

Attachment B

UPM Blandin ATV/OHM Trail Project

**Division of Ecological Resources
Department of Natural Resources**

Natural Heritage Information System

Heritage Cover Letter - October 13, 2008

Heritage Index Report - October 13, 2008

Heritage Cover Letter - May 18, 2006





Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological Resources, Box 25

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025

Phone: (651) 259-5109 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: lisa.joyal@dnr.state.mn.us

October 13, 2008

Ms. Diane Anderson
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Trails and Waterways
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4052

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information in the vicinity of the proposed UPM Blandin GIA ATV/OHM Trail, Aitkin and Itasca Counties
Correspondence # : ERDB 20060865-0003

Dear Ms. Anderson,

As requested, the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System has been queried to determine if any rare species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the proposed project. Based on this query, several rare features have been documented within the search area (for details, see the enclosed database reports). The previous Heritage letter dated 18 May 2006 identified three species that could potentially be affected by the project. We understand that you have coordinated with Division of Ecological Resources staff to address these issues, and have modified the trail route based on staff recommendations. The response to Item 11b of the project EAW should address the potential impacts to these rare features, and any avoidance or mitigation measures that have been or will be implemented.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Division of Ecological Resources, Department of Natural Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area.

The enclosed results include an Index Report and a Detailed Report of records in the Rare Features Database, the main database of the NHIS. To control the release of specific location information, which might result in the destruction of a rare feature, both reports are copyrighted.

The Index Report provides rare feature locations only to the nearest section, and may be reprinted, unaltered, in an environmental review document (e.g., EAW or EIS), municipal natural resource plan, or report compiled by your company for the project listed above. If you wish to reproduce the index report for any other purpose, please contact me to request written permission. **The Detailed Report is for your personal use only as it may include specific location information that is considered nonpublic data under *Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0872, subd. 2. If you wish to reprint or publish the Detailed Report for any purpose, please contact me to request written permission.**

Please be aware that this letter focuses only on potential effects to *rare natural features*; there may be other natural resource concerns associated with the proposed project. This letter does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. If you would like further information on the

environmental review process, please contact your Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Rian Reed, at 218-999-7826. Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Joyal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Joyal
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator

enc. Rare Features Database: Index Report
 Rare Features Database: Detail Report
 Rare Features Database Reports: An Explanation of Fields

cc: Rian Reed

Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System: Rare Features Database
Index Report of records within 1 mile radius of:
UPM Blandin GIA ATV/OHM Trail
Multiple TRS
Itasca and Aitkin Counties

Element Name and Occurrence Number	Federal Status	MN Status	State Rank	Global Rank	Last Observed Date	EO ID #
Aitkin County, MN						
<u>Botrychium oneidense</u> (Blunt-lobed Grapefern) #19 Location Description: T52N R25W S11, T52N R25W S2		END	S1	G4Q	1999-10-06	22534
<u>Buteo lineatus</u> (Red-shouldered Hawk) #363 Location Description: T52N R25W S21		SPC	S3B,SNRN	G5	2001-05-02	29276
<u>Emydoidea blandingii</u> (Blanding's Turtle) #1025 Location Description: T52N R25W S24		THR	S2	G4	2001-06-27	30668
<u>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</u> (Bald Eagle) #1471 Location Description: T52N R26W S13		SPC	S3B,S3N	G5	2005-03-28	20958
<u>Hemidactylium scutatum</u> (Four-toed Salamander) #35 Location Description: T52N R25W S22, T52N R25W S16, T52N R25W S15, T52N R25W S21		SPC	S3	G5	2001-05-17	29296
<u>Malaxis monophyllos var. brachypoda</u> (White Adder's-mouth) #28 Location Description: T52N R25W S23		SPC	S3	G5T4Q	1991-06-11	11354
<u>Malaxis monophyllos var. brachypoda</u> (White Adder's-mouth) #29 Location Description: T52N R25W S23		SPC	S3	G5T4Q	1991-06-20	11355
<u>Native Plant Community, Undetermined Class</u> #1112 Location Description: T52N R25W S11, T52N R25W S15, T52N R25W S14, T52N R25W S10		N/A	SNR	GNR	1970-03	1144
<u>Platanthera clavellata</u> (Club-spur Orchid) #69 Location Description: T52N R25W S30		SPC	S3	G5	2000-08-02	33502
<u>Platanthera clavellata</u> (Club-spur Orchid) #70 Location Description: T52N R25W S14		SPC	S3	G5	2006-08	33550
Itasca County, MN						
<u>Native Plant Community, Undetermined Class</u> #323 Location Description: T54N R26W S28		N/A	SNR	GNR	1985-05-22	6407
<u>Native Plant Community, Undetermined Class</u> #567 Location Description: T54N R26W S27, T54N R26W S22		N/A	SNR	GNR	1985-05-22	6728
<u>Native Plant Community, Undetermined Class</u> #597 Location Description: T54N R26W S29, T54N R26W S33, T54N R26W S28		N/A	SNR	GNR	1985-05-22	6729

Records Printed = 13



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Box 25

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025

Phone: (651) 259-5107 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

May 18, 2006

Bob Moore, Area TAW Supervisor
DNR Grand Rapids Headquarters
1201 E Highway 2
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information for vicinity of proposed UPM/Blandin ATV Trail, Aitkin and Itasca Counties
NHNRP Contact #: ERDB 20060865

Dear Mr. Moore,

Per your request, we have reviewed the Minnesota Natural Heritage database to determine if any rare plant or animal species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the proposed trail alignment. Based on this review, there are 11 known occurrences of rare species or native plant communities in the area searched (for details, see enclosed database printouts and explanation of selected fields). I recommend that the following rare features be addressed in project development, as they may be affected by the project.

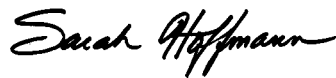
- **Blunt-lobed Grapefern:** This state-listed endangered plant species was documented in an ashy swale approximately 450 feet west of the proposed trail alignment in T52N R25W Section 11. Because this species is hard to identify and requires meticulous searches, we can't confidently rule out the possibility that it could be present closer to or along the proposed trail alignment. I will consult further with our staff botanists to determine if there are specific habitat types that could be avoided (e.g. moist areas, depressions) to minimize risk to this species, but I think it's likely that much of the project area contains potential habitat. If this is the case, a botanical survey of the alignment will likely be needed. I will notify you as soon as possible if a survey will be needed and provide you with a list of qualified botanical contractors.
- **Red-shouldered Hawks:** This special concern species has been documented in the vicinity of the Aitkin portion of the trail alignment. Red-shouldered hawks require large, contiguous forest tracts interspersed with wetlands and prefer lowland woods and river bottoms. Their critical nesting time is April and May, so disturbance in active nesting areas should be avoided during this time. I understand that Kevin Woizeschke will be field checking the trail alignment with you later this summer. As such, I will defer to Kevin's expertise on whether any seasonal restrictions or other protection measures would be advisable.
- **Four-toed Salamanders:** This special concern species was documented in Aitkin County in the vicinity of the trail alignment in 2001. Four-toed salamanders are typically found in small, isolated colonies. Adults generally inhabit mature hardwood forests associated with wetland depressions or small streams. They find shelter in the forest floor under leaf litter, woody debris, rocks, and moss. Females lay eggs in sphagnum moss hummocks, in shallow wetlands, or stream-side pools where hatchlings move into the water after emerging from the egg. April and May are the best months to survey for this species, so if Kevin will be field checking the alignment with you soon, it would be a good time to look for them. To minimize disturbance to this rare species, we recommend that a trail alignment with the least amount of wetland impacts be considered.

Please note that 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 Aitkin County but not Itasca County. Our information about native plant communities is, therefore, quite thorough for Aitkin county. 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: short record report and long record report. To control the release of locational information, which might result in the damage or destruction of a rare element, both printout formats are copyrighted. If you wish to reproduce the enclosed data in a natural resource plan, internal report compiled by your program, or a similar document, please use the short record report. The long record report includes more detailed locational information, and is for your personal use only. If you wish to reprint the full-record printouts, please contact me first.

Please be aware that review by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program focuses only on *rare natural features*. It does not cover other potential wildlife and fisheries concerns. Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Sarah D. Hoffmann
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator

encl: Database search results
Rare Feature Database Print-Outs: An Explanation of Fields

cc: Kevin Woizeschke