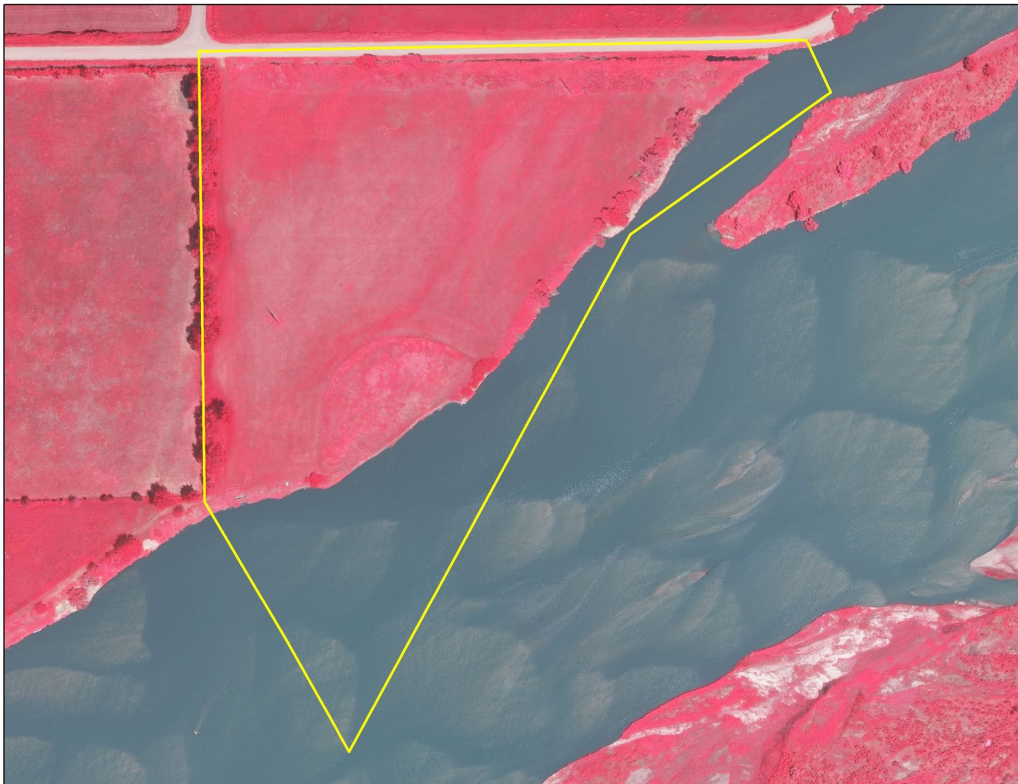




LAND EVALUATION REPORT

For

TRACT 2201



Prepared for:
**Platte River Recovery Implementation Program
Land Advisory Committee**

Evaluation Team:
John Shadle, Ted LaGrange, Matt Rabbe, Dave Zorn, Tim Tunnell

Site Visit Date:
2/11/2022

Evaluation Report Completion Date:
2/24/2025



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APPENDIX A – MAPS



I. EVALUATION TEAM AND SCHEDULE

A. Evaluation Team Members

The Tract 2201 Evaluation Team members are:

- Tim Tunnell – Platte River Recovery Implementation Program
- John Shadle – Nebraska Public Power District
- Matt Rabbe – US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Ted LaGrange – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- Dave Zorn – Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District

B. Date of Evaluation

The Evaluation Team performed a site visit on February 11, 2022. A summary of this Evaluation Report was presented to the Land Advisory Committee (LAC) and discussed at the February 23, 2022, LAC meeting in Kearney Nebraska. The Report was finalized following that meeting.

II. GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

This tract lies within the Highway 34 to Chapman reach of the Platte River and within 3.5 miles of the main channel or 2 miles of a side channel. As such, it is eligible for inclusion in the Program. Tract 2201 is being considered as complex habitat.

A. Tract Location and Size

Tract 2201 is approximately 19 acres in size and is located in Section 11 T-11N, R-8W. Figure A-1 (located in Appendix A) delineates the property boundary. The tract is located in the Highway 34 to Chapman bridge segment. Figure A-2 shows the parcel location within the Program land acquisition area, bridge segment and its proximity to existing leased and owned conservation lands and other tracts being evaluated by the Program.

III. LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

Land cover/use information for this phase of the land evaluation process is compiled by Program Staff utilizing best available Geographic Information System (GIS) datasets developed by the Program and its partners. A more detailed field analysis of target species habitat considerations is conducted during the next phase of the tract evaluation process and is discussed further in the next section of this report.

A. Land Cover/Use

Existing land cover/use on and adjacent to this tract was evaluated utilizing the updated 2005 land cover overlay developed in cooperation with the Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust Inc. (Crane Trust) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW). The land cover classifications from the overlay were compared to the most recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Program aerial photography in order to identify any land use changes that have occurred since the development of that dataset. The 2005 land cover/use for this tract is summarized in Table 1.



Several additional land cover/use related maps are located in Appendix A including:

- Figure A-3 – 2005 Land Cover/Use
- Figure A-4 – National Wetland Inventory
- Figure A-5 – 1938 Aerial Photography
- Figure A-6 – 1998 CIR Aerial Photography
- Figure A-7 – 2021 CIR Aerial Photography
- Figure A-8 – Complex Habitat

Table 1 – Tract 2201 2005 Land Cover/Use Summary

Land Cover Classification	Acres	Percent of Total
Mesic Wet Meadow	11.34	61.17%
Phragmites	0.51	2.75%
River Channel	0.28	1.51%
River Early Successional	1.54	8.31%
River Shrubland	0.13	0.70%
Roads	1.23	6.63%
Unvegetated Sandbar	2.91	15.70%
Upland Woodland	0.57	3.07%
Xeric Wet Meadow	0.03	0.16%
	18.54	100.00%

B. Incompatible Uses and Environmental Concerns

Tract 2201 does not currently have land uses that are incompatible with target species habitat. No environmental concerns have been identified.

C. Restoration and Maintenance Impacts on Neighboring Properties

Restoration and maintenance on this tract are not expected to have negative impacts on neighboring properties. Program Staff would coordinate with neighboring landowners to inform them about restoration and maintenance activities and use this contact as a tool to develop positive relationships.

D. Target Species Use

Confirmed whooping crane sightings occurred in the river within 1 mile of this tract in 2002, 2015, and 2017. Additional sightings of whooping cranes have also been documented greater than 1 mile away. In 2010, a crane group was documented within 4 miles upstream of this tract in the river.

Since 2001, 28 observations of least tern adults, 3 least tern fledgling, 8 piping plover adults, and 1 piping plover fledgling have been recorded foraging in this river segment from the Chapman



bridge to the Burlington RR bridge. None of the piping plover sightings occurred on this tract, and only 1 plover was observed foraging within a mile of the property, which occurred in 2005. Of the total observations, 10 of the least tern adults were observed foraging in the river on or immediately adjacent to this property. The last least tern sighted on the property was in 2013, though a tern was observed foraging within a mile of the property in 2016. Both species have been recorded foraging on this bridge segment, but no nests have been observed.

E. Certified Irrigated Acres

There are no cropland areas on Tract 2201.

IV. TARGET SPECIES HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS

A. Existing Species Habitat

On February 11, 2022, the Evaluation Team completed the field investigation requirements of the land evaluation process. The information in this section of the report has been compiled from the site visit and follow-up analysis of Program GIS datasets.

1. Non-Riverine Surface Water

There is a small (less than 2 foot) berm at the southwest side of the tract close to the river. It appears that it was man made and possibly used to pump water into the area for waterfowl hunting.

2. River Frontage and Active Channel Widths

There is approximately 1,450 linear feet of river frontage on this tract.

Channel width measurement protocols define active channel width as the width of the channel that is unvegetated. Channel widths were measured at ¼ mile intervals utilizing color infrared aerial photography flown in July of 2021 under average water conditions. The measured channel widths are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2 – Tract 2201 Channel Widths

Measurement	Width (ft)
Minimum Channel Width	37
Maximum Channel Width	517
Median Channel Width	128
Mean Channel Width	163

3. Contiguous Sand Substrates

Tract 2201 contains no significant areas of contiguous sand substrate.



4. Island and Channel Bank Height

Channel bank height estimated from LiDAR is on the order of one to four feet above water.

5. Groundwater

Depth to groundwater on this tract was estimated to be four to seven feet using static water level from wells located on adjacent tracts.

6. Flooding in Non-Wetland Areas

There was no evidence of temporary inundation of non-wetland areas at the time of the site evaluation.

7. Power/Transmission Lines

There is a large, overhead transmission power line crossing this tract and running parallel to the river but appears that this line has already been marked with bird flight diverters. There is also a secondary electric line that runs from the primary line north of the county road south approximately 150 feet to a meter. An underground line appears to have been trenched in from the meter SE to a constructed berm and blind location.

B. Complex and Non-Complex Habitat

The Evaluation Team recommends that the entire tract be considered as habitat complex acres due to tract's compliance with parts of *Table 1. Target Habitat Complex Guidelines* of the Program Land Plan. The tract complex acres are classified by type in the following sections.

1. Habitat Complex Acres

Table 3 provides the total acres of land contributing to a habitat complex. The classifications are based on *Table 1. Target Habitat Complex Guidelines* of the Program's Land Plan. The classification acres in Table 3 are based on existing tract land cover/use.

Table 3 – Tract 2201 Habitat Complex Acres

Land Classification*	Acres
Wet Meadow	
Grassland	11
Riverine	
Channel	5
Buffer	
Upland Woodland	1

* Habitat complex land classification categories are more general than the 2005 land cover/use classification and areas may vary due to changes in land use and vegetation since 2005.

2. Non-Complex Habitat Acres

No portion of this tract is being considered as non-complex habitat.



3. *Excess Acres*

This tract does not contain any excess acres.

4. *Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Needs and Conceptual Costs*

This tract has large open wet meadow and wide river channels already not requiring much additional management. Currently, the grassland appears to be in good condition in native species diversity. It is expected that PRRIP could continue to work with the existing haying tenant and manage haying in a similar fashion. There is a man-made berm and a buried blind at the rivers edge. It is likely that both would be removed.

5. *Buffer*

This tract is bounded on the south by Platte River channel and Tract 2019001. On the north, the tract is bounded by county road and intact grassland/ hay meadows. On the west, the tract is bounded by a shared tree line, hay meadow and two residences on neighboring property and on the east by river channel and residence located approximately 800 feet east of the east property boundary. Tract 2201 has potential for outside disturbance from neighboring properties and county road.

V. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

A. Encumbrances

1. *Legal Encumbrances*

At the time of review there were no known legal restrictions. The owner did not detail any information about any restrictive easements; public records have not yet been reviewed.

2. *Management Encumbrances*

No management encumbrances were identified for Tract 2201.

B. Environmental Audit

An environmental audit has not been completed for Tract 2201. No obvious dumps, chemical spills or waste piles were evident on the property the day of inspection.

C. Property Interest Acquisition Options and Costs

The property owner currently is undecided whether they prefer the sale of a fee simple absolute title to the Program or as a long-term lease or lease-to-purchase. Table 4 describes expected land acquisition costs.

Table 4 – Tract 2201 Acquisition Cost Estimate

Acquisition Item/Activity	Cost
Title Review	\$75
Appraisal	\$5,000
Appraisal Review	\$500
Total Estimated Cost	\$5,575



D. Extraneous Costs

Extraneous costs include current land use modification or cessation, third party impacts, and adjacent incompatible use mitigation costs. No extraneous costs have been identified at this time.

E. Operations and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance costs have been estimated based on O&M activities on existing conservation properties in the critical habitat area. Actual costs are highly variable and expected to change as the result of adaptive management activities.

Table 5 – Tract 2201 Operations & Maintenance Cost Estimate

Item/Activity	Annual Cost
Noxious Weed Control	\$500
Fence Maintenance	\$500
Annual Disking & Herbicide	\$500
Miscellaneous Expenditures	\$2,000
Oversight	\$500
Total Estimated Cost	\$4,000

F. Other Considerations

No other considerations were identified that are not discussed in this report.

VI. EVALUATION TEAM RECOMMENDATION

The Evaluation Team agreed that Tract 2201 would be a good addition to the PRRIP Chapman Complex in the Highway 34 to Chapman bridge segment as buffer and additional northern access to existing tracts and river channel for management purposes. The tract also has river frontage with good channel widths, as well as wet meadow that has been managed well. While the wet meadow is bisected by an overhead transmission line, the evaluation team felt that acquiring the property could provide additional opportunities to reduce risks to cranes or other migratory birds through direct management. Overall, the evaluation team supports pursuit of this tract as complex habitat.

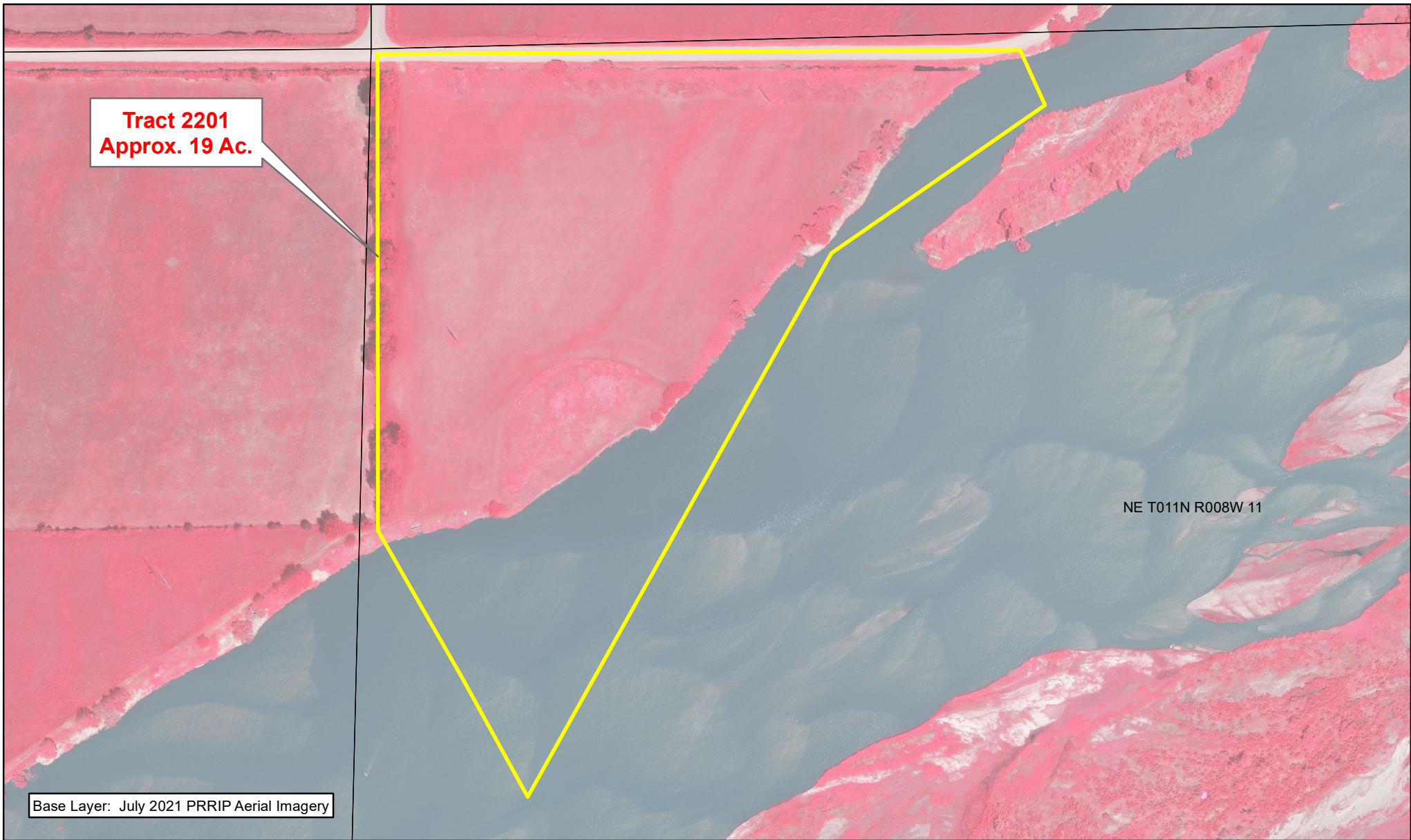
VII. LAC RECOMMENDATION

On February 23, 2022, the LAC voted to accept the evaluation team's recommendation and forward Tract 2201 to the GC with a recommendation to pursue acquisition of this tract. LAC discussion cited the overall quality of the tract for target species and its location as a good addition for a north access to the Chapman complex.





APPENDIX A – MAPS


CONFIDENTIAL



Legend

-  Tract 2201
-  Sections

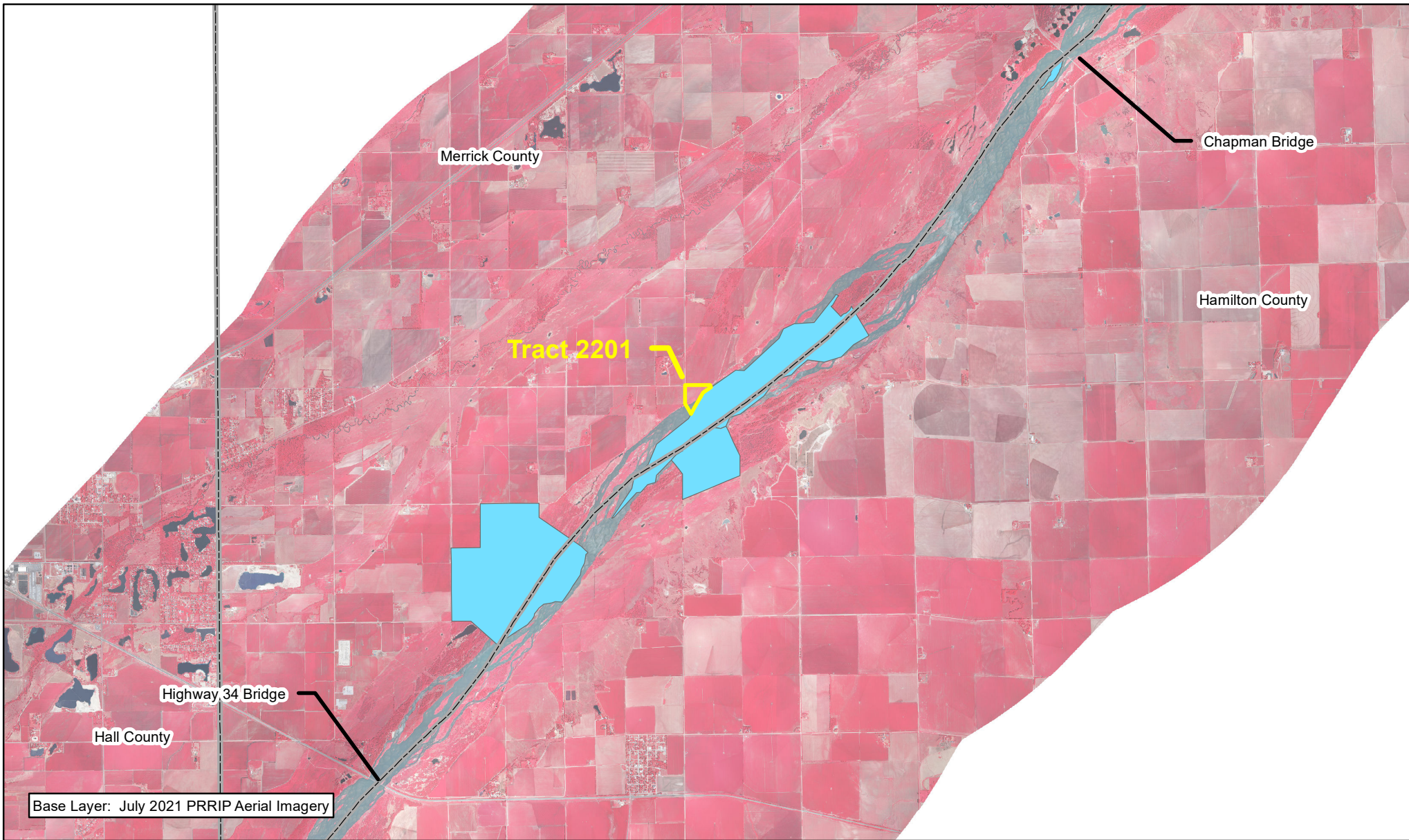


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








**TRACT 2201
BOUNDARY MAP**

Date: 2/8/22
By: TRT


Figure A-1



Legend

	Tract 2201		Audubon		PRRIP
	County		CNPPID		PRWCT
			NGPC		TNC
			NPPD		Wyoming

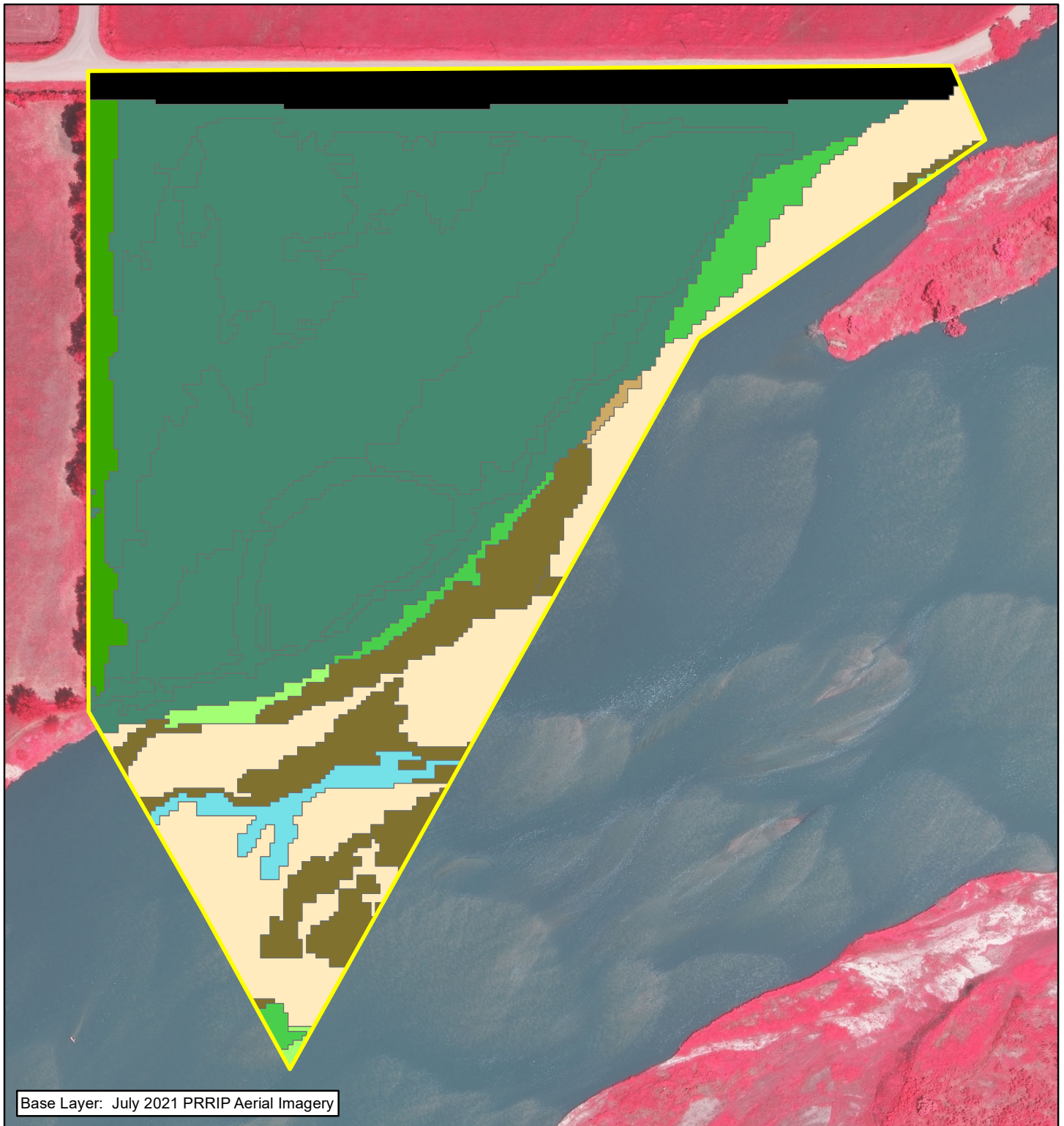


 Miles
1

TRACT 2201 LOCATION MAP

Date: 2/8/22
By: TRT

Figure A-2



- Legend**
- Tract_2201
 - LCLU_Class**
 - Mesic Wet Meadow
 - Phragmites
 - River Channel
 - River Early Successional
 - River Shrubland
 - Roads
 - Unvegetated Sandbar
 - Upland Woodland
 - Xeric Wet Meadow

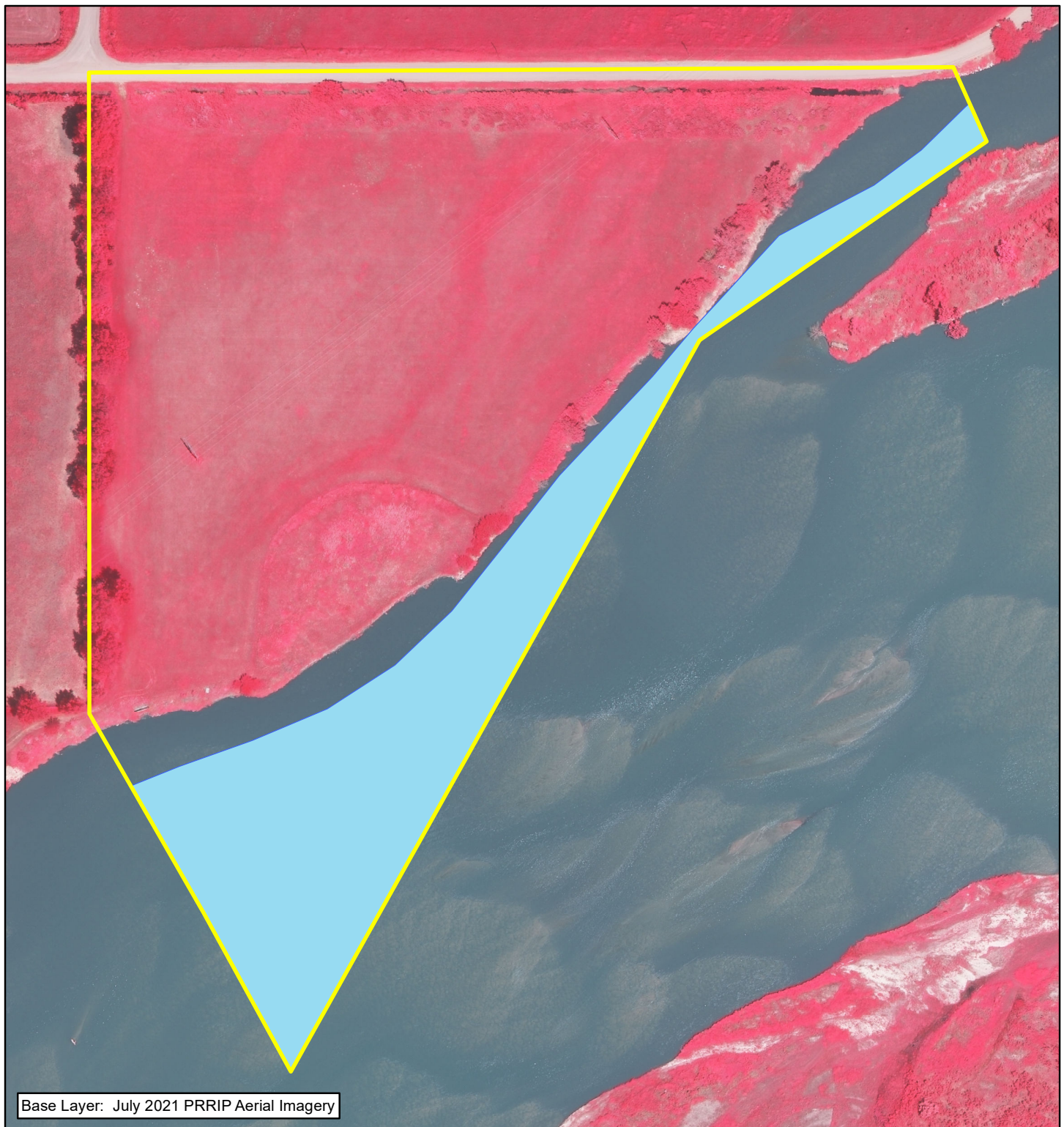


Miles
0.055

TRACT 2201
2005 LAND COVER/USE

Date: 2/14/22
By: TRT

Figure A-3



Legend

Tract_2201

TYPE

 R2UBF



0.055 Miles

TRACT 2201
NWI MAP

Date: 2/14/22

By: TRT


Figure A-4

Not Available




PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Legend

 Tract_2201



 Miles
0.055

TRACT 2201
1938 CIR IMAGERY

Date: 2/14/22
By: TRT


Figure A-5



Legend

 Tract_2201

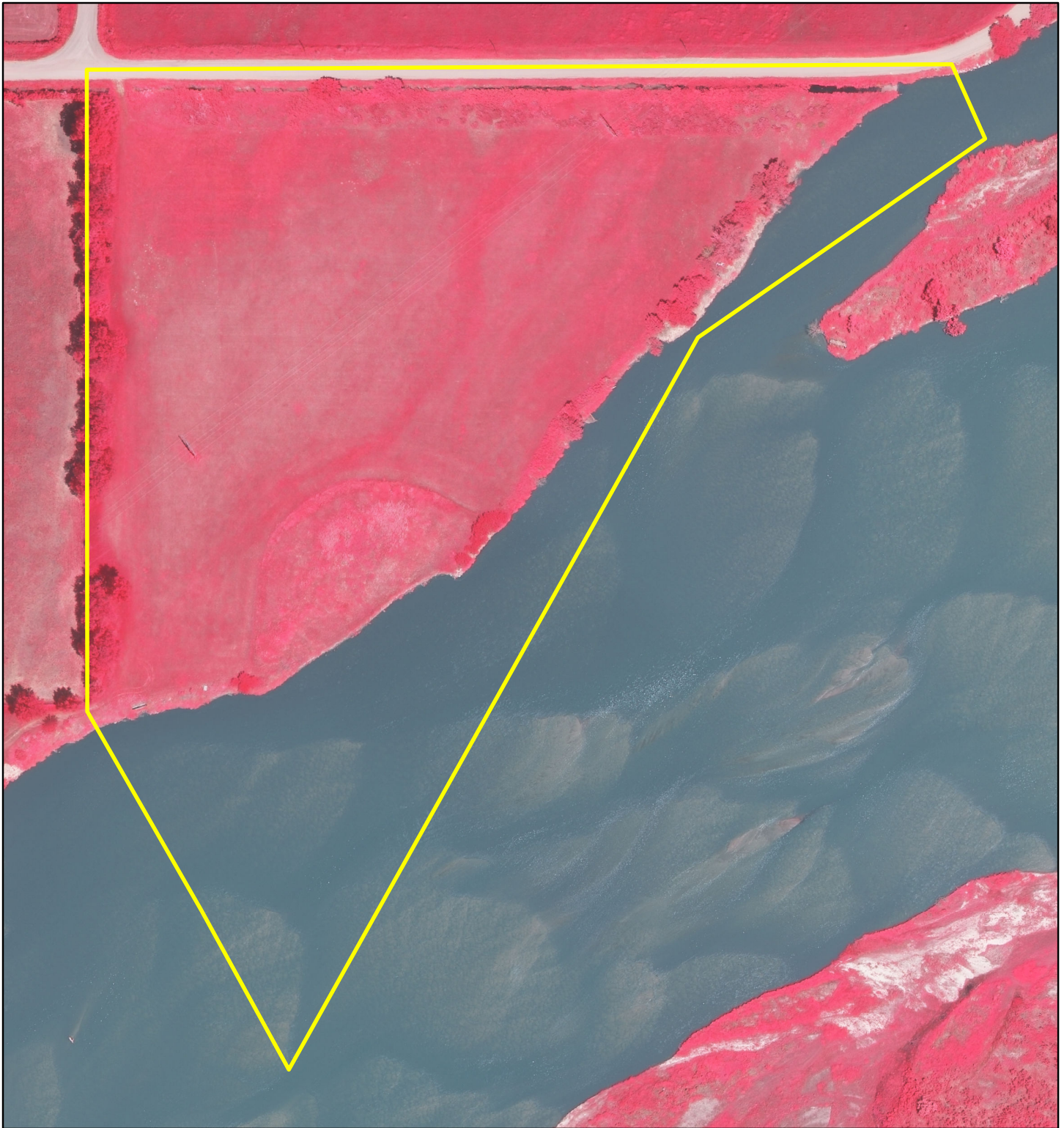


 Miles
0.055

TRACT 2201
1998 CIR IMAGERY

Date: 12/17/20
By: TRT

Figure A-6




PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Legend

 Tract_2201

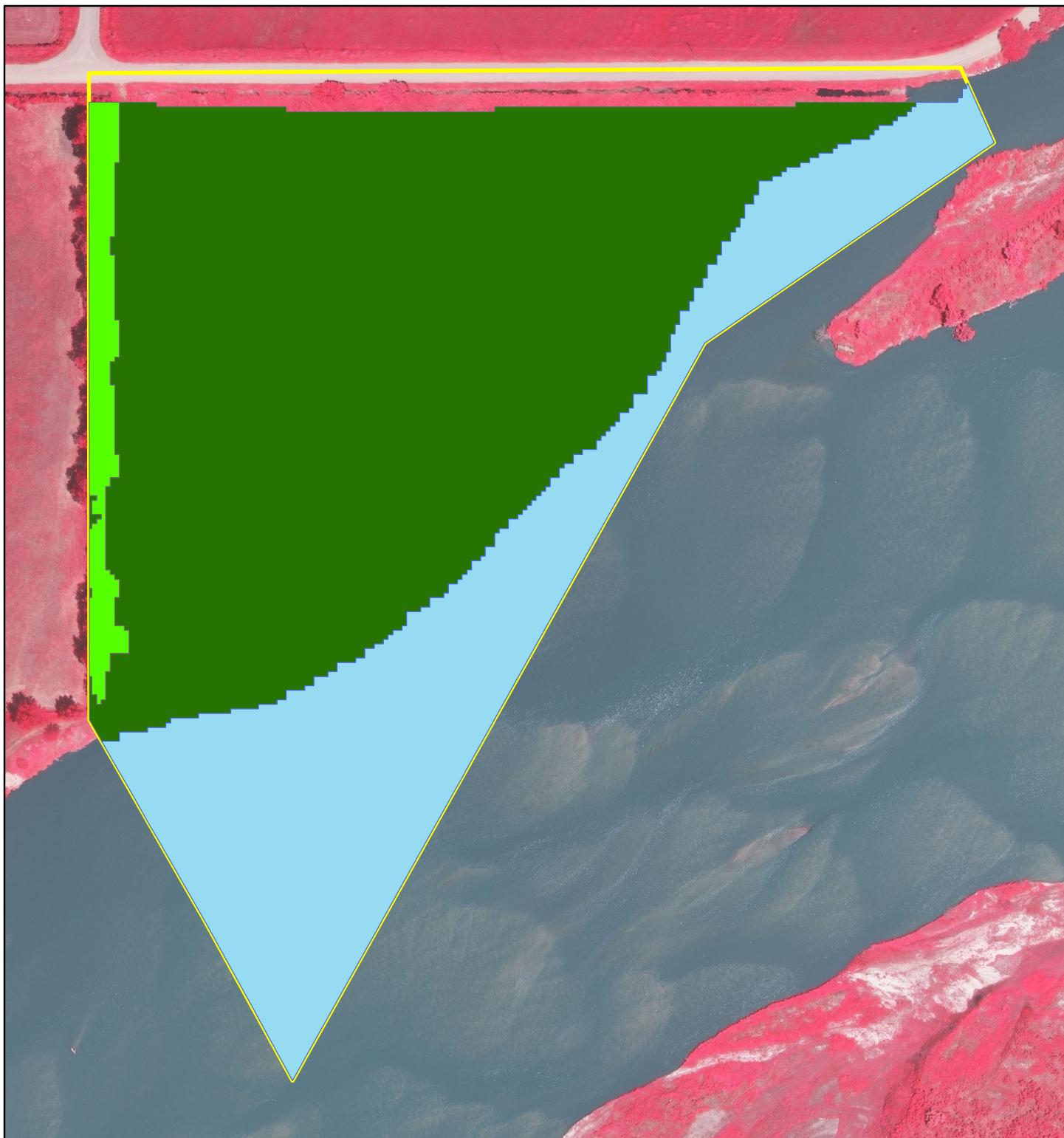


 Miles
0.055

TRACT 2201
2021 CIR IMAGERY

Date: 2/14/22
By: TRT

Figure A-7




PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Legend

 Tract_2201

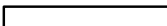
HabClass

 Complex - Riverine - Channel

 Complex - Riverine - Woodland

 Complex - Riverine -Wet Meadow



 Miles
0.03

TRACT 2201
COMPLEX HABITAT

Date: 2/14/22

By: TRT

Figure A-8