

NATURAL HERITAGE REVIEW: A RARE SPECIES SURVEY IS REQUESTED. NOW WHAT?

Questions? Contact the Natural Heritage Review Team at Review.NHIS@state.mn.us

Minnesota's endangered species law (*Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0895) and associated rules (*Minnesota Rules*, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of threatened or endangered species without a permit. Given the potential for the proposed project to negatively impact a state-listed threatened or endangered species, a rare species survey has been requested. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Division of Ecological and Water Resources (DNR) relies upon the results of endangered and threatened species surveys to conserve these species through its conservation, management, environmental review, and permitting responsibilities. When surveys for rare species are requested as part of the environmental review process, the DNR makes every effort to coordinate closely with surveyors to ensure high quality survey results and to avoid any potential project delays due to miscommunication, inappropriate survey protocol, or misidentified species.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE PRIOR TO THE SURVEY?

CHOOSE A SURVEYOR

The DNR maintains a List of Surveyors that are considered qualified to conduct rare species surveys in Minnesota. Using a surveyor from this list minimizes the time needed to obtain a collection permit and the time needed to review survey proposals.

If you would like to choose an individual that is not on the list, the DNR would like to review his/her qualifications prior to any survey work. For information on the application process, visit [DNR List of Surveyors – Application Process](#).

DETERMINE IF A PERMIT IS REQUIRED TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY

A permit is required to collect specimen vouchers of state-listed threatened or endangered species. All plant surveyors should have a collection permit prior to conducting any survey work. A permit is also required to survey for bats, turtles, mussels, or butterflies. Please visit [DNR Endangered Species Permits](#) for information on how to apply for a "Permit for the Use of Endangered or Threatened Species in a Scientific Study."

PREPARE A SURVEY PROPOSAL

- Refer to [Rare Species Survey Plans and Reports](#) for information to include in the survey proposal.
- Refer to the [DNR Rare Species Guide](#) for suitable habitat and appropriate survey periods for the target species.
- Review the rare species data spreadsheet templates for [Submitting Data to the NHIS](#).
- For plant surveys, follow the procedures in the [Rare Plant Guidance](#).
- For mussel surveys, follow the procedures in the [Mussel Survey and Relocation Protocol](#).

► *Submit proposal to Reports.NHIS@state.mn.us* ► Please submit an accessible* electronic copy of the survey proposal for DNR review. Please anticipate an approximate two week turnaround for DNR comments.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE DURING THE SURVEY?

- For plant surveys, follow the procedures in the [Rare Plant Guidance](#).
- For mussel surveys, follow the procedures in the [Mussel Survey and Relocation Protocol](#).
- Identify any suitable habitat for target species within the potential project footprint.
- Survey for target species within any suitable habitat that may be impacted by the project.
- If any threatened or endangered species are found, delineate extent of population or at least extent of population within the potential project footprint. Consider flagging the population for avoidance purposes. If you are considering applying for a permit to take, conduct a count of individual plants that you are proposing to take.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AFTER THE SURVEY IS COMPLETED?

VERIFY SPECIMEN IDENTIFICATION FOR STATE-LISTED SPECIES

Prior to submitting data, please contact the appropriate DNR staff (Welby.Smith@state.mn.us for plants; for animals contact the appropriate [MBS staff](#)) to verify specimen identifications of **state-listed species or suspected state-listed species**. Your request should clearly identify the project name and must include a label that meets the Bell Museum standards (see the [Rare Plant Guidance](#) for example of plant labels).

COMPLETE A REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Refer to [Rare Species Survey Plans and Reports](#) or [Mussel Survey and Relocation Protocol](#) for information to include in the survey report. The survey report should include detailed information for any state-listed species that are found during the survey.

SUBMIT REPORT AND DATA TO THE NHIS

Submit cover sheet, survey report in accessible format*, email verifying specimen id, GIS shapefile, and spreadsheet to Reports.NHIS@state.mn.us.

Important! *Please ensure that the unique identifier for each record is the same in the GIS shapefile, the spreadsheet, the report's tables and figures, and the information submitted with the specimens.*

WHAT IF A THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES IS FOUND?

The project proposer should consider project alternatives that would avoid impacting these species. If there are any questions as to what constitutes avoidance, please contact Review.NHIS@state.mn.us.

► *Submit avoidance plan to Reports.NHIS@state.mn.us* ► Please submit an accessible* electronic copy of the avoidance plan for DNR review. The plan should identify measures to avoid and minimize disturbance.

WHAT IF A THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES CANNOT BE AVOIDED?

The project proposer will need to apply for a permit to take. For more information on the endangered species permitting process, please visit [DNR Endangered Species Permits](#) or contact EndangeredSpeciesPermits.dnr@state.mn.us.

*Please refer to the State of Minnesota guidelines for [Accessible Electronic Documents](#) and [Map Accessibility](#).