

US Army Corps of Engineers St Paul District SPONSOR: MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) c/o Ben Carlson



ISSUED: November 1, 2022 EXPIRES: December 1, 2022

REFER TO: MVP-2022-01399-CEB SECTION: 404 - Clean Water Act

- 1. WETLAND COMPENSATORY MITIGATION BANK PROPOSAL
- 2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:

MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) c/o Ben Carlson 520 Lafayette Road North St. Paul, MN 55155

PROJECT LOCATION: The project site is located in Section 13, Township 111 North, Range 34 West, Redwood County, Minnesota. The approximate UTM coordinates are N 351071.101888, E 4919598.667856. Latitude 44.414363, Longitude -94.870629.

BANK SERVICE AREA: The proposed bank service area is the Minnesota River- Mankato major watershed #28 (Bank Service Area (BSA) 9).

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The Sponsor is proposing to develop Mathiowetz Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program (LGRWRP) Bank. The proposed bank site is approximately 75.8 acres in size, including upland buffer areas.

NEED AND OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT: All credits generated from this project are for the LGRWRP. This BWSR-administered state program provides compensatory mitigation for local government road improvement and rehabilitation projects. BSA 9 has one of the highest average annual credit demands in the state for the LGRWRP. The Sponsor's five-year projection indicates the program's demand for compensatory mitigation credits will exceed their supply of credits within the next twelve months. Bank objectives include: 1) Restore approximately 75.8-acres (42.8 acres wetlands via Cultivated Field Crediting (CFC), 0.2 acres wetland via CFC reduced crediting, and 32.8 acres upland buffer) of natural habitat consisting of a depressional wetland system of shallow and deep marsh wetlands, fresh (wet) meadow wetlands, and native upland prairie in the Minnesota River Watershed. 2) Improve the water quality being passed along downstream in a watershed that has experienced significant hydrologic alterations from agricultural drainage. 3) Increase aquatic and terrestrial habitat connectivity in an agricultural landscape.

ESTABLISHMENT, OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT: The Sponsor proposes to hydrologically and vegetatively restore 42.8 acres of wetland within cultivated fields at 100% credit, hydrologically and vegetatively restore 0.2 acres of wetland directly adjacent to the easement boundary (without an upland buffer) at a reduced credit amount of 50% and vegetatively restore 32.8 acres of uplands to native mesic prairie at 25% credit. The project site would likely be kept in row-crop production for the growing season prior to construction. If nonnative perennial vegetation is present, it would be treated with a broad-spectrum herbicide prior to construction and seeding.

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Hydrologic restoration would occur by disabling the subsurface drainage system by blocking tile lines and preventing water from entering the public tile system. Vegetation re-establishment would occur by reseeding the site with state-approved seed mixes specific to the region. Seeding zones would be identified after further planning and presented at the next stage of the project development. BWSR expects shallow and deep marsh communities in the lowest landscape position, fresh (wet) meadow wetlands along the perimeter and upland mesic prairie in the uplands.

General design strategies proposed by the Sponsor to restore this site include disabling the subsurface drainage system, constructing an outlet structure, and minor grading to prevent erosion and protect adjacent properties. Specific restoration construction strategies include:

1. Block tile lines at strategically identified locations by excavating and removing a specified length of tile, plugging the tile ends, and then backfilling and compacting the excavated trench. Per the Sponsor, this effectively renders the subsurface drainage system inoperable.

2. Daylight incoming tile coming from west and south of the easement area above pool elevations. This tile outlet allows the adjacent property to maintain its current drainage benefits while providing additional hydrology to the project site.

3. Reroute the existing public tile line around the easement area.

4. Construct an outlet structure at the east end of the wetland restoration that ties into existing public tile.

An in-depth hydro-modeling, watershed analysis, and sustainability document would be included as part of the Mitigation Banking Instrument (MBI). As currently proposed, private tile lines from the west of the site would be rerouted and daylight into the restored basin, with all reroutes occurring within the Mathiowetz parcel. Currently, private tile from the Christensen property (west of the site) drains through the Mathiowetz property and ultimately into the JD 17 public tile. The Christensen property is several feet higher in elevation than the basin on the Mathiowetz property. For the private tile to function, it must drain to the east and into the Mathiowetz basin, thus ensuring the western portion of the watershed would drain into the restored basin. Additional tile within the Mathiowetz property, both north and south of the easement, would daylight into the basin. Per the Sponsor, this would ensure the northern and southern regional watershed would drain into the restored basin. According to the Sponsor, the public tile line reroute would go through a public drainage hearing requiring approval from Redwood County.

The five-year management plan would focus on regular control of perennial non-native species through clipping, herbicide applications, and prescribed burn. Mowing is proposed to only be used if the equipment would not cause ruts or soil compaction. Non-native perennials to be targeted with herbicides include reed canary grass, non-native cattails, Canada thistle, smooth bromegrass, and Kentucky bluegrass. Imazapyr and /or aquatic glyphosate herbicides would be used in wetland areas. Thistles would be spot treated with Milestone® herbicide unless conditions are too wet, requiring the use of an aquatically certified herbicide. Use of an adaptive management strategy to respond to unexpected weather conditions that may alter construction, or vegetation establishment timelines would occur, as well as changing management methods if the plan is not achieving desirable results.

OWNERSHIP AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT: BWSR is the project Sponsor and would be signatory to the MBI with the landowner retaining ownership of the property. BWSR has the responsibility for implementation of the bank plan and would be the manager of all the compensatory mitigation credits from the project. Long-term management would be a cooperative effort by both BWSR and the landowner. The conservation easement identifies the landowner as being responsible for maintaining the project site in accordance with the implemented bank plan. However, as a BWSR LGRWRP bank, it would be placed into BWSR's long-term management queue after the initial 5-year monitoring period is complete to assist the landowners in correcting any conditions inconsistent with the bank plan.

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TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS: This project has a large contributing watershed with a functional drainage system. When the drainage system is disabled, the natural wetland conditions would be restored. BWSR is staffed by professional engineers, hydrologists, soil scientists and vegetation specialists. BWSR has completed hundreds of wetland restoration projects with various drainage networks within Minnesota for both regulatory purposes and conservation programs such as Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). BWSR would draw from their experience to design and guide the project Sponsor to restore wetlands at the site in a sustainable and ecologically suitable approach. In order to have consistent plans and outcomes they have developed the Wetland Restoration Guide https://bwsr.state.mn.us/mnwetland-restoration-guide, which is a guide to all other state, local and private entities restoring wetlands. Based on the on-site data collected, observations made on-site by BWSR and preliminary engineering assessments, BWSR believes that wetland hydrology can be restored to the site resulting in plant communities that closely resemble what are believed to have been present prior to cropping and installation of drainage features. No constraints that would prevent successful restoration of the site have been identified at this point in the planning and design process.

ECOLOGICAL SUITABILITY: The site is in a landscape position that receives overland flow and groundwater. Elevations range from 1028 to 1018 feet above mean sea level (MSL) with the restorable areas being depressional basins at differing elevations. Dismantling the drainage network and disconnecting the site from the public drain tile would allow overland flow and groundwater to be held on site for longer periods.

HYDROLOGY: The project site has a dense private tile network that outlets into a public tile system. The spacing on the tiles is approximately 100 to 150-feet with multiple tile intakes. The subsurface drainage flows from west to east in a public tile system (JD 17 tile) which ultimately flows off-site to the east.

CURRENT LAND USES: The entire project site and surrounding areas are annually cultivated in a rotation of corn and soybeans with no perennial vegetation and little to no annual weeds.

COORDINATION WITH RESOURCE AGENCIES: This project has been coordinated with the following members of the Interagency Review Team (IRT) and other resource agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

3. FEDERALLY LISTED THREATENED OR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE OR PLANTS OR THEIR CRITICAL HABITAT

None were identified by the bank Sponsor or are known to exist in the action area. However, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) identified the following Federally-listed species:

Northern long-eared bat Hibernates in caves and mines – swarming in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. Roosts and forages in upland forests during spring and summer.

This notice is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any comments it may have concerning Federally listed threatened or endangered wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

4. JURISDICTION

This proposal is being reviewed in accordance with the practices for documenting Corps jurisdiction under Sections 9 & 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

5. HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL

The Corps will review information on known cultural resources and/or historic properties within and adjacent to the project area. The Corps will also consider the potential effects of the project on any properties that have yet to be identified. The results of this review and the Corps' determination of effect will be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer independent of this public notice. Any adverse effects on historic properties will be resolved prior to the Corps authorization of the work in connection with this project.

6. PUBLIC HEARING REQUESTS

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, in detail, the reasons for holding a public hearing. A request may be denied if substantive reasons for holding a hearing are not provided or if there is otherwise no valid interest to be served.

7. REPLIES/COMMENTS

Interested parties are invited to submit to this office written facts, arguments, or objections by the expiration date above. These statements should bear upon the suitability of the location and the adequacy of the project and should, if appropriate, suggest any changes believed to be desirable. Comments received may be forwarded to the applicant. A copy of the full prospectus submitted by the Sponsor is available to the public for review upon request.

Replies may be addressed to Catherine.E.Beatty@usace.army.mil. If you would like to mail in a response, you may provide those to:

Regulatory Division St. Paul District Corps of Engineers c/o Catherine Beatty 1114 South Oak Street La Crescent, Minnesota 55947-1560

Or, IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT, email Catherine Beatty at Catherine.E.Beatty@usace.army.mil or call at the La Crescent office of the Corps, telephone number 651-290-5371.

To receive Public Notice notifications, go to: https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Contact/RSS/ and subscribe to the RSS Feed for which you would like to receive Public Notices.

Enclosures









Property and Easement Boundaries Map Mathiowetz LGRWRP Bank T 111N R 34W S 13 Figure # 2



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Historical Conditions Mathiowetz LGRWRP Bank T 111N R 34W S 13 Figure # 3



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BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES T 111N R 34W S 13 Figure # 6



Figure # 7



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T 111N R 34W S 13 Figure # 8



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Preliminary Plant Communities Mathiowetz LGRWRP Bank T 111N R 34W S 13 Figure # 9 MVP-2022-01399-CEB Mathiowetz Bank Public Notice Page 9 of 9



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