

**ATTACHMENT F**

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**WEAVER BOTTOMS PROJECT**

**TURTLE AND SNAKE AVOIDANCE PLAN (AUGUST, 2015)**

## Attachment F

### **Weaver Bottoms (Pool 5) Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Restoration Project**

#### **Turtle and Snake Avoidance Plan (August, 2015)**

Blanding's turtles, a state-threatened species, are known to inhabit the project site. In addition, three snake species classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need are known in this area; some individuals are tracked with telemetry by the Minnesota DNR.

State law and rules prohibit the destruction of threatened or endangered species, except under certain prescribed conditions. If turtles are encountered on site during proposed activities, they should be left undisturbed if possible. If they are in imminent danger, they should be moved by hand out of harm's way. If you encounter Blanding's turtles nesting on the site, please contact the DNR Nongame Program staff for the Central Region (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/central.html>).

This Plan and the Blanding's Turtle Fact Sheet and Flyer, containing species identification and recommendations for avoidance, should be given to all contractors working in the area. The fact sheet provides two lists of recommendations for avoiding and minimizing impacts to this rare turtle. The first list is relevant for all areas inhabited by Blanding's turtles, while the second list contains additional protective measures for areas known to be of statewide importance to this species. As the proposed project is within an area of statewide importance, both lists of recommendations are relevant and should be followed to the extent feasible and applicable.

#### Plan actions

- Install silt fence (two to three feet in height) around the entire perimeter of the placement site to exclude turtles and snakes. To avoid any inadvertent takings of turtles or eggs, the silt fence will need to be installed in early spring prior to any Blanding's turtle nesting activities. The project proposers will work with Jaime Edwards, DNR Nongame Specialist, to determine appropriate timing.
- Prior to the initial vegetation removal and grading activity, qualified surveyors (refer to DNR List of Surveyors) and/or DNR staff will perform a walking survey for adult and juvenile turtles and snakes.
- Prior to the beginning of daily operations, perform a daily walking survey in the active work area of the placement site for turtles and snakes.
- Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) staff may be available to remove snakes and turtles found within the placement site. All contractors are encouraged to contact MBS to see if staff are available to assist with reptile removal.

- Alert all drivers that increased roadway traffic will also increase the potential for turtle and snake fatality. Please advise caution, slow speeds, and avoidance of all wildlife on the roads. The month of June is dangerous for gravid females on the move.
- If any erosion control materials are required, use only wildlife friendly erosion control materials with these characteristics: natural fibers, no plastics, non-welded mesh construction, and mesh greater than or equal to 1.5” openings. Traditional mesh (plastic and welded construction) is known to cause entanglement and fatality in small wildlife.