

Building a Wetland Program: An Oklahoma Tribal Perspective on Prospects and Pitfalls

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What I will Cover

- MCN EPA's Wetland Program Development Grant.
 - Goals and tasks
 - How I approached achieving those goals and tasks.
 - The challenges I encountered.
- Discuss the potential for other tribes to incorporate a wetland component into their water protection programs.
- Explore potential pitfalls or challenges

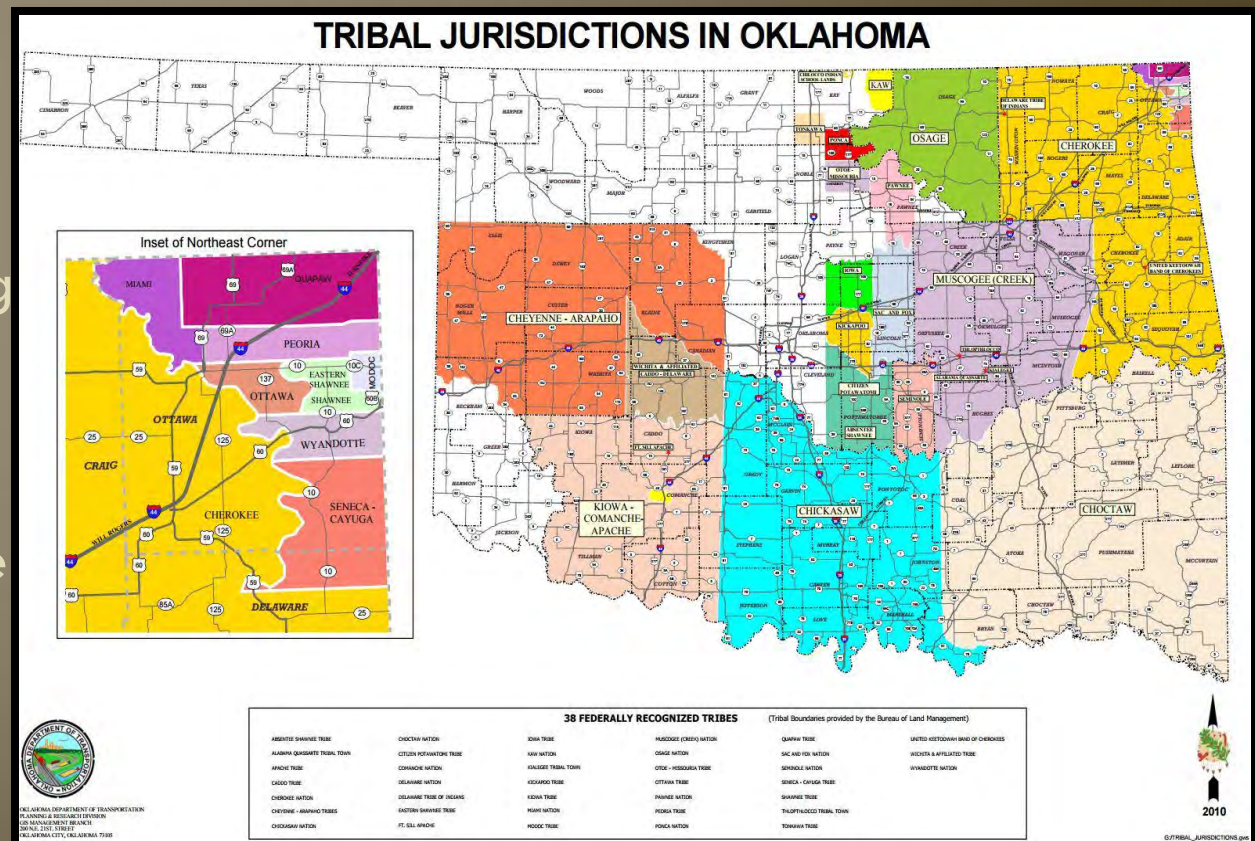
What I can't Cover

- Can not speak for any of the other tribes.
- Any tribal information, background, or cultural specifics that is not publically available.



Oklahoma Tribes: Introduction

- 39 Tribes in Oklahoma
- Each are sovereign and most have established environmental programs.
- Most have water protection programs.
- Stream monitoring under section 106 or NPS under section 319 of the CWA.



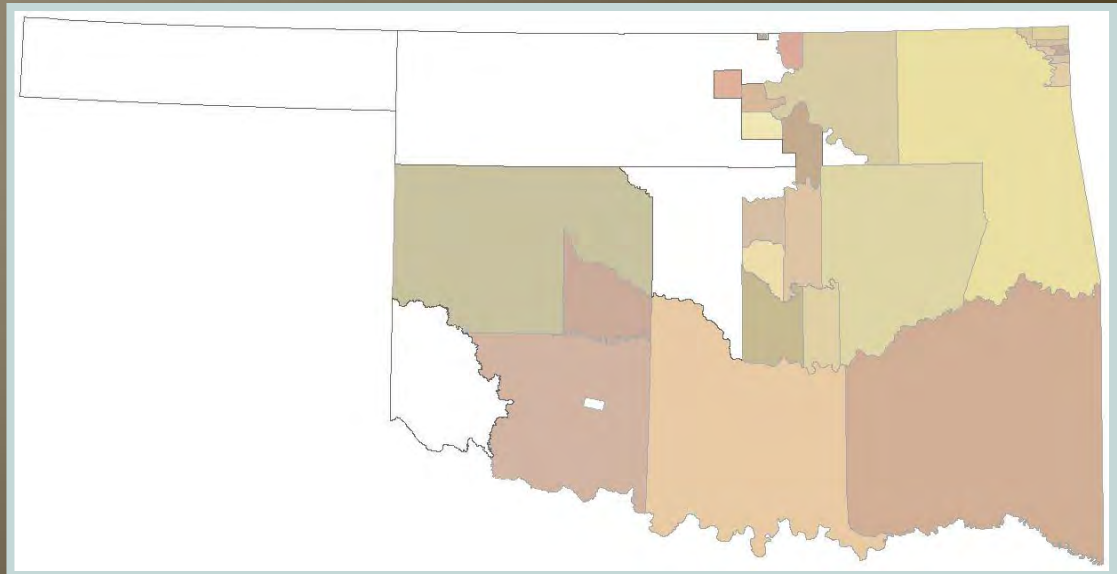
Between 1998-2014:

8 Oklahoma tribes have utilized EPA wetlands programs/funding.

Between 2005-2014:

2 Tribes

- Peoria Tribe
- Muscogee Creek Nation



Potential pitfalls for tribes

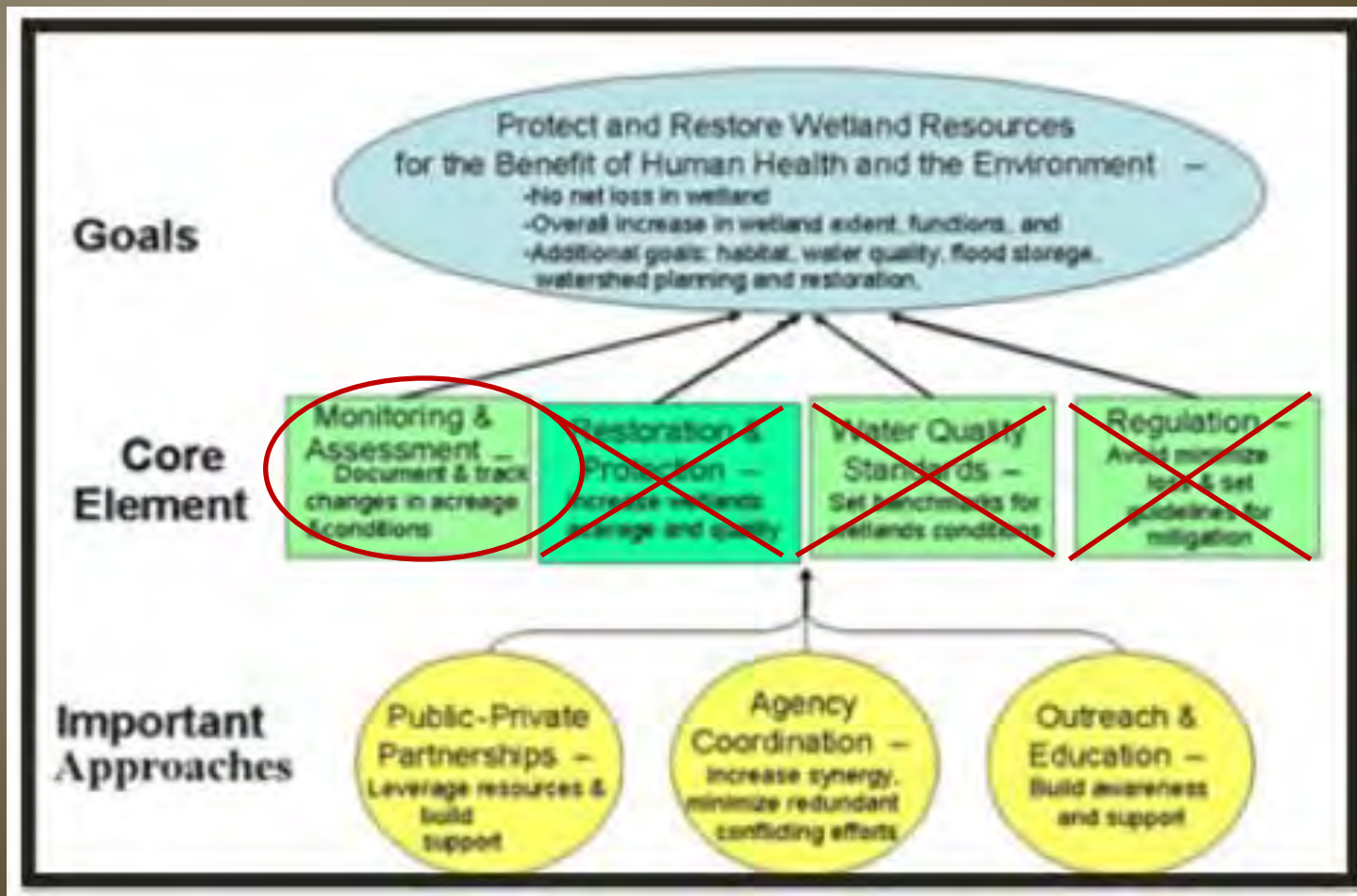
- Not all of the 39 tribes have a land base.
 - Of those that do most have some type of water protection program.
 - The 40% match is often too much for a tribe's limited department budget
- We typically have small departments.
 - Smaller pool of expertise to draw from

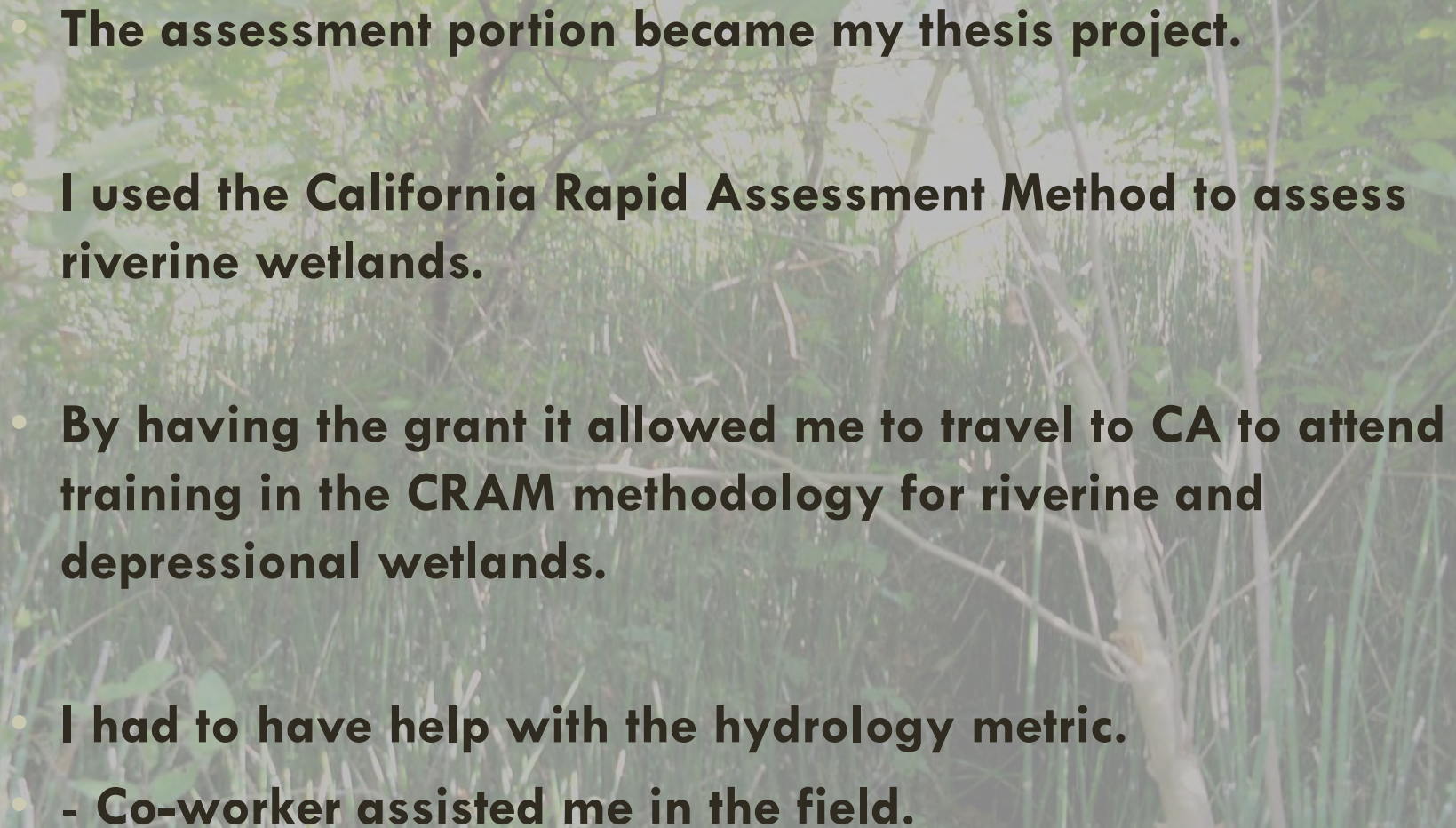
ITEC has been a training resource.



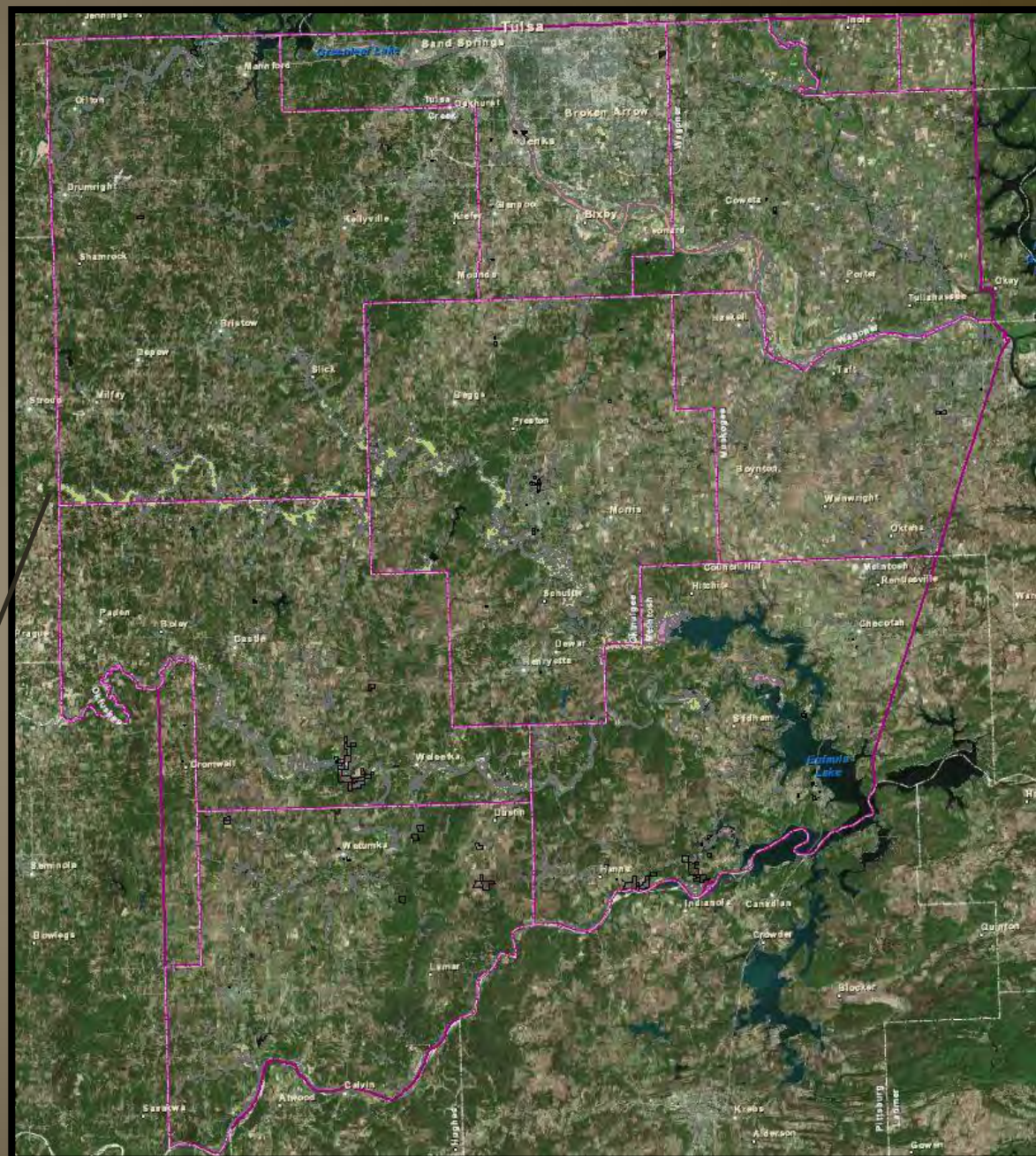
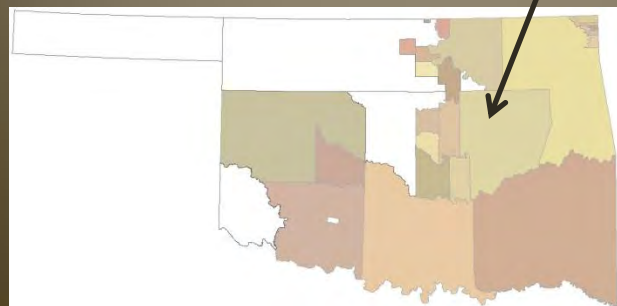
MCN Experience: The pitfalls

- Little knowledge with EPA 4 core elements framework.
- Little knowledge of the Level 1, 2, & 3 wetland assessment.

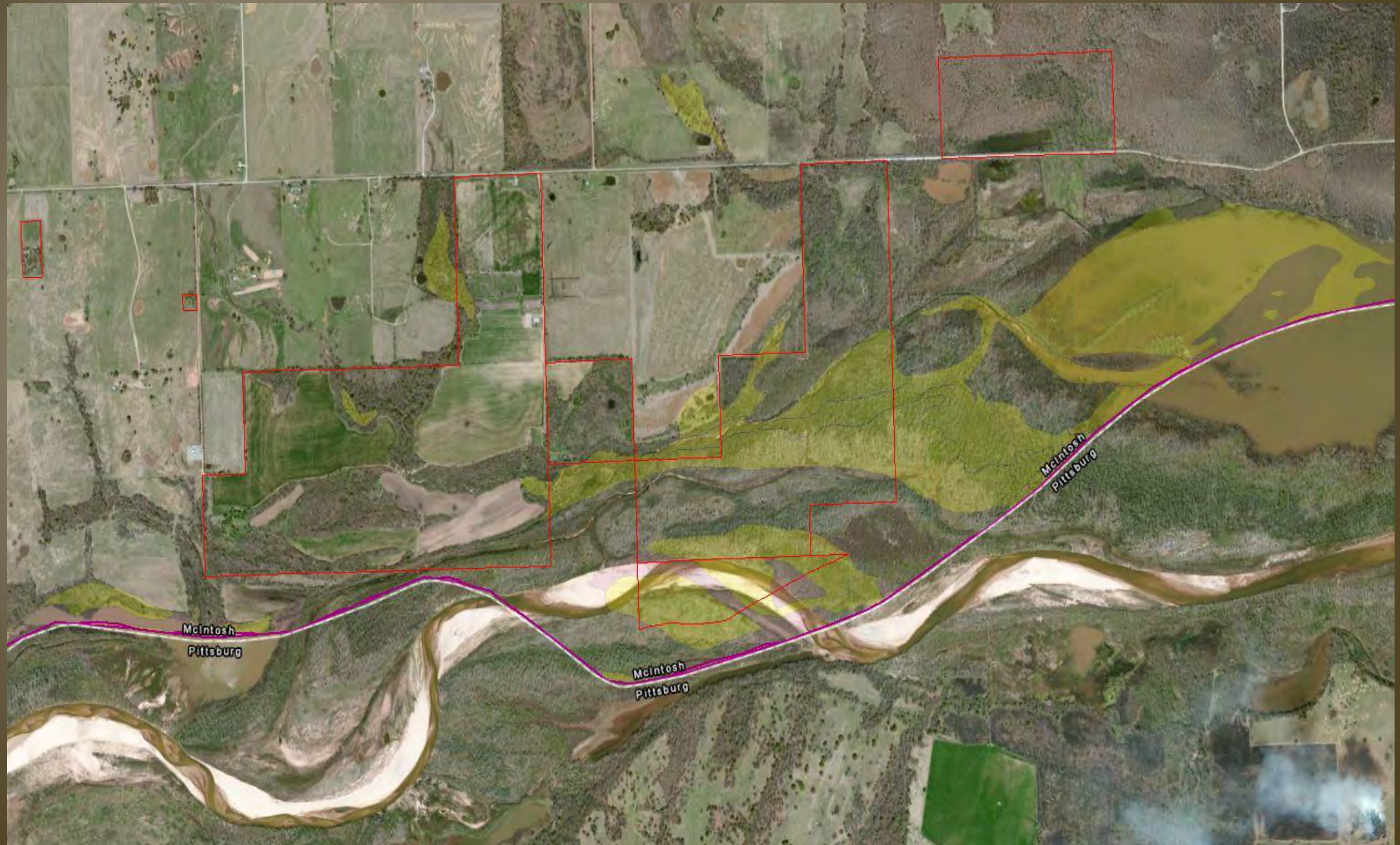


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- **The assessment portion became my thesis project.**
 - **I used the California Rapid Assessment Method to assess riverine wetlands.**
 - **By having the grant it allowed me to travel to CA to attend training in the CRAM methodology for riverine and depressional wetlands.**
 - **I had to have help with the hydrology metric.**
 - **- Co-worker assisted me in the field.**

MCN Exterior Boundary

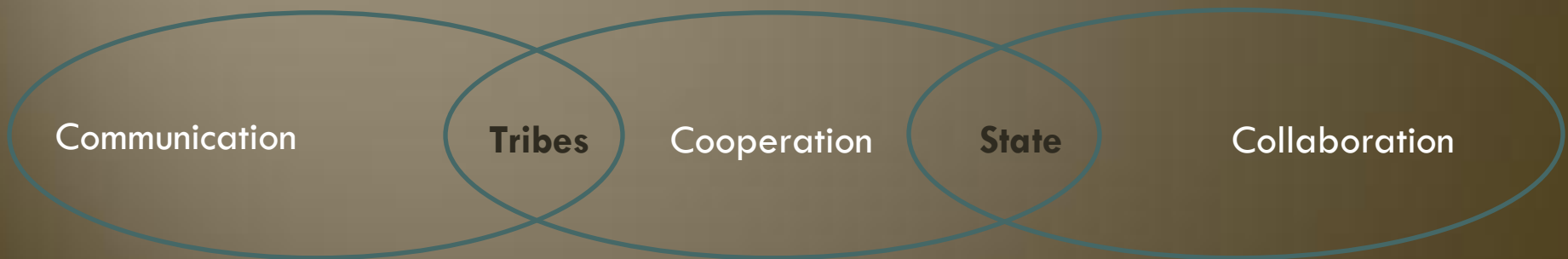


Wetlands of primary interest



Back to Tribes: Potential

- Will other tribes attempt Level 1 and 2 assessments?
 - I don't have that answer, but.....
 - Many of the tribes have wetlands on tribal land.
- Oklahoma is in the process of developing the OKRAM.
 - I'd like to see the opportunity extended to tribes to learn the methodology.
 - Consistency in methodology throughout the state is the best option.



- Many tribes have quality GIS departments.
- Improved communication expands expertise.
- When OKRAM is implemented if tribal staff is trained it provides consistency statewide.



Questions?



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Mvto!
Thank You!