

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** R&R Outdoors Minnesota <randroutdoorsmn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 08, 2016 3:20 PM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project

Wow! What a waste of tax-payer's money! Leave the Pomme de Terre where it is, improve and open the road on the west side, construct rock-ramp fish-way where the current overflow structure is(if you must), and dredge the lake out and sell the sediment as rich topsoil (back to the farmers who's hilltops and row-crop fields it came from).

The current plan will not work because the carp that are keeping the vegetation from becoming established in marsh lake will thrive in the conditions that have been proposed. As long as carp can get into the lake from the Minnesota river from above and up the rock-ramp fish-way from below no amount of winter kill will solve this problem. In fact the fish that will be most affected by winter kill are game fish, not carp.

Tim Rittenour

**\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** Burt Letrud <rletrud@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 09, 2016 11:33 AM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** "marsh lake ecosystem restoration project"

I don't know if public comments are considered or not on these projects , but i thought i would send thoughts. First thing i feel duck hunting will never be like many years ago, the flyway has moved west. The true duck hunters still get duck here. Marsh lake has always been mud bottom. We swam out to bird s--- island about 45 years ago and was the same bottom as it is now. I am sure the carp aren't good for the lake. We have had two major floods since 1998 and they both ripped out a lot of cattail roots. I feel that moving river back will cause a shortage of water in marsh lake in years like this. You won't need to do draw downs, it will happen on its own. Why not control the the river to go either way. Its sounds like it will be a new river channel in the old location. Thanks

Randy Letrud 3566 241st ave, Madison , Mn.  
56256

320-568-2230

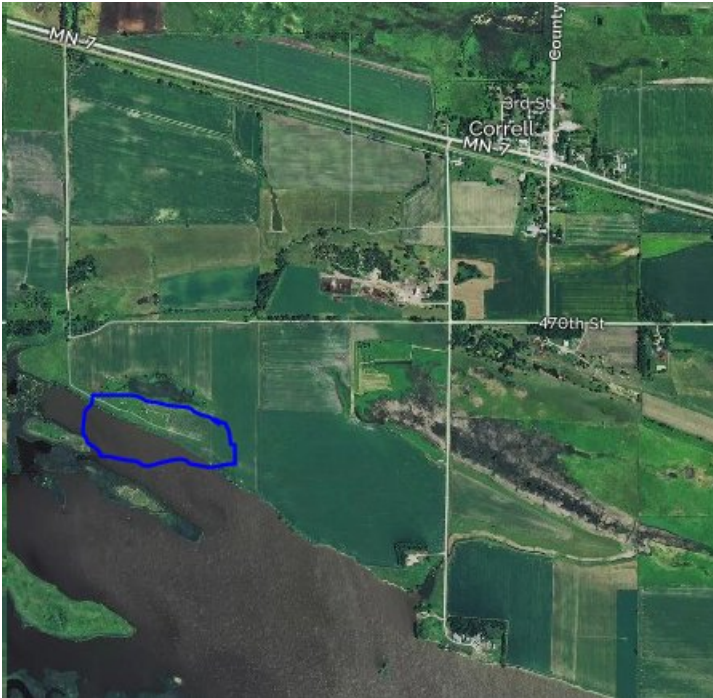
**\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** CABeisner@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2016 2:21 PM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project EAW

Charlette:

I am a property owner on March Lake. We are located south of the town of Correll. Can you tell me how this project will effect the water level and shoreland in front of our place? We are avid waterfowl hunters and have been hunting Marsh Lake for 30+ years. We are located as shown below:



Thanks,

Chuck Beisner  
**CB Real Estate Services, Inc.**  
**612.701.4855 mobile**

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**\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** Pam Tucholke <pamtucholke@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2016 9:06 PM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project

Are there ever plans to flood outside of the existing banks of Marsh Lake? If so, how would neighboring landowners be compensated?  
Please add me to your mailing list:

Steve Tucholke  
8416 W 109TH Street  
Bloomington, MN 55438

## **\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** Jim VanAlstine -WCEC <vanalstj@wcec.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 23, 2016 10:37 AM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project

I have hunted waterfowl almost exclusively on Marsh Lake since the mid 1980's. This restoration is long overdue. I have watched the degradation and loss of habitat that has occurred over the last 30 years with growing alarm. I applaud this project and strongly support it. Would there be any opportunity with the construction to build up a few strategic linear islands with dredge spoil that would break up the fetch on the lake and prevent the water from blowing all to one end or then other during high wind events? This would also reduce turbidity, and offer more locations for sheltering water fowl and provide more hunting opportunities. Islands have been built in the Mississippi River back water pools near Reno with a lot of success. Just a thought. Good luck with the project, and I look forward to watching the progress.

Dr. James B. VanAlstine  
19801 US Hwy 59  
Morris, MN 56267

320-589-2535 (H)  
320-287-2791 (C)

## Cohn, Charlotte W (DNR)

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**From:** Tegdesch, Elizabeth (MPCA)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2016 10:59 AM  
**To:** Cohn, Charlotte W (DNR)  
**Cc:** Kain, Kevin (MPCA); Kromar, Karen (MPCA)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project  
**Attachments:** Marsh lake Ecosystem Restoration Proj Comment Ltr.pdf

Attached are the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's comments on the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project Environmental Assessment Worksheet. A paper copy will follow by interoffice mail.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Tegdesch  
Environmental Review and EQB Support  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Road N  
St. Paul, MN 55155 / 651-757-2100  
[elizabeth.tegdesch@state.mn.us](mailto:elizabeth.tegdesch@state.mn.us)



# Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road North | St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4194 | 651-296-6300

800-657-3864 | 651-282-5332 TTY | [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us) | Equal Opportunity Employer

August 3, 2016

Ms. Charlotte W. Cohn  
EAW Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Ecological and Water Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Re: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project Environmental Assessment Worksheet

Dear Ms. Cohn:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration project (Project) located in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, and Swift counties, Minnesota. The Project consists of modifications to the existing dam structure and other associated activities. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff has reviewed the EAW and have no comments at this time.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this Project. Please provide the notice of decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement. Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of this EAW, please contact me at 651-757-2482.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Kain", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kevin Kain  
Planner Principal  
Environmental Review Unit  
Resource Management and Assistance Division

KK:bt

cc: Dan Card, MPCA, St. Paul



## **\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** Jim Cox <jimcox@mwthermo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 09, 2016 7:45 PM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration EAW

Charlotte Cohn  
EAW Project Manager  
Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources  
ST. Paul, Minn

Charlotte:

I would like to comment on the EAW for the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project, specifically on the Attachment C, Draft Operation Management Plan.

The EAW calls for a "Performance Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan." This plan will be under the supervision of a Adaptive Management Project Team. It appears that all members of the AMPT are members of the MDNR, MVP Corps, or the USFWS, all government agencies. There appears to be no members from stakeholder groups, local sporting or environmental groups, or others who may have a interest in this project. To say the AMPT is in-bred ,is a understatement. I think this is a very poor decision, it will invariably lead to a lack of transparency , and a mistrust of most of the management decisions. Since the majority of the financing for the State of Minnesota's portion of its financial obligation for this project came from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, I believe there should be civilian representation on the AMPT.

I also believe your Adaptive Management Plan, is a very poor decision. It is in effect no plan at all. So you have no definitive plan, and all government AMPT, as a citizen of this state for many years, this to me seems like a recipe for disaster. Classic DNR. A purposeful attempt to control this project with no input from those outside the system.

How can there be a plan with no specific goals, no specific management path to follow, to which environmental effects can be measured, and alterations made. This project was brought to the Outdoor Heritage Fund by the DNR Wetland Habitat Team , as a wetland project, who's primary benefit was to be for migratory birds.

One of the major expenses of the project was a drawdown structure . We were told this structure was critical to the project, to draw down the lake to solidify the bottom, and reduce rough fish in the lake, from your description of your Adaptive Management plan , the structure sounds like it may not even be necessary.

A plan without direction, firm goals, a initial path, without specific triggers, is no plan at all. It seems more like an attempt to be a group preparing to be all things to all people, that will be accountable to no one, and accomplish only a very small portion of what it could have, if it would have made some firm plans and decisions and

decided what it wanted to accomplish form the beginning.

Please change the make up of the AMPT and develop a firm plan for the management of Marsh Lake. Every plan can be adjusted.

Regards

Jim Cox  
11790 Hwy 284

Cologne, Minn 55322  
612-670-4783

## **\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** pragrass@frontiernet.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2016 4:15 PM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR)  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project

I have read the proposal for Marsh Lake and not being an engineer, biologist or engineer my expertise is somewhat lacking here but I do understand what happens when a program re-establishes emergent vegetation in a body of water. That is why I keep thinking about the main objective of this restoration. I quote-

"Marsh Lake is within the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan core area. Project objectives for Marsh Lake and the Marsh Lake Area support the conservation efforts in this plan. The MNDNR's Long Range Duck Recovery Plan (LRDRP) has a goal of recovering historical breeding and migrating populations of ducks in Minnesota. Further, the LRDRP identifies the need to manage an additional 29 lakes per year for a total of 1,800 lakes to be managed by 2056. The Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project supports these goals identified in these plans. The Lac qui Parle WMA and surrounding public lands are considered a significant bird conservation area."

I don't believe the proposed management plan will accomplish these goals. I believe that an initial draw down is very important. To allow the fish pass-way to do a temporary reduction of water levels will not achieve enough reduction to expose mud flats in the lake and regenerate emergent vegetation throughout the whole lake area. To re-establish vegetation a drawn down is a must and then let's see before we do another draw down if the fish passage area will drain enough water to maintain the vegetation needed to support migrating waterfowl in the spring and fall seasons. The current plan is just the opposite. Marsh Lake currently has NO EMERGENT VEGETATION.

I have hunted Marsh Lake for 40 years, during that time I have seen the results of drought twice in the 70's and again in the 80's. The lake was void of water during those times. When the water returned the vegetation also returned, it was so thick that in the months of July, August and September an outboard motor could not traverse the lake. The ducks also returned in the fall, rafts of ducks covered the lake feeding in the vegetation.

To do this restoration without a draw down of the lake is a waste of taxpayers' money, if you don't reduce the common carp population vegetation will never have a chance to grow. As Senator Amy Klobuchar so wisely asked when are you going to put the marsh back into Marsh Lake. I first spoke with the Senator in her Washington, DC office 8 years

ago and made her aware of Marsh Lake and it's status and have had numerous occasions to remind her of the problem. I have spent 20 years attending meetings and talking to politicians making them aware of the condition of Marsh Lake.

I hope, I will be able to see clear water and ducks on Marsh Lake again, if I live long enough to realize the accomplishment.

Win Mitchell  
3408 263 rd St W.  
Northfield, MN 55057

## **\*Review, Environmental (DNR)**

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**From:** Jon Schneider <jschneider@ducks.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2016 10:06 AM  
**To:** \*Review, Environmental (DNR); Cohn, Charlotte W (DNR)  
**Cc:** Kavanagh, Joshua (DNR); Hansel-Welch, Nicole J (DNR); Lien, Ricky (DNR); John Lindstrom  
**Subject:** FW: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration EAW  
**Attachments:** DU letter - Marsh Lake EAW Aug 2016.pdf  
**Importance:** High

Dear Charlotte Cohn and Minneosta DNR Environmental Review,

Please note the email I sent below yesterday at 4:17pm with the letter attached did not receive an auto-reply indicating it was received by DNR. After looking more closely at the email, it appears it was inadvertently sent to the old Environmental Review email address that includes "DNR" after the @ symbol. My guess is that my email system auto-filled the "To" line with that old email address, and I did not catch it yesterday – sorry!

Please let me know if there is any way you can include our letter in your review despite the email address typo. Feel free to call my cell if you want to discuss. Thanks!

Jon

JON SCHNEIDER  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
Manager - Minnesota Conservation Programs  
Office: 320.762.9916 / Cell: 320.815.0327

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**From:** Jon Schneider  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2016 4:17 PM  
**To:** 'environmental.review@dnr.state.mn.us' <environmental.review@dnr.state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** John Lindstrom (jlindstrom@ducks.org) <jlindstrom@ducks.org>; Doug Gorby <dgorby@ducks.org>; Gildo Tori <gtori@ducks.org>; 'Brian Ross' <bross@mnducksvolunteer.org>; 'WINFIELD MITCHELL' <pragrass@prodigy.net>; Peter Eigen <pjeigen@gmail.com>; Dan Gahlon (degahlon@gmail.com) <degahlon@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration EAW

Charlotte W. Cohn, Environmental Review Project Manager, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Subject: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration EAW

Dear Ms. Cohn,

On behalf of nearly 42,000 Ducks Unlimited members and supporters in Minnesota, our letter of support and comments on the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project is attached. Thank you for your consideration, please let me know if you have any questions. Jon



JON SCHNEIDER  
Manager - Minnesota Conservation Programs  
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*Jon P. Schneider*

*Manager – Minnesota Conservation Programs*

August 10, 2016

Charlotte W. Cohn, Environmental Review Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

[Environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:Environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us)

Subject: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration EAW

Dear Ms. Cohn,

On behalf of nearly 42,000 Ducks Unlimited members and supporters in Minnesota, I write to convey support for the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project. We concur with the Environmental Assessment Worksheet, but have suggestions to improve the draft lake management plan. This project will enhance Marsh Lake's aquatic ecology and will significantly improve both water quality and wildlife habitat for waterfowl and public recreation both, if the new structures are managed appropriately, aggressively, and proactively at the outset and in the future too.

At 5,000 acres with an average depth of only about three feet, Marsh Lake is one of a few historically very important shallow lakes in Minnesota that provided abundant aquatic plants and invertebrates required by diving ducks and other wetland-dependent wildlife. Although Marsh Lake has a history of heavy waterfowl use in the past due to abundant aquatic food resources, and great waterfowl hunting opportunities too, waterfowl habitat and water quality in Marsh Lake deteriorated over the last few decades due to high and stable water levels, increased inflows of water and nutrients, overabundance of invasive common carp, and lack of natural fish winterkills. Restoring seasonal and annual water-level variation in Marsh Lake is critically needed, as is reducing carp abundance in the lake.

Ducks Unlimited supports the proposed Marsh Lake project because it includes seasonal water level variation that mimics the natural hydrograph of the lake, and acknowledges the need for periodic low water or drought conditions to restore and maintain the health and vigor of this shallow lake system. However, we remain concerned about the future effects of carp on the ecology of Marsh Lake due to the emphasis of the project on fish passage – which may unfortunately include invasive bighead, silver, grass, black, and common carp from the Mississippi River, and more importantly the Minnesota River where common carp thrive and where bighead carp have now been documented. The EAW report states that a fish barrier is not feasible, however, we question if that option was thoroughly investigated by engineers or considered by biologists due to the emphasis placed on providing fish passage.

In light of the decision to emphasize fish passage and forego a fish barrier component to limit carp access to Marsh Lake, ***we strongly recommend*** an initial major water level draw-down of Marsh Lake immediately following construction of the new Marsh Lake draw-down structure to rid the lake of carp currently infesting the lake before downstream fish gain access to the lake via the new fish passageway structure. to achieve the goals outlined. This will help consolidate flocculent suspended sediments/nutrients, rejuvenate wetland plants that require low, clear water or exposed mudflats on which to germinate and grow during summer, and switch the lake back into the "clear-water state" to achieve project goals. Since the lake is currently highly degraded and devoid of aquatic plants, it is highly justified to first restore plants. This is standard accepted practice for restoring shallow lake water quality and vegetative diversity, and is consistent with the approach DNR has successfully used to enhance many other shallow lakes throughout Minnesota. It seems illogical and scientifically unfounded to spend taxpayer funds to build a draw-down structure designed to enhance a degraded shallow lake, but then not plan to use it until many years later.

Further, proactive water level management in Marsh Lake using the new draw-down outlet structure in the future will be key to the long-term success of the project too. We are also concerned about the passive management approach proposed in the draft Marsh Lake Management Plan (Plan), or Attachment C of the EAW, and we recommend more aggressively managing Marsh Lake in the future when carp numbers build and water quality/clarity declines in the lake. Active lake water level management should be required whenever two or more of the numeric vegetation and water clarity goals are not met, not when all of them fall below 50% of the numeric goals listed, as waiting for such to occur would mean the lake has crashed ecologically back into a degraded state. Proactively managing the lake to avoid ecological crashes is consistent with how DNR manages other shallow lakes.

While the draft Plan includes 10 reasonable lake management goal categories that an “Adaptive Management Team” may use to justify lake water level management action, the numeric goals in the plan appear too low, the plan is much too vague about using these goals as management triggers, and the “50% of goal” trigger for active water level management is too weak compared to other DNR shallow lake management plans of which we are familiar.

As Marsh Lake is so shallow, most if not all of the basin is capable of growing submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV). Therefore, Plan goal #6 that calls for 60% of the basin to have SAV is simply too low, especially considering the currently-proposed 50% trigger indicates the lake would have 30% SAV before draw-down. Similarly, we also believe that Plan goal #8 which calls for reduction in aquatic invasive fish species to less than 40% by weight is simply much too low of a goal, and the Plan should instead strive for a much higher reduction in weight of carp and other invasive species such as no less than 20% or less by weight. The Plan should be more explicit about requiring draw-downs be conducted when triggers are met in the future, so the public understands when they will occur, as in other DNR shallow lake management plans.

Finally, we are puzzled that Adaptive Management Team listed in the draft Plan includes 15 agency staff but no public stakeholders or conservation organization representatives. We recommend adding a limited number of stakeholders representing both waterfowl hunters and anglers, as well as biologists from appropriate non-profit conservation organizations involved in and supportive of the project for many years, such as Ducks Unlimited.

Ducks Unlimited has invested significant staff time and expense to help Minnesota DNR ensure the restoration of Marsh Lake becomes a reality, and it is our hope to see Marsh Lake restored to its prime as a waterfowl and wildlife haven in the very near future before too many more years pass by. We voice the concerns and professional opinions above with that goal in mind, and urge the use of good science and shallow lake management expertise. We remain committed to helping Minnesota DNR improve Marsh Lake, as we have with many other shallow lakes around the state. We will welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns and lake management plans for the future betterment of Marsh Lake for all Minnesotans in person. Thanks for considering our thoughts and recommendations, and good luck with this hugely-important shallow lake enhancement project.

Sincerely,



Jon P. Schneider, Manager – Minnesota Conservation Programs, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.



Copies: Tom Landwehr, Commissioner – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)  
Jim Leach, Director, Division of Fisheries & Wildlife – Minnesota DNR  
Paul Telander, Wildlife Chief - Minnesota DNR  
David Trauba, Southern Regional Wildlife Manager – Minnesota DNR  
Ricky Lien, Wetland Habitat Team Supervisor – Minnesota DNR  
Nicole Hansel-Welch, Shallow Lakes Program Supervisor – Minnesota DNR  
Josh Kavanagh, Wildlife Lake Specialist – Minnesota DNR  
Dianne Radermacher, Administrator - Upper Minnesota River Watershed District  
Brian Ross, Minnesota State Chairman – Ducks Unlimited  
Win Mitchell, Minnesota Past State Chairman – Ducks Unlimited  
Peter Eigen, Minnesota Public Policy Chairman – Ducks Unlimited  
Dan Gahlon, Conservation Programs Committee – Ducks Unlimited  
John Lindstrom, Biologist - Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota  
Gildo Tori, Director of Public Policy – Ducks Unlimited Great Lakes Atlantic Region  
Doug Gorby, Director of Conservation Programs – Ducks Unlimited Great Lakes Atlantic Region