

# **Appendix J**

## **Natural Heritage Review**





Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

June 9, 2023

Correspondence # MCE 2023-00344

Genesis Mickel  
Westwood Professional Services, Inc.

RE: Natural Heritage Review of the proposed Sherco Solar 3,  
T34N R29W Sections 15-22, 27-28, T34N R30W Sections 13, 23-25; Sherburne County

Dear Genesis Mickel,

As requested, the [Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System](#) has been reviewed to determine if the proposed project has the potential to impact any rare species or other significant natural features. Based on the project details provided with the request, the following rare features may be impacted by the proposed project:

#### *Ecologically Significant Areas*

- The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has identified a Site of *Moderate* Biodiversity Significance that overlaps and is adjacent to a portion of the proposed project in T34N R30W Section 25. Sites of Biodiversity Significance have varying levels of native biodiversity and are ranked based on the relative significance of this biodiversity at a statewide level. Sites ranked as *Moderate* contain occurrences of rare species and/or moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have a strong potential for recovery. This Site has a native plant community mapped in and adjacent to the proposed project area. This is a Southern Dry-Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland, which is state-ranked as Vulnerable to Extirpation. MBS considered the area adjacent to the proposed project in T34N R29W Section 21 for a Site of Biodiversity Significance. It was determined to be *Below* the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance. This area, however, may have conservation value at the local level as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or as areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat. We encourage you to consider project alternatives that would avoid or minimize disturbance to these ecologically significant areas. Actions to minimize disturbance may include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:

- Minimize vehicular disturbance in the MBS Site (allow only vehicles/equipment necessary for construction activities);
  - Do not park equipment or stockpile supplies in the MBS Site;
  - Do not place spoil within MBS Site or other sensitive areas;
  - Retain a buffer between proposed activities and the MBS Site;
  - If possible, conduct the work under frozen ground conditions;
  - Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures;
  - Inspect and clean all equipment prior to bringing it to the Site to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species;
  - As much as possible, operate within already-disturbed areas;
  - Revegetate 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. Of particular concern are birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*), two invasive species that are sold commercially and are problematic in prairies and disturbed open areas.
- MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities can be viewed using the [Minnesota Conservation Explorer](#) or their GIS shapefiles can be downloaded from the [MN Geospatial Commons](#). Please contact the [NH Review Team](#) if you need assistance accessing the data. Reference the [MBS Site Biodiversity Significance](#) and [Native Plant Community](#) websites for information on interpreting the data.

#### *State-listed Species*

- Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*), a state-listed threatened species, have been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project. Blanding's turtles use upland areas up to and over a mile distant from wetlands, waterbodies, and watercourses. Uplands are used for nesting, basking, periods of dormancy, and traveling between wetlands. Factors believed to contribute to the decline of this species include collisions with vehicles, wetland drainage and degradation, and the development of upland habitat. Any added mortality can be detrimental to populations of Blanding's turtles, as these turtles have a low reproduction rate that depends upon a high survival rate to maintain population levels.

This project has the potential to impact this rare turtle through direct fatalities and habitat disturbance/destruction due to excavation, fill, and other construction activities associated with the project. Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (*Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (*Minnesota Rules*, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of threatened or endangered species without a permit. As such, **the following avoidance measures are required:**

- Avoid wetland and aquatic impacts during hibernation season, between October 15th and April 15th, if the area is suitable for hibernation.
- The use of [erosion control](#) blanket shall be limited to 'bio-netting' or 'natural-netting' types, and specifically not products containing plastic mesh netting or other plastic components.
  - Also, be aware that hydro-mulch products may contain small synthetic (plastic) fibers to aid in their matrix strength. These loose fibers could potentially re-suspend and make their way into Public Waters. As such, please review mulch products and do not allow any materials with synthetic (plastic) fiber additives in areas that drain into Public Waters.
- Areas where there will be construction, especially aquatic or wetland areas, should be thoroughly checked for turtles before the use of heavy equipment or any ground disturbance.
  - The [Blanding's turtle flyer](#) must be given to all contractors working in the area.
  - Monitor for turtles during construction and report any sightings to the [DNR Nongame Specialist](#), Erica Hoaglund ([Erica.Hoaglund@state.mn.us](mailto:Erica.Hoaglund@state.mn.us)).
  - If turtles are in imminent danger they must be moved by hand out of harm's way, otherwise, they are to be left undisturbed.

**If following the above avoidance measures is not possible, please contact [NHIS.Review@state.mn.us](mailto:NHIS.Review@state.mn.us) as further action may be needed.**

For additional information, see the [Blanding's turtle fact sheet](#), which describes the habitat use and life history of this species. The fact sheet also provides two lists of recommendations for avoiding and minimizing impacts to this rare turtle. **Please refer to both lists of recommendations and apply those that are relevant to your project.** For further assistance regarding the Blanding's turtle, please contact the DNR Regional Nongame Specialist, Erica Hoaglund.

- The loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a state-listed endangered bird, has been documented in the vicinity of the project site. Loggerhead shrikes use grasslands that contain short grass and scattered perching sites such as hedgerows, shrubs, or small trees. They can be found in native prairie, pastures, shelterbelts, old fields or orchards, cemeteries, grassy roadsides, and farmyards. **Given the potential for this species to be found in the vicinity of the project, tree and shrub removal is required to be avoided during the breeding season, April through July.** If you cannot avoid tree removal during loggerhead shrike breeding period, a qualified surveyor needs to conduct a survey for active nests before any trees or shrubs will be removed. Surveys must follow the standards contained in the [Rare Species Survey Process](#). Please consult with the NH Review Team at [Reports.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Reports.NHIS@state.mn.us) regarding this process. The list of approved DNR Animal Surveyors is attached to this MCE project. Project planning should take

into account that the survey needs to be conducted during the appropriate time of the year, which may be limited.

- The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) tracks bat roost trees and hibernacula plus some acoustic data, but this information is not exhaustive. Even if there are no bat records listed nearby, all seven of Minnesota's bats, including the federally endangered northern long-eared bat ([Myotis septentrionalis](#)), can be found throughout Minnesota. During the active season (approximately April-November) bats roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Tree removal can negatively impact bats by destroying roosting habitat, especially during the pup rearing season when females are forming maternity roosting colonies and the pups cannot yet fly. To minimize these impacts, the DNR recommends that tree removal be avoided from June 1 through August 15.
- Please visit the [DNR Rare Species Guide](#) for more information on the habitat use of these species and recommended measures to avoid or minimize impacts. For further assistance with these species, please contact the appropriate [DNR Regional Nongame Specialist](#) or [Regional Ecologist](#).

#### *Federally Protected Species*

- To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#).

#### *Environmental Review and Permitting*

- Please include a copy of this letter and the MCE-generated Final Project Report in any state or local license or permit application. Please note that measures to avoid or minimize disturbance to the above rare features may be included as restrictions or conditions in any required permits or licenses.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Division of Ecological and Water Resources, Department of Natural Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area. If additional information becomes available regarding rare features in the vicinity of the project, further review may be necessary.

For environmental review purposes, the results of this Natural Heritage Review are valid for one year; the results are only valid for the project location and project description provided with the request. If project details change or the project has not occurred within one year, please resubmit the project for review within one year of initiating project activities.

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute project approval by the Department of Natural Resources. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential impacts to these rare features. Visit the [Natural Heritage Review website](#) for additional information regarding this process, survey guidance, and other related information. For information on the environmental review process or other natural resource concerns, you may contact your [DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist](#).

Thank you for consulting us on this matter and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Drake".

James Drake  
Natural Heritage Review Specialist  
[James.F.Drake@state.mn.us](mailto:James.F.Drake@state.mn.us)

Cc: Melissa Collins



## Formal Natural Heritage Review - Cover Page

See next page for results of review. A draft watermark means the project details have not been finalized and the results are not official.

**Project Name:** Sherco Solar 3

**Project Proposer:** Northern States Power Company, d.b.a. Xcel Energy

**Project Type:** Power, Solar

**Project Type Activities:** Tree Removal;Other

**TRS:** T34 R29 S10, T34 R29 S15, T34 R29 S16, T34 R29 S17, T34 R29 S18, T34 R29 S19, T34 R29 S20, T34 R29 S21, T34 R29 S22, T34 R29 S27, T34 R29 S28, T34 R29 S30 +

**County(s):** Sherburne

**DNR Admin Region(s):** Central

**Reason Requested:** PUC Site or Route Application

**Project Description:** Xcel Energy proposes to construct the Project, a solar energy conversion facility with an up to 250 MWAC nameplate capacity, in the city of Clear Lake ...

**Existing Land Uses:** Agriculture - row crop

**Landcover / Habitat Impacted:** Mostly row crop agriculture with smaller areas of old field.

**Waterbodies Affected:** No waterbody impacts are anticipated at this time.

**Groundwater Resources Affected:** none anticipated

**Previous Natural Heritage Review:** Yes, ERDB#: 2023-00290

**Previous Habitat Assessments / Surveys:** Yes

### SUMMARY OF AUTOMATED RESULTS

Category	Results	Response By Category
<b>Project Details</b>	Needs Further Review	Needs Further Review
<b>Ecologically Significant Area</b>	Comments	MBS Sites - Recommendations Potential RNC - Will Require Consultation
<b>State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species</b>	Needs Further Review	State-protected Species in Vicinity
<b>State-Listed Species of Special Concern</b>	Comments	Recommendations
<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	No Records	Visit IPaC For Federal Review





May 1, 2023

**Project Name:** Sherco Solar 3

**Project Proposer:** Northern States Power Company, d.b.a. Xcel Energy

**Project Type:** Power, Solar

**Project ID:** MCE #2023-00344

**AUTOMATED RESULTS: FURTHER REVIEW IS NEEDED**

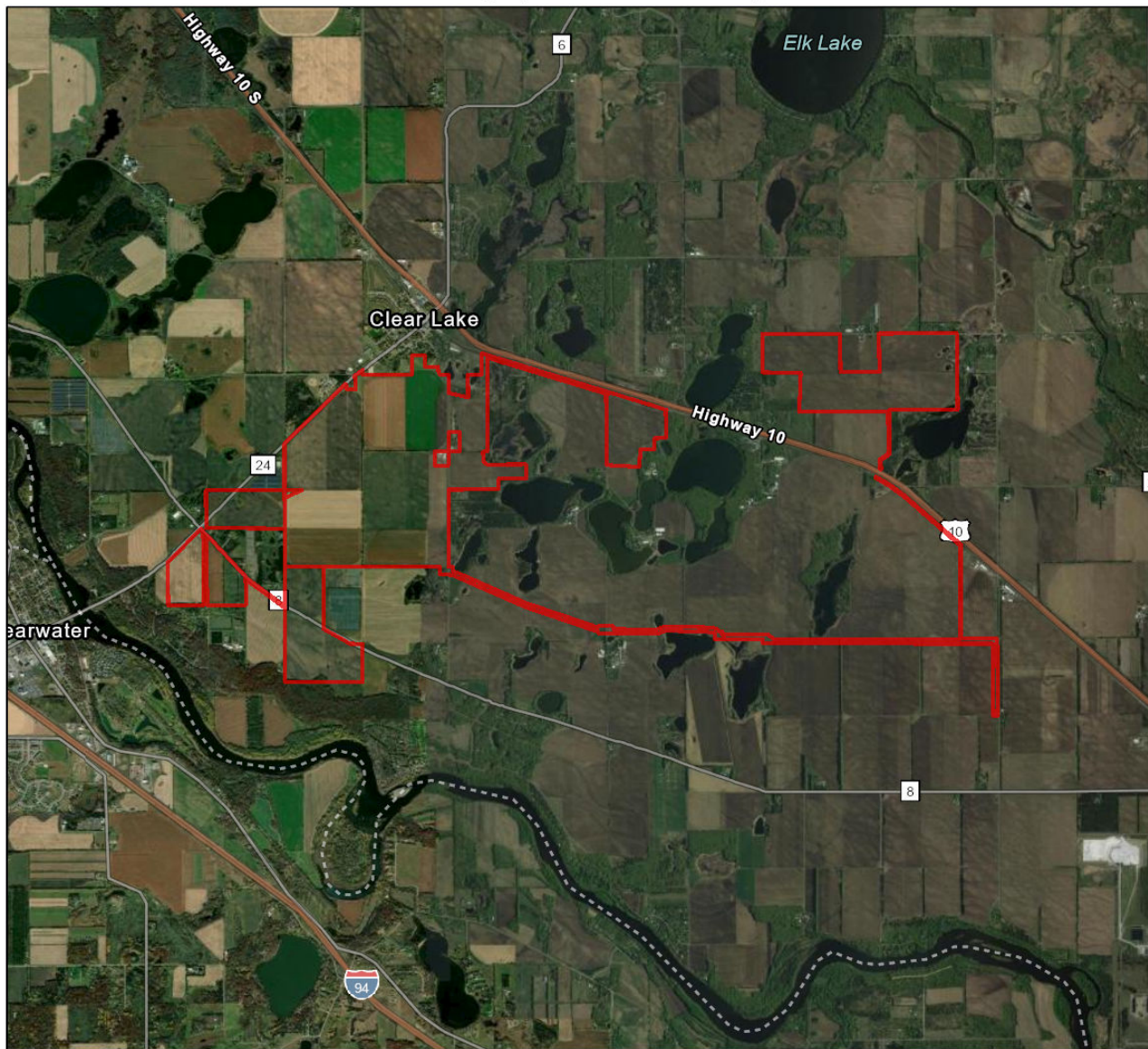
As requested, the above project has undergone an automated review for potential impacts to rare features. Based on this review, one or more rare features may be impacted by the proposed project and further review by the Natural Heritage Review Team is needed. You will receive a separate notification email when the review process is complete and the Natural Heritage Review letter has been posted.

Please refer to the table on the cover page of this report for a summary of potential impacts to rare features. For additional information or planning purposes, use the Explore Page in Minnesota Conservation Explorer to view the potentially impacted rare features or to create a Conservation Planning Report for the proposed project.

If you have additional information to help resolve the potential impacts listed in the summary results, please attach related project documentation in the Edit Details tab of the Project page. Relevant information includes, but is not limited to, additional project details, completed habitat assessments, or survey results. This additional information will be considered during the project review.

# Sherco Solar 3

## Aerial Imagery With Locator Map



 Project Boundary

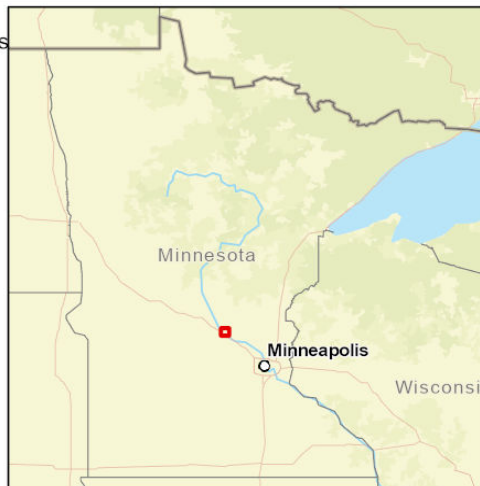
Project Type: Power, Solar

Project Size (acres): 1,772.59

County(s): Sherburne

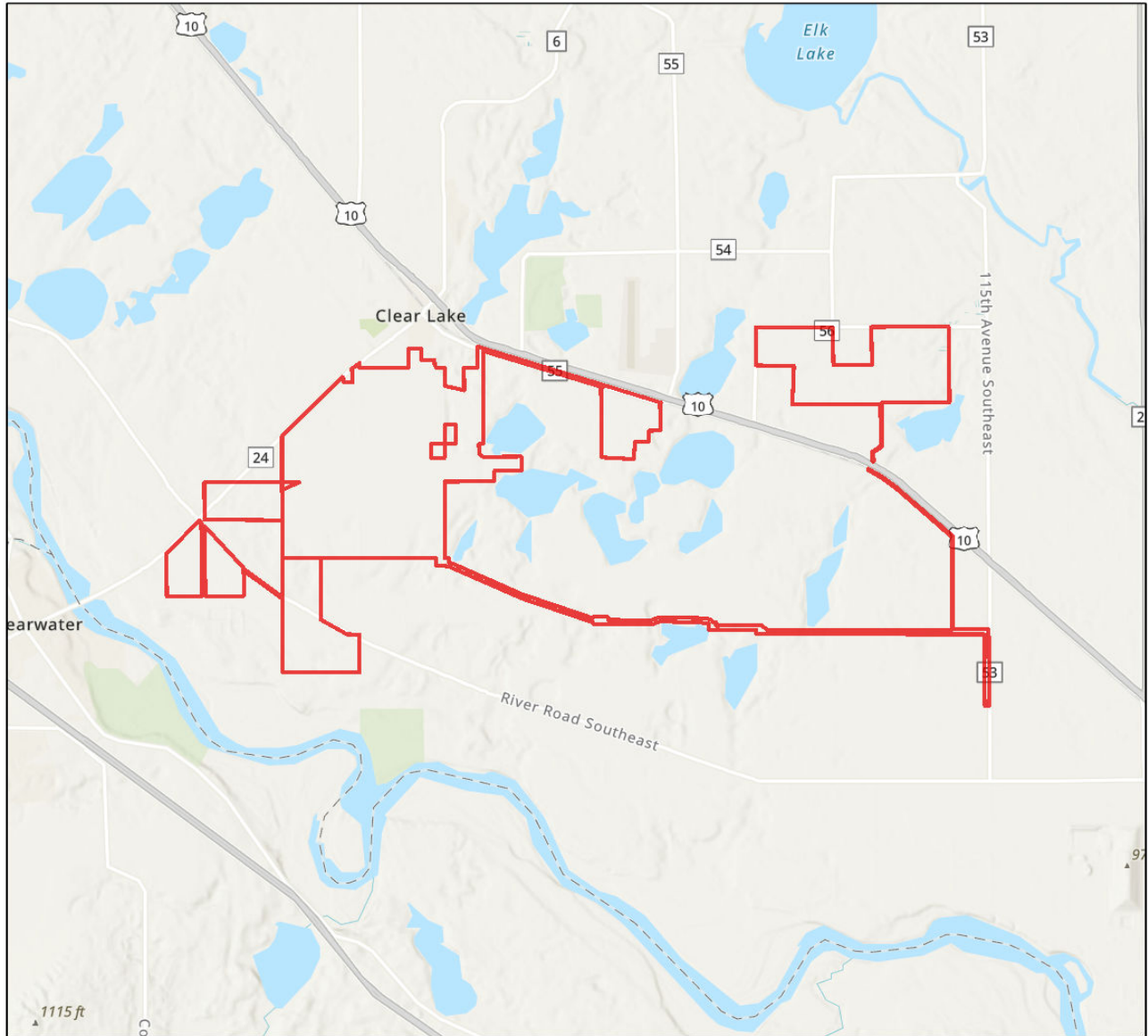
TRS: T34 R29 S10, T34 R29 S15, T34 R29 S16, T34 R29 S17, T34 R29 S18 +

Sherburne County MN GIS, Earthstar Geographics  
Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph,  
GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA



# Sherco Solar 3

USA Topo Basemap With Locator Map



 Project Boundary

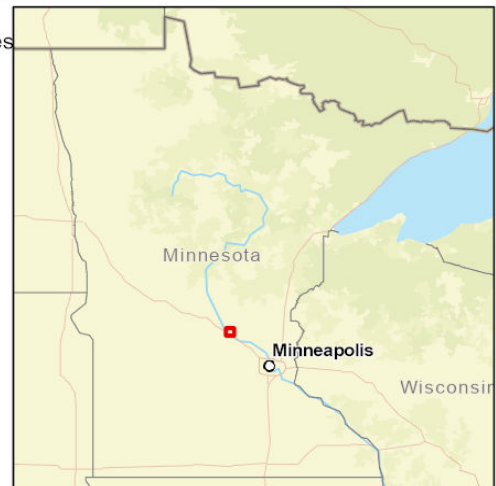
Project Type: Power, Solar

Project Size (acres): 1,772.59

County(s): Sherburne

TRS: T34 R29 S10, T34 R29 S15, T34 R29 S16, T34 R29 S17, T34 R29 S18 +

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS  
Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph,  
GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA







# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office  
3815 American Blvd East  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1659  
Phone: (952) 858-0793 Fax: (952) 646-2873

In Reply Refer To:  
Project Code: 2023-0075884  
Project Name: Sherco Solar 3

May 01, 2023

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

## To Whom It May Concern:

This response has been generated by the Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) system to provide information on natural resources that could be affected by your project. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides this response under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668d), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*).

### **Threatened and Endangered Species**

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirement for obtaining a Technical Assistance Letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

### **Consultation Technical Assistance**

Please refer to our [Section 7 website](#) for guidance and technical assistance, including [step-by-step instructions](#) for making effects determinations for each species that might be present and for specific guidance on the following types of projects: projects in developed areas, HUD, CDBG, EDA, USDA Rural Development projects, pipelines, buried utilities, telecommunications, and requests for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) from FEMA.

We recommend running the project (if it qualifies) through our **Minnesota-Wisconsin Federal Endangered Species Determination Key (Minnesota-Wisconsin ("D-key"))**. A [demonstration video](#) showing how-to access and use the determination key is available. Please note that the Minnesota-Wisconsin D-key is the third option of 3 available d-keys. D-keys are tools to help Federal agencies and other project proponents determine if their proposed action has the potential to adversely affect federally listed species and designated critical habitat. The Minnesota-Wisconsin D-key includes a structured set of questions that assists a project proponent in determining whether a proposed project qualifies for a certain predetermined consultation outcome for all federally listed species found in Minnesota and Wisconsin (except for the northern long-eared bat- see below), which includes determinations of "no effect" or "may affect, not likely to adversely affect." In each case, the Service has compiled and analyzed the best available information on the species' biology and the impacts of certain activities to support these determinations.

If your completed d-key output letter shows a "No Effect" (NE) determination for all listed species, print your IPaC output letter for your files to document your compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

For Federal projects with a "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" (NLAA) determination, our concurrence becomes valid if you do not hear otherwise from us after a 30-day review period, as indicated in your letter.

If your d-key output letter indicates additional coordination with the Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office is necessary (i.e., you get a "May Affect" determination), you will be provided additional guidance on contacting the Service to continue ESA coordination outside of the key; ESA compliance cannot be concluded using the key for "May Affect" determinations unless otherwise indicated in your output letter.

**Note: Once you obtain your official species list, you are not required to continue in IPaC with d-keys, although in most cases these tools should expedite your review.** If you choose to make an effects determination on your own, you may do so. If the project is a Federal Action, you may want to review our section 7 step-by-step instructions before making your determinations.

### **Using the IPaC Official Species List to Make No Effect and May Affect Determinations for Listed Species**

1. If IPaC returns a result of "There are no listed species found within the vicinity of the project," then project proponents can conclude the proposed activities will have **no effect** on any federally listed species under Service jurisdiction. Concurrence from the Service is not required for **no effect** determinations. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records.
  2. If IPaC returns one or more federally listed, proposed, or candidate species as potentially present in the action area of the proposed project – other than bats (see below) – then project proponents must determine if proposed activities will have **no effect** on or **may affect** those species. For assistance in determining if suitable habitat for listed, candidate, or proposed species occurs within your project area or if species may be affected by project activities, you can obtain [Life History Information for Listed and Candidate Species](#) on our office website. If no impacts will occur to a species on the IPaC species list (e.g., there is no habitat present in the project area), the appropriate determination is **no effect**. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records.
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3. Should you determine that project activities **may affect** any federally listed, please contact our office for further coordination. Letters with requests for consultation or correspondence about your project should include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header. Electronic submission is preferred.

### **Northern Long-Eared Bats**

Northern long-eared bats occur throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin and the information below may help in determining if your project may affect these species.

This species hibernates in caves or mines only during the winter. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, the hibernation season is considered to be November 1 to March 31. During the active season (April 1 to October 31) they roost in forest and woodland habitats. Suitable summer habitat for northern long-eared bats consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where they roost, forage, and travel and may also include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields and pastures. This includes forests and woodlots containing potential roosts (i.e., live trees and/or snags  $\geq 3$  inches dbh for northern long-eared bat that have exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, and/or hollows), as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. These wooded areas may be dense or loose aggregates of trees with variable amounts of canopy closure. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet (305 meters) of forested/wooded habitat. Northern long-eared bats have also been observed roosting in human-made structures, such as buildings, barns, bridges, and bat houses; therefore, these structures should also be considered potential summer habitat and evaluated for use by bats. If your project will impact caves or mines or will involve clearing forest or woodland habitat containing suitable roosting habitat, northern long-eared bats could be affected.

Examples of unsuitable habitat include:

- Individual trees that are greater than 1,000 feet from forested or wooded areas,
- Trees found in highly developed urban areas (e.g., street trees, downtown areas),
- A pure stand of less than 3-inch dbh trees that are not mixed with larger trees, and
- A monoculture stand of shrubby vegetation with no potential roost trees.

If IPaC returns a result that northern long-eared bats are potentially present in the action area of the proposed project, project proponents can conclude the proposed activities **may affect** this species **IF** one or more of the following activities are proposed:

- Clearing or disturbing suitable roosting habitat, as defined above, at any time of year,
- Any activity in or near the entrance to a cave or mine,
- Mining, deep excavation, or underground work within 0.25 miles of a cave or mine,
- Construction of one or more wind turbines, or
- Demolition or reconstruction of human-made structures that are known to be used by bats based on observations of roosting bats, bats emerging at dusk, or guano deposits or stains.

*If none of the above activities are proposed*, project proponents can conclude the proposed activities will have **no effect** on the northern long-eared bat. Concurrence from the Service is not required for **No**

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**Effect** determinations. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records.

*If any of the above activities are proposed*, and the northern long-eared bat appears on the user's species list, the federal project user will be directed to either the range-wide northern long-eared bat D-key or the Federal Highways Administration, Federal Railways Administration, and Federal Transit Administration Indiana bat/ Northern long-eared bat D-key, depending on the type of project and federal agency involvement. Similar to the Minnesota-Wisconsin D-key, these d-keys helps to determine if prohibited take might occur and, if not, will generate an automated verification letter.

*Please note:* On November 30, 2022, the Service published a proposal final rule to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. On January 26, 2023, the Service published a 60-day extension for the final reclassification rule in the Federal Register, moving the effective listing date from January 30, 2023, to March 31, 2023. This extension will provide stakeholders and the public time to preview interim guidance and consultation tools before the rule becomes effective. When available, the tools will be available on the Service's northern long-eared bat website (<https://www.fws.gov/species/northern-long-eared-bat-myotis-septentrionalis>). Once the final rule goes into effect on March 31, 2023, the 4(d) D-key will no longer be available (4(d) rules are not available for federally endangered species) and will be replaced with a new Range-wide NLEB D-key (range-wide d-key). For projects not completed by March 31, 2023, that were previously reviewed under the 4(d) d-key, there may be a need for reinitiation of consultation. For these ongoing projects previously reviewed under the 4(d) d-key that may result in incidental take of the northern long-eared bat, we recommend you review your project using the new range-wide d-key once available. If your project does not comply with the range-wide d-key, it may be eligible for use of the Interim (formal) Consultation framework (framework). The framework is intended to facilitate the transition from the 4(d) rule to typical Section 7 consultation procedures for federally endangered species and will be available only until spring 2024. Again, when available, these tools (new range-wide d-key and framework) will be available on the Service's [northern long-eared bat website](#).

### **Whooping Crane**

Whooping crane is designated as a non-essential experimental population in Wisconsin and consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act is only required if project activities will occur within a National Wildlife Refuge or National Park. If project activities are proposed on lands outside of a National Wildlife Refuge or National Park, then you are not required to consult. For additional information on this designation and consultation requirements, please review "[Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Whooping Cranes in the Eastern United States](#)."

### **Other Trust Resources and Activities**

*Bald and Golden Eagles* - Although the bald eagle has been removed from the endangered species list, this species and the golden eagle are protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Should bald or golden eagles occur within or near the project area please contact our office for further coordination. For communication and wind energy projects, please refer to additional guidelines below.

*Migratory Birds* - The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Service. The Service has the responsibility under the MBTA to proactively prevent the

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mortality of migratory birds whenever possible and we encourage implementation of [recommendations that minimize potential impacts to migratory birds](#). Such measures include clearing forested habitat outside the nesting season (generally March 1 to August 31) or conducting nest surveys prior to clearing to avoid injury to eggs or nestlings.

*Communication Towers* - Construction of new communications towers (including radio, television, cellular, and microwave) creates a potentially significant impact on migratory birds, especially some 350 species of night-migrating birds. However, the Service has developed [voluntary guidelines for minimizing impacts](#).

*Transmission Lines* - Migratory birds, especially large species with long wingspans, heavy bodies, and poor maneuverability can also collide with power lines. In addition, mortality can occur when birds, particularly hawks, eagles, kites, falcons, and owls, attempt to perch on uninsulated or unguarded power poles. To minimize these risks, please refer to [guidelines](#) developed by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee and the Service. Implementation of these measures is especially important along sections of lines adjacent to wetlands or other areas that support large numbers of raptors and migratory birds.

*Wind Energy* - To minimize impacts to migratory birds and bats, wind energy projects should follow the Service's [Wind Energy Guidelines](#). In addition, please refer to the Service's [Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance](#), which provides guidance for conserving bald and golden eagles in the course of siting, constructing, and operating wind energy facilities.

#### **State Department of Natural Resources Coordination**

While it is not required for your Federal section 7 consultation, please note that additional state endangered or threatened species may also have the potential to be impacted. Please contact the Minnesota or Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for information on state listed species that may be present in your proposed project area.

##### *Minnesota*

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Endangered Resources Review Homepage](#)

Email: [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us)

##### *Wisconsin*

[Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Endangered Resources Review Homepage](#)

Email: [DNRERReview@wi.gov](mailto:DNRERReview@wi.gov)

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. Please feel free to contact our office with questions or for additional information.

#### Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
  - USFWS National Wildlife Refuges and Fish Hatcheries
  - Migratory Birds
  - Wetlands
-

## **OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST**

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

**Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office**

3815 American Blvd East

Bloomington, MN 55425-1659

(952) 858-0793

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2023-0075884

Project Name: Sherco Solar 3

Project Type: Power Gen - Solar

Project Description: This is a request for an updated official species list for the project area which now includes collection lines. Previous project code: 2023-0059581

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@45.4248243,-94.00584119613012,14z>



Counties: Sherburne County, Minnesota

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## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 4 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries<sup>1</sup>, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

### MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045</a>	Endangered
Tricolored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515</a>	Proposed Endangered

### BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
Whooping Crane <i>Grus americana</i> Population: U.S.A. (AL, AR, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NC, NM, OH, SC, TN, UT, VA, WI, WV, western half of WY) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/758">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/758</a>	Experimental Population, Non- Essential

### INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743</a>	Candidate

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## **CRITICAL HABITATS**

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

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# **USFWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LANDS AND FISH HATCHERIES**

Any activity proposed on lands managed by the [National Wildlife Refuge](#) system must undergo a 'Compatibility Determination' conducted by the Refuge. Please contact the individual Refuges to discuss any questions or concerns.

THERE ARE NO REFUGE LANDS OR FISH HATCHERIES WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA.

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## MIGRATORY BIRDS

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act<sup>1</sup> and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act<sup>2</sup>.

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described [below](#).

- 
1. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
  2. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.
  3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

**The birds listed below are birds of particular concern either because they occur on the [USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\) list](#) or warrant special attention in your project location.** To learn more about the levels of concern for birds on your list and how this list is generated, see the FAQ [below](#). This is not a list of every bird you may find in this location, nor a guarantee that every bird on this list will be found in your project area. To see exact locations of where birders and the general public have sighted birds in and around your project area, visit the [E-bird data mapping tool](#) (Tip: enter your location, desired date range and a species on your list). For projects that occur off the Atlantic Coast, additional maps and models detailing the relative occurrence and abundance of bird species on your list are available. Links to additional information about Atlantic Coast birds, and other important information about your migratory bird list, including how to properly interpret and use your migratory bird report, can be found [below](#).

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, click on the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY at the top of your list to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities.	Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3093">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3093</a>	Breeds May 15 to Aug 20

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
<p><b>Black-billed Cuckoo</b> <i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9399">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9399</a></p>	Breeds May 15 to Oct 10
<p><b>Canada Warbler</b> <i>Cardellina canadensis</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.</p>	Breeds May 20 to Aug 10
<p><b>Chimney Swift</b> <i>Chaetura pelagica</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.</p>	Breeds Mar 15 to Aug 25
<p><b>Golden-winged Warbler</b> <i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8745">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8745</a></p>	Breeds May 1 to Jul 20
<p><b>Henslow's Sparrow</b> <i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3941">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3941</a></p>	Breeds May 1 to Aug 31
<p><b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b> <i>Tringa flavipes</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679</a></p>	Breeds elsewhere
<p><b>Long-eared Owl</b> <i>asio otus</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3631">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3631</a></p>	Breeds Mar 1 to Jul 15
<p><b>Red-headed Woodpecker</b> <i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.</p>	Breeds May 10 to Sep 10
<p><b>Ruddy Turnstone</b> <i>Arenaria interpres morinella</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA</p>	Breeds elsewhere
<p><b>Rusty Blackbird</b> <i>Euphagus carolinus</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA</p>	Breeds elsewhere
<p><b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b> <i>Limnodromus griseus</i>            This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.  <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9480">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9480</a></p>	Breeds elsewhere



NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Wood Thrush <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds May 10 to Aug 31

## PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read and understand the FAQ "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

### Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is  $0.25/0.25 = 1$ ; at week 20 it is  $0.05/0.25 = 0.2$ .
3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

### Breeding Season (■)

Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

### Survey Effort (|)

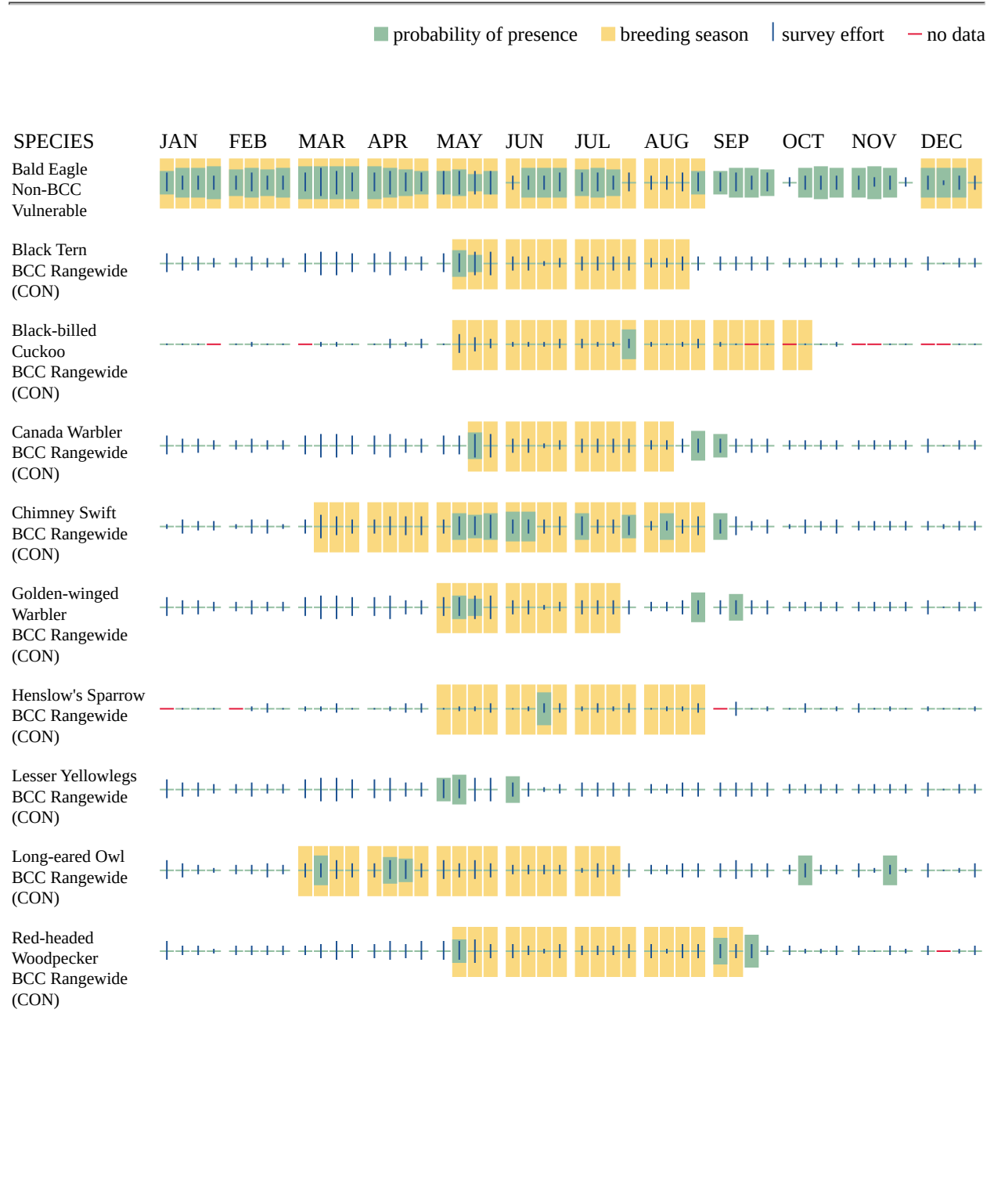
Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

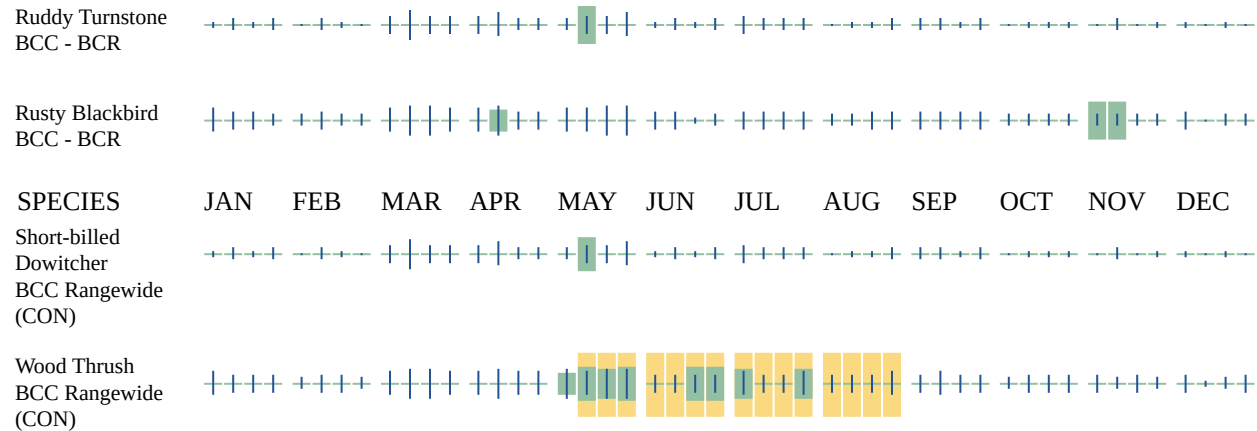
### No Data (-)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

### Survey Timeframe

Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.





Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Birds of Conservation Concern <https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-birds/species>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incident-take-migratory-birds>
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf>

## MIGRATORY BIRDS FAQ

**Tell me more about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds.**

[Nationwide Conservation Measures](#) describes measures that can help avoid and minimize impacts to all birds at any location year round. Implementation of these measures is particularly important when birds are most likely to occur in the project area. When birds may be breeding in the area, identifying the locations of any active nests and avoiding their destruction is a very helpful impact minimization measure. To see when birds are most likely to occur and be breeding in your project area, view the Probability of Presence Summary. [Additional measures](#) or [permits](#) may be advisable depending on the type of activity you are conducting and the type of infrastructure or bird species present on your project site.

**What does IPaC use to generate the list of migratory birds that potentially occur in my specified location?**

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS [Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\)](#) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#)

requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [Rapid Avian Information Locator \(RAIL\) Tool](#).

### **What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs for the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?**

The probability of presence graphs associated with your migratory bird list are based on data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). This data is derived from a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#).

Probability of presence data is continuously being updated as new and better information becomes available. To learn more about how the probability of presence graphs are produced and how to interpret them, go the Probability of Presence Summary and then click on the "Tell me about these graphs" link.

### **How do I know if a bird is breeding, wintering or migrating in my area?**

To see what part of a particular bird's range your project area falls within (i.e. breeding, wintering, migrating or year-round), you may query your location using the [RAIL Tool](#) and look at the range maps provided for birds in your area at the bottom of the profiles provided for each bird in your results. If a bird on your migratory bird species list has a breeding season associated with it, if that bird does occur in your project area, there may be nests present at some point within the timeframe specified. If "Breeds elsewhere" is indicated, then the bird likely does not breed in your project area.

### **What are the levels of concern for migratory birds?**

Migratory birds delivered through IPaC fall into the following distinct categories of concern:

1. "BCC Rangewide" birds are [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) that are of concern throughout their range anywhere within the USA (including Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands);
2. "BCC - BCR" birds are BCCs that are of concern only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA; and
3. "Non-BCC - Vulnerable" birds are not BCC species in your project area, but appear on your list either because of the [Eagle Act](#) requirements (for eagles) or (for non-eagles) potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities (e.g. offshore energy development or longline fishing).

Although it is important to try to avoid and minimize impacts to all birds, efforts should be made, in particular, to avoid and minimize impacts to the birds on this list, especially eagles and BCC species of rangewide concern. For more information on conservation measures you can implement to help avoid and minimize migratory bird impacts and requirements for eagles, please see the FAQs for these topics.

### **Details about birds that are potentially affected by offshore projects**

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For additional details about the relative occurrence and abundance of both individual bird species and groups of bird species within your project area off the Atlantic Coast, please visit the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#). The Portal also offers data and information about other taxa besides birds that may be helpful to you in your project review. Alternately, you may download the bird model results files underlying the portal maps through the [NOAA NCCOS Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Marine Bird Distributions and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf](#) project webpage.

Bird tracking data can also provide additional details about occurrence and habitat use throughout the year, including migration. Models relying on survey data may not include this information. For additional information on marine bird tracking data, see the [Diving Bird Study](#) and the [nanotag studies](#) or contact [Caleb Spiegel](#) or [Pam Loring](#).

### **What if I have eagles on my list?**

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to [obtain a permit](#) to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur.

### **Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report**

The migratory bird list generated is not a list of all birds in your project area, only a subset of birds of priority concern. To learn more about how your list is generated, and see options for identifying what other birds may be in your project area, please see the FAQ "What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location". Please be aware this report provides the "probability of presence" of birds within the 10 km grid cell(s) that overlap your project; not your exact project footprint. On the graphs provided, please also look carefully at the survey effort (indicated by the black vertical bar) and for the existence of the "no data" indicator (a red horizontal bar). A high survey effort is the key component. If the survey effort is high, then the probability of presence score can be viewed as more dependable. In contrast, a low survey effort bar or no data bar means a lack of data and, therefore, a lack of certainty about presence of the species. This list is not perfect; it is simply a starting point for identifying what birds of concern have the potential to be in your project area, when they might be there, and if they might be breeding (which means nests might be present). The list helps you know what to look for to confirm presence, and helps guide you in knowing when to implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts from your project activities, should presence be confirmed. To learn more about conservation measures, visit the FAQ "Tell me about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds" at the bottom of your migratory bird trust resources page.

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## WETLANDS

Impacts to [NWI wetlands](#) and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District](#).

Please note that the NWI data being shown may be out of date. We are currently working to update our NWI data set. We recommend you verify these results with a site visit to determine the actual extent of wetlands on site.

WETLAND INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE WHEN THIS SPECIES LIST WAS GENERATED.  
PLEASE VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.FWS.GOV/WETLANDS/DATA/MAPPER.HTML](https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html) OR CONTACT THE FIELD OFFICE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

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## **IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Agency: Minnesota Department of Commerce Public Utilities  
Name: Genesis Mickel  
Address: 12701 Whitewater Drive, Suite 300  
City: Minnetonka  
State: MN  
Zip: 55343  
Email: genesis.mickel@westwoodps.com  
Phone: 8889375150

## **LEAD AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Lead Agency: Minnesota Department of Commerce Public Utilities

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# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office  
3815 American Blvd East  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1659  
Phone: (952) 858-0793 Fax: (952) 646-2873

In Reply Refer To:  
Project code: 2023-0075884  
Project Name: Sherco Solar 3

May 01, 2023

Federal Nexus: no  
Federal Action Agency (if applicable): Minnesota Department of Commerce Public Utilities

**Subject:** Technical assistance for 'Sherco Solar 3'

Dear Genesis Mickel:

This letter records your determination using the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on May 01, 2023, for 'Sherco Solar 3' (here forward, Project). This project has been assigned Project Code 2023-0075884 and all future correspondence should clearly reference this number. **Please carefully review this letter. Your Endangered Species Act (Act) requirements are not complete.**

### **Ensuring Accurate Determinations When Using IPaC**

The Service developed the IPaC system and associated species' determination keys in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and based on a standing analysis. All information submitted by the Project proponent into the IPaC must accurately represent the full scope and details of the Project. Failure to accurately represent or implement the Project as detailed in IPaC or the Northern Long-eared Bat Rangewide Determination Key (Dkey), invalidates this letter.

### **Determination for the Northern Long-Eared Bat**

Based upon your IPaC submission and a standing analysis, your project is not reasonably certain to cause incidental take of the northern long-eared bat. Unless the Service advises you within 15 days of the date of this letter that your IPaC-assisted determination was incorrect, this letter verifies that the Action is not likely to result in unauthorized take of the northern long-eared bat.



### **Other Species and Critical Habitat that May be Present in the Action Area**

The IPaC-assisted determination for the northern long-eared bat does not apply to the following ESA-protected species and/or critical habitat that also may occur in your Action area:

- Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* Candidate
- Tricolored Bat *Perimyotis subflavus* Proposed Endangered
- Whooping Crane *Grus americana* Experimental Population, Non-Essential

You may coordinate with our Office to determine whether the Action may cause prohibited take of the animal species and/or critical habitat listed above. Note that if a new species is listed that may be affected by the identified action before it is complete, additional review is recommended to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

### **Next Steps**

Coordination with the Service is complete. This letter serves as technical assistance. All conservation measures should be implemented as proposed. Thank you for considering federally listed species during your project planning.

We are uncertain where the northern long-eared bat occurs on the landscape outside of known locations. Because of the steep declines in the species and vast amount of available and suitable forest habitat, the presence of suitable forest habitat alone is a far less reliable predictor of their presence. Based on the best available information, most suitable habitat is now expected to be unoccupied. During the interim period, while we are working on potential methods to address this uncertainty, we conclude take is not reasonably certain to occur in areas of suitable habitat where presence has not been documented.

If no changes occur with the Project or there are no updates on listed species, no further consultation/coordination for this project is required for the northern long-eared bat. However, the Service recommends that project proponents re-evaluate the Project in IPaC if: 1) the scope, timing, duration, or location of the Project changes (includes any project changes or amendments); 2) new information reveals the Project may impact (positively or negatively) federally listed species or designated critical habitat; or 3) a new species is listed, or critical habitat designated. If any of the above conditions occurs, additional coordination with the Service should take place before project implements any changes which are final or commits additional resources.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or need further assistance, please contact the Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office and reference Project Code 2023-0075884 associated with this Project.

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**Action Description**

You provided to IPaC the following name and description for the subject Action.

**1. Name**

Sherco Solar 3

**2. Description**

The following description was provided for the project 'Sherco Solar 3':

This is a request for an updated official species list for the project area which now includes collection lines. Previous project code: 2023-0059581

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@45.4248243,-94.00584119613012,14z>



## DETERMINATION KEY RESULT

Based on the answers provided, the proposed Action is consistent with a determination of “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” for the Endangered northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*).

## QUALIFICATION INTERVIEW

1. Does the proposed project include, or is it reasonably certain to cause, intentional take of the northern long-eared bat or any other listed species?

**Note:** Intentional take is defined as take that is the intended result of a project. Intentional take could refer to research, direct species management, surveys, and/or studies that include intentional handling/encountering, harassment, collection, or capturing of any individual of a federally listed threatened, endangered or proposed species?

No

2. Do you have post-white nose syndrome occurrence data that indicates that northern long-eared bats (NLEB) are likely to be present in the action area?

Bat occurrence data may include identification of NLEBs in hibernacula, capture of NLEBs, tracking of NLEBs to roost trees, or confirmed acoustic detections. With this question, we are looking for data that, for some reason, may have not yet been made available to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

No

3. Does any component of the action involve construction or operation of wind turbines?

**Note:** For federal actions, answer ‘yes’ if the construction or operation of wind power facilities is either (1) part of the federal action or (2) would not occur but for a federal agency action (federal permit, funding, etc.).

No

4. Is the proposed action authorized, permitted, licensed, funded, or being carried out by a Federal agency in whole or in part?

No

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# **PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE**

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## **IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Agency: Minnesota Department of Commerce Public Utilities

Name: Genesis Mickel

Address: 12701 Whitewater Drive, Suite 300

City: Minnetonka

State: MN

Zip: 55343

Email: genesis.mickel@westwoodps.com

Phone: 8889375150

## **LEAD AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Lead Agency: Minnesota Department of Commerce Public Utilities

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# **Appendix K**

## **Soil Map Units and Characteristics**



**Appendix K**  
**Soil Map Units and Characteristics for the Sherco 3 Solar Project**

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres	Farmland Classification	Drainage Class	Surface Texture	WEG	Kw	Slope Range	Hydric Rating	Non-Irrigated LCC
<b>Solar Facility</b>										
261	Isan sandy loam, depressional, 0 to 1 percent slopes	14.5	Not prime farmland	Very poorly drained	sandy	3	0.2	0-5	Yes	6w
768	Mosford sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	20.4	Farmland of statewide importance	Somewhat excessively drained	sandy	3	0.2	0-5	No	3s
1288	Seelyeville-Markey complex, ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes	9.6	Not prime farmland	Very poorly drained	not used	8	0.2	0-5	Yes	8w
258C	Sandberg loamy sand, 2 to 12 percent slopes	6.6	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.1	5-8	No	6s
258E	Sandberg loamy coarse sand, 6 to 30 percent slopes	4.4	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.15	>8-15	No	7s
D20A	Isan-Isan, frequently ponded, complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes	1.6	Not prime farmland	Poorly drained	sandy	3	0.2	0-5	Yes	4w
D62A	Hubbard-Mosford complex, Mississippi River Valley, 0 to 3 percent slopes	1,320.7	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67A	Hubbard loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	17.0	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67B	Hubbard loamy sand, 1 to 6 percent slopes	175.4	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67C	Hubbard loamy sand, 2 to 12 percent slopes	109.5	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	5-8	No	6s
	<b>Solar Facility Subtotal</b>	<b>1,680.0</b>								
<b>Collection Corridors</b>										
260	Duelm loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.5	Not prime farmland	Moderately well drained	sandy	2	0.17	0-5	No	4s
261	Isan sandy loam, depressional, 0 to 1 percent slopes	0.8	Not prime farmland	Very poorly drained	sandy	3	0.20	0-5	Yes	6w
708	Rushlake coarse sand, 1 to 4 percent slopes	0.9	Not prime farmland	Moderately well drained	not used	1	0.02	0-5	No	4s
258C	Sandberg loamy sand, 2 to 12 percent slopes	10.1	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.10	5-8	No	6s
258E	Sandberg loamy coarse sand, 6 to 30 percent slopes	0.0	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.15	>8-15	No	7s
D20A	Isan-Isan, frequently ponded, complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.3	Not prime farmland	Poorly drained	sandy	3	0.20	0-5	Yes	4w
D62A	Hubbard-Mosford complex, Mississippi River Valley, 0 to 3 percent slopes	60.2	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67A	Hubbard loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.1	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67B	Hubbard loamy sand, 1 to 6 percent slopes	6.5	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	0-5	No	4s
D67C	Hubbard loamy sand, 2 to 12 percent slopes	15.3	Not prime farmland	Excessively drained	sandy	2	0.02	5-8	No	6s
	<b>Collection Corridor Subtotal</b>	<b>102.0</b>								
	<b>Project Area Total</b>	<b>1,780.0</b>								

<sup>1</sup> Acreages for Collection Corridors U09 and U09 Alt are within D62A - Hubbard-Mosford complex, Mississippi River Valley, 0 to 3 percent slopes.

\*Note: Addends may not sum due to rounding.