

**COMMENTS RECEIVED AND RESPONSES CONCERNING
THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET FOR**

**Quarry Creek Conservation Project EAW
Blakeley Township
Scott County, Minnesota**

**The headings for the EAW Item topics are in brackets.
Comments received are in normal font following the name/organization of the commenter in bold font.
Staff responses are in Italics**

Note: Comments received note the name of the commenter and are either quotes from their comments or are paraphrased by staff to capture the essence of the concern as it relates to the EAW item in question. *Staff responses to the comments follow each comment and are in italics and noted as Staff Response.* Comments received that were of similar concern are addressed once throughout the document.

13. Fish, wildlife, plant communities, and sensitive ecological resources (rare features)

MNDNR

1. It should be noted that all of the native plant communities within the Site of High Biodiversity Significance are rare, having a conservation rank of S2 (imperiled in Minnesota) or S3 (vulnerable to extirpation in Minnesota).

Staff Response: Thank you for your comment.

2. The EAW states that there will be limited disturbance within the MBS Site including tree removal, access improvements, and construction staging areas. If any disturbance will occur within a native plant community, please follow these recommendations:

- As much as possible, operate within already-disturbed areas;
- Minimize vehicular disturbance in the area (allow only vehicles/equipment necessary for construction activities);
- Do no park equipment or stockpile supplies within the MBS Site;
- Inspect and clean all equipment prior to bringing it to the site to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species;
- Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures;
- Re-vegetate disturbed soil with native species suitable to the local habitat as soon after construction as possible; and
- Use only weed-free mulches, topsoils, and seed mixes.

Staff Response: Thank you for your comments, we'll consider your recommendations.

3. Kitten-tails (*Besseyia bullii*), state-listed as threatened, occurs, in oak savannas, dry prairies, and oak woodlands. The oak savannas and dry prairie native plant communities documented within the Site of High Biodiversity Significance may provide suitable habitat for this species. If there will be any ground disturbance within the native plant communities, the DNR recommends that a qualified surveyor conduct a botanical survey of the proposed disturbance areas. The purpose of the survey would be to reduce the likelihood of an inadvertent taking of a state-protected species and to inform the takings permit process if needed.

Staff Response: Thank you for your comments, we'll consider your recommendation.

4. The northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a state-listed species of special concern, can be found throughout Minnesota. During the winter this species hibernates in caves and mines, and during the active season (approximately April-October) it roosts underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Activities that may impact this species include, but are not limited to, wind farm operation, any disturbance to hibernacula, and destruction/degradation of habitat (including tree removal).

Staff Response: Tree clearing is planned from November to February.

5. During erosion-control activities, the DNR encourages the use of wildlife-friendly erosion control mesh (natural fibers such as jute netting, straw or coconut shell matrix). Traditional erosion control mesh (plastic welded netting, plastic fragment matrix) is known to cause injury and may be fatal to wildlife, particularly reptiles and amphibians.

Staff Response: Thank you for your comment, we'll consider your recommendation.

6. The project is located in the riparian corridor which provides habitat and travel corridors for a variety of wildlife. We recommend that all riprapped areas be augmented with additional gravel fill between the large riprap rocks in order to improve wildlife passage and prevent entrapment of juvenile animals.

14. Historic properties

Staff Response: Thank you for your comment, we'll consider your recommendation.

Minnesota Historical Society

1. Due to the nature and location of the proposed project, we recommend that a Phase I archaeological survey be completed. The survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation, and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified.

Staff Response: Thank you for your comment; we'll consider your recommendation for a Phase I archaeological survey.

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS
FOR
THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET
FOR
QUARRY CREEK CONSERVATION PROJECT
BLAKELEY TOWNSHIP, SCOTT COUNTY**

In consideration of the comments received and reviewed staff recommends the following Findings of Fact and Conclusion:

A. The type, extent, and reversibility of effects:

The proposed project will adhere to Best Management Practices. MNDNR and MHS recommendations will be considered. Erosion control and surface water management controls will be required in accordance with Chapter 6 of the County's Zoning Ordinance. In consideration of these controls, it is concluded that any environmental effects resulting from this project can be controlled through proper management during construction and operation. It is also concluded that any effects can be detected and corrected and should not result in permanent degradation of the environment.

B. The cumulative potential effects of related or anticipated future projects:

No cumulative effects or future projects are expected.

C. The extent to which effects can be mitigated by ongoing public regulatory authorities:

There are in place numerous regulatory controls designed to protect the environment that include Federal, State and County permit requirements. No adverse effects are anticipated.

D. The extent to which effects can be anticipated and controlled as a result of other studies undertaken by public agencies or the project Proposer, or of previous EISs.

No adverse effects are anticipated.

E. It is, therefore, recommended that an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.