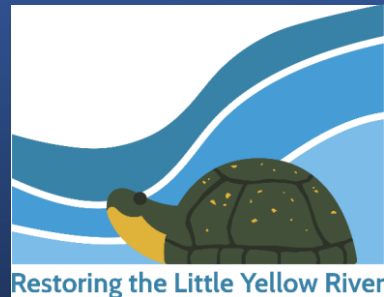


The Little Yellow River : Restoring a watershed in the heart of Sand County



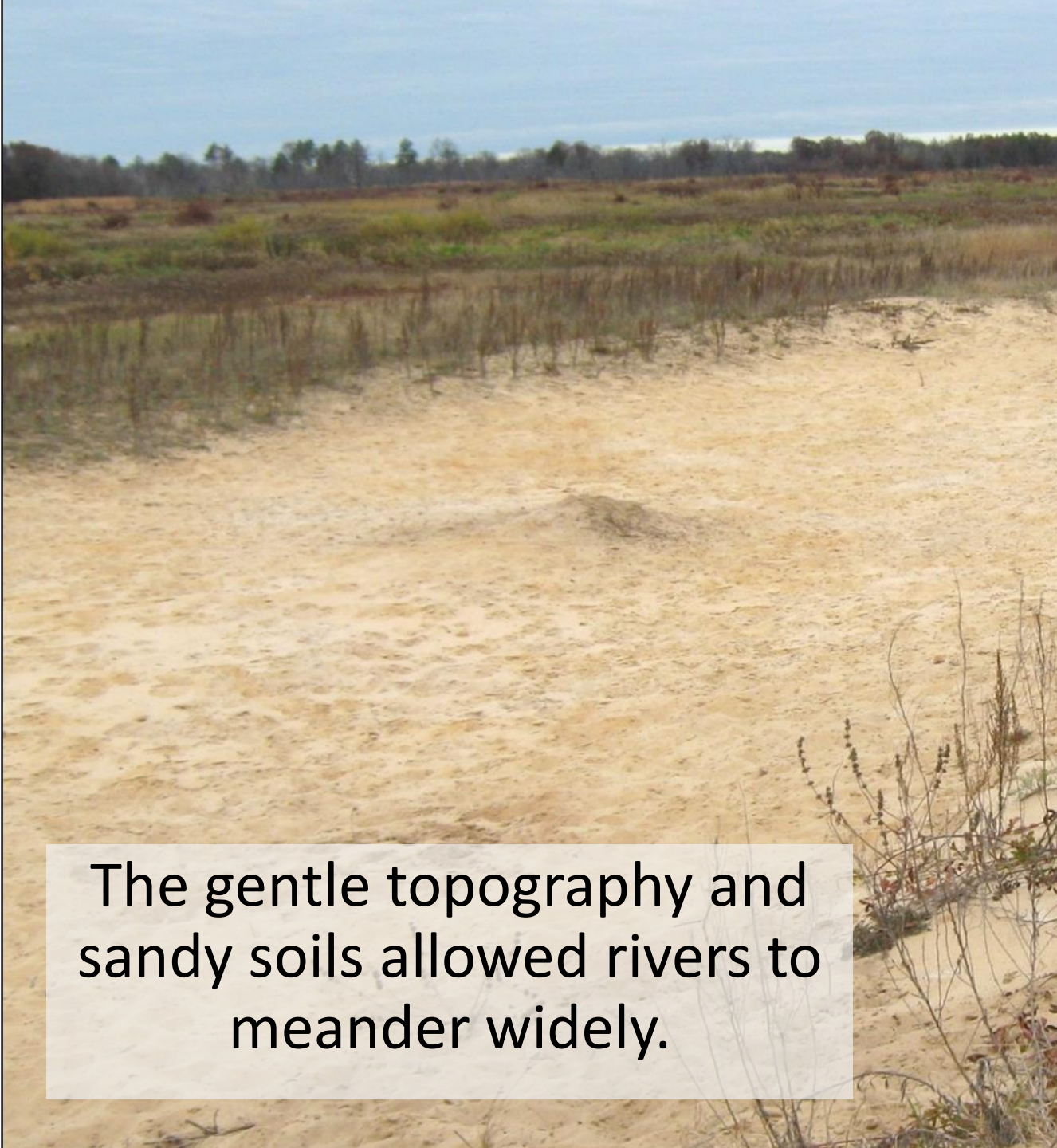
NATIONAL
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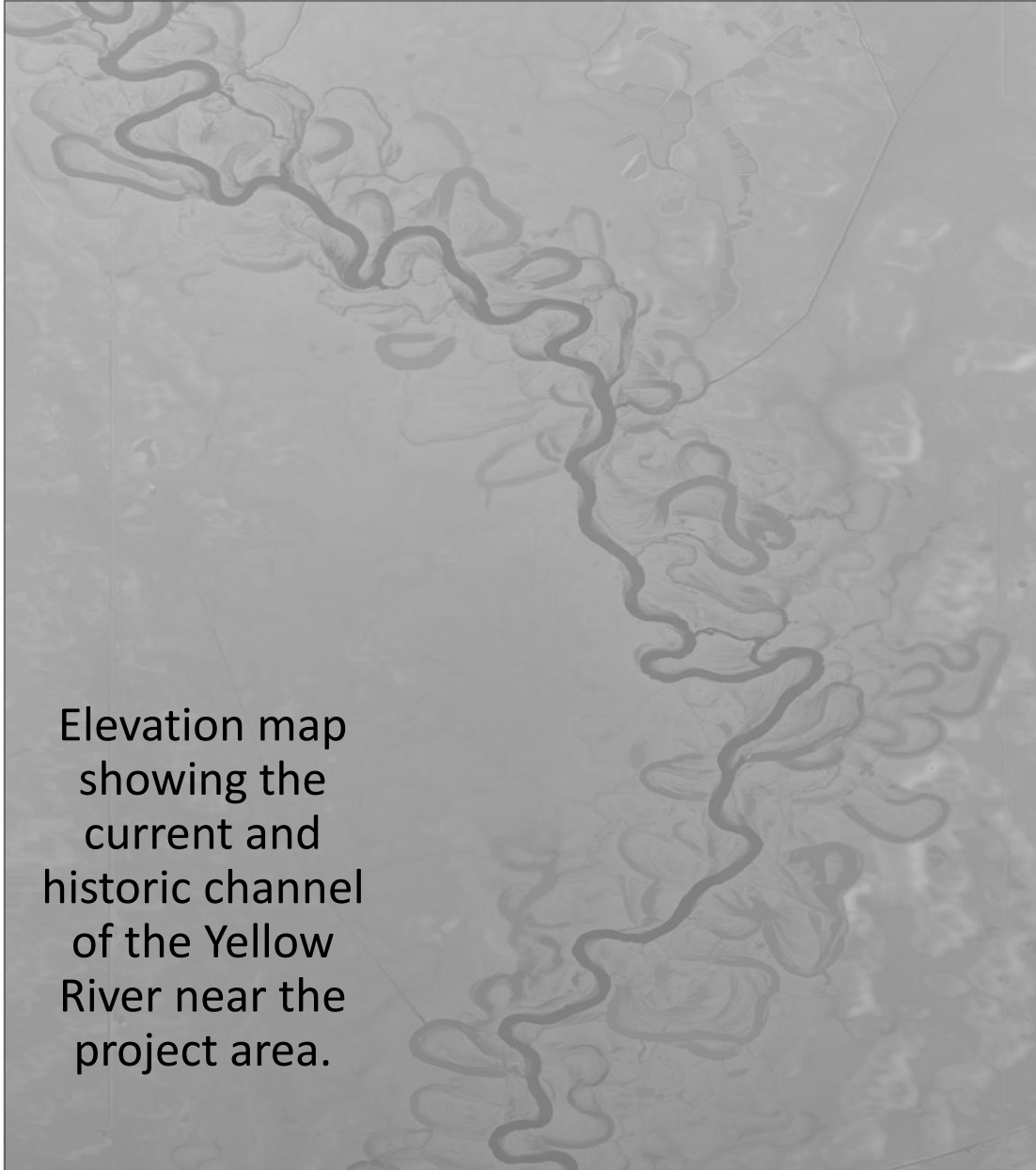
Restoring the Little Yellow River

Wisconsin's "Sand Counties"
were once the bottom of an
ancient glacial lake.

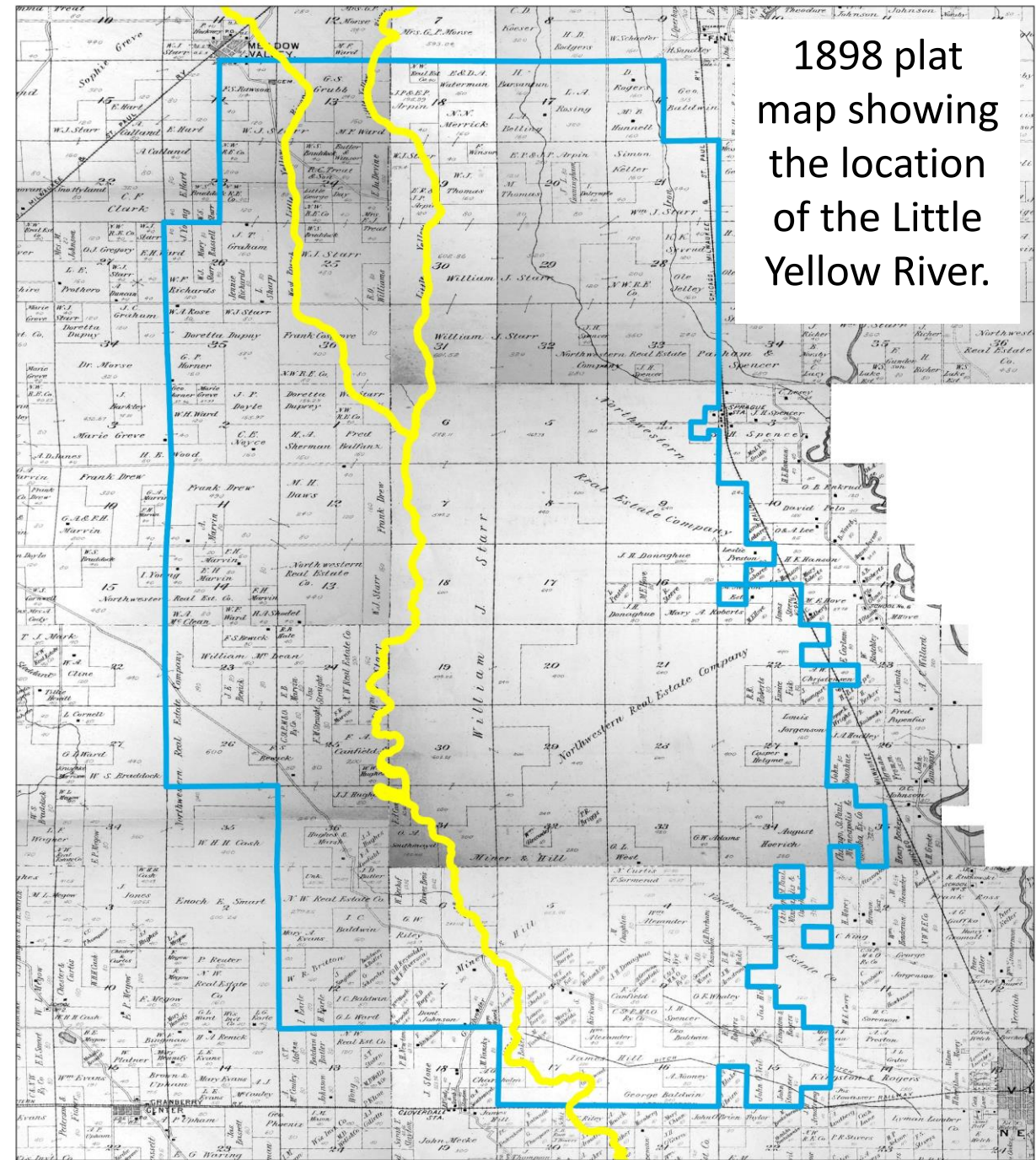




The gentle topography and sandy soils allowed rivers to meander widely.



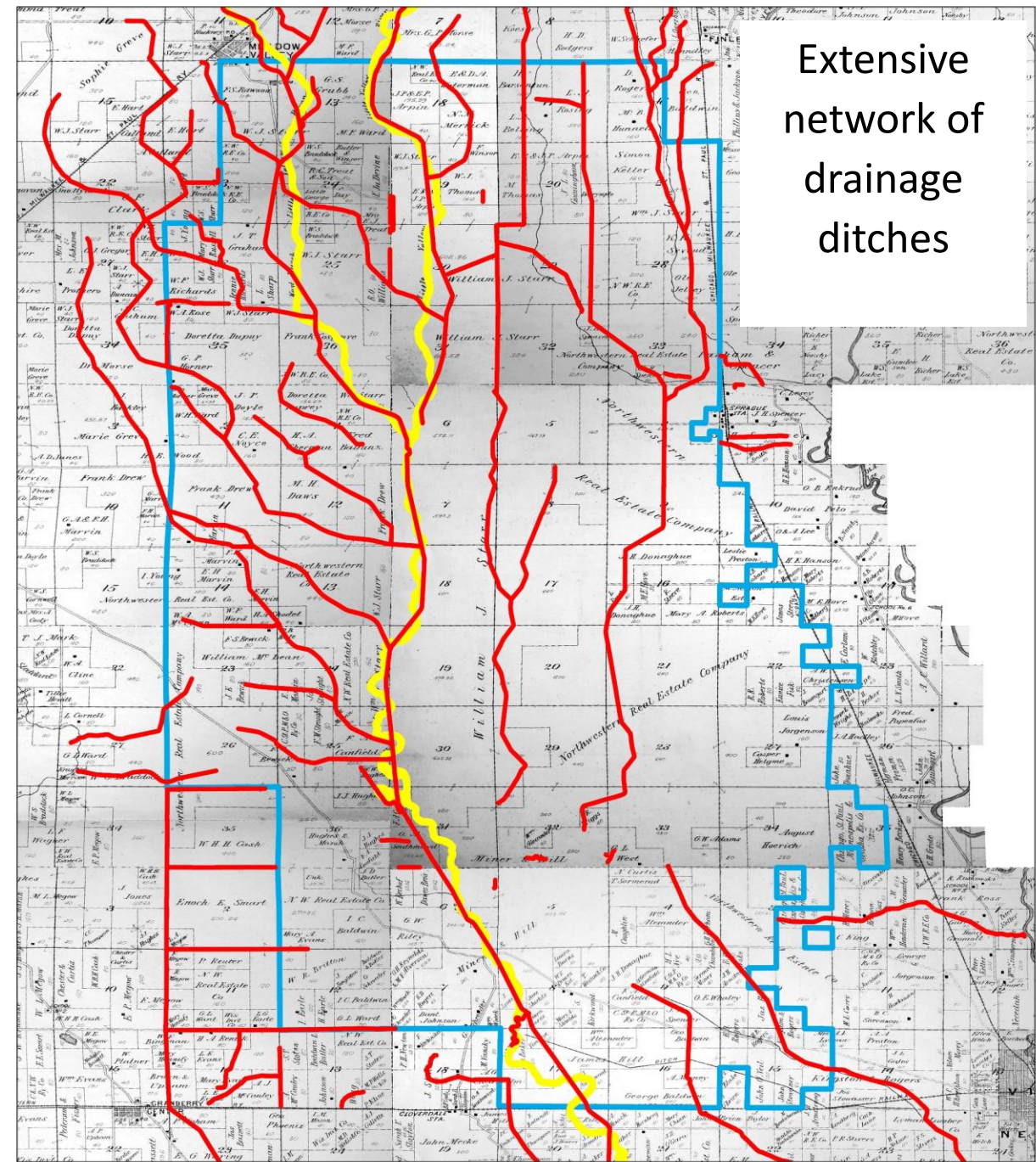
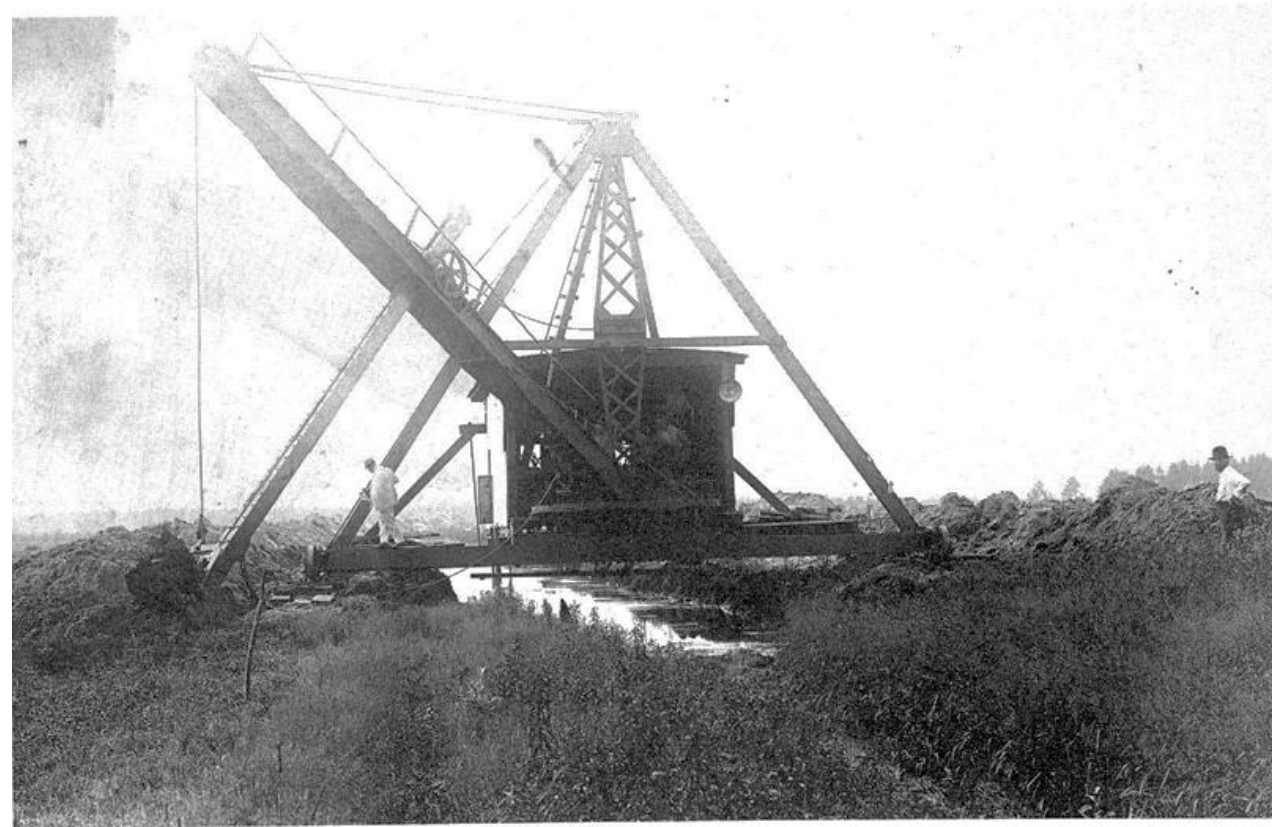
Elevation map showing the current and historic channel of the Yellow River near the project area.



1898 plat map showing the location of the Little Yellow River.

*1910-1920,
the decade of the drainage dream,
when steam shovels sucked dry the marshes
of central Wisconsin to make farms,
and made ash heaps instead.*

~ Aldo Leopold



Extensive
network of
drainage
ditches

During dry spells,
ditches rapidly drain natural
wetlands and groundwater.

When it's dry, it's very dry.



During wet spells,
water races downstream churning
through culverts.

When it's wet, it's very wet.





Ditches have high and narrow banks making it easy for beavers to dam.

Unpredictable
rainfall



30,000 acre
watershed



100 mile
drainage
network



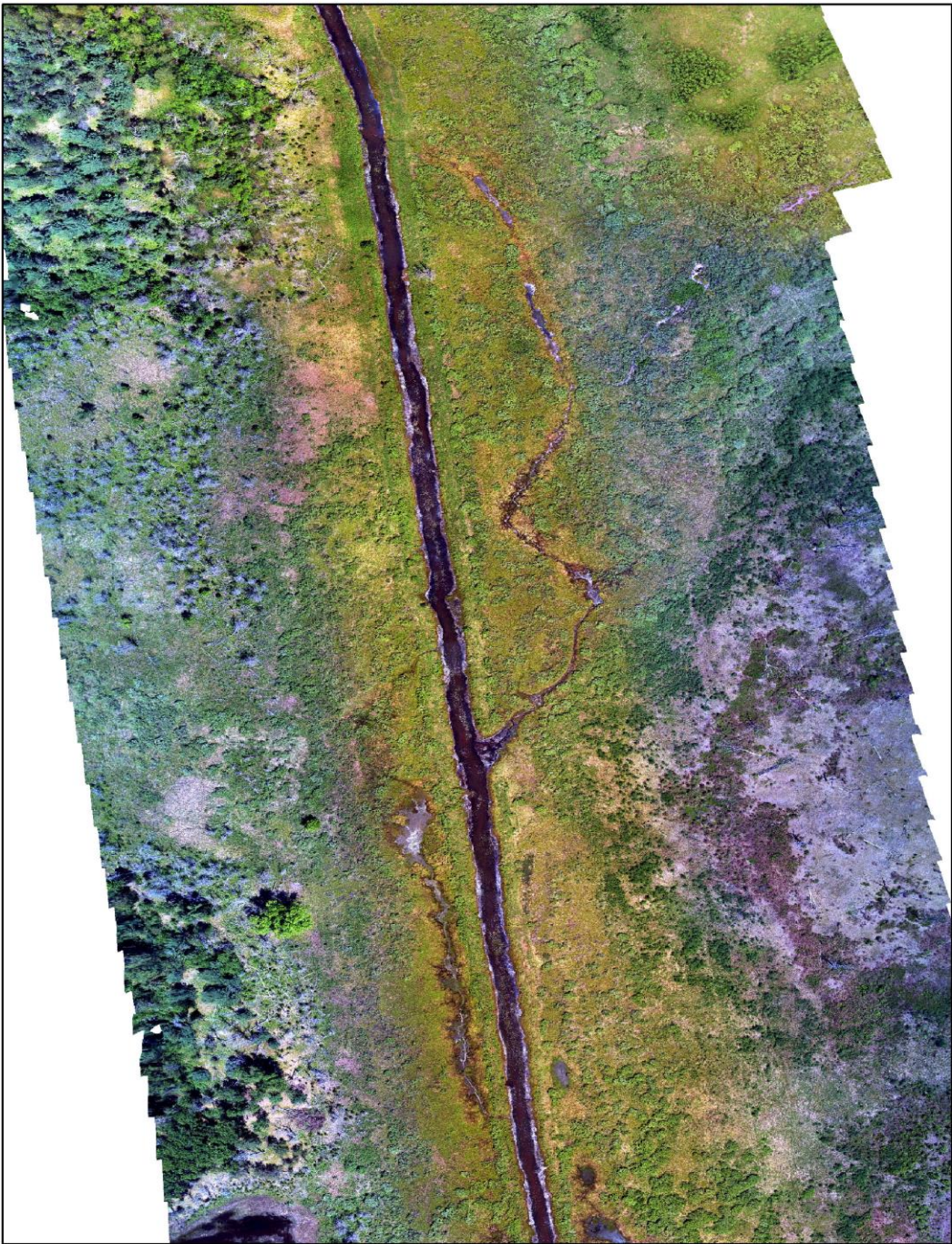
Low elevation
roads



Benefits of Restoration

- More consistent stream flows
- Better water quality
- Reduce downstream floods
- Improved wildlife habitat
- Recharge ground water

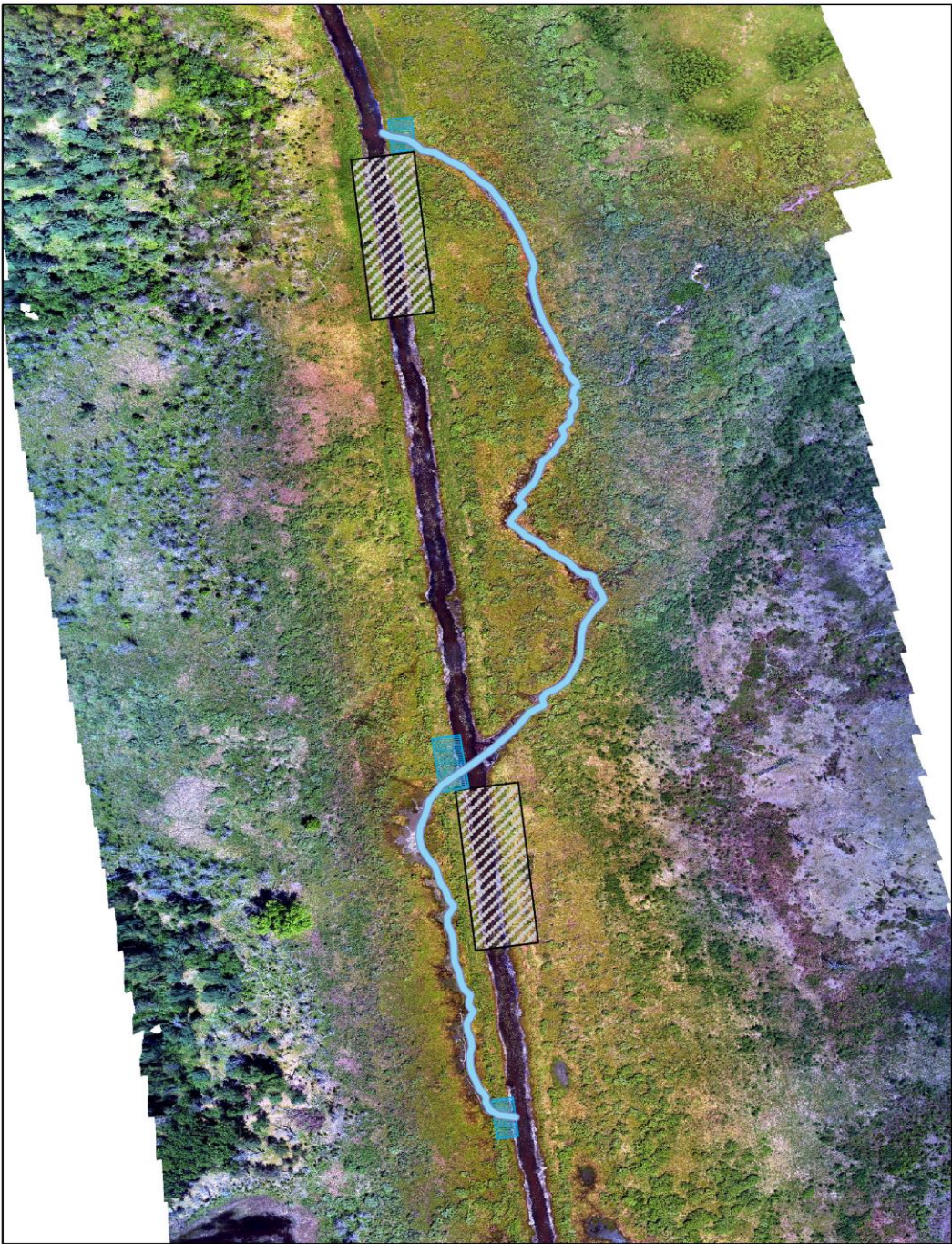




- Find the historic location of the Little Yellow River



- Find the historic location of the Little Yellow River
- Remove the ditch banks



- Find the historic location of the Little Yellow River
- Remove the ditch banks
- Redirect the water to flow back through the Little Yellow River



Crews remove ditch banks and restore flow to the river





Working together to improve transportation infrastructure will ensure roads remain resilient to unpredictable weather.

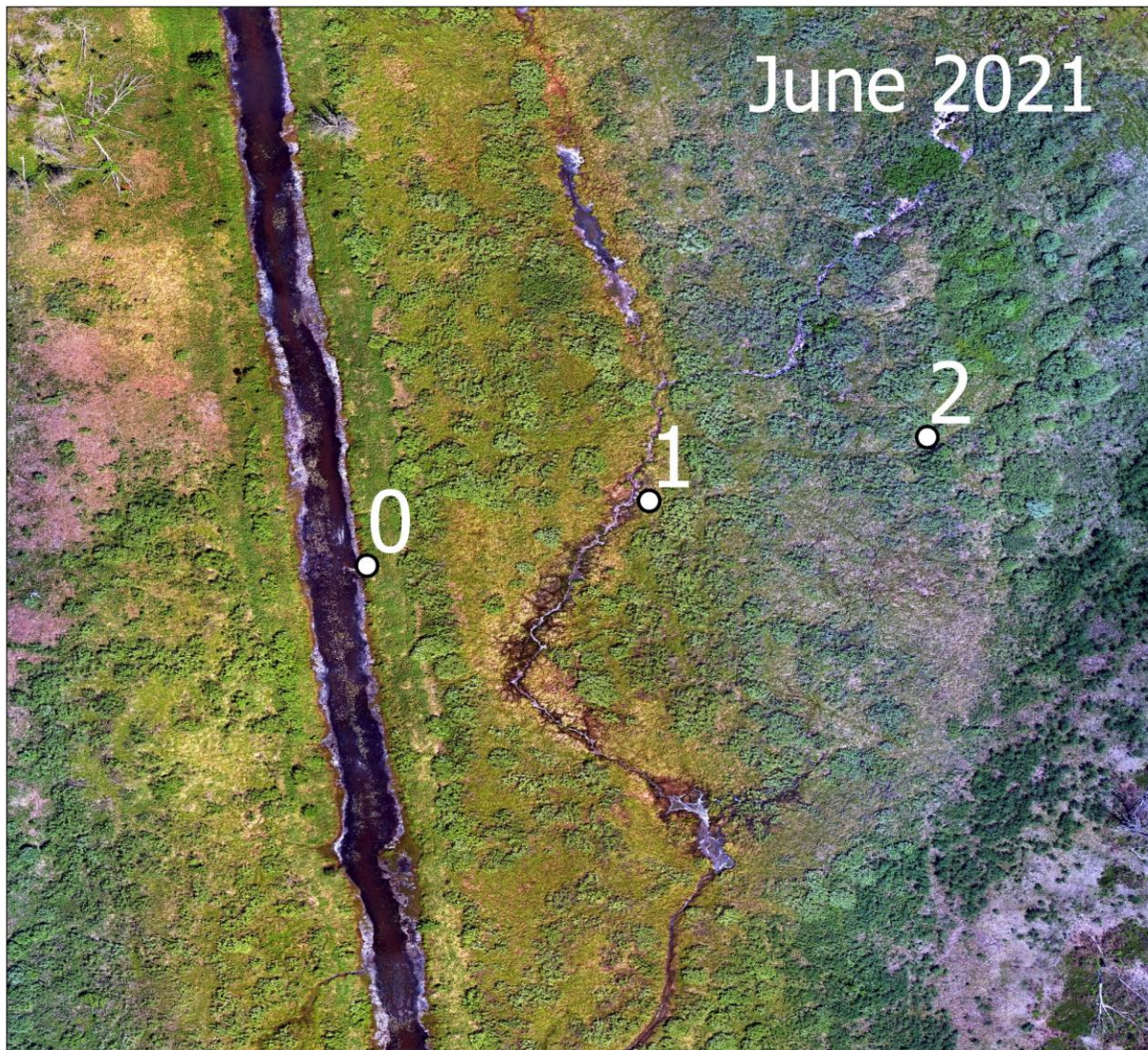


Keeping Track

Staff at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge monitor the levels of the ground water and surface water throughout the year to better understand how the restoration will impact the human and wildlife communities.



Students help monitor water quality, plant and animal communities.



A segment of the West Branch of the Little Yellow River before and 1 year after its' restoration.

The ditch (0), the historic stream bed (1), and the floodplain (2), all showed rapid changes.



Restoring the Little Yellow River watershed will be a long-term project that will improve our waters, help protect our roads and benefit our community.