

Nishnabotna Fertilizer Spill

National Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration

What Happened?

To restore fish and wildlife resources in the East Nishnabotna River affected by the March 9-11, 2024, fertilizer spill at the NEW Cooperative Inc. (NEW) facility in Red Oak, IA, the natural resource Trustees have initiated a natural resource damage assessment and restoration (NRDAR) to evaluate the impact of the spill on natural resources and ultimately to restore the injured resources.

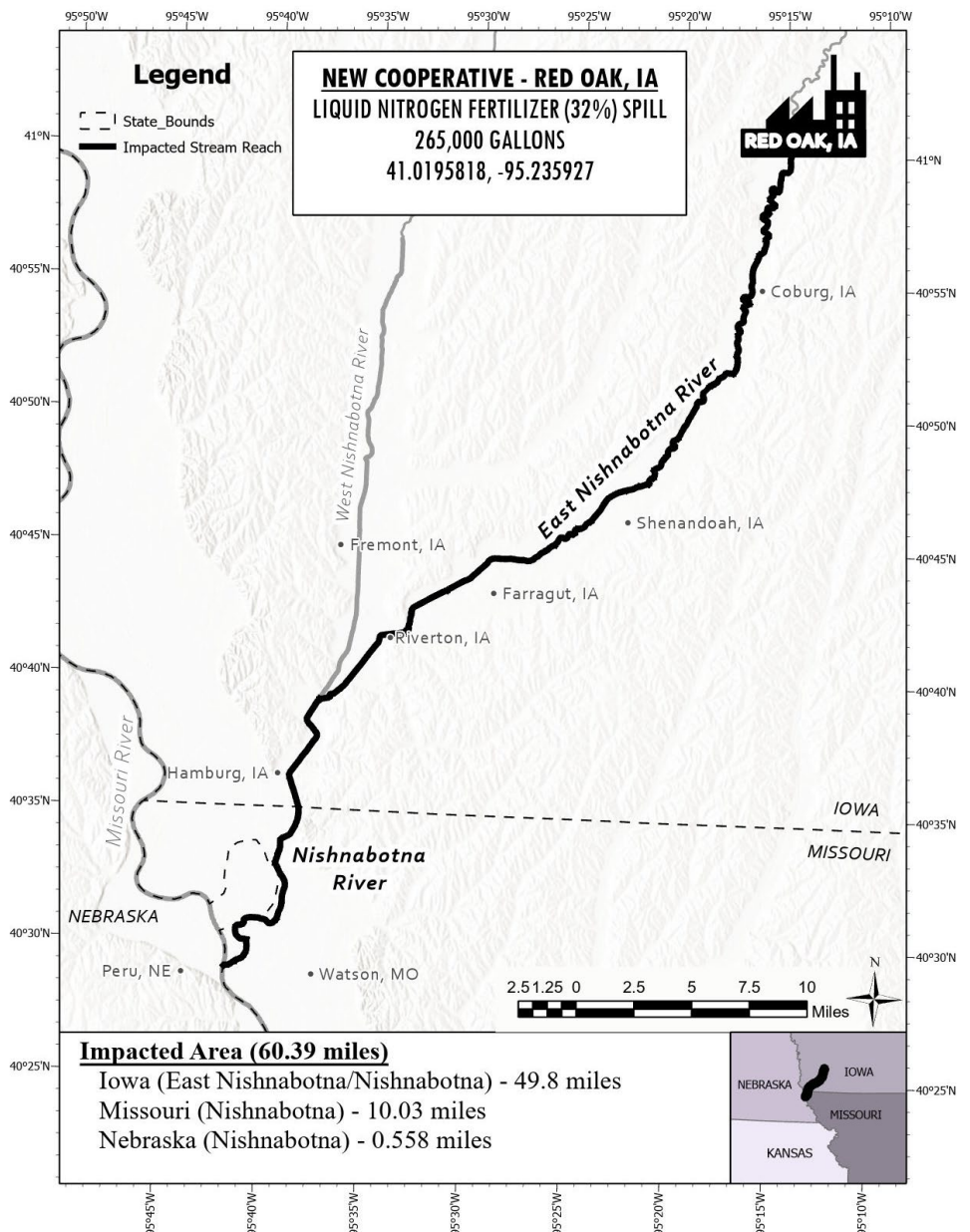
The Trustees are the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The East Nishnabotna River Watershed:

The Nishnabotna River is a tributary of the Missouri River in southwestern Iowa, northwestern Missouri, and southeastern Nebraska, and flows for most of its length as two parallel streams in Iowa: the East Nishnabotna and the West Nishnabotna River.

The East Nishnabotna River Watershed encompasses 696,400 acres and flows through 10 counties in southwest Iowa. It is part of the greater Nishnabotna Basin, which drains to the Missouri River, a crucial water body that provides feeding, breeding, and resting areas for hundreds of species of birds and fish.

The East and West Nishnabotna Rivers merge to create the Nishnabotna River. The Nishnabotna River flows into the Missouri River near Peru, Nebraska.



Map of the Nishnabotna Fertilizer Spill impacted area, noting the location of the release site in Red Oak, IA, and the 60.39 miles of impacted river across Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska.



Photo: USFWS

The federally endangered Pallid Sturgeon.

Both the Nishnabotna and Missouri Rivers provide suitable habitat for the federally endangered Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) and the federally threatened due to similarity of appearance, Shovelnose Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*).

These sturgeon species are native to the mainstem of the Missouri River (USFWS 2014). However, given its connection as a tributary and its morphology, the Nishnabotna River can also support and is frequented by the by these sturgeon species.

The Nishnabotna River Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration:

Fish, wildlife, other natural resources, and the services those resources provide can be injured when hazardous substances enter the environment. Those natural resources are managed for the public's benefit.

As such, the Trustees are working on the public's behalf to determine the extent of the fertilizer spill's injury to the Nishnabotna River's natural resources.

Based on the damage assessment, the Trustees will seek compensation from NEW Cooperative Inc. for activities to restore or replace natural resources injured by the fertilizer spill. A benefit of the NRDAR program is that natural resources are restored at no cost to the taxpayers. The Trustees hope to expedite restoration efficiently and effectively by working through the NRDAR process.

Our ultimate goal is to restore the Nishnabotna River's natural resources. Public participation will be an essential component moving forward with the NRDAR. The Trustees will provide opportunities for public engagement on restoration planning in the future.

Quick Facts

- 265,000 gallons of fertilizer released
- 60.39 river miles impacted
- 4 Trustees involved
- At least 2 federally-protected species potentially impacted

More Information:

USFWS NRDAR:

<https://www.fws.gov/nrdar>

ORDA NRDAR:

<https://www.doi.gov/restoration>

For questions related to the Nishnabotna Fertilizer Spill NRDAR, please contact:

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Photo: USACE

The confluence of the Nishnabotna River and Missouri River.

