



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological & Water Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

June 29, 2018

Correspondence # ERDB 20180491

Ms. Diane Anderson
MN DNR Parks and Trails Division
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Natural Heritage Review of the proposed Cuyuna County State Recreation Area Trail Expansion,
Crow Wing County

County	Township (N)	Range (W)	Section(s)
Crow Wing	46	28	6
Crow Wing	46	29	1-5,8-11,16-19,30
Crow Wing	47	29	33-36

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, rare features have been documented within the search area (for details, please visit the [Rare Species Guide Website](#) for more information on the biology, habitat use, and conservation measures of these rare species). Please note that the following rare features may be adversely affected by the proposed project:

Ecologically Significant Areas

- Multiple DNR native plant communities have been documented within the project boundary. (GIS shapefiles of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities can be downloaded from DNR Quick Layers or [MN Geospatial Commons](#).) As stated in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource Recommendations, disturbance within rare native plant communities will be avoided or minimized and disturbance within wetland native plant communities will be avoided. Additional actions to minimize disturbance may include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:
 - Minimize width of trail;
 - As much as possible, operate within already-disturbed areas;
 - Do not route trails through wet swales or depressions, or sensitive rock outcrop areas;
 - Bridge all stream and wetland crossings;

- Minimize vehicular disturbance in the area (allow only vehicles/equipment necessary for construction activities);
- Do not park equipment or stockpile supplies in the areas;
- Do not place spoil within the areas;
- Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures;
- Inspect and clean all equipment prior to bringing it to the site to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species;
- Trail maintenance plans should address erodible soils, especially in areas of steep topography;
- Use signage to encourage visitors to stay on designated trails;
- Revegetate disturbed soil with native species suitable to the local habitat as soon after construction as possible; and
- Use only weed-free mulches, topsoils, and seed mixes.

State-listed Species

- The following state-listed Botrychium species have been documented within the Cuyuna County State Recreation Area:
 - Spatulate Moonwort (*Botrychium spathulatum*), endangered
 - Upswept Moonwort (*Botrychium ascendens*), endangered
 - Slender Moonwort (*Botrychium lineare*), endangered
 - Blunt-Lobed Grapefern (*Botrychium oneidense*), threatened
 - St. Lawrence Grapefern (*Botrychium rugulosum*), special concern
 - Least Moonwort (*Botrychium simplex*), special concern
 - Prairie Moonwort (*Botrychium campestre*), special concern
 - Pale Moonwort (*Botrychium pallidum*), special concern
- As stated in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource Recommendations, survey work for these species has already begun by a qualified surveyor and will be continuing, as trail locations are determined. The surveys must follow the standards in the attached *Rare Species Survey Process* and *Rare Plant Guidance*. Survey reports need to be submitted to the Endangered Species Review Coordinator, Lisa Joyal, for DNR review and approval.
- Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*), a state-listed threatened species, have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed project. In addition to the avoidance measures included in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource document, we recommend avoiding impacts to type 2 & 3 wetlands, if present.
- The least darter (*Etheostoma microperca*), a state-listed fish species of special concern, has been documented in Blackhoof Lake. The avoidance measures included in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource document should be adequate in minimizing impacts to this species.

Federally Protected Species

- The northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), federally listed as threatened and state-listed as special concern, was not documented in the vicinity of the proposed but can be found throughout Minnesota. The avoidance measures included in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource document should be adequate in minimizing impacts to this species.
- Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) have not been documented within the project area but have been documented in the vicinity of the project. In addition to the avoidance measures included in the attached CCSRA EAW Resource document, trees that will be removed should be inspected for nests prior to being cut down. See the attached fact sheet regarding large bird nest identification.

Environmental Review and Permitting

- The Environmental Assessment Worksheet should address whether the proposed project has the potential to adversely affect the above rare features and, if so, it should identify specific measures that will be taken to avoid or minimize disturbance. Sufficient information should be provided so the DNR can determine whether a takings permit will be needed for any of the above protected species.
- Please include a copy of this letter in any state or local license or permit application. Please note that measures to avoid or minimize disturbance to the above rare features may be included as restrictions or conditions in any required permits or licenses.

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 and Water 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. If additional information becomes available regarding rare features in the vicinity of the project, further review may be necessary.

For environmental review purposes, the results of this Natural Heritage Review are valid for one year; the results are only valid for the project location (noted above) and the project description provided on the NHIS Data Request Form. Please contact me if project details change or for an updated review if construction has not occurred within one year.

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential effects to these rare features. If needed, please contact your [DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist](#) to determine whether there are other natural resource concerns associated with the proposed project. Please be aware that additional site assessments or review may be required. 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 "Samantha Bump". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Samantha Bump
Natural Heritage Review Specialist
Samantha.Bump@state.mn.us

Enc. CCSRA EAW Resource Recommendations
Blanding's Turtle Fact Sheet & Flyer
Wildlife Friendly Erosion Control
Large Bird Nest Identification
Rare Species Survey Process (pdf with several pdf attachments)
Rare Plant Guidance

Links: Rare Species Guide
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rsg/index.html>
DNR Native Plant Communities
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/npc/index.html>
Guidelines for Managing Native Plant Communities along Trails
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/trails_plantcommunities/index.html
DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist Contact Info
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/ereview/erp_regioncontacts.html

Cc: Margi Coyle
Brooke Haworth