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See where Micron plans new wetlands to replace those destroyed by Clay chip plant

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Micron Technology would destroy more than 200 acres of wetlands, like these along Burnet Road, in the town of Clay to build a semiconductor manufacturing complex. Glenn Coin | gcoin@syracuse.com



By [Glenn Coin](#) | gcoin@syracuse.com

Syracuse, N.Y. –[Micron Technology's](#) planned chipmaking plant in the town of Clay could destroy more than 200 acres of wetlands and over a mile of streams.

Micron will be required under state and federal law to replace those wetlands nearby.

The company has tentatively identified nearly 400 acres of forest and farmland in six separate sections to create new wetlands in adjoining Oswego County. That's a combined area bigger than the New York State Fairgrounds.

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Micron is still working with the federal and state agencies that oversee wetlands, and the plan isn't final. The state Department of Environmental Conservation and the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) will decide how many acres of wetlands Micron must create to compensate for the loss of those from the chip complex.

Micron need permits from both agencies before it can start construction of the complex at the corner of Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road. [The company plans to start clearing trees](#), the first step toward construction, in November.

[Micron has said it plans to build](#) up to four enormous chipmaking plants, each taking up 28 acres of land, over the next 20 years.

Micron is working with The Wetland Trust, a nonprofit based in Schuyler County that owns nearly 1,200 acres of land in southern Oswego County.

“Everything’s still kind of in flux,” said Jim Curatolo, executive director of the trust. That includes the exact parcels and the total number of acres.

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“Whenever the agencies and Micron come up with the final compensation package, we will be the ones to provide it,” he said.

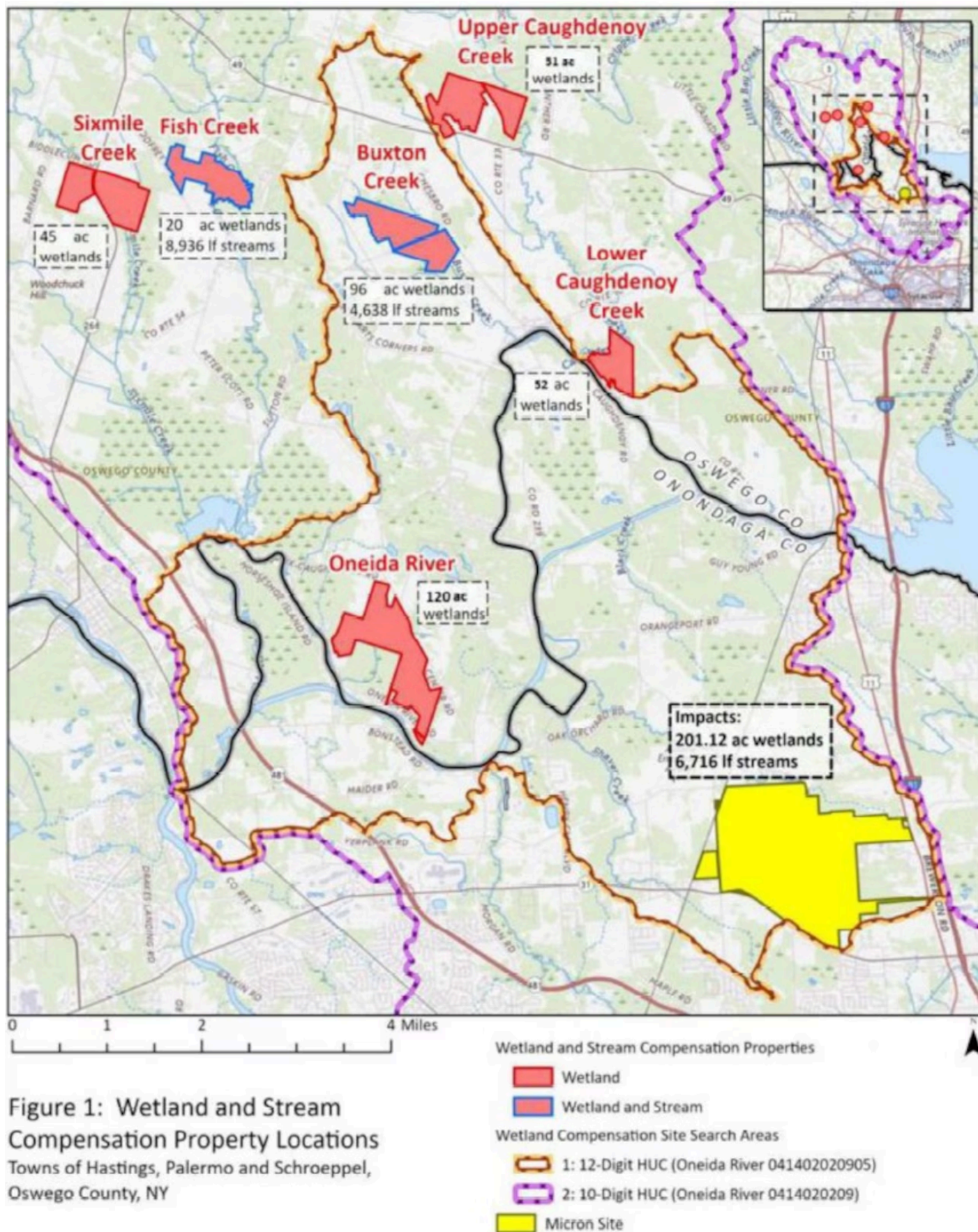


Figure 1: Wetland and Stream Compensation Property Locations
Towns of Hastings, Palermo and Schroepfel,
Oswego County, NY

This map shows a tentative proposal by Micron Technology to build new wetlands (red) to replace the ones it plans to fill in when building a chip making plant (yello) in Clay Micron Technology

The Micron project is expected to fill in more than 200 acres of wetlands. Curatolo said companies are generally required to create more acres of wetlands than they're destroying.

"You usually build more wetlands than what was impacted so you get a net gain," he said.

The trust in January submitted a proposal to the Army Corps and DEC to use six chunks of land in Oswego County to provide wetlands for the Micron project. The submission included a Micron map that showed the total acres of new wetlands created would be 384 acres.

That's not enough to undo the damage Micron will cause, said Don Hughes, conservation chair of the Sierra Club Central & Northern New York Group.

"If this is the totality of what they're doing, it's clearly inadequate," Hughes said. "I would want them to do at least 500 acres of wetlands, if not more."

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Hughes said the destruction of wetlands on the Micron site will also damage nearby wetlands.

Micron did not respond to questions for this story.

The Wetland Trust spent about \$10 million buying land in southern Oswego County over the past few months, according to land records. Not all of that land is for Micron, Curatolo said.

On the parcels that Micron would use, he said, the company would pay all the costs, including the land and construction work.

The trust would own the land, create the wetlands and oversee the land in the future, he said.

“We have our own equipment, we have our own operators, our own planners,” Curatolo said. “When you own the land forever, you want to be the one designing and building it, so you get it done right.”

The trust has more than 100 properties covering 3,800 wetland acres, according to its website. In Central New York, it has projects along Nine Mile Swamp, in Madison and Oneida counties; at the Owasco Inlet Creek, in Cayuga and Tompkins counties; and near Onondaga Lake.

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It owns six parcels totaling 458 acres in Onondaga County, according to county property records.

Micron’s final wetlands plan will be part of a broader environmental impact statement required by state and federal law. [Micron filed the draft of that report](#) Thursday with the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The report is expected to be released in early June and the public will have 45 days to comment on it, said Bob Petrovich, executive director of OCIDA.

Micron will also set aside 650 acres of grassland to accommodate rare birds that might be on the site, the company said a year ago in a filing with environmental regulators. The company must also preserve some forest land to provide homes for the endangered bats that roost and mate on the chip plant site.

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