

GENERAL LAND OFFICE SURVEY VEGETATION ANALYSIS FOR EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

*** DENISE BOUDREAU, EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT, 151 HWY 76, HARPERS FERRY, IA 52146**

Abstract: The General Land Office Surveys have been used to determine the vegetation present on the landscape at the time of European settlement. With the use of GIS, it is now easier to map these Surveys with greater accuracy. The plat maps for Iowa have been digitized and rectified providing a better mapping base. These along with the digital Orthophotos provide a visual base. Bearing trees are digitized using species and diameter as well as any distinguishing features. Plat line data is mapped using a code and a description field. Line notes use fields denoting vegetation type, trees, undergrowth, rating, description, and notes. Plat point data is mapped using a code and description. The analyst needs to be familiar with vegetation communities as well as soils in the local area in order to properly determine the historic vegetation present. Board-based information can be obtained keeping in mind that the surveys were not a scientific vegetation study but a tool to be used by settlers during the westward expansion. Another thing to note during mapping is knowing who the surveyors were and where they came from, the terms of the time, and the vegetation names of the area of the country where the surveyors were from.