

APPENDIX A

AGENCY COORDINATION

- **MnDNR Natural Resources and Recreational Questionnaire Review**
- **USFWS Correspondence**
- **USDA NRCS Correspondence**
- **USDA Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Forms**
- **Mn/DOT Cultural Resources Unit Correspondence**
- **Minnesota Historical Society (SHPO) Correspondence**



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__

March 18, 2002

Chad Casey
MNDOT
District 3
3725 12th Street North
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Re: Natural Resources and Recreational Resources Questionnaire for Proposed I-94/TH
10 Mississippi River Crossing East of St. Cloud and West of Becker (S.P.8823-01)

Dear: Mr. Casey:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed our review of the Natural Resources and Recreational Resources Questionnaire for the above-referenced project and we offer the following comments for your consideration.

First, we would point out that all four of the "build" alternatives have the potential for very significant adverse impacts to the scenic, natural, and recreational values of this reach of the Mississippi River. Bridges can impact the environment in the immediate vicinity of the structure through the destruction of fish and wildlife habitat, disturbances to breeding patterns of wildlife in the area and reduced scenic and visual qualities. They may also have farther-reaching adverse impacts from noise and light pollution as well as water and air quality. For these reasons, Minnesota Wild and Scenic River Rules (M.R.6105) provide that river crossings in segments so-designated, are to be avoided whenever practicable. Where no feasible alternative to a new crossing exists, primary consideration must be given to crossings located within or adjacent to existing facilities. This means that the EIS will need to include a very thorough analysis of the no-build alternative as well as Alternative B, which most closely follows the existing alignment.

The DNR Natural Heritage Program staff have reviewed our databases and provided a comment memo and database printout to document the rare features in proximity to each of the proposed alignments. DNR Fisheries has also provided a comment memo detailing potential impacts to the fishery associated with the various alternatives. These documents are included as attachments to this letter.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for continuing coordination on this project. We intend to actively participate in the ongoing Technical Advisory Committee for this project and can provide further input in that forum. If you have questions regarding this letter, please e-mail me at kate.drewry@dnr.state.mn.us or call at (651) 772 -7946.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Drewry".

Kate Drewry
Interregional Corridors Transportation Team
Office of Management and Budget Services

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929



PART 3. Natural Heritage Resources

To be completed by DNR Natural Heritage and Non-game Research Program

1. Are there Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern flora present in the project area?

Yes X No ____ Unknown ____

If yes or unknown, please explain.

Based on our search of the Minnesota Natural Heritage database (see attached printouts), the following occur in the project vicinity:

Endangered plant species occurrences:	0
Threatened plant species occurrences:	0
Special Concern plant species occurrences:	5

2. Is a survey of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern flora recommended? (To be conducted by Mn/DOT or a consultant)

Yes ____ No X

Please explain.

We have no information indicating that any additional rare plant species may exist in or near the project area, for which a field survey is warranted.

3. Are there Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern fauna present in the project area?

Yes X No ____ Unknown ____

If yes or unknown, please explain.

Based on our search of the Minnesota Natural Heritage database (see attached printouts), the following occur in the project vicinity:

Endangered animal species occurrences:	0
Threatened animal species occurrences:	21
Special Concern animal species occurrences:	12

4. Is a survey of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern fauna recommended? (To be conducted by Mn/DOT or a consultant)

Yes ____ No X

Please explain.

We have no information indicating that any additional rare fauna may exist in or near the project area for which a field survey is warranted.

5. Could any native plant communities such as native prairie tracts be impacted by this project either directly or through the extraction of aggregate or fill material?

Yes X No ____ Unknown ____

If yes, please indicate the location of these communities in relation to this project.

Alternative A: The Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area contains an assemblage of Natural Communities including Wet Meadow, Wet Prairie, Dry Prairie, Willow Swamp, Mixed Emergent Marsh, and Aspen Woodland within an area identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey Program as a "Site of Biodiversity Significance". We are opposed to any disturbance of this ecologically important area.

Alternative B: Oak Forest, Floodplain Forest, Dry Oak Savanna, Wet Meadow, and Floodplain Forest Natural Communities are present adjacent to the existing TH 24 alignment, just north of the river in T34N R30W Section 23 (please refer to the enclosed "Natural Community and Rare Species" Map of Sherburne County for more detailed locational information).

Alternative C: Oak Forest and Floodplain Forest Natural Communities are present along the proposed alignment, north of the river in T34N R30W Section 25 (please refer to the enclosed "Natural Community and Rare Species" Map of Sherburne County for more detailed locational information).

Alternative D: An Oak Forest Natural Community is present just west of Barton Avenue in T122N R26W Section 14.

Because the locations of aggregate / fill sources are unknown or undisclosed in the project description, it is unknown whether additional native plant communities will be affected.

6. Are there recommendations for how potential impacts to Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern flora and fauna, and native plant communities should be addressed in project development?

Yes X No ____

If yes, please indicate what techniques should be used and where and when they should be used.

Blanding's Turtles: Blanding's Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*), a state-listed threatened species, are reported from the vicinity of Alternatives A, B, and D. Blanding's Turtles spend much of their time in shallow wetlands (1-3 feet deep), but they nest in open, sandy uplands up to 1 mile from wetlands. Factors believed to contribute to the decline of this species include wetland drainage and degradation, development on upland nesting areas, and possibly collection for the pet trade. In addition, because of the tendency for Blanding's Turtles to travel long distances over land, they are often forced to cross roads in developed areas. Many of the records we have of Blanding's Turtles are from turtles killed crossing roads.

The area north of the Alternative A connection with TH 10 (including the Sand Prairie State Wildlife Management Area) and the northern tip of Alternative D (in the vicinity of the intersection of 120th Avenue and 97th Street) are within "known concentration" areas of Blanding's Turtles. There are 13 such areas in the state. These areas have been determined by the DNR to be locations of highest priority for research and management activities, and are relied upon to maintain the species' security in the state.

The portion of the Alternative A alignment between I-94 and the river and the area just west of Alternative B near Clearwater are within "potentially important" Blanding's Turtle areas. There are 14 such areas in the state. These areas are also considered to be priority areas for research and management activities, but for which important information on the size and health of the Blanding's turtle populations is lacking. Because of this lack of information, the exact boundaries of the potentially important areas have not yet been determined.

For your information, I have attached a fact sheet and a flyer about the Blanding's Turtle. The fact sheet is intended to provide you with background information regarding habitat use, life history, and reasons

for the specie's decline, as well as recommendations for avoiding and minimizing impacts to this rare turtle. As you will note, there are two lists of recommendations. The first list contains recommendations to prevent harm to turtles during construction work, and is relative to all areas inhabited by Blanding's Turtles. Please refer to this list for Alternative B. The second column expands on the first column, and contains greater protective measures to be considered for areas known to be of state-wide importance to Blanding's Turtles. Please refer to this list of recommendations for Alternatives A and D, as these alignments fall within such areas. The flyer, which should be given to all contractors working in the area, contains an illustration and description of the Blanding's Turtle, as well as a summary of the recommendations provided in the fact sheet.

Heron Rookery: A colonial waterbird nesting site known as "Snuffy's Landing Heron Rookery" is located just north of the river and west of the proposed Alternative D river crossing in T33N R29W Section 2. The Natural Heritage database is used to track nesting colonies of waterbirds regardless of the legal status of the species present. The importance of tracking colonies lies in the fact that the tendency to aggregate makes these species particularly vulnerable during the breeding season to disturbance or a single catastrophic event, which could result in the loss of many individuals. If this alternative is considered further, the Regional Nongame Specialist Pam Perry should be contacted at (218) 828-2228 to discuss any concerns she may have regarding its proximity to the project.

Loggerhead Shrikes: Loggerhead Shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a state-listed threatened species, have been reported nesting north of the river in the vicinity of Alternatives A and D. The preferred habitat of this species is open country and dry upland prairie with hedgerows, shrubs, and small trees. Shrikes are also found around shelterbelts, old orchards, pastures, cemeteries, grassy roadsides, and farmsteads. The scattered trees, shrubs, and fencerows in these areas provide places shrikes need to hunt and nest. Red cedar, hawthorn, and plum trees are frequently used for nesting. Shrikes feed by perching on the trees, shrubs, or fences, and flying out to catch their prey (large insects, small mammals, birds, frogs etc.) in surrounding open grassy areas. If either of these alternatives will be pursued further, please contact Regional Nongame Specialist Pam Perry, at (218) 828-2228 about enhancing roadside habitat for shrikes and to discuss whether construction activity should be avoided during the critical nesting season. Please refer to the enclosed fact sheets for additional information about Loggerhead Shrikes.

Mussels: The DNR mussel survey crew completed a survey of the four alternative bridge crossings in August 2001. All mussels encountered were collected and moved out of the survey corridors to avoid any future impacts from bridge construction. If there are changes to any of the proposed alignments, further mussel survey work may be necessary.

7. Do you have any concerns about cumulative impacts to Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern flora and fauna in the project area?

Yes X No _____

If yes, please explain.

Any increased development resulting from a new freeway corridor could negatively impact the rare species listed above by facilitating further habitat loss, fragmentation, and/or degradation.

8. Could the project affect any Scientific and Natural Areas?

Yes _____ No X

If yes, please explain.

9. Do you have additional comments or observations?

We are in favor of expansion of the existing TH 24 alignment (Alternative B) as it would result in the least disturbance to the river corridor.

Note: If there is any need to meet, or if you have any questions on this project, contact the MnDOT project Manager listed on the Questionnaire Form.

Completed by:

Name: Sarah D. Hoffmann
Position: Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator
Unit: Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program
Region: Central Office, Saint Paul
Address: MNDNR - Ecological Services Division
500 Lafayette Rd., Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651/296-7863
Fax: 651/296-1811
Email: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

(ERDB# 20020702)

IMPORTANT! Please Read the Following.....

The Natural Heritage database is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources. It is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, natural communities, and other natural features. Its purpose is to foster better understanding and protection of these features.

Because our information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be rare or otherwise significant natural features in the state that are not represented in the database. A county-by-county survey of rare natural features is now underway, and has been completed for Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties. Our information about natural communities is, therefore, quite thorough for those counties. However, because survey work for rare plants and animals is less exhaustive, and because there has not been an on-site survey of all areas of the county, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist on the project area.

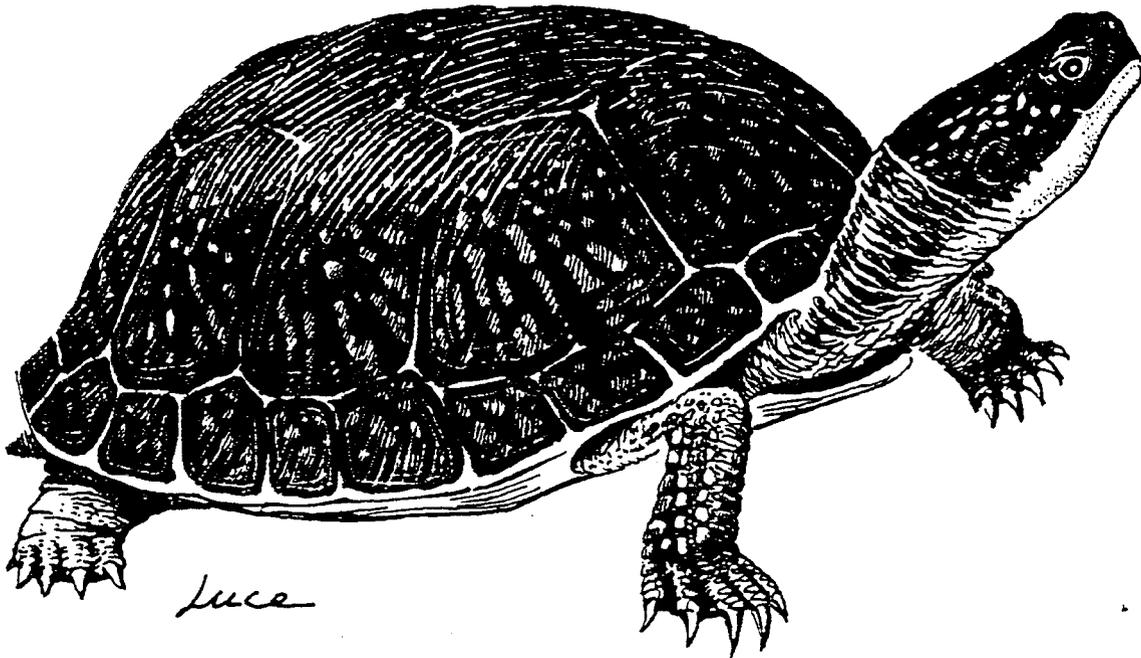
The enclosed results of the database search are provided in two formats: index and full record. To control the release of locational information which might result in the damage or destruction of a rare element, both printout formats are copyrighted.

The index provides rare feature locations only to the nearest section, and may be reprinted, unaltered, in an Environmental Assessment Worksheet, municipal natural resource plan, or internal report compiled by your company for the project listed above. If you wish to reproduce the index for any other purpose, please contact me to request written permission. Copyright notice for the index should include the following disclaimer:

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The full-record printout includes more detailed locational information, and is for your personal use only. If you wish to reprint the full-record printouts for any purpose, please contact me to request written permission.

CAUTION



BLANDING'S TURTLES MAY BE ENCOUNTERED IN THIS AREA

The unique and rare Blanding's turtle has been found in this area. Blanding's turtles are a State Threatened species and are protected under Minnesota Statute 84.095, Protection of Threatened and Endangered Species. Please be careful of turtles on roads and in construction sites. For additional information on turtles, or to report a Blanding's turtle sighting, contact the DNR Nongame Specialist nearest you: Bemidji (218-755-2976); Brainerd (218-828-2228); New Ulm (507-359-6033); Rochester (507-280-5070); or St. Paul (651-297-2277).

DESCRIPTION: The Blanding's turtle is a medium to large turtle (5 to 10 inches) with a black or dark blue, dome-shaped shell with muted yellow spots and bars. The bottom of the shell is hinged across the front third, enabling the turtle to pull the front edge of the lower shell firmly against the top shell to provide additional protection when threatened. The head, legs, and tail are dark brown or blue-gray with small dots of light brown or yellow. A distinctive field mark is the bright yellow chin and neck.

Landowners Guide for Maintaining and Encouraging Loggerhead Shrikes

Loggerhead shrikes are in trouble – *but you may be able to help*. Throughout the United States, and particularly in the Midwest, loggerhead shrikes are disappearing at an alarming rate. So serious is the decline that the loggerhead shrike is one of six bird species considered threatened in Minnesota.



What is a loggerhead shrike?

Loggerhead shrikes are special birds – an interesting cross between songbird and hawk. They feed on large insects such as grasshoppers and beetles, mice, small birds, frogs and toads. Shrikes spend much of their time perched on powerlines, fences or the top-most branches of trees and shrubs, scouting for prey and then swooping down to catch it. Then the bird either eats its prey, impales it on a nearby thorn or barbed wire fence or wedges it into the fork of a branch. Because shrikes lack the strong, sharp claws and feet of hawks, impaling food holds it in place as the bird tears at it with its bill. Your first clue that loggerhead shrikes are on your property may be finding an animal impaled on a fence barb or a thorn. This habit has earned the loggerhead shrike the nickname "butcher bird."

What do loggerhead shrikes look like?

The robin-sized loggerhead shrike has a slate-gray back with a light breast. The most distinguishing markings of this bird are the black mask, which extends across the eye, and the black and white wing and tail patches which flash when the bird flies. Males and females are similar in size and color.

In Minnesota, loggerhead shrikes are most easily confused with eastern kingbirds and northern shrikes. However, eastern kingbirds have no mask, their heads are entirely dark, and they do not have white patches on their wings. The northern shrike looks very similar to the loggerhead shrike, but occurs in Minnesota from October through April, whereas the loggerhead shrike is here from March to October. During the early spring and fall, when both shrikes are in the state, they can be told apart by the loggerhead shrike's completely black bill and its mask which extends across the top of the bill.

Where do they live?

Loggerhead shrikes were once found throughout much of the unforested region of the state. Today, their numbers are very low. Recent surveys have located fewer than 30 nests in the state (Fig. 1). It is very important that we try to maintain habitat for the few shrikes that still breed in Minnesota.

Shrikes use grassy, open areas with scattered trees and shrubs such as pastures, prairie patches and grassy roadsides. A few trees and shrubs, along with fences and powerlines provide nesting sites and perches from



OFFICIAL STATUS: Threatened

BASIS FOR STATUS: The loggerhead shrike is widely distributed throughout most of the continental United States and the southern part of the Prairie Provinces of Canada. In Minnesota, the shrike was formerly a common to uncommon breeding species, except in the northeastern region and adjacent counties in the north-central region where it was scarce. Today, however, it is absent from these two regions and is very rare elsewhere. There are only a few localities, primarily in western and east-central Minnesota, where the species is now consistently reported each year.

A drastic decline throughout the shrike's range has been observed during the past ten to 15 years. It has been on the National Audubon Society's Blue List since 1972, with all regions in the United States reporting fewer numbers in recent years. Federal breeding bird survey routes, which are run throughout the United States, reveal a nearly 50% decrease in the number of birds reported in the 15-year period from 1965 to 1979. Several states have responded to this decline and have given the species an official status.

Once considered a common inhabitant of farmland country, the shrike's population in Minnesota has fallen sharply to a point where it is very rare or absent throughout suitable open country. Habitat destruction may be responsible for some of the decline. Intensive farming practices, for example, often preclude the presence of shelterbelts and hedgerows, which can provide suitable nesting habitat. Because the shrike is a predator, environmental contamination may also be responsible for the decline.

PREFERRED HABITAT: The shrike is primarily an inhabitant of the open country and dry upland prairie where hedgerows, shrubs, and small trees occur. It is also found around shelterbelts, old orchards, pastures, cemeteries, and farmsteads where this type of habitat is present.

AID TO IDENTIFICATION: The striking features of this robin-sized bird include slate gray upperparts, a broad, black mask through the eye, a white patch on otherwise black wings, and white outer tail feathers. The grayish white underparts are unbarred. A shrike can often be detected without observing the bird itself. Its unique behavior of impaling unused prey items, such as frogs, mice, and large invertebrates, on thorns and barbed wire is a telltale sign of the bird's presence in an area. The loggerhead shrike is a summer resident of Minnesota. It is often confused with its counterpart, the northern shrike, which is only a winter visitant in the state. The loggerhead's smaller, stouter bill and black feathers at the base of the upper mandible are two of several features that can be used to distinguish the species.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A study of the population biology of this species is needed to determine the causes for decline. Priority should also be given to developing a better understanding of the accumulation of environmental contaminants in its food chain, both in breeding and wintering areas. Perpetuation of shelterbelt and hedgerow habitat on the prairie is a requirement for the species.

SELECTED REFERENCES: Anderson and Duzan 1978; Robbins, Bystrak, and Geissler 1986; Tate 1986.



Loggerhead Shrike

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species of Minnesota

Blanding's Turtle
(Emydoidea blandingii)

Minnesota Status: Threatened
Federal Status: none

State Rank¹: S2
Global Rank¹: G4

HABITAT USE

Blanding's turtles need both wetland and upland habitats to complete their life cycle. The types of wetlands used include ponds, marshes, shrub swamps, bogs, and ditches and streams with slow-moving water. In Minnesota, Blanding's turtles are primarily marsh and pond inhabitants. Calm, shallow water bodies (Type 1-3 wetlands) with mud bottoms and abundant aquatic vegetation (cattails, water lilies, etc.) are preferred, and extensive marshes bordering rivers provide excellent habitat. Small temporary wetlands (those that dry up in the late summer or fall) are frequently used in spring and summer -- these fishless pools are amphibian and invertebrate breeding habitat, which provides an important food source for Blanding's turtles. Also, the warmer water of these shallower areas probably aids in the development of eggs within the female turtle. Nesting occurs in open (grassy or brushy) sandy uplands, often some distance from water bodies. Frequently, nesting occurs in traditional nesting grounds on undeveloped land. Blanding's turtles have also been known to nest successfully on residential property (especially in low density housing situations), and to utilize disturbed areas such as farm fields, gardens, under power lines, and road shoulders (especially of dirt roads). Although Blanding's turtles may travel through woodlots during their seasonal movements, shady areas (including forests and lawns with shade trees) are not used for nesting. Wetlands with deeper water are needed in times of drought, and during the winter. Blanding's turtles overwinter in the muddy bottoms of deeper marshes and ponds, or other water bodies where they are protected from freezing.

LIFE HISTORY

Individuals emerge from overwintering and begin basking in late March or early April on warm, sunny days. The increase in body temperature which occurs during basking is necessary for egg development within the female turtle. Nesting in Minnesota typically occurs during June, and females are most active in late afternoon and at dusk. Nesting can occur as much as a mile from wetlands. The nest is dug by the female in an open sandy area and 6-15 eggs are laid. The female turtle returns to the marsh within 24 hours of laying eggs. After a development period of approximately two months, hatchlings leave the nest from mid-August through early-October. Nesting females and hatchlings are often at risk of being killed while crossing roads between wetlands and nesting areas. In addition to movements associated with nesting, all ages and both sexes move between wetlands from April through November. These movements peak in June and July and again in September and October as turtles move to and from overwintering sites. In late autumn (typically November), Blanding's turtles bury themselves in the substrate (the mud at the bottom) of deeper wetlands to overwinter.

IMPACTS / THREATS / CAUSES OF DECLINE

- loss of wetland habitat through drainage or flooding (converting wetlands into ponds or lakes)
- loss of upland habitat through development or conversion to agriculture
- human disturbance, including collection for the pet trade* and road kills during seasonal movements
- increase in predator populations (skunks, racoons, etc.) which prey on nests and young

*It is illegal to possess this threatened species.

ROADS cont.	
Culverts between wetland areas, or between wetland areas and nesting areas, should be 36 inches or greater in diameter, and elliptical or flat-bottomed.	Road placement should avoid separating wetlands from adjacent upland nesting sites, or these roads should be fenced to prevent turtles from attempting to cross them (contact your DNR Nongame Specialist for details).
Wetland crossings should be bridged, or include raised roadways with culverts which are 36 in or greater in diameter and flat-bottomed or elliptical (raised roadways discourage turtles from leaving the wetland to bask on roads).	Road placement should avoid bisecting wetlands, or these roads should be fenced to prevent turtles from attempting to cross them (contact your DNR Nongame Specialist for details). This is especially important for roads with more than 2 lanes.
Culverts under roads crossing streams should be oversized (at least twice as wide as the normal width of open water) and flat-bottomed or elliptical.	Roads crossing streams should be bridged.
UTILITIES	
Utility access and maintenance roads should be kept to a minimum (this reduces road-kill potential).	
Below-ground utility construction sites should be returned to original grade (trenches can trap turtles).	
LANDSCAPING AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT	
Terrain should be left with as much natural contour as possible.	As much natural landscape as possible should be preserved (installation of sod or wood chips, paving, and planting of trees within nesting habitat can make that habitat unusable to nesting Blanding's turtles).
Graded areas should be revegetated with native grasses and forbs (some non-natives form dense patches through which it is difficult for turtles to travel).	Open space should include some areas at higher elevations for nesting. These areas should be retained in native vegetation, and should be connected to wetlands by a wide corridor of native vegetation.
Vegetation management in infrequently mowed areas -- such as in ditches, along utility access roads, and under power lines -- should be done mechanically (chemicals should not be used). Work should occur fall through spring (after October 1 st and before June 1 st).	Ditches and utility access roads should not be mowed or managed through use of chemicals. If vegetation management is required, it should be done mechanically, as infrequently as possible, and fall through spring (mowing can kill turtles present during mowing, and makes it easier for predators to locate turtles crossing roads).

Protecting Blanding's Turtle Nests: Most predation on turtle nests occurs within 48 hours after the eggs are laid. After this time, the scent is gone from the nest and it is more difficult for predators to locate the nest. Nests more than a week old probably do not need additional protection, unless they are in a particularly vulnerable spot, such as a yard where pets may disturb the nest. Turtle nests can be protected from predators and other disturbance by covering them with a piece of wire fencing (such as chicken wire), secured to the ground with stakes or rocks. The piece of fencing should measure at least 2 ft. x 2 ft., and should be of medium sized mesh (openings should be about 2 in. x 2 in.). It is *very important* that the fencing be **removed before August 1st** so the young turtles can escape from the nest when they hatch!

REFERENCES

- ¹Association for Biodiversity Information. "Heritage Status: Global, National, and Subnational Conservation Status Ranks." NatureServe. Version 1.3 (9 April 2001). <http://www.natureserve.org/ranking.htm> (15 April 2001).
- Coffin, B., and L. Pfanmueller. 1988. Minnesota's Endangered Flora and Fauna. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 473 pp.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Twin Cities Field Office

4101 East 30th Street

Bloomington, Minnesota 55425-1665

OCT 31 1997

Ed Idzorek
Minnesota Department of Transportation
District 3
3725 12th Street North
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56303-2130

Dear Mr. Idzorek:

This responds to the Scoping Document and Draft Scoping Decision Document, which describes the proposed improvements to state highway connections between Interstate 94 (I-94) and Trunk Highway 10 (TH10), between the Cities of St. Cloud and Becker in Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties. On October 9, 1997, Nick Rowse of my staff attended a meeting held at the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), where the proposed project was reviewed. According to MNDOT, congestion is currently occurring on TH24 and TH 25 between I-94 and TH10 and is likely to worsen. This congestion is primarily due to recreational demand on the highway system as people drive between the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the Brainerd area.

As discussed in the Endangered and Threatened Species section, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is documented to breed in Stearns and Sherburne Counties. This information needs to be updated in that the eagle is also documented to breed in Wright County. In addition, the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is documented. Because of the location and type of activity proposed, this project is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat. This precludes the need for further action on this project as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. However, if the project is modified or new information becomes available which indicates that listed species may be affected, consultation with this office should be reinitiated.

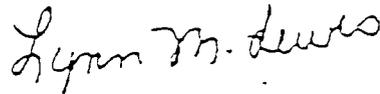
It was stated that Alternatives A, C, and D would all require new bridges to be constructed over the Mississippi River. Because these new bridges would likely directly impact the river substrate through the construction of pilings and/or other structures, we recommend that the MNDOT conduct a mussel survey at the crossing locations to identify all mussel species likely to be impacted.

Mr. Izodrek

page 2.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of and in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act and the Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy. This proposal was also examined for its conformance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended and Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn M. Lewis".

Lynn M. Lewis
Field Supervisor

December 2, 2002

Ms. Courtney Bot, Environmental Planner
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
One Carlson Parkway, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443

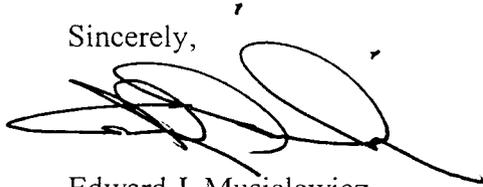
RE: I-94/TH-10 Inter-Regional Connection EIS, Sherburne County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Bot:

This letter is in response to your request for information on state or federal conservation easements within a 300-foot corridor associated with the EIS alignment alternatives. No RIM or WRP easements appear to be within the corridors.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Musielewicz
District Conservationist

cc:
Sherburne-Anoka-Hennepin County FSA





Waite Park Field Office
110 Second Street South, Suite 128
Waite Park, MN 56387
(320) 251-7800, ext. 3

November 25, 2002

Courtney Bot
SRF Consulting Group
One Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443

NOV 2002
NOV 2002
NOV 2002

Dear Ms. Bot:

This letter is in response to your request for completed form AD-1006, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating regarding the I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection.

The Waite Park Field office is responding specifically to Alternative A as identified in your mailing dated November 7, 2002. Alternatives B, C and D should be referred to the respective NRCS field offices (Sherburne and Wright counties) at the addresses I have enclosed. NRCS has reviewed aerial photographs and soil maps and determined that there will be approximately 3.0 acres of prime and unique farmland impacted by the project area.

It is the responsibility of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to monitor the effects of the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses through the Farmland Protection Act (FPPA, Public Law 97-98, December 22, 1981).

NRCS recommends the use of Best Management Practices, such as silt fences, stockpiling topsoil and sediment basins to minimize erosion and sediment in runoff during construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If NRCS can be of any further assistance please contact our office at 320-251-7800, extension 3.

Sincerely,



Steven L. Sellnow
District Conservationist

enclosures

cc: EC Field Support Office, Resource Soil Scientist
lrz

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Buffalo Field Office
306C Brighton Avenue
Buffalo, MN 55313

(763) 682-1933 Ext. 3

November 26, 2002

Courtney Bot
Environmental Planner
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
One Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443

Subject: I-94/TH 10

Dear Ms. Bot:

The three alternatives of the proposed project that are located within Wright County do not have any direct impact on any land that is currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Permanent Wetland Preserve (PWP), Waterbank Program (WBP), or Re-invest in Minnesota (RIM).

If you have any questions, please contact me at (763) 682-1933 extension 3.

Sincerely,

George W. Morris
District Conservationist

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



April 2, 2003

Courtney Bot
Environmental Planner
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
One Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443

SUBJECT: I-94/TH 10 INTERREGIONAL CONNECTION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SHERBURNE, STEARNS AND WRIGHT COUNTIES, MINNESOTA

Dear Ms Bot:

This letter is in regards to your inquiry about the possible effect the project referenced above may have on prime or important farmland. NRCS has completed an analysis of the site and determined that approximately 2.0 acres total of **prime farmland** and approximately 29.9 acres total of **farmland of statewide importance** are located within the proposed construction sites.

It is the responsibility of the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service to monitor the effects of Federal programs or money on the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses through the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA, Public Law 97-98, December 22, 1981). The land evaluation section of the AD-1006 form has been completed. If NRCS can be of any further assistance please contact our office at (763) 241-1170, extension 3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Musielewicz".

Edward J. Musielewicz
District Conservationist

Enclosure(s)

Cc: Peter Weilke, Area Resource Soil Scientist, Brooklyn Center, MN



Waite Park Field Office
110 Second Street South, Suite 128
Waite Park, MN 56387
(320) 251-7800, ext. 3

March 21, 2003

Courtney Bot
SRF Consulting Group
One Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443



Dear Ms. Bot:

This letter is in response to your request dated March 12, 2003 for completed form AD-1006, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating regarding the I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection.

Enclosed please find form AD-1006 I received from you partially completed. NRCS has determined there are 2.0 acres of prime farmland that will be impacted by *Alternative A* as outlined in the information you included in your March 12, 2003 mailing. NRCS is not aware of any RIM or WRP easements that will be impacted by *Alternative A*.

It is the responsibility of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to monitor the effects of the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses through the Farmland Protection Act (FPPA, Public Law 97-98, December 22, 1981).

NRCS recommends the use of Best Management Practices, such as silt fences, stockpiling topsoil and sediment basins to minimize erosion and sediment in runoff during construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If NRCS can be of any further assistance please contact our office at 320-251-7800, extension 3.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Sellnow
District Conservationist

enclosures

cc: EC Field Support Office, Resource Soil Scientist
lrz

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Buffalo Field Office
306C Brighton Avenue
Buffalo, MN 55313

(763) 682-1933 Ext. 3

March 31, 2003



Courtney Bot
Environmental Planner
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
1 Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55447-4443

SUBJECT: COMPLETED AD-1006 FOR THE I94/TH10 INTERREGIONAL
CONNECTION WRIGHT COUNTY, MN

Dear Ms. Bot:

Enclosed you will find the completed Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form (AD-1006). If you have any questions please contact me at 763-682-1933 extension 3.

Sincerely,

George W. Morris,
District Conservationist

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) Date Of Land Evaluation Request 3/11/03

Name Of Project I-44/TH10 Interregional Connection EIS Federal Agency Involved FHWV

Proposed Land Use Roadway County And State Snehnune County Minnesota

PART II (To be completed by SCS) Date Request Received By SCS

Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? Yes No Acres Irrigated 247 Average Farm Size 247

Major Crop(s) CORN, SOYBEANS, POTATOES Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 214,790 % 77 Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 30360 % 14

Name Of Land Evaluation System Used LE PART OF LESA Name Of Local Site Assessment System N/A Date Land Evaluation Returned By SCS 4/1/03

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)

	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	<u>82.5</u>	<u>87.6</u>	<u>22.4</u>	<u>91.0</u>
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly	<u>320</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>310</u>
C. Total Acres In Site	<u>402.5</u>	<u>437.6</u>	<u>402.4</u>	<u>401</u>

PART IV (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Information

A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	<u>0.6</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	<u>9.2</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>19.2</u>	<u>0</u>
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	<u>.03</u>	<u>.01</u>	<u>.06</u>	<u>0</u>
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	<u>2.4</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>0</u>

PART V (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Criterion

Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)	<u>61.4</u>	<u>69.2</u>	<u>64.3</u>	<u>0</u>
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PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b))	Maximum Points				
1. Area In Nonurban Use	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>19</u>
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
10. On-Farm Investments	<u>20</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	<u>25</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	103	101	102	102

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	<u>61.4</u>	<u>69.2</u>	<u>64.3</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	<u>103</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>102</u>
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	164.4	170.2	166.3	102

Site Selected: _____ Date Of Selection _____ Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes No

Reason For Selection: _____

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) Date Of Land Evaluation Request 3/11/03

Name Of Project I-94/TH10 Interregional Connection EIS Federal Agency Involved FHWA

Proposed Land Use Roadway County And State Stearns County Minnesota

PART II (To be completed by SCS) Date Request Received By SCS March 14, 2003

Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? Yes No
 (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form). Acres Irrigated _____ Average Farm Size 241 acres

Major Crop(s) Corn, soy beans, alfalfa (hay) Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 700,320 % 82 Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 613,491 % 88

Name Of Land Evaluation System Used LE part of LESA Name Of Local Site Assessment System N/A Date Land Evaluation Returned By SCS March 26, 2003

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)

	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	<u>28</u>			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly	<u>150</u>			
C. Total Acres In Site	<u>178</u>			

PART IV (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Information

A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland 2

B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland 0

C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted .00032%

D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value .02%

PART V (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Criterion
 Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points) 79

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b))	Maximum Points			
1. Area In Nonurban Use	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	X	
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>		
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>		
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>		
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>		
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>		
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>		
10. On-Farm Investments	<u>20</u>	<u>14</u>		
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	<u>25</u>	<u>0</u>		
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>		
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	103		

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	<u>79</u>		
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	<u>103</u>		
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	182		

Site Selected: _____ Date Of Selection _____ Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes No

Reason For Selection: _____

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) Date Of Land Evaluation Request 3/11/03

Name Of Project I-94/TH10 Interregional Connection EIS Federal Agency Involved FitWA

Proposed Land Use Roadway County, And State Wright County Minnesota

PART II (To be completed by SCS) Date Request Received By SCS 3/14/03

Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? Yes No Acres Irrigated — Average Farm Size 172.0

Major Crop(s) Corn, Soybeans, Hay Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 371,590 % 88 Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 322,010 % 87

Name Of Land Evaluation System Used Le Part of LESA Name Of Local Site Assessment System NA Date Land Evaluation Returned By SCS

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly		<u>27.5</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>37.9</u>
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly		<u>30</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>170</u>
C. Total Acres In Site		<u>57.5</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>207.9</u>

PART IV (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Information	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland		<u>0</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>150.2</u>
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland		<u>42.7</u>	<u>129.1</u>	<u>11.3</u>
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted		<u>0.0133</u>	<u>0.0402</u>	<u>0.0502</u>
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value		<u>100</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>53</u>

PART V (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Criterion	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)		<u>39</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>85</u>

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b))					
1. Area In Nonurban Use	<u>15</u>	0	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use	<u>10</u>	0	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	<u>20</u>	0	<u>20</u>	<u>19</u>	
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	<u>20</u>	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	<u>0</u>	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	<u>0</u>	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	<u>10</u>	4	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	<u>25</u>	12	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	<u>5</u>	5	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	
10. On-Farm Investments	<u>25</u>	14	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	<u>25</u>	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	<u>10</u>	2	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	37	<u>102</u>	<u>102</u>	

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	<u>39</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>85</u>
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	<u>37</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>102</u>
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	<u>76</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>187</u>

Site Selected: _____ Date Of Selection _____ Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes No

Reason For Selection: _____



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

October 17, 2000

Mr. Dennis Gimmestad
State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55101-1906

re: SP 8823-01, Mississippi River Regional Connectors, A, B, C, and D, I-94 to TH 10
Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties, SHPO # 97-4211

Dear Mr. Gimmestad,

Please review the enclosed cultural resource investigations by BRW, Inc. and UMD Archaeometry Lab under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended (36CFR part 800), the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act, and the Minnesota Historic Sites Act.

We agree with the UMD report that sites 21SH38 and 21SH39 (field sites A1A, BC1) are not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. We also agree that site 21SN133 (field site A2D on corridor A) needs to be evaluated if it can not be avoided because it is undisturbed and contains flaked stone debris made of materials not usually found in the region.

We disagree with the consultant that sites 21SN30 (field site A2A), 21SN131 (field site A2B), 21SN132 (field site A2C), 21SH40 (field site B2C), and 21WR117 (D1A) are potentially eligible and therefore need to be evaluated if they can not be avoided. These five sites are light-density lithic scatters characterized by locally available lithic raw materials. Most of the sites probably lack integrity due to cultivation and all fail to exhibit any evidence for any longer-term occupations (e.g. fire-cracked rock indicative of features) which may be useful in placing them in broader cultural contexts. These five sites are not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

We concur with the conclusion of the November 1, 1998 standing structures investigation that two properties, a brick barn (ST-SAT-009) and a farmstead (ST-SAT-101), meet National Register criteria for eligibility. The farmstead is an outstanding example of a diversified farmstead (criterion A) and the barn exhibits a high level of craftsmanship (criterion C). Both properties are located along alternative A and should be avoided.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me at (651) 296-8729.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Johnson
MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit

encl: 2 reports

cc: Chuck Woods, CO file
Joe Hudak, MnDOT CRU
CRU project file
Terry Humbert, District 3



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

May 6, 2003

Mr. Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs & Compliance Officer
State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55101



Re: S.P. 8823-01
Mississippi River Regional Connectors A, B, C, D, I-94 to TH 10
Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties
SHPO: 1997-4211

Dear Mr. Gimmestad:

We have reviewed the above-referenced undertaking pursuant to our FHWA-delegated responsibilities for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (36 CFR 800). Enclosed for your review are two reports by URS/BRW entitled *Phase II Archaeological Investigations at Sites 21SN130, 21SN132, 21SN133, and 21WR117* and *Cultural Resources Survey and Evaluation of Portions of the Mississippi River Crossing Project in Stearns, Wright, and Sherburne Counties, Minnesota*. The Phase II report evaluated archaeological sites identified during a Phase I survey conducted by the University of Minnesota-Duluth Archaeometry Laboratory (1999) (the Phase I report has been submitted to the SHPO); the second report is an investigation of changes and additions to the project. The second report also contains an historical archaeological assessment of Alternative A, B, and C. Our staff historical archaeologist completed an assessment of the historical archaeological potential along Alternative D that included map and field reviews. Based on her assessment, there is low potential for the APE of Alternative D to contain intact and significant historical archaeological sites.

We concur with URS/BRW's Phase II recommendation that site 21SN133 on Alternative A is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion D. Further, we believe that site 21WR136 (Fremont City townsite) is eligible under Criterion D based on the results of the Phase I investigation. We agree that site 21WR117 on Alternative D is not eligible while 21SN130 and 21SN132, both on Alternative A, still require evaluation despite efforts to do so. Two areas of moderate or high potential for containing unknown precontact archaeological sites were identified within interchange options B4-1 and B2/B4 and recommended for survey, but access to them was denied by the landowner. Interchange Option B4-1 has been dropped, but the area in the APE of Option B2/B4 will still need survey if the intersection option is selected. Further, a review of the Mn/Model landscape suitability rankings for depths of 0 m, 0-1 m, 1-2 m, and 2-5 meters with Scott Anfinson on 1/15/2003 indicates that there are no moderate or large-sized landforms of high potential likely to contain precontact archaeological sites present in the APE for the combined alternatives and options. The need for any deep site testing will be determined once a preferred alternative is chosen and more specific construction plans become available.

Two reports were completed to inventory and evaluate standing structures in the area of potential effect for this project: *Phase I and II Historic Resources Identification and Evaluation*, completed by BRW, Inc. on November, 1, 1998, and the previously cited *Cultural Resources Survey and Evaluation of Portions of the Mississippi River Crossing Project in Stearns, Wright, and Sherburne Counties, Minnesota*, completed by URS/BRW in October, 2002. The first report identified two eligible properties: the brick Beumer Barn (ST-SAT-009) and the Frank Hurrle Farmstead (ST-SAT-101). Your office concurred with that finding in your letter of March 5, 2001. The most recent report, completed to survey additional areas possible project impacts, identified the Weyrauch Farmstead (SN-LYN-007) as eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. The local cream brick house on this farmstead, was

determined individually eligible under criterion C and our office agrees with that finding. However, the report also finds the larger farmstead property eligible and we do not agree with that finding. Our review indicates that the larger farmstead does not meet National Register criterion A because of the large number (eight) of non-contributing elements in the larger farmstead (see figure 7.4-1 in October 2002 report). The alternative B4.1 that would have affected this property has been dropped. Therefore there will be no project effects to the eligible Weyrauch brick farmhouse. The Beumer Barn (ST-SAT-009) is located some distance north of the proposed Alternative A. The proposed roadway begins to angle off I-94 nearly a mile south of the building. At its nearest point, the A corridor comes within ½ mile southeast of the barn (see figure 3 in the 1998 report). Several digital photographs were taken of the Beumer barn setting from the barn site and from Franklin Road that runs east of the barn, parallel to the river. It is the opinion of this office that the neither the setting of the barn or the essential historic characteristics that make the barn eligible for the National Register under criterion C will be adversely affected by the construction of the roadway at this distance from the property. The Frank Hurrle Farmstead (ST-SAT-101) is also within the APE for Corridor A and the corridor will pass through the acreage associated with the historic property (see figure 3 in the 1998 report), causing a direct physical and visual and atmospheric adverse effects to the historic property.

In summary, three eligible historic properties, the Frank Hurrle Farmstead (ST-SAT-101), the Beumer Brick Barn (ST-SAT-009) and a pre-contact archaeological site (21SN133) were identified within the APE of Alternative A. Two of the properties, the Hurrle farmstead (ST-SAT-101) and site 21SN133 will be adversely affected. Two more pre-contact sites (21SN130 and 21SN132) on Alternative A, still require evaluation due to access problems. The APE for interchange Option B4-1 contains one eligible property, the Weyrauch farmhouse (SN-LYN-007), along with one high-potential area for archaeological sites; however, Option B4-1 has been dropped. A second high potential area for precontact sites was identified within the APE of interchange Options B2/B4, along with an eligible historical archaeological site, the Fremont City Townsite (21WR136). The Fremont City Townsite will be adversely affected only by Option B2.

These findings will be considered in the selection of the preferred alternative. If you have any questions concerning this review, please call me at (651) 296.3065.

Sincerely,



Jackie Sluss, Historian
Cultural Resources Unit (CRU)

enclosures

cc: Joe Hudak, Mn/DOT CRU
Mn/DOT CRU & CO Files
Mark Dudzik, OSA (2 reports)
Legislative Library (2 reports)
Terry Humbert/Chad Casey Mn/DOT D.3 (2 reports)

Donna Alexander, SRF (2 reports)
Cheryl Martin, FHWA (6 reports)



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 5, 2001

Mr. Craig Johnson
Cultural Resource Unit
MN Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Building, MS 676
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155-1899



Re: S.P. 8823-01
Mississippi River Regional Connectors A, B, C and D, I-94 to T.H. 10
Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties
SHPO Number: 1997-4211

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800), and to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

We have reviewed the reports of the cultural resource surveys completed for the various project alternatives. These surveys were completed by the Archaeometry Lab at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and by BRW. We have the following comments on the recommendations of these reports:

1. We conclude that the following identified archaeological sites do not meet National Register criteria: 21SH38, 21SN131, 21SH39, and 21SH40.
2. We conclude that the following identified archaeological sites merit a Phase II evaluation to determine eligibility: 21SN130, 21SN132, 21SN133, and 21WR117.
3. We conclude that the following history/architecture properties meet National Register criteria: the Franz Michael Hurrle Farmstead (SN-SAT-010), and the Beumer Barn (SN-SAT-009). The boundaries of both of these properties, particularly with regard to the historic acreage associated with the Hurrle Farmstead, need to be clarified.

We look forward to working with you in evaluating the effects on the eligible properties as planning on this project proceeds. Contact us at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns.

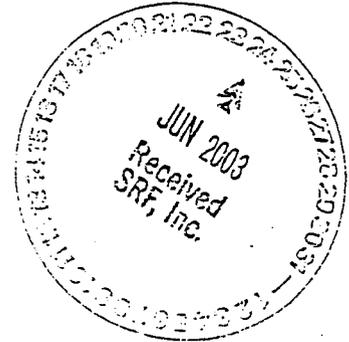
Sincerely,

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs & Compliance Officer

cc: Tom Cinadr, SHPO (CEF)



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



June 19, 2003

Ms. Jackie Sluss
Cultural Resources Unit
Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul MN 55155-1899

RE: S.P. 8823-01
Mississippi River Regional Connectors A, B, C, D, I-94 to T.H. 10
Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties County
SHPO Number: 2003-0477

Dear Ms. Sluss:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the report of the updated survey for the above referenced project.

We have the following comments:

1. We agree that sites 21SN0133 and 21WR136 meet National Register criteria, and that sites 21SN0131 and 21SN0132 merit further evaluation.
2. We agree that sites 21WR117, 21SN139, and 21SN140 do not meet National Register criteria.
3. The submittal includes material that supports the eligibility of the Weyrauch farmhouse only, and another discussion that proposes that the entire farmstead is eligible. However, since this property is only potentially affected by alternative B4-1, and this alternative has been dropped, it does not seem important to reach agreement on this determination. Should alternative B4-1 be reactivated, additional consideration will be needed.
4. We have previously agreed that the Frank Hurtle Farmstead and the Beumer Barn meet National Register criteria.

We look forward to working with you to further consider the effects of the selected alternative on listed and/or eligible properties.

Contact us at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

Cc: Tom Cinadr, SHPO