

## Attachment B: Timely Public Comments Received

**From:** Dānellā Chistēn Glander  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** MN Valley State Trail  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 14, 2018 2:39:53 PM

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The Minnesota River Bottoms Trail is one of my favorite features of Bloomington. It feels like a secret cove where you can step out into the wild. I love how natural that area is. For me, pavement would really ruin that feeling and what makes this trail special.

As a person with mobility issues I appreciate the effort to make the trail ADA accessible. As is, some of the trail is currently inaccessible to me. However, we have many accessible trails in Bloomington. This is one of the most natural areas of Bloomington, and I would like to see it kept that way. While there are lots of great mitigation efforts in the plan, this area is frequently flooded and the wildlife would still experience short and long-term damage from construction, clearing, and increased recreational use. Clearing 19 acres is a lot for an already narrow corridor. As is, the damage and expense for this project does not seem worth it.

A few minor repairs and bathroom facilities would really spruce up this trail and cause far less disruption to the native environment.

Thank you,

Bethani Glander  
10717 France Ave S #215  
Bloomington MN 55431

**From:** Jeff Grady  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** Re: MN Valley State Trail EAW  
**Date:** Monday, October 29, 2018 1:55:03 PM

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Here is my mailing address :10441 Vessey Road, Bloomington, MN

On Mon, Oct 29, 2018 at 1:49 PM Jeff Grady <[jtgrady23@gmail.com](mailto:jtgrady23@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hello,

I find it troubling and confusing that first of all, this project for some reason is still pushing forward. After multiple attempts, it has been dropped by the City of Bloomington, the Metropolitan Council and other organizations thanks to the massive effort by everyday citizens, dog walkers, trail runners, hikers and bikers who only want to preserve this wonderful piece of heaven we get to experience in our own backyards.

Actually, what troubles me the most after reading the EAW was that if approved, the DNR would be LEVELING, CLEARING AND DEFORESTING 13.5 miles of Bloomington's most precious natural habitat in a 50 - 80 foot wide strip. Nearly 500 Acres? Are you serious? More like DNR: Destruction of Natural Resources!

What is the estimate on how many trees are to be cut down? Is there a number? Deforestation at this level can and will have serious effects on CO2 propagation, rare and endangered animals habitats and flood control along the river! Why am I telling this the the DNR? Do I really need to mention climate change to an organization who's job is to protect our natural resources? One acre of hardwood trees can off-set 18 American's carbon footprint of 2.3 tons of CO2 a year. Multiply that by the DNR's proposed area of deforestation: thats nearly 20,000 tons of CO2 a year!

What is also very troubling with this whole project is that the DNR is on both sides of the issue. One side of the DNR is proposing this massive deformation effort and working hard like they're excited to destroy miles and miles of untouched wildlife. At the same time the other side, the ecologists and biologists in the DNR are discouraging the whole thing, labeling the area as "an area with a high level of rare biodiversity." It's so strange, your biologists and ecologists are writing up reports to your lumberjacks saying don't do it!

Here is the mission statement of the Department of Natural Resources: "**The mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources.**"

After reading the entire EAW the DNR wrote up, it seems to me like the only thing the DNR would be doing would be destroying and deforesting an unprecedented amount of one of Minnesota's most precious natural resources. "MN DNR: Destruction of Natural Resources?"

I use the trail on a weekly basis. Nearly every day out on the trails I see multiple Bald Eagles, great blue herons, and lots of wildlife. As far as I see it, I would be more than happy to present a case against the MN DNR using the Federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 to protect the lives and habitat of the Bald Eagles that have lived along the MN

River Bottoms for hundreds of years. The purpose of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection act is to not agitate the bald and golden eagle to the extent of not 1.) Abusing an eagle, 2.) Interfering with its substantial lifestyle, including shelter, breeding, feeding, or 3.) Nest abandonment. Federal Law states that maximum fine is \$5,000 and one-year in prison. Who would be the one to go though? The truck-driver? The chain-saw operator? The DNR?

Here's some specific wording from your EAW :

"Federally protected species: Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Although trail development is planned in the vicinity of known active and alternate bald eagle nest trees, no removal of active or alternate bald eagle nest trees will occur as part of this project."

Here is more wording from your EAW:

"Next, the contractor will clear the trail construction limits which are anticipated to be between 20 and 50 feet wide depending on location. The majority of the cleared trail corridor will be 20 feet wide. In order to provide sufficient space for heavy equipment to turn around, 50 feet of clearing will be necessary at certain locations. It is anticipated that the contractor will use logging equipment to safely perform the clearing operation. Woody biomass will either be removed from the construction site or chipped and left on site. After removal of the trees, the contractor will install silt fence, filter logs and other perimeter erosion control measures. The process and timing of tree clearing will be planned to avoid impacts to state-protected species."

This is truly just a bad project. It's a waste of money, resources, time and effort from both sides. Leave the trail as it is! Use your resources for a project that is of value to our state and community!

I am a close friends with many Bloomington City Council Members and the Mayor Gene Winstead. I have a feeling they haven't read some of the details of the EAW yet. I will be sharing specific details of the DNR's deforestation efforts in Bloomington in the next few days.

I apologize for the negativity in this email. It is not directed at you (the reader). It is directed towards the continued efforts of a very small group of people, led by Ann Lenchewski, a former political figure, turned paid lobbyist, who have made it their mission to destroy one of Minnesota's greatest natural resources. This trail is a little slice of Heaven that we have in Bloomington. We need to preserve and converse the few areas we still have that are not influenced by the industrializing tendencies of our human nature.

Plus if you've ever stepped foot down on those trails you'd know that everyday the trails look dramatically different. Flooding, erosion and tree-fall make this area totally unpredictable and ever-changing. Any trucks you drive down there would start to sink and the next day they'd be in the river!

Just like those trucks, I respectfully hope to see this project sink in the mud!

Thank you for your time reading this and hopefully is has made an impact.

Signed,

Jeff Grady

Life-Long Bloomington Resident

Mountain Biker

Eagle Scout

**From:** Reid Johnson  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** MN Valley State Trail  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 17, 2018 1:13:19 PM

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To whom it may concern,  
The proposal for a 13.5 mile paved trail is, to put it lightly, a COMPLETE WASTE OF TAX PAYER DOLLARS and political buffoonery at its worst.

It takes no more than a 20 minute walk on the current trail - as a reminder, is unpaved, naturally-occurring, and is multi-purpose - to realize that annual flooding will make a paved trail a maintenance NIGHTMARE. Currently, as of 10/17/2018, the trail is flooded - meaning un-passeable - in no less than five different sections. I have been a regular user of the trail and this is not the first summer season where floodwaters have prevented me from using the trail on a regular basis. I present each of these anecdotes to hopefully provide additional reasoning for why a paved trail will continuously be unusable.

All financial reports also indicate that the project has barely enough funds to pay for the total 13.5 miles, which of course leaves a significant shortfall in the funds needed to maintain the trail on a yearly basis, which WILL be required, as per the above.

Do the right thing and WALK AWAY FROM THIS FOOLISH PROJECT.

--

Reid Johnson  
Minneapolis resident

# Technical Memorandum

**To:** Linda Loomis, Administrator  
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

**From:** Sarah Duke Middleton, Water Resources Scientist  
Della Schall Young, PMP, CPESC

**Date:** September 26, 2018

**Re:** Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment—Preliminary Environmental Assessment Worksheet

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The Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment, preliminary environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) was reviewed as requested by the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (District).

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposes to develop 13.5 miles of the Minnesota Valley State Trail from the Bloomington Ferry Bridge to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center in the city of Bloomington. The proposed trail will be a 10-foot-wide paved, multiple-use, non-motorized recreational state trail with 2-foot gravel shoulders. The proposed project is in the Minnesota River floodplain and will generate a net increase of approximately 19 acres of impervious surface by converting approximately 2.3 acres of wetland, 11.7 acres of forest/wooded area, and 5 acres of grassland to trails. As a result, the following District standards are triggered: Erosion and Sediment Control, Stormwater Management, and Floodplain and Drainage Alteration standards. The District's Steep Slope, Shoreline and Streambank and Water Crossing standards are also triggered because of natural steep slopes along the trail's alignment and the proposed crossing at Nine Mile Creek. The proposed project does not cross the District's High Value Resources Area (HVRA) Overlay District.

Below are comments on how the EAW addresses or proposes to address the District's standards as presented in Appendix K of the Draft 2018 Watershed Management Plan.

## Erosion and Sediment Control Standard

The proposed project will disturb more than an acre of land. The EAW references the DNR's intent to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Stormwater (CSW) permit. Compliance with the CSW permit would satisfy the District's general erosion and sediment control requirements, as they are equivalent.

**Comment: Provide proof of compliance with the NPDES CSW permit.**

Floodplain and Drainage Alteration

Before completing the EAW, the DNR provided the project's floodplain analysis to the District for review. The District reviewed and ultimately approved the analysis during its June 13, 2018, meeting.

**Comment: If significant changes are made to the proposed project, calculations must be updated, and a narrative must be sent to the District explaining how the project will maintain compliance with the Floodplain and Drainage Alteration Standard.**

Stormwater Management Standard

The proposed project will generate more than an acre of impervious surface. The EAW references the DNR's intent to obtain an NPDES CSW permit. Compliance with the CSW permit would satisfy the District's general stormwater management requirement, as they are equivalent.

**Comment: Provide proof of compliance with the NPDES CSW permit.**

Shoreline and Streambank Alternation Standard

This proposed project involves work beneath the ordinary high water level and includes the installation of riprap at the Nine Mile Creek bridge. The EAW states the DNR will design the bridge and support elements in accordance with the Minnesota Department of Transportation State Aid Geometric Design Standards and the DNR Public Waters Work Permit.

**Comment: Provide proof of compliance with the DNR Public Waters Work Permit.**

Steep Slope Standard

The proposed multiuse trail crosses into the city of Bloomington's Bluff Protection Overlay District as well as the District's Steep Slope Overlay District. The EAW indicates the project will comply with the city's Bluff Protection Overlay District, City Code §19.38. Although there are some differences between the District's and the city's slope protection standard, compliance with the city's requirements will suffice.

**Comment: Provide proof of compliance with the City of Bloomington's bluff protection requirements.**

Water Crossing Standard

The proposed project meets the threshold for this District standard and satisfies it through the adoption and implementation of the DNR Public Waters Work Permit.



**Comment:** Provide proof of compliance with the DNR Public Waters Work Permit.

**Final comment:** As the DNR moves forward with finalizing the EAW and project plans, the District respectfully requests updates on any changes to the alignment and construction methods that would cause the project to significantly affect water and natural resources.

November 13, 2018

Lisa Fay, EAW Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: MN DNR Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) – Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment**  
Metropolitan Council Review No. 5  
Metropolitan Council District No. 22111-1

Dear Ms. Fay:

The Metropolitan Council received the EAW for the Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment project on October 15, 2018. The proposed project is located in the City of Bloomington and spans from the Bloomington Ferry Bridge to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. The multiple-use, non-motorized recreational state trail is approximately 13.5 miles and will consist of a 10-foot wide paved surface with 2-foot vegetated shoulders.

The staff review finds that the EAW is complete and accurate with respect to regional concerns and does not raise major issues of consistency with Council policies. An EIS is not necessary for regional purposes.

We offer the following comments for your consideration.

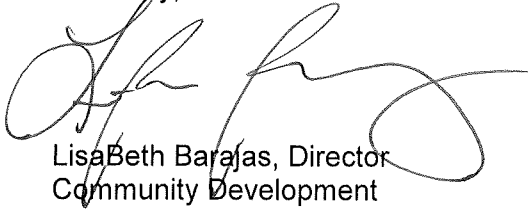
**Item 9.i – Land Use – Regional Parks and Trails** (*Raya Esmaeili, 651-602-1616*)

The EAW acknowledges Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Regional Park Reserve and Savage Fen Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) within a two-mile radius of the project area. It also needs to mention the Regional Trail Search Corridors. Intercity Extension and South Hennepin West (CP Rail) Regional Trail Search Corridors, as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, potentially intersect with the future Minnesota Valley State Trail. Moreover, the Minnesota River Extension Regional Trail Search Corridor in Scott County is within 0.5 mile of the future Minnesota Valley State Trail. Staff encourage the DNR to coordinate with the City of Bloomington, Three Rivers Park District, and Scott County (the respective park implementing agencies) for potential future connections as they evaluate the alignments.

This concludes the Council's review of the EAW. The Council will not take formal action on the EAW.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Raya Esmaeili, Principal Reviewer, at 651-602-1616.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LisaBeth Barajas', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

LisaBeth Barajas, Director  
Community Development

CC: Tod Sherman, Development Reviews Coordinator, MnDOT - Metro Division  
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council District 5  
Michael Larson, Sector Representative  
Raya Esmaeili, Principal Reviewer/Reviews Coordinator

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**From:** Porter R. Million  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** MN Valley State Trail  
**Date:** Thursday, October 18, 2018 2:23:32 PM

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Hello- I am writing in regards to the possible development of the MN Valley State Trail. Over the past 14 years I have lived in the metro area, I have hiked, biked, snowshowed, and xc skied down where they are proposing to pave. During the non-winter months, I have watched the water levels of the river rise to flood stage more than a couple times each year. In my opinion, it makes absolutely no sense to pave any section of that segment. I can only imagine the amount of yearly maintenance that would have to be done, and the massive amount of money that would need to be spent to keep the trail surface in good shape after the floodwaters go down, year after year. The natural surface trail that is currently there, has been very resilient. After the water resides, the trail is reformed by the many different users who run, walk, and bike it, everyday. There is always a general path, but it is never quite the same and that is only one of the things that many people love about it!

When you are down in the river bottoms, it feels like you are miles away from any civilization. You are immersed in the natural surrounding. Wildlife is everywhere, and you feel as if you are just hiking through some remote woods. If the path was paved, it would greatly change that experience... especially if it was constantly in need of repairs from the surging floodwaters in the spring, and throughout the summer. I have seen many regional trail sections blocked off or closed because maintenance cannot be completed in a timely fashion. This becomes a huge issue for the people who use that trail every day for recreation and commuting. I do realize that the goal is to allow access for all types of users to enjoy this natural area but if that is the main goal, I believe it can be done in ways other than adding more pavement to our natural areas. Please do not pave the River Bottoms trail!

Thank you.  
Porter Million - River Bottoms Trail User

November 9, 2018

Lisa Fay  
EAW Project Manager  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

**SUBJECT: Minnesota Valley State Trail (Bloomington Segment)**  
MnDOT Review # **EAW18-020**  
Along Minnesota River from West of I-35W to I-494  
Bloomington, Hennepin

Dear Ms. Fay:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the site plan for the proposed **Minnesota Valley State Trail (Bloomington Segment)** EAW. Please address the following issues before any further development:

***Water Resources:***

1. MnDOT's Right-Of-Way (ROW) line along I-35W in the 'Figure 3 – General Land appears to be missing. Please indicate MnDOT ROW along I-35W in the area surrounding the project.
2. The 12" base shown in 'Figure 4 – Typical Drawings' may not be stout enough to support the proposed trail. Soils adjacent to the Minnesota River are unstable.
3. The MnDOT trail adjacent to I-494 is currently planned for immediate rehabilitation as well as widening within the next few years. Please consider the proposed plans in your connection.
4. Consider storm water management rules of the various Water Resources/Water Quality stakeholders along the trail while planning for right-of-way needs.
5. Additionally, this project may affect drainage flows into the MnDOT Right of Way and a drainage permit may be required. We would like to review the computations and plans as a check that the proposed development maintains or reduces drainage rates to MnDOT right of way. Please include both existing and proposed site conditions for comparison.

Please submit the documents below with the drainage permit application for review and approval:

1. Proposed grading plans, proposed drainage plans and all hydraulic calculations. Please show that the proposed drainage rate to MnDOT right-of-way is the same as or less than existing conditions.

An equal opportunity employer

2. Existing and Proposed drainage area maps with flow arrows and labeling that correspond with the submitted calculations.
3. Hydro CAD model and the corresponding .pdf output for the 2, 10, and 100 year Atlas 14 storm events.

Drainage permit application can be found at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/forms.html>-

[Application for Drainage Permit](#)

MnDOT Drainage Permits Checklist can be found at:

<http://ihub/metro/wre/Link%20Files/Drainage%20Permit%20Applications%20Checklist.pdf>

For questions on these points or to submit additional information, please call Chris Chatfield, Mn/DOT Metro District Water Resources Engineering, at (651) 234-7365 or email

[Christopher.Chatfield@state.mn.us](mailto:Christopher.Chatfield@state.mn.us).

***Environmental Stewardship:***

1. Given the proximity to known bat maternity roosts, tree clearing within MnDOT right-of-way must be limited to the winter months (Nov. 1 to March 31, inclusive).
2. Multiple bridges along the project corridor are known bat maternity roosts, including two bridges that are known roosts for the federally threatened Northern Long-eared Bat. All construction activities under these bridges and within MnDOT right-of-way adjacent to these bridges must avoid the bat pupping season of June 1 to August 15, inclusive. This includes all activities that increase noises above the background level and activities that use percussives or cause vibrations.

For questions on these points or to submit additional information, please call Christopher Smith, Wildlife Ecologist, MnDOT Office of Environmental Stewardship at (651) 366-3605 or email

[christopher.e.smith@state.mn.us](mailto:christopher.e.smith@state.mn.us).

***Review Submittal Options:***

MnDOT's goal is to complete the review of plans within 30 days. Submittals sent in electronically can usually be turned around faster. There are four submittal options. Please submit either:

1. An electronic .pdf version of the plans. MnDOT can accept the plans via e-mail at [metrodevreviews.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:metrodevreviews.dot@state.mn.us) provided that each separate e-mail is less than 20 megabytes.
2. A compact disc with the plans in .pdf format. The disc can be sent to:

MnDOT – Metro District Planning Section  
Development Reviews Coordinator  
1500 West County Road B-2  
Roseville, MN 55113

3. A .pdf version of the plans sent to MnDOT's external shared workspace site located at: <https://mft.dot.state.mn.us> Please contact MnDOT development review staff gain access to the shared workspace site. Also, please send a note to [metrodevreviews.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:metrodevreviews.dot@state.mn.us) indicating the file name and stating that the plans have been submitted on the shared workspace site.
4. If you are unable to send the plans electronically, please submit a set of full size plans to the above address.

MnDOT Metropolitan District, Waters Edge Building, 1500 County Road B2 West, Roseville, MN 55113



If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact me at (651) 234-7797.

Sincerely,



Cameron Muhic  
Senior Planner

**Copy sent via E-Mail:**

Buck Craig, Permits

Aaron Tag, Area engineer

Hailu Shekur, Water Resources

Russell Owen, Metropolitan Council

Jeff Rones, Design

Rylan Juran, Aviation

Doug Nelson, Right-of-Way

Andrew Lutaya, Area Engineer

Nicholas Olson, Water Resources

Jason Junge, Traffic

Chris Chatfield, Water Resources

Christopher Smith, Environmental Stewardship

November 14, 2018

Lisa Fay  
EAW Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Re: Minnesota Valley State Trail Environmental Assessment Worksheet

Dear Lisa Fay:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), for Minnesota Valley State Trail project (Project) in the city of Bloomington, Hennepin County, Minnesota. The Project consists of development of a 13 mile multiple-use, non-motorized recreational trail. Regarding matters for which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has regulatory responsibility or other interests, the MPCA staff has the following comments for your consideration.

**Water Resources (Item 11)*****Stormwater***

- Due to the size of the Project and proximity to impaired waters, the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will need to be submitted to MPCA for review and approval prior to obtaining National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System General Construction Stormwater (CSW) permit coverage.
- The SWPPP will also need to include plans for installing redundant (double) down gradient perimeter sediment controls where construction encroaches existing natural buffers within 50 feet of all surface waters and wetlands. These down gradient sediment controls are required in addition to sediment controls that will be required at the base of any soil stockpiles erected at the site.
- The SWPPP will need to describe specialized best management practices to be utilized at the stream crossings to prevent sediment discharges into these surface waters during construction.
- The infiltration systems used to treat stormwater runoff from the new impervious surfaces must be designed according to the requirements listed under Item 16.1 in the 2018 CSW permit. Soil borings must be conducted in the locations of the infiltration areas to determine infiltration rates and depths to seasonally saturated soils. Where infiltration cannot be achieved due to one of the prohibitions listed in the permit, another method of stormwater volume reduction must be considered. The MPCA highly encourages the use of pervious pavements (e.g. pervious asphalt) for trail segments to reduce the need for constructed stormwater collection areas where suitable. Questions regarding Construction Stormwater Permit requirements should be directed to Roberta Getman at 507-206-2629 or [Roberta.Getman@state.mn.us](mailto:Roberta.Getman@state.mn.us).



We appreciate the opportunity to review this Project. Please provide your specific responses to our comments and 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 by email at [Karen.kromar@state.mn.us](mailto:Karen.kromar@state.mn.us) or by telephone at 651-757-2508.

Sincerely,



Karen Kromar  
Project Manager  
Environmental Review Unit  
Resource Management and Assistance Division

KK:bt

cc: Dan Card, MPCA, St. Paul  
Roberta Getman, MPCA, Rochester  
Teresa McDill, MPCA, St. Paul

**From:** William O'Reilly  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** MN Valley State Trail  
**Date:** Thursday, October 18, 2018 7:32:11 PM

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I have worked on cycling and pedestrian trails as a member of the Crystal Park and Recreation Department for 17 years, and with the City of Minneapolis for the development of the Theodore Wirth ski and off road cycling trail system. I have never seen a more idiotic proposal for a trail than the one being considered for the Minnesota River 'bottoms'. I have ridden bicycles and hiked that trail for 35 years, and can attest to the futility of constructing an asphalt trail in that particular flood plane. Just this year alone would have had half the trail at the bottom of the river gorge, and the replacement cost and maintenance would bankrupt any City that would enjoin the DNR in its construction and upkeep.

All I can ask is, "What are you thinking?"

Leave this area natural as the river will keep it that way, whether you like it or not.

Sincerely, Bill

Jeffrey Perry  
3917 Overlook Drive  
Bloomington MN 55437

7 November 2018

Ms. Lisa Fay, EAW Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul MN 55155-4025

cc: Mayor Gene Winstead, Bloomington City Council Members, Mpls StarTribune, Bloomington Sun-Current

Dear Ms. Fay,

Thank you for the clear, detailed, and well-written summary of the proposed trail project in the Minnesota River bottoms. It is gratifying to realize that nearly every element that the project will impact has been addressed.

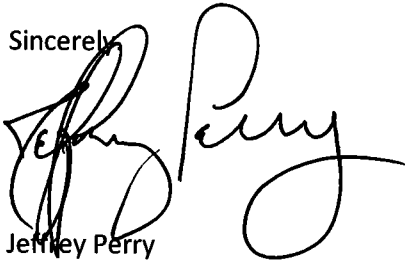
The missing element, however, is NEED. The current state of the river bottoms is natural, with many towering cottonwood trees so close to the trail that they can be touched while walking, skiing, or biking past them. This intimacy is what brings users of the trail who come from all over the metro region. Nowhere else can be enjoyed the proximity of big water and wild woods in the heart of the city. The planned twelve-foot swath of pavement would change the character of the trail for the worse. The current-condition trail requires maintenance, of course, but this is provided by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who open the trail after flood events or wind events that create blockages. This maintenance is done at no cost to the city, state, or federal governments. A paved trail would require even more maintenance, but it is unlikely that a volunteer force would step forth. Note the condition of the trail downstream from the Bloomington Ferry bridge as an example. Broken and silted-over pavement entices neither users nor volunteer maintainers. Your report suggests that deep excavation will be the answer to flood erosion. Note the condition of Black Dog Road, built to carry truck traffic, which suffered damage after every flood, eventually causing it to be closed.

Far more than twelve feet would need to be cleared in order to make room for the construction equipment. Witness the work done recently on Irwin Avenue south of Overlook. A charming, woodsy path was transformed into a barrens. The asphalt bakes in the sun, and the overhanging shade trees are just a memory. The cleared swath is approximately the width of the land between the river and the riverine lakes (Coleman and Nine Mile). The paved trail that the DNR envisions will be similarly barren, and to what end? The current trail users will not be attracted to it. It will take a human generation before mature trees once again shade the trail and provide habitat for the birdlife. This is unacceptable and unnecessary.

Your report mentions ADA compliance as a feature of the "improved" trail. I recognize that any trail work will need to address this concern. The only response I have is: leave it alone. No ADA compliance is required if no work occurs. It may be worth considering a stable of Segway wheelchairs to enable the differently-abled to access the river bottoms. My cousin had such a chair, and his negotiated off-road conditions easily. Not every wild spot need be ADA-compliant.

Thank you for taking my objections to the proposed trail paving seriously. I am adamantly opposed to the project, and I speak for many friends and neighbors. It not only wastes money in the construction; it will waste money in perpetuity if it is to be adequately maintained. The track record of the MN DNR in project maintenance is not enviable. Why take on more burden? Leave the trail maintenance in the hands of the bikers and bird watchers. Leave the river-bottom trees to stand. Leave the beauty of the forest and river banks to remain the jewel they are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Perry". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey Perry

**From:** Kevio  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** River Bottom Paved trail  
**Date:** Saturday, October 27, 2018 9:09:24 AM

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I just wanted to voice my opposition to paved paths, on the MN River Valley area, as stated in the project overview. Having seen the river at flood level 5 times, since this past April, I have great concerns about the fiscal responsibility of such a project, there is already a Black Dog Road path, that will connect 35w and 77. I don't understand the need to fund further paved paths. Environmentally, this too, feels extremely short sighted, both for it's direct impact on the area, but also, it ignores the dramatic shift in the mindset of urban adventurers. Be it mountain biking, including school riding teams, hikers, climbers, kayakers, these cities have fully embraced the BOLD NORTH attitudes, of natural recreation. Looking at Duluth, that is now a world renowned mountain biking destination, due to the miles and miles of trail systems they have developed, as well as the Cayuna trail systems, near Brainerd, which have completely revitalized the area, with adventure tourism. There is an opportunity here, to do the same. I would fully support a similar approach here, one that embraces the pristine natural space, that is becoming so much harder to find, in urban areas.

I ask that you please reconsider, and implement a much more progressive approach, to preserving natural space, and greatly enhancing the ability to be a true adventure destination.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Schafer  
612-827-2059

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Keith Severson  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** Minnesota Valley State trail  
**Date:** Monday, November 05, 2018 5:41:14 PM

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I support the creation of a of the 13 Mile Trail from the Bloomington Ferry to East Bloomington. I would likely bike and rollerblade on it at least twice a month! Thank you.



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

#### Ecological Services

Minnesota-Wisconsin Field Office

4101 American Boulevard East

Bloomington, Minnesota 55425-1665

Phone: (952) 252-0092 Fax: (952) 646-2873



November 14, 2018

Lisa Fay  
Project Manager  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Re: Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment  
FWS Tails # 03E19000-2019-CPA-0003, Hennepin County

Dear Ms. Fay:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Minnesota Valley State Trail (EAW) prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR). The EAW assesses the impacts of a new 13.5-mile segment of the Minnesota State Trail between Bloomington Ferry Bridge (I-169) and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bloomington Visitor Center (Refuge). With respect to those portions of the document for which the Service has jurisdiction or special expertise, we offer the following early coordination comments and recommendations for your consideration.

#### Northern long-eared bat

We consider the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*, NLEB) to be present throughout the state and the species was positively identified in 2018 using acoustic sampling at both units that intersect the proposed action area (Long Meadow Lake and Bloomington Ferry). NLEB females with pups have been observed roosting on the Hwy 77 Bridge in close proximity to the proposed action area and indications of bat use were detected beneath the I-35 Bridge. In light of the recent bridge observations, we recommend that trail construction directly beneath any of the three bridge locations (I-169, I-35 and I-77) occur outside of the NLEB pupping season (June 1 through August 15).

Based on recent observations of NLEB in the greater metro area, it appears that the species has not declined as much as it has elsewhere in the state. This may be potential related to the lack of large occupied hibernacula for the species in the Twin Cities where the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome may spread more easily. We believe that added effort should be taken in order to minimize impacts to NLEB from this project on and off Service lands. To more fully understanding the impacts of the project on local NLEB populations, we recommend that surveys be conducted to assess NLEB use of the area and to determine if the proposed actions will impact maternity roost

trees. Information gained by this effort may provide flexibility for construction timing and help alleviate the competing conservation measures for this species and the rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*, RPBB).

Direct impacts to NLEB can be avoided if all tree removal is conducted in the winter when the species is not present (October 1 through March 31), however, this conservation measure would not avoid potential impacts to RPBB within the suitable overwintering habitat of mapped High Potential Zones. We believe that impacts to NLEB may be significantly minimized if the proposed route can avoid large trees, greater than 15-inches DBH. This may require close coordination with our office when the proposed ROW is marked on the ground.

#### Rusty patched bumble bee

The RPBB was detected within 1 mile of the proposed project area in 2017 and within 0.4 miles of the proposed project area in 2018. The High Potential Zone generated from these observations intersects approximately 2.15 miles of the route and consists of habitat believed to be suitable for RPBB overwintering and spring foraging.

We anticipate impacts to the species if soil disturbance occurs within forested overwintered habitat between October 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>. At this time, we do not believe that additional surveys will provide enough certainty on whether RPBB would be present and impacted within the overwintering habitat along the proposed ROW. In order to fully avoid direct impacts to overwintering queens within the project area, soil disturbance associated with the tree removal and construction along the 2.15-mile portion of the trail would need to occur when the species is not anticipated to be present (between March 16 and October 15<sup>th</sup>). It is during this period of the species' life cycle where we would anticipate RPBBs be present in open floral resource areas located outside of the proposed construction limits. If avoidance of impacts through construction timing is not possible, we believe soil disturbance may rise to the level that impacts to overwintering RPBB queen would be likely. The Federal action agency should then be prepared to conduct "take" calculations in order assess the overall impact of the project on the RPBB. We can provide whatever additional guidance is necessary to further evaluate the potential impacts.

#### Continued coordination with Refuge

The proposed action will require a ROW easement and Special Use Permits from the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge for the construction and continued operation and maintenance of the state trail. Please continue working closely with Refuge managers and personnel to avoid, minimize, and offset adverse impacts to all federal trust resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the EAW. Please contact Andrew Horton at the Minnesota-Wisconsin Field Office ([andrew\\_horton@fws.gov](mailto:andrew_horton@fws.gov) or 952-252-0092, extension 208) if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,



Peter J. Fasbender  
Field Supervisor



**From:** Dan VanHorn  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington segment  
**Date:** Thursday, October 18, 2018 6:46:04 PM

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Hope this new paved trail could be placed above the low flood prone river bottom.  
Doing this would keep the trail open more and reduce maintenance.  
This no doubt would be more expensive to install with grading, board walks over wet seeps  
and springs, and bridges over drainages.  
A high quality project would be appreciated.

**Daniel VanHorn**  
**Bloomington MN 55438**

**From:** Debra Walsh  
**To:** [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** MN River Trail  
**Date:** Friday, October 19, 2018 2:16:31 PM

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We are 4 season users of the trail system. We fully support the building of a pave addition to the trail system. It will open a beautiful area to a much broader group. We hope to see the paved trail completed and open for use soon.