

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Proposal Name: Ducks Unlimited's Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Restoration Program

1.2 Project(s) Description:

Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) proposes a set of twelve [12] habitat conservation projects across North America to redress negative impacts to waterfowl (and other wildlife) populations affected by natural resource damages on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Commerce City, Colorado. We propose here a continental-scale, whole life cycle approach to wildlife restoration as the best means to achieve significant benefits to the population of ducks and other migratory wildlife species diminished by toxicant releases on the Arsenal. DU has identified five [5] priority landscapes that are key in providing habitat during each seasonal phase of their annual life cycle to populations of waterfowl found on the Arsenal. We propose funding at least five [5] projects in the Western Canadian Prairie, North Park (Colorado), and the San Luis Valley (Colorado) regions, all breeding landscapes contributing birds to the waterfowl populations that frequent the Rocky Mountain Arsenal area. We also propose funding at least one [1] project in the wintering grounds of coastal and the central highlands of Mexico, where birds from the Arsenal region are known to winter. And, finally, we propose at least six [6] conservation projects within the South Platte Watershed in closer proximity to the Arsenal site, including wetland restoration and establishment work on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR itself. We estimate that the restoration, enhancement, and acquisition activities proposed here will annually produce, on average, nearly 6,000 ducks to the fall flight and will further contribute nearly 1.2 million duck-use day equivalents, significantly improving habitat conditions for non-breeding populations of ducks and other wildlife species using the South Platte River watershed. While these landscapes and the projects within them are not all geographically proximate to the Arsenal within the South Platte River watershed, we are certain that they are ecologically proximate for waterfowl populations that are migratory in nature and that perform different, critical phases of their annual life cycle across vast reaches of the North American continent. The work identified here proposes to utilize funding for habitat conservation activities that support each of these phases: breeding, migration, and wintering.

We request \$6.5 million from the Natural Resource Damages Fund to pay for eligible expenditures in the restoration, enhancement, establishment, and acquisition of over 14,000 acres of important habitats located within the identified priority areas. These expenditures include staff costs, travel costs, survey equipment rental for construction management, due diligence and acquisition costs, subcontractor costs for construction, expenditures for community outreach activities, and indirect costs. DU and six [6] other partners will contribute an additional \$8.1 million dollars in cash match to conserve these habitats. This represents a match ratio of 1 NRD \$ to 1.24 Match \$. All acquisitions will be perpetual in length and all restoration projects are designed by DU engineers for a 30-year lifespan. Two of the twelve projects are conservation easement acquisitions. The easements will be held by DU's land trust. The remaining ten projects are wetland (and associated upland) restoration, enhancement, and establishment projects where DU's bio-engineering teams will implement infrastructure rehabilitation and installation activities in order to construct areas that maximize habitat quality for breeding and non-breeding waterfowl populations on both public lands and private lands protected with conservation easements.

DU is a private, not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people. We have an 85-year history of waterfowl habitat conservation across North America and a thirty-year history of conservation delivery within Colorado.

1.3 Project Offeror: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

1.4 Point-of-Contact Name, Address, Phone, and Email address:

John Denton
Manager of Conservation Programs – Colorado
2114 Midpoint Drive Unit 1, Fort Collins, CO 80525
308-258-4682
jdenton@ducks.org

1.5 Total Project Cost: \$14,582,429

1.6 Amount of NRD Funding Requested: \$6,500,000

1.7 Matching Fund Sources, Type, Value, and Status:

Source	Type	Value (\$)	Status
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	Private	3,458,139	Secure
South Platte Water Related Activities Program	Private	700,000	Secure
Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (W.D.)	Private	72,750	Secure
Colorado Parks & Wildlife	State	793,425	Secure
Colorado Water Conservation Board	State	194,312	Secure
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Federal	5,000	Secure
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Federal	2,822,828	Secure
TOTAL		8,082,429	

1.8 Signature of Authorized Officer:



John Denton, March 29, 2024

2.0 Scope of Work, including maps

2.1 Describe Nature and Substance of Project, Provide general overview of the proposed project:

Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) proposes a set of twelve habitat [12] conservation projects in five [5] priority landscapes across North America to redress negative impacts to waterfowl (and other wildlife) populations affected by natural resource damages on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Commerce City, Colorado. We propose here a continental-scale, whole life cycle approach to wildlife restoration as the best means to achieve significant benefits to the population of ducks and other migratory wildlife species diminished by toxicant releases on the Arsenal. We estimate that the restoration, enhancement, and acquisition activities proposed here will annually produce, on average, nearly 6,000 ducks to the fall flight and will further contribute nearly 1.2 million duck-use day equivalents, significantly improving habitat conditions for non-breeding populations of ducks and other wildlife species using the South Platte River watershed. While these landscapes and the projects within them are not all geographically proximate to the Arsenal within the South Platte River watershed, we are certain that they are ecologically proximate for waterfowl populations that are migratory in nature and that perform different, critical phases of their annual life cycle across vast reaches of the North American continent.

The substance and nature of the projects proposed fall into three primary categories: acquisition, enhancement, and restoration, with many projects overlapping across the categories. Acquisition projects require DU to secure a conservation easement in partnership with a private landowner. This work involves a thorough evaluation of the site and its existing resources, appraisal, and any need for subsequent restoration efforts that may be implemented to maximize the impact of the easement. Enhancement projects focus on maximizing a key function of a site – such as food production in the form of seeds and invertebrates – to meet the goals of the site, partner, or broader landscape. Restoration projects are more intensive and comprehensive, involving the rehabilitation of a site that has lost most, if not all, of its wetland functionality. In some cases, a site may have been devoid of wetland function for several years or even decades. For sites impacted for a shorter time, a restoration site may be one that has lost function due to overgrowth of undesirable vegetation, resulting in a site that is still visibly a wetland but fails to meet the needs of wetland-dependent wildlife.

For all proposed restoration and enhancement projects, DU will work with partners to establish site goals, evaluate existing site conditions, conduct topographic surveys, develop design concepts and engineering plansets, and construct a site that delivers desired habitat conditions. In addition, we will work with partners to evaluate any needs related to invasive species management and factors other than water control that need to be addressed for successful project delivery.

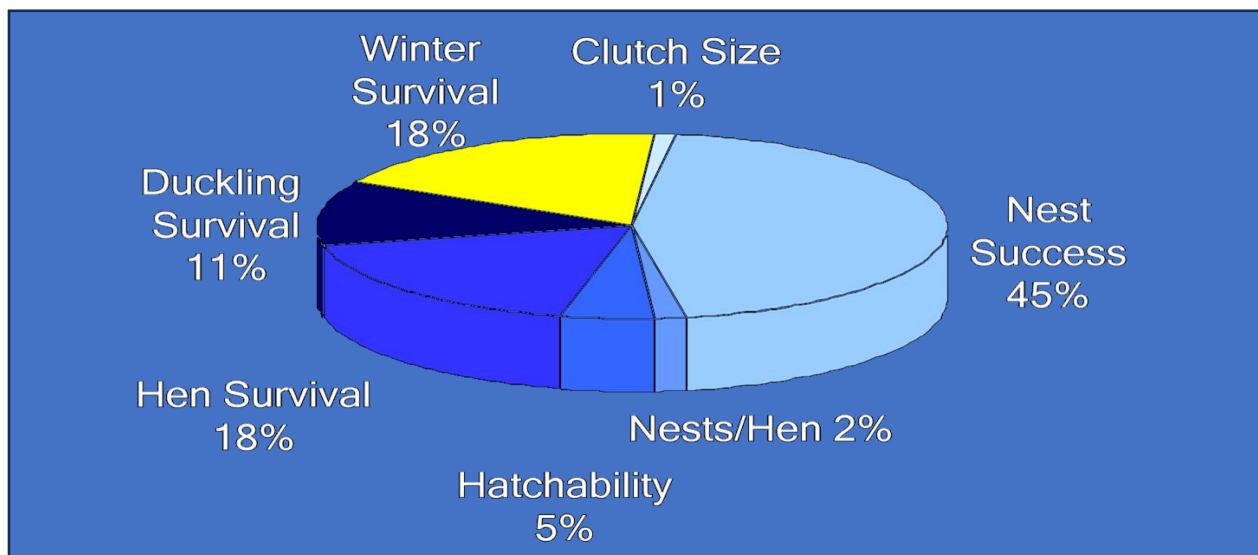
In this proposal DU requests funding for projects both geographically proximate to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and in landscapes far removed from that site. Inclusion of the latter set of waterfowl conservation projects may seem to contradict the instructions in the Project Proposal Solicitation that states: “Offerors who have an interest may submit a **proposal for improving and restoring wildlife habitat, surface water, and groundwater quality in the South Platte Watershed in the proximity of Rocky Mountain Arsenal...**” (emphasis in original). We provide here a brief explanation as to why we feel that if we are to measurably restore waterfowl populations damaged by incidents on the Arsenal, a continent-wide, whole life-cycle approach is most likely to succeed.

First, when considering different populations of wildlife species we are faced with different scales of what “geographically proximate” may mean. Waterfowl and other migratory bird species have the broadest range of occupancy across their annual life cycle. So, what may count as a home range for the various mammalian, reptilian, and amphibious species impacted on the Arsenal are far too small for most duck species, who need habitats across North America to complete their life cycle. For a duck, North Park, the San Luis Valley, and the prairies of Alberta are geographically proximate to the Arsenal. The three maps provided in Appendix 13 below use band return data to show the link between project areas outside of the South Platte Watershed and the Arsenal.

Second, the large scope of biological resource damages to waterfowl populations, tens of thousands of birds, requires work to be done outside of the South Platte Watershed. As the figure below shows, we know that most factors that increase duck production (all non-yellow slices of the pie) occur on duck breeding grounds. The South Platte Watershed does not serve as an important breeding ground for ducks. Any site geographically proximate to the Arsenal would not provide the right kinds of (breeding) habitats to annually produce enough birds to offset damages on the Arsenal.

We are confident that our understanding of waterfowl ecology and the requirements to redress damages to waterfowl populations on the Arsenal provide a strong basis for expanding the concept of “proximity” to include the continental scale, whole life-cycle approach to waterfowl conservation presented here.

A recent review of the body of waterfowl ecology research has shown that over 80% of the factors contributing to successful production of ducks in a given year occur on duck breeding grounds.



2.2 Address Natural Resource(s):

2.2.1 Describe how the project will restore, replace or acquire the equivalent of the natural resources injured by the Site.

A review of the ***Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Commerce, City, Colorado*** section on *Injury to Biological Resources* indicates that one of the principal, and longest-lived impacts of toxicant releases on the Arsenal was waterfowl mortality (pp. 6-12 – 6-16). Information related to duck and other waterfowl mortality in that report indicates that, at a minimum, between 1952 and 1987, 5,294 dead individuals were counted on ponds on the Arsenal. This is likely a very low estimate and the report indicates that tens of thousands more waterfowl deaths could have resulted from exposure to toxicants on the Arsenal.

The continental scale and large scope of activities presented by this multi-project proposal seem, to us, the best means by which we may redress the large and sustained effect of waterfowl mortality on populations found on the Arsenal. The cumulative, multi-decade loss of thousands of ducks per annum requires waterfowl managers to countenance highly strategic investment in projects that have a high likelihood of success, are large in scope, are located in regions of known importance to waterfowl, recognize and utilize our latest understanding of waterfowl ecology and conservation biology, are supported by a strong, cross-jurisdictional collaborative of partners dedicated to the long-term management of conserved habitats, and, of course, are shown to have an ecological nexus to the populations of wildlife that use the Arsenal. If we are to recover waterfowl populations on the Arsenal we must focus our efforts in all of the landscapes where they breed, migrate, and over-winter.

The set of projects presented here achieve this aim. We have used our understanding of waterfowl life cycle needs, duck band return records, and habitat conservation principles to propose conservation projects in priority landscapes that are known to contribute birds to the Arsenal's population of ducks. We offer a set of activities that will support the whole life cycle of breeding, migration, and over-wintering behaviors required to ensure year-on-year increase in waterfowl production. The resulting increase in ducklings bred, maintenance of bird body condition during migration events, and over-winter survival allow us to estimate a return to baseline conditions for duck populations impacted on the Arsenal within the 30-year lifespan of our projects and likely much sooner depending upon the method used to determine the size of the impact on the Arsenal's waterfowl population.

The nearly 15,000 acres of habitat conserved in this proposal will produce, we estimate, on average 5,903 new ducks to each fall flight each year. This is quantified by the table provided in Section 2.2.2 that follows. Further, these projects will furnish ducks in their non-breeding phases of their life cycle with enough food to support over a million mallard-sized ducks one day's energetic requirements (or, 10,000 mallard-sized ducks with over 120 days of energy). While here we provide only estimates of our proposed work's impact on waterfowl populations, we know that our conservation activities also benefit numerous other wetland and prairie-dependent species impacted by Arsenal activities, including other bird species, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and a host of invertebrates that require high-quality wetlands for survival.

Although we do not claim them, we know that the work proposed here will also have a positive impact on surface and groundwater quality and quantity in the South Platte Watershed and beyond. Wetlands are known to remove toxicants, nutrients, and other pollutants. They are also key areas of groundwater and alluvial aquifer recharge.

2.2.2 Provide a detailed description of the area (acreage, linear footage, etc.) of natural resources addressed by the proposal.

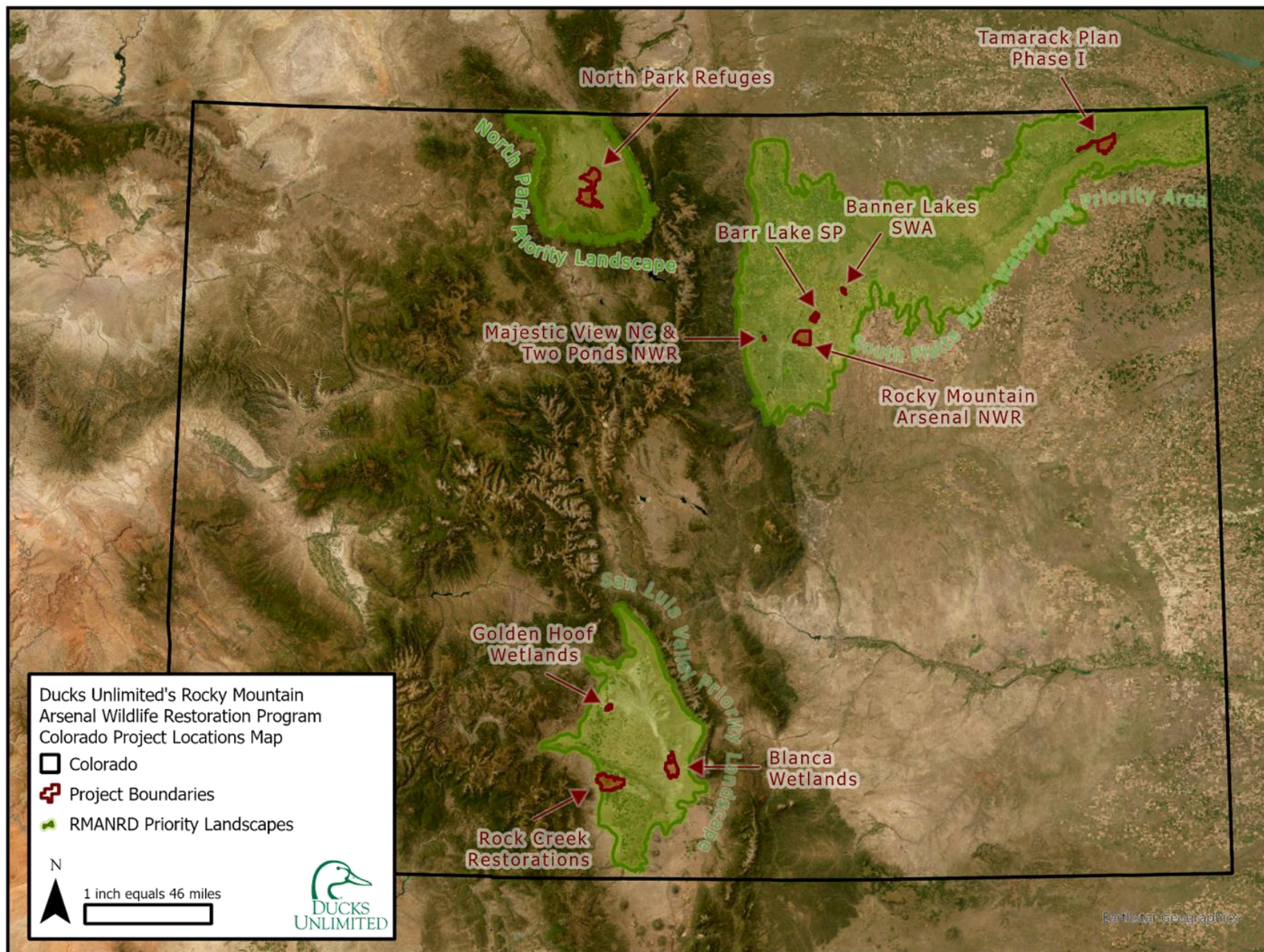
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRD Settlement Outcomes by Project										
Priority Landscape	Project	Project Type	Longevity of Benefits	Wildlife Habitat Acres Conserved				Waterfowl Response		
				Emergent Wetlands	Riparian/ Riverine	Open Water/ Lakes	Associated Uplands	Total Acres Conserved	Annual Duck Production ¹	Annual DUD Equivalents ²
Proposal Total				8,147.8	339.3	53.3	5,925.4	14,465.8	5,903	1,212,497
South Platte River Watershed								689.8	-	1,212,497
Banner Lakes SWA		Restore	30+ years	205.6	113.8	23.3	-	342.7	-	653,680
Barr Lake State Park		Restore	30+ years	15.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	40.0	-	54,465
Majestic View NC		Restore	30+ years	9.5	0.5	-	-	10.0	-	28,807
Rocky Mtn Arsenal NWR		Restore	30+ years	140.0	-	-	140.0	280.0	-	423,783
Tamarack Plan Phase I		Enhance	30+ years	9.1	-	-	-	9.1	-	27,546
Two Ponds NWR		Restore	30+ years	8.0	-	-	-	8.0	-	24,216
North Park (Colorado Breeding Grounds)								1,310.0	368	-
North Park Refuges		Restore	30+ years	1,310.0	-	-	-	1,310.0	368	-
San Luis Valley (Colorado Breeding Grounds)								7,793.0	1,210	-
Blanca Wetlands		Restore	30+ years	2,545.0	-	-	-	2,545.0	716	-
Golden Hoof Wetlands		Acquire	Perpetual	463.0	-	-	1,295.0	1,758.0	494	-
Rock Creek Restoration		Restore	30+ years	2,500.0	220.0	-	770.0	3,490.0		-
Canadian Western Prairies								4,613.0	4,325	-
Canadian Prairie Habitats		Acquire	Perpetual	922.6	-	-	3,690.4	4,613.0	4,325	-
Mexican Wintering Grounds								60.0	-	-
Mexican Projects		Restore	30+ years	20.0	-	20.0	20.0	60.0	-	-

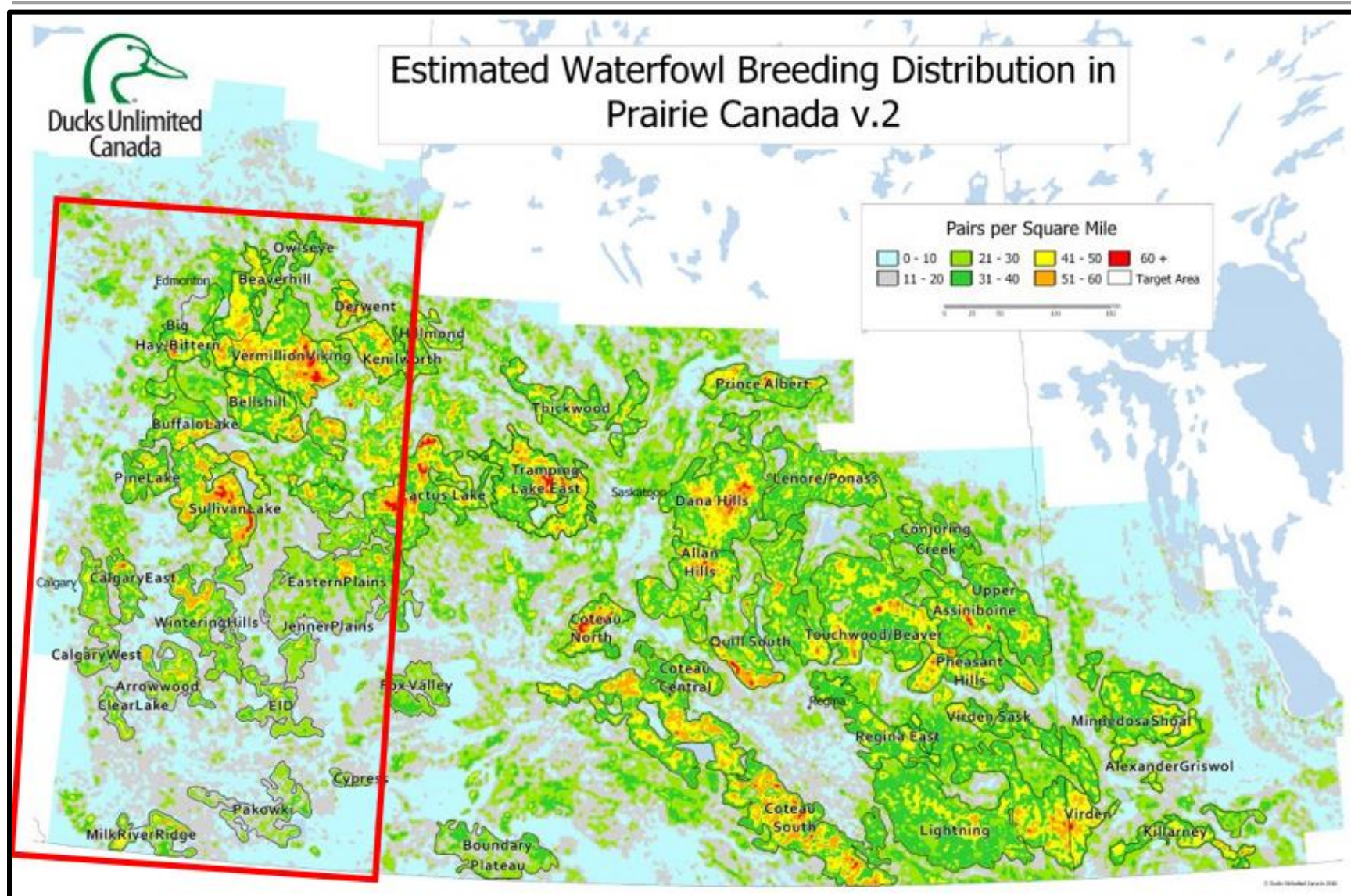
¹ Annual Duck Production represents estimated average annual production of fledged ducklings contributing to each year's fall flight from projects located on waterfowl breeding grounds contributing to bird populations that frequent the Rocky Mountain Arsenal area. Estimates derived from waterfowl vital rate coefficients (nest density, clutch size, duckling survival rates) summarized in the waterfowl ecology literature for each breeding landscape (Colorado, Alberta).

² Annual DUD Equivalents represent estimated annual provision by each project of food energy sufficient to support a mallard-sized duck for a day (**Duck Use Day** equivalent) such that body condition of migrating ducks is maintained in non-breeding areas of the flyway. Thus, approximately 1.2M mallard-sized ducks could be supported for one day each year (or, 600K ducks for two days each year, etc.) with the food provided in these habitats in the South Platte River watershed. Estimates derived from the Playa Lakes Migratory Bird Joint Venture HABS database.

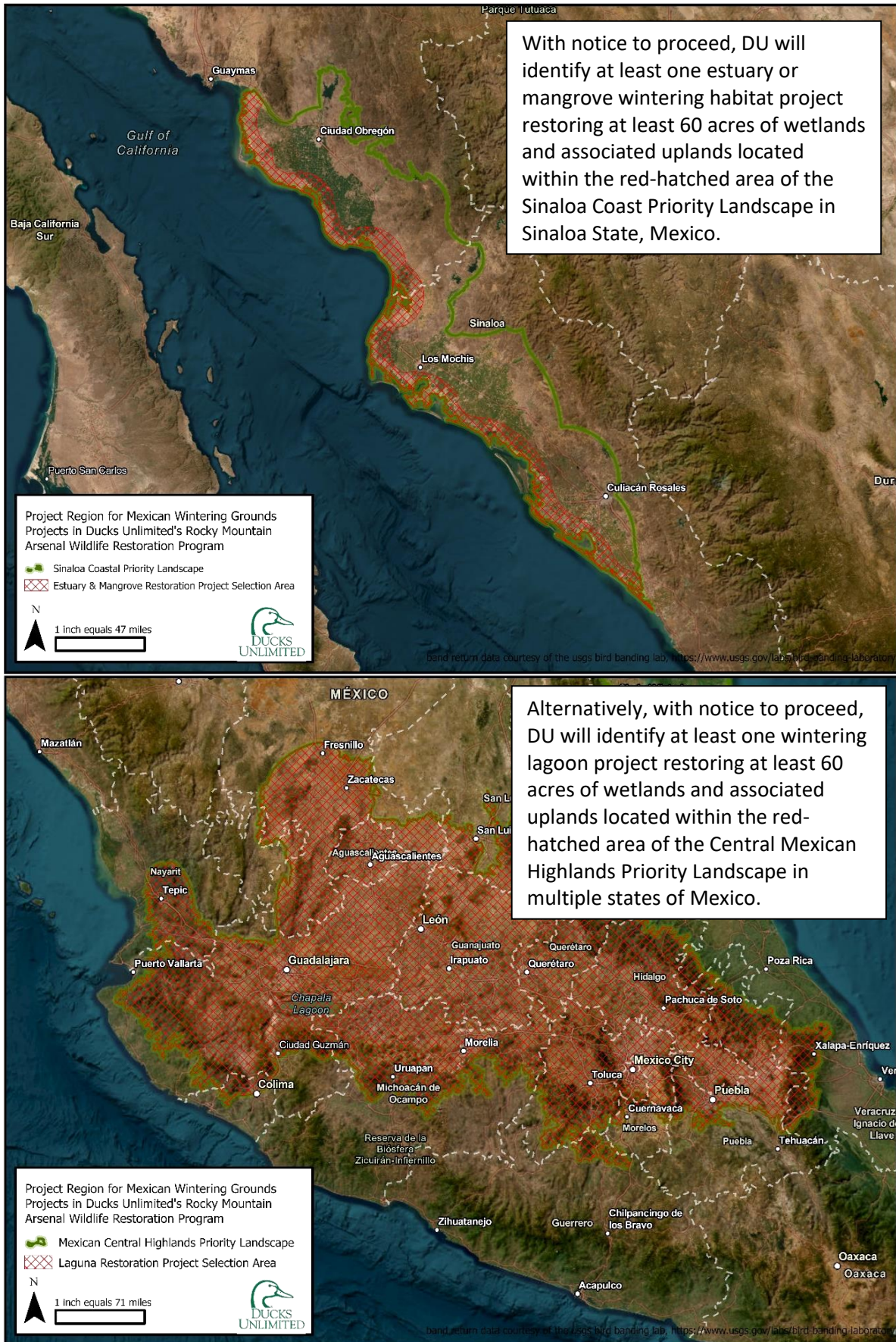
2.2.3 Provide a map of the area.







With notice to proceed, DU will identify a land acquisition project or set of acquisition projects permanently protecting at least 4,613 acres of wetlands and associated uplands in landscapes with high densities of breeding pairs of ducks on properties found within the red box.



2.3 Objectives: Provide clear, measurable, realistic, time-phased, objective(s) for the work proposed.

Within five (5) years of receiving the Notice to Proceed (NTP), DU will conserve at least 14,465.8 acres of wildlife habitat across five (5) priority landscapes in Colorado, Canada, and Mexico to meet the needs of migratory waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife species. Within the South Platte River Watershed, we will conserve at least 689.8 acres of emergent wetlands, riparian/riverine wetlands, open water habitat, and associated uplands. The six (6) projects proposed within this priority landscape serve as a robust set of projects intended to remediate the damages at, and in proximity to, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, as well as downstream along the South Platte River. In the San Luis Valley, we will conserve at least 7,793 acres of emergent wetlands, riparian/riverine wetlands, and associated uplands to meet the needs of breeding waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wetland-dependent species. In North Park, we will conserve at least 1,310 acres of emergent wetlands to meet the needs of breeding waterfowl. The one (1) proposed project in Canada will permanently protect at least 4,613 acres of wetlands and associated uplands to meet the needs of breeding waterfowl. In Mexico, we will restore at least 60 acres of wetlands and associated upland habitat to support wintering waterfowl populations. For each proposed project, we outline specific measurable and time-phased objectives below.

South Platte River Watershed Priority Landscape

- 1) Banner Lakes State Wildlife Area:** Two years from NTP, at least 342 acres of wetlands and associated habitats will be restored at Banner Lakes State Wildlife Area by improving water conveyance infrastructure and water level control capabilities on this state-managed, publicly accessible property. This will result in a wetland complex proximate to the Arsenal with ideal habitat conditions for waterfowl and an array of other wetland-dependent wildlife. Match funds will be used to pay for construction plansets and permitting, and construction of priority wetland management infrastructure.
- 2) Barr Lake State Park:** Five years from NTP, at least 40 acres of habitat will be restored on lands owned and/or managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) at Barr Lake State Park by removing invasive vegetation species, reintroducing native vegetation, and creating and/or rehabilitating existing wetland complexes through enhancement of water conveyance and natural flowpaths.
- 3) Majestic View Nature Center Restoration:** Two years from NTP, we will construct and rehabilitate at least 10 acres of riparian and shallow-water wetlands at Majestic View Nature Center by removing invasive vegetation and installing new water control structures that will improve conveyance and flood regimes.
- 4) Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge:** Five years from NTP, DU will work with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to construct and enhance at least 280 acres of wetlands and associated uplands at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. This work will increase the amount of emergent wetlands found within Refuge boundaries, improve water storage abilities and provide high-quality wildlife viewing opportunities to visitors to the Refuge. DU will design water conveyance and impounding structures such that available flooding regimes present hydrology conducive to the growth of wetland plant species known to provide large amounts of seeds and invertebrate substrates such that local populations of waterfowl are well-fed and maintain body condition during non-breeding phases of their annual life cycle.
- 5) Tamarack Plan Phase I:** Within one year from NTP, DU will work with CPW and the South Platte Water Related Activities Program to construct at least 9.1 acres of emergent wetlands by establishing three [3] recharge wetland basins, a well, and a pump to facilitate preferred flood regimes and groundwater recharge. These recharge basins serve to not only provide waterfowl habitat on a publicly managed State Wildlife Area, but they also are the final element of the State of Colorado's Tamarack Plan. This is the state-managed program ensuring that South Platte River flows at the Nebraska state line are maintained at levels required by the South Platte Decree. These flows are maintained through

the development and operation of shallow-water managed alluvial aquifer recharge basins on Tamarack SWA. Our work ensures that while these recharge basins provide South Platte River flow, they also provide high quality habitat for non-breeding populations of ducks utilizing this section of the watershed.

6) Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge: Two years [2] from NTP, construct and rehabilitate at least 10 acres of shallow-water wetlands and open-water habitat at Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge through vegetation management, improvement of water conveyance, and installation of water control structures to create the ability to manage flood regimes across the wetland complex.

San Luis Valley Priority Landscape (Colorado Breeding Grounds)

7) Blanca Wetlands: Within four [4] years of NTP, DU will work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to restore and enhance at least 2,545 acres of wetland habitats managed on the Blanca Wetlands ACEC for waterfowl production (and other wildlife benefits). We will utilize matching funds to develop construction plansets and secure permits for the rehabilitation and consolidation of over forty [40] artesian wells, ditch headgates, water conveyance systems, water measurement devices, and impounding structures required to optimize water management conducive to the growth of wetland plant communities preferred by breeding ducks and other wetland dependent species in this part of the San Luis Valley. We will utilize both match and NRD funds to rehabilitate wells and construct this infrastructure over a three-year period.

8) Golden Hoof Wetlands: Within four [4] years of NTP, 1,758 acres of predominantly wetland acres will be perpetually protected from development and de-watering by a Wetlands America Trust, Inc. Conservation Easement as part of a larger contiguous protected landscape of 10,647 acres. At least 300 acres will be restored by improving water conveyance and restoring the wetland to allow for water level control that will produce ideal wetland conditions. The Golden Hoof Wetlands project site buffers Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area, a wetland complex of statewide significance that (band records indicate) furnishes a large complement of birds to the Arsenal.

9) Rock Creek Restoration: DU will work with the USFWS, private landowners, Wetland Dynamics, LLC and the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust in the San Luis Valley to replace dilapidated infrastructure along the Rock Creek watershed which encompasses a large complex of permanently protected private lands and the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge. Within five [5] years of NTP, more than ten [10] high-priority water control structures will be replaced to allow for improved water conveyance and flood irrigation capacities. Both the Refuge and private landowners on six [6] ranches within the watershed will be better able to divert their adjudicated water right and downstream water rights will be more efficiently delivered to appropriate headgates.

North Park Priority Landscape (Colorado Breeding Grounds)

10) North Park Refuges: Within four [4] years of NTP, DU will work with the BLM and USFWS to restore and enhance at least 1,310 acres of emergent wetland habitats managed on Hebron Slough WMA and Arapaho NWR for waterfowl production. We will utilize matching funds to develop construction plansets and secure permits for the rehabilitation of ditch headgates, water conveyance systems, water measurement devices, wells, and impounding structures required to optimize water management conducive to the growth of wetland plant communities preferred by breeding ducks and other wetland dependent species in North Park. We will utilize both match and NRD funds to construct this wetland management infrastructure over a three-year period.

11) Canadian Western Prairies Priority Landscape (Canadian Breeding Grounds)

Within three years from NTP, DU will permanently protect with a conservation easement at least 4,613 acres of wetlands and associated prairie uplands within the Canadian Western Prairies Priority

Landscape. The exact tracts to be permanently protected under this part of the proposal will be selected and submitted to the Trustee Council within 8 months of NTP. DU has a queue of qualified landowners who will be selected and submitted for approval based on how proposal approval and subsequent execution of agreements sync with our Canadian operation's financial cycle as project selection and matching funds are obligated on an annual late winter cycle. DU will pay landowners in the Canadian Western Prairies Priority Landscape between 20 and 30% of land value in exchange for a bundle of rights, which is registered as a permanent caveat on the property title. By virtue of this transaction, wetlands on the property may never be drained and uplands may never be tilled, ensuring that the necessary habitat for waterfowl production will remain perpetually intact. In most CE transactions, the landowner is a cattle producer; responsible grazing helps ensure the health of grasslands is maintained and a range of ecosystem services, in addition to productive waterfowl habitat, are kept viable and intact. These properties will be situated in the priority target areas and boast not only exceptional habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife, but also offer cost-effective solutions for the delivery of critical ecosystem services, including water quality improvement, flood and drought mitigation, carbon sequestration, and groundwater recharge. Conservation lands acquired with monies from the NRDF will support waterfowl at all stages in their life cycle, with a primary emphasis on ensuring availability of high-quality habitat for breeding populations. Conservation efforts enabled through this funding will focus on landscapes known to sustain breeding waterfowl population densities in the range of 40 to 60 breeding pairs per square mile. Habitat projects acquired under the LTH program will be managed to optimize conservation outcomes perpetually, thereby providing ecosystem services, habitat functionality and myriad benefits to all species. Properties secured under the CE program will be closely monitored on an annual basis to ensure landowners remain compliant with terms of the perpetual agreement, similarly ensuring the continued availability and functionality of habitat lands.

12) Mexican Wintering Ground Projects

Within three years from NTP, DU will conserve 60 acres of wildlife habitat within the Mexican Wintering Grounds Priority Landscape. The exact tracts to be conserved under this part of the proposal will be selected and submitted to the Trustee Council within 8 months of NTP. DUMAC has a queue of potential projects, from which we will select 1-2 and submit them to the Council for approval. This will allow DU/DUMAC to select the highest-priority project while ensuring the work meets the goals of this award. Final selection of project(s) will determine whether we focus on one or both of Mexico's key waterfowl areas: the Mexican Pacific Coast and the Mexican Central Highlands. Along the coast, our proposed project aims to address the growing challenges facing key waterfowl areas. Principally, rapid industrial growth is leading to significant alterations to coastal wetland areas. It is imperative to restore and protect these habitats to ensure they continue supporting migratory waterfowl populations. A typical coastal wetland restoration project involves desilting, earthwork to facilitate desired flood conditions, and/or rehabilitation of key infrastructure. In Mexico's interior, historic wetlands have faced considerable degradation due to activities such as cropland conversion, urban expansion, and water diversion. Remaining wetlands have suffered from overgrazing, pollution, and siltation, stemming from erosion in surrounding watersheds. Given the loss and modification of these habitats, the conservation of remaining natural and created wetlands becomes paramount for wintering waterfowl. The Central Highlands of Mexico host seven priority wetlands, collectively supporting over 10% of the nation's wintering waterfowl. Awarded funding will directly support on-the-ground conservation at one or more of these key sites. A typical inland wetland restoration project requires installation and/or rehabilitation of water control structures, earthwork and reshaping to facilitate desired flood regimes, and/or creation of new flowpaths to restore connectivity.

Awarded funding will directly support on-the-ground restoration at one or more of these key sites. To ensure the longevity of benefits of this restoration, DUMAC works to address underlying challenges that could put restored sites at risk. For example, DUMAC will host outreach and environmental education events for local community members and industry partners to increase awareness of the need for healthy wetland systems. This ensures there is long-term local support for the work. Additionally, many conservation challenges in Mexico stem from underlying infrastructure challenges, such as wastewater flowing into a previously healthy wetland complex. For any and all proposed projects, DUMAC examines these external elements to ensure they are addressed within the scope of work (if present), ensuring the project will remain resilient under growing human pressure.

2.4 Operation Plan: Submit an operational plan that describes the proposal

2.4.1 Describe in detail how the work will be implemented:

DU's project delivery operational plan follows a regular pattern of design, permitting, bidding, construction, and evaluation. DU is a complete design-build firm and performs all work under each stage of this project delivery pattern. The design phase of our restoration, enhancement, and establishment work entails our bio-engineering teams corresponding with land managers and landowners to explicitly state the wetland, waterfowl and water goals of the tract under question. Based on these goals, as well as the habitat and hydrologic objectives developed thereunder, our technical team will perform a series of geotechnical surveys to assess the suitability of all or parts of the tract for the desired conditions. These surveys include GPS-assisted topographic surveys to develop a minimum six-inch surface model of the property, bathymetric surveys, soil sampling, hydraulic conductivity testing and flow tests. Plant community characteristics and landscape context will also be assessed to evaluate potential project performance. Our team will assess the water resources available to the site in both physical and legal terms. Database surveys and correspondence with state and local administrators of water supplies provide the information required to determine if water can be used on the site during the preferred times and in the required amounts to achieve the sought-after wetland habitat conditions and functions. Using this material, our team will present the landowner and/or manager with a conceptual plan for wetland conservation for review and authorization to move forward. It is at this point that DU will execute, on those projects that require it, a 30-year conservation contract (Site Conservation Agreement) that prescribes the roles, responsibilities, financial contributions and long-term commitment under the project. The design phase is completed by our engineering team when they produce a P.E.-stamped planset for the project. This planset details project components, provides specifications and standards for construction work, and locates work on the project site. We use this planset to complete permitting of our projects.

Different permitting regimes apply depending on the nature and intent of the project. For a typical project, DU's team handles NEPA, NHPA, ESA and CWA permitting responsibilities. Project permitting may be done in partnership with federal and state agency partners, in-house, or through a sub-contract with specialists in these fields to ensure timely authorization of our project work. All projects included in this proposal have secured water rights decreed for the habitat uses considered here. At times, and in certain places in the South Platte Basin, county and local permits are required on construction sites. DU's engineering team regularly secures those permits and manages their administration.

When all required permits are secure, DU places the project out to bid. DU uses an online, competitive bid process to select the subcontractor(s) working on the project. Our procurement system is designed to meet the demands of federal, state and local insurance, bonding, and wage-protection requirements. The lowest bidder for any given amount of work is awarded the contract, which is executed between DU and the winning contractor. These contracts, again, are drafted to meet the requirements of federal,

state and local procurement law, rule, and administrative order. A copy of our template contract is available upon request. Upon execution of all required contracts for the project workplan, DU will schedule project construction. Depending on the complexity of the project and the skill of the contractor, DU's engineering team performs daily to weekly construction management on our wetland conservation sites to ensure that all standards, specifications and details contained in the permitted plan are realized during the construction phase. Change orders are evaluated by our bio-engineering team and, if the consequential enough, are submitted to our funding partners for review and authorization. Upon completion of construction, but before demobilization, we perform a project evaluation with the contractor, our engineering team, the landowner and/or manager, and any interested funding party to ensure that the completed work matches the expectations of those parties. Once authorized by those parties, DU will demobilize our contractors from the project site. For one to three years post-project delivery, DU will monitor the performance of the project site to ensure that all constructed infrastructure and other project components are functioning in the required manner.

Our easement acquisition process follows a regular pattern of negotiation, due diligence, closing and easement monitoring. If initial conceptual discussions of an easement acquisition result in the desire to move forward with a deal, then DU or one of our certified partners will provide the landowner with a base template easement deed from which negotiations can proceed. All easements in Colorado are in perpetuity and require a 'no additional surface disturbance' clause as well as a clause requiring adequate water supplies (e.g. decreed water rights) to be encumbered in the deed. Once a final conservation easement deed is negotiated, the due diligence period can begin. In this period, we work with the landowner to get a certified conservation easement appraisal, a baseline documentation report, a minerals remoteness letter from a certified geologist, title insurance and review, a Phase I environmental review, a water rights report, and various other documents depending upon the details of the property, the landowner, and the contents of the deed. When all this documentation is collected, reviewed, and dependent authorizations are made, we will set a closing date, ready the financial transactions, and close the deal. The conservation easement deed is recorded with the property title in the appropriate county office. Plans are made for annual easement compliance monitoring visits which are regularly scheduled and made for the (perpetual) term of the easement. DUC follows a similar model of easement acquisition in their conservation programs.

2.4.2 Describe with whom the Offeror will collaborate to accomplish the scope of work. Provide letters of support from those entities and any other letters of support as an appendix to the proposal:

DU prides itself on its ability to form diverse, effective partnerships at a continental scale. The resume of projects (Appendix B) provides a sample of past projects proving our ability at conceiving, permitting, contracting, and constructing wildlife habitat restoration projects. Our active partnerships include federal agencies, state agencies, municipalities and local/district entities, other NGOs, foundations, and private landowners. The projects put forward in this proposal include the following list of partners and would expand even further if successful: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Bureau of Land Management, City of Arvada, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, South Platte Water-Related Activities Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wetland Dynamics LLC, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Ducks Unlimited de México.

2.4.3 Describe the type and name(s) of donors and what they are contributing in equivalent dollar amount of match if in-kind or actual dollar amount if cash:

DU, along with our project partners and funders, will provide \$8,082,429 in match to the projects presented in this proposal. This represents a 1:1.24 match ratio. At least 6 partners will be providing

cash and/or in-kind match to the work, including: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc., Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust and Wetland Dynamics, LLC. All of these funds are secured, leaving only additional match funding – if required – to be raised in future years. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources will provide at least \$987,737 in cash match to the proposal. A portion of this has been allocated to DU under two grant programs: Colorado Parks & Wildlife’s Wetlands for Wildlife Program and the Colorado Water Conservation Board’s Water Plan Grant Program. Additionally, Colorado Parks & Wildlife is providing internal construction funding as match for at least one site.

2.4.4 Provide construction designs and drawings, if applicable, maps of proposed restoration location(s), and a schedule and/or timeline for the completion of major project components.

Due to the quantity and breadth of projects proposed here, we have included project maps, photos, and evidence of construction designs and drawings in Appendix F. Full documents, such as construction designs, are not included due to file size and restraints. A full copy of any project component is available upon request.

2.4.5 Describe to what degree the proposal matches the goals of environmental restoration.

A review of the *Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Commerce, City, Colorado (Plan)* section on Injury to Biological Resources indicates that one of the principal, and longest-lived impacts of toxicant releases on the Arsenal was waterfowl mortality (pp. 6-12 – 6-16). Information related to duck and other waterfowl mortality in that report indicates that at a minimum, between 1952 and 1987, 5,294 dead individuals were counted or collected on ponds on the Arsenal. This is likely a very low estimate and the report indicates that tens of thousands more waterfowl deaths could have resulted from exposure to toxicants on the Arsenal. The work proposed here will conserve nearly 15,000 acres of habitat. We estimate, on average, the lands acted on through this proposed work will produce 5,903 new ducks to each fall flight each year. Further, these projects will furnish ducks in the non-breeding phases of their life cycle with enough food to support over a million mallard-sized ducks one day’s energetic requirements (or, 10,000 mallard-sized ducks with over 120 days of energy). Within the South Platte River Priority Watershed, we identify six [6] projects, ranging in proximity of the Arsenal. Beyond the priority landscape, we propose an additional [6] projects that meet the needs of migratory waterfowl injured at the Arsenal site. Beyond restoration, we will work with project partners to ensure the publicly-accessible sites remediate any indirect damages incurred to people – specifically, wildlife viewers – by creating sites that meet wildlife needs and, in turn, facilitate high-quality wildlife viewing opportunities.

2.4.6 Describe how the proposal will be coordinated with complimentary, similar existing, or other proposed projects in the area, if any:

The projects included in this proposal are part of several ongoing conservation programs and collaborative conservation partnerships that strive to have landscape-level impacts for waterfowl and other wildlife. On a continental scale, Ducks Unlimited’s three arms – Ducks Unlimited, Inc, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Ducks Unlimited de México – work to protect and restore essential wetland and grassland complexes to serve migratory waterfowl across all stages of their life cycles. We are part of a larger waterfowl conservation community that is directed by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which establishes multi-scale and temporal population and habitat objectives required to maintain populations of waterfowl in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, to manage waterfowl populations. Our combined efforts continue continental waterfowl conservation that has been ongoing for almost a century. We are certain that the work proposed here is suitable for the

remediation of damages to duck populations because we have observed that waterfowl populations (and similar species) alone amongst North American bird populations have not evinced precipitous population declines over the past four decades. This is a direct result of the large-scale, coordinated habitat conservation effort the waterfowl conservation community has exercised over those years and to which the activities proposed here will contribute. Proposed conservation work within Colorado follows a thirty-year history of collaboration with federal, state, and local wildlife managers. We are a principal funding entity and delivery agent for CPW's Wetlands Program, executing dozens of wetland conservation projects across Colorado in collaboration with state biologists and managers. We are also a principal partner in regional Colorado Wetlands Focus Area Committees, groups of partners working together to deliver wetland conservation projects in the principal watersheds of the state (including the South Platte River, Rio Grande, and North Platte River regions). Our work is included in the most recent update of the Colorado Water Plan (specifically, the South Platte/Metro Basin Implementation Plan) and we are invested in working with local watershed groups to incorporate waterfowl ecology and wetland management principles in watershed planning efforts funded by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. In recent years, DU has begun to critically look at how targeted restoration sites can meet the needs of both wildlife and people. This has resulted in an intentional growth into urban wetland areas. Through strategic partnerships, such as those in many of the projects presented here, DU is working to grow a network of high-quality, functionally-connected wetland sites across the Front Range of Colorado. As competition for open space increases, and the ecosystem services provided by wetlands become more vital, we believe this arm will continue showing its potential to benefit all species that rely on wetlands, including people.

2.4.7 Describe the operation, maintenance and monitoring (OMM) requirements and the entity(ies) accepting those responsibilities for the duration of the project and a minimum of 10 years thereafter, if applicable:

On public lands, the managing agency is responsible for performing required operations and maintenance leading to the hydrologic and plant community characteristics targeted by the conservation work. At times, these operations are stipulated under a contract or other agreement between DU and the public agency managing the property. Operation and maintenance of our restoration, enhancement and establishment sites are prescribed in each 30-year Site Conservation Agreement. On private lands, it is the landowner's responsibility for the term of the contract to utilize physically and legally available water supplies to inundate wetlands on a schedule beneficial to ducks and other migratory birds and in a sequence that recharges the alluvial aquifers of streams. Outside of warranty issues related to design failures and acts of nature, it is the landowner's responsibility to maintain all infrastructure installed under the Agreement.

2.4.8 Permits/Approvals/Certifications: Describe all permits, licenses, approvals, professional engineer's stamps of engineering design and as-built documents that will be required to complete the project and describe current status/progress towards obtaining these permits/approvals:

Projects	Permits, Certifications, & Approvals Required by Project							
	NEPA	NHPA	ESA	SHPO	404	CO-SWFP ¹	P.E. Stamp	Other
Banner Lakes SWA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DU	CPW Review & Approval
Barr Lake State Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DU	CPW Review & Approval
Majestic View Nature Center	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	DU	City of Arvada Review & Approval
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	DU	U.S. FWS Review & Approval
Tamarack Plan Phase I	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DU	CPW Review & Approval
Two Ponds NWR	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	DU	U.S. FWS Review & Approval
North Park Refuges	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	DU	U.S. FWS Review & Approval U.S. BLM Review & Approval
Blanca Wetlands	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	DU	U.S. BLM Review & Approval
Golden Hoof Wetlands	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	DU	CE Appraisal CE Appraisal Review
Rock Creek Restoration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DU	U.S. FWS Review & Approval CPW Review & Approval
Canadian Prairie Breeding Habitats ²	Y	N	?	N	N	N	N	CE Appraisal NRD Review & Approval
Mexican Wintering Habitats ²	Y	N	?	N	N	N	DU	NRD Review & Approval

¹ Colorado State Waters Dredge & Fill Permit as determined by State of Colorado as they develop permitting program post Sackett decision

² Proper permitting of international projects will be coordinated with the Department of Interior as performed in previous NRD funding

2.4.9 Project Schedule: Provide a timeline which identifies project phases, milestones, midpoint and pre-final inspections.

Projects	FY25				FY26				FY27	
	Quarter									
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Banner Lakes SWA	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	eval. midpt.	construct	construct	construct
Barr Lake State Park	plan	plan	plan	permit	permit	procure	construct midpt.	construct	construct	construct
Majestic View Nature Center	plan	plan	permit	procure	construct	construct	eval. midpt.	construct	construct	construct
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR					plan	plan	plan	plan	permit	permit
Tamarack Plan Phase I	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	eval. midpt.	construct	construct	proj. midpt.
Two Ponds NWR	plan	plan	permit	procure	construct	construct	eval. midpt.	construct	construct	construct
North Park Refuges	plan	plan	plan	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	proj. midpt.
Blanca Wetlands	plan	plan	plan	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	proj. midpt.
Golden Hoof Wetlands	plan	due diligence	due diligence	close acqui.	plan	permit	procure	eval. midpt.	construct	construct
Rock Creek Restoration	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	eval. midpt.	construct	construct	construct
Canadian Western Prairie Breeding Habitats					plan	due diligence	due diligence	close acqui.	oper.	oper.
Mexican Wintering Habitats	plan	plan	plan	permit	permit	procure	construct	construct	construct	proj. midpt.

Projects cont.	FY27		FY28				FY29			
	Quarter									
	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Banner Lakes SWA	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Barr Lake State Park	eval.	construct	construct	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Majestic View Nature Center	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR	eval. midpt.	procure	construct	construct	construct	pre-final eval.	construct	oper.	report	final report
Tamarack Plan Phase I	eval.	construct	construct	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Two Ponds NWR	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
North Park Refuges	construct	construct	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Blanca Wetlands	construct	construct	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Golden Hoof Wetlands	eval.	construct	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Rock Creek Restoration	construct	construct	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Canadian Prairie Breeding Habitats	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	oper.	report	final report
Mexican Wintering Habitats	construct	construct	construct	eval.	construct	pre-final eval.	oper.	oper.	report	final report

2.4.10 Monthly Invoice and Status Report: Describe which activities in the operational plan will be tracked, how they will be counted, and how they will be reported in the monthly invoice:

DU tracks all project expenditures, personnel time, personnel, travel, and match obligations in electronic databases that are used to document project progress, procure contractors, reimburse for project payables, invoice funding partners, and report project accomplishments. This system is set up to ensure that DU's financial system is responsive to the demands of the laws, policies and administrative rules regarding procurement, contracting and project financing promulgated by the various federal agencies of the United States government. DU typically invoices funding partners quarterly with a document specifying the amount of each eligible charge.

2.4.11 Project Documentation and Deliverables: Provide a list of documentation and deliverables that will be supplied for the proposed project and throughout the duration of the project including the OMM phase.

Project	Presiding Conservation Agreement	Permit Package	Planset or As-Built as Required	Semi-Annual Progress Reports	Conservation Easement Deed	Final Project Report
Banner Lakes SWA	X	X	X	X		X
Barr Lake State Park	X	X	X	X		X
Majestic View Nature Center	X	X	X	X		X
Rocky Mtn Arsenal NWR	X	X	X	X		X
Tamarack Plan Phase I	X	X	X	X		X
Two Ponds NWR	X	X	X	X		X
North Park Refuges	X	X	X	X		X
Blanca Wetlands	X	X	X	X		X
Golden Hoof Wetlands	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rock Creek Wetlands	X	X	X	X		X
Canadian Prairie Habitats	X	X		X	X	X
Mexican Wintering Grounds	X	X	X	X		X

3.0 Budget Spreadsheet

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRD Settlement Funding Request by Budget Category (\$)

Priority Landscape	Project	Personnel Costs	Fringe Benefits	Total Staff Costs	Travel Costs	Equipment & Supplies	Acquisition & Contract Costs	Community Outreach	Total Direct Costs	Indirect Cost	Total Grant Request
Proposal Total		318,397	149,834	468,232	140,469	117,058	4,909,733	46,823	5,682,315	817,685	6,500,000
South Platte River Watershed											2,267,570
	Banner Lakes SWA	54,400	25,600	80,000	24,000	20,000	668,000	8,000	800,000	115,120	915,120
	Barr Lake State Park	20,400	9,600	30,000	9,000	7,500	250,500	3,000	300,000	43,170	343,170
	Majestic View NC	4,080	1,920	6,000	1,800	1,500	50,100	600	60,000	8,634	68,634
	Rocky Mtn Arsenal NWR	41,637	19,594	61,232	18,369	15,308	511,283	6,123	612,315	88,112	700,427
	Tamarack Plan Phase I	10,200	4,800	15,000	4,500	3,750	125,250	1,500	150,000	21,585	171,585
	Two Ponds NWR	4,080	1,920	6,000	1,800	1,500	50,100	600	60,000	8,634	68,634
North Park (Colorado Breeding Grounds)											571,950
	North Park Refuges	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950
San Luis Valley (Colorado Breeding Grounds)											1,944,630
	Blanca Wetlands	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950
	Golden Hoof Wetlands	13,600	6,400	20,000	6,000	5,000	167,000	2,000	200,000	28,780	228,780
	Rock Creek Wetlands	68,000	32,000	100,000	30,000	25,000	835,000	10,000	1,000,000	143,900	1,143,900
Canadian Western Prairies											1,143,900
	Canadian Projects	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	143,900	1,143,900
Mexican Wintering Grounds											571,950
	Mexican Projects	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950

Please see Appendix C for full budget table with matching funds documents.

4.0 Public Communication Strategy

As a non-profit conservation organization, DU recognizes the importance of consistent, far-reaching communication at multiple scales (e.g. local, regional, national, and even continental). Public communication will be specific to each project and the context of the local landscape. In the South Platte River Priority Watershed, we have close working relationships with local partners, such as Majestic View Nature Center and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. These partners regularly do public engagement and outreach. We will leverage these partnerships to gain community input, share information related to the project, and maximize opportunities to educate the public on the project(s) upon completion. We will strive to ensure our communication is inclusive by providing materials into multiple languages (English and Spanish at minimum), centering DEI where applicable (e.g. public sites like Majestic View Nature Center), and ensuring our communication reaches both our project partners and those impacted by our work. In the San Luis Valley and North Park, all proposed work will take place on private or federal lands. For private lands work, we have existing strong relationships with the landowners directly involved in the project(s). Our relationships with local partners allow us to ensure there are multiple points of contact for landowners and gives the project team greater capacity to maintain ongoing communication. Work on federal lands in both landscapes will require the project team to follow standard federal communication protocol. Relationships with federal partners will also allow us to reach the public one-on-one through their recreation staff, which typically have a strong seasonal presence at the properties where work is proposed. As projects develop, we will work with our federal partners to establish our public communication strategy, which may include supplemental materials like signage and/or social media posts. In Canada and Mexico, we will rely on our local DU partners to ensure public communication opportunities are maximized when/where appropriate. Across all three countries, DU employs communication specialists who will aid in drafting outreach material and distributing it accordingly. Our ability to reach a wide audience is unparalleled. In addition to a national and regional website, DU has over 1.15 million Facebook followers and more than 776,000 Instagram followers. The organization also has a strong presence via LinkedIn, TikTok, Threads, the DU podcast, DU magazine, and other creative communication avenues. If successful, DU project proponents will work with the internal communications team to develop outreach material that highlights the partnership and project successes.

5.0 Relationship to the Ranking Criteria

Compliance with the SPP requirements: DU believes all projects presented in this proposal comply with the requirements of this solicitation.

Compliance with Laws: DU always complies with applicable Federal, State, and Local Laws and Policies. This is especially important given the complexities of water rights administration in Colorado, which can easily trip up a well-intentioned wetland restoration project.

Public Health & Safety: None of the standard practices, techniques and work proposed here poses a danger to public health and safety.

Eligibility for NRD Funding: The projects proposed here will restore, replace, or require the equivalent of the natural resources and/or services injured at this site. Over time, we expect impacts to far exceed the injured levels, leveraging this funding to create a net positive impact.

Public Support: The projects proposed here include private, local, state, and federal partnerships. Additionally, these projects have strong support from DU's volunteers and members. Across all landscapes proposed here, DU has strong partnerships with locally-based agencies and organizations. These partnerships reflect the unique characteristics of each landscape and the work proposed within it. For example, in the San Luis Valley, we are working with an extensive network of private landowners to deliver a landscape-scale project across several private properties. For this work, we have built a strong partnership with both a local land trust and a local LLC, giving us deeper roots and ongoing relationships

with the private landowner(s). Within the South Platte River Priority Watershed, we have partnerships with local environmental education and conservation organizations. These relationships allow us to intergrate local perspectives and better reach the communities are working in. For example, our partnership with Majestic View Nature Center will allow us to educate the public about the proposed restoration, gain their support, and ultimately deliver a project that meets the needs of both wildlife and the local community.

Likelihood of Success: We believe the scope of work presented under the 12 projects proposed here will ensure the resource damages incurred because of the incident will be adequately addressed at multiple spatial and temporal scales. The large expanse of work proposed here will diminish the likelihood that local changes in land or water use will subvert the restored resources gained under the proposal. All goals outlined in this proposal are clear and measurable. Additionally, DU will work with project partners to monitor and evaluate the success of the proposed projects using accepted standard practices such as annual photo-point monitoring.

DU's strong partner relationships and network ensure any potential problems that may arise can, and will, be corrected. For many of the proposed projects, we have a history with the partner landowner(s) and, for some, agreements are already in place. The projects presented here have all been vetted by partner landowners and land managers, as well as DU's internal biologists and engineers, to ensure the work proposed is feasible and can realistically be delivered within the award period. If any major problems arise that require DU to implement a project alternative, we will work both with the Trustee Council and our partners to identify an appropriate alternative that meets, or exceeds, the deliverables and outcomes presented in this proposal. Proposed project(s) in Canada and Mexico have been framed in this proposal to ensure flexibility and adaptability in light of any potential challenges that may arise.

Technical Feasibility: All proposed project activities in this proposal are technically feasible within the timeframe scheduled. DU has an 85-year history of implementing wetland acquisition, restoration, enhancement, and establishment projects. In Colorado, DU typically delivers 8-12 restoration projects per year. We, with our partners in easement acquisition, regularly deliver between 2-6 conservation easements per year. While project cost uncertainties must be considered given the proposed timeline and recent spikes in construction costs, the techniques utilized to achieve project outcomes are well understood and have been proven to be cost-effective and predictable over nearly 30 years of delivering wetland conservation in Colorado and the other regions presented in this proposal.

Multiple Natural Resource Benefits: Although we do not claim them, we know that the work proposed here will also have a positive impact on surface and ground water quality and quantity in the South Platte Watershed and beyond. Wetlands are known to remove toxicants, nutrients, and other pollutants. They are also key areas of groundwater and alluvial aquifer recharge. Additionally, for several sites, the work proposed here is crucial for ensuring existing water rights continue to be put to beneficial use. If lost, the lack of water would have significant impacts on natural resources. We also recognize wetlands provide numerous, vital ecosystem services beyond the injured resources. For example, the proposed work at Rocky Mountain Arsenal will provide crucial flood storage.

Time to Provide Benefits: The positive outcomes resulting from this work will be evident immediately. The shallow-water wetlands and associated uplands protected, restored, enhanced, and established by our projects begin to function as forage production and breeding areas immediately upon completion and inundation. For all publicly-accessible project sites, the public will experience benefits on a similar near-immediate basis. As flood regimes take shape and vegetation communities recover, the resulting wildlife benefits will be clear. Additionally, our local partners will work to ensure the project sites are leveraged for environmental education and similar activities. This will allow the public to receive even more benefits from the restored sites.

Duration of Benefits: All acquisitions are in perpetuity. All restoration, enhancement, and establishment work in Colorado is designed to last for a minimum of 30 years. Work delivered in Mexico is expected to persist for at least 10 years.

Non-NRDs Match: DU, along with our project partners and funders, will provide \$8,082,429 in match to the projects presented in this proposal. This represents a 1:1.24 match ratio.

Protection of Implemented Project: As stated above, we strive to protect our projects and benefits over time. All acquisitions are in perpetuity. All restoration, enhancement, and establishment work in Colorado is designed to last for a minimum of 30 years. Proposed projects in Colorado and Canada fall into one of two categories: restoration on public lands owned and managed for wildlife and natural resources, or private lands protected (or to be protected) under a conservation easement. In Mexico, DUMAC works to ensure protection for a minimum of 10 years, but land ownership and acquisitions do not work the same in that landscape.

Project Alignment with Regional Planning: Within Colorado, proposed projects align with several regional plans, including the Colorado Water Plan and the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan. Continentally, proposed projects align with landscape-scale plans, including the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and DU's International Conservation Plan. When taken individually, the proposed work will have clear local impacts. When delivered together, the proposed work will have continental benefits for migratory waterfowl, people, and water.

Public Access: Of the 12 projects proposed here, 8 are already, and will remain, accessible by the public here in Colorado. The proposed work on private lands as part of the Rock Creek Restoration project will have direct benefits on the downstream, publicly-accessible Monte Viste National Wildlife Refuge. The Golden Hoof easement will be placed on private, working lands in the San Luis Valley. The planned easement in Canada will be placed on a similar property. Due to the nature of these protected properties, public access is not relevant and would not be appropriate for the sites. Land governance does not follow the U.S. model in Mexico. Often, sites are communally owned by partnerships known as ejidos. These sites walk the line between public and private and, as such, outlining public access in this manner is not relevant.

Appendix A: Description of Offeror's Organization

Ducks Unlimited (DU) was founded in 1937 during the Dust Bowl when North America's drought-plagued waterfowl populations had plunged to unprecedented lows. Thanks to more than 80 years of abiding by the single mission of habitat conservation delivery, DU is now the world's largest and most effective private, non-profit wetlands conservation organization [501 (c)(3) documentation attached to proposal]. As of January 1, 2024, DU has conserved more than 16.2 million acres across North America. Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (the North American arm of the larger DU), deploys roughly \$300 million dollars in financial resources annually, and has roughly 684,000 supporting organizational members. DU is a volunteer-led organization, guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency. Over the last ten years, more than 80% of DU's expenditures have been converted directly to conservation work vital to ducks, geese, and other wetland-dependent wildlife.

As a part of the larger Great Plains Region, DU's Colorado office, located in Fort Collins, employs four biologists and four engineers that lead the state's conservation program and policy initiatives. The location houses all the necessary IT resources, equipment, and vehicles necessary to deliver projects across the state. The small team has diverse expertise, including biology, ecology, engineering, hydrology, economics, real estate, land protection, water law, and public policy. DU has conserved more than 140,000 acres across the state since the first project was initiated in the late 1980s.

DU has heavily invested in key migratory bird areas across Colorado, including the South Platte Watershed, North Park, and the San Luis Valley. DU has also become an expert in groundwater augmentation, having built over a dozen functioning recharge sites, with many more being conceptually developed. We pride ourselves on partnerships, which include many public agencies, regional water districts, local irrigation companies, land trusts, other conservation organizations, private sector corporations, and a diverse suite of private landowners. Our proposal seeks funds for wetland habitat, waterfowl, and water projects.

Appendix B: Standards of Responsibility & Offeror Resume

Offeror agencies, organizations, and individuals must meet the following standards of responsibility:

The Offeror selected must be responsible for project costs including personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, operating expenses, travel, equipment, and capital items. The Offeror must provide the necessary financial, material, equipment, facility, personnel resources, and expertise, to meet all contractual requirements, and provide all services requested herein. Offeror must provide evidence that it possesses the necessary resources; or must present acceptable plans to subcontract for them; or must document commitment from, or an explicit arrangement with, a satisfactory source to provide them.

The Offeror must present a resume indicating experience with analogous projects and/or the capacity to perform the scope of work. The resume shall include the project description and objectives, the contracting entity, the cost of the project, the schedule for implementation, cost overruns and technical difficulties encountered. In addition, the Offeror shall indicate its experience with developing funding sources for matching with the NRD funds.

Ducks Unlimited possesses all necessary resources to meet and/or subcontract all contractual requirements and services. This is demonstrated by our Offeror resume included below. Projects included in the Offeror resume have been successfully delivered with support from CDPHE's Natural Resource Damages Program, awarded to DU under the Suncor Restoration Solicitation for Project Proposals. DU's ability to successfully deliver the work presented here serves as evidence that the organization possesses the necessary resources outlined above.

In-house, DU's team has the capacity to manage project costs related to personnel, fringe, benefits, supplies, operating expenses, travel, equipment, and capital items. For construction, DU's engineering team manages a competitive bid process, [sub]contracting, and oversees all construction activities. Our in-house team possesses the necessary expertise to manage all project activities, including work with outside partners through subcontracts, to ensure the proposed scope of work is delivered successfully within the award period. Additionally, DU's experience developing funding sources for matching with the NRD funds is evident both in the completed projects presented in our resume, as well as the wide array of matching partners included in the scope of work and project budget(s) presented here.

Offeror Resume:

Russell Lakes SWA - Russell Creek Restoration

Project Description:

The Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area – Russell Creek Restoration restored flowpaths and hydrologic function on 785 shallow-water wetland and wet meadow acres on state-owned property in Saguache County, Colorado. The work focused on the removal of unnecessary and detrimental earthen levees that directed flows of Russell Creek away from the wetland basins and meadows managed as waterfowl habitat on the SWA. Further we installed additional earthen levees in strategic locations to disperse water supplies across the meadows and basins associated with the Creek's floodplains. The following was completed: 1. Removal of the north levee: Approximately 2,765 feet (levee varies in width and height decreasing from west to east); return soil to borrow to make it even with existing topography to allow for sheet flow; 2.

Removal of six large water control structures and 24 of the small 12" flapper structures; 3. Construction and installation of a large structure (T-box) that allows for ATV access at the southwest corner over the existing ditch and incorporates allowing water out of Unit A/B into that southern ditch; 4. Construction of 3 new contour levees; and, 5.) Construction and installation of four Agri-drains in the new contour levees.

This project remediates damages to the waterfowl populations, wetland habitats, and groundwater resources posed by the Suncor incident by restoring historic patterns of flow and augmenting water storage in wetland and wet meadow habitats used by thousands of breeding ducks and other waterbirds during their seasonal migrations through the San Luis Valley and during breeding efforts they expend there. Our actions will allow managers to fully utilize water supplies on the property leading to an expansion in the quality and extent of breeding habitats of waterfowl in the State of Colorado.

Objectives:

The original objective of this project was to conserve 100 acres of wetland habitats on the publicly-accessible, state managed wildlife area on the north end of the San Luis Valley. At project completion, we had conserved 785 wetland acres.

Contracting Entity:

All activities on the state-owned property were managed by a Master Task Order executed between the State of Colorado and DU for this type of work. All bidding, contracting, and construction management was managed by DU's engineering team.

Project Cost:

The project cost \$352,529 in total. Of this, \$9,535 came from the Suncor NRD settlement award. The remaining \$351,515 came from matching funds raised and administered by DU.

Schedule for Implementation:

Activities	Project Period		
	Months 1-6	Months 7-12	Months 13-18
Survey	X		
Design & Drafting	X	X	
Permitting	X	X	
Bidding & Contracting		X	
Project Construction		X	X
Construction Evaluation			X
Project Completion			X

Cost Overruns:

There were no cost overruns that impacted the ultimate delivery of this project. However, the project team did encounter some inflation in material costs during the project period. DU worked with partners and raised all necessary matching funds to deliver the full project scope within the grant period.

Difficulties Encountered:

The principal obstacle presented to us in the delivery of this project was the general lack of contractors who would take this work on during this period of time. Finding qualified contractors who maintain the skill, capacity, and desire to work on large wetland projects with – sometimes – tricky installation of water control structures is a persistent aggravation to our engineering team. On this project we worked with known builders to employ one company to perform the earthmoving portions of the project and another trusted contractor to install the structures on the site. We also began to experience inflation in materials cost during the construction of this project. We were able to secure additional funding from our state partners

to ensure that we could deliver the entire project despite the increase in costs. This is a problem that will likely persist across all remaining project deliveries under the Suncor grant.



Photo: Russell Creek Restoration project site post-construction

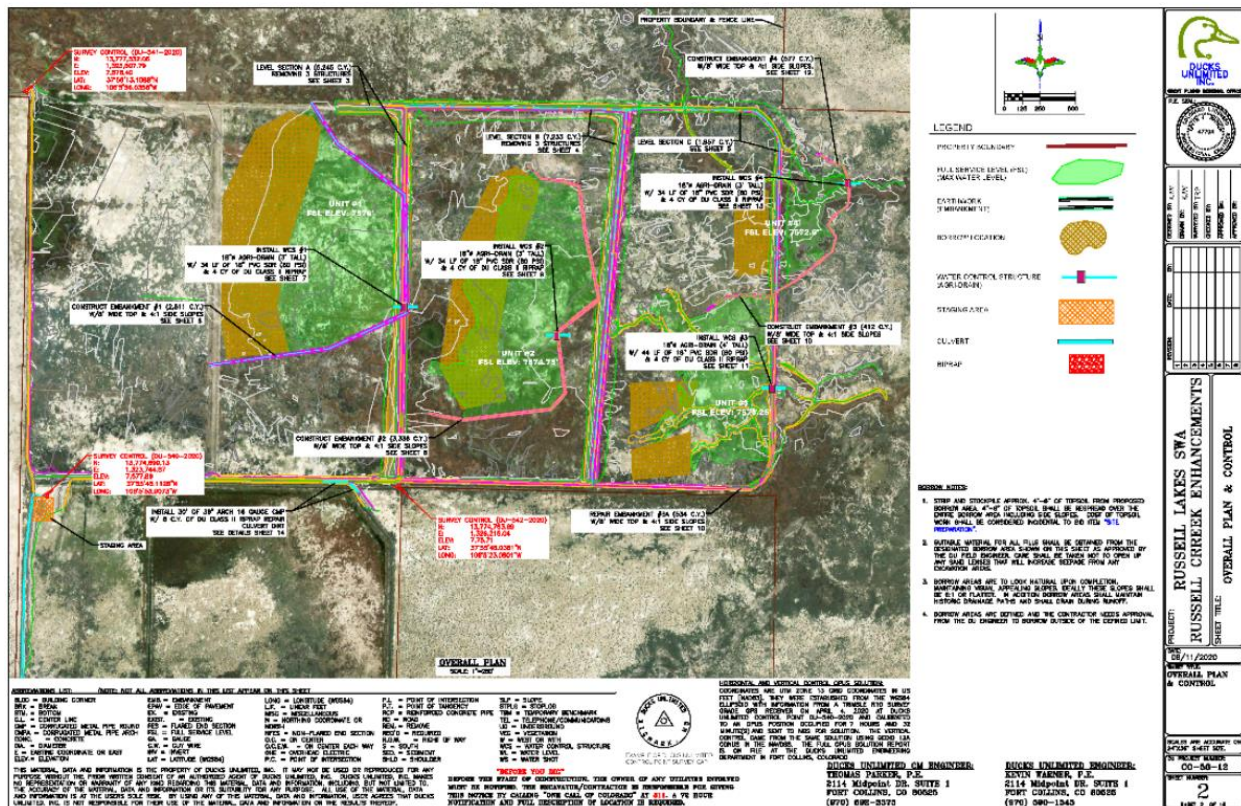


Figure: Excerpt from Russell Creek engineering planset

LaFleur Wetlands

Project Description:

The LaFleur Wetlands project acquired 526 acres of conservation easement lands along the South Platte River and restored or enhanced at least 73 acres of shallow-water wetlands and wet meadows on those private lands in Logan County, Colorado. The conservation easement permanently protected agricultural ground, pasture, wetlands, and the riparian floodplain associated with the South Platte River in northeastern Colorado. The area of restoration was used as upland pasture and cropland, but historically was saltgrass meadow that enjoyed periodic inundation when the South Platte River regularly left its banks and flooded the floodplain. Lacking those regular periods of overbank flow, the facilities constructed by DU allow the landowners to convey water through emplaced ditches to three impoundments and a complex of natural swale wetlands such that pools of water no more than 24 inches in depth are maintained – functionally mimicking historic flood events. A slow, early season drawdown in these wetlands will encourage the growth of the annual plants, grasses and sedges that provide the seed mast and invertebrate populations highly desired by waterfowl and other wetland birds. These native seed sources and bugs provide a set of minerals, proteins, and other nutrients absent from the agricultural ground found in abundance in the region. This project remediates damages to the waterfowl populations, wetland habitats, and groundwater resources posed by the Suncor incident by permanently protecting riverine, riparian, wetland, and agricultural habitats used by thousands of ducks, geese and other waterbirds during their seasonal migrations through the South Platte Watershed. Our wetland restorations on the property also increased the extent and quality of wetland habitats available to those populations of migratory birds. Finally, the wetlands we conserved under this project serve as groundwater recharge augmentation sites where excess river flows are directed into the wetlands that, then, naturally percolate those waters into the alluvial aquifer of the South Platte River.

Objectives:

The original project objective was to conserve 497 acres of waterfowl habitats associated with the South Platte River, of which 121 acres would be wetlands. Upon project completion, 526 acres of agricultural, pasture, riparian, floodplain, and wetland acres were permanently protected. 118 of the protected acres were wetlands, 76 of these wetland acres were restored by DU as part of this project.

Contracting Entity:

The LaFleur family placed 576 acres of their farm under a conservation easement held by Colorado Open Lands. The family also entered into a 30-year site conservation agreement with Ducks Unlimited, which governed the restoration, enhancement, and management of at least 76 acres of shallow-water wetlands and wet meadows found on the property. All restoration bidding, contracting, and construction management was managed by DU's engineering team.

Project Cost:

The project cost \$580,393 in total. Of this, \$21,278 came from the Suncor NRD settlement award. The remaining \$559,115 came from matching funds raised and administered by DU.

Schedule for Implementation:

Activities	Project Period			
	Months 1-6	Months 7-12	Months 13-18	Months 19-24
Survey	X			
Design & Drafting	X	X	X	
Permitting	X	X		
Bidding & Contracting		X		

Project Construction		X	X	
Construction Evaluation			X	
Easement Due Diligence	X			
Easement Closing	X			
Project Completion				X

There were no significant or detrimental cost overruns for this project. In fact, the project cost less in Suncor NRD settlement funding than initially proposed. DU raised all necessary matching funds to deliver the full project scope within the grant period.

Apart from some minor repair work on a conveyance ditch that delayed completion of the project some six months, neither the conservation easement transaction nor the wetland restoration and enhancement construction work presented any major challenges. The project was completed during the COVID19 pandemic which did present – initially – some logistical and administrative issues with the coordination of DU staff members and our contractors. Nevertheless, the process went smoothly and we enjoy watching the site slowly come up to speed as one of the highest quality wetland complexes in this region of the state.

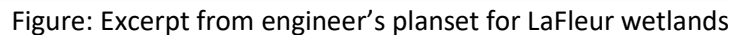




Photo: Set of aerial images of the LaFleur Wetlands project site from pre-project delivery (October 2015 - top) and post-project (September 2020 - bottom) showing installation of wetland infrastructure.

Santa Barbara Bay Estuary

Project Description:

The mainland west coast of Mexico is home to numerous important wetland areas that span across three coastal states. These coastal and interior wetlands support over 33% of the migratory waterfowl that winter in Mexico. One of these significant wetland areas is Santa Barbara Bay, located south of Huatabampo in the state of Sonora. Sonora itself contains 66,000 hectares of wetlands across its 1,200-kilometer area. The complex of coastal wetlands in the states of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Nayarit represents the most important habitats for waterfowl in Mexico. Notably, Santa Barbara Bay alone hosted 1.6% of wintering waterfowl during the 1980s.

To restore the health of the ecosystem, DUMAC implemented desilting activities over the project period. Desilting benefits Santa Barbara Bay by improving water flow and restoring habitat by removing excess sediment. Across a total project area of 1,500 acres (~600ha), DUMAC restored 288 acres of estuaries. From bidding to full delivery, the project took approximately 9 months to complete.

Objectives:

The project initially aimed to restore at least 30 acres. The completed project restored a total of 288 acres of Santa Barbara Bay Estuary.

Contracting Entity:

DUMAC managed all aspects of project delivery in partnership with the local partner(s), Ejido Navomorai, via a Collaboration Agreement.

Project Cost:

The project cost \$408,306 in total. \$57,250 of this funding came from the Suncor NRD settlement, the remaining \$351,056 came from matching funds raised and provided by DU/DUMAC.

Schedule for Implementation:

Activities	Project Period						
	Months 1-6	Months 7-12	Months 13-18	Months 19-24	Months 25-30	Months 31-36	Months 37-42
Design & Drafting	X						
Permitting			X				
Bidding & Contracting				X			
Project Construction				X	X		
Project Completion					X		X
Project Evaluation							

Cost Overruns:

There were no significant or detrimental cost overruns for this project. Awarded Suncor NRD settlement funding was used in the amount proposed. DU/DUMAC raised all necessary matching funds to deliver the full project scope within the grant period.

Difficulties Encountered:

COVID-19 pandemic impacted the original timeline of this project. When the project was able to proceed, the primary obstacle for the project's progress the time delay in obtaining permits. Due to the project's environmental significance, an environmental assessment study was required to demonstrate its benefits. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorities took longer than anticipated to approve the project permits. During project construction, the primary obstacle encountered was finding the right contractor for this construction project, primarily due to the complex aspects of this project. Another obstacle was finding the right machinery to carry out the activities since specific depth measures are needed to restore the hydrology of the

area and not all machinery has such control. DUMAC's team held meetings with several contractors before identifying the best technical proposals.



Photo: Desilting activities being conducted at Santa Barbara Bay in January 2023

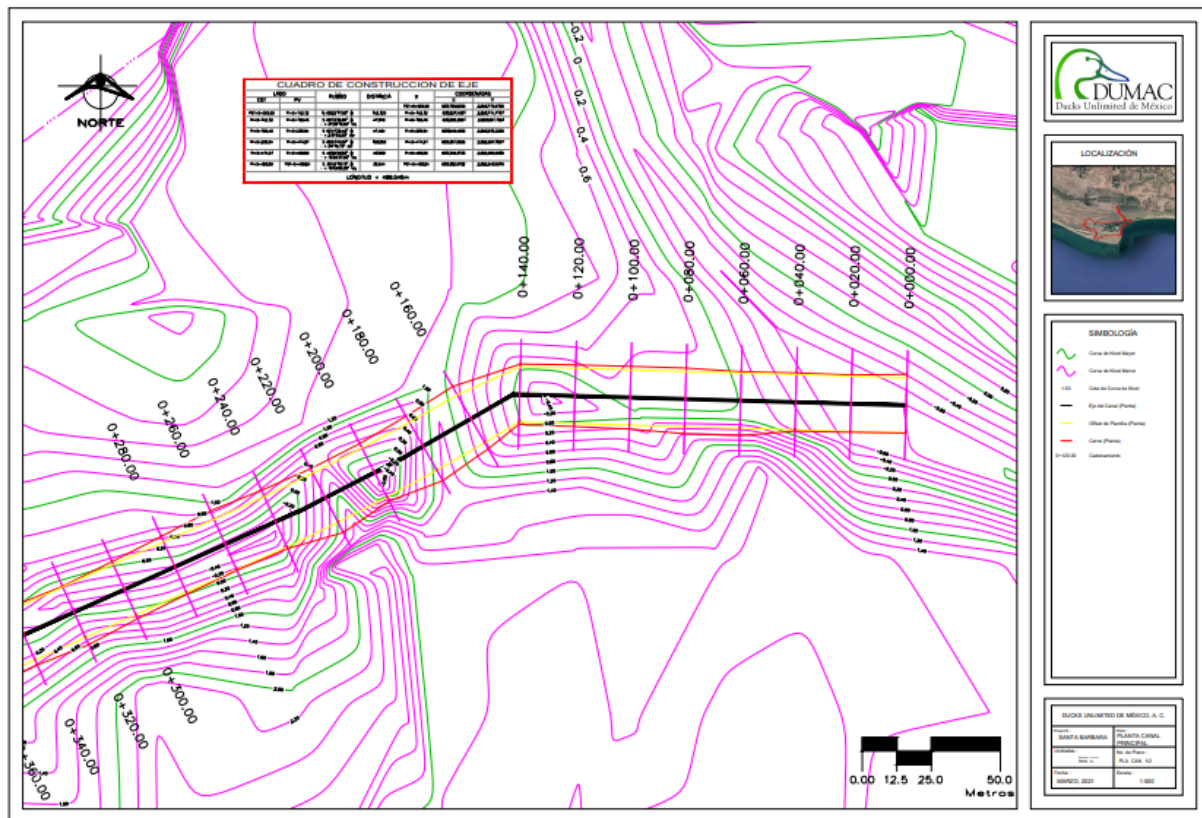


Figure: Planset excerpt from Santa Barbara Bay project

Appendix C: Full budget table

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRD Settlement Funding Request by Budget Category (\$)

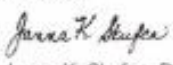
Priority Landscape	Project	Personnel Costs	Fringe Benefits	Total Staff Costs	Travel Costs	Equipment & Supplies	Acquisition & Contract Costs	Community Outreach	Total Direct Costs	Indirect Cost	Total Grant Request
Proposal Total		318,397	149,834	468,232	140,469	117,058	4,909,733	46,823	5,682,315	817,685	6,500,000
South Platte River Watershed											2,267,570
	Banner Lakes SWA	54,400	25,600	80,000	24,000	20,000	668,000	8,000	800,000	115,120	915,120
	Barr Lake State Park	20,400	9,600	30,000	9,000	7,500	250,500	3,000	300,000	43,170	343,170
	Majestic View NC	4,080	1,920	6,000	1,800	1,500	50,100	600	60,000	8,634	68,634
	Rocky Mtn Arsenal NWR	41,637	19,594	61,232	18,369	15,308	511,283	6,123	612,315	88,112	700,427
	Tamarack Plan Phase I	10,200	4,800	15,000	4,500	3,750	125,250	1,500	150,000	21,585	171,585
	Two Ponds NWR	4,080	1,920	6,000	1,800	1,500	50,100	600	60,000	8,634	68,634
North Park (Colorado Breeding Grounds)											571,950
	North Park Refuges	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950
San Luis Valley (Colorado Breeding Grounds)											1,944,630
	Blanca Wetlands	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950
	Golden Hoof Wetlands	13,600	6,400	20,000	6,000	5,000	167,000	2,000	200,000	28,780	228,780
	Rock Creek Wetlands	68,000	32,000	100,000	30,000	25,000	835,000	10,000	1,000,000	143,900	1,143,900
Canadian Western Prairies											1,143,900
	Canadian Projects	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	143,900	1,143,900
Mexican Wintering Grounds											571,950
	Mexican Projects	34,000	16,000	50,000	15,000	12,500	417,500	5,000	500,000	71,950	571,950

Budget cont. on next page

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRD Settlement Match Funding by Source (\$)

Priority Landscape	Project	Total Grant Request	Percent Match	Total Match	DU	CPW	CWCB	USFWS	USBLM	SPWRAP	RiGHT & WD
Proposal Total		6,500,000	124%	8,082,429	3,458,139	793,425	194,312	5,000	2,822,828	700,000	72,750
South Platte River Watershed		2,267,570	89%	2,019,036							
	Banner Lakes SWA	915,120	55%	500,000	-	500,000	-	-	-	-	-
	Barr Lake State Park	343,170	50%	171,585	171,585	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Majestic View NC	68,634	204%	139,912	-	43,725	96,187	-	-	-	-
	Rocky Mtn Arsenal NWR	700,427	50%	352,714	350,214	-	-	2,500	-	-	-
	Tamarack Plan Phase I	171,585	408%	700,000	-	-	-	-	-	700,000	-
	Two Ponds NWR	68,634	226%	154,825	-	54,200	98,125	2,500	-	-	-
North Park		571,950	70%	399,500							
	North Park Refuges	571,950	70%	399,500	-	25,000	-	-	374,500	-	-
San Luis Valley		1,944,630	174%	3,377,918							
	Blanca Wetlands	571,950	432%	2,473,328	-	25,000	-	-	2,448,328	-	-
	Golden Hoof Wetlands	228,780	50%	114,390	114,390	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Rock Creek Wetlands	1,143,900	69%	790,200	571,950	145,500	-	-	-	-	72,750
Canadian Western Prairie		1,143,900	175%	2,000,000							
	Canadian Prairie Habitats	1,143,900	175%	2,000,000	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexican Wintering Grounds		571,950	50%	285,975							
	Mexican Wintering Habitats	571,950	50%	285,975	285,975	-	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix D: Application/Assurances: If applicable, provide proof of organizational status and if the Offeror claims non-profit tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, then the Offeror shall submit proof of status.

FEB 08 2005	
Internal Revenue Service Date: February 4, 2005 DUCKS UNLIMITED INC % AMY BATSON ASSISTANT CONTROLLER ONE WATERFOWL WAY MEMPHIS TN 38120-2350	Department of the Treasury P. O. Box 2508 Cincinnati, OH 45201 Person to Contact: Ms. Benson #31-07273 Customer Service Representative Toll Free Telephone Number: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET 877-829-5500 Fax Number: 513-263-3756 Federal Identification Number: 13-5643799
Dear Sir or Madam: This is in response to your request of February 4, 2005, regarding your organization's tax-exempt status. Your organization is exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code because it is included in a group ruling issued to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., located in Memphis, TN. Our records indicate that contributions to your organization are deductible under section 170 of the Code, and that you are qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code. If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.	
Sincerely,  Janna K. Skufca, Director, TE/GE Customer Account Services	
DU Operating Manual 2015/16	129

Appendix E: Letters of Support



March 25, 2024

Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Solicitation

RE: Restoring wildlife habitat, surface water and ground water quality in the South Platte River watershed

Dear Selection Committee:

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies strongly supports Ducks Unlimited (DU) in their proposal for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Solicitation fund. We are a nonprofit conservation organization whose mission is to conserve birds and their habitat through an integrated approach of science, education and land stewardship. Bird Conservancy has been headquartered at Barr Lake State Park since our inception in 1988.

We have been working side by side with park managers and staff to develop mitigation and restoration plans in conjunction with Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company (FRICO) work over the last several years. This project would focus on restoring habitat that has been degraded through tree and vegetation removal around Barr Lake. Returning native vegetation will provide shading, cooler temperatures and help protect the soil and encourage water infiltration supporting underground water quality and quantity.

Funds would also be used to mitigate work this past summer/fall, FRICO initiated and will be conducting over the next several years. They are doing extensive berm and shore work in response to dam safety requirements. This includes removing all vegetation along the shoreline, toe ditch and existing berms to address roots and other engineering/slope requirements. This work has significantly altered the shoreline and available habitat for migratory and resident wildlife. Our wildlife habitat biologist, Ashley Mertz, who specializes in wetland restoration has visited the site to provide guidance on reseeded and restoration. Jeff Thompson with CPW and Park Manager, Lisa Gill, have also provided restoration guidance. Ducks Unlimited is helping lead grant development, assisting with habitat restoration and providing engineering support. Together, we are working to ensure restoration efforts maximize wildlife habitat to help mitigate for the extensive loss of old growth cottonwoods and shrubs and annual forbs critical for migratory and breeding waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds and songbirds.

We have been operating our bird banding station for 35 years, annually catching an estimated 1,000 migrating songbirds of 60-70 species. We saw a drastic reduction not only in the numbers of birds caught but the diversity of species. With the recent documentation of 3 billion birds lost in the last 50 years, we need to ensure Barr Lake supports critical habitat and aids in population recovery.

BRIGHTON HEADQUARTERS
14500 Lark Bunting Lane
Brighton, CO 80603
(303) 659-4348

FORT COLLINS OFFICE
230 Cherry Street, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(970) 482-1707

NEBRASKA OFFICE
4502 Avenue I
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 633-1013

www.birdconservancy.org



Proposed habitat restoration work over the next 5 years will improve and mitigate for habitat loss from previous years and ongoing work along more than 2 miles of shoreline at Barr Lake State Park, and associated berms that will be impacted in the next 3-4 years by FRICO. In partnership with DU, FRICO and CPW we will work to restore native vegetation to help reduce erosion, improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and plant cottonwoods proximal to open water habitat. Native plant restoration will also help filter out contaminants from FRICO mechanical work, protect the shoreline thus reducing soil erosion into lake, and mitigate for habitat loss.

Sincerely,

Tammy VerCauteren
Executive Director

BRIGHTON HEADQUARTERS
14500 Lark Bunting Lane
Brighton, CO 80603
(303) 659-4348

FORT COLLINS OFFICE
230 Cherry Street, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(970) 482-1707

NEBRASKA OFFICE
4502 Avenue I
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 633-1013

www.birdconservancy.org



MAJESTIC VIEW
NATURE CENTER

Open Year Round: Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Majesticviewnc.org
MajesticViewNC@Arvada.org
720-898-7405

7030 Garrison Street
Arvada, CO 80004

January 20, 2023

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the proposal for wetland restoration surrounding Oberon Lake within Majestic View Park, located at 7030 Garrison St. Arvada, CO 80004, being submitted by our partners at Ducks Unlimited.

The wetlands surrounding Oberon Lake are home to a variety of wildlife and we are seeing the impacts of invasive plants (e.g. Russian Olives) and changing water levels. The biologists and staff working with the Majestic View Nature Center all have an interest in preserving the wetland habitat for educational programming, public use for recreation and wellness, and other ecological services that Majestic View provides.

The City of Arvada and I fully support the efforts of Ducks Unlimited as they seek external funding to support a program designed to conserve our wetlands. Any programs that can help increase the sustainability of our park system will benefit our youth programs, the wildlife living in the park, and the community at large.

Sincerely,

Enessa Janes
Director of Vibrant Communities and Neighborhoods
City of Arvada, Colorado



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Habitat Conservation Unit, Terrestrial Section
317 W. Prospect Rd.
Fort Collins, CO 80526

March 29, 2024

Dear Trustee Council:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is pleased to support Ducks Unlimited's (DU) Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resource Damages Project. This project will enhance, restore, and protect wetlands within the South Platte River Watershed, facilitating improvements in surface and groundwater quality.

DU has an extensive record of conservation in the South Platte River corridor, and CPW has worked closely with DU for decades to provide habitat for wildlife there and statewide. This project includes extensive restoration work on Banner Lakes State Wildlife Area (SWA) and Front Range National Wildlife Refuges, which are near the Rocky Mountain Arsenal site, as well as work at Tamarack SWA, which will have direct positive impacts on water quality while also improving wildlife habitat on some of CPW's most important and heavily utilized areas. In partnership with DU, CPW is participating in all of these projects, and many other projects outside the scope of this proposal.

DU is the largest organization in the nation devoted to wetland conservation. We are unaware of another organization with the reach and impact to deliver projects within and outside of Colorado for the resources (e.g., migratory wetland birds) that were impacted by the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. We strongly recommend funding this important conservation work.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brian D. Sullivan
Wetlands Program Coordinator

Jeff Davis, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Parks and Wildlife Commission: Dallas Ray, Chair • Richard Reading, Vice-Chair • Karen Bailey, Secretary • Jessica Beaulieu
Marie Haskett • Jack Murphy • Gabriel Otero • Duke Phillips, IV • Gary T. Skiba • James Jay Tuttleton • Eden Vardy





COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources
Northeast Regional Office
6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216
P 303.291.7227

March 28, 2024

RE: Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Solicitation Fund Opportunity

Barr Lake State Park (BLSP) enthusiastically supports Ducks Unlimited (DU) in their proposal for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Solicitation fund. BLSP provides an array of outdoor recreational activities to visitors while serving as an oasis for migratory and residential wildlife. With over 350 bird species recorded, including nesting bald eagles and a lively rookery, the park is a paradise for birds and bird enthusiasts. Many other wildlife species such as deer, coyotes, foxes, and other small mammals depend on the park's diverse habitats.

The mission of Colorado Parks and Wildlife is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. We are dedicated to providing quality wildlife habitat that supports rich biodiversity and ensuring the park remains a thriving environment for both wildlife and visitors alike.

This project aims to restore degraded habitat around Barr Lake by reintroducing native vegetation, removing invasive species like Russian olive, providing shading, and stabilizing the soil while supporting groundwater quality and quantity. Funds will also address mitigation for recent and upcoming FRICO-initiated berm work, which has and will significantly alter or damage wildlife habitat. DU is leading grant development and providing engineering support, while BCR and CPW staff provide guidance on restoration needs and methods. The key goals of this collaboration are to restore critical wildlife habitat impacted while simultaneously reducing soil runoff and improving groundwater quality. This effort aims to mitigate past and ongoing habitat loss along Barr Lake's shoreline, as well as in the riparian and wetland areas surrounding irrigation canals on at least 40 acres of park property.

The work areas are highlighted in orange in the attached map of Barr Lake State Park.

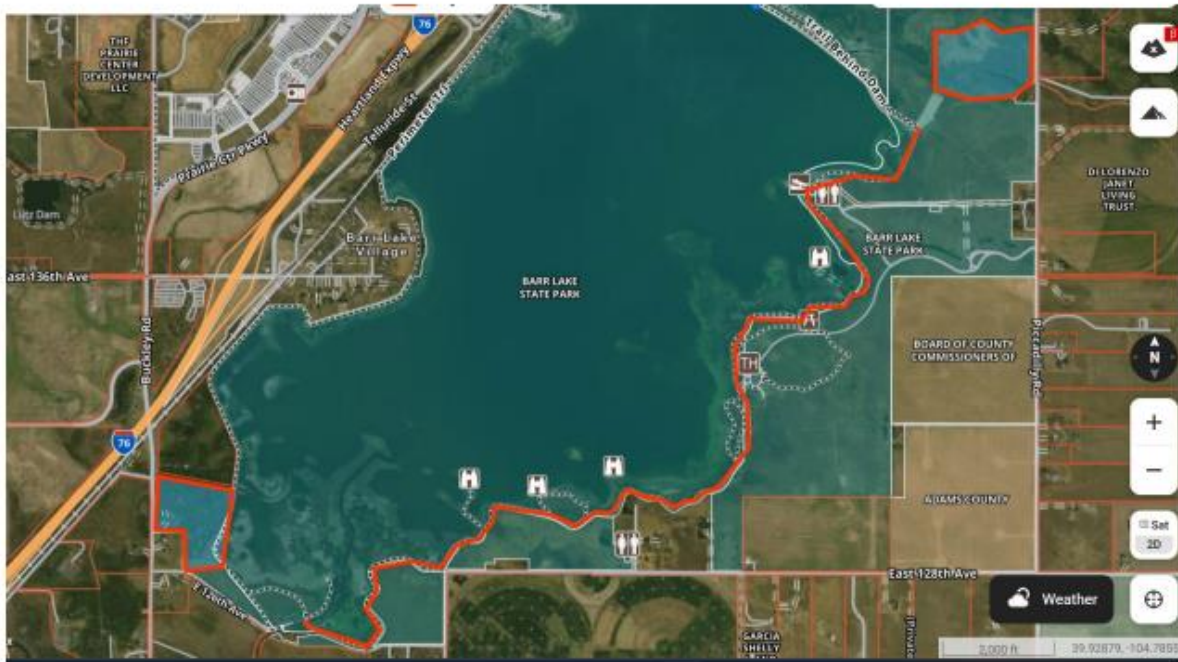
Sincerely,

Lisa Gill
Park Manager
Barr Lake State Park

Jeff Davis, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Parks and Wildlife Commission: Dallas May, Chair • Richard Reading, Vice-Chair • Karen Bailey, Secretary • Jessica Beaulieu
Marie Haskett • Jack Murphy • Gabriel Otero • Duke Phillips, IV • Gary T. Skiba • James Jay Tutchtton • Eden Vardy



Attachment: Project Area Map





March 27, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for Ducks Unlimited's Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Project Proposal

Dear Trustee Council,

Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, the only local land trust in the San Luis Valley, has collaborated with Ducks Unlimited (DU) many times over the years and is pleased to assist DU in delivering its Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resource Damages Project Proposal. This proposal will not only enhance, restore, and protect wetlands for migratory birds near the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, but also throughout the Central Flyway in Colorado, Mexico, and Canada. This includes the San Luis Valley, which is a crucial nesting, feeding, and stopover area for birds that also utilize the South Platte River of Colorado. DU has an extensive record working with us on conservation in the San Luis Valley, and we look forward to working with them once again. This proposal includes large-scale wetland restoration work on the Rock Creek corridor, which includes portions of the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge and multiple landowners enrolled in perpetual conservation easements. The San Luis Valley wetlands are particularly crucial due to their location on the flyway as the distance would be too great between stopovers for many bird species if not for the wetlands in the San Luis Valley. Many of these wetlands are maintained by irrigation systems that if left in disrepair not only impact agricultural yield but threaten the very existence of these wetlands. Upon completion, this project will result in restoring and maintaining these wetlands, leading to very high bird use and duration of habitat benefit that is being sought by this request for proposal. We believe this effort has the greatest probability of success in meeting the goals of this program, and are pleased to support funding of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Susan M. Pierce-Platais".

Susan M. Pierce-Platais
Executive Director
Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust
840 Grand Ave, Del Norte, CO. 88832
susan@rightslv.org, (719) 657-0800

PO Box 444 Del Norte, CO 81132
(719) 657.0800
info@riograndelandtrust.org
riograndelandtrust.org

CONSERVING
OUR LAND, WATER
AND WAY OF LIFE
IN COLORADO'S
SAN LUIS VALLEY

South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc.

615 South 10th Avenue Sterling, CO 80751



March 29, 2024

RE: Letter of Support for Ducks Unlimited's Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Project Proposal

Dear Trustee Council,

South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP) is pleased to support Ducks Unlimited's (DU) Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resource Damages Project Proposal. South Platte Water Related Activities Program is a non-profit organization of South Platte water users developed to meet Colorado's obligations under the endangered species recovery program implemented on the Platte River in Nebraska.

This proposal will enhance, restore, and protect wetlands within the South Platte River Watershed which will result in improved surface water and groundwater quality, which is a priority for this Request for Proposals. DU has an extensive record working with SPWRAP to successfully complete joint water conservation and habitat projects along the South Platte River corridor, furthering the goals of both organizations. This proposal includes extensive restoration work on Tamarack State Wildlife Area that SPWRAP is partnering with DU on to continue to meet our organizational goals while also providing significant habitat to wetland-dependent wildlife on the State Wildlife Area.

You will not find an organization better equipped to meet the purpose of this funding to improve the South Platte River Watershed. We believe this proposal will result in the greatest positive impact to the resources negatively affected by the Rocky Mountain Arsenal over the years, and we recommend it be funded for that purpose.

Thank you and please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard L. Belt'.

Richard L. Belt

Executive Director – South Platte Water Related Activities Program, Inc.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
 6550 Gateway Road, Bldg. 121
 Commerce City, Colorado 80022-4358
 Telephone (303) 289-0232 Fax (303) 289-0579



In Reply Refer to:
 FWS/R6/NWRS/CFR/RMA/TP

March 27, 2024

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRDA
 CDPHE – Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
 4300 E. Cherry Creek S. Drive
 Denver, CO 80246

RE: Ducks Unlimited Two Ponds & Rocky Mountain Arsenal Restoration Proposal

Dear Ms. Newton,

I am writing on behalf of the Colorado Front Range National Wildlife Refuge Complex to support the Ducks Unlimited proposal for the projects at Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge (Two Ponds) and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMA). The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service owns and manages both properties as part of a complex of urban Refuges in the Denver Metro area. Two Ponds, a 72-acre refuge with native prairie ecosystems, is known for its valuable wetland habitat. Through an extensive cleanup process, RMA NWR has become a 15,000-acre oasis in the middle of one of the fastest growing metropolitan communities in the country and has been designated as an Urban Flagship Refuge.

Along with its location in a rapidly developing urban environment comes unique challenges such as stormwater runoff from developments surrounding the Refuge. The Irondale Gulch watershed begins southwest of RMA and exits near Adams City High School. In 2013 a major flood event led to vast amounts of water retained on the Refuge, but portions of Commerce City in the downstream area had to be evacuated. DU's proposal will help to establish a wetland habitat area where flood waters that enter the Refuge will be slowed and filtered, minimizing damage downstream.

The Colorado Front Range National Wildlife Refuge Complex has a history of partnering with DU and can rely on their technical expertise to carry out restoration projects. Therefore the Colorado Front Range National Wildlife Refuge Complex is supportive of Ducks Unlimited's proposal. Please feel free to contact me at 303-729-2202 or david_c_lucas@fws.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

DAVID LUCAS

Digitally signed by DAVID
 LUCAS
 Date: 2024.03.27 08:30:16
 -06'00'

Project Leader/Refuge Manager
 Colorado Front Range National Wildlife Refuge Complex



Ecosystem Management, Monitoring, and Technical Services
<https://wetlanddynamics.com>

Cary Aloia
Wetland Dynamics, LLC
3393 E County Road 9 S
Cary_Aloia@msn.com
(719) 850-2562

March 27, 2024

Subject: Letter of Support for Ducks Unlimited's Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resources Damages Project Proposal

Dear Trustee Council,

Wetland Dynamics, LLC (WD) looks forward to assisting Ducks Unlimited (DU) in delivering its Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Resource Damages Project Proposal. This proposal will enhance, restore, and protect wetlands near the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, and also throughout the Central Flyway from Canada south through Colorado into Mexico for migratory birds. This includes the San Luis Valley (SLV) of Colorado, which provides crucial nesting and stopover habitats for birds that utilize the South Platte River of Colorado. DU has an extensive record working with us on conservation projects in the SLV. This proposal includes a large-scale wetland restoration project on the Rock Creek corridor, including privately conserved properties and portions of the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge. Upon completion, this project will result in resilient wetlands and riparian areas that promote high quality habitat for a variety of waterfowl and waterbirds during both spring and fall migration and during the nesting season. We believe this effort supports the goals of this funding request, promotes cross boundary partnerships, improves the resiliency of water resources, and will enhance habitat for birds utilizing resources as needed throughout the Central Flyway. We appreciate the opportunity to provide support for funding of this proposal for DU.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cary Aloia".

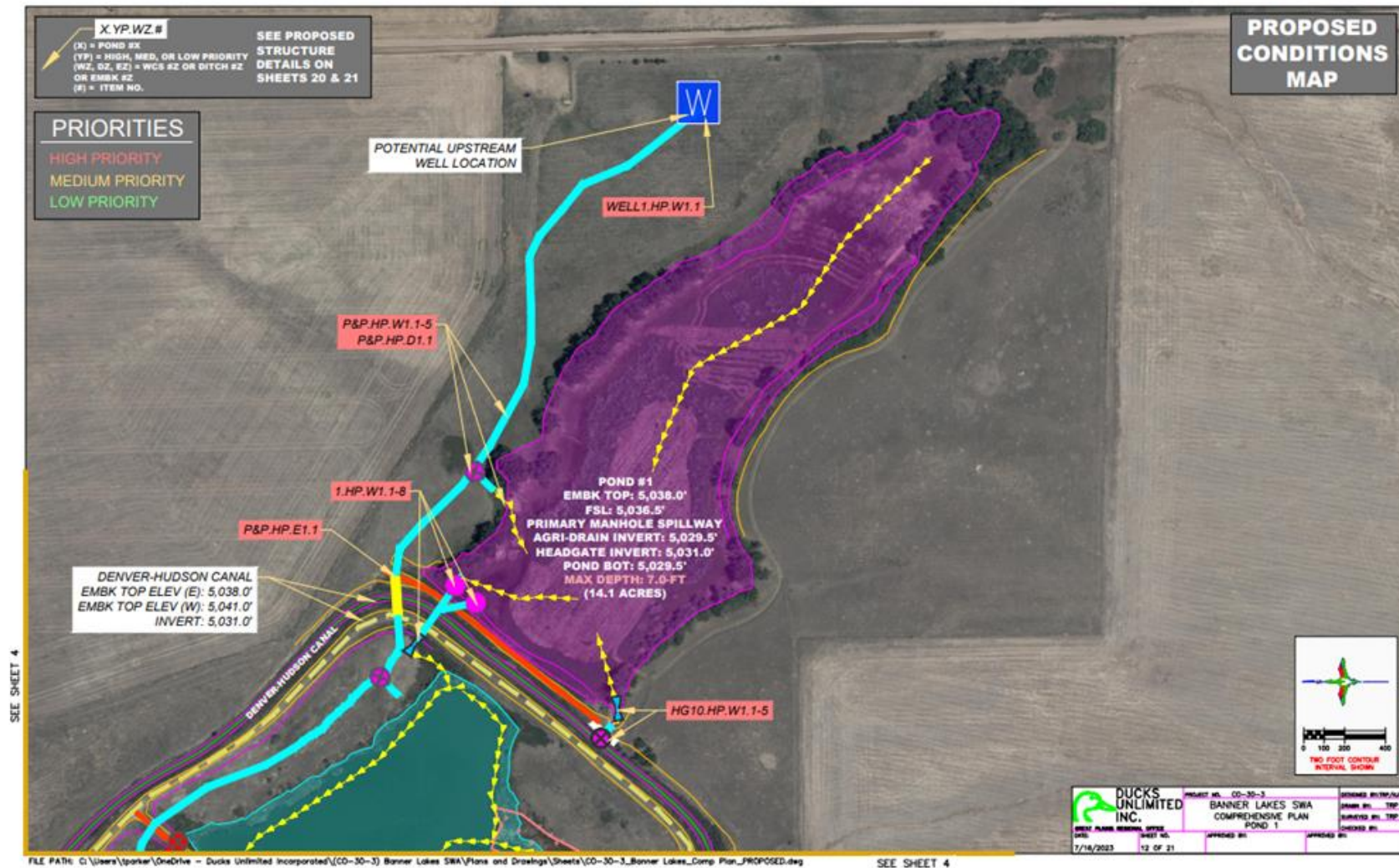
Cary Aloia

3393 E County Road 9 S, Monte Vista, CO 81144

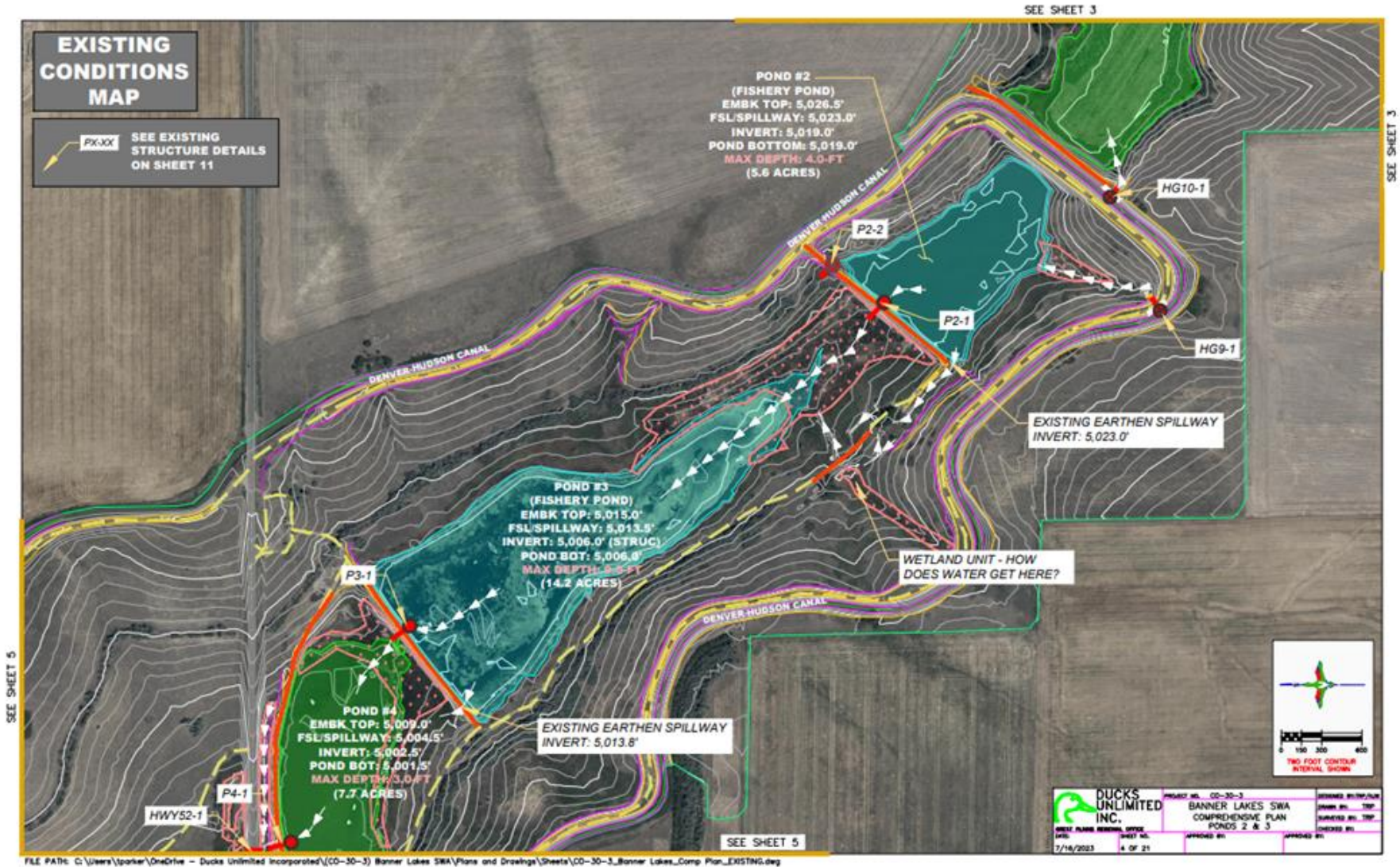
Appendix F: Project Maps, Conceptual Plans & Engineering Plansets

Banner Lakes State Wildlife Area

1. Excerpt from engineer planset(s) developed outlining proposed conditions and structures at Banner Lakes SWA

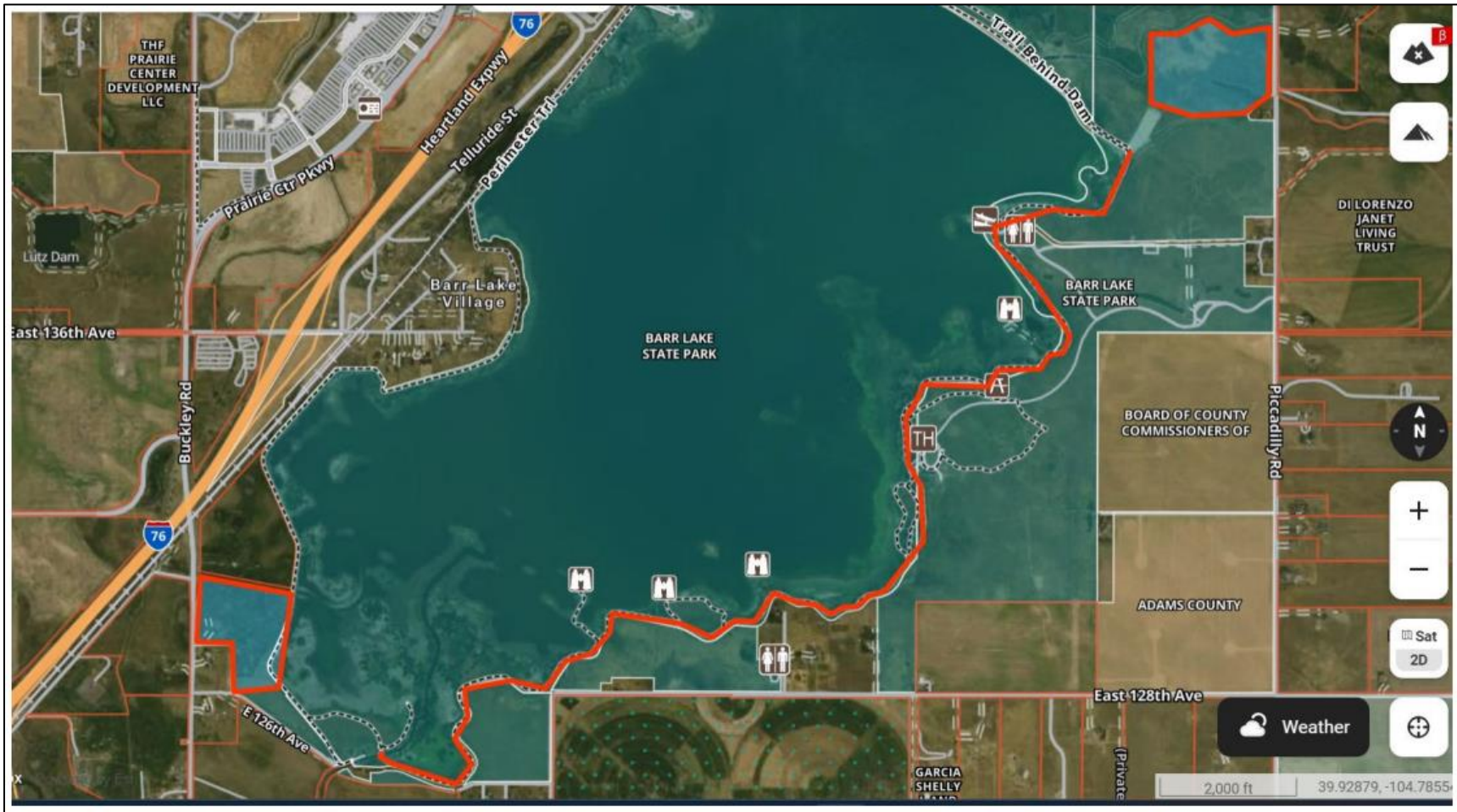


2. Excerpt from engineering planset(s) developed outlining existing conditions and structures at Banner Lakes SWA



Barr Lake State Park

1. Proposed project site(s) at Barr Lake State Park

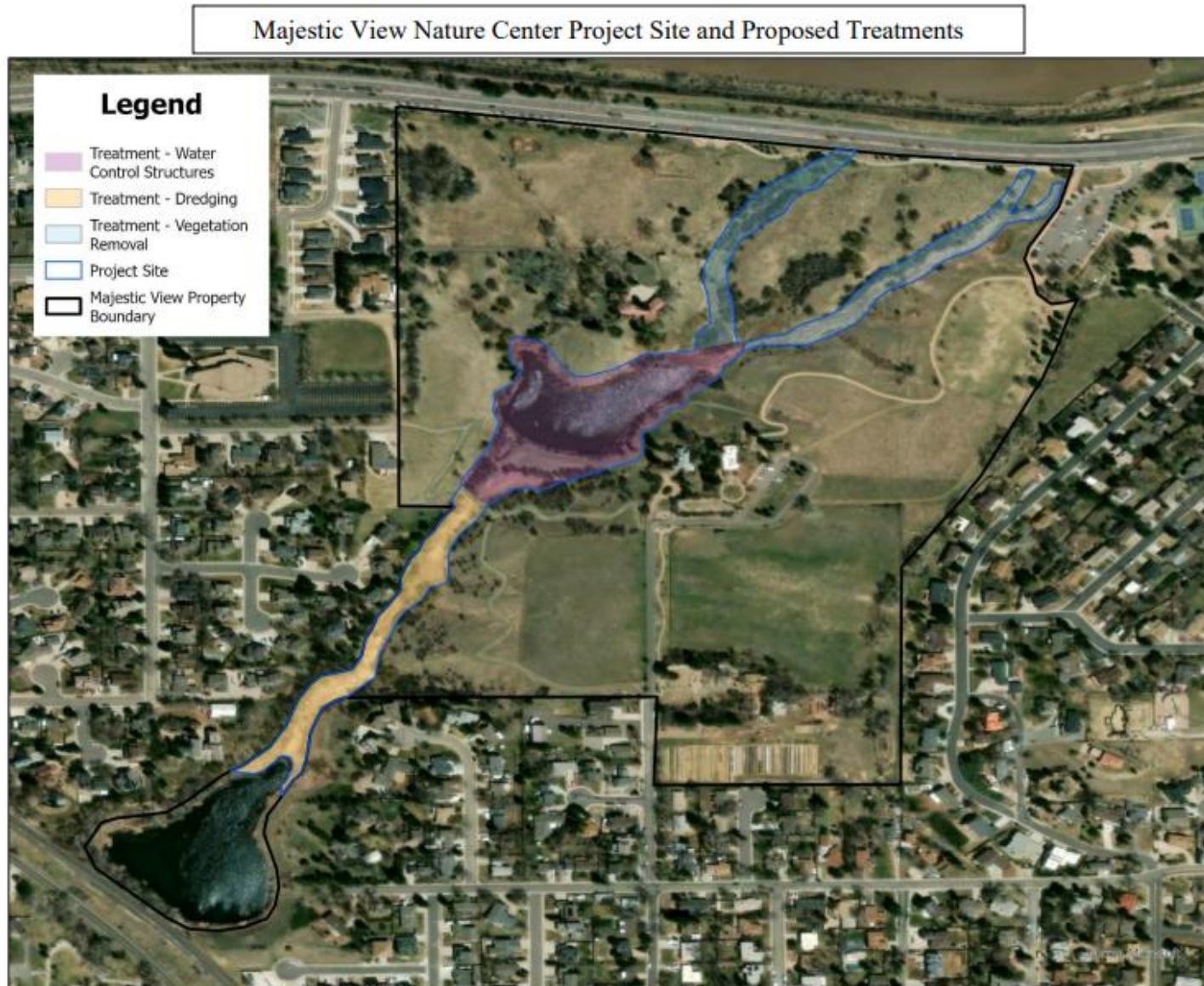


2. Image demonstrating recent ditch construction impacts at Barr Lake State Park, which have had significant impact on the quantity and quality of habitat at the site.



Majestic View Nature Center

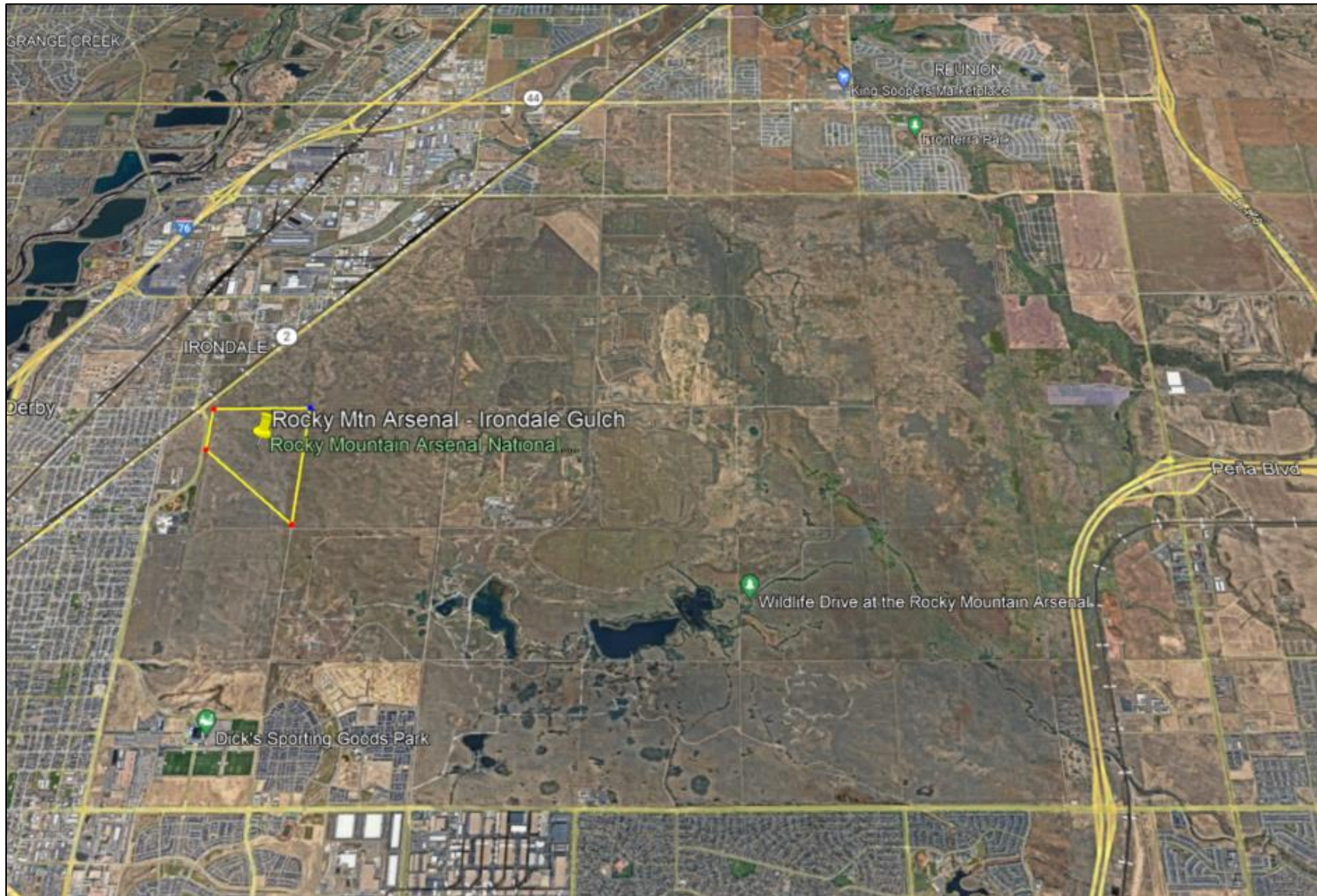
1. Site map and preliminary proposed restoration activities for Majestic View Nature Center



2. Current conditions at Majestic View Nature Center – Oberon Lake is undergoing significant sedimentation, resulting in a loss of water capacity and habitat.



2. Proposed Irondale Gulch site

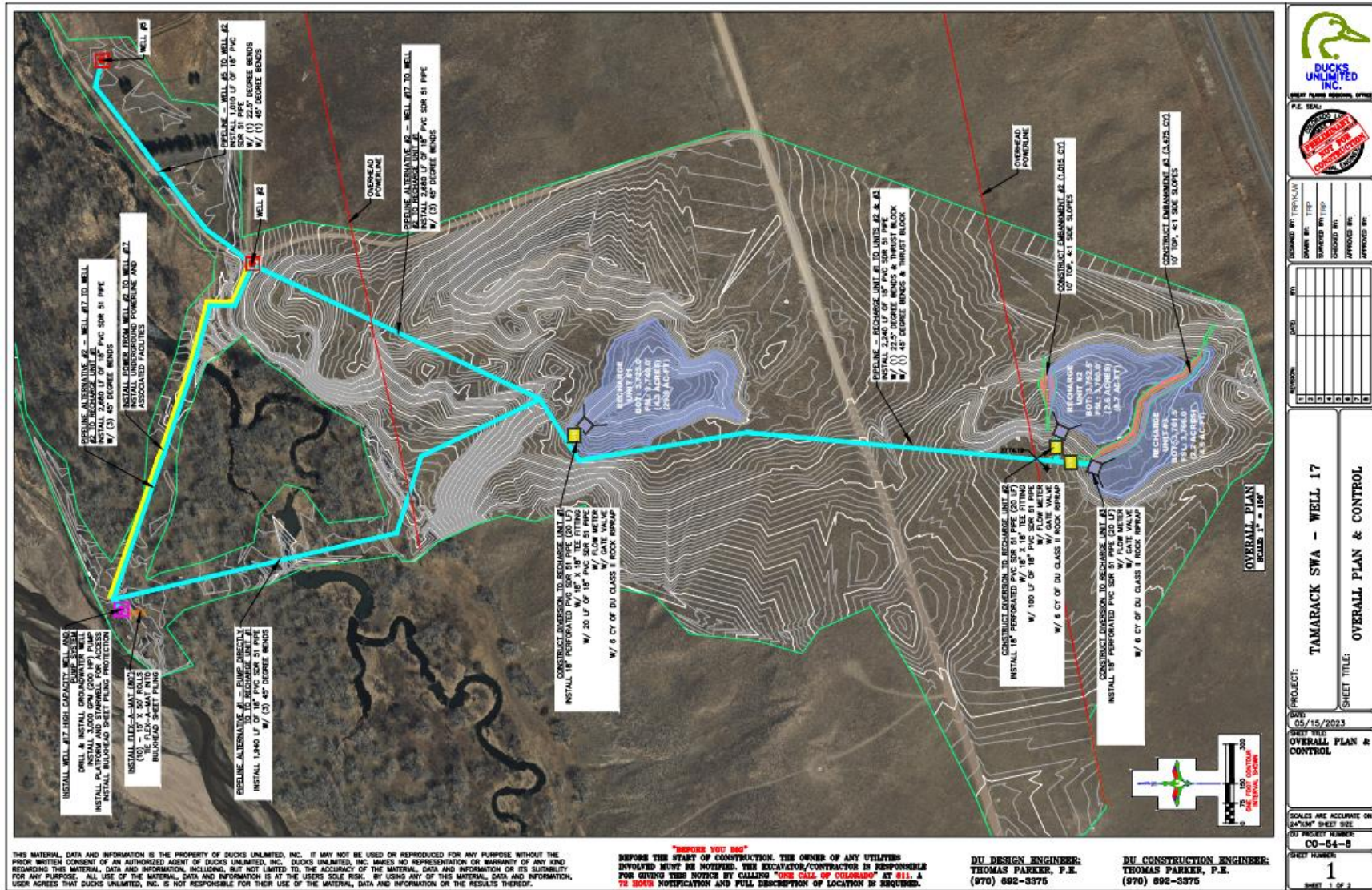


3. Aerial imagery of Irondale Gulch site today



Tamarack Plan Phase I

1. Initial engineer planset for Tamarack Plan Phase I



Two Ponds NWR

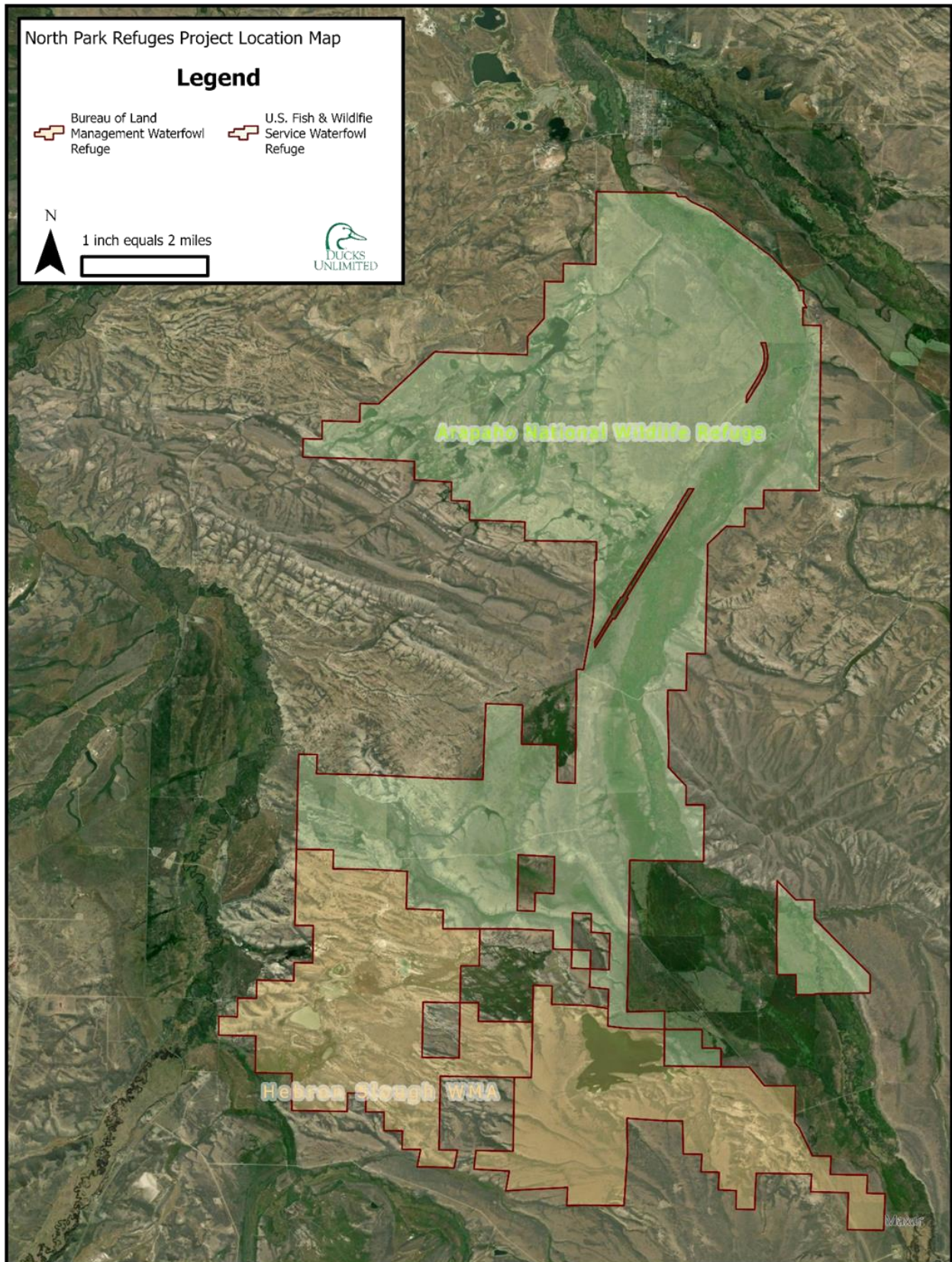
1. Site map for Two Ponds NWR project



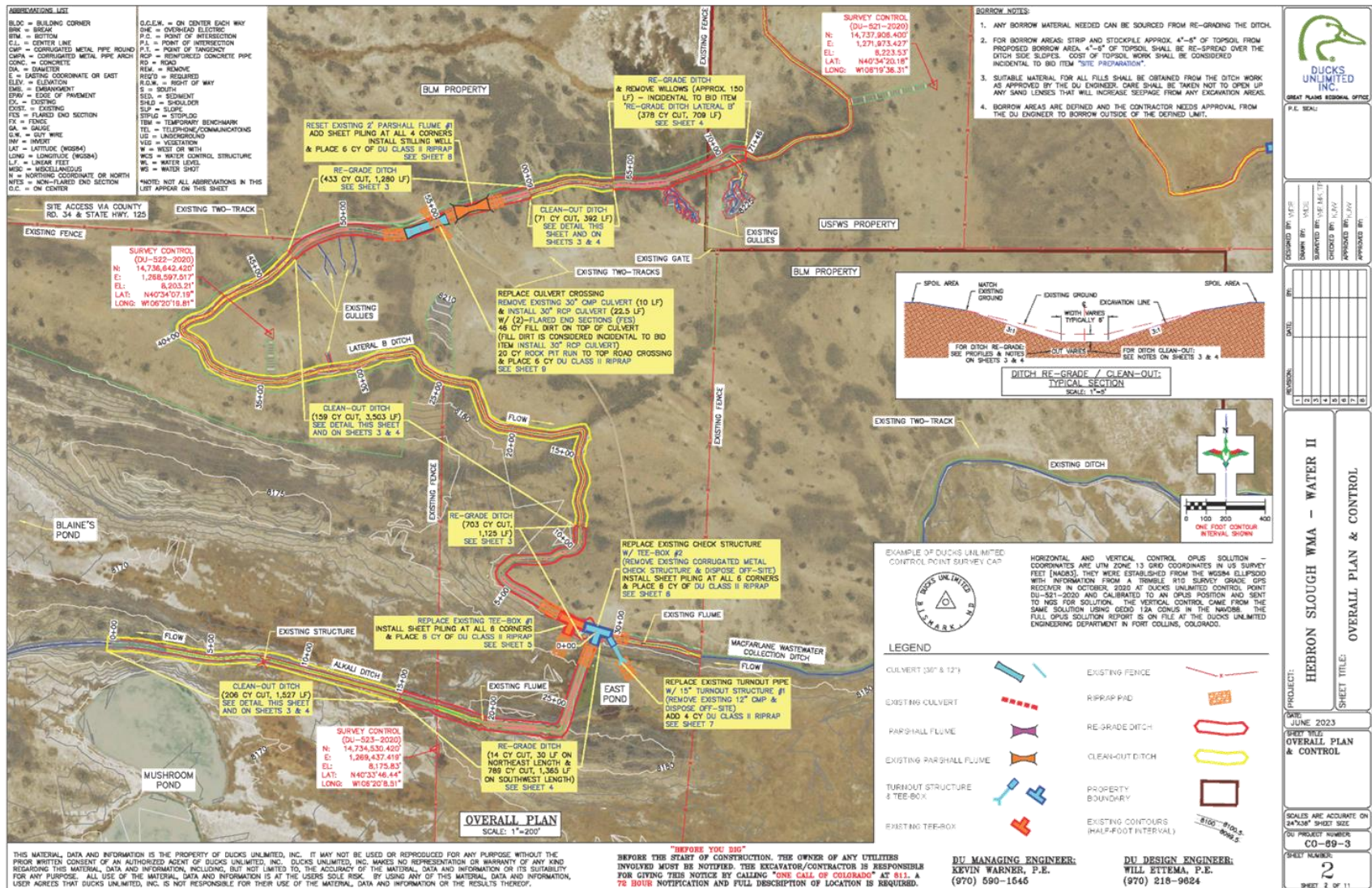
2. Recent image of Two Ponds NWR, demonstrating loss of open water habitat occurring due to cattail infiltration



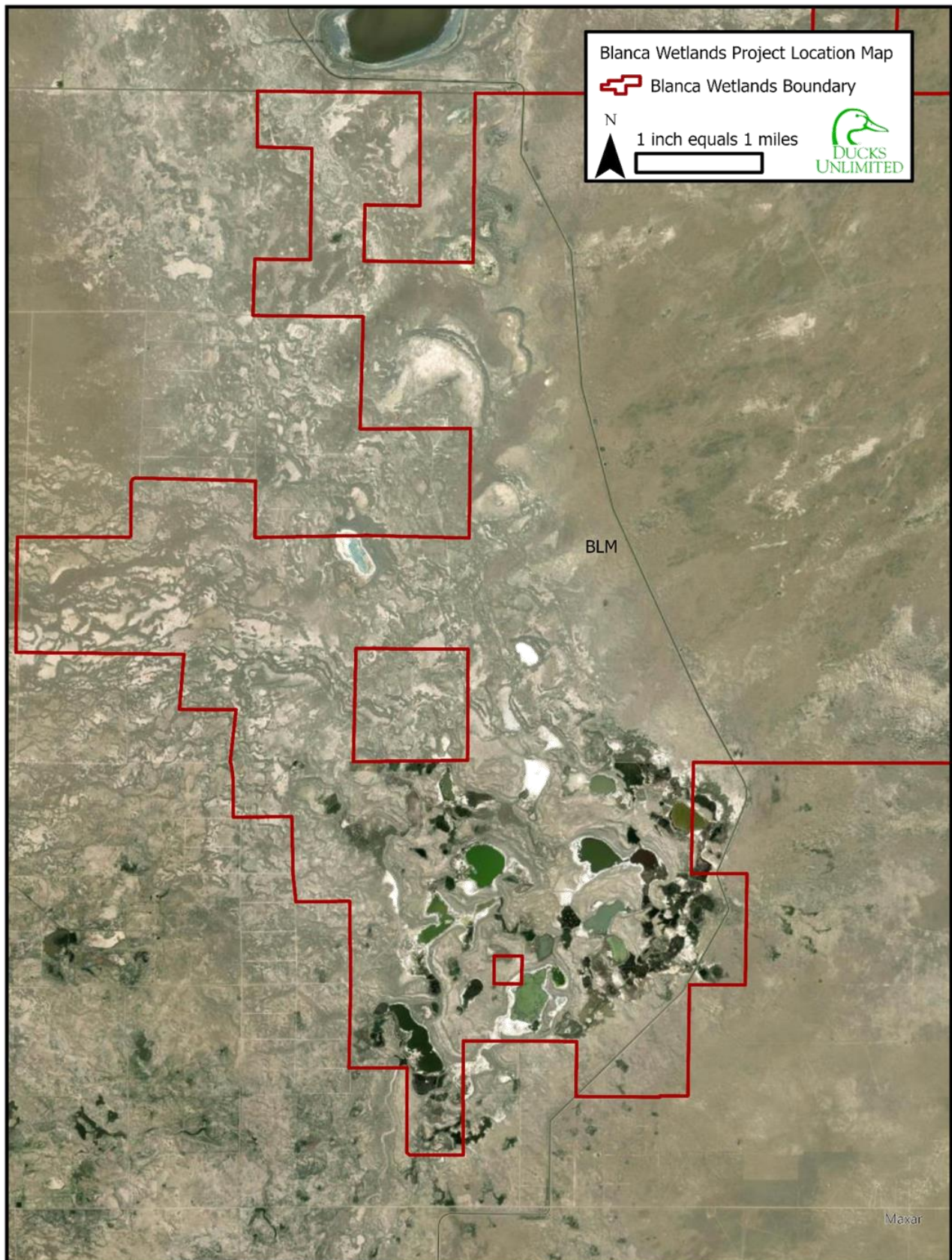
North Park Refuges



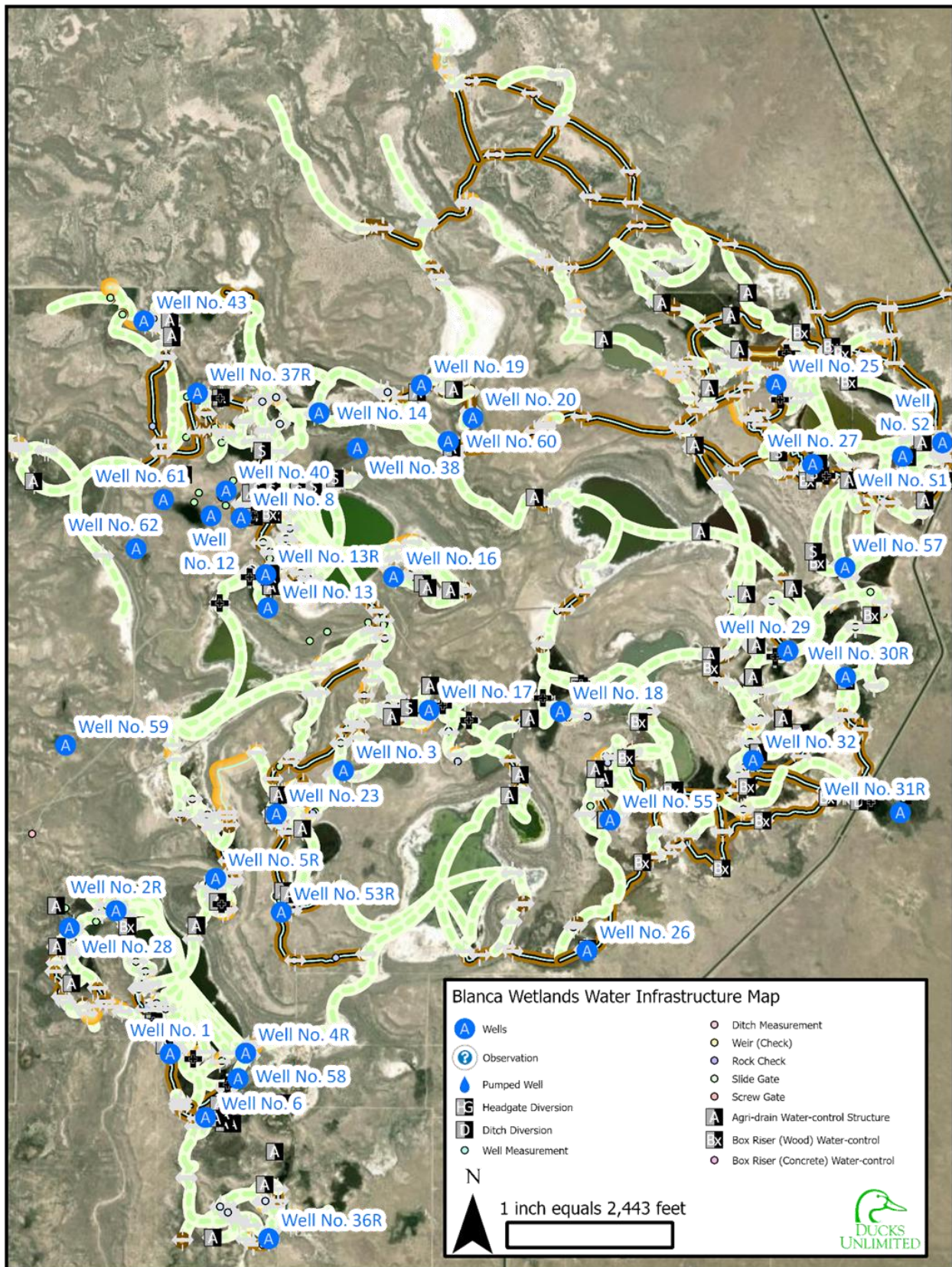
2. Planset for Ditch Rehabilitation Work on Hebron Slough WMA



Blanca Wetlands



Blanca Wetlands



Golden Hoof Wetlands

1. Evidence of Preliminary Property Inspection completed for the proposed Golden Hoof conservation easement



Lands Project Summary

January 2022

CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Project Name	Golden Hoof CE
Project Number	CO0355001
County, State	Saguache, Colorado
Acres	1,758
Approvals Needed/ Rationale	LRC
LCP (Priority Level)	San Luis Valley (II)

Target Protection Date	6/30/2024
Landowner	Karel and Alice Starek
CE Type	Donation
Estimated Value (If Applicable)	\$800,000
Purchase Price (If Applicable)	N/A
Endowment Value and Source	\$29,000 Landowner

1. Provide a high-level summary of the project. What will the protection of this property accomplish (select all that apply and describe)?

☒ Habitat Values
 ☒ Partnership Opportunity
 ☐ Ecosystem Services
 ☐ Other

The property contains a large amount of potential wetland area based on hydric soils and currently functioning wetlands in an area known as a high desert, the San Luis Valley. It is a landscape that is known for its value to migrating and sometimes breeding waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The grasslands are intact and relatively well maintained with the landowners desiring to improve all aspects for wildlife and ranching. The property donation will be used as required match to achieve wetland restoration and enhancement on this property as well as others throughout the San Luis Valley. This property adjoins the 2,488 acres WAT-held Corzine Conservation Easement, which adjoins the 4,579 acres Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area where DU has completed many wetland restoration project phases over the years. Additionally, it adjoins 1,023 acres of NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program easements and 800 acres of State Land Board property. If this CE is secured, that will result in 10,647 acres of contiguous protected habitat. Within 20 miles, there are thousands of acres of other protected habitats, including many wetlands, and WAT has over 2 dozen conservation easements in the relatively small San Luis Valley priority landscape. The property currently functions as a working ranch, and the landowners are willing to retain and pursue additional water rights for the purpose of ranching and irrigation of wetlands. Other landowners could possibly purchase the property to move the water rights elsewhere, which would essentially render the wetlands permanently dry since most water that would have made it to the wetland would be diverted to other uses. Additionally, most other landowners would likely not have as high of a desire to manage the wetlands for waterfowl habitat or to protect the habitat in perpetuity. This amount of water right with landowners willing to utilize them for conservation is rare in the San Luis Valley and will allow for many restoration and enhancement design options in the future to improve the wetland habitat while protecting and adding to a very large wetland/grassland complex in perpetuity.

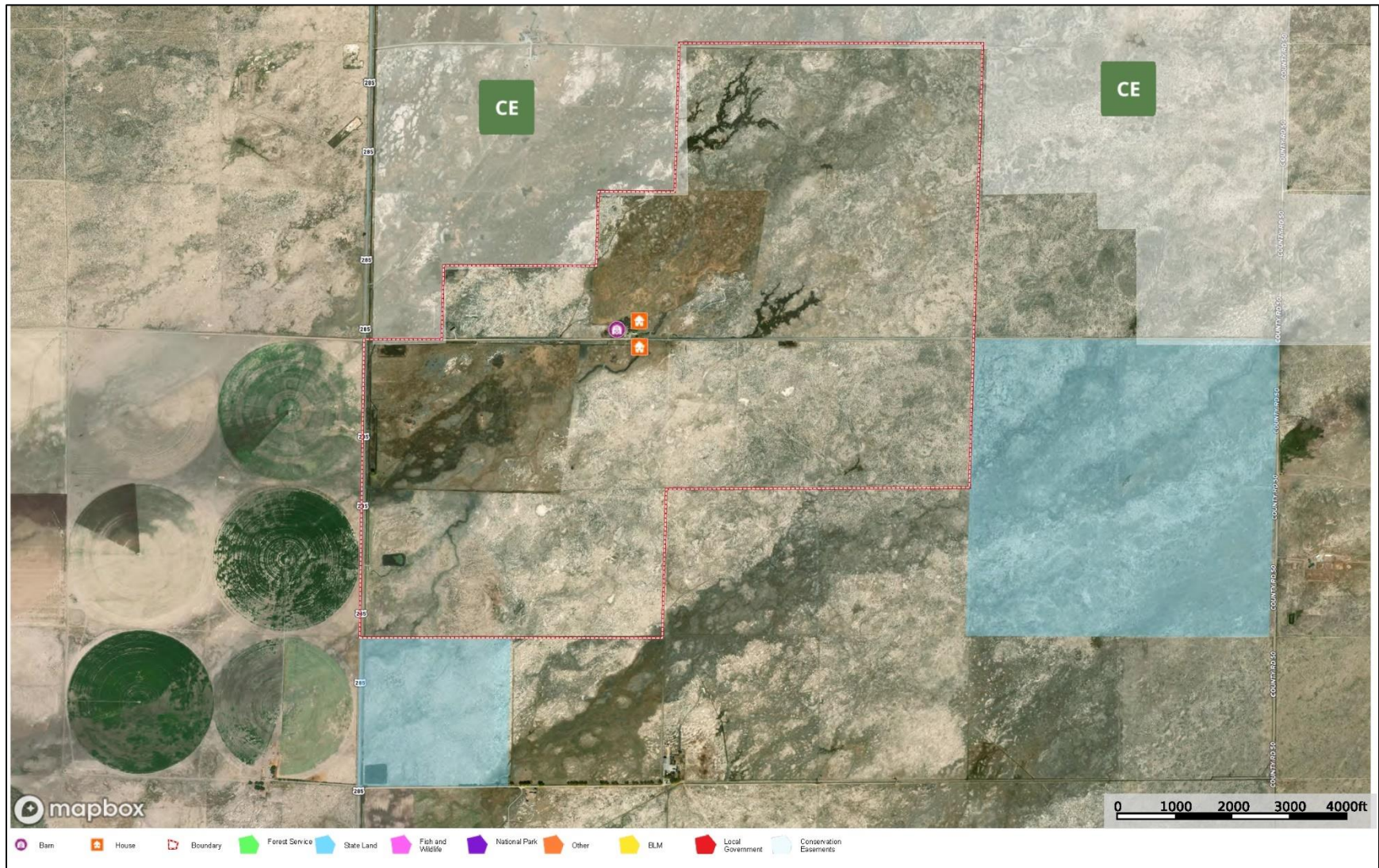
2. Why should DU/WAT protect this property with a DU/WAT held conservation easement now (select all that apply and describe)?

☐ Threats
 ☒ Priority Area
 ☐ Regional Significance
 ☒ Other

Lands Project Summary and PPI (Revised 1/2022)

Page 1 of 11

2. Map outlining proposed Golden Hoof Wetlands property in the San Luis Valley of Colorado

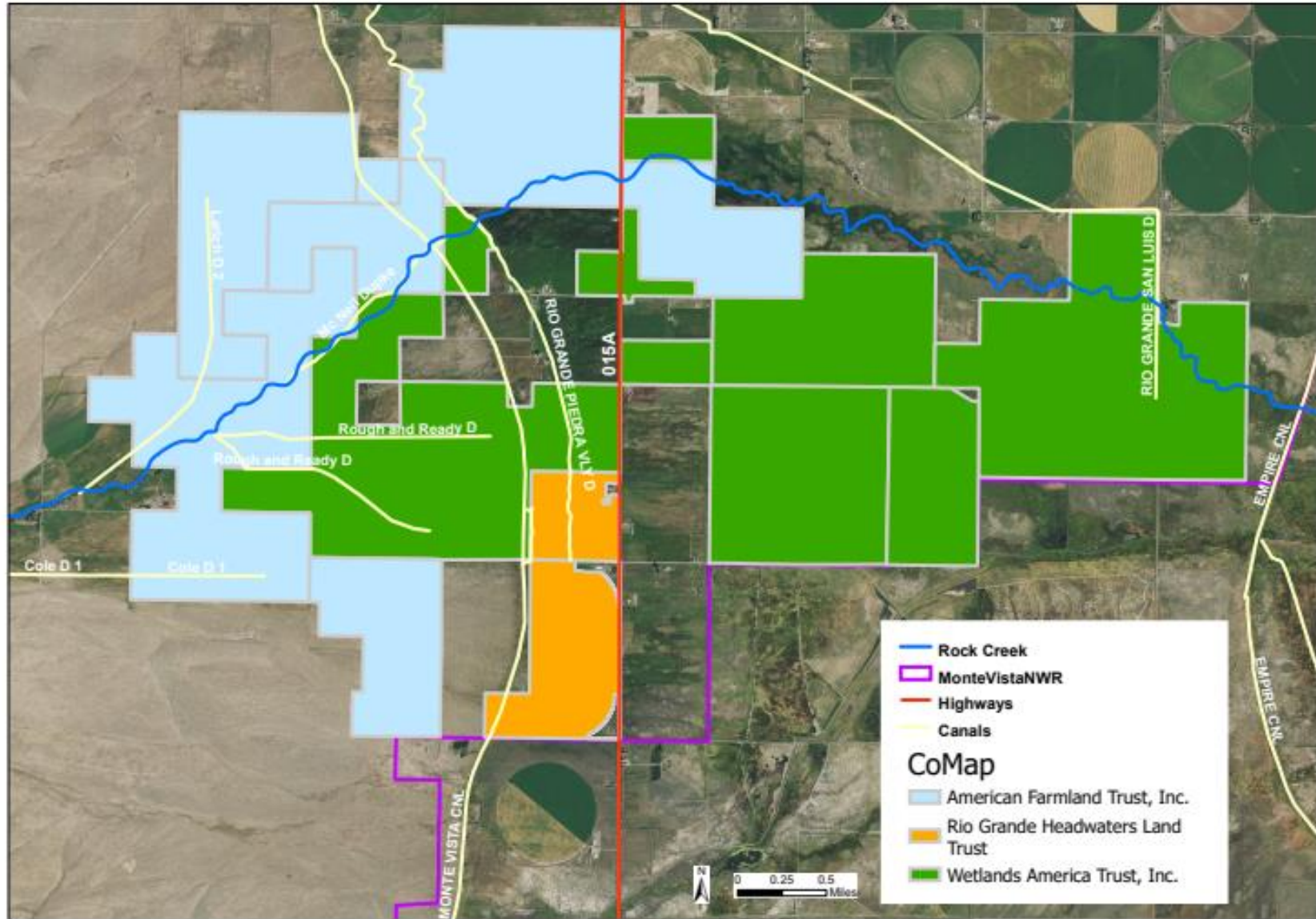


3. Photo of Golden Hoof site pre-project

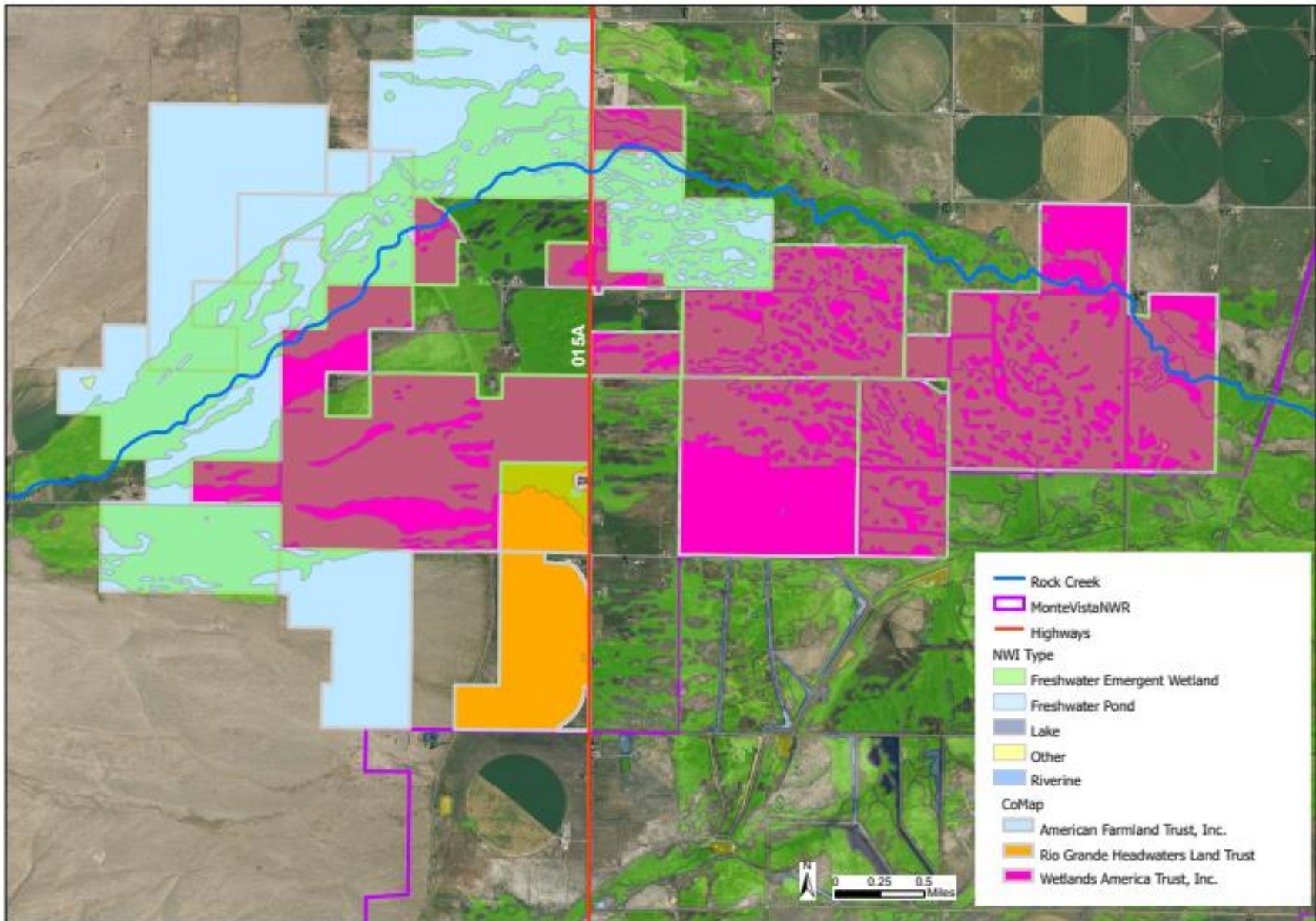


Rock Creek Restoration

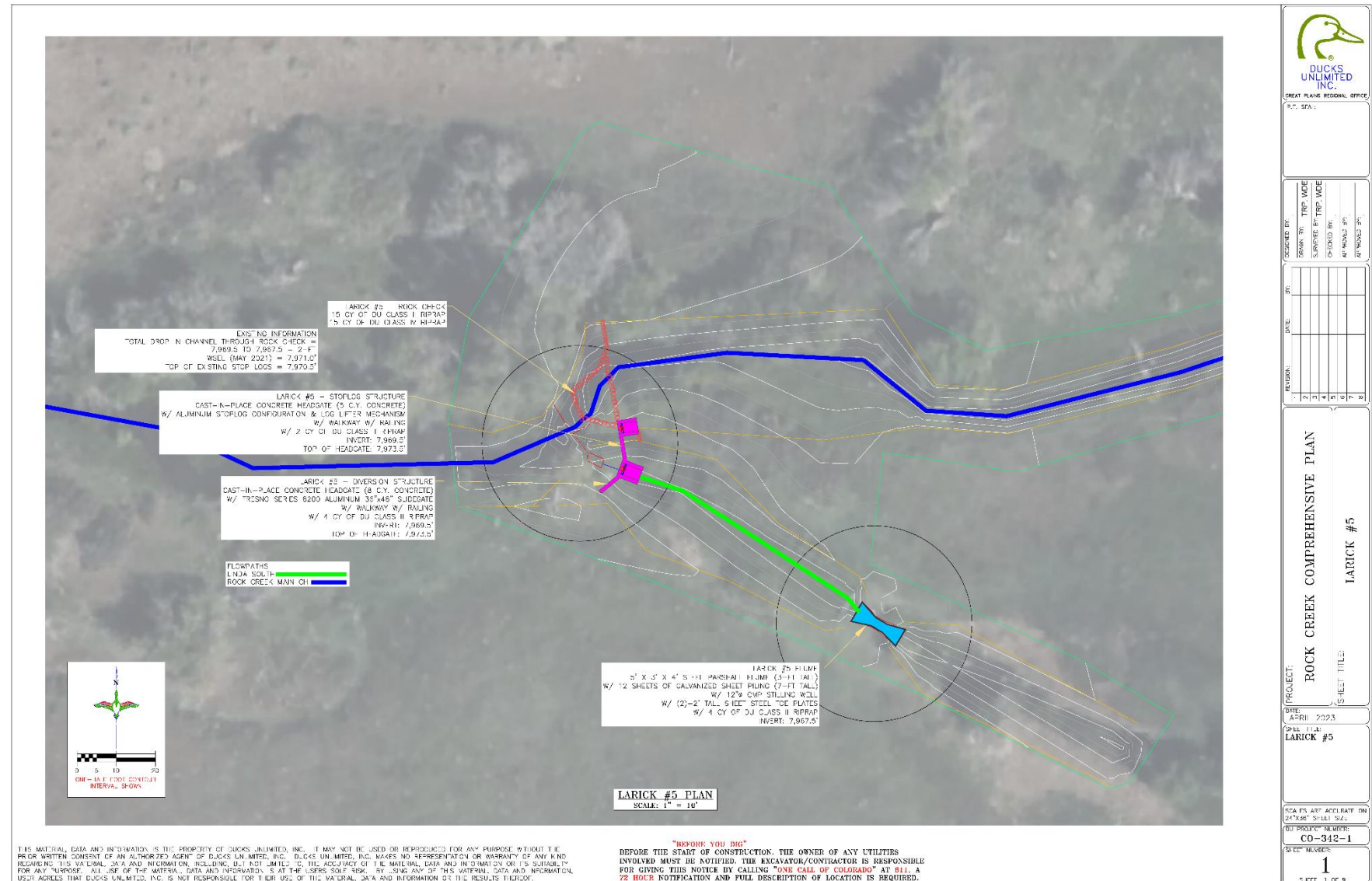
1. Map of Rock Creek Restoration project site, CoMap denotes existing conservation easements and their respective easement holder

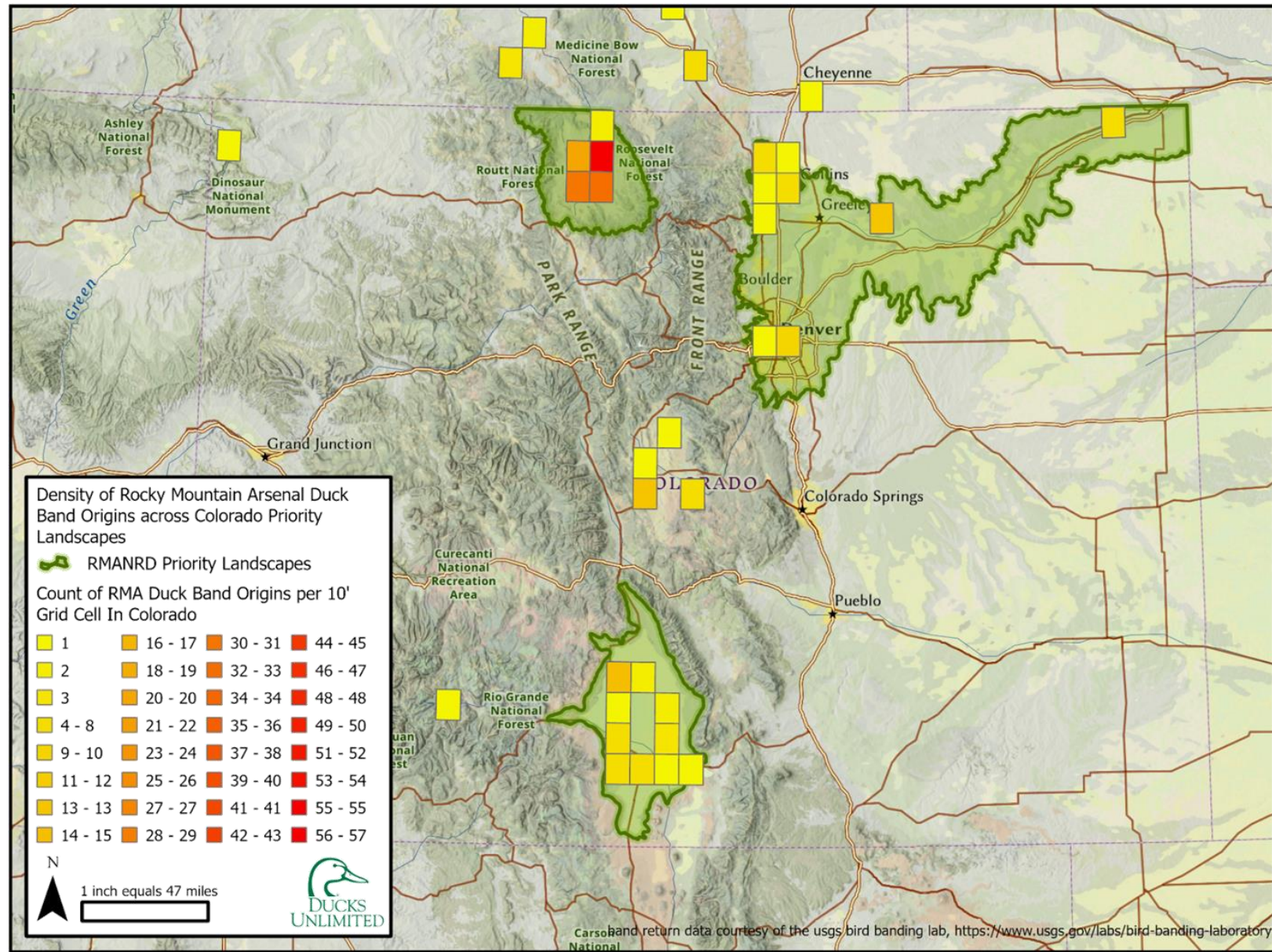


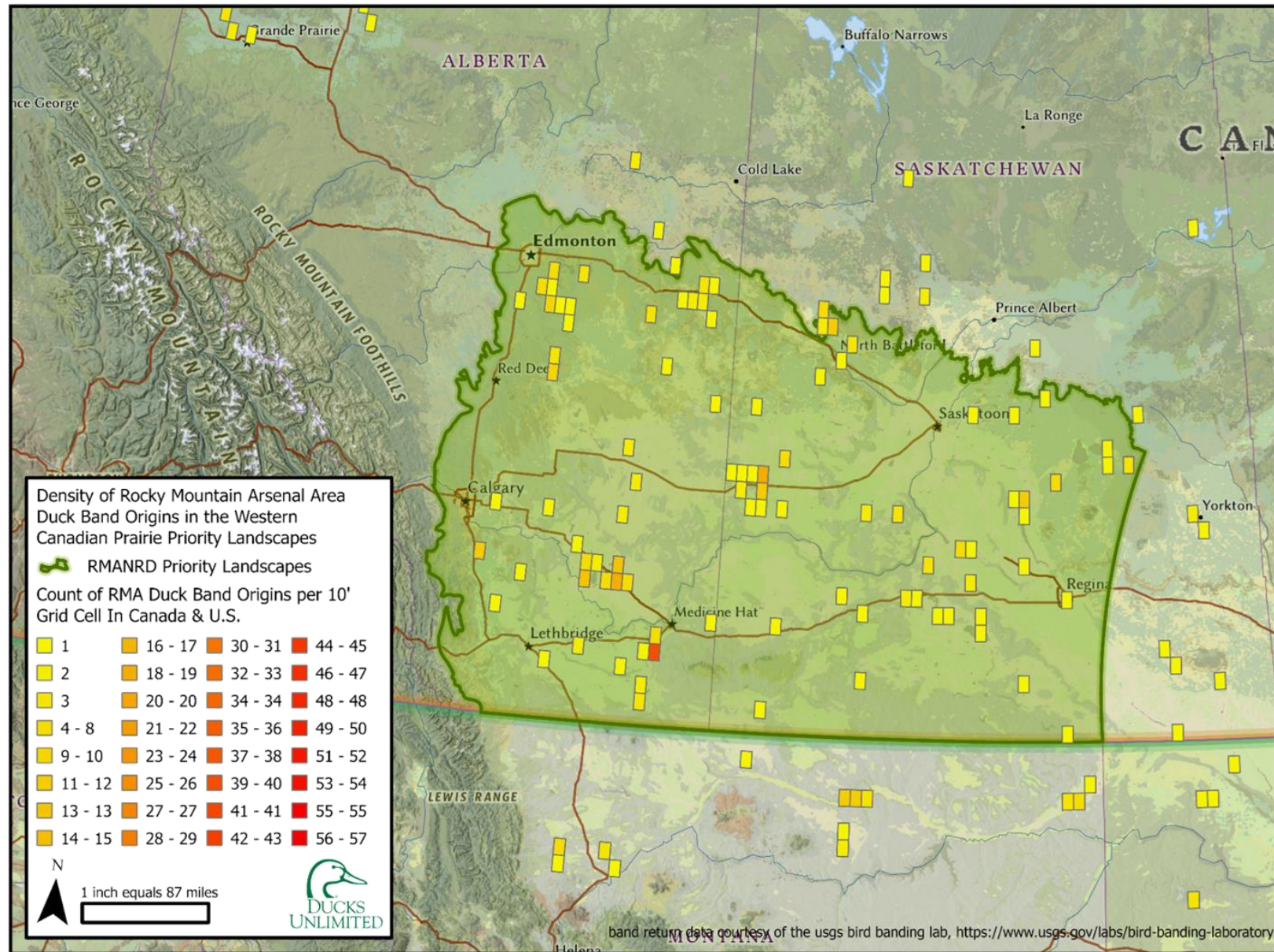
2. National Wetland Inventory along the Rock Creek corridor on existing conservation easements

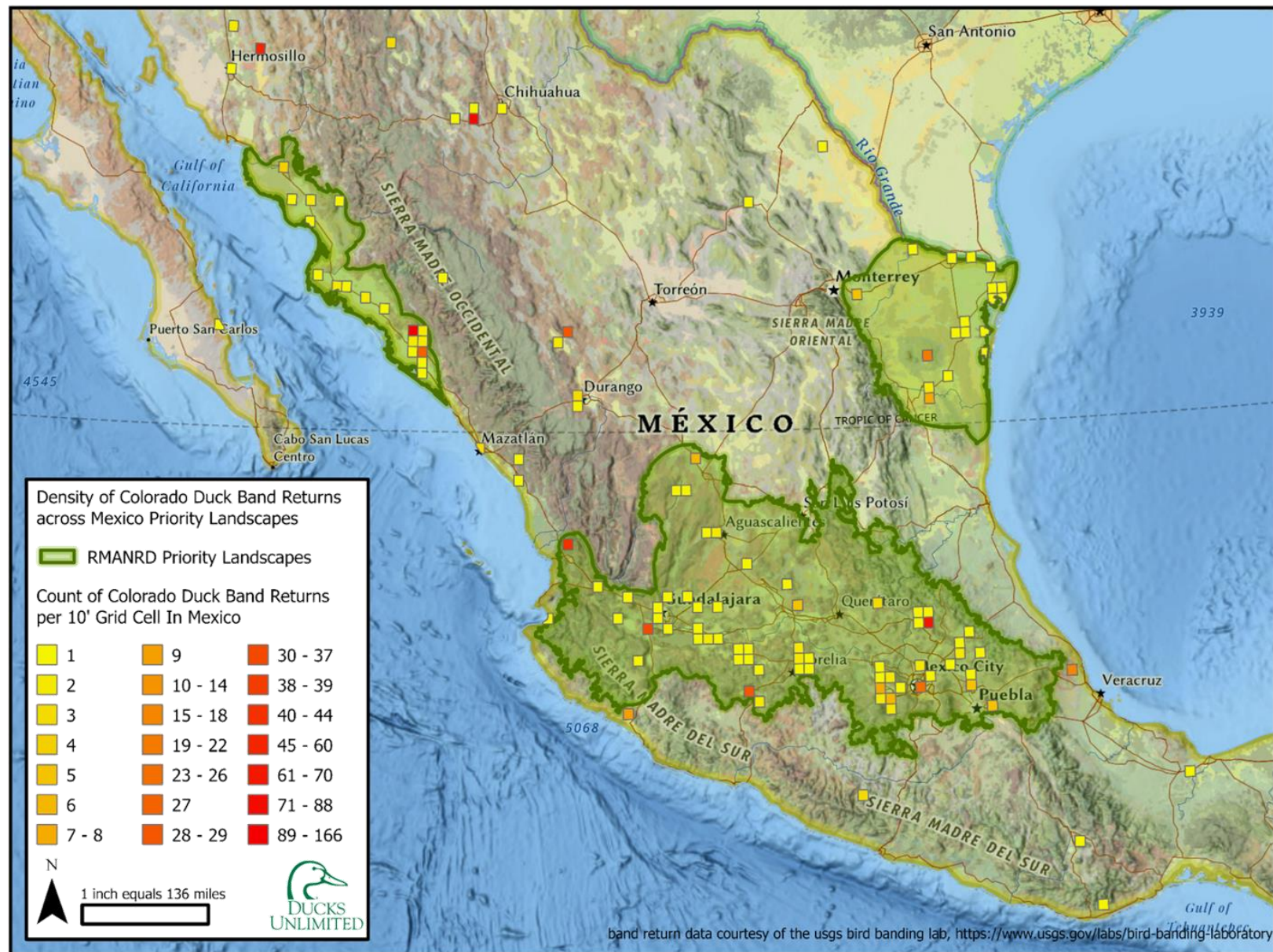


3. Excerpt of engineering planset(s) for Rock Creek Restoration Larick #5 diversion, measurement and conveyance for irrigated wetlands adjacent to the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge.









**Attachment A
Offeror Registration Form**

Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division

**Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Natural Resource
Damages Solicitation for Project
Proposals**

All potential Offerors that may be interested in submitting proposals under this request must complete and return this registration form. This will enable the CDPHE to contact all potential Offerors in the event of changes to the SPP, clarification or extension.

Offeror Organization Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Type of Organization, Status, Registrations (i.e. non-profit, government or private entity) Private non-profit 501(c)3

Name of Official Representative John Denton

Address 2114 Midpoint Drive, Unit 1, Fort Collins, CO 80525

Phone number 308-258-4682

Fax number 970-484-1785

Email address jdenton@ducks.org

Please return this form by email to:

Susan Newton
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and
Environment Hazardous Materials and Waste
Management Division Susan.newton@state.co.us

If you have technical limitations and cannot provide this document via email, please call Susan Newton at 303-692-3321 to make alternate arrangements.

This form must be received by October 2, 2023