

## WHAT IS AN OXBOW?

An oxbow wetland is a meander of a stream, river or creek, that has become separated from the flow of water. Oxbow wetlands store excess water that might otherwise lead to flooding, filter water to improve water quality and provide habitat to a variety of wildlife. Over time, some oxbows fill in with sediment due to erosion of soil in surrounding areas.



**QUESTIONS?** Contact:

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**The Nature Conservancy** 

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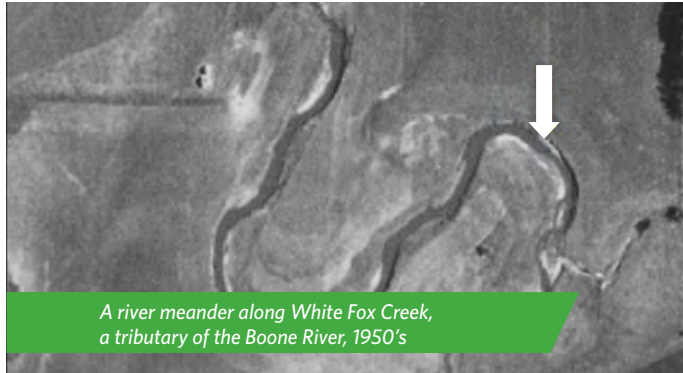
**The Nature Conservancy** 



**OXBOW RESTORATION**

The Nature Conservancy in Iowa

# OXBOW RESTORATION



# BENEFITS

- **Improved water quality:**

Oxbows can remove an estimated **45-90% of nitrate** from intercepted tile water.

- **Floodwater storage:**

Each one acre oxbow provides an estimated **one million gallons of floodwater** storage each year.

- **Wildlife habitat:**

Critical habitat for amphibians, fish, birds and reptiles that prefer slow-moving water

- **Thousands of fish** representing 40 species have been found utilizing restored oxbow habitat.

- **54 species of birds** have been identified at restored oxbows.

# RESTORATION

- Excavate soil to historic riverbed depth
- Re-slope and re-seed banks
- Average surface area size of 1/4 acre
- Typically located in low lying wet areas not currently in production
- Reconnect to river during floods



Oxbow before restoration



Oxbow during restoration

Oxbow after restoration

