

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a two-lane asphalt road with yellow center lines runs horizontally across the bottom. To the right of the road, there's a green field with a small pond. The middle ground is dominated by a large, open field with a mix of green and brown vegetation, suggesting a restoration site. In the background, there's a dense forest with trees in various shades of green, yellow, and orange, indicating autumn. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Habitat Restoration on the Keller Mohawk Hill PCA

John Fraser
Regional Biologist – Mitigation
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

What does Ducks Unlimited do?



- Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.
- 18 million acres conserved and counting
- Restore thousands of acres annually
- Continental in Scale:
 - Ducks Unlimited Inc.
 - DU Canada (DUC)
 - DU Mexico (DUMAC)

What is wetland mitigation?

- Offsets for unavoidable impacts to wetlands under a permit
 - Section 404 Clean Water Act / Dredge and Fill Permits
 - Various State Protections
 - No Net Loss of Wetlands Policy (E.O. 11990 Carter Admin.)
 - National Environmental Protection Act
- Avoid
- Minimize
- Mitigate
- Permittee responsible, mitigation banks, in-lieu fee mitigation



DU In-Lieu Fee Wetland Mitigation

- In the northeast US, Ducks Unlimited has been operating In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Programs in New York (2012) and Vermont (2011)
- NY-ILF program currently provides wetland mitigation in 13 service areas (watersheds), with additional service areas being proposed
- All ILF mitigation plans must be reviewed and approved by the Interagency Review Team
- To date, the DU-ILF programs have protected over 2,400 acres in NY and VT
- After construction, DU transfers sites to a long-term steward



May 2024
Mitigation Program
Status

- ◆ Completed - Long-Term Management Phase
- ◇ Constructed in 2018
- Constructed in 2019/2020
- + Constructed in 2020
- Approved
- ★ 2024 Construction
- In Final Revision
- Plan in Development
- Site Search
- ⊠ NYS Expansion (pending)

NY ILF

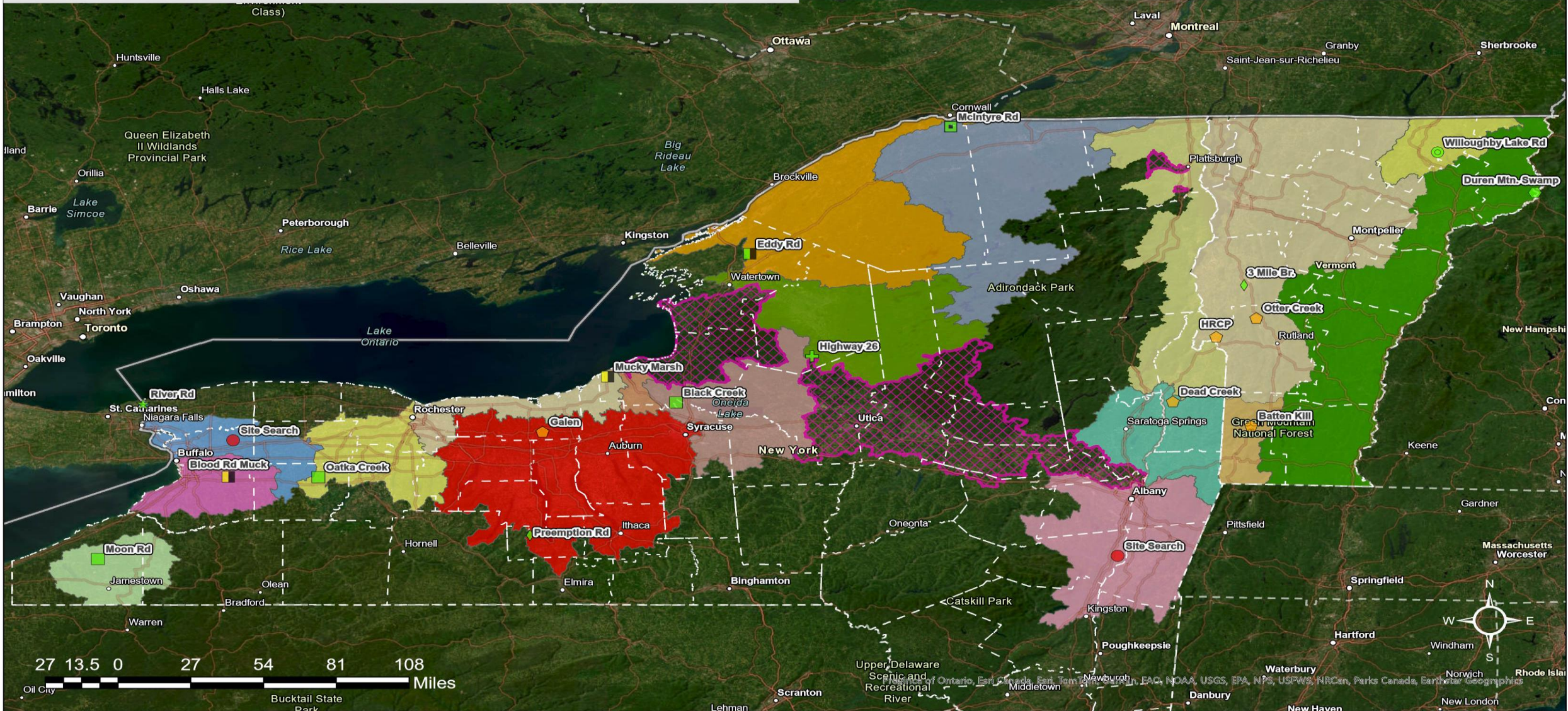
- Black River
- Buffalo-Eighteenmile Creek
- Conewango River
- Eastern St. Lawrence River
- Hudson-Hoosic

- Irondequoit-Ninemile Creek
- Lower Genesee River
- Middle Hudson
- Niagara River
- Oneida Lake
- Oswego River
- Seneca-Finger Lakes Region

- Western St. Lawrence River
- VT ILF**
- Connecticut River
- Richelieu
- St. Francois
- Upper Hudson
- NY Portion of Richelieu (VT-ILF)



MITIGATION & ECOLOGICAL SERVICES



Keller Mohawk Hill PCA (aka "Highway 26 Site")



- Ducks Unlimited purchased the property in 2016 to provide mitigation for wetland impacts within the Black River watershed
- Mitigation plan approved by the Interagency Review Team in June 2020
- Construction and wetland seeding occurred during fall of 2020
- Tree planting and grassland seeding occurred during spring of 2021
- Property transferred to Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust in June 2022

9/8/2020 – contractor tilling
and seeding cover crop



**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

9/22/2020 – grading and
constructing berms



**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

10/1/2020 –installing water control structure



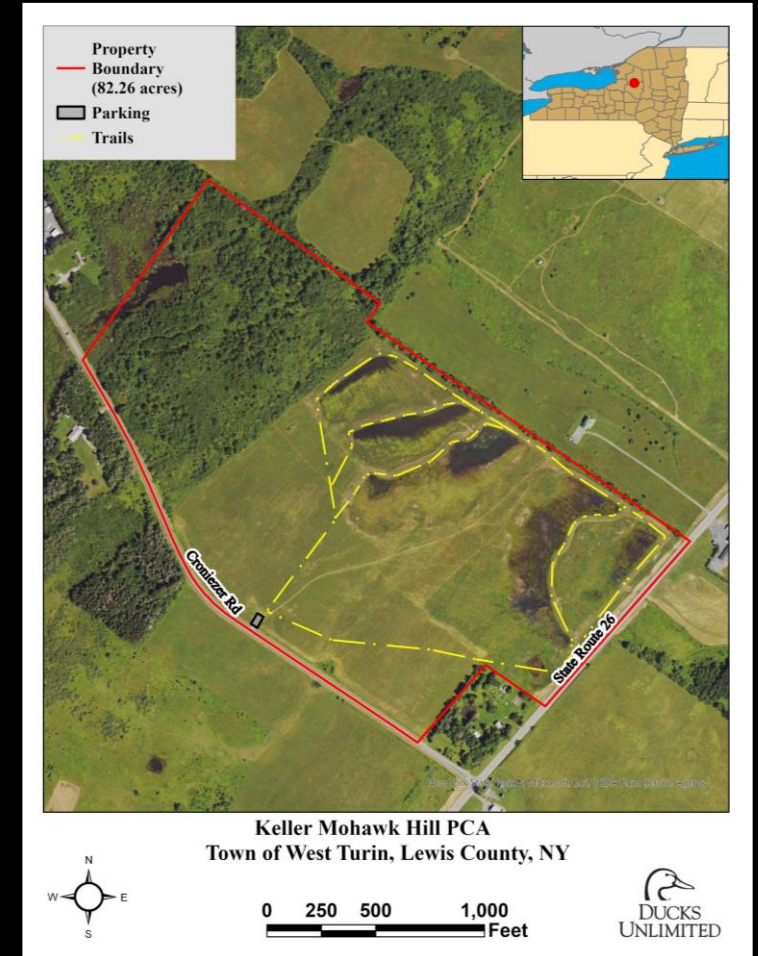
**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

6/17/2021 – seeding native
grasses and wildflowers in the
upland area



Current Status of Keller Mohawk Hill PCA

- DU is monitoring and conducting adaptive management activities needed to meet performance standards
 - Invasive species management
 - Water level management
 - Supplemental tree planting
 - Mowing of grasslands and berms
- Have observed 44 species of birds and 114 plant species
- Once all performance standards have been met, long term management responsibilities will shift to THTLT
- Long term management activities are specified in a plan and funded through an endowment





**6/1/2023 – mowing grassland
areas to aid in establishment of
native species**



**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

10/20/2023 – planting trees
with THTLT, SLU, and BHA



**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

5/7/2024 – glossy ibis observed
at the site



**MITIGATION &
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**



Questions?