



Title: Authorization to Execute Contract for Blandings Turtle Survey and Avoidance Plan

Resolution number: 25-081

Prepared by: Name: James McDermond-Spies
Phone: 952-641-4513
jmcdermondspies@minnehahacreek.org

Reviewed by: Name/Title: Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners

Recommended action: Authorization to execute a contract with Stantec to prepare and obtain approval of a Blanding's Turtle avoidance plan

Budget considerations: Fund name and code: Project Maintenance & Land Management, 2-2003-4340
Fund budget: \$72,000.00
Expenditures to date: \$24,484.00
Requested amount of funding: \$15,086.00

Past Board action:

Res # 23-043	Authorization to Contract for Engineering and Design Services For 2023-2024 Stormwater Pond Survey and Maintenance
Res # 23-072	Awarding Construction Contact for 2023-24 Twin Lakes Park Pond and Nokomis-Amelia Pond Dredging
Res # 24-060	Authorization to Terminate Minnesota Dirt Works, Inc. Contract for Twin Lakes Park Pond and Nokomis-Amelia Pond Dredging

Summary:

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is responsible to inspect and maintain 26 stormwater ponds through ownership or cooperative agreements with its partner communities. The MCWD Board of Managers established a policy that guides the investigation and maintenance of its stormwater management infrastructure to ensure the long-term water quality and water quantity function of these systems.

In 2023 Twin Lakes Park Pond and Nokomis-Amelia Pond were identified to be in need of maintenance that coming winter. Work was unable to be completed, and the contract ultimately was terminated due to a combination of unseasonably warm weather, and permitting hurdles encountered with the reported presence of Blanding's Turtles in the vicinity of the Nokomis-Amelia work area. Work plans and contract for Twin Lakes were separated from Amelia with that work to be done this winter. Staff are targeting maintenance work at Amelia for the following winter, 2026-2027.

The District typically conducts pond dredging work during winter to minimize the disturbance and impacts of this work. In possible Blanding's habitats this can have a negative effect on turtle populations as turtles burrow into the muck to protect themselves from winter temperatures. Dewatering associated with pond maintenance removes this protection and exposes hibernating turtles to extreme winter conditions, in addition to potential direct impacts of excavation. Staff have had some preliminary meetings with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to explore options, alternatives and regulations when working in habitats near reports of Blanding's turtles. These meetings identified a few

potential paths forward but not a single clear solution. Though it did become clear that MCWD will need to develop a plan early as it may take time to work with the DNR, and some options may require work well ahead of our typical schedule for dredging maintenance.

Staff have requested that Stantec, as the project engineer for dredging Amelia, provide a scope of work to develop an avoidance plan. The primary objective of a plan is to identify measures that, in the DNR's assessment, will allow MCWD to avoid impacts to Blanding's turtles that otherwise would require that MCWD apply to the DNR for a "take" permit. The plan will outline the monitoring and avoidance measures prior to and during dredging work and any alterations to timing of work tasks. Plan drafting will begin this winter and may take several months, with the exact timeline dependent on required coordination with the DNR. To support the avoidance plan, Stantec personnel will conduct a survey of the site and provide a report of their methods and any turtle species observed. Staff find this scope to meet the needs of the project and to be of reasonable cost.

At the December 18, 2025 Board Meeting, Staff will seek authorization for the Administrator to negotiate and execute a contract with Stantec Consulting in an amount not to exceed \$15,086.00.

Supporting Documents (list attachments):

- Proposed Scope of Work



RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 25-081

Title: Authorization to Execute Contract for Blanding's Turtle Survey and Avoidance Plan

- WHEREAS, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) engages in regional capital improvement projects as described in its Water Resources Management Plan;
- WHEREAS, MCWD has a policy that guides the investigation and maintenance of its stormwater management infrastructure and conducts pond sediment surveys on the 26 regional ponds that MCWD is responsible to inspect and maintain;
- WHEREAS, the Project Maintenance and Land Management Program (PMLM) annually budgets for this effort in accordance with the PMLM Maintenance Plan;
- WHEREAS, utilizing MCWD's Stormwater Pond Data Analysis, in 2023, the Board of Managers ("Board") identified Twin Lakes Park pond and Nokomis-Amelia pond for Winter 2023-24 maintenance;
- WHEREAS, the winter of 2023-2024 did not have the cold weather conditions needed to conduct dredging work and Blanding's turtles, a state-listed threatened species, were reported to be in the vicinity of the Nokomis-Amelia project area, with the result that the work was not completed in winter of 2023-2024;
- WHEREAS, With Twin Lakes maintenance under contract and moving forward, staff engaged the Minnesota DNR to understand what would be needed to enable maintenance dredging of the Nokomis-Amelia Pond;
- WHEREAS, Discussion with the DNR informed staff that a Blanding's Turtle avoidance plan would be necessary, and developing and gaining approval of that plan would require starting well ahead of the usual schedule for dredging work;
- WHEREAS, staff requested that Stantec, which has served as the project engineer, provide a scope of work for services associated with obtaining a DNR-approved avoidance plan to allow maintenance of the Nokomis-Amelia Pond in winter 2026-2027;
- WHEREAS, staff recommends the submitted scope of work as meeting the needs of the MCWD at an appropriate cost for these services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the MCWD Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to negotiate and execute a contract with Stantec Consulting, in an amount not to exceed \$15,086, and authorizes the Administrator to execute any amendments to the contract that he finds warranted, up to an additional 10 percent of the contract price, in aggregate.

Resolution Number 25-081 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 12/18/2025

Date: _____

Secretary



Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2963 Yorkton Boulevard Suite C, Little Canada MN 55117-2089

December 15, 2025
File: 1198331

Attention: James McDermond-Spies, Project Maintenance & Land Management Manager
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
15320 Minnetonka Blvd
Minnetonka, MN 55345

952-641-4513

Dear James,

Reference: Amelia Pond Blanding's Turtle Avoidance Plan Hennepin County, Minnesota

Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) appreciates the opportunity to provide this proposal for developing a Blanding's turtle avoidance and minimization plan on Minnehaha Creek Watershed Districts' (MCWD) Twin Lakes and Amelia project (Project). The Project is located in a highly visible portion of Minneapolis next to Cedar Avenue and Lake Nokomis and is outlined in our RFP – 2023-2024 Stormwater Pond Survey & Maintenance. and is depicted in the attached **Figure 1** in Hennepin County, Minnesota.

Avoidance Plan

Stantec proposes to prepare a Blanding's turtle avoidance plan for the Project incorporating those measures necessary to avoid impacts to the state threatened Blanding's turtle that would result in the necessity to apply for a "take" permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The plan will be crafted based upon correspondence generated by the MCWD's description of the Project and the steps necessary to complete the intended objectives of this effort. The Avoidance/Mitigation Plan (Plan) would necessitate coordination with DNR Environmental Review staff using directives, avoidance measures, monitoring or other additional steps that may be required. It will also itemize monitoring/avoidance measures such as, monitoring, erosion control measures, education of work crews, site inspection, and movement of any turtles to safe areas outside of the Project workspace.

Following receipt of a notice to proceed, Stantec will proceed with development of a draft plan and correspondence for submittal to the DNR.

Survey Report

Stantec will provide a letter report to summarize the methods used during the survey, results of turtle species observed (if any) on the site.

We have assumed one round of report edits from MCWD to the draft report. Stantec will finalize the report and provide it to MCWD.

December 15, 2025

James McDermont-Spies, Project Maintenance & Land Management Manager

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Reference: Amelia Pond Blanding's Turtle Avoidance Plan Hennepin County, Minnesota

Assumptions

- Client/landowner ensures permission and access to the Project site for monitoring or survey work.
- Stantec will notify you of anticipated survey day(s) at least 2 days in advance of on-the-ground survey and will communicate any potential delays or adjustments in survey timing due to inclement weather.

Cost Estimate

Based on information provided to Stantec by MCWD, our knowledge of the site context, landscape, land our assumptions about the presence of Blanding's turtles at the Project site, we propose to conduct the survey for an estimated sum of \$15,086.

Supplemental Services

Upon request, we can provide a written proposal for supplemental services such as coordination with agency staff, permitting options, and additional field work. Supplemental services above and beyond those in the work plan need to be authorized in writing.

If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please contact us.

Regards,

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.



Scott Krych

Senior Ecologist/Associate

Phone: 651-247-5218

Scott.krych@stantec.com



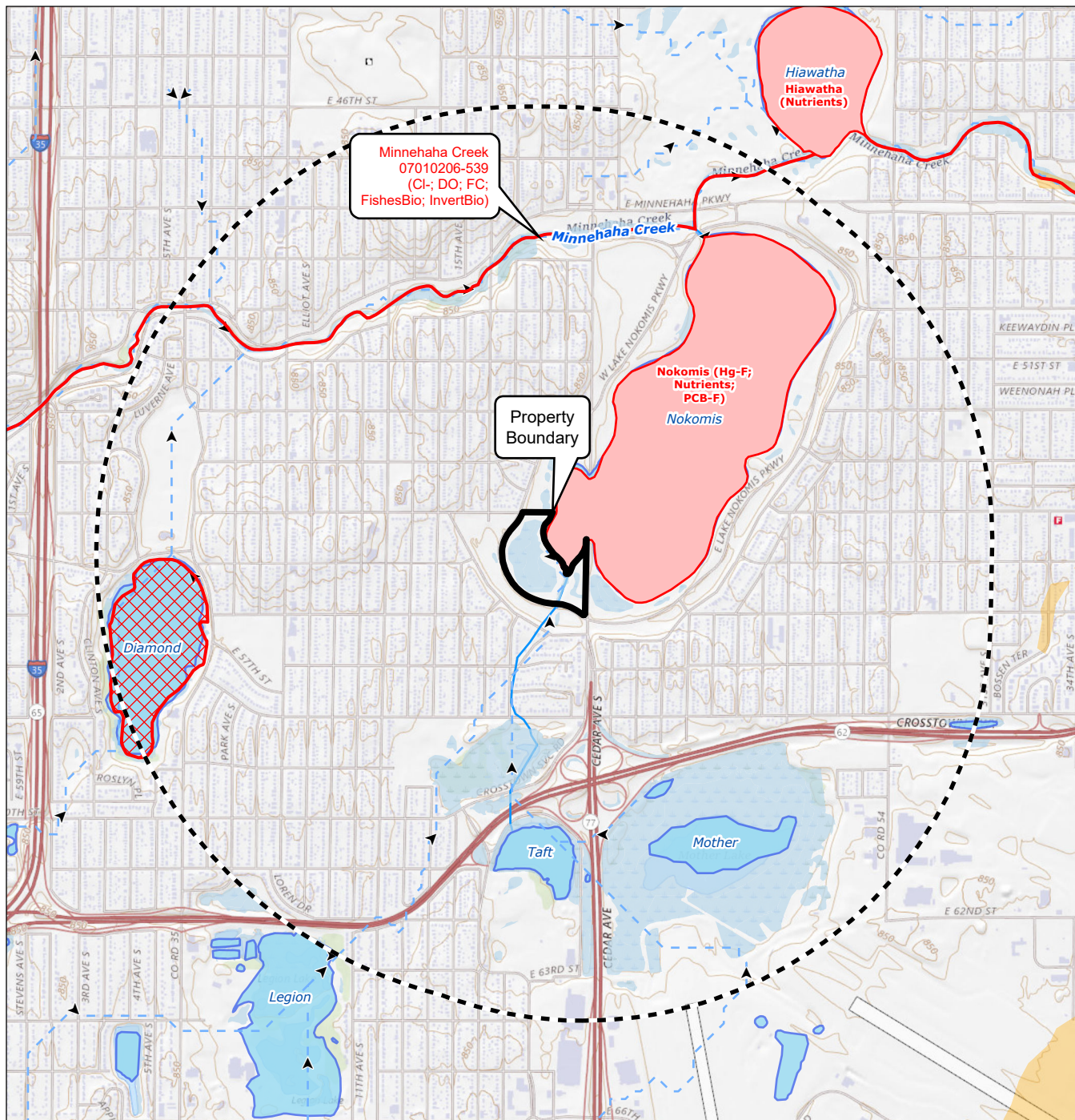
Nick Wyers

Civil Engineer

Phone: 952-838-5661

Nick.wyers@stantec.com

Attachments: Figure 1



Notes
 1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 15N
 2. Data Sources: Calcareous Fens: MN DNR (2017)
 Springs: MN DNR (2019)
 Impaired Wetlands/Lakes/Streams: MPCA (2022)
 Trout Streams/Lakes: MN DNR (2017)
 Streams/Rivers/Lakes: USGS NHD (2015)
 Revised National Wetlands Inventory: MN DNR (2009-2014)
 Karsts Features: MN DNR (2018)
 Designated Outstanding Resource Value Waters (ORVW) (2018)
 3. Background: USGS Topo

- Legend**
- Property Boundary
 - 1 Mile Buffer
 - 2022 MPCA Impaired Lakes
 - 2022 MPCA Impaired Wetlands
 - 2022 MPCA Impaired Streams
 - Calcareous Fens
 - Stream Sink
 - Sinkhole

- Federal Designated Scenic or Recreational Rivers
- Flow Direction
- Minnesota Springs
- Prone To Surface Karst
- Trout Streams
- Trout Lakes
- Lake, Pond or Reservoir
- River or Stream
- Revised National Wetland Inventory
- Rivers and Streams

0 1,000 2,000 Feet
 (At original document size of 8.5x11)
 1:24,000



Project Location T28, R24, S23
 Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., MN
Client/Project Minnehaha Creek SWPPP
 Prepared by TAW on 2023-09-22
 227706259

Figure No. 1
Title Special Waters Map