

DNR (Jessica Parsons)

Question 14c, last paragraph states:

“The Project construction and operations will take place within the site boundaries, no new species of plants or animals will be introduced to the site as part of the Project, and the surrounding environments are homogenous with the environment on the site that will be developed during the project. Due to this, no introduction and/or spread of invasive species from the project construction and operation are anticipated.”

Even though the proposer will be working with materials on site, there is still a chance to introduce invasive species when equipment/vehicles are brought into the site. MNDNR recommends that the proposer implements a procedure to inspect and clean equipment prior to operation and follow the attached recommendations to prevent the spread of invasive species. This is particularly important as the project expansion may impact an area of high biodiversity significance, as designated by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). If the expansion displaces any surrounding recreational trails, consider relocating any trail reroutes outside of the high MBS site. This would help reduce additional habitat damage, and introduction of invasives into the high-quality habitat and native plant communities.

Despite the IPAC’s conclusion that the project is not likely to impact Northern Long-eared Bats, MNDNR still recommends that the project proposer avoids (or minimizes) tree removal from June 1 – July 31. This would reduce the potential to disturb adult females with pups. The females with young tend to target snags and/or partially decaying, jagged/wolfy trees; these are particularly important to avoid/inspect.

DNR is supportive of the Blandings Turtle Avoidance Plan provided in the EAW. If Blanding’s turtles are observed nesting or a nest is found, please contact MNDNR Non-Game Specialist Spencer Rettler (Spencer.Rettler@state.mn.us) as soon as possible. Nesting activity has been documented very close to the project area and MNDNR would be interested in installing a temporary cage around nests. Please see the attached “Caution” flyer that includes some color photos of Blanding’s turtles that would help with identification.