

REVIEW POINT 3

DRAFT MOCCASIN CREEK WATERSHED PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

*Prepared for
U.S Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service
and Wild Rice Watershed District (Minnesota)*

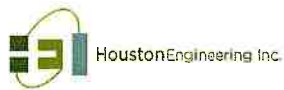
DRAFT
MOCCASIN CREEK
WATERSHED PLAN
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

***REVIEW POINT NO. 3
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT***

April 24, 2018

Prepared on behalf of:
U.S Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service
and Wild Rice Watershed District

Technical Assistance by:
Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI #1432-366)



Draft
Watershed Plan & Environmental Assessment
For
Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed
of the
Wild Rice Watershed District
Becker, Clay, Mahnomon, and Norman Counties, Minnesota

Prepared By:
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
In Cooperation With:
Wild Rice Watershed District, Minnesota

AUTHORITY

The original watershed work plan was prepared, and works of improvement have been installed, under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) as amended.

ABSTRACT

<<<SECTION TO BE COMPLETED FOR NRCS REVIEW POINT 5>>>

COMMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Comments and inquires must be received by ***** , 20** . Submit comments and inquiries to:

<<<SECTION TO BE COMPLETED FOR NRCS REVIEW POINT 5>>>

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This document represents Review Point No. 3 for the Moccasin Creek NRCS RCPP Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment (EA) and is primarily focused on Sections 1-4. Section 5-12 content will be added later as future Review Point information is developed.

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1 PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment Document for:	
Name of Watershed:	Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed, Wild Rice River Watershed (see Appendix B for project maps)
County and State:	Becker, Norman, and Mahnomen Counties, Minnesota
Congressional District:	7
Authorization:	The WRWD made application for assistance from the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RRRA authorized the WRWD to proceed in a Cooperative Agreement (No. 68-6322-16-506) with NRCS to perform Watershed Planning in the Wild Rice River Watershed for Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan. Watershed Planning funded through NRCS RCPP is required to follow Public Law 83-566 requirements. The Watershed Project Plan was prepared per polices and guidelines contained in the NRCS National Watershed Program Manual (NWPM 2014) and National Watershed Program Handbook (NWPB 2014).
Sponsors:	Wild Rice Watershed District
Proposed Action:	<<<TO BE COMPLETED FOR NRCS REVIEW POINT 5>>>
Purpose and Need for Action:	<p>The purpose of the action is to provide flood damage reduction from a 10-yr 24-hr storm for agricultural land and to reduce flood damage to public transportation infrastructure in the Moccasin Creek RCPP subwatershed.</p> <p>A secondary purpose of this action is to help contribute to the overall basin-wide goal of reducing peak flows on the Red River of the North by 20%. If practical, opportunities for Natural Resource and Water Quality Enhancements should be incorporated in the alternatives that are considered.</p> <p>There is a need for 10-yr 24-hr flood damage reduction for agricultural land and reduction in public transportation infrastructure flood damages in the Moccasin Creek RCPP subwatershed. Additional information supporting this need is included in the following list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural crop and public infrastructure/transportation damages in were extensive during the 2002 summer flooding. ▪ Drainage concerns along the Moccasin Creek have been a problem for property owners along the creek in the vicinity (both upstream and downstream) of Trunk Highway (TH) 113 for many years resulting from a combination of sedimentation and beaver dam blockages. ▪ Channel erosion and instability in the downstream reach below the existing Moccasin Creek Dam is present. ▪ Flooding in the watershed results in damages to crop land due to channel erosion, delayed planting, prevented planting, and prolonged inundation. Total inundated

	<p>acres and agricultural acres in the area directly adjacent to the channel are estimated for various synthetic rainfall events based on the hydraulic modeling completed for the project and shown in Table 1 below. Note that these measurements were limited to areas of detailed analysis showing in the maps in Appendix C (previously Appendix B in RP2) and do not include all damages.</p>
<p>Description of Preferred Alternative (no more than 5 lines):</p>	<p><<<TO BE COMPLETED FOR NRCS REVIEW POINT 5>>></p>
<p>Resource Information:</p>	<p>Latitude and Longitude: NA – this project is at a sub-watershed scale</p> <p>Eight-Digit Hydrologic Unit No.: Wild Rice River - 09020108</p> <p>Climatology and Topography: The climate within the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed is continental and characterized by large variances in temperature, both on a seasonal and daily basis. The normal mean monthly temperatures vary from 6°F to 70°F, with a normal mean temperature of 40°F. The movement of cold polar air masses into the area during the winter months result in very cold, dry weather. During the spring and summer, warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico tends to dominate weather patterns. The growing season between the last frost in the spring and the first frost in the fall averages about 120 days. Approximately 71% of the annual precipitation occurs during the five (5) month growing season of May through September. Snowfall presents about 15% of the total annual precipitation and averages about 32 inches per year.</p> <p>Topography within the project area ranges from 1,037 to 1,353 feet. The project area is generally level to gently rolling, with the exception of the northwestern portion of the project area, west of Moccasin Creek, which has some steeper, more varied relief. The upper end of the Moccasin Creek sub-watershed is at an elevation of approximately 1,250 feet (NAVD1988), the fields near the downstream end are at an approximate elevation of 1,120 feet (NAVD1988). Using GIS processing techniques and LiDAR, the topographic slopes were derived for hydrologic model processing. LiDAR topography data and derived slope information is presented in Figure C12 and Figure C13, respectively.</p> <p>Sub-Watershed Size (acres): 60.7 square miles of land or 38,856 acres</p> <p>Land Uses (acres): According to the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium, 2011 National Land Cover Database (NLCD 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivated Crops - 76% or 29,639 acres ▪ Emergency Herbaceous Wetlands – 9% or 3,771 acres ▪ Pasture/Hay – 3% or 1,283 acres ▪ Developed, Open Space – 4% or 6,289 acres ▪ Deciduous Forest – 2% or 847 acres



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grassland/Herbaceous – 2% or 699 acres ▪ Open Water – 1% or 480 acres <p>The remaining land use cover types each account for less than 1% of the project area; the full list is presented in Section 4.10 – <i>Land Use</i>.</p>
	<p>Land Ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private (51%) Federal (1%) State-Local (1%) Tribal (47%)
	<p>Population and demographics:</p> <p>The most recent U.S. Census Bureau data was obtained to develop an understanding of demographics within the study area. Demographic statistics for the project area were generated by using 2010 Census Block and ACS 2015 Block Group data, described in Table 11 (Section 4.5). Due to the rural nature of the project area and coverage of the most readily available demographic data, please note that these statistics are best available estimates.</p> <p>The Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed is a relatively small area, located within a rural-agricultural setting with low population density (395 individuals). Distribution of race among the population within the Project area includes 89% white and 4% American Indian individuals. According to the census block data, the study area has an average per-capita income in comparison to the counties in which the project resides but is relatively lower than the State's. The statistics show that the poverty rate in the study area (16%) is a little above average in comparison to the counties (12-17%) that the project is located within.</p>
	<p>Relevant resource concerns identified through Scoping (as identified in RP2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Economic Development (NED) P&G Air Quality Coral Reefs Cultural Resources Ecologically Critical Areas Endangered and Threatened Species (Federal and State Listed Species) Environmental Justice and Civil Rights Essential fish habitat Fish and Wildlife Floodplain Management Forest Resources Invasive Species Land Use Migratory Birds Natural Areas Parklands Prime and Unique Farmlands, and Farmland of Statewide Significance



	Public Health and Safety Regional Water Resource Plans Riparian Areas Scenic Beauty Scientific Resources Sole Source Aquifers and Groundwater Resources Social Issues Soil Resources Tribal Lands (added as part of RP3) Water Quality Water Resources Waters of the United States Wetlands
Alternative plans considered:	To be included in future review point
Brief description of components of each alternative:	To be included in future review point
Mitigation measures for alternatives:	To be included in future review point
Project costs: To be included in future review point	PL 83-566 funds: \$XX XX%
	Other funds \$XX XX%
	Total \$XX XX%
Project costs continued: To be included in future review point	Construction:
	Engineering:
	Technical assistance:
	Relocation:
	Real property rights:
	Project administration:
	Annual O&M (non-Federal):
	Other:
TOTAL COSTS:	
Project benefits: To be included in future review point	Monetary benefits (390-NWPM, Part 506, Subp. B, Sec. 506.19 (Table 5); 390-NWPM, Part 506, Subp. B, Sect. 506.20 (Table 5a); and 390-NWPM, Part 506, Subp. B, Sect. 506.21 (Table 6)):
	Number of direct beneficiaries (Onsite – Offsite):



	Other beneficial effects in physical terms:
	Benefit to Cost Ratio (authorized rate):
	Benefit to Cost Ratio (current rate):
	Net benefit effects (NED):
	Funding schedule (budget year + 5): Federal funds: Non-federal funds:
	Period of analysis:
Project life:	To be included in future review point
Environmental effects, impacts (include context and intensity):	To be included in future review point
Major conclusions (if not already covered elsewhere in the Summary)	To be included in future review point
Areas of controversy/ Controversial issues:	To be included in future review point
Issues to be resolved:	To be included in future review point
Evidence of Unusual Congressional or Local Interest	To be included in future review point
Compliance:	<p>Is this report in compliance with executive orders, public laws, and other statutes governing the formulation of water resource projects? Yes</p> <p>This project's Environmental Assessment (Federal, NRCS document) is written to address the Federal environmental review as well as the Minnesota Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), in accordance with Chapter 6 – <i>Substitute Methods of Environmental Review</i>, in the Guide to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules (May 2010) produced by the Environmental Quality Board.</p> <p>Based on Minnesota Rule Chapter 4410.4400, <i>Mandatory EIS Categories</i>, an EIS must be prepared for projects that meet or exceed the threshold of any of the subparts 2 through 25. Based on this planning process, it is anticipated that the requirement for a</p>



	<p>mandatory EIS will not be able to be fully determined until after a preferred alternative has been selected and/or a location is determined.</p> <p>NRCS Review Point #4 which includes submitting alternatives and associated documentation is the first time in the planning process that the environmental consequences will be reviewed. At this time a determination will be made whether the selected alternative will meet the threshold of requiring a mandatory EIS.</p> <p>The Purpose and Need for Action along with Scope of the Environmental Assessment presented in the following sections are intended to meet both the Federal and State Requirements. Invitations were sent to state, federal and tribal agencies that have a potential interest in the project. The potential Cooperating Agencies invited included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Army Corps of Engineers• US Fish and Wildlife Service• Minnesota State Historical Preservation Offices• Tribal Historical Preservation Offices (MN, ND, SD, MT, WY) <p>Copies of the letters of invitation are included in Appendix A. The US Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to be a Cooperating Agency in development of the Environmental Assessment for this project. Their letter of concurrence is also included in Appendix A.</p>
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2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION (REVIEW POINT NO. 2A)

2.1 PURPOSE:

The purpose of the action is to provide flood damage reduction from a 10-yr 24-hr storm for agricultural land and to reduce flood damage to public transportation infrastructure in the Moccasin Creek RCPP subwatershed.

A secondary purpose of this action is to help contribute to the overall basin-wide goal of reducing peak flows on the Red River of the North by 20%. If practical, opportunities for Natural Resource and Water Quality Enhancements should be incorporated in the alternatives that are considered.

2.2 NEED:

There is a need for 10-yr 24-hr flood damage reduction for agricultural land and reduction in public transportation infrastructure flood damages in the Moccasin Creek RCPP subwatershed. Additional information supporting this need is included in the following list:

- Agricultural crop and public infrastructure/transportation damages in were extensive during the 2002 summer flooding.
- Drainage concerns along the Moccasin Creek have been a problem for property owners along the creek in the vicinity (both upstream and downstream) of TH113 for many years resulting from a combination of sedimentation and beaver dam blockages.
- Channel erosion and instability in the downstream reach below the existing Moccasin Creek Dam is present.
- Flooding in the watershed results in damages to crop land due to channel erosion, delayed planting, prevented planting, and prolonged inundation. Total inundated acres and agricultural acres in the area directly adjacent to the channel are estimated for various synthetic rainfall events based on the hydraulic modeling completed for the project, and shown in **Table 1** below. Note that these measurements were limited to areas of detailed analysis showing in the maps in **Appendix C** (previously Appendix B in RP2) and do not include all damages.



Table 1: Inundated Lands Summary*

Return Period	24-Hour Rainfall (in.)	Total Inundated Acres	*Cropland Inundated Acres	Average Annual Inundated Cropland Acres
2 – year, 24-hr	2.48	657	283	141
5 – year, 24-hr	3.15	874	401	80
10 – year, 24-hr	3.80	1,084	510	51
25 – year, 24-hr	4.84	1,363	688	28
50 – year, 24-hr	5.76	1,577	842	17
100 – year, 24-hr	6.79	1,795	1,014	10
Annual Average Inundated Cropland				327

*This table has been updated for Review Point 3 to reflect the most recent hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and damage assessment analyses for the project.

**Estimated from National Agricultural Statistics Service (2017) GIS data layer

Additional Supplemental Documentation to Support the Existence of the Problems are provided in **Appendix C** (previously Appendix B in RP2). Please note the following figures have been updated since the November 2017, Review Point No. 2 submittal.

- **Figure C1** – FEMA Floodplain and Federal Disasters Map (previously titled Map 1 and 2)
- **Figure C2.1** – Inundation Map 2-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 3)
- **Figure C2.2** – Inundation Map 5-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 4)
- **Figure C2.3** – Inundation Map 10-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 5)
- **Figure C2.4** – Inundation Map 25-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 6)
- **Figure C2.5** – Inundation Map 50-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 7)
- **Figure C2.6** – Inundation Map 100-Year 24-Hour Rainfall Event (previously titled Map 8)

2.3 SUPPLEMENTAL NEED INFORMATION SINCE REVIEW POINT NO. 2 SUBMITTAL (REVIEW POINT NO. 3)

Additional hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and damage assessment work has been completed since the submission of Review Point No. 2 (RP2) in November of 2017. Upon receipt of comment from NRCS on RP2, it is anticipated that this information will be merged in the future Purpose and Need section of this document for future submittals. Previously submitted RP2 information and RP3 information are being separately distinguished in this document to avoid confusion in the interim review process. To continue with the topic at hand, because duration is a key factor for flood damages to cropland, the hydraulic model was used to determine the estimated duration of flooding on inundated areas. The table below summarizes the percent of acres inundated for various inundation times for the 10-year rainfall event.

Table 2: 10-Year, 24-Hr Rainfall Inundation/Duration Summary

Duration	Total Inundated Acres	Cropland Inundated Acres
0 – 24 hours	154	91
24 – 48 hours	190	116
48 – 72 hours	201	101
72 – 96 hours	215	109
96 – 120 hours	160	62
> 120 hours	164	31

*Estimated from National Agricultural Statistics Service (2017) GIS data layer

Damages also occur to public and private infrastructure. Public health and safety, and commerce is currently susceptible to being compromised during significant snow melt and spring rain events due to the disruptions and damages transportation infrastructure experience. Minnesota State Law provides requirements for minimum recurrence design events for stream crossings based on road authority. Road overtopping often results in damages to the road surface, and in certain instances can result in failure of the culvert. Culvert failures produce a “washout”, or a large scour hole in the roadway that presents a public safety issue. Floodplains developed from the hydrologic and hydraulic model of the project area were used to estimate a count of structure impacts. One structure was identified to be impacted during a 100-yr, 24-hr event.

Table 3: Road and Structural Impacts Summary

Rainfall Event	Incidence of Road Overtopping (Count)
2-year, 24-hr	2
5-year, 24-hr	5
10-year, 24-hr	6
25-year, 24-hr	8
50-year, 24-hr	12
100-year, 24-hr	14

Local roadways within the project area that are susceptible to and experience overtopping and transportation disruptions are those that traverse Moccasin Creek. Incidences of roadways overtopping during 10-year, 25-year, 50-year, and 100-year rainfall events are tabulated in **Table 3**. Hydraulic modeling data for the project was used and shown in **Figure C3**.

2.4 REGIONAL CONCERNS (REVIEW POINT NO. 3)

Flooding in the Moccasin Creek has been a persistent problem in Becker, Mahanomen, and Norman counties and throughout the Wild Rice River Watershed. The Wild Rice River (including Moccasin Creek) is a tributary to the Red River Basin. The Red River Basin is an international, multi-jurisdictional watershed of approximately 45,000 square miles, with 80% of the Basin contained within the United States, and the remaining 20% of the Basin located in Canada. The region is frequently impacted by

flooding along the Red River and its tributaries. Impacts experienced along the Red River mainstem are a result of combined tributary subwatershed contributions, which includes the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed of Wild Rice River.

2.5 OPPORTUNITIES (REVIEW POINT NO. 3)

Opportunities made available through the implementation of this plan include the following improvements to the quality of life and enhancement of environmental values within and extending outside of the project area:

- Consistency with the Red River Basin Commission's Long-Term Flood Solutions Report to help achieve basin-wide commitment to comprehensive integrated water stewardship and management.
- Protect human health and safety and improve the welfare of communities.
- Protect and maintain public and private investments in infrastructure and the transportation system.
- Maintain or increase flood resiliency.
- Protect, maintain, or improve water quality.
- Protect, maintain, or improve fish and wildlife habitats.
- Improve bank stability.
- Promote responsible land stewardship throughout the watershed.

3 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 REVIEW POINT NO. 2B INFORMATION

Systematic scoping was used to identify resource concerns within the watershed, and to rate their potential significance. An abbreviated list of concerns was initially presented to the public during the June 12, 2017 public meeting in Twin Valley, MN. Additional details of the meeting are included in **Appendix A** (previously Appendix C in RP2). This meeting discussed several known concerns within the watershed, and allowed the general public to rate the level of concern for various considerations. The following concerns were initially presented to the public for consideration:

Identified Resource Concerns:

- Flooding/Flood Damages (i.e. agricultural effects from delayed planting, prevented planting, crop flood inundation, road damages, culvert/bridge damages, breakout flows, field erosion/deposition, floodplain management, etc.)
- Water Quality/Erosion and Sedimentation (water quality, water resources, soil resources, field erosion/deposition, channel erosion/deposition, etc.)
- Wildlife and Habitat (Fish and wildlife, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, migratory birds, forest resources, etc.)
- Other

Following the meeting and subsequent public comment period, the Moccasin Creek Flood Damage Reduction Project Team reviewed the public input and also considered the following resource concerns as set forth in Section 501.24 of Title 390 – National Watershed Program Manual. Each of the concerns was ranked based on their relevance within the study area. The results of this scoping process are listed in the following table:

Table 4: Summary Scoping Table (Review Point No. 2)

Item/Concern	Relevance to the Proposed Action	Rationale
REQUIRED RESOURCE CONCERN CONSIDERED		
(1) National Economic Development (NED) P&G	MEDIUM	Potential to utilize other local, state, and regional funding
(2) Air quality	LOW	Impacts only likely to be temporary in nature
(3) Coral reefs	N/A	N/A
(4) Cultural resources	LOW	Class 1 Archaeological and Cultural investigations will be completed to determine the presence of historic and culturally significant sites.
(5) Ecologically critical areas	MEDIUM	There are no known ecologically critical areas designated within the project area however the riparian area near the existing Moccasin Creek Dam has been an area of concern for summer inundation.
(6) Endangered and threatened species	LOW	The project alternatives are not expected to have impact on T&E species
(7) Environmental justice and civil rights	LOW	Not likely to impact Minority and Low-Income Populations
(8) Essential fish habitat	LOW	Limited fish population within the project area.
(9) Fish and wildlife (including coordination requirements)	MEDIUM	State WMA land within the project areas.
(10) Floodplain management	LOW	Only limited designated floodplains exist in the study area.
(11) Forest resources	MEDIUM	No significant forest resources in study area, however the riparian area near the existing Moccasin Creek Dam has been an area of concern for summer inundation.
(12) Invasive species	LOW	No impact to the presence of invasive species within the study area is anticipated.
(13) Land use	LOW	Limited landuse change anticipated to result from alternatives to be considered. Most of the study area is cultivated agricultural land.
(14) Migratory birds	MEDIUM	State WMA within the project area
(15) Natural areas	MEDIUM	State WMA within the project area
(16) Parklands	MEDIUM	State WMA within the project area
(17) Prime and unique farmland, and farmland of statewide significance	MEDIUM	Project alternatives have the potential to impact prime and unique farmland



(18) Public health and safety	MEDIUM	Limited population within study area. However, roadway washouts and road damages resulting from flooding occur.
(19) Regional water resource plans (including coastal zone plans)	N/A	N/A
(20) Riparian areas	LOW	Limited riparian areas exist along much of the channel.
(21) Scenic beauty	LOW	Limited natural landscape exists within the study area.
(22) Scientific resources	LOW	No known SNAs within portions of study area.
(23) Sole source aquifers	LOW	Limited impact on groundwater expected
(24) Social issues	LOW	Limited population in study area
(25) Soil resources	LOW	Limited impacts to soil resources expected from project alternatives
(26) Water quality	LOW	Limited impact on water quality is expected.
(27) Water resources	HIGH	Will vary depending the alternatives considered.
(28) Waters of the United States, including special aquatic sites	HIGH	Significant areas of wetlands identified within the study area.
(29) Wetlands	HIGH	Significant areas of wetlands identified within the study area.
(30) Wild and scenic rivers	N/A	N/A
<i>Other concerns identified by SLO, agencies, and the public</i>		
None		

Copies of the Public Comments received during and following the public scoping meeting are included in **Appendix A** (previously Appendix C in RP2). Concerns raised include:

- Channel blockages along the Moccasin Creek
- Overland flooding
- Drainage issues from lands adjacent to the creek.
- Channel cleanout and maintenance issues
- Dam operation for more local benefit within the WRWD
- Erosion between dam and confluence with WRR

3.2 UPDATED SCOPING BASED ON ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS (REVIEW POINT NO. 3)

The scoping table has been updated and further refined since Review Point No. 2:

Table 5: Summary Scoping Table (Review Point No. 3)

Item/Concern	Relevance to the Proposed Action	Rationale
REQUIRED RESOURCE CONCERN CONSIDERED		
National Economic Development (NED) P&G	MEDIUM	Potential to utilize other local, state, and regional funding
Air quality	LOW	Impacts only likely to be temporary in nature
Cultural resources	MEDIUM	Class 1 Archaeological and Cultural investigations will be completed to determine the presence of historic and culturally significant sites. Impacts will be dependent upon locations of alternative project components.
Ecologically critical areas	MEDIUM	There are some MN DNR NHIS and MCBS designated lands within the project area. Impacts will depend upon locations of alternative project components.
Endangered and threatened species	MEDIUM	T&E species are located within the project area; potential impacts to designated species will depend upon locations of alternative project components.
Environmental justice and civil rights	LOW	Not likely to impact minority and low-income populations
Essential fish habitat	NOT PRESENT	Limited fish population within the project area. There are no designated essential fish habitat within the project area.
Fish and wildlife (including coordination requirements)	MEDIUM	Project contains designated State WMA and Federal WPA lands, which provide potential habitat for fish and wildlife. Fish and wildlife habitat reside within the project area though their habitat has been historically altered from its pre-settlement conditions due to land use alterations.
Floodplain management	LOW	Only limited designated floodplains exist in the study area.
Forest resources	MEDIUM	No significant forest resources in study area, however the forested/riparian area near the existing Moccasin Creek Dam has been an area of concern for summer inundation.
Invasive species	LOW	No impact to the presence of invasive species within the study area is anticipated.
Land use	LOW	Limited land use change anticipated to result from alternatives to be considered. Most of the study area is cultivated agricultural land.
Migratory birds	MEDIUM	Project contains designated State, WMA and Federal, WPA lands, which provide potential habitat for migratory birds.

Natural areas	MEDIUM	There are several State and Federal designated natural areas within the project area, including MN DNR WMAs and USFWS WPAs. Impact to these areas will be dependent upon locations of alternative project components.
Parklands	NOT PRESENT	There are no designated State or Federal parklands within the project area.
Prime and unique farmland, and farmland of statewide significance	MEDIUM	Project alternatives have the potential to impact prime and unique farmland
Public health and safety	MEDIUM	Limited population within study area. However, roadway washouts and road damages resulting from flooding occur.
Regional water resource plans (including coastal zone plans)	HIGH	This project is consistent with local watershed planning and is part of a larger planning effort to increase flood resilience within the Red River Valley. The project is consistent with the local county water management plans.
Riparian areas	MEDIUM	Limited riparian areas exist along much of the channel. The riparian area near the existing Moccasin Creek Dam has been an area of concern for summer inundation.
Scenic beauty	LOW	Limited natural landscape exists within the study area.
Scientific resources	LOW	One designated SNA is partially located on uplands within the southwestern portion of the project area; due to its location, this resource is not anticipated to be impacted by the project.
Sole source aquifers	LOW	There are no EPA designated Sole Source Aquifers within the project area; limited impact on groundwater is expected.
Social issues	HIGH	There are considerable social impacts due to the current state of flooding within the project area and extending into the Wild Rice River Watershed and Red River Valley. How to address these social issues is being addressed by the development of this project.
Soil resources	LOW	Limited impacts to soil resources expected from project alternatives
Water quality	LOW	Limited impact on water quality is expected.
Water resources	HIGH	The project is not anticipated to adversely impact or degrade current water resources conditions below existing conditions. The project is anticipated to maintain or improve existing water resource conditions. Potential impacts will vary depending the alternatives considered.
Waters of the United States, including special aquatic sites	HIGH	Significant areas of wetlands identified within the study area. Potential impacts will vary depending on alternatives considered.



Wetlands	HIGH	Significant areas of wetlands identified within the study area. Potential impacts will vary depending on alternatives considered.
Wild and scenic rivers	NOT PRESENT	There are no wild and scenic river designations within the project area.

4 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT (REVIEW POINT NO. 3)

This section describes pertinent physical, ecological, economic, and social information for the watershed and other areas of project impact. This will provide the context for determining the effects of alternatives in later sections. Each of the relevant concerns identified during the scoping process described in the previous section is described in more detail in the following sections.

4.1 AIR QUALITY

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) (40 CFR 50), set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as directed under the Clean Air Act, define standards for six criteria air pollutants (Carbon Monoxide (CO), Lead (Pb), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Ozone (O₃) Particle Pollution (PM): PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, and Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂)) that are considered harmful to public health and the environment. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has the responsibility to ensure the ambient air quality in Minnesota is maintained in accordance with the levels established by the state and federal AAQS and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of Air Quality Rules.

The EPA developed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the criteria pollutants to protect public health and welfare. When a designated air quality area or "airshed" with concentrations of criteria pollutants that are below the levels established by the NAAQS are considered either attainment or unclassifiable areas. To determine whether an area meets the NAAQS, air monitoring networks have been established and are used to measure ambient air quality and determine attainment areas. MPCA operates and maintains a network of ambient air quality monitoring sites throughout the state; there are no monitoring sites within the vicinity of the study area (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, accessed Feb 8, 2018). The study area is designated to be in attainment or unclassifiable (to be considered in attainment) for all NAAQS (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, accessed Feb 8, 2018).

4.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

A Class 1 Archaeological and Cultural investigation is underway to determine the presence of historic and culturally significant sites. These reports will be summarized here upon their completion and provided as background documents.

4.3 ECOLOGICALLY CRITICAL AREAS

There are designated areas within the project area that exhibit rare and/or unique natural features and can be considered ecological resources. The MN DNR, Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program works closely with the Minnesota Biological Survey to curate the state's rare natural resources. The MN DNR, Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) database (LA-805) and MBS Sites of

Biodiversity Significance datasets from the Minnesota Geospatial Commons were used to identify the presence of potentially ecologically sensitive areas within the project area. This section also relates to the natural areas discussed in **Section 4.12**; refer to said section for more information.

According to the MN DNR, NHIS (LA-805), there are 23 identified areas of ecological significance within the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed area. These sites are shown in **Figure C4**.

Table 6: NHIS Ecological Sites within the Project Area (MN DNR NHIS LA-805)

Site Name	# of occurrences in project area	Location of Occurrence (date of last observation)
Dry Hill Prairie (Northern)	1	Norman County (Aug 1985)
Dry Sand – Gravel Prairie (Northern)	4	Norman County (1973-1985)
Kame (Quaternary)	1	Norman County (1979)
Lake and Wetland Composite (Quaternary)	1	Norman County (1979)
Mesic Prairie (Northern)	9	Norman (1987)
Native Plant Community, Undetermined Class	2	Becker (2000)
Sedimentary Structure (Quaternary)	1	Norman County (1979)
Wet Prairie (Northern)	4	Becker and Mahnomen counties (2000 and 1968)

Source: MN DNR, Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) data (LA-805), accessed Mar 15, 2018.

There are also 92 individual MCBS Native Plant Communities accounting for approximately 3,664 acres identified within the project area. A tabulation of the identified MCBS Native Plant Communities within the project area is presented below with locations shown on **Figure C5**.

Table 7: MCBS Native Plant Communities within the Project Area

Site Name	# of occurrences in project area
Black Ash – Silver Maple Terrace Forest	2
Bur Oak – Aspen Forest	5
Cattail – Sedge Marsh (Prairie)	2
Dry Hill Prairie (Northern)	1
Dry Sand – Gravel Prairie (Northern)	4
Meadow – Marsh – Fen – Swamp Complex	6
Mesic Prairie (Northern)	18
Northern Wet Prairie	3
Northwestern Upland Hardwood Forest Complex	3
Other Water Body	1
Prairie Mixed Cattail Marsh	8
Prairie Rich Fen	2
Prairie Wetland Complex	37

There are 21 MCBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance encapsulating approximately 7,422 acres within the project area (**Table 8, Figure C5**). Three of these sites are located along Moccasin Creek (Moccasin WMA – North Unit, Flom 26, and Moccasin WMA – South Unit). There are four biodiversity significance ranks; outstanding, high, moderate, and below (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb. 19, 2018):

- “Outstanding” – sites contain the best occurrences of the rarest species, the most outstanding examples of the rarest native plant communities, and/or the largest most ecologically intact or functional landscapes.
- “High” – sites contain very good quality occurrences of the rarest species, high-quality examples of rare native plant communities, and/or important functional landscapes.
- “Moderate” – sites contain occurrences of rare species, moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have strong potential for recovery of native plant communities and characteristic ecological processes.
- “Below” - sites lack occurrences of rare species and natural features or do not meet MBS standards for outstanding, high, or moderate rank. These sites may include areas of conservation value at the local

level, such as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movement, buffers surrounding higher-quality natural areas, areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat, or open space.

Table 8: MCBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Rank	Site Name (acres)
Outstanding	Frenchman's Bluff Preserve (52 acres)
High	Downing Waubun Prairies (1,218 acres)
	Spring Creek WMA NW (752 acres)
	Wild Rice River Woods West (1,148 acres)
	Wild Rice River Woods East (972 acres)
Moderate	Waubun WMA West (559 acres)
	Popple Grove 31 (113 acres)
	Coburn WMA (434 acres)
	Hellickson Prairie WPA (1,211 acres)
	Shayetal WPA (157 acres)
	Syverson WPA (66 acres)
	Flom 29 NE (86 acres)
	Moccasin WMA – North Unit (50 acres)
	Flom 17 (39 acres)
	Flom 19 (76 acres)
	Flom 21 (25 acres)
	Flom 20 (85 acres)
Moccasin WMA – South Unit (144 acres)	
Below	Flom 26 (194 acres)
	Flom 28 (44 acres)

Specific locations of project activities in relation to these resources will be assessed later in this watershed plan/EA to determine project impact to these resources.

4.4 ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) directs all Federal agencies to work to conserve threatened and endangered species and to use their authorities to further to purposes of the Act. The ESA lists nine (9) species as threatened (likely to become an endangered species in the near future), eleven (11) as endangered (in danger of extinction now), and seven (7) associated designated Critical Habitat areas located in Minnesota (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, accessed Mar 16, 2018).

In addition, the MN DNR maintains a state designated list of threatened, endangered (T&E), and special concern species (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Mar 16, 2018). Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (Minn. Stat. Section 84.0895) and Minnesota Administrative Rules, Chapter

6134 provide the prescribed rules, definitions, and associated list of species designated in the state. Note that the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531-1544) requires the U.S. Department of the Interior to identify species as endangered or threatened according to a separate set of definitions, and imposes a separate set of restrictions pertaining to those species.

The project area was evaluated to assess the potential presence of federally and state listed species by obtaining a list of species and other resources such as critical habitat under the USFWS and State jurisdictions. The USFWS, online Information Planning and Conservation System (IPaC) program data included the potential occurrence of four (4) federally-listed threatened species (see **Table 9**, below). The MN DNR, Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Rare Natural Features GIS data (LA-805) was also accessed to identify state-listed species that are known or expected to be on or near the study area. According to the MN DNR, Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), there are four (4) endangered and one (1) threatened species in the study area (see **Table 9**). Descriptions of the state and federally listed threatened and endangered species and their presence in relation to the project is provided below. State listed Special Concern species are listed in **Section 4.4.2**.

Table 9: Threatened and Endangered Species

Species	Type of Animal	Status	County of Occurrence (dates last observed)	Critical Habitat
*FEDERALLY LISTED THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES				
Gray Wolf ¹ (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	Becker Mahnomen	There is final designated critical habitat for this species, but the project is located outside the critical habitat.
Northern Long-eared Bat ² (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	Becker Mahnomen Norman	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Dakota Skipper (<i>Hesperia dacotae</i>) ³	Zoological: Invertebrate Animal	Threatened	Norman	There is final critical habitat for this species, but the project is located outside the critical habitat.

¹ USFWS, Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS): Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), accessed Mar 15 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?sId=4488>. And, USFWS, *Wolf – Western Great Lakes*, accessed Feb 13 2018: <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf/>.

² USFWS, ECOS: Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), accessed Mar 15 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?sId=9045>.

³ USFWS, ECOS: Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*), accessed Mar 15 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?scode=1011>

Species	Type of Animal	Status	County of Occurrence (dates last observed)	Critical Habitat
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (<i>Platanthera praeclara</i>)	Botanical Vascular Plant	Threatened	Norman	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
**STATE LISTED THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES				
Dakota Skipper (<i>Hesperia dactotae</i>) ⁴	Zoological: Invertebrate Animal	Endangered	Norman (July 1988)	No
Frenchman's Bluff Moonwort (<i>Botrychium gallicomontanum</i>)	Botanical Vascular Plant	Endangered	Norman (2004)	No
Horned Grebe (<i>Podiceps auratus</i>)	Zoological Vertebrate Animal	Endangered	Becker, Norman, Mahnomen (1958)	No
Poweshiek Skipperling (<i>Oarisma Poweshiek</i>)	Zoological Invertebrate Animal	Endangered	Project Area (July 1994)	No
Wilson's Phalarope (<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>)	Botanical Vascular Plant	Threatened	Project Area (1988)	No

*Source: USFWS, Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) online database, accessed Mar 15 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>.


**Source: MN DNR, Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) data (LA-805).

4.4.1 FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES

The Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed resides in portions of Becker, Mahnomen, and Norman Counties. Review of the USFWS Endangered Species list from the USFWS Environmental Conservation Online System and the MN DNR, NHIS, for the three counties indicates the following Threatened and Endangered species of concern may be present within the watershed (USFWS, accessed Mar 15 2018):

- Gray Wolf – Threatened
- Northern Long-Eared Bat – Threatened
- Western Prairie Fringed Orchid – Threatened (State listed Endangered)
- Dakota Skipper – Threatened (State listed Endangered)

⁴ USFWS, ECOS: Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dactotae*), accessed Mar 15 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?spcode=1011>



Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*)

The gray wolf is found in a wide range of habitats throughout the United States, including the grassland habitats found within the watershed boundary. Agriculture lands, however, which dominate the watershed area, are less than ideal habitats for the gray wolf and it is unlikely to be found within heavily cultivated areas.

Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

The Northern Long-Eared Bat is medium-sized, about 3 to 3.7 inches long, with a wingspan of 9 to 10 inches and is distinguished by its long ears. The northern long-eared bat is found across much of the eastern and north central United States and all Canadian provinces from the Atlantic coast west to the southern Northwest Territories and eastern British Columbia. White nose syndrome, a disease that has contributed to the population plummet of the Northern Long-Eared Bat was first observed in New York in 2006 and has spread considerably throughout the northeast, Midwest and southeast. In the northeast, population of the Northern Long-Eared Bat has declined by up to 99% (based on hibernacula counts). It is expected the white nose syndrome will continue to spread throughout the United States at an uncertain rate, into the future. Other negative impediments to this species include impacts to hibernacula (e.g., trespassing restriction structures at caves and mines that restrict bat movement and can contribute to changes in the microclimate in the mine/cave), wind farm operations, and loss or degradation of summer roosting habitat. The MN DNR identifies and maintains a listing of counties within the state that contain documented Northern Long-Eared Bat maternity roost trees and/or hibernacula entrances. There are no townships within the project area identified to contain the bat maternity roost trees and/or hibernacula (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2017).

Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*) – Threatened (State listed Endangered)

The Dakota Skipper is a "branded" skipper that is completely dependent upon its native prairie habitat. Even so, there has been no evidence that reconstructed prairie provides suitable habitat. The Dakota Skipper seems to prefer native dry-mesic to dry prairie where mid-height grasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* var. *scoparium*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), and side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula* var. *curtipendula*) are a major component of the vegetation. The most productive sites in Minnesota feature some topographic variation. Adults will forage into nearby lowland prairie (mesic or wet prairie) for nectar. Presently, most of the skipper's native prairie habitat throughout its range has been lost through conversion of land use to agriculture. The skipper has disappeared south and east of Minnesota and has become increasingly rare and local in its remaining range (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 18, 2018 (2)). The project does not contain designated critical habitat for the Dakota Skipper (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, last updated: Dec 14, 2017).

Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*) – Threatened (State listed Endangered)

The Western Prairie Fringed Orchid is found in Lowland Prairie habitats (grass dominated treeless communities on poorly drained soils, usually in depressions or drainage ways; sedges are often nearly as common as grasses, and broad-leafed herbs (forbs) are typically common. Low shrubs are sparse to common). This plant is rare today because of the widespread conversion of its native prairie habitat to agricultural uses. The species' decline has become so critical that it was listed as state endangered in 1984 and federally threatened in 1989. The Western Prairie Fringed Orchid occurs almost exclusively in remnant



native prairies and sedge meadows. The majority of sites occur in full sunlight on moist, calcareous till or sandy soils. None of the sites have a significant history of cattle grazing, although a few have a history of intermittent mowing for wild hay. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 18, 2018)

4.4.2 STATE LISTED ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND SPECIAL CONCERN SPECIES

Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute requires the MN DNR to adopt rules designating species meeting the statutory definitions of endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. The resulting List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species is codified as Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6134. According to the MN DNR, NHIS data (LA-805), the following State listed Threatened and Endangered species have been identified to occur within the project area:

Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*) – State listed Endangered

Refer to description provided under the Federal listings.

Frenchman's Bluff Moonwort (*Botrychium gallicomontanum*) – State listed Endangered

The Frenchman's Bluff Moonwort is a small prairie fern was first discovered on Frenchman's Bluff in Norman County in 1986. As of 2008, it has only been found in two western Minnesota counties, Glacier National Park (Montana), and the Black Hills (South Dakota). The site in Norman County has over 500 plants. The Minnesota sites supporting this plant are noted as potentially vulnerable to a variety of threats, including stochastic events. Preferred habitat includes dry, sandy to gravelly prairie, on all slope aspects, and in dense as well as sparse prairie vegetation. The MN DNR describes this plant as diminutive and obscure; a rare fern producing two leaves, one fertile and one sterile. The best time to search for Frenchmans' Bluff Moonwort is from the first week of June to early July, when aboveground plant parts are most abundant. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Mar 16, 2018)

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auratus*) – State listed Endangered

The Horned Grebe is a small water bird, readily identified by its bright red eye, prominent yellow-gold ear tufts, and reddish neck, breast, and flanks. Horned Grebes have white on their cheeks and neck, which makes them more identifiable between other grebes. Horned Grebes are known to nest in marshes and on lakes with emergent vegetation. They build floating nests; on larger lakes they prefer to use bays and inlets that provide protection from wind and wave action. Nests are constructed in shallow water, usually with emergent vegetation. During migration they can be observed on a variety of lakes, even without emergent vegetation. These birds are generally tolerant of humans, though may abandon highly developed lakes with too much human activity. Historically, the presence of the Horned Grebe has been declining in the state. Since 1996, reports of this bird in suitable habitat during the breeding season continue to be scarce, and no persistent breeding populations are known in MN. The only documented nesting in MN over the past 20 years was in 2013 when two pairs were found in Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. Due to the current breeding population size and with continuing threats from habitat loss and water quality issues, this bird was elevated to a state-listed endangered status. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Mar 16, 2018)

Poweshiek Skipperling (*Oarisma Poweshiek*) – State listed Endangered

The Poweshiek Skipperling occurs in a number of sites in northern Iowa and northeast South Dakota, a few sites in southeast North Dakota, and three sites in southeast Wisconsin. Western Minnesota has been identified by the USFWS to support the majority of known, extant occurrences of the Poweshiek Skipperling. Its habitat has been reduced to small isolated remnants that collectively comprise only a tiny fraction of its formerly vast expanse. Habitats utilized by this skipperling, in Minnesota include wet to dry native prairie but not sand prairie. The Poweshiek Skipperling has never been reported from sedge-dominated wet meadow or fen in Minnesota. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 18, 2018 (3))

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) - State listed Threatened

The Wilson's phalarope is a wetland species that breeds primarily in the northwestern quarter of the U.S. and southwestern Canada. They are most common in western and northwestern counties in Minnesota but they have also been documented in some central and eastern counties. Although the number of summer bird observations has remained fairly consistent, nesting has been documented at only a few sites. The species' wetland habitat is especially vulnerable to drainage and degradation from agricultural activities. Wilson's phalaropes are most frequently found in wet prairie, rich fen, and other grass- or sedge-dominated wetlands. The presence of short vegetation in or adjacent to shallow pools of open water is an important microhabitat feature. Human-altered habitats, particularly flooded pastures and municipal wastewater stabilization ponds, may also provide suitable habitat. Most Wilson's phalarope nests are located in the wet meadow zone of wetlands or in nearby upland prairie. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 18, 2018)

4.4.2.1 STATE LISTED SPECIAL CONCERN AND WATCHLIST SPECIES

Within Minnesota, designated special concern species are those that are not endangered or threatened, but are uncommon in the state, or have unique or highly specific habitat requirements. Species on the periphery of their range that are not listed as threatened may be included in this category along with those species that were once threatened or endangered but now have increasing or protected, stable populations. Species under the state Special Concern designation or Watchlist are those species not protected under the Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute but are being closely monitored by the state. According to the MN DNR NHIS data (LA-805), there are 15 state-listed Special Concern and 4 Watchlist species identified to have occurred within the project area.

Table 10: State Listed Special Concern and Watchlist Species (NHIS data, LA-805)

Species	# of occurrence	Type of Species	State Rank	County of Occurrence (dates last observed)
Blanket Flower (<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>)	1	Botanical Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (June 1979)
Creeping Juniper (<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>)	1	Botanical Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (Aug 1985)



Species	# of occurrence	Type of Species	State Rank	County of Occurrence (dates last observed)
Greater Prairie Chicken (<i>Tympanuchus cupido</i>)	15	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Special	Becker and Mahnomen (1981-2006)
Marbled Godwit (<i>Limosa fedoa</i>)	4	Zoological Vertebrate Animal	Special	Becker and Mahnomen (1978-2001)
Mingan Moonwort (<i>Botrychium minganense</i>)	1	Botanical Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (1955)
Nelson's Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus nelsoni</i>)	3	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Special	Becker and Mahnomen (1979-1999)
Northern Grasshopper Mouse	1	Zoological Vertebrate Animal	Special	Norman (1979)
Pawnee Skipper (<i>Hesperia leonardus pawnee</i>)	2	Zoological Invertebrate Animal	Special	Norman (1979-1985)
Plains Reedgrass (<i>Calamagrostis montanensis</i>)	1	Botanical Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (1962)
Prairie Moonwort (<i>Botrychium campestre</i>)	1	Botanical Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (1995)
Regal Fritillary (<i>Speyeria Idalia</i>)	1	Zoological Invertebrate Animal	Special	Norman (1988)
Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)	1	Zoological Vertebrate Animal	Special	Becker and Mahnomen (1973)
Small White Lady's- slipper (<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>)	6	Botanical: Vascular Plant	Special	Becker, Norman, and Mahnomen (1982-2016)
Spike Oat (<i>Avenula hookeri</i>)	1	Botanical: Vascular Plant	Special	Norman (2015)
Yellow Rail (<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>)	1	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Special	Mahnomen (1995)

Species	# of occurrence	Type of Species	State Rank	County of Occurrence (dates last observed)
American Bittern (<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>)	2	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Watchlist	Becker and Mahnomen (1995-1999)
Nuttall's Ground-nose (<i>Chamaerhodos nuttallii</i>)	1	Botanical: Vascular Plant	Watchlist	Norman (1961)
Sandhill Crane (<i>Grus canadensis</i>)	1	Zoological: Vertebrate Animal	Watchlist	Becker (1999)
Upland Sandpiper (<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>)	10	Zoological Vertebrate Animal	Watchlist	Becker, Mahnomen, and Norman (1988-1999)

Source: MN DNR, NHIS, data license 805, data assessed: Mar 15 2018.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

An evaluation of environmental justice impacts is mandated by Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (February 11, 1994). This Executive Order directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau data was obtained to develop an understanding of demographics within the study area. Demographic statistics for the project area were generated by using 2010 Census Block and ACS 2015 Block Group data, described in **Table 11**. Due to the rural nature of the project area and coverage of the most readily available demographic data, please note that these statistics are best available estimates.

The Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed is a relatively small area, located within a rural-agricultural setting with low population density (395 individuals). Distribution of race among the individuals is shown in the table below. According to the census block data, the study area has an average per-capita income in comparison to the counties in which the project resides but is relatively lower than the State's. The statistics show that the poverty rate in the study area (16%) is a little above average in comparison to the counties (12-17%) that the project is located within.

Table 11: Demographic Statistics

Location	Population	Per-Capita Income	Persons in poverty (%)	Predominant Race	Predominant Minority (approximate percentage)
Project area*	395	\$23,181	16.4%	White, 89%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 4%
Becker County**	33,734	\$27,188	12.7%	White, 88%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 8%
Norman County**	6,579	\$26,270	12.1%	White, 94%	People of two or more races, 3%
Mahnomen County**	5,465	\$20,233	17.5%	White, 47%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 44%
Minnesota**	5,519,952	\$33,225	9.9%	White, 85%	Black or African American, 6%

Source:

*Population, Predominant Race, and Predominant Minority statistics for the Project area were determined using the 2010 Census Block data. ACS 2015 Block Groups were used to determine the Per-Capita Income and Persons in Poverty.

** U.S. Census Bureau, *QuickFacts*: Minnesota; Becker County, MN; Clay County, MN; Mahnomen County, MN; Norman County, MN; and Minnesota. Population estimates, July 1, 2016; accessed Feb 19 2018:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MN,mahnomencountyminnesota,normancountyminnesota,claycountyminnesota,beckercountyminnesota,US/PST045216>.


4.6 FISH AND WILDLIFE

4.6.1 ECOLOGICAL SETTING

As classified by the MN DNR, Ecological Classification System, the South Branch Sub-Watershed resides within the Red River Prairie Subsection of the Red River Valley Section within the Prairie Parkland Province. The Prairie Parkland Province traverses western portion of the state and extends into neighboring Midwest States and northward into Canada. In Minnesota, this province coincides with the part of the state historically dominated by tallgrass prairie. The land surface was heavily influenced by the most recent glaciation. Ice sheets crossed the province several times during the Wisconsin glaciation, depositing a mantle of drift 100 to 600 feet thick in most places. The last lobe of ice, the Des Moines lobe, deposited calcareous drift in the southern part of the province. The ice lobe was fronted to the north by the largest pro-glacial lake in North America, Glacial Lake Agassiz, which deposited deep-water sediments over the northern portion of the province in Minnesota. The Red River Valley Section is characterized as being formed predominately of a single landform, the deep-water basin of Glacial Lake Agassiz. This area is drained by the Red River of the North and this Section is the flattest, driest, most fire-prone region of Minnesota and therefore this region was historically dominated by communities of the Upland Prairie and Wetland Prairies systems, which covered more than 90% of the section.

4.6.2 FISH AND WILDLIFE

The primary water resource within the study area that contains fish habitat is Moccasin Creek (and tributaries). Several small intermittent to perennial lakes or ponds are also present within the project area (see **Figure C18** for water resources within the project area), which provide habitat for fish and wildlife.



As further detailed in Section 5.11 - *Land Use*, the study area is heavily cultivated (78%). Much of the study area pre-settlement habitat has been altered to accommodate agriculture. However, the study area provides appropriate habitats for a variety of mammals, including deer, elk, fox, racoon, coyote, skunk, and also supports amphibian and reptile populations (toads, turtles, snakes, and lizards).

The project is located on the border between the Central and Mississippi migratory bird Flyways. More information regarding migratory bird species is discussed in **Section 4.11**, below. The project area contains some designated habitats: Waterfowl Production areas (WPA), Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), and a portion of a Scientific Natural Area (SNA) (**Figure C3**) that provide high-quality wildlife habitat.

4.7 FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Moccasin Creek is a natural meandering stream. The floodplain of the upstream portion is mainly cultivated land and wetlands. Downstream of County Road 37, the Moccasin Creek floodplain transitions to forested area. There is limited designated floodplains in the project area. Floodplain maps and designations are developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The current Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map identifies Special Flood Hazard Areas that are regulated through the participating community's floodplain ordinance. These areas are subject to inundations by the 1% annual chance flood are designated by zones A, AE, AH, AW, AR A99, V, and VE. The 1% annual chance flood, also known as the base flood or 100-year flood, has a 1% chance of happening or being exceeded each year. The Base Flood Elevation is the water-surface elevation of the 1% chance flood.

Figure C1 provides a map showing the designated FEMA Flood Zones within the project area. Areas along Moccasin Creek are classified as Zone A, which is defined below (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, accessed Feb 28, 2018).

Zone A

Areas subject to inundation by the 1% annual-chance flood event generally determined using approximate methodologies. Because detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed, no Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) or flood depths are shown. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.

The study area has flood prone locations that continually face impacts from flooding. Refer to **Figures C2 and C3**, which show existing flooding conditions within the study area.

4.8 FOREST RESOURCES

The project area is predominately agricultural-type land use. Forest resources are not prominent in this area. Refer to **Section 4.10 – Land Use** for a description of the land uses and cover types in the project area.



4.9 INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are species that are not native to Minnesota and cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive species can occur on land or in the water. Minnesota has several state laws intended to minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species of wild animal and aquatic plants in the state. Using a four-tiered system, invasive species are classified as *prohibited*, *regulated*, *unregulated nonnative species* (or are unclassified), and remain as *unlisted nonnative species* (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 9, 2018). This classification system establishes the level of regulation and allowable uses for each species and the MN DNR has regulatory authority over aquatic plants and animals, and terrestrial vertebrates. The MDA has regulatory authority over terrestrial plants (noxious weeds) and plant pests. Below is a table summarizing several current state regulated invasive species and **Figure C6** show locations of known invasive species and infested waters in the project area.

Table 12: Prohibited and Regulated Invasive and Nonnative Species

Prohibited Invasive Species		
<p>Aquatic Plants: African oxygen weed; aquarium watermoss or giant salvinia; Australian stone crop; brittle naiad; curly-leaf pondweed; Eurasian watermilfoil; European frog-bit; flowering rush; hydrilla; Indian swampweed; purple loosestrife; starry stonewort; water aloe or water soldiers; water chestnut; the aquatic plants listed in Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Section 360.200, are also designated as prohibited invasive species except for Chinese water spinach</p>	<p>Fish: Amur sleeper; bighead carp; black carp; crucian carp; Eurasian minor; European perch; grass carp; largescale silver carp; northern snakehead fish; Oriental weatherfish; Prussian carp; roach; round goby; rudd; ruffe; sea lamprey; silver carp; stone moroko; tubenose goby; wels catfish; western mosquitofish; white perch; zander</p>	<p>Invertebrates: Faucet snail; New Zealand mud snail; quagga mussel; red swamp crayfish; yabby; zebra mussel</p> <p>Mammals: Asian raccoon dog; European rabbit; European wild boar; nutria</p>
Regulated Invasive Species		



Prohibited Invasive Species		
<p>Aquatic Plants: Brazilian waterweed; Carolina fanwort or fanwort; Chinese water spinach; nonnative waterlilies; parrot's feather; water hyacinth; yellow iris or yellow flag</p>	<p>Birds: Egyptian goose; mute swan; Sichuan pheasant</p> <p>Fish: Alewife; common carp, koi; goldfish; rainbow smelt; tilapia</p>	<p>Invertebrates: Banded mystery snail; Chinese mystery snail; rusty crayfish; spiny waterflea</p> <p>Reptiles: Red-eared slider</p>
Unregulated Nonnative Species***		
<p>Fish: Atlantic salmon; brown trout; coho salmon; Chinook salmon; pink salmon; rainbow trout; subtropical/tropical/ and saltwater fish, except anadromous species</p>	<p>Invertebrates: Subtropical/tropical/ and saltwater invertebrates</p> <p>Mammals: Rat</p>	<p>Birds: Chukar partridge; helmeted Guinea fowl; house sparrow; Hungarian partridge, gray partridge; peafowl; pigeon or rock dove; ring-necked pheasant; starling</p>

*Prohibited invasive species: certain invasive species that can threaten natural resources and their use have been designated as prohibited invasive species in Minnesota. It is unlawful to possess, import, purchase, transport, or introduce these species except under a permit for disposal, control, research, or education.

**Regulated invasive species: It is legal to possess, sell, buy, and transport regulated invasive species, but they may not be introduced into a free-living state, such as being released or planted in public waters.

***Unregulated nonnative species: are not subject under Minnesota Invasive Species Statutes, but refer to fishing and hunting regulations for regulations on fishing, hunting, or transporting these species.

Source: MN DNR, *Minnesota invasive species laws*, accessed Feb 9 2018: <http://dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/laws.html>.

4.9.1 AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

According to the MN DNR, there are eight (8) identified sites within the southeastern extents of the project area with presence of the invasive aquatic plant, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*, *L. virgatum* and their hybrids). These sites are identified below:

- Helliksen Prairie (wetland site)
- Apple Lake (wetland site)
- Waubun (meadow)
- Cucumber Lake (lake site)
- Banana Lake (lake site)
- Clarence Lake (lake site)
- Waubun (wetland site)
- Spring Creek Township (roadside site)

4.9.2 TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE SPECIES

Minnesota Noxious Weed Law (Minnesota Statutes 18.75-18.91) includes provisions to control the spread of noxious weeds. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) maintains a state-wide Noxious Weed List that includes State Prohibited Noxious Weeds, Restricted Noxious Weeds, and Specially Regulated Plants (Minnesota Department of Agriculture). The most recent MDA, Noxious Weed List (2018) is incorporated here by reference due to its length (Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 2018). The MDA coordinates the efforts of county, city, and township officials to inspect and destroy noxious weeds.



County boards are responsible for developing County Noxious Weed Lists through an official county resolution and assume all responsibility for enforcement. Becker County has approved noxious weeds; see list below.

Table 13: *Terrestrial Invasive Species*

Minnesota County	County Approved Noxious Weeds
Becker (2011; 2014)	<i>Bertero incana</i> (L.) DC., Hoary Alyssum <i>Artemisia absinthium</i> L., Absinthe Wormwood <i>Cynoglossum officinale</i> L., Houndstongue <i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i> L., Orange Hawkweed (2014) <i>Hieracium caespitosum</i> Dumort, Yellow Hawkweed (2014)

Source: Minnesota Department of Agriculture, *County Approved Noxious Weeds*, accessed Feb. 16, 2018: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/weedcontrol/noxiouslist/countynoxiousweeds.aspx>.

4.10 LAND USE

National Land Cover Data (NLCD) developed in 2011 was acquired and reviewed to assess land use within the Wild Rice Watershed. Agricultural Lands (cultivated crop and pasture/hay) make up approximately 81% of the watershed, whereas Wetlands, Woody Wetlands, and forested areas make up a combined 13% of the sub-watershed. NLCD 2011 data is presented in **Figure C7**.

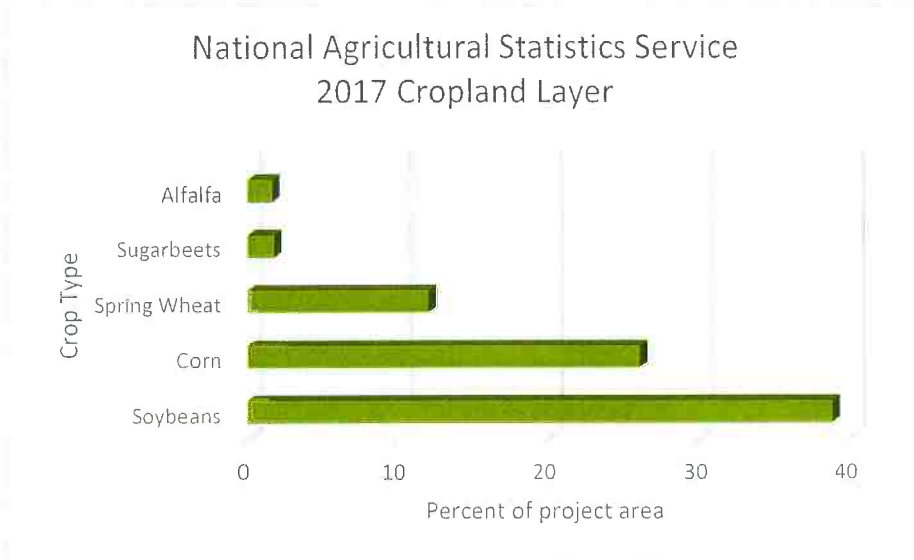
Table 14: *Land Use and Cover Types (NLCD 2011)*

NLCD 2011 - Cover Type	Acres	Percentage of Total Area
Cultivated Crop	29,639	76.3
Emergent Herbaceous Wetland	3,771	9.7
Pasture/Hay	1,667	4.3
Developed, Open Space	1,284	3.3
Deciduous Forest	847	2.2
Grassland/Herbaceous	699	1.8
Open Water	480	1.2
Woody Wetland	232	0.6
Developed, Low Intensity	207	0.5
Evergreen Forest	13	0.03
Scrub/Shrub	9	0.02
Developed, Medium Intensity	5	0.01
Developed, High Intensity	0.44	0.001
Total Acreage:	38,856	100%

Source: Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (MRLC), National Land Cover Database (NLCD) 2011. Accessed Feb. 22, 2018: <https://www.mrlc.gov/finddata.php>.

The 2017 National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS2017) Cropland Layer was also reviewed to determine leading crops within the watershed. The most notable crops are the following: Soybeans (39%), Corn (26%), Spring Wheat (12%), Sugar Beets (2%). More information on land use, as defined by the 2017 NASS Cropland Layer, is presented in the chart below and in **Figure C8**.

Table 15: National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2017 Cropland Layer



Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), 2017 Cropland Layer.
 Only crops grown that represent 1% or greater of the crops that are grown in the project area are shown in this graphic.

Additionally, various State and Federal Interest Lands exist within the project area. Identified lands include, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs), and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) as presented in **Figure C9**. These areas are discussed in more detail under **Section 4.12 – Natural Areas**.

4.11 MIGRATORY BIRDS

The project resides along the borders of the Central and Mississippi flyways. The flyways represent designated migration routes of birds. The project is also located within the U.S. portion of the Prairie Pothole Region which makes Minnesota and encompassing states an important breeding area and significant contributor to continental waterfowl populations.

The U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it illegal for anyone to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to Federal regulations. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Protected Species list was last updated in October 2013 and includes the following species that have the potential to be present within the project area:

Table 16: Migratory Birds Potentially Within the Project Area

Bird Species		Breeding Season
American Golden-plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Dec 1 to Aug 31
Black Tern	<i>Chidonias niger</i>	May 15 - August 20
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	May 15 - October 10
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	May 20 - July 31
Buff-Breasted Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulean</i>	Apr 22 to Jul 20
Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus vociferous</i>	May 1 to Aug 20
Franklin's Gull	<i>Leucophaeus pipixcan</i>	May 1 to Jul 31
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	May 1 to Jul 20
Hudsonian Godwit	<i>Limosa haemastica</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i> ,	Aug 16 to Oct 31
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	May 1 - July 31
Nelsons Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus nelsoni</i>	May 15 - September 5
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	May 10 - September 10
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	Breeds elsewhere
Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	Apr 20 to Aug 5
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	May 20 to Aug 31
Wood Thrush	<i>Mylocichla mustelina</i>	May 10 to Aug 31

Source: Migratory Bird Treaty Act Protected Species (10.13 List), accessed Feb 12 2018: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/migratory-bird-treaty-act-protected-species.php>, and USFWS, Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) resource list obtained Mar 15, 2018: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>.

4.12 NATURAL AREAS

As described in Section 4.11 – *Land Use*, the project area is predominately composed of agricultural lands (81% of the project area), whereas wetlands, woody wetlands, and deciduous forest make up a combined 13%. However, there are non-cultivated natural areas scattered sporadically throughout the project area (see **Figure C9** showing designated natural areas). According to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED), there are 7 sites, encapsulating approximately 732 acres (1.14 mi²) of Federal, State, and jointly held designated conservation lands. The MN DNR, Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Geographic Information System data shows 4 sites, encompassing approximately 1,280 acres (2 mi²) within the project area.

Additionally, other designated natural areas include USFWS, Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs), which account for 11 sites and 1,408 acres (2.2 mi²) within the project area. There is one (1) designated Scientific and Natural Area (Frenchman's Bluff SNA) partially located on uplands within the northwestern extents of the project area, which is discussed in **Section 4.18**.

Specific locations of project activities in relation to these resources will be assessed later in this watershed plan/EA to determine project impact to these resources.

4.13 PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND, AND FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

Protection for prime and important farmland and prime rangeland and forest land is established in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), USDA regulations implementing the FPPA (7 CFR Part 658), and USDA DR No. 9500-3, Land Use Policy. Section 658.5 of the FPPA offers criteria for federal agencies to consider when identifying the potential adverse effects of federal programs on farmland. Federal agencies are to consider actions that could lessen adverse effects on farmland and assure that federal programs, to the extent practicable, are compatible with state, local government unit, and private programs and policies that protect farmland.


Some of the designated farmlands within the project area are currently affected by the existing flood conditions within the watershed. The project area is predominately farmland; approximately 8% of the project area classified as not prime farmland. According to the USDA, NRCS, SSURGO soils database, farmland classifications within the project area are tabulated below and shown on **Figure C10**.

Table 17: Farmland Classifications

Farmland Classification	Acres	Percent
Prime farmland if drained	16,788	43%
All areas are prime farmland	16,028	41%
Not prime farmland	3,084	8%
Farmland of statewide importance	2,955	8%
Total	38,856	100%

4.14 PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) maintains the *What's In My Neighborhood* database, which provides information about environmental permits issues by the MPCA, registrations and notifications required by the MPCA, and investigations of potentially contaminated properties undertaken by the MPCA or its partners (MPCA, accessed Mar 15, 2018). According to this MPCA data, there are 13 individually listed environmental sites within the study area (8 feedlots, 2 hazardous waste sites, 2 petroleum remediation, leak sites, and 1 construction stormwater). A map and associated listing of recorded environmental sites are provided in **Figure C11** and **Appendix E**.



Public health and safety services within the project area include local police and fire departments, along with hospital facilities. Nearby local police departments are located in Waubun, Ogema, and White Earth; the Ada Police Department and Audobon Police Department are further outside of the project limits. Norman and Mahnomen County Sheriff departments are located north of the project. Medical facilities located nearest the project area include the White Earth Health Center to the east and Mahnomen Health Center to the north. Nearby fire departments include the Waubun Fire Hall (Waubun, MN; northeast from the project); Ogema City Fire Department (Ogema, MN; east of the project area); Ulen Fire Department (Ulen, MN; west of the project); and Flom Fire Department (Flom, MN; northwest of the project).

Flood impacts to transportation corridors within the study area remain a public health and safety concern within and directly downstream of the study area. Safe, reliable transportation corridors that are engineered to accommodate local water resources (including flood conditions) is crucial to the communities and commuters that reside in and visit the area. Roadways that are currently impacted by the existing flood conditions are shown in **Figure C3**.

4.15 REGIONAL WATER RESOURCE PLANS

Many resource and flood damage reduction studies have been conducted on various portions of the Wild Rice Watershed over the years. Some of the investigations were regionally driven like the Red River Basin Commission, *Long Term Flood Solutions* (LTFS), while others were initiated locally. The following is a list of applicable studies that have been conducted that have included the project area:

- Red River Basin Commission – Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Plan (2011)
- Wild Rice Watershed District Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy (2013)

The project will address adverse flood-related conditions locally within this sub-watershed and is part of a larger scale approach to water resources management within the Red River Basin. The Red River Basin is a multi-jurisdictional 45,000 square mile watershed. Eighty percent (80%) of the Basin resides within the United States, and the remaining 20% within Canada. Flooding along the Red River and its tributaries is a prolonged issue for the region. Substantial damages are often experienced during periods of excessive runoff. Impacts experienced along the Red River mainstem are a result of combined tributary sub-watershed contributions. Since the flood of 1997, severe flooding has been observed to occur on a more frequent basis. In response to this, the Red River Basin Commission began development of the *Long-Term Flood Solutions* report. This report was developed with broad input from local, state, and federal officials to provide recommendations for acceptable levels of flood risk within the Red River Basin.

The Wild Rice Watershed District, Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy (2013) identified flood water detention locations aimed at meeting peak flow and volume reduction goals specified in the Red River Basin Commission's LTFS. The 2013 Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy sets forth a strategy that would alleviate the flood risk throughout the basin by reducing the flood volume enough to provide a 20% peak flow reduction on the Red River main stem.

Additional water plans associated with the project area include:

- Becker County 2017-2027 Local Water Management Plan is in the process of being drafted (Becker County).



- Mahnommen County 2008-2018 Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan (Mahnomment County)
- Norman County 2017-2026 Local Water Management Plan (Norman County)

4.16 RIPARIAN AREAS

Riparian areas occur at the interface between land and a watercourse (river, stream, or tributary) or water body. Typical examples include flood plains and stream banks. They are distinctly different from surrounding lands because of unique soil and vegetation characteristics that area strongly influenced by the presence of water. Moccasin Creek accounts for approximately 20 miles of stream and associated riparian corridor. Tributaries and the downstream dam area also account for riparian areas. The riparian habitats will be further assessed per alternative locations and project specific activities.

4.17 SCENIC BEAUTY


The scenic beauty or aesthetic nature of a viewshed includes the existing natural and built features visible to a viewer. The visual quality of a particular environment is also dependent upon the unique individual perceptions of a viewer. Changes to or introduction of new features can impact the aesthetic nature and perceived scenic beauty of an area. In particular, impact to visually sensitive areas, such as those listed below, may influence the scenic beauty of an area:

- Historic properties and potentially, archaeological resources;
- Cultural resources, traditional cultural places, and cultural landscapes;
- Areas of scenic beauty, such as scenic overlooks, and highways;
- Wilderness areas, parks, and forests;
- Wild and scenic rivers, recreational, or nationwide inventory rivers; and
- Areas adjacent to rural residences.

The project is located within a rural, agricultural setting; adjacent communities include Twin Valley to the north (Norman County), Waubun to the east (Mahnommen County), Ogema to the southeast (Becker County), and Ulen to the southwest (Clay County). The majority of the viewshed within the project area includes fields/cultivated croplands, hayland, some sporadic wetland areas and rural residences. There are no designated scenic byways, scenic waterways, or other visually sensitive areas within the project area. Natural areas that hold some aesthetically pleasing nature are covered under **Section 4.3 – Ecologically Critical Areas** and **Section 4.12 – Natural Areas**. Historic and cultural resource surveys are underway to determine the presence of historic and/or cultural resources.

4.18 SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES

According to the MN DNR, designated Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) include world-class peatlands in northern MN, native prairie remnants in western and southern MN, unique shorelines along Lake Superior, and the blufflands of the southeastern portion of the state. SNAs protect native plant communities, populations of rare species, and geologic features, and may contain successional processes, relict flora or fauna, natural formations, fossil evidence, habitat for concentrations of animals, or vantage points for observing migration routes or other animal concentrations. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, accessed Feb 23, 2018)



There is one (1) designated SNA that is partially located in the far northwestern boundary of the project extents. The Frenchman's Bluff SNA encompasses approximately 48 acres with approximately 18 acres located within the project area. This SNA is owned by the Nature Conservancy and is one of the highest point in northwestern Minnesota (approximately elevation at 1,340 feet). This SNA is perched hundreds of feet above the Red River Valley floor and provides a majestic view of the Glacial Lake Agassiz basin. Due to its location relevant to the flooding issues being addressed within this EA, it is unlikely that this resource will be affected by any of the project alternatives.

4.19 SOLE SOURCE AQUIFERS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a sole source aquifer (SSA) as one where: 1) the aquifer supplies at least 50% of the drinking water for its service area; and 2) there are no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, accessed Feb 12 2018). According to the EPA SSA dataset, there are no SSAs within the study area.

In regard to groundwater, the subsurface geology determines the locations of groundwater within the watershed. Glaciers moved over the area three or four times during the Pleistocene Age, dropping loads of rock fragments which they had picked up and transported from other locations. Neither deposits of undifferentiated glacial till nor those of the lake silts yield much water. Groundwater throughout the watershed is found in the aquifers, such as glacial drainage channel deposits, lake deltas and beach deposits, outwash bodies, and small lenses of sand and gravel interbedded within the glacial till. The regional movement of groundwater in the glacial drift is westward from the rolling uplands of the morainal area to the lake plain and the Red River of the North. Locally, groundwater moves toward depressions and valleys within the uplands.

The most important aquifers in the western part of the Wild Rice Watershed are surficial-drift aquifers made up of glacial and beach ridge deposits. Major aquifers in the eastern portion of the watershed are almost entirely made up of surficial-drift aquifers. Glacial tills cover most of this part of the watershed with some sand and gravel deposits.

The project is not located within a wellhead protection area.

4.20 SOCIAL ISSUES

The reoccurring flooding within the project area results in various social issues that impose pressures on the communities and rural residents within this area. Risk for flood damages exist for residents living within flood prone areas along Moccasin Creek and its tributaries. This flood risk has potential to result in loss or damage to personal property, and in extreme events, potentially loss of life. Residents in flood prone areas have many indirect impacts from disruptions to transportation and infrastructure. Flooding results in potential for inundation of buildings along with public and private infrastructure, transportation disruptions, and commerce disruptions. Flooding also puts a strain on the emotional and psychological health of individual communities as they deal with loss and recovery.

4.21 SOIL RESOURCES

4.21.1 HISTORICAL GEOLOGY

The project resides within a large lake plain formed by the ancient Glacial Lake Agassiz. This glacial lake plain is characterized with silty, sandy, and clayey lacustrine deposits and is typically level, uniform, and featureless, broken by wetlands, meandering waterways, and old beach ridges.

4.21.2 TOPOGRAPHY

Topography within the project area is level to gently rolling. LiDAR data collected in 2008 and 2009 is available for the Wild Rice Watershed (Red River Basin Mapping Initiative, International Water Institute). This information indicates that the upper end of the Moccasin Creek sub-watershed is at an elevation of approximately 1,250 feet (NAVD1988), the fields near the downstream end are at an approximate elevation of 1,120 feet (NAVD1988). Using GIS processing techniques and LiDAR, the topographic slopes were derived for hydrologic model processing. LiDAR topography data and derived slope information is presented in **Figure C12** and **C13**, respectively.

4.21.3 SOILS


Soils information provided by the USDA through the SSURGO Soils Database was compiled and reviewed for the Wild Rice Watershed (Soil Survey Staff). The SSURGO Soils Database allows for extraction of various characteristics; the following variables were extracted from the database and are presented in **Figures C14-C16** (Farmland Classifications are covered under **Section 4.13**):

- Hydrologic Soils Group (**Figure C14**)
- Crop Productivity Index (**Figure C15**)
- Normal Year Range Production (**Figure C16**)

Hydrologic soil groups are classified by the NRCS into four groups (A, B, C, and D) based on the soil's runoff potential; A's generally have the smallest runoff potential and D's have the greatest (Purdue Engineering). The Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed is primarily composed of *Type B* (silt loam or loam; moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wetted) and *D* (clay loam/silty clay loam/sandy clay/silty clay/clay; highest runoff potential, low infiltration) hydrologic soils, and if the *Type D* soils are drained, they will produce runoff similar to a lighter, *Type B* soil (**Figure C14**). The soils database suggests that the sub-watershed has a high Crop Productivity Index (CPI) (**Figure C15**) that is uniform throughout the sub-watershed. Additionally, the Farmland Classification data shows the lower half of the sub-watershed is prime farmland, and the upper half would be characterized as prime farmland if it was drained. The sub-watershed also has scattered plots of statewide significant farmland. The Normal Year Range Production levels (**Figure C16**) are generally low throughout the upstream regions of the subwatershed and along the lower creek corridor.

4.22 TRIBAL LANDS

The eastern portion of the project area is located within the White Earth Reservation. The White Earth Reservation is located in Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen counties in north-central Minnesota. Created in 1867 by a treaty between the United States and the Mississippi Band of Chippewa Indians, it



is one of seven Chippewa reservations in Minnesota (White Earth Nation - Gaa waabaiganikaag, accessed Feb 13 2018). Refer to **Figure C17** to see the location of the White Earth Reservation in relation to the project area.

4.23 WATER QUALITY

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act of 1986 (CWA) requires states to monitor and assess their waters to determine if they meet water quality standards supporting the beneficial uses they are intended to provide (33 U.S.C. 1313(d)). Waters that do not meet their designated uses due to water quality standard violations are listed as impaired. States are required to develop a list of impaired waters that require total maximum daily load (TMDL) studies and to submit an updated list of impaired waters to the USEPS every two years. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) maintains this list of impaired waters for the State of Minnesota.

According to the MPCA 2018 Impaired Waters list, Moccasin Creek ("Unnamed Creek" (AUID 09020108-546)) is listed as an impaired stream. This water body has a 2B (aquatic life and recreation; cool and warm water fisheries (not protected for drinking water)), 3C (industrial use and cooling) use classification and is listed impaired for aquatic recreation (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, accessed Apr 6, 2018). Currently, total maximum daily load (TMDL) studies are needed for Escherichia coli within Moccasin Creek.

4.24 WATER RESOURCES

Water resources residing within the project area includes Moccasin Creek and smaller streams/drainage ditches, and small lakes and wetlands (wetlands are discussed in Section 4.27). The project area is located within northwestern Minnesota and is a tributary to the Red River of the North. The Wild Rice River begins its course at Mud Lake in Minnesota's Clearwater County, and flows largely to the west through Norman and Mahnommen counties. The river is joined by its two largest tributaries, Moccasin Creek and the White Earth River before converging with the Red River of the North. (Minnesota Nutrient Planning Portal, accessed Feb. 20, 2018) The Wild Rice River Watershed is characterized with above-normal precipitation in late autumn or from May to October lead to high levels of soil moisture, periodically producing the snow-melt and summer floods that are known to affect the region.

Moccasin Creek is a small meandering creek traversing a rural agricultural setting. Runoff from the majority of the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed is currently regulated by the Moccasin Creek Dam, which is owned and operated by the Wild Rice Watershed District. The Moccasin Creek Project No. 8 (dam), formerly known as Flom Township Detention Dams, is located in the northwestern corner of Flom Township, upstream of the confluence of Moccasin Creek and Wild Rice River. The project design incorporated "gated storage" as a method to increase the effectiveness of the structure. The dam project was designed to have the capacity of holding 1,000 acre-feet of water until downstream conditions allow for the discharge of the impounded water. Additional flood water storage of 800 acre-feet, with automatic drawdown, was incorporated into the project. This equates to approximately 0.6 inches over the upstream drainage area. The Moccasin Creek Dam was constructed in 1982, modified in 1981, last inspected in

2009, and has a design life into 2032⁵. Other water retention structures located within the project area are tabulated below. Other than the Moccasin Creek Dam, the other dams were originally constructed primarily for erosion control purposes.

Table 18: Dams within the Project Area

Name	Completion Date
Moccasin Creek Project No. 8 (MN00375)	1982
Skansgaard Upper (MN01798)	1971
Holum Middle (MN01799)	1971
Sunny Hill – Upper (MN00811)	1974
Sunny Hill – Lower (MN00812)	1974
Boreen Lower (MN01023)	1971

All structures listed above are located in Flom Township, Norman County and are listed as active structures.

Additionally, Minnesota Public Waters are designated as such to indicate which lakes, wetlands, and watercourses over which the MN DNR has regulatory jurisdiction. There are 22 designated Public Waters basins and 3 Public Waters watercourse designations associated with Moccasin Creek. See **Figure C18** for the locations of these designated waters.

4.25 WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING SPECIAL AQUATIC SITES

Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (WOTUS), including wetlands (wetlands are discussed in Section 5.29). The term WOTUS is defined in 40 CFR 230.3(s). The current definition of WOTUS includes:

- All waters which are currently used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide;
- All interstate waters including interstate wetlands;
- All other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use, degradation, or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce including any such waters:
 - which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes; or

⁵ End of design life is based on a standard 50-year life expectancy for these types of structures

- from which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce; or
- which are used or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce;
- All impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States under this definition;
- Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs (s)(1) through (4) of this section;
- The territorial sea;
- Wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands) identified in paragraphs (s)(1) through (6) of this section; waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons designed to meet the requirements of CWA (other than cooling ponds as defined in 40 CFR 423.11(m) which also meet the criteria of this definition) are not waters of the United States.

Moccasin Creek is a tributary to the Wild Rice River, which is located toward the southern (upstream) end of the Red River Basin. The Wild Rice River is a tributary to the Red River of the North; the Red River of the North is identified as a Section 10, navigable waterway. The study area includes many wetlands, as identified through the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) (see **Section 4.26 – Wetlands**). While an official Jurisdictional Determination has not been completed within the study area (a request to the US Army Corps of Engineers to identify WOTUS) it is assumed that at least a portion of these wetlands may be identified as WOTUS. Wetlands that are generally isolated on the landscape (separated by upland from other water resources) are likely not waters of the US, and therefore would not be regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

There are no Section 10 waterways within the study area, however, as stated above, the Red River of the North is identified as a Section 10 waterway. There are no special aquatic sites within the study area.

4.26 WETLANDS

The project resides within the Prairie Pothole Region, which represents an area that is characterized with prairie potholes, or depressional wetlands (primarily freshwater marshes) that may be permanent or temporary in nature (EPA, accessed Feb 22, 2018). Wetlands are defined in 1977 Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, and in Section 404 of the CWA as those areas that are inundated by surface or ground water frequently enough to support, under normal circumstances, a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. There are three parameters that define a wetland: hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydrology (Environmental Laboratory, 1987).

The USFWS, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) was developed in 1970's to aid in wetland conservation efforts. The NWI classifies wetlands into different types using the USFWS Cowardin Classification System (Cowardin). The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data was extracted for the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed. NWI wetlands are scattered throughout the sub-watershed and account for approximately 2,700 acres (7%) of wetlands and ponds which are displayed on **Figure C19**. The USFWS NWI data provides a general index of wetlands within the Moccasin Creek Sub-Watershed, however more detailed field review may be needed to assess wetlands throughout the planning process.

Table 19: NWI (2016) - Wetlands in Project Area

Wetland Type	Estimated Area
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	2,289 acres (3.6 mi ²)
Lake	214 acres (0.33 mi ²)
Freshwater Forested / Shrub Wetland	104 acres (0.16 mi ²)
Freshwater Pond	89 acres (0.13 mi ²)
Riverine	2 acres
Total NWI Wetland Areas	2,699 acres (4.2 mi²)

Source: USFWS, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) dataset (2016). <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>.

5 ALTERNATIVES (REVIEW POINT NO. 4)

XXXX

5.1 FORMULATION PROCESS

Xxxx

5.2 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

xxx

5.3 ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTION

xxxxx

5.3.1 ALTERNATIVE NO. 1 – NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (FUTURE WITHOUT PROJECT CONDITION (FWOP))

xxxx

5.3.2 ALTERNATIVE NO. 1 – 1111111

xxxx

5.3.3 ALTERNATIVE NO. 2 – 2222222

xxxx

5.3.4 ALTERNATIVE NO. 3 – 3333333

XXXX

5.4 SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE PLANS TABLE

XXXXX

6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (REVIEW POINT NO. 5)

This section provides the analytical basis for the comparisons of effects presented in the alternatives. This section will describe the economic, environmental, and social effects of each alternative. The relevant concerns identified in the scoping section are discussed in this section of the plan for each alternative.

6.1 NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (NED) P&G

XXXX

6.2 AIR QUALITY

XXXX

6.3 CORAL REEFS

XXXX

6.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

XXXX

6.5 ECOLOGICALLY CRITICAL AREAS

XXXX

6.6 ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES

XXX

6.7 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

XXX

6.8 ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

XXX



6.9 FISH AND WILDLIFE (INCLUDING COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS)

XXX

6.10 FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

XXX

6.11 FOREST RESOURCES

XXX

6.12 INVASIVE SPECIES

XXX

6.13 LAND USE

XXX

6.14 MIGRATORY BIRDS

XXXX

6.15 NATURAL AREAS

XXXX

6.16 PARKLANDS

XXXX

6.17 PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND, AND FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

XXXX

6.18 PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

XXX

6.19 REGIONAL WATER RESOURCE PLANS (INCLUDING COASTAL ZONE PLANS)

XXXX



6.20 RIPARIAN AREAS

XXXX

6.21 SCENIC BEAUTY

XXXX

6.22 SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES

XXX

6.23 SOLE SOURCE AQUIFERS

XXX

6.24 SOCIAL ISSUES

XXX

6.25 SOIL RESOURCES

XXX

6.26 WATER QUALITY

XXX

6.27 WATER RESOURCES

XXXX

6.28 WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING SPECIAL AQUATIC SITES

XXXX

6.29 WETLANDS

XXXX

6.30 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

XXXX

6.31 OTHER CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY SLO, AGENCIES, AND THE PUBLIC

XXXX

6.32 CUMMULATIVE IMPACTS

Describe the impacts that result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Further guidance can be found in the NECH and at the "Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act" Web site:

<http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/ccenepa/ccenepa.htm>.

6.33 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS (INCLUDING ANY PERMIT REQUIREMENTS).

Xxxx

7 CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (REVIEW POINT NO. 6)

7.1 AGENCY CONSULTATION

7.1.1 LOCAL

xxxx

7.1.2 STATE

- 7.1.2.1 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
- 7.1.2.2 MINNESOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

7.1.3 FEDERAL

- 7.1.3.1 U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
- 7.1.3.2 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

7.1.4 TRIBAL

7.2 PROJECT TEAM COORDINATION

xxxx

7.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Xxxx

8 THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (REVIEW POINT NO. 6)

xxx

8.1 DESCRIPTION

xxxx

8.2 RATIONALE FOR PREFERENCE

xxx

8.3 NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (NED) PLAN

xxx

8.4 MITIGATION FEATURES

xxx

8.5 PERMITS AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

xx

8.6 OPINTION OF PROBABLE COSTS

xx

8.7 INSTALLATION SEQUENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

xxx

8.8 FINANCING OF THE PROJECT

xx

8.9 OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPLACEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

xxx

8.10 ECONOMIC AND STRUCTURAL TABLES

Economic tables must include information relevant to the costs and benefits of the project plan. Structural tables must include information relevant to the design of the measure. The economic and structural tables (tables 1-6) are found in the exhibits in 390-NWPM, Part 506, Subpart B.

9 REFERENCES

This section provides the sources of the information contained in the document. If supporting data are incorporated by reference, then the material being referenced must be briefly summarized for the reader to understand the context of the material being incorporated. This section also includes information on how the reader can arrange to obtain and review the material being referenced. Material based on proprietary data that are not available for review may not be incorporated by reference (40 CFR Section 1502.21).

10 LIST OF PREPARERS (REVIEW POINT NO. 6)

The list of preparers includes the key NRCS State, area, and field office personnel who were directly responsible for significant input in preparing the watershed project plan. Consultants, individuals, and personnel from other agencies are included if they made significant input. The list must include the person's name, current title, education, experience, employer, and other pertinent qualifications, publications, and professional licenses (see exhibit "List of Preparers—Example" in 390-NWPH, Part 606, Subpart B, Section 606.22).

11 DISTRIBUTION LIST (REVIEW POINT NO. 6)

This is a listing of the agencies, organizations, and persons to whom the watershed project plan-EA or Plan-EIS is sent.

12 INDEX (REVIEW POINT NO. 6)

This section lists key words, phrases, or subheadings along with appropriate page numbers. Examples of entries include alternatives, archeological resources, installation costs, land treatment, mitigation, NED plan, operation, maintenance, replacement, plan elements, sedimentation, and water quality. If other agencies or organizations are mentioned in the document, they must be included in the index.



Appendix A

Comments and Responses

A1: Cooperative Agencies Information

- Letters of Invitation
- US Army Corps of Engineers Cooperating Agency Request



United States Department of Agriculture

June 13, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Regulatory Functions Branch
US Army Corps of Engineers
180 5th St. East, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

Dear Sir:

Subject: Formal Request to be a Cooperating Agency on the Wild Rice River Watershed
District – Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at 40 CFR Part 1501.6, NRCS is formally requesting that your agency become a cooperating agency in the planning and development of the Wild Rice River Watershed District – Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment (EA).

This request is being made because your agency has been identified as having special expertise or jurisdiction by law related to this project. The EA is being prepared to fulfill NRCS NEPA compliance responsibilities pertaining to our potential federal financial assistance through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566) for this project. As your agency may also have NEPA compliance responsibilities concerning this project or other future projects that may be evaluated in this EA, preparation of this EA should also assist in fulfilling environmental review requirements for your agency or other federal agencies and meet the NEPA intent of reducing duplication and delay between agencies.

If your agency is unable to participate as a Cooperating Agency, please return a written explanation why your agency can not participate. Please note that a response declining to be a Cooperating Agency is required to also be submitted to the Council on Environmental Quality per 40 CFR Part 1501.6(c). Upon acceptance of this invitation, roles can be defined in an informal agreement or formal MOU can be established.

Thank you for your timely response and cooperation with this project. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice River Watershed District, 11 East 5th Avenue,
Ada Minnesota 56510

Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Avenue N., Ste B, Fargo, ND



United States Department of Agriculture

June 13, 2016

Natural Resources
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State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Regional Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service
5600 American Boulevard West, Suite 990
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458

Dear Sir:

Subject: Formal Request to be a Cooperating Agency on the Wild Rice River Watershed
District – Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at 40 CFR Part 1501.6, NRCS is formally requesting that your agency become a cooperating agency in the planning and development of the Wild Rice River Watershed District – Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment (EA).

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice River Watershed District, 11 East 5th Avenue,
Ada Minnesota 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
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Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Sarah J. Beimers
Manager, Government Programs and Compliance
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Ms. Beimers:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) made application for assistance from the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RRRA authorized the WRWD to proceed with a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to perform Watershed Planning in the Green Meadow, Moccasin Creek and South Branch of the Wild Rice River watersheds. The WRWD is committed to develop solutions to flooding, erosion, drainage issues and related natural resource concerns within these watersheds. This work includes developing a NRCS watershed plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. RCPP watershed plans are required to conform to Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566).

The NRCS and the WRWD would like to invite your Tribe to participate in these planning efforts. The planning process will identify watershed natural resource concerns and problems, define a scope of action, evaluate resource issues and develop a range of alternatives to address the watershed needs, and ultimately identify a preferred alternative for the watershed. These watershed plans require communication with a Watershed Stakeholder's Committee and/or Project Team consisting of concerned citizens and local governing units. You will be invited to participate in these meetings and provide input into the planning process; especially as it relates to your historical and cultural interests within the watershed planning area (see attached map).

During the planning process a number of public meetings are scheduled. You will be notified of such meetings. I hope you or a representative from your office can attend and participate at these meetings.

The NRCS and the WRWD requests your office identify and provide any new point of contact information to the WRWD administrator as it relates to Green Meadow Watershed-EA, Moccasin Creek Watershed-EA and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed-EA.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566 or Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator at Kevin@wildricewatershed.org or by phone at (218) 784-5501.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

John Murray
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
The Blackfeet Nation
850 Government Square
Browning, MT 59417

Dear John Murray:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) made application for assistance from the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RRRA authorized the WRWD to proceed with a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to perform Watershed Planning in the Green Meadow, Moccasin Creek and South Branch of the Wild Rice River watersheds. The WRWD is committed to develop solutions to flooding, erosion, drainage issues and related natural resource concerns within these watersheds. This work includes developing a NRCS watershed plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. RCPP watershed plans are required to conform to Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566).

The NRCS and the WRWD would like to invite your Tribe to participate in these planning efforts. The planning process will identify watershed natural resource concerns and problems, define a scope of action, evaluate resource issues and develop a range of alternatives to address the watershed needs, and ultimately identify a preferred alternative for the watershed. These watershed plans require communication with a Watershed Stakeholder's Committee and/or Project Team consisting of concerned citizens and local governing units. You will be invited to participate in these meetings and provide input into the planning process; especially as it relates to your historical and cultural interests within the watershed planning area (see attached map).

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The NRCS and the WRWD requests your office identify and provide any new point of contact information to the WRWD administrator as it relates to Green Meadow Watershed-EA, Moccasin Creek Watershed-EA and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed-EA.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566 or Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator at Kevin@wildricewatershed.org or by phone at (218) 784-5501.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Alvin Windy Boy, Sr.
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation
9740 Upper Box Elder Road
P.O. Box 230
Box Elder, MT 59521

Dear Alvin Windy Boy, Sr.:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) made application for assistance from the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RRRA authorized the WRWD to proceed with a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to perform Watershed Planning in the Green Meadow, Moccasin Creek and South Branch of the Wild Rice River watersheds. The WRWD is committed to develop solutions to flooding, erosion, drainage issues and related natural resource concerns within these watersheds. This work includes developing a NRCS watershed plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. RCPP watershed plans are required to conform to Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566).

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566 or Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator at Kevin@wildricewatershed.org or by phone at (218) 784-5501.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Ira L. Matt
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855

Dear Ira L. Matt:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Emerson Bull Chief
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
The Crow Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 159
Crow Agency, MT 59002

Dear Emerson Bull Chief:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Michael J. Black Wolf
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Fort Belknap Indian Community
656 Agency Main Street
Harlem, MT 59526

Dear Michael J. Black Wolf:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Darrell Youpee
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes
501 Medicine Bear Road
P.O. Box 1027
Poplar, MT 59255

Dear Darrell Youpee:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Teanna Limpy
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
P.O. Box 128
Lame Deer, MT 59043

Dear Teanna Limpy:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Wilfred Ferris
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation
P.O. Box 538
Fort Washakie, WY 82514

Dear Wilfred Ferris:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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Conservation Service

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St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Darlene Conrad
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Northern Arapaho Tribe
P.O. Box 396
Ft. Washakie, WY 82514

Dear Darlene Conrad:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Elgin Crows Breast
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation
404 Frontage Road
New Town, ND 58763

Dear Elgin Crows Breast:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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Dr. Erich Longie
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Spirit Lake Tribe of Fort Totten
P.O. Box 76
Fort Totten, ND 58335

Dear Dr. Erich Longie:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Waste'Win Young
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
P.O. Box D
Fort Yates, ND 58538

Dear Waste'Win Young:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Bruce Nadean
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
P.O. Box 900
Belcourt, ND 58316

Dear Bruce Nadean:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) made application for assistance from the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) for Watershed Planning under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RRRA authorized the WRWD to proceed with a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to perform Watershed Planning in the Green Meadow, Moccasin Creek and South Branch of the Wild Rice River watersheds. The WRWD is committed to develop solutions to flooding, erosion, drainage issues and related natural resource concerns within these watersheds. This work includes developing a NRCS watershed plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. RCPP watershed plans are required to conform to Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566).

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566 or Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator at Kevin@wildricewatershed.org or by phone at (218) 784-5501.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Bill Latady
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians
1500 Bois Forte Road
Tower, MN 55790

Dear Bill Latady:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

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State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Marcu Ammesmaki
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
1720 Big Lake Road
Cloquet, MN 55720

Dear Marcu Ammesmaki:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Mary Ann Gagnon
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
P.O. Box 428
Grand Portage, MN 55605

Dear Mary Ann Gagnon:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Amy Burnette
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
190 Sailstar Drive NW
Cass Lake, MN 56633

Dear Amy Burnette:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Michael Bergervoet, M.S.
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Prairie Island Indian Community of Minnesota
5636 Sturgeon Lake Road
Welch, MN 55089

Dear Michael Bergervoet, M.S.:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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June 29, 2016

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St. Paul, MN 55101

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www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Grace Goldtooth-Campos
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Lower Sioux Indian Community
39527 Reservation Highway 1
Morton, MN 56270

Dear Grace Goldtooth-Campos:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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Natalie Weyaus
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

Dear Natalie Weyaus:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Sara Childers
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Upper Sioux Community
P.O. Box 147
Granite Falls, MN 56241

Dear Sara Childers:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Cayla Olson
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
White Earth Nation of Minnesota Chippewa
P.O. Box 418
White Earth, MN 56591

Dear Cayla Olson:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Steven Vance
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
P.O. Box 590
Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Dear Steven Vance:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Minnesota
State Office

375 Jackson Street
Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101

Ph: 651-602-7900
Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Darrell Zephier
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
P.O. Box 50
Fort Thompson, SD 57339

Dear Darrell Zephier:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator on my staff at keith.weston@nd.usda.gov or via phone at 701-356-6641 or cell phone 701-318-8566 or Kevin Ruud, WRWD Administrator at Kevin@wildricewatershed.org or by phone at (218) 784-5501.

Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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James B. Weston
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
P.O. Box 285
Flandreau, SD 57028

Dear James B. Weston:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Dennis Yellow Thunder
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Oglala Sioux Tribe
P.O. Box 129
Kyle, SD 57752

Dear Dennis Yellow Thunder:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:
Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Russell Eagle Bear
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Rosebud Sioux Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 809
Rosebud, SD 57570

Dear Russell Eagle Bear:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc:

Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Dianne Desrosiers
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
P.O. Box 907
Sisseton, SD 57262

Dear Dianne Desrosiers:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Lana M. Gravatt, RPA
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Yankton Sioux Tribe
800 Main Avenue SW
P.O. Box 1153
Wagner, SD 57380

Dear Lana M. Gravatt, RPA:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



June 29, 2016

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375 Jackson Street
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St. Paul, MN 55101

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Fax 855-823-7656
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Kade M. Ferris, MS
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
P.O. Box 274
Red Lake, MN 56671

Dear Kade M. Ferris, MS:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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State Conservationist

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Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



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Leonard Wabasha
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota
2330 Sioux Trail N.W.
Prior Lake, MN 55372

Dear Leonard Wabasha:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in NRCS RCPP Watershed Planning Process on the Green Meadow Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment, Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and South Branch of the Wild Rice River Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment

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Sincerely,

CATHEE PULLMAN
State Conservationist

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Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 E 5th Ave, Ada, MN 56510
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS, 1120 28th Ave. N., Ste B, Fargo, ND 58102



REPLY TO ATTENTION OF
REGULATORY BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ST. PAUL DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
180 FIFTH STREET EAST, SUITE 700
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-1678

SEP 09 2016

Cathee Pullman
State Conservationist
Natura Resource Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1678

Dear Ms. Pullman:

This letter is in response to your requests for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), St. Paul District to participate as a Cooperating Agency in development of Environmental Assessments (EA) for the following projects:

- Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District Judicial Ditch #14 Watershed Plan
- Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District Judicial Ditch #19 Watershed Plan
- Boise De Sioux Watershed District Direct Watershed Plan
- Two River Watershed District Klondike Clean Water Retention Project
- Red Lake Watershed District Four Legged Lake Watershed Plan
- Red Lake Watershed District Pine Lake Watershed Plan
- Wild Rice River Watershed District Green Meadow Watershed Plan
- Wild Rice River Watershed District South Branch Wild Rice River Watershed Plan
- Wild Rice River Watershed District Moccasin Creek Watershed Plan
- Roseau River Watershed District Beltrami Island State Forest Watershed Plan
- Roseau River Watershed District Whitney Lake Watershed Plan

It is our understanding that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the lead Federal Agency initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process due to financial assistance to the Sponsoring Local Organization provided through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law (PL) 83-566).

The USACE St. Paul District appreciates your invitation and agrees to be a cooperating agency for the development of these EAs. We understand the agency roles and responsibilities will be defined in a separate Memorandum of Understanding. We appreciate your request for comments, and look forward to continued coordination on these projects.

Mr. Craig Jarrot from our Bemidji Office has been assigned as the project manager for this review. If you have any questions, please contact him in our Bemidji office at (651) 290-5337 or Craig.L.Jarrot @usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Chad S. Konickson
Chief, Regulatory Branch

cc:

Brent Silvis, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District
John Roeschlein, Boise de Sioux Watershed District
Dan Money, Two River Watershed District
Myron Jesme, Red Lake Watershed District
Kevin Ruud, Wild Rice River Watershed District
Tracy Halstensgard, Roseau River Watershed District
Keith Weston, NRCS