

APPENDIX A

AGENCY COORDINATION

- **MnDNR Correspondence**
- **USFWS Correspondence**
- **USDA NRCS Correspondence**
- **USDA Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Forms**
- **Mn/DOT Cultural Resources Unit Correspondence**
- **Minnesota Historical Society (SHPO) Correspondence**
- **Record of Mn/DOT and MnDNR Staff Meeting (February 7, 2006)**



**STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office Memorandum**

Division of Ecological Services

DATE: May 24, 2006

TO: Terry Humbert, MnDOT
terry.humbert@dot.state.mn.us

FROM: Dennis Thompson, Principal Planner
Division of Ecological Services

PHONE: 651-259-5148

SUBJECT: Mississippi Mussel Survey ERDB# 20020702

Our mussel experts feel that the existing survey of the Mississippi in the search area for the I94/TH 10 River Crossing should be adequate for the preparation of the EIS. The field of mussel surveying and preservation is rapidly changing. We do request that you include the recommendation for a new survey of mussels prior to construction in the EIS, as the situation may have changed by then.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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

March 23, 2004

Chad Casey
Project Manager
Mn/DOT – District 3
3725 – 12th Street North
Mail Stop 030
St. Cloud, MN 56303-2130

Subject: I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection DEIS

Dear Mr. Casey:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the I-94/TH10 Interregional Connection Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as part of the public review. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The issues of cumulative and secondary impacts are inadequately addressed in the DEIS.

MnDOT has identified the need to improve the capacity and safety of the connection between I-94 and TH 10. However, in so doing, it compounds another aspect of stakeholder values, in that by moving traffic faster and more efficiently to their desired destinations, adverse impacts to land and water resources can result. For example, the rapid urbanization and associated sprawl within the I-94/TH10 corridor is only further magnified. By moving traffic faster to and through communities like Clearwater, Clear Lake, Becker, Big Lake, St. Michael, and St. Cloud, additional burdens are created on local land use, infrastructure and regulatory programs. In addition, by moving traffic up north faster, we also continue the trend towards shoreland and back lot/second tier development in the Brainerd lakes area and lake areas further north.

MnDOT discusses some of these problems in the cumulative impact section of the document, but only identifies the implementation of mitigation strategies (i.e., state and federal regulations, local land use practices, etc.) as being key in avoiding/minimizing the extent and severity of impacts from the proposed project and future development. The DEIS does not adequately evaluate the ability of these mitigation strategies to protect resources of concern. Local units of government within the study area should be encouraged to assess their land use planning and zoning programs prior to project construction. If local government units do not have the technical or financial resources to administer such programs and/or adopt protective measures for resources of concern, then MnDOT could provide such assistance as part of project mitigation.

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

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Alternative Selection

The No Build Alternative is the best choice to protect the Wild and Scenic River. However, it is not a realistic alternative with what MnDOT is planning and what stakeholder groups have identified as priorities.

Alternative A is not an acceptable alternative. It would result in significant impacts to a segment of the river that is designated as Scenic, and where there are currently no crossings. This alternative would introduce traffic, noise, and pollution to a very scenic area of the river, where there is currently none. A new crossing at this location would significantly impact the river and river users' experiences.

Alternative B works well with what the Wild and Scenic River rules say about new crossings.

Public Road Permits - 6105.0190 Subp. 1. In reviewing permit applications required for road or railroad crossings, primary consideration shall be given to crossing located with or adjacent to existing facilities, such as roads or utilities.
6105.0200 Subp. 2. In general, avoid wild, scenic, and recreational river land use districts, especially wild river land use districts, whenever practicable. But if there is no feasible alternative, the following standards and criteria shall apply. Criteria are found in 6105.0200 Subp. 3 - Route Design addressing topography, location, vegetation, and soil characteristics.

Implementation of Alternative B would result in the most displacement of homes, businesses, and commercial infrastructure, and would result in localized problems with vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic flows within the City of Clearwater.

Implementation of Alternative C offers somewhat of a compromise among the five alternatives: the bridge would be located near an already urbanized segment of the river, adjacent to an existing crossing, and in a segment of the river designated Recreational. It has less impact than Alternative B on homes and businesses, though there could be some economic impacts to the City of Clearwater with less traffic traveling through it.

Alternative D offers little benefit for the impacts a new crossing will have on this segment of the river. Although the river is designated as recreational in this area, it is very scenic as it flows through land that has been preserved in a natural state due in part to its ownership by Xcel Energy. There are several islands, one with a campsite on it, as well as a public landing, making this segment of river important to recreational users. A crossing of this magnitude would significantly impact the river and river users' experiences.

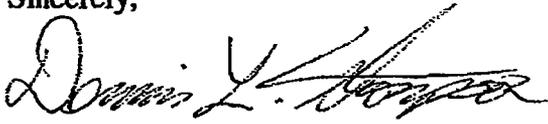
Of the build alternatives, Alternative C could have the least environmental impact while still satisfying the purpose of the proposal. How this alternative would be implemented is very important. MnDNR will work with MnDOT to address the potential impacts to the Mississippi Wild and Scenic River during the permitting process.

Details

Page 3-3, section 3.1.2 I-94/TH 10 Regional Connection Scoping Process, paragraph two should include a discussion of the Mississippi Wild & Scenic River that is an important state recreation and natural resource protection program.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this DEIS. Please contact me with any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,



Dennis Thompson, Principal Planner
Environmental Policy and Review Unit
Division of Ecological Services

C: Balcom, Tom
 Colvin, Steve
 Denz, Amy
 Gerbig, Bruce
 Lais, Dan
 North, Mike

H:\Environmental Review\I-94-TH10 DEIS Resp.doc



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.

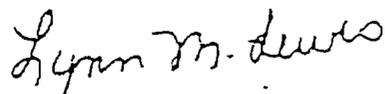
It was stated that Alternatives A, C, and D would all require new bridges to be constructed over the Mississippi River. Because these new bridges would likely directly impact the river substrate through the construction of pilings and/or other structures, we recommend that the MNDOT conduct a mussel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



Lynn M. Lewis
Field Supervisor

United States Department of Agriculture

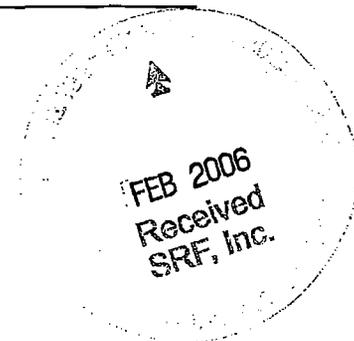


Natural Resources Conservation Service
306C Brighton Avenue
Buffalo, MN 55313-1725

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Phone: (763) 682-1933
FAX: (763) 682-2903

February 15, 2006



Lark Weller
Environmental Planner
SRF Consulting Group
One Carlson Parkway North, Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 5547-4443

Subject: I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection

Dear Mr. Weller:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and respond to the above project. NRCS is a technical agency of the USDA that implements portions of the Federal Farm Bill. The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating is a portion of that farm bill. If you should have any questions please call me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Onstad".

Jim Onstad
District Conservationist

**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		3. Date of Land Evaluation Request	1/10/06	4. Sheet 1 of 1
1. Name of Project		I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection EIS		
2. Type of Project		Roadway		
5. Federal Agency Involved		FHWA		
6. County and State		Wright County, Minnesota		

PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		1. Date Request Received by NRCS	1/12/06	2. Person Completing Form	Jim Onstad
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form).		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	4. Acres Irrigated	0
5. Major Crop(s)		6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction		7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA	
Corn, soybean, hay		Acres: 371,590 % 88		Acres: 322,010 % 87	
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used		9. Name of Local Site Assessment System		10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS	
LE part of LESA		N/A			

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor For Segment C - Preferred Alternative			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	90			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	100			
C. Total Acres In Corridor	190	0	0	0

PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	0.2			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	132.7			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0.0403			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	85			

PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)				
	50			

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))		Maximum Points			
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	12			
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	10			
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	20			
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0			
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	0			
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	25			
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5			
8. On-Farm Investments	20	20			
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	0			
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	3			
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	95	0	0	0

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)				
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	50		
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	95	0	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	145	0	0

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Reason For Selection:			

Signature of Person Completing this Part: _____ DATE _____

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

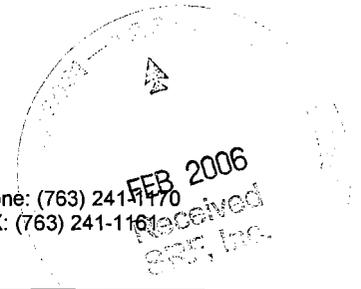
United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
14855 Highway 10
Elk River, MN 55330-7606

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FAX: (763) 241-1161



February 1, 2006

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

Dear Lark Weller:

*Subject: I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection Environmental Impact Statement
Sherburne and Wright Counties, Minnesota*

This letter is in regards to your inquiry about the possible effect the revised Alternative C road construction may have on prime or important farmland, and any land within a 300 foot corridor of the project that may be enrolled in state or federal easement programs. NRCS has completed an analysis of the site and determined that approximately 19.2 acres of farmland of statewide importance is located within the proposed construction site. The realignment of Corridor C did not have an effect on the acres of farmland converted. The acres of statewide important farmland is the same as that calculated in April of 2003 (see enclosed NRCS-CPA-106).

The slight shift of Corridor C to the east at its south end has put it within 300 feet of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The CRP land highlighted on the attached map was planted to a Forest Riparian Buffer in 1998.

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 NRCS-CPA-106 has been completed. If we can be of any further assistance please contact our office at (763) 241-1170 ex. 3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Anderson".

Jerry Anderson
Soil Conservation Technician

Enclosures

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

**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)	3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 1/10/06	4. Sheet 1 of 1
---------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------	------------------------

1. Name of Project I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection EIS	5. Federal Agency Involved FHWA
2. Type of Project Roadway	6. County and State Sherburne County, Minnesota

PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		1. Date Request Received by NRCS 1/12/06	2. Person Completing Form J. Anderson
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		4. Acres Irrigated Average Farm Size 247	
5. Major Crop(s) Corn, Soybeans, Potatoes	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: 214,780 % 77	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 30360 % 14	
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used LE Part of LESA	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System N/A	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 2/1/06	

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor For Segment C			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	363			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	163			
C. Total Acres In Corridor	526	0	0	0

PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information	Corridor C
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	0
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	19.2
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	106
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	1.2

PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))	Maximum Points				
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	12			
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	10			
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	20			
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0			
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	10			
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	25			
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5			
8. On-Farm Investments	20	20			
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	0			
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	3			
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	105	0	0	0

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	64.3			
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	105	0	0	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	169.3	0	0	0

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part: _____ DATE _____

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

Revised Alternative C
South

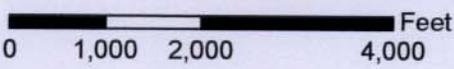


-  CRP Land
-  Prime Farmland
-  Alternative C

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet



Revised Alternative C
North



-  Prime Farmland
-  Alternative C

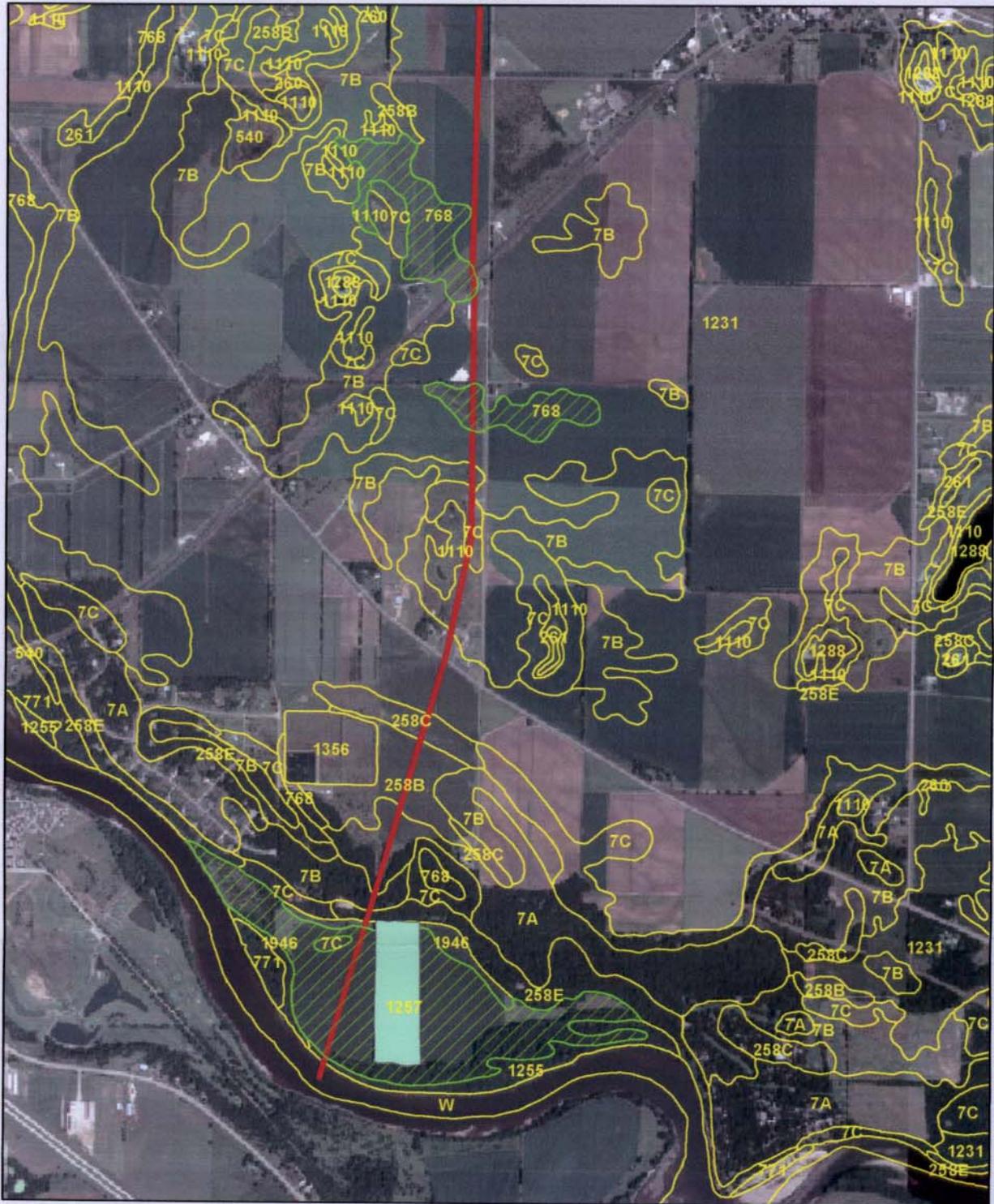


Prime and other Important Farmlands

Sherburne County, Minnesota

Map symbol	Map unit name	Farmland classification
32B	Nebish fine sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
38B	Waukon fine sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
125	Beltrami fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
164A	Mora loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
204B	Cushing fine sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
623A	Pierz sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
771	Elkriver fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded	All areas are prime farmland
1254	Ricelake fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
1255	Elkriver fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	All areas are prime farmland
1270B	Milaca fine sandy loam, moderately wet, 3 to 6 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
32C	Nebish fine sandy loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
152C	Milaca fine sandy loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
162	Lino loamy fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
169B	Braham loamy fine sand, 3 to 6 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
204C	Cushing fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
341	Arvilla sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
373	Renshaw loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
565	Eckvoll loamy fine sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
567	Verdale sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
623B	Pierz sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
730A	Sanburn fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
730B	Sanburn fine sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
732B	Bushville fine sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
768	Mosford sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
1257	Elkriver-Mosford complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, rarely flooded	Farmland of statewide importance
165	Parent loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if drained
166	Ronneby loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if drained
346	Talmoon loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if drained

Revised Alternative C South

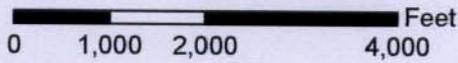


 Prime Farmland

 Alternative C

 Soils

 CRP Land





Memo

Office of Environmental Services (Cultural Resources Unit)

Mail Stop 620

395 John Ireland Boulevard

St. Paul, MN 55155-1899

To: Chad Casey, MnDOT District 3

From: Jackie Sluss, Historian, Cultural Resources Unit

Date: December 10, 2004

re: SP 8823-01 I/94/TH 10 Interregional Connection from St. Cloud to Becker

SHPO Number 2003-0477 (1997-4211)

The original historic properties survey for this project was conducted in 1998 and 2002. Since there will be a gap of 17 years between when the surveys were completed and when construction for the preferred alternative will begin in 2015, a reconnaissance survey was completed by myself to review properties that will reach the 45 year-old age threshold at the time the project begins. The review noted that the properties not evaluated by the previous surveys were homes built between 1953 and 1970. Each of the houses was modest in design, typical of the era, and included small single story rectangular "boxes" and split-level designs. None showed any distinction of design or construction and it is not likely that any were architect-designed. The house types have been duplicated in high numbers throughout Minnesota. The houses represent new construction on old farm sites or new construction on parcels facing the road carved out of agricultural land. There were no concentrations to illustrate a significant pattern of development or suburbanization. The largest community, St. Cloud, lies roughly 10 miles north of this alternative corridor and the wave of suburbanization has not yet reached this area. In summary, I would not recommend that any of the recent housing built could be considered to have achieved exceptional significance (National Register criteria consideration G). In addition, based on what we know today about the wide distribution of the property types throughout the state, the development and history of the area, the limited number of such properties in the area, it is not likely that the properties, at the time of project construction, will meet National Register criteria for significant patterns of history (Criterion A) or the criteria for design, type, or the work of a master (Criterion C). Whether any one of the properties achieves significance over the next 12 years for its association with significant events or persons remains to be seen.

This memo is to assist the district in the event that the FHWA require a supplemental EIS, or if questions are raised about the comprehensiveness of the current surveys.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please call me at 651-296-3065.

cc:

Joe Hudak, Mn/DOT CRU

Mn/DOT CO File

Mn/DOT CRU Project File



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

State Historic Preservation Office

April 7, 2006

Ms. Jackie Sluss
Cultural Resources Unit
MN Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Building, MS 620
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155-1899

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

Dear Ms. Sluss:

Thank you for your letter regarding the above referenced proposed undertaking.

Based on the results of the earlier surveys of the various project corridors, we concur with your determination that no historic properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the construction of Alternative C.

We appreciate your efforts in identifying historic properties early in the planning process. Contact our Compliance Section at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



RECORD OF MEETING

SRF NUMBER 4367
PROJECT NAME 94/10
Interregional
Connection

DATE 2/7/06

LOCATION SRF

ROUTE/COPY TO

CLIENT Mn/DOT

PURPOSE OF MEETING Update DNR staff on design and bridge changes made since last meeting.

Attendees
Michael North, DNR

ATTENDEES

Dennis Thompson, DNR—Ecology
Dale Homuth, DNR—Hydrologist
Rebecca Wooden, DNR—Waters
Nick Tiedeken, Mn/DOT OES
Chad Casey, Mn/DOT District 3

Terry Humbert, Mn/DOT District 3
Larry Erickson, SRF
Dave Montebello, SRF
Courtney Bot, SRF
Lark Weller, SRF

Cheryl Martin, FHWA
Gerry Larson, Mn/DOT
Curt Kobilarcsik, SRF
Kyle Ludwig, SRF

FROM
Lark Weller

BRIEF SUMMARY OF MEETING

1. Courtney reviewed that the last time this group met it was to discuss the selection of the Preferred Alternative and DNR's DEIS comments. At that meeting, DNR staff expressed an interest in better understanding what the bridge will look like and how it will cross the river.
2. The purpose of the current meeting was to provide details on the project's modified (post-DEIS) designs (SRF is now preparing a draft FEIS), which were also presented at the January 2006 public open house for public comment—most comments received at that meeting were more focused on impacts to individual properties than on design changes. It is anticipated that the design will be finished in Spring 2006 for Mn/DOT review; the FEIS is anticipated to be completed in Fall 2006. Construction is planned for 2015, but could begin as early as 2009, dependent on funding. For the purposes of the FEIS, construction is assumed to begin in 2015.
3. The following post-DEIS design changes were discussed (starting at north end of project and moving south):
 - a. The TH 10 interchange footprint has increased, moved onto some farmland, and resulted in slightly increased wetland impacts in the area. However, the impacts to wetlands in this area of the project have been balanced with decreased impacts elsewhere along the corridor (see Item e. below).
 - b. The alignment was moved to the west side of the section line from about CR 76 to CSAH 8 in order to minimize farmland impacts (including pivot irrigation systems and splitting farmland).
 - c. The alignment from CSAH 8 to the south side of the river has been adjusted, based on more accurate survey information. It now crosses the oak woodland at a narrower location and avoids impacts to the Clearwater/Clear Lake Wastewater Treatment Facility and golf course on the south side of the river.
 - d. The I-94 interchange footprint has increased in size, due to design speed changes.
 - e. Overall wetland impacts throughout the project corridor have been decreased by about one acre.
 - f. Overall floodplain impacts have been increased slightly (by 0.5 acres) as a result of increased fill from the river crossing. Final river survey information is being collected currently in order to finalize the scope of those impacts. It was clarified that this fill will be in the flood fringe, not in the floodway.
 - g. The realignment of the river crossing has moved the project approximately 800 feet closer to a heron rookery that was identified in the DEIS comment period (the rookery is now approximately 2000 feet east of the alignment). Potential impacts to the rookery are being considered and will be part of the FEIS discussion.
 - h. The centerline spacing in the area away from the river has been decreased from 124' to 90'. (The centerline spacing is narrowed to a single roadway in the river crossing area).
 - i. The bridge length documented in the DEIS (and presented at the meeting) may be adjusted; an exact length will be determined after receiving additional survey data and completion of additional floodplain/floodway analysis for the FEIS.

- j. Seven potential ponding locations have been identified (represented as blue dots) on concept layouts. Factors considered in locating these ponds include: disturbance during project, existing drainage flow conditions, or, at the river, opportunities to reduce sedimentation. Ponds have not been sized yet. The DEIS did not discuss specific ponding locations. Nick reminded the group that the next round of stormwater permits (beginning in 2008) will have volume requirements (possibly ½" infiltration allowed in areas without impaired waters; 1" in areas with impaired waters). Because the project area is within the Lake Pepin watershed, such requirements should be kept in mind.
 - k. SRF has and will continue to pay special attention to areas/impacts that will change in the FEIS from what was discussed in the DEIS.
4. The group reviewed concept graphics of two generic renderings of the river crossing itself. Both renderings are, at this point, general; exact pier location in the river can be adjusted, etc. The up-front difference in cost between the two would be approximately a couple million dollars. All piers would be "Y-shaped" and in neither case would cause eddy problems.
 - a. The **short-span** crossing would typically be constructed of concrete and in this case would require 13 piers, four of which would be in the river itself. The crossing would incorporate concrete girders; the maximum span length would be approximately 150'. Construction would involve coffer dams and pile foundation (probably not to bedrock).
 - b. The **long-span** crossing could potentially be constructed of a combination of steel and concrete. In this case it would require nine piers, two of which would be in the river. The use of steel allows an arch to be incorporated into the design which would not be necessary but would improve the structure and its aesthetics (including downstream view for river users). The pier spans in the middle could be approximately 300' and closer to 260' on the ends of the river span. The remaining spans over land to the north would be 150'. Construction of this bridge type would also use coffer dams with pile foundation. It was mentioned that the price of steel is unpredictable (and has been increasing), and that it is possible to build a long-span crossing using special segmental sections of concrete. This option is not expected to significantly reduce construction costs (relative to steel construction), but would reduce maintenance costs somewhat.
5. Detailed river channel work is not typically done until final design work has begun; however, Mn/DOT has taken river bottom contours in the project area (still need cross-sections on the floodplains). This information can be used to further study pier placement. It was stated that the channel is relatively stable in this area. Within the river, the piers of either type of bridge would be placed with the flow of the river (skewed) and straight in the floodplain.
6. One of the things the crossing design is attempting to accomplish is minimizing visual impacts. The pier massing is similar on both bridge types, and piers are designed as much in response to geometry and aesthetics as to structural requirements.
7. Dale stated that pier placement is a significant issue and the DNR will want detailed cross-sections extending 100' on either side of the bridge to ensure that no piers are placed in the middle of a navigational channel in dry years. He also stated that construction methods are a concern for the floodways. Courtney confirmed that the FEIS will discuss general construction impacts like timing (duration and time of year) and methods.
8. The group discussed aesthetic options possible with each bridge type (e.g., concrete can be dyed/stained to provide visual options; steel can be painted). Mn/DOT informed the group that part of final design includes coordination with an architectural design committee. Visual impacts are to be considered for both bridge users and river users. Rebecca raised the issue of long-term maintenance for the bridge (as it relates to its long-term visual impact) and how maintenance is funded by Mn/DOT. Mn/DOT's maintenance funding is based on miles of road a district has to maintain, not on the functional class of its roads (the road will be a principal arterial). Snow/ice maintenance funds are based more on the level of traffic on district roads. Terry stated that maintenance is currently Mn/DOT's top priority. He also told the group that Mn/DOT-Bridge will spend approximately 5-7% of the project's cost on aesthetics (paint, railing, patterns, etc.). In other words, once the project's total cost is determined, Mn/DOT-Bridge will devote 5-7% of that total to aesthetic treatments.

A discussion will need to occur during the design of the aesthetics as to how much should be done to the piers and columns. Since the bridge is in a Wild and Scenic area, the aesthetics should be designed to minimize the attention drawn to the bridge. Dale indicated that his opinion is that this structure will not be nearly as visually obvious to large numbers of people as something like the Sauk Rapids bridge. Therefore, it should blend into the landscape without making a statement.

9. Courtney clarified that it would be ideal to carry forward one bridge design type for detailed discussion in the FEIS. The group indicated that because fewer piers are better, the long-span concept was preferred, as long as piers are placed so they do not interfere with navigation or channelization.
10. At the last meeting (August 2004), DNR staff requested that the abandoned boat landing on the north side of the river (east of existing TH 24) be removed for water quality purposes. Courtney stated that SRF will check the DEIS and will continue to discuss this mitigation with Mn/DOT as the review goes forward.
11. In response to prior comments from the DNR about secondary and indirect impacts, the FEIS will also generally discuss how trips to Brainerd may be affected by the project, and will include updated discussions, where applicable, of local land use plans that have recently been updated.
12. The existing TH 24 bridge will be turned back to the county and will include pedestrian and bicycle access when reconstructed. Pedestrian and bicycle access will not be a part of the new crossing.
13. DNR staff suggested that the State's Public Waters Permitting Rules (Chapter 6115) and Wild and Scenic Rivers Rules (Chapter 6105) be reviewed in order to inform the FEIS and decision-making. The Public Waters rules require the fewest number of piers possible.
14. Courtney told the group that they will be contacted again when a draft FEIS is ready for them to respond to (probably late summer/early fall 2006).