

Memorandum

To: Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC)

From: Karen Chandler and Karen Wold

Subject: Item 5A. Blue Line LRT - Process for Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Decisions

BCWMC January 21, 2016 Meeting Agenda

Date: January 13, 2016

Item 5A. Blue Line LRT – Process for Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Decisions

Recommendations:

- i. Approve Notice of Decision for Blue Line LRT wetland boundaries and types (Attachment F)
- ii. Discuss future decision points regarding Blue Line LRT WCA tasks

Background

The BCWMC is the Local Government Unit (LGU) responsible for administration of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for projects within the Bassett Creek Watershed in the cities of Robbinsdale, Medicine Lake, and St. Louis Park. For general information about WCA, see fact sheet in Attachment A from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) website.

As the LGU, the BCWMC must follow Notice of Application and Notice of Decision procedures for WCA applications. This ensures adherence to the decision-notification timeline established by Minnesota Statute 15.99 (MS 15.99) and allows for the appeal process, if necessary. According to MS 15.99, an agency must approve or deny a completed application within 60 days of submittal. See statute and rules (MN Rules 8420) here:

- https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=15.99
- https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8420.0255

Important timelines within the WCA process include:

- Within 15 business days of receiving an application, the LGU must determine if an application is complete. If the application is incomplete, the permit applicant needs to be notified of missing items within 15 business days of receiving an application. Within 15 business days of receiving a complete application, the LGU needs to send the application, along with a Notice of Application, to the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), applicant, and agent as well as individual members of the public who request a copy for comments. Representatives and individuals receiving the application will have at least 15 business days from the date of receiving the Notice of Application to provide comments to the LGU.
- Within the comment period, the TEP may meet to discuss the project or to review wetland boundaries. If appropriate, the LGU will prepare TEP Findings reports and obtain TEP signatures.

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• The LGU must make a decision within 60 days of receiving the complete application. If the 60-day timeframe cannot be met, a written extension must be provided to the applicant prior to the end of the 60-day period, with an explanation of why an extension is needed.

 A decision is documented with a Notice of Decision. The Notice of Decision must be sent to the applicant, agent, and TEP within 10 business days from the date of the decision.

WCA decisions can include wetland boundary and type, no-loss, exemption, sequencing, replacement plan, and banking plan decisions.

The BCWMC does not often make WCA decisions; however, the BCWMC must now make WCA decisions that affect the City of Robbinsdale as part of the preliminary work/planning for the Blue Line LRT project.

As requested by the cities of Crystal, Golden Valley and Minneapolis, the BCWMC Engineer is also performing WCA administration duties on behalf of these cities along the Blue Line LRT project route. In this role, the BCWMC Engineer is the lead reviewer and point person, and prepares WCA decision recommendations and documentation for the cities' review. However, the cities are responsible for making formal WCA decisions and submitting WCA documentation to the TEP, the applicant, and the agent. Because the cities retained their WCA LGU decision-making authority, the Commission does not approve the WCA decisions in those cities. (Note: the BCWMC Engineer found that there are no wetlands in Crystal within the Blue Line LRT wetland evaluation area project boundary. The BCWMC Engineer continues to provide WCA administration duties for Golden Valley and Minneapolis.)

The maps in Attachment B show the location of the proposed Blue Line LRT project and the wetland locations and delineations in Robbinsdale, along with Crystal (none), Golden Valley and Minneapolis.

Blue Line LRT Wetland Boundary and Type Approval

Often, the first WCA application is a request for LGU approval of wetland boundary and type. At the January Commission meeting, the BCWMC must decide whether to approve the wetland boundaries and wetland types for the wetlands delineated for the Blue Line LRT project. The BCWMC Engineer recommends the Commission approve the wetland boundaries and wetlands types, as presented in the most recently updated/edited wetland delineation report and summarized in the attached updated/revised wetland summary table (Attachments C and D, respectively, attached with online materials). The BCWMC Engineer previously reviewed the wetland boundaries and wetland types in the field, reviewed the draft wetland delineation report, submitted the attached Notice of Application (Attachment E) after receiving a complete wetland delineation report, and requested and obtained edits to the wetland summary table. The Notice of Application (Attachment E) states that the Commission will make a decision on the wetland boundaries and types at their January 21, 2016 meeting. If the Commission does not make a decision at their January meeting, a 60-day extension would need to be issued.

If the Commission approves the wetland boundaries and types, the Chair or Acting Chair should sign the attached Notice of Decision (Attachment F) form during/after the meeting.

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Future Blue Line LRT WCA Decision Points

The next application submitted for the Blue Line LRT project will be a request for the LGU (BCWMC) to determine that some wetlands are "incidental." Incidental wetlands are wetlands that are created out of upland, not for the purpose of creating a wetland. Incidental wetlands are not regulated under the WCA and can be documented on the Notice of Decision form as a no-loss decision. During the Blue Line LRT pre-application meeting in December 2015, the applicant described that they will request incidental determinations for some wetlands. The BCWMC has not received that application yet.

An application will also be submitted for the Blue Line LRT project requesting approval of the sequencing and wetland replacement plan. There is usually at least one TEP meeting during the review period for this application.

The BCWMC could consider these options regarding future WCA decision-making authority for the Blue Line LRT project (and future projects):

- The Commission (i.e., at their regular meetings) makes all WCA decisions
- The Commission delegates some of the WCA decisions to BCWMC staff (Engineer or Administrator)
- The Commission delegates all of the WCA decisions to BCWMC staff (Engineer or Administrator)

The BCWMC Engineer's assistance with WCA administration typically includes reviewing applications, preparing and sending out Notices, conducting and participating in TEP meetings, preparing TEP Findings reports, obtaining signatures, and providing recommendations for BCWMC decisions.

In addition, the BCWMC could delegate some WCA decisions to BCWMC staff (BCWMC Engineer or Administrator). To do this requires completion and signing of a resolution delegating WCA authority. For example, the BCWMC might wish to delegate wetland boundary and type, no-loss, and exemption decisions to BCWMC staff, but retain the authority for sequencing, replacement plan, and banking plan decisions.

An example resolution is found in Attachment G. Example forms can also be found on the BWSR website http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wca/index.html. If some decisions are delegated to BCWMC staff and some decisions are retained by the BCWMC, the BCWMC should designate on the resolution the decisions that are to be delegated.

Attachments:

A: Wetland Conservation Act Fact Sheet

B: Location Map and Wetland Delineation Maps

C: Wetland Delineation Report (online only)

D: Revised/Updated Summary Table (online only)

E: Notice of Application

F: Notice of Decision

G: Example Delegation Resolution

Attachment A

Home Easements Grants Resource Management and Planning Conservation Implementation Wetlands

Wetlands - Wetland Conservation Act Fact Sheet

Purpose:

To maintain and protect Minnesota's wetlands and the benefits they provide. To retain the benefits of wetlands and reach the legislation's goal of nonet-loss of wetlands, the Wetland Conservation Act requires anyone proposing to drain, fill, or excavate a wetland first to try to avoid disturbing the wetland; second, to try to minimize any impact on the wetland; and, finally, to replace any lost wetland acres, functions, and values. Certain wetland activities are exempt from the act, allowing projects with minimal impact or projects located on land where certain pre-established land uses are present to proceed without regulation.

History:

In 1991, reacting to public concern about Minnesota's disappearing wetlands, the Minnesota Legislature approved and Governor Arne Carlson signed the Wetland Conservation Act, one of the most sweeping wetlands protection laws in the country.

An interim program became effective January 1, 1992. On January 1, 1994, the full program began. The Legislature has amended the WCA many times, mostly to accommodate the varying needs of the different geographic areas of Minnesota.

Administration:

Local government units—cities, counties, watershed management organizations, soil and water conservation districts, and townships—implement the act locally. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources administers the act statewide, and the Department of Natural Resources enforces it.

Benefits:

- The Wetland Conservation Act recognizes a number of wetland benefits deemed important, including:
- Water quality, including filtering pollutants out of surface water and groundwater, using nutrients that would otherwise pollute public waters, trapping sediments, protecting shoreline, and recharging groundwater supplies;
- Floodwater and storm water retention, including reducing the potential for flooding in the watershed;
- Public recreation and education, including hunting and fishing areas, wildlife viewing areas, and nature areas;
- Commercial benefits, including wild rice and cranberry growing areas and aquaculture areas;
- Fish and wildlife benefits; and
- Low-flow augmentation during times of drought.

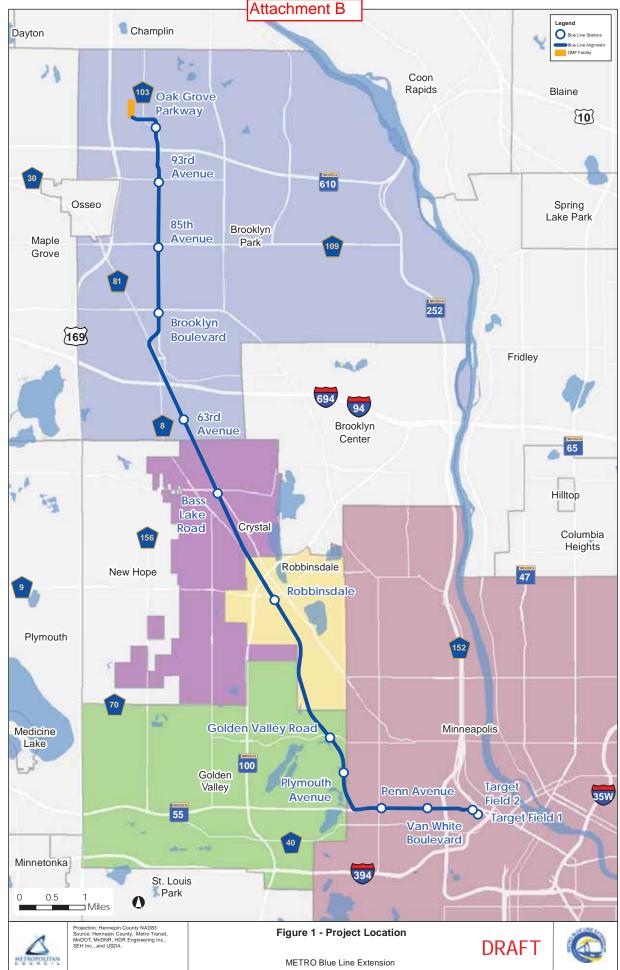
BACK to Wetlands page

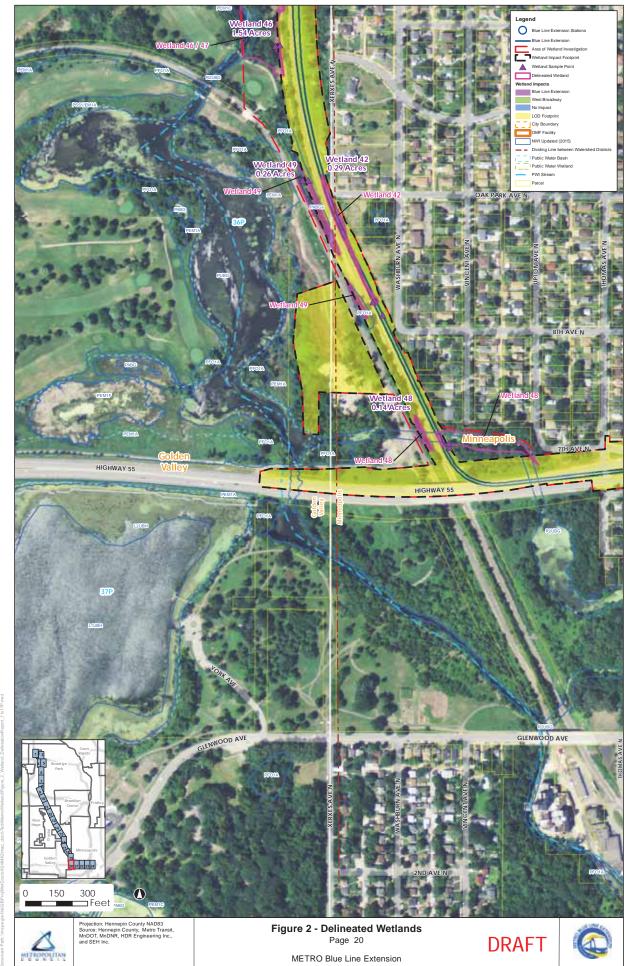
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155 | (651) 296-3767 | Fax (651) 297-5615 | TTY (800) 627-3529

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Attachment E

Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act **Notice of Application**

Local Government Unit (LGU)

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC)

Address 7800 Golden Valley Road Golden Valley, MN 55427

1. PROJECT INFORMATION					
Applicant Name	Project Name		Date of	Application	
Metropolitan Council	Blue Line Light Rail Exter	nsion (LRT)	Application	Number	
_	_		12/11/15		
Type of Application (check all that apply):					
Wetland Boundary or Type	☐ No-Loss	Exemp	tion [Sequencing	
☐ Replacement Plan ☐ Banking Plan					

Summary and description of proposed project (attach additional sheets as necessary):

On behalf of the Metropolitan Council, SEH Inc. has submitted a wetland delineation for the Blue Line Light Rail Extension project located within Hennepin County in Brooklyn Park, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis. The BCWMC is the WCA LGU for the portion of the project within the City of Robbinsdale and within the Bassett Creek Watershed, which is the area south of 36th Ave N. Wetlands associated with this project within the BCWMC jurisdiction are: W31, W32, W33, W34, W35, W36, W44, and W45. Note that W34 straddles both Robbinsdale and Golden Valley. For wetland delineation purposes, the BCWMC will review W34. The following wetland types were designated for these wetlands:

Wetland ID	Field Verified Cowardin	Eggers & Reed Class.	Circ. 39 Class.	Wetland Sheet Number
W31	PSS1A	Shrub Carr	Type 6	16
W32	PFO1A	Seas. flooded basin	Type 1	17
W33	PUBGx	Open Water	Type 5	17
W34	PEM1F	Deep Marsh	Type 4	17
W35	PFO1A	Seas. flooded basin	Type 1	17
W36	PSS1A	Shrub Carr	Type 6	17
W44	PUBGx	Open Water	Type 5	16
W45	PFO1A	Seas. flooded basin	Type 1	16

The preliminary wetland maps and wetland data forms were submitted on 6/22/15 in preparation for a site review of the wetland boundaries which took place on 6/29/15. Present at the site review were Ben Meyer with BWSR, Stacey Lijewski with Hennepin County, Melissa Jenny with the USACE, Adam Arvidson with the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board, Jeff Olson with SEH for the applicant, and Karen Wold with Barr for the City of Minneapolis, Bassett Creek WMC portion of Robbinsdale, and Golden Valley. Wetland edits were completed based on initial comments and a complete wetland delineation report was submitted on 12/11/15.

During a TEP meeting on 12/8/15, each LGU clarified that they would each retain jurisdiction for their portions of this project.

BWSR Forms 7-1-10 Page 1 of 3

2. APPLICATION REVIEW AND DECISION

Signing and mailing of this completed form to the appropriate recipients in accordance with 8420.0255, Subp. 3 provides notice that an application was made to the LGU under the Wetland Conservation Act as specified above. A copy of the application is attached. Comments can be submitted to:

Name and Title of LGU Contact Person	Comments must be received by (minimum 15		
Karen Wold	business-day comment period):		
Senior Environmental Scientist	January 12, 2016		
Address (if different than LGU)	Date, time, and location of decision:		
Barr Engineering Co.	January 21, 2016 8:30 am		
4300 MarketPointe Drive	Plymouth City Hall, Medicine Lake Room		
Minneapolis, MN 55435	3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN		
Phone Number and E-mail Address	Decision-maker for this application:		
952-832-2707	Staff		
kwold@barr.com	☐ Governing Board or Council		
Signature: Date: Date:			
 SWCD TEP member: Stacey Lijewski BWSR TEP member: Ben Meyer LGU TEP member (if different than LGU Contact): DNR TEP member: Leslie Parris, Kate Drewry DNR Regional Office (if different than DNR TEP member) WD or WMO (if applicable): Laura Jester (BCWMC), Jim Herbert (Barr) Applicant (notice only) and Landowner (if different) agent Jeff Olson (SEH) City of Robbinsdale: Richard McCoy Members of the public who requested notice (notice only): 			
Corps of Engineers Project Manager (notice only) Melissa Jenny			

4. MAILING INFORMATION

For a list of BWSR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/contact/WCA_areas.pdf

BWSR Wetland Bank Coordinator (wetland bank plan applications only)

For a list of DNR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wca/DNR_TEP_contacts.pdf

➤ Department of Natural Resources Regional Offices:

NW Region:	NE Region:	Central Region:	Southern Region:
Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.
Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources
2115 Birchmont Beach Rd. NE	1201 E. Hwy. 2	1200 Warner Road	261 Hwy. 15 South
Bemidji, MN 56601	Grand Rapids, MN 55744	St. Paul, MN 55106	New Ulm, MN 56073

For a map of DNR Administrative Regions, see: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/dnr_regions.pdf

For a list of Corps of Project Managers: www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory/default.asp?pageid=687 or send to:

US Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District, ATTN: OP-R 180 Fifth St. East, Suite 700 St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

For Wetland Bank Plan applications, also send a copy of the application to:

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Wetland Bank Coordinator

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5. ATTACHMENTS
In addition to the application, list any other attachments:

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Attachment F Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act **Notice of Decision**

Local Government Unit (LGU)

Bassett Creek Watershed Management

Address 7800 Golden Valley Road

Commission (BCWMC)		Golden van	ey, MIN 33427	
1. PROJECT INFORMATION				
Applicant Name Metropolitan Council	Project Name Blue Line Light Rail E (LRT)		Date of Application 12/11/15	Application Number
Attach site locator map.				
Type of Decision:				
Wetland Boundary or Type	☐ No-Loss	Exemptio	n 🗌	Sequencing
Replacement	Plan	Banking Pl	an	
2. LOCAI	L GOVERNMENT UN	NIT DECISIO	ON	
Date of Decision: 1/21/16				
⊠ Approved □ A _l	pproved with conditions (include below)		Denied
LGU Findings and Conclusions (attac	ch additional sheets as neo	cessary):		
On behalf of the Metropolitan Councilight Rail Extension project located of Golden Valley, and Minneapolis. The City of Robbinsdale and within the B Wetlands associated with this project W36, W44, and W45. Note that W34 delineation purposes, the BCWMC has the preliminary wetland maps and w review of the wetland boundaries whi with BWSR, Stacey Lijewski with He with the Minneapolis Park and Rec B Barr for the City of Minneapolis, Bas Wetland edits were completed based submitted on 12/11/15. During a TEP meeting on 12/8/15, ea portions of this project. During the comment period, Karen W designations. Based on these commer which was provided to the TEP on 1/2 received during the comment period.	within Hennepin County is a BCWMC is the WCA Leassett Creek Watershed, within the BCWMC juris straddles both Robbinsda as reviewed W34. The strand data forms were suich took place on 6/29/15. The st	n Brooklyn Par GU for the port which is the are sdiction are: Walle and Golden behitted on 6/2. Present at the Jenny with the Hard for the application of Robbinsdale a complete weth by would each reserved wetland type sed wetland sur an this document	rk, Robbinsdale tion of the project a south of 36th 31, W32, W33, Valley. For we 2/15 in preparasite review wer USACE, Adament, and Karen e, and Golden Vallend delineation tetain jurisdiction revisions and warmary table on the transport of the	e, Crystal, ect within the Ave N. W34, W35, etland tion for a site re Ben Meyer of Arvidson Wold with Valley. The report was performed by the
BCWMC jurisdiction:	merades the following we	mana types and	1 31203 101 WELL	mgs withill

BWSR Forms 7-1-10 Page 1 of 3

Wetland ID	Field Verified Cowardin	Eggers & Reed Class.	Circ. 39 Class.	Basin Size (ac)
W31	PSS1A	Shrub Carr	Туре 6	Part of W32
W32	PFO1A/PEMC/PSS1C	Floodplain forest/shallo marsh/shrub-carr	ow Type 1/ 3/Type	
W33	PUBGx	Open Water	Type 5	7.41
W34	PEM1F	Deep Marsh	Type 4	17.01
W35	PFO1A	Floodplain forest	Type 1	0.85
W36	PSS1A	Shrub Carr	Туре 6	1.39
W44	PUBGx	Open Water	Type 5	0.87
W45	PFO1A	Floodplain forest	Type 1	11.14
Guidance The BCW		tion Reports to the Und boundaries and type	USACE and WC.	egional Supplement, and the 2015 A LGU in Minnesota, Version 2.0.
Bank Acco	Bank Service	ce Area County		Credits Approved for Withdrawal (sq. ft. or nearest .01 acre)
Fi assura		For project-specific LGU must be subm	replacement th	ing: at is not in-advance, a financial U in accordance with MN Rul
the B'	WSR "Declaration of I have been filed with the	Restrictions and Coverence county recorder's or	venants" and "C	must be provided to the LGU that consent to Replacement Wetland e replacement wetland is located.
BWSF		•	•	
BWSF	R has withdrawn the ement plan.	credits from the st	ate wetland ba	
BWSF	R has withdrawn the ement plan. Wetlands may not be	credits from the st	ate wetland ba	nk as specified in the approve
BWSF replace LGU Authorized Signing and Subp. 5 proposition and specified and specifi	R has withdrawn the ement plan. Wetlands may not be norized Signature: and mailing of this completion ovides notice that a decirabove. If additional deta	e impacted until all eted form to the apprecion was made by the ils on the decision ex	ate wetland ba applicable cond copriate recipient e LGU under the	d bank credits, confirmation thank as specified in the approventions have been met! s in accordance with 8420.0255, we Wetland Conservation Act as the provided to the landowner and
BWSF replace LGU Authorized Signing and Subp. 5 proposition and specified and specifi	R has withdrawn the ement plan. Wetlands may not be norized Signature: and mailing of this completion ovides notice that a deci	e impacted until all eted form to the apprecion was made by the ils on the decision ex	ate wetland ba applicable cond copriate recipient e LGU under the	itions have been met! s in accordance with 8420.0255, Wetland Conservation Act as

THIS DECISION ONLY APPLIES TO THE MINNESOTA WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT. Additional approvals or permits from local, state, and federal agencies may be required. Check with all appropriate authorities before commencing work in or near wetlands.

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Applicants proceed at their own risk if work authorized by this decision is started before the time period for appeal (30 days) has expired. If this decision is reversed or revised under appeal, the applicant may be responsible for restoring or replacing all wetland impacts.

This decision is valid for five years from the date of decision unless a longer period is advised by the TEP and specified in this notice of decision.

3. APPEAL OF THIS DECISION

Pursuant to MN Rule 8420.0905, any appeal of this decision can only be commenced by mailing a petition for appeal, including applicable fee, within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the mailing of this Notice to the following as indicated:

Che	ck	on	e	:

Appeal of an LGU staff decision. Send	Appeal of LGU governing body decision. Send
petition and \$ fee (if applicable) to:	petition and \$500 filing fee to:
	Executive Director
	Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
	520 Lafayette Road North
	St. Paul, MN 55155

4. LIST OF ADDRESSEES

\boxtimes	SWCD TEP member: Stacey Lijewski
\boxtimes	BWSR TEP member: Ben Meyer

- DNR TEP member: Leslie Parris, Kate Drewry
- WD or WMO (if applicable): Laura Jester (BCWMC), Jim Herbert (Barr)
- Applicant and Landowner (if different) agent Jeff Olson (SEH)
- City of Robbinsdale: **Richard McCov**
- Corps of Engineers Project Manager Melissa Jenny

5. MAILING INFORMATION

- For a list of BWSR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/aboutbwsr/workareas/WCA areas.pdf
- For a list of DNR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wca/DNR TEP contacts.pdf
- ➤ Department of Natural Resources Regional Offices:

NW Region:	NE Region:	Central Region:	Southern Region:
Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol.
Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources	Div. Ecol. Resources
2115 Birchmont Beach Rd.	1201 E. Hwy. 2	1200 Warner Road	261 Hwy. 15 South
NE	Grand Rapids, MN 55744	St. Paul, MN 55106	New Ulm, MN 56073
Bemidji, MN 56601			

For a map of DNR Administrative Regions, see: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/dnr_regions.pdf For a list of Corps of Project Managers: www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory/default.asp?pageid=687 or send to:

> US Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District, ATTN: OP-R 180 Fifth St. East, Suite 700 St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

For Wetland Bank Plan applications, also send a copy of the application to:

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Wetland Bank Coordinator

520 Lafayette Road North St. Paul, MN 55155	
6. ATTACHMENTS	
In addition to the site locator map, list any other attachments: Updated wetland summary table Wetland delineation maps	
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Example of resolution to delegate WCA functions to LGU staff

A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MINNESOTA WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

{LGU NAME} {Resolution #}

WHEREAS, {*LGU Name*} has accepted the authority and administrative responsibility to implement the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) within the legal boundaries of {*LGU Name*} in accordance with Minnesota Rules, Chapter 8420; and

WHEREAS, {*LGU Name*} is authorized by Minnesota Administrative Rules Part 8420.0200, Subpart 2, Item C, to delegate certain functions with regard to implementation of WCA, including the authority to make decisions on applications, with its staff.

THEREFORE; BE IT RESOLVED by the {*LGU Name*} {*Board of Commissioners*¹}, that decision-making authority for WCA {*exemption, no-loss, wetland boundary and type, sequencing, replacement plan, and wetland banking*²} applications is placed with the {*Position Title*} or their designee.

Adopted this	day of	, 20	
		By:Chair of the {Board of Comm	$\frac{1}{nissioners^{I}}$
$\{Commissioner^{I}\}$		Offered by { Commissioner \(^{I}\)}, adopted by a vote of	, seconded by
meeting of the $\{Boolean Boolean Bool$	ard of Comm	nissioners ¹ } of {LGU Name} on {Date}.	
		Attest:	
		{Staff Name}	
		{Position Title}	

- 1. For a City, Township, or Soil and Water Conservation District, replace "Commissioner" or "Board of Commissioners" with "Councilmember, Supervisor, City Council, Board of Supervisors," etc. as applicable.
- 2. Choose any or all of the listed application types, as applicable.