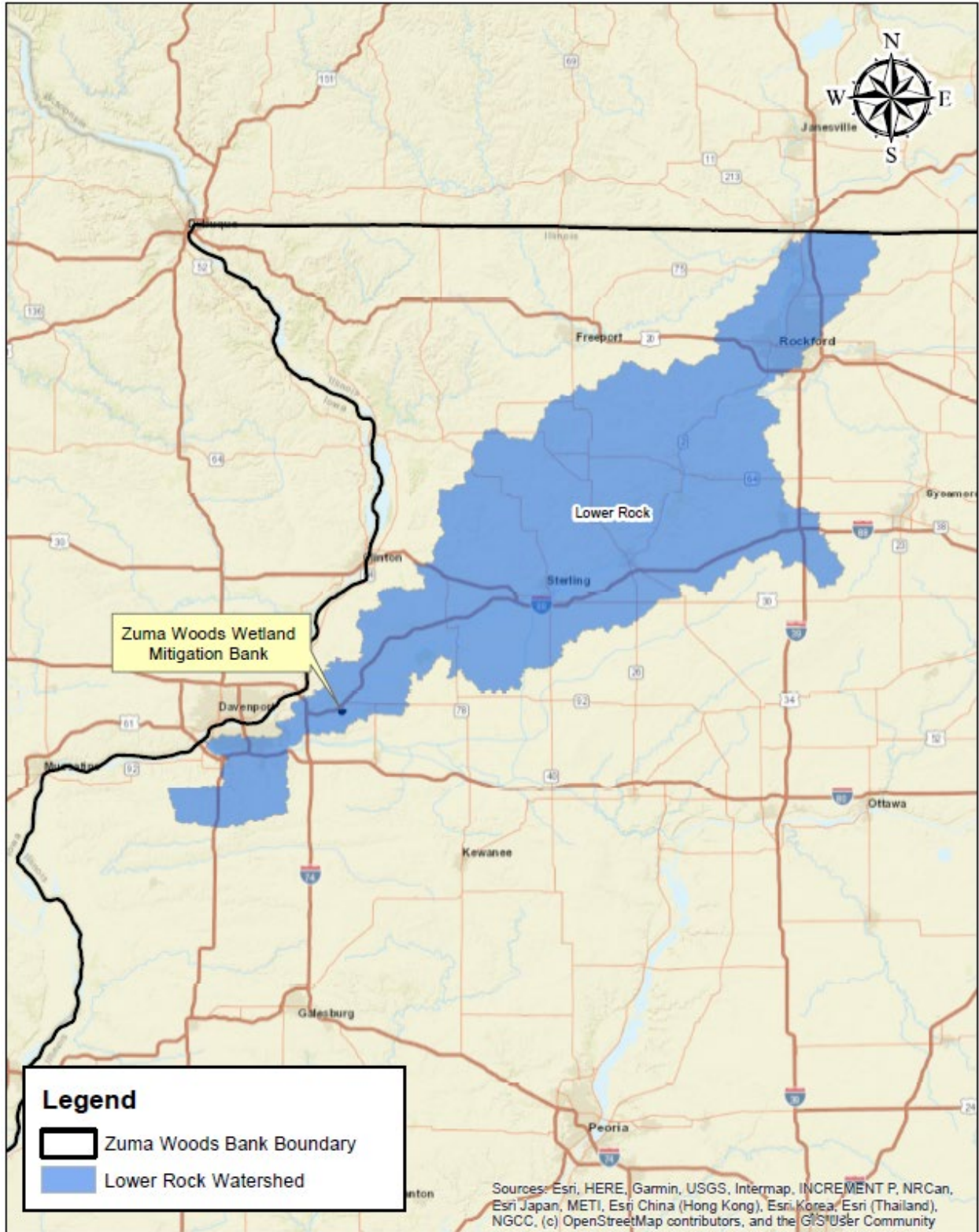
Attach
Plans

Mrs. Wendy Frohlich
Project Manager Eastern Branch
Regulatory Division

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Figure 1 – Location in Lower Rock Watershed



CEMVR-RD-2022-0976 pg. 2 of 5
Project Location



MITIGATION PLAN

Figure 10 – Mitigation Plan Map

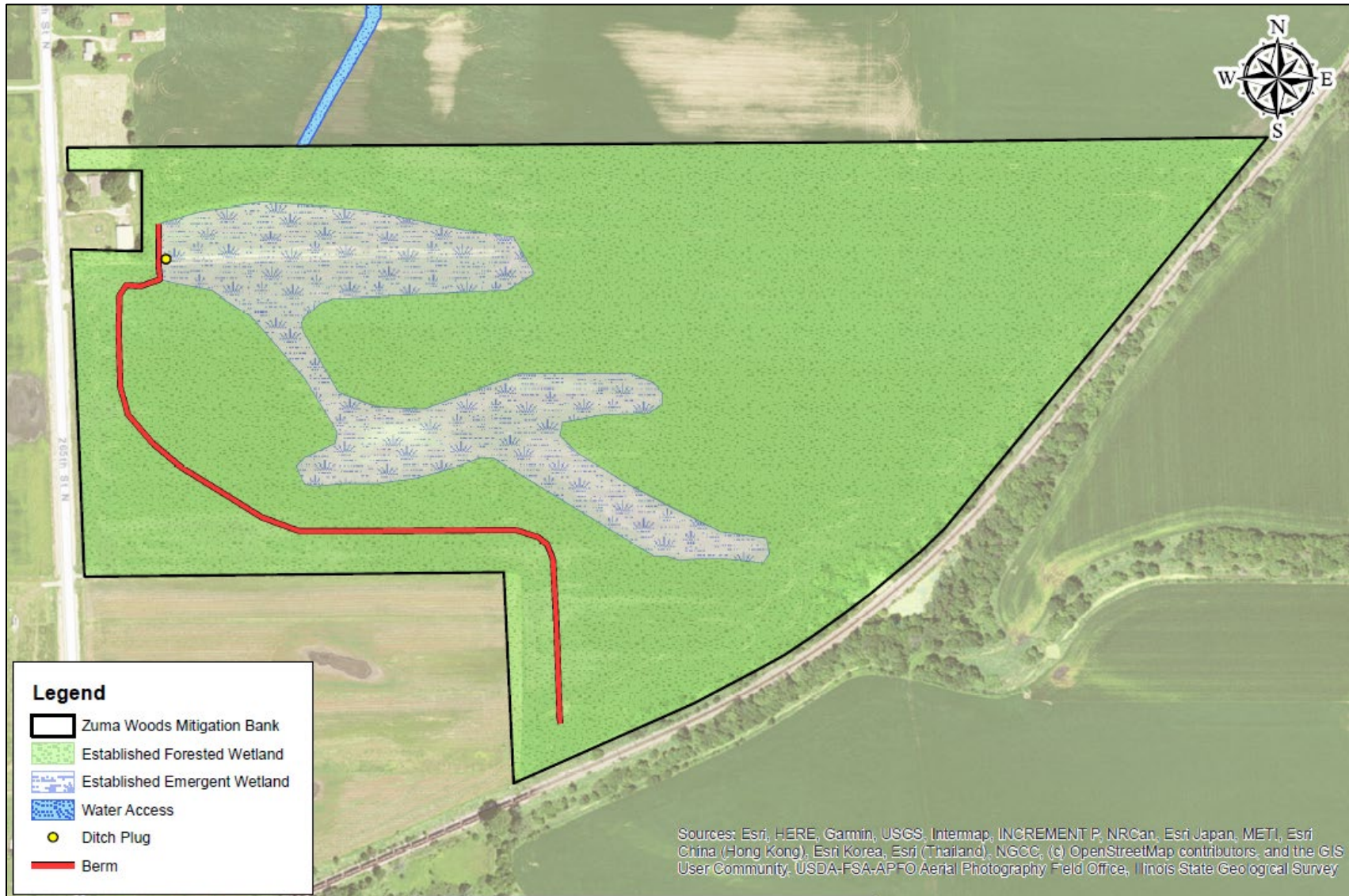
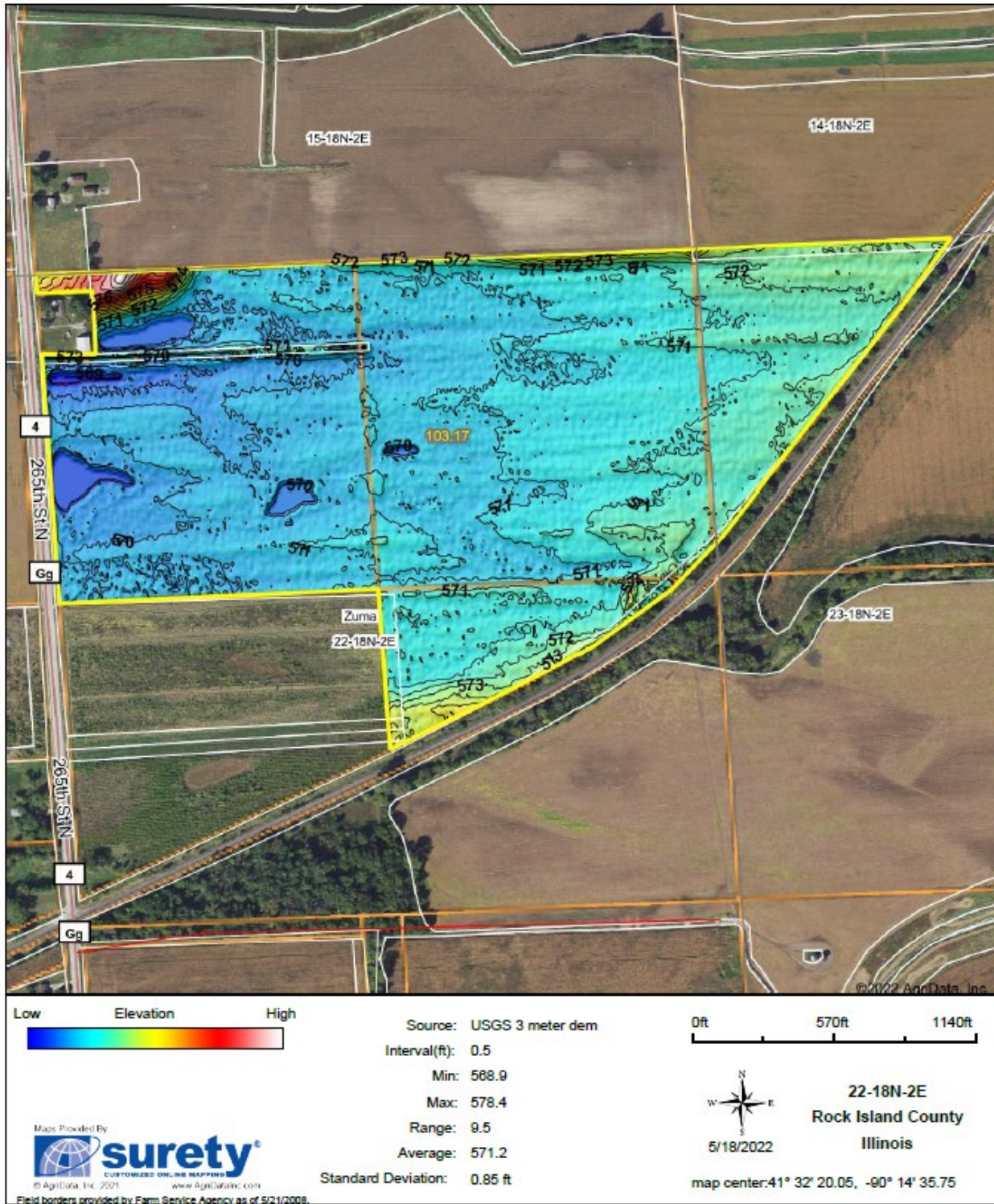


Figure 6b – Topographical Map of Mitigation Site (Hillshade)



CEMVR-RD-2022-0976 pg. 5 of 5
Figure 3 – Service Area

