

**BELLEVUE BRIDGE STUDY
MILLS COUNTY, IOWA, AND SARPY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

Iowa DOT Project Number
NHSX-34-1(63)-19-65

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

By the
**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Highway Division
Office of Location & Environment
and**

**NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS
Planning and Project Development**

Cooperating Agencies

U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The signatures are considered acceptance of the general project location and concepts described in the environmental document unless otherwise specified by the approving officials. However, such approval does not commit to approve any future grant request to fund the preferred alternative.

May 11, 2007
Date of Approval

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Date of Approval

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For Iowa Department of Transportation



For Nebraska Department of Roads



For Federal Highway Administration

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Philip Barnes
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
105 6th Street
Ames, IA 50010
Tele. (515) 233-7300

James Rost
Director, Office of Location &
Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010
Tele. (515) 239-1225

Art Yonkey, P.E.
Planning & Project Development
Engineer
Nebraska Department of Roads
1500 Nebraska Highway 2
Lincoln, NE 68509
Tele. (402) 479-4795

The purpose of this Project is to improve connectivity and fulfill transportation needs of the region (the southern Omaha metropolitan area, including eastern Sarpy County and Bellevue, and western Mills County) by providing a safe and free-flowing connection across the Missouri River from U.S. 75 to I-29. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is in condensed format. It summarizes the Draft EIS and reports the final results of the environmental analysis for the Project. The focus is on changes that have occurred since publication of the Draft EIS.

Comments on this Final EIS are due by July 24, 2007 and should be sent to the persons listed above.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION	1-1
1.1 THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE STUDY AREA	1-1
1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND	1-2
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT	1-3
1.4 NEED FOR THE PROJECT	1-3
1.5 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 1.....	1-3
CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES	2-1
2.1 PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING AND SCREENING ALTERNATIVES.....	2-1
2.2 STEP 1 – RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.....	2-1
2.3 STEP 2 – ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION	2-2
2.4 STEP 3 – ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD.....	2-2
2.5 STEP 4 – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.....	2-3
2.6 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 2.....	2-3
CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	3-1
3.1 SUMMARY OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	3-1
3.2 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 3.....	3-2
CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES	4-1
4.1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.....	4-1
4.2 MORE DETAILED UPDATES TO CHAPTER 4	4-4
CHAPTER 5 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION	5-1
5.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	5-1
5.2 AGENCY COORDINATION.....	5-2
CHAPTER 6 REFERENCES	6-1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1	Summary of Potential Impacts	4-3
Table 4-2	Wetlands in ROW of Alternative 2.....	4-6
Table 4-3	Wetlands in ROW of Alternative 3.....	4-7

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1 Study Area..... 1-5
Figure 1-2 Aerial Background of Study Area 1-6
Figure 1-3 Existing Bellevue Bridge..... 1-7
Figure 2-1 Alternative 2 South of Offutt Air Force Base Alternative..... 2-6
Figure 2-2 Alternative 3 Alignment Revision Compared with Draft EIS Alignment 2-7
Figure 2-3 Typical Sections – Nebraska..... 2-8
Figure 2-4 Typical Sections – Iowa..... 2-9
Figure 4-1 Human Environment – Alternative 2..... 4-11
Figure 4-2 Natural Environment – Alternative 2..... 4-13
Figure 4-3 Human Environment – Alternative 3..... 4-15
Figure 4-4 Natural Environment – Alternative 3..... 4-18

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Memorandum of Agreement
Appendix B Agency Correspondence Not Commenting on the Draft EIS

ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND SHORT FORMS

1996 Draft EIS	1996 Draft EIS for U.S. 34 Roadway and Bridge Improvement from I-29 in Mills County, Iowa, to U.S. 75 in Cass or Sarpy County, Nebraska
AFB	Air Force Base
Applicants	Iowa Department of Transportation and Nebraska Department of Roads
BA	Biological Assessment
BNSF	Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
dBA	A-weighted decibel
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	flood insurance rate map
FIS	flood insurance study
HEC	Hydrologic Engineering Center
Highway 370	Nebraska and Iowa State Highway 370
I-29	Interstate 29
Iowa 370	Iowa State Highway 370
Iowa DNR	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa DOT	Iowa Department of Transportation
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MAPA	Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
mg/L	milligrams per liter
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MUD	Metropolitan Utilities District
N-370	Nebraska State Highway 370
NAC	noise abatement criteria

NDEQ	Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
NDOR	Nebraska Department of Roads
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NGPC	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
NRD	Natural Resources District
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSHS	Nebraska State Historical Society
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
P-MRNRD	Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District
PEMA	palustrine emergent temporarily flooded
PEMC	palustrine emergent seasonally flooded
PEMF	palustrine emergent semi-permanently flooded
PFOA	palustrine forested temporarily flooded
Project	maintaining, improving, or replacing with a new alignment, as necessary, the existing connection from U.S. 75 in Nebraska to I-29 in Iowa, including a bridge across the Missouri River at the City of Bellevue, Nebraska
R2UB	riverine lower perennial unconsolidated bottom subsystem
REC	recognized environmental condition
ROW	right-of-way
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
signatory agencies	Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Department of Transportation, and Nebraska Department of Roads
Study Area	the area examined in this environmental analysis
T&E	threatened or endangered
U.S. 75	U.S. Highway 75
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	U.S. Code
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USFWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
Year 2030	the planning horizon for the Project

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) and the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), is proposing to improve the connectivity between the Omaha metropolitan area and southwest Iowa. This condensed¹ Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) reports the final results of the environmental analysis for the proposed action, which is described below. This Final EIS was prepared in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and with guidelines in FHWA's Technical Advisory T 6640.8A, *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents*.² The intent is to provide a full and fair discussion of the significant environmental impacts of the proposed action and to inform decision makers and the public of the reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment.

The interim results of the analysis were published in October 2004 in the *Bellevue Bridge Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Draft EIS), which was made available to the appropriate agencies and to the public for review and comment. This Final EIS is in a condensed format and summarizes the Draft EIS, with focus on changes that have occurred since publication of the Draft EIS. For more detail, see the Draft EIS, which has chapter numbers corresponding to those in this Final EIS. Note that any references in this Final EIS to chapters, figures, and tables pertain to this document unless the Draft EIS is specified.

1.1 THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE STUDY AREA

The proposed action consists of (1) maintaining, (2) improving, or (3) replacing with a new alignment, as necessary, the existing connection from U.S. Highway 75 (U.S. 75) in Nebraska to Interstate 29 (I-29) in Iowa (the Project). The existing connecting route is Nebraska and Iowa State Highway 370 (Highway 370), known as N-370 and Iowa 370, respectively. The existing connection includes the Bellevue Bridge (also known as the Grand Army of the Republic Bridge), a 1,965-foot-long truss structure³ across the Missouri River. The bridge was built in 1952.

The area examined in this environmental analysis (Study Area) is located in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and Mills County, Iowa, and includes a portion of the City of Bellevue, Nebraska. The general boundaries of the Study Area are U.S. 75 on the west, I-29 on the east, the Platte River on the south, and the Fontenelle Forest and Nature Center on the north. Figure 1-1 shows the

¹ “[The condensed] approach avoids repetition of material from the draft EIS by incorporating, by reference, the draft EIS” (FHWA, Technical Advisory T 6640.8A).

² The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)—which authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the five-year period of 2005 to 2009—replaces the term “Section 4(f)” with “Section 303” (the current section of the Federal code that deals with issues formerly addressed in Section 4(f)). This Final EIS retains the term “4(f)”, however, in keeping with current guidance from FHWA and Iowa DOT.

³ Truss bridges consist of an assembly of triangles. They are commonly made from a series of straight steel bars.

Study Area for the Project. Figure 1-2 shows an aerial-based background of the Study Area and identifies several key features discussed in this Final EIS.

The Project is approximately 6 miles long, stretching from U.S. 75 on the west to I-29 on the east. These termini are logical connection points to the primary regional highway and interstate facilities serving north-south travel in the southern Omaha, Nebraska, metropolitan area.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

For several years, efforts have been underway to improve the transportation system between Nebraska and Iowa in the southern Omaha metropolitan area. These efforts have included consideration of a new Missouri River crossing. The following key events relate to the Project:

- 1996 Draft EIS for U.S. 34 Roadway and Bridge Improvement from I-29 in Mills County, Iowa, to U.S. 75 in Cass or Sarpy County, Nebraska (1996 Draft EIS) (one-bridge and two-bridge concepts)
- Congressional designation of funding for study
- Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

A number of other studies also relate to the Project because of their purpose in maintaining connectivity between Iowa and Nebraska, their timing, and their proximity to the Study Area:

- Plattsmouth Bridge Study – A Draft EIS was signed by FHWA on July 7, 2005 and released to the public on July 29, 2005, and a public hearing was held on August 30, 2005. The Final EIS is being prepared to address public and agency comments.
- South Omaha Veterans Memorial Bridge Study – The Final EIS was signed by FHWA on October 3, 2005 and issued to the public on October 21, 2005, and the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed by FHWA on December 2, 2005.
- Council Bluffs Interstate System Improvements Project – A Tier 1⁴ Draft EIS was signed by FHWA on November 23, 2004 and issued on December 23, 2004, the Final EIS was signed by FHWA on July 19, 2005 and issued on September 9, 2005, and the ROD was signed by FHWA on October 26, 2005. Tier 2 NEPA studies are underway for a portion of the project area, primarily along I-80 in Omaha and Council Bluffs.
- Supplemental EIS for U.S. 75 from Bellevue to Nebraska City, Nebraska – Design of this project is ongoing for five segments, with the first segment slated for completion of design in October 2007. The contract to start the construction work is to be awarded in the fall of 2009.

⁴ “Agencies are encouraged to tier their environmental impact statements to eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review Whenever a broad environmental impact statement has been prepared . . . and a subsequent statement . . . is then prepared on an action included within the entire program or policy (such as a site specific action) the subsequent statement . . . need only summarize the issues discussed in the broader statement and incorporate discussions from the broader statement by reference and shall concentrate on the issues specific to the subsequent action.” (Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] 1502.20).

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the Project is to improve connectivity and fulfill transportation needs of the region (the southern Omaha metropolitan area, including eastern Sarpy County and Bellevue as well as western Mills County) by providing a safe and free-flowing connection across the Missouri River from U.S. 75 to I-29.

1.4 NEED FOR THE PROJECT

There are four key needs for the Project, as summarized below and discussed in detail in Section 1.4 of the Draft EIS:

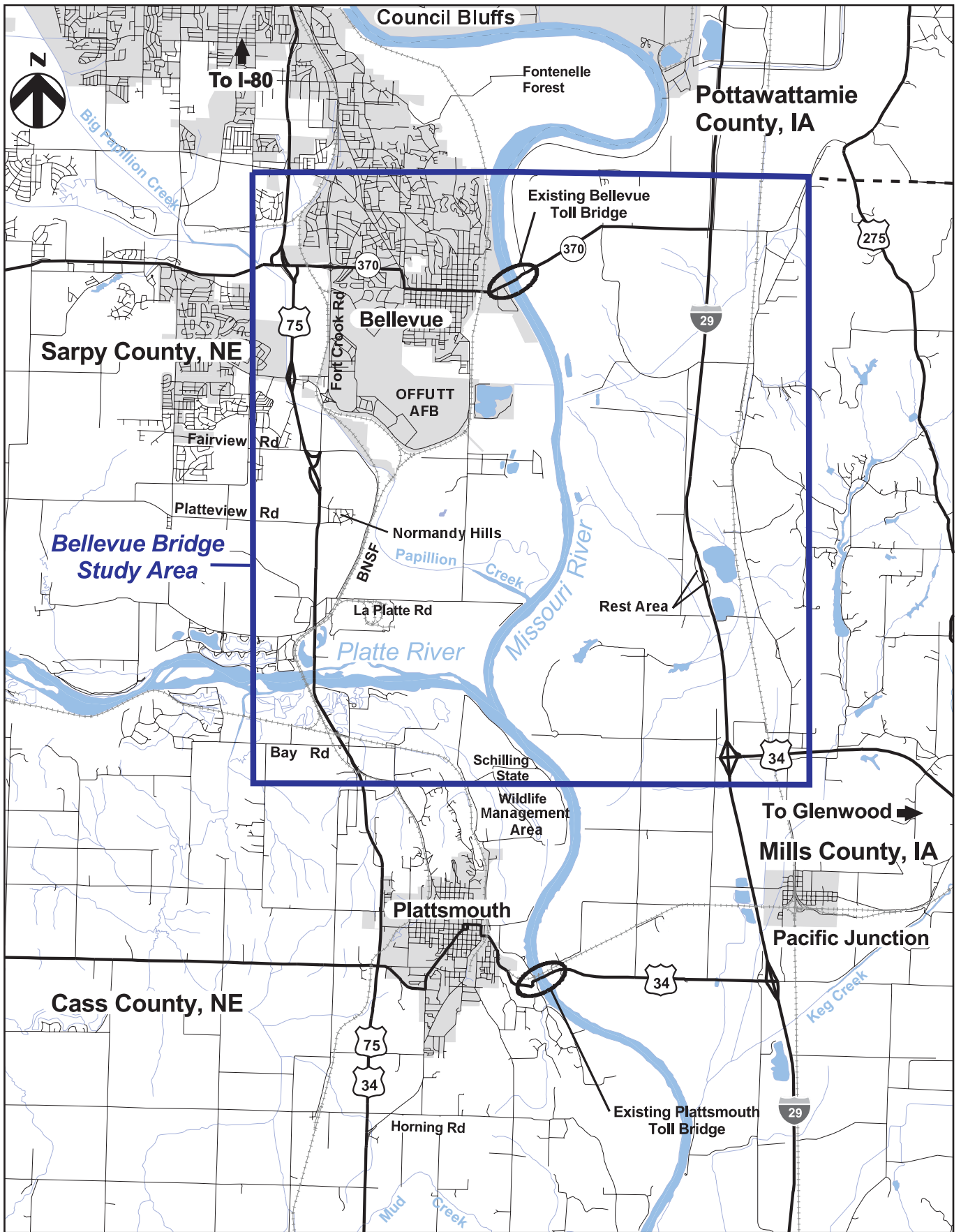
- Substandard bridge – The existing Bellevue Bridge (see Figure 1-3, a recent photograph of the bridge) does not meet current functional design standards because of its width (22 feet total). Traffic on the bridge is projected to double by the planning horizon for the Project (Year 2030).
- Substandard roadway – The existing roadway between U.S. 75 and I-29 does not meet current standards. Inconsistencies from one segment of Highway 370 to another—in terms of cross sections, signalization, speed limits, parking, and adjacent land uses—restrict the traffic-carrying capacity and violate driver expectancy. Operational efficiency is further restricted because the route serves divergent functions as it traverses established commercial, institutional, and residential areas. By Year 2030, traffic is projected to increase by approximately 20 and 50 percent on segments of Highway 370.
- System linkage – The existing roadway system does not meet the regional transportation needs and does not allow free flow of traffic between U.S. 75 and I-29. The other existing connections between U.S. 75 and I-29 are inefficient and cannot meet the strong travel demand in the southeast-to-northwest direction, in part because of the outdated South Omaha, Bellevue, and Plattsmouth Bridges.
- Compatibility with local land use – Land uses along Highway 370 are not compatible with a major transportation corridor, and the highway cannot provide the necessary transportation service to industries in the area. The existing roadway system does not accommodate the planned growth in the southern Omaha metropolitan area (see Figure 1-8 in the Draft EIS, which shows future land uses planned along Highway 370 in southeastern Sarpy County and northeastern Cass County in Nebraska, and western Mills County in Iowa).

1.5 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 1

This section provides new information relevant to the Purpose and Need for the Project. Since publication of the Draft EIS, the following has occurred:

- The Bellevue Bridge has been repaired to extend its life. Deck and guardrail replacement, completed in October 2004, eliminated the prior need for weight restrictions and load posting on the bridge. The improvements did not address the narrowness of the bridge. In 2005, the biannual bridge inspection was completed in accordance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards. The inspection report listed no structural deficiencies but rated the bridge status as functionally obsolete (TranSystems Corporation, June 2005). The bridge would have to be a minimum of 28 feet for the functionally obsolete status to be removed, and a minimum of 32 feet for the sufficiency rating to improve. However, widening is not an option because of the truss construction.

- The Plattsmouth Bridge was studied for possible replacement. Current plans are to repair and redeck the existing structure. Given funding constraints, Iowa DOT and NDOR agreed in fall 2006 to change from the two-bridge concept for two new Missouri River bridges (one in Plattsmouth and one in southern Sarpy County) to one new Missouri River bridge in southern Sarpy County and repair and redeck the existing Plattsmouth Bridge. They also agreed to remove the U.S. 34 highway designation (and national highway system designation) from the Plattsmouth Bridge and connecting roadways and, instead, to assign this designation to the connection from I-29 near Glenwood, Iowa, across the new Bellevue Bridge, to the new interchange of relocated Platteview Road with U.S. 75 in Nebraska, and south along U.S. 75.
- The South Omaha Bridge is planned to be replaced with a new bridge, to be constructed within the next five years.
- An additional I-80 bridge is planned adjacent to the existing bridge across the Missouri River. Construction is programmed to start in 2008.
- In October 2005, Sarpy County issued a draft Comprehensive Development Plan, which was revised and issued in final form in December 2005 (RDG Planning and Design, 2005). The future industrial land use along the portion of the proposed Project corridor in Sarpy County (see Figure 1-8 in the Draft EIS) corresponds to the future land use indicated in the current Sarpy County Comprehensive Development Plan.
- Various resource agencies submitted their comments on the Draft EIS. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) expressed its understanding that the actual purpose of the Project was to provide connectivity between I-29 and I-80. USFWS indicated that improvement of Platteview Road should be considered as part of the Project. Iowa DOT addressed this issue in responses clarifying that the need for the Project is connectivity from I-29 to U.S. 75 and that the Platteview Road project is independent of the Bellevue Bridge Project. Comment response 15-3, reprinted in Chapter 5, Comments and Coordination, further clarifies this issue.



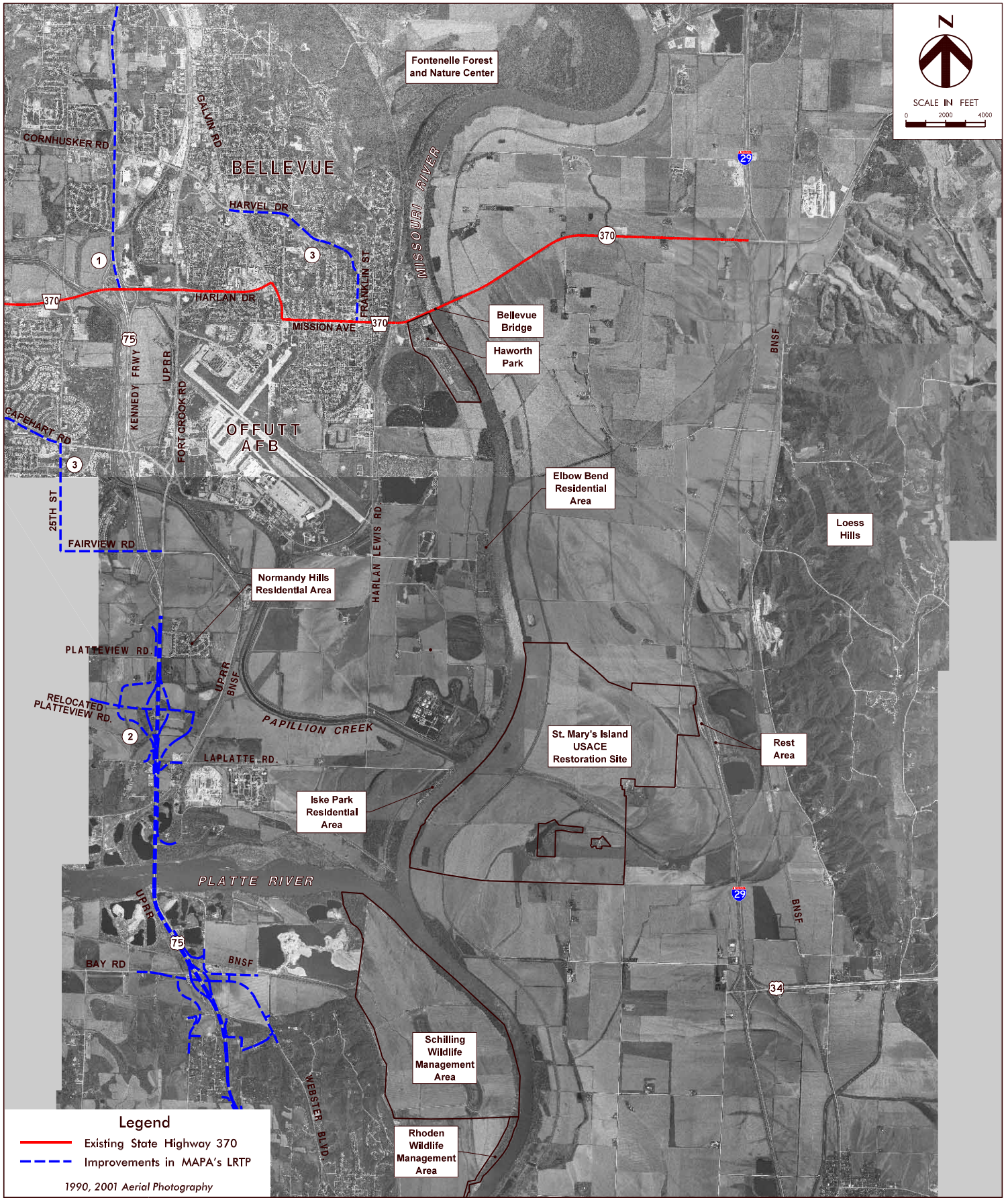
Study Area

Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date
 Apr. 2006

Figure
 1-1





Aerial Background of Study Area

Date
Apr. 2006



Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure
1-2



**Figure 1-3
Existing Bellevue Bridge**

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES

CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are strategies that can satisfy the purpose of and need for the Project. This chapter includes a summary of the process used for identifying and screening alternatives, the range of alternatives developed, alternatives eliminated, and alternatives retained for analysis. The preferred alternative to be implemented is also identified. The chapter concludes by summarizing changes in the alternatives since the Draft EIS was issued.

2.1 PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING AND SCREENING ALTERNATIVES

A detailed process was used to identify and evaluate the alternatives that meet the Project purpose and to address problems identified as needs that can be satisfied by the Project. Alternative solutions were developed and screened as follows:

- Step 1 Develop a range of alternatives to consider.
- Step 2 Evaluate the range of alternatives. Eliminate from further consideration any that do not meet the Project purpose and need or have unacceptable impacts.
- Step 3 Identify the alternatives that meet the Project purpose and need and should be carried forward for detailed study. Develop preliminary alignments and other details for each.
- Step 4 Identify the preferred alternative based on engineering considerations, potential environmental impacts, input from regulatory agencies, and public opinion.

The following explains what was done during these steps.

2.2 STEP 1 – RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives were initially considered⁵:

No-Build Alternative (Year 2030 baseline conditions) – The proposed action to improve connectivity between the southern Omaha metropolitan area and southwest Iowa would not be implemented. The existing Highway 370, including the functionally obsolete Bellevue Bridge, would continue to provide this connection, with ongoing minor maintenance.

Improvements Not Requiring Major Construction – Low- or no-cost improvements, such as Transportation System Management and Travel Demand Management, would be implemented rather than major new construction.

Improvements to the Existing Roadway and Bridge – Highway 370 would be widened, and the existing Bellevue Bridge would be rehabilitated or replaced.

New Roadway Corridors to connect U.S. 75 and I-29 – North of the existing connecting route, no new corridors were considered because they would have to cross either the developed core of Bellevue or the Fontenelle Forest and Nature Center. South of the existing connecting route,

⁵ Under all of these alternatives, it is considered likely that other projects in the Study Area which MAPA's LRTP identifies as committed improvements would be implemented concurrently with the Project.

two potential corridors were identified in the area between Offutt Air Force Base (AFB) to the north and the Platte River to the south:

- South of Offutt AFB Corridor (similar to Corridor A in the 1996 Draft EIS) – On the west, this corridor connects to an existing interchange of U.S. 75 with Fort Crook Road and Fairview Road. This corridor traverses primarily agricultural land and connects to I-29 at a new interchange east of the Missouri River.
- Southern Sarpy County Corridor (Corridor B in the 1996 Draft EIS) – On the west, this corridor connects to the proposed interchange of U.S. 75 with relocated Platteview Road. This corridor also traverses primarily agricultural land and connects to the existing interchange of I-29 with U.S. 34 east of the Missouri River.

2.3 STEP 2 – ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The No-Build Alternative, though unable to meet the Project purpose and need, was carried forward to serve as a baseline for comparison with the build alternatives.⁶ As the range of alternatives was evaluated, other alternatives that did not meet the Project purpose and need were eliminated from further consideration as follows:

- Improvements Not Requiring Major Construction – These strategies and alternative transportation modes cannot address the Project needs in relation to physical condition and system linkage.
- Improvements to the Existing Roadway and Bridge – This alternative would not meet primary elements of the Project purpose and need. Major impacts on adjacent properties (including several residential acquisitions, parks, and a National Register of Historic Places [NRHP] property) make this an unreasonable alternative.

2.4 STEP 3 – ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD

Two build alternatives would meet all aspects of the Project purpose and need. These build alternatives were carried forward, along with the No-Build Alternative (Alternative 1), for detailed study:

- South of Offutt AFB Corridor (Alternative 2) – This alternative has a total length of 5.9 miles, requires 297 acres of new right-of-way (ROW), and has access control.⁷ Its cost would be approximately 25 percent more than that of Alternative 3, primarily because of the construction of an additional bridge over Papillion Creek and a new interchange on I-29. Figure 2-1 shows a representative alignment of this alternative and the preliminary access locations, which remain unchanged since the Draft EIS.

⁶ The No-Build Alternative is included in accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1502.14, Alternatives including the proposed action, of the Regulations for Implementing NEPA.

⁷ Priority III access control would occur in Iowa; at-grade intersections would be allowed, with a minimum spacing of 1,000 feet between intersections (Iowa DOT, July 1995). In Nebraska, the desirable spacing in rural areas and undeveloped urban areas is no more than one access location per mile, with a minimum 2,000 feet distance between access locations (NDOR, 1996). The maximum allowable spacing is no more than three access locations per mile, with 1,000 feet between access locations.

- Southern Sarpy County Corridor (Alternative 3) – This alternative has a total length of 7.0 miles, requires approximately 266 acres of new ROW, and also has access control. The cost to construct this alternative would be approximately 25 percent less than to construct Alternative 2. Subsequent to the Draft EIS, the alignment of Alternative 3 has been modified, as addressed in Section 2.6, Changes since the Draft EIS. The modification slightly decreased the new ROW requirement from 272 to 266 acres. Figure 2-2 shows a representative alignment of this alternative, as modified, and preliminary access locations.

Figures 2-3 and 2-4 show typical cross sections of the four primary roadway segments in the build alternatives. These figures include the widths of the lateral obstacle clearance,⁸ shoulders, driving lanes, and median.

2.5 STEP 4 – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

FHWA, in coordination with Iowa DOT and NDOR, has identified Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative for the following reasons (see Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, for information regarding the preference for Alternative 3 with respect to minimizing impacts):

- Evaluation of the existing and planned transportation network indicated that Alternative 3 best meets the Project purpose and need.
- Alternative 3 would involve fewer direct impacts (see Chapter 4).
- Alternative 3 would cost less and would take less time to construct because it would require no new interchanges and fewer bridges.
- Alternative 3 received the most public support.

Alternative 3 was identified as the preferred alternative after reviewing all reasonable alternatives under consideration (including the No-Build Alternative) with respect to their ability to meet the Project purpose and need. FHWA has also identified Alternative 3 as the environmentally preferred alternative based on a comparison of the potential impacts of the build alternatives, as identified during preparation of the Final EIS. The results of the Biological Assessment (BA) have also been considered in identifying Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative, including the environmentally preferred alternative.

Subsequent to the Draft EIS, FHWA, Iowa DOT, and NDOR (the signatory agencies) further evaluated potential impacts, as discussed in Chapter 4, and reviewed the comments received on the Draft EIS, as addressed in Chapter 5, Comments and Coordination. Based on the updated information obtained in this manner, the signatory agencies decided that the preferred alternative to implement for the Project is Alternative 3, as modified.

2.6 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 2

No comments received from the public or resource agencies required evaluation of different alternatives. However, some changes have been made to the alignment of Alternative 3 (see Chapter 3, Affected Environment, and Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, for a discussion of the resulting changes in impacts), and further consideration of pedestrian and bicyclist accommodation has occurred, as follows:

⁸ Lateral obstacle clearance is the width of the area beyond the edge of the through driving lanes that is kept clear of tall vegetation and other obstructions to provide a recovery area for errant vehicles.

- The U.S. 75 project from Bellevue to Nebraska City has been undergoing additional design subsequent to the Draft EIS. Figures 2-1 and 2-2 show the alternatives for the Bellevue Bridge Project as well as the latest version of the roadway design for the U.S. 75 project. NDOR decided to have the Bellevue Bridge Project include four lanes extending eastward from the proposed U.S. 75 interchange with Platteview Road and a four-lane bridge across the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) rail lines.⁹ The original plan was to split the projects differently: the U.S. 75 project would have included approximately 1 mile of a two-lane roadway and a two-lane bridge over the rail lines, and the Bellevue Bridge Project would have included construction of another two lanes and widening the bridge over the rail lines to four lanes.
- During the preliminary investigation of ROW to be acquired by NDOR, it became evident that the alignment should avoid PCS Nitrogen property, which contains a recognized environmental condition (REC)¹⁰, to avert future liability at this site. Consequently, a portion of the Alternative 3 alignment in Nebraska was shifted to avoid this site. To illustrate the change, Figure 2-2 shows the original and shifted alignments in this area.
- A revised hydrologic analysis of the necessary height of the bridge above the 2 percent water surface elevation required raising the bridge elevation by approximately 6 feet. Consequently, this change required a slightly wider area of ROW on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River but no modification to the ROW on the Iowa side of the river.
- The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) changed the minimum horizontal clearance for navigation purposes from 450 feet to 500 feet to account for the bridge location on a river bend (USCG, 2005). This change, together with the availability of longer girders, has changed the pier configuration to four spans on the Nebraska approach, three main spans, and 10 spans on the Iowa approach; this is one less pier than noted in the Draft EIS .
- A REC located at Lincoln Amoco (referred to as “Fast Break Amoco” in the Draft EIS) was evaluated further during the design process. Based on a comment by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommending a shift in alignment to avoid the property, the alignment was shifted to the south away from the site. Additionally, an access road to 190th Street was shifted west, farther away from the REC site.
- Consideration of improved traffic operations and capacity for future expansion resulted in a decision to design a partial cloverleaf interchange of I-29 with U.S. 34 to replace the existing diamond interchange. Twin bridges, each with two travel lanes and an auxiliary lane, would be used to replace the current bridge over I-29.
- Comments by agencies managing natural resources led to the proposed acquisition of a 167-acre conservation easement¹¹ west of the preferred alternative alignment in Iowa. The area is located west of the ROW for Alternative 3 in Iowa and adjacent to the south side of the proposed St. Mary’s Island restoration site (see Figure 4-3B). USFWS requested that a

⁹ The Bellevue Bridge Project originally included only a two-lane bridge over the UPRR and BNSF tracks and a two-lane section of road connecting to a new U.S. 75 interchange. Current plans for the Project include construction of a four-lane bridge and a four-lane section of road connecting to the new interchange.

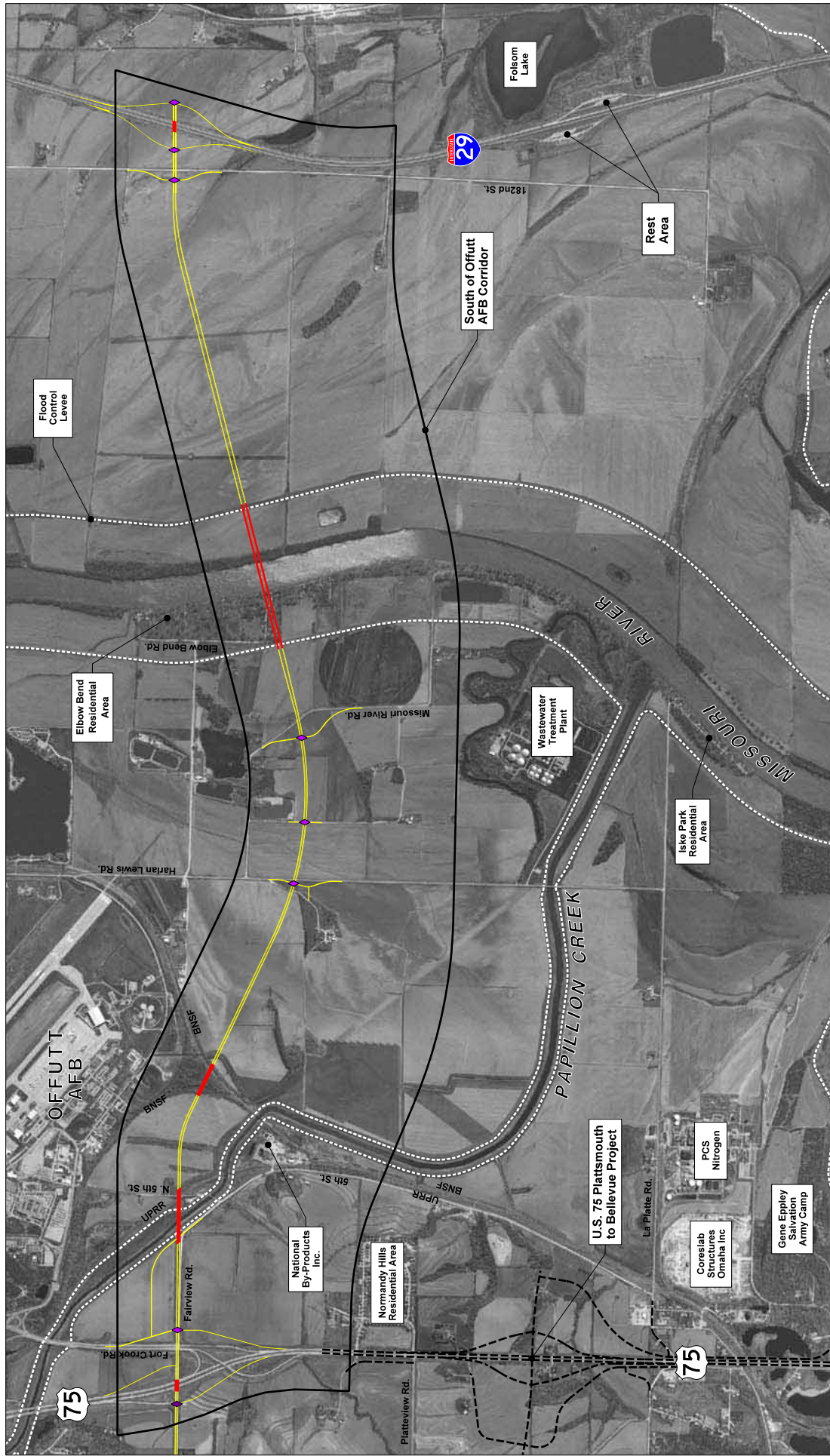
¹⁰ A REC is “a past or present site condition that may have resulted in the release of chemicals or hazardous substances into the structures, soil, or ground water on the property, or that represents the material threat of a release” (American Society for Testing and Materials).

¹¹ A conservation easement is a recorded restriction of the title of land and limits development of the property.

portion of the alignment in Iowa be shifted northeastward as much as practicable in this area. The roadway corridor was shifted northeast as much as practicable during the design process without causing acquisitions of farm structures northeast of the alignment.

- Preliminary design changes subsequent to the Draft EIS also include repaving and regrading of U.S. 34 approximately 1,000 feet farther east of I-29.
- Comments by agencies and public representatives concerning pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations on the Missouri River Bridge involved re-examination of the proposed accommodation. At this time, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation is anticipated on the widened shoulders. Final design will more completely address the method of providing for pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the bridge.

See Chapter 4 for updated information on the potential environmental impacts associated with the Alternative 3 alignment, as modified, and revised figures showing the ROW for the refined alignment relative to environmental features such as wetlands and floodplains.



Alternative 2
South of Offutt Air Force Base Alternative
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Apr. 2006
 Figure: 2-1

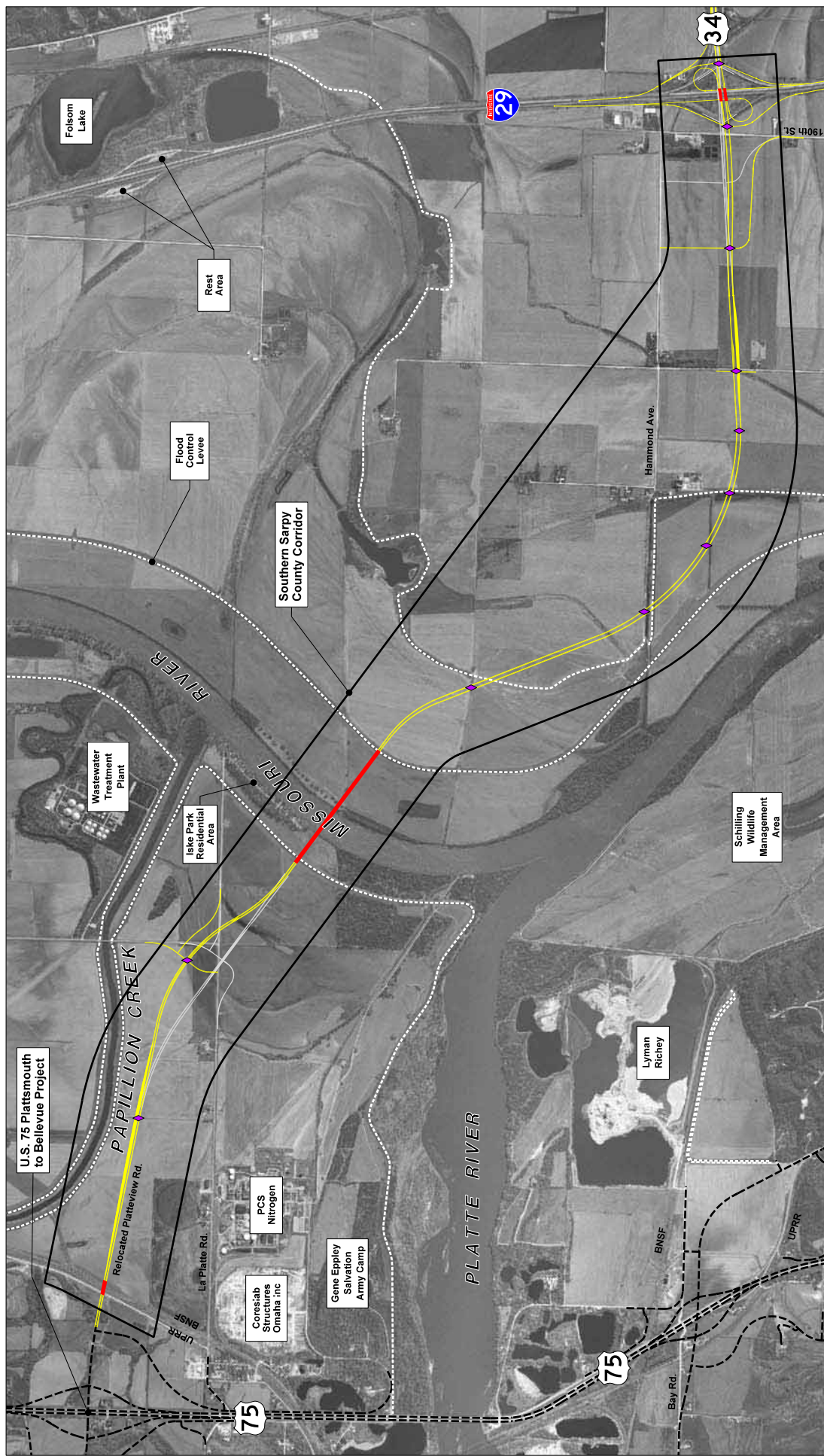
Iowa Department of Transportation

Source: Western Air Map 2001
 Aerial Photography

SCALE IN FEET
 0 1000 2000

Legend

- Proposed Roadway Alignment
- Proposed Bridge
- Preliminary Access Locations
- Flood Control Levee (Federal)
- Flood Control Levee (Local)



U.S. 75 Plattsburgh to Bellevue Project

PAPILLION CREEK
Relocated Platteview Rd.

La Platte Rd.
BNSF
UPRR

Core:sh Structures Omaha, Inc

PCS Nitrogen

Gene Eppley Salvation Army Camp

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Iske Park Residential Area

Flood Control Levee

Rest Area

Southern Sarpy County Corridor

Hammond Ave.

Bay Rd.

Lyman Richey

BNSF

UPRR

Folsom Lake

29

34

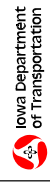
75

75

- Legend**
- Proposed Roadway Alignment
 - DEIS Roadway Alignment Component
 - Proposed Bridge
 - Preliminary Access Locations
 - Flood Control Levee (Federal)
 - Flood Control Levee (Local)



Source: Western Air Map 2001
Aerial Photography

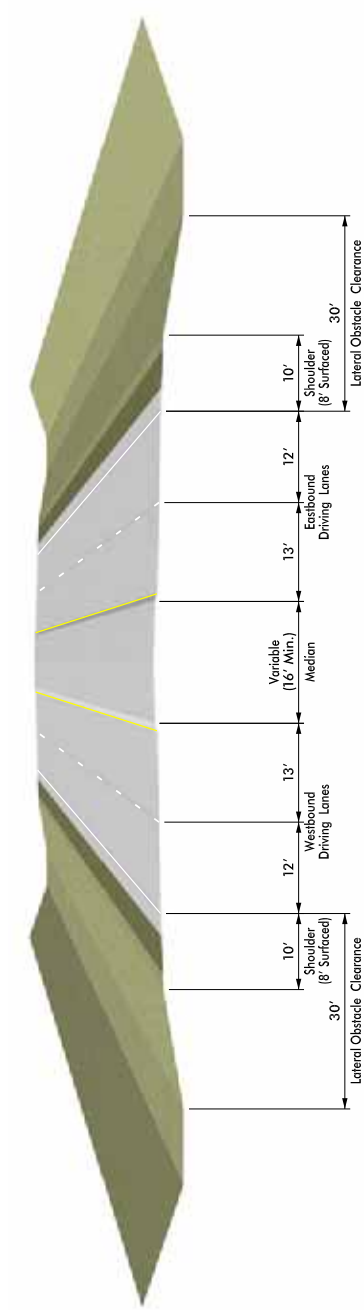


**Alternative 3
Alignment Revision Compared with Draft EIS Alignment**

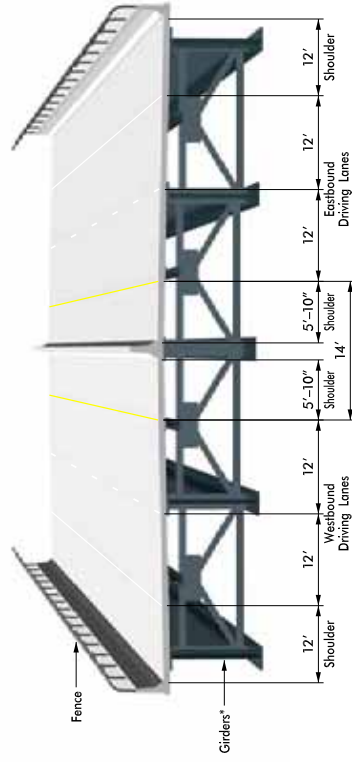
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Date Oct. 2006

Figure 2-2



**West Terminus at U.S. 75 to the Missouri River
(Nebraska)**



* Girder type and spacing have not been determined.
Shown for illustration purposes only.

Bridge over the Missouri River

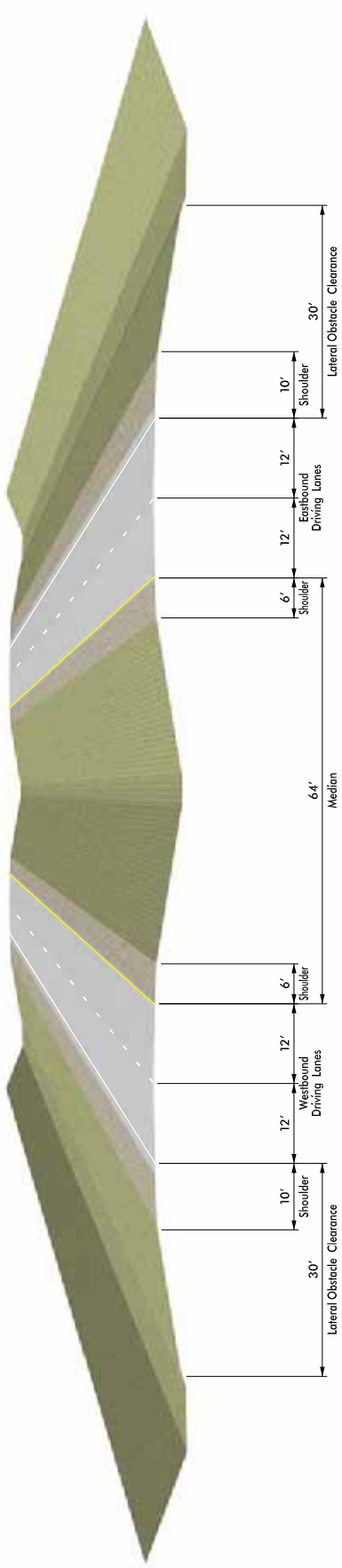
Typical Sections - Nebraska



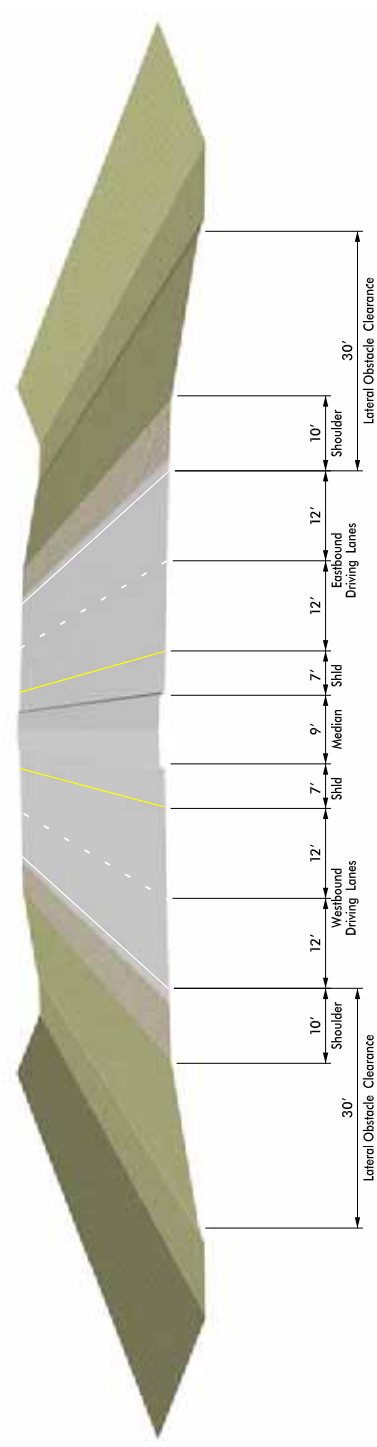
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Date
Apr. 2006

Figure
2-3

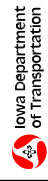


Missouri River to West of I-29 (Iowa)



West of I-29 to the East Terminus at I-29 (Iowa)

Typical Sections - Iowa



Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date
 Apr. 2006

Figure
 2-4

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS described the existing natural and human environment of the Study Area that may be affected by the Project. This chapter of the Final EIS summarizes notable features of the affected environment in Section 3.1. A review of the comments on the Draft EIS indicated that none of the comments provided new information requiring major changes to the description of the affected environment. Some conditions have changed, however, as explained below in Section 3.2, which provides updated information.

3.1 SUMMARY OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Bellevue Bridge links the Omaha metropolitan area (including Bellevue) in Nebraska with the area south of Council Bluffs, Iowa, which includes Glenwood and the surrounding areas in Mills County.

To date, the Study Area is predominantly rural in nature, with the exception of residential, commercial, and industrial development concentrated in Bellevue and Offutt AFB located in the northwest portion of the Study Area. Public and semi-public land uses include the Schilling Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Bellevue Loop Trail, and other public recreation areas. Projected future land uses in the Study Area (see Figure 1-8 in the Draft EIS) include continued urban expansion south and west of Bellevue into rural areas of Sarpy County. The portion of Mills County included in the Study Area is expected to remain primarily agricultural through Year 2030. Creation of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site, adjacent to the Missouri River, would result in the conversion of approximately 2,315 acres of cropland to terrestrial habitat. This area would be permanently preserved as open space.

Some of the constraints to siting a highway corridor in the Study Area are the UPRR and BNSF rail lines, the Omaha Papillion Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site.

The Study Area also includes sites with RECs. The PCS Nitrogen property in Nebraska contains several groundwater monitoring wells installed to monitor a shallow nitrate plume and a deeper ammonia plume. The closest wells to the proposed alignment are a nested pair of groundwater monitoring wells (MW-20, consisting of one shallow well and one deep well installed close to one another) located in the northeast corner of this property in the vicinity of LaPlatte Road. In addition, the Lincoln Amoco site in Iowa contains a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) and three waste stabilization lagoons. (See Figures 4-3A and 4-3C for the location of these sites and Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, for the related issues).

The economy of the six-county region encompassing Sarpy and Mills counties as well as Douglas, Cass, Washington, and Pottawattamie counties is relatively diversified. The region functions as a center for regional trade, services, and transporting and processing regional agricultural production. In 2000, the highest percentage of total jobs was in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors. Sarpy County has a population that is more than eight times greater than that of Mills County and is expected to experience faster growth through 2020. The median income in Sarpy County is 3.7 percent higher than that of Nebraska, although five block

groups within the Bellevue city limits contain potential low-income Environmental Justice¹² populations based on the 2000 Census. Within the Study Area, prime farmland is generally found in the fertile alluvial floodplain of the Missouri River.

Both build alternatives would cross the Missouri River, and Alternative 2 would cross Papillion Creek (see Figures 2-1 and 2-2). Papillion Creek and the Missouri River are waters of the U.S. that are subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act¹³. The alternatives would also pass through their associated floodways¹⁴ and floodplains, and interior drainage areas. Several Federal levees offer flood protection in the Study Area. Wetlands, consisting primarily of palustrine¹⁵ and riverine¹⁶ systems, are also found in the Study Area. The riverine system in the corridors for both build alternatives is on the left (east) bank of the Missouri River.

The Missouri River, its associated waterways, and the adjacent floodplain provide diverse biological resources that support a variety of fish and wildlife populations. The Study Area also includes potential habitat for nine threatened or endangered (T&E) species; including the Federally listed endangered interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) and pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), and the Federally listed threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and western prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*). The confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers is a sensitive area providing habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species. The confluence is close to Schilling WMA and is included in a pallid sturgeon recovery priority management area in the Missouri River that extends 20 miles upriver and downriver.

3.2 UPDATES TO CHAPTER 3

Since publication of the Draft EIS, the following new information has been identified and changes have occurred in the affected environment:

- The boundary of the proposed restoration site on St. Mary's Island has been revised by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This boundary change does not affect the acreage of the site within the ROW for Alternative 3; only approximately 2 percent of the land proposed for this conservation area is within the ROW. USACE began purchasing land from willing sellers in 2004. Approximately 1,800 acres have been acquired (USACE, October 11, 2006). In addition to developing terrestrial habitat at the site, USACE plans to preserve the very limited wetlands and to establish some aquatic habitat along the Missouri River bank.

¹² Environmental Justice addresses equity in all Federally funded programs and activities in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S. Code [USC] 2000d, et seq.) and Executive Order 12898 (59 Federal Register 7629).

¹³ Section 404 of the Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into federally regulated waters of the U.S., including wetlands, without first obtaining a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the primary regulatory authority with jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act).

¹⁴ The floodways for Papillion Creek and the Missouri River generally include the area between levees on either side of creek and the river.

¹⁵ Palustrine system wetlands include all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, and emergent mosses and lichens. Palustrine system wetlands are generally bounded by uplands or by any other type of wetland system (Cowardin et al., December 1979).

¹⁶ Riverine systems include all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel with the exception of wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens (Cowardin et al., December 1979).

- The 167-acre conservation easement has been incorporated into the Project to address resource agency concerns regarding mitigation of impacts potentially caused by Alternative 3. As shown in Figure 4-3B, the area is bounded on the west by the Federal levee along the Missouri River and on the east by the proposed highway realignment. The area comprises current cropland and wetlands, and is primarily within the 100-year floodplain.
- The Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan, revised in 2005, indicates future industrial land use along the portion of the Alternative 3 alignment in Sarpy County, which corresponds to the future land use shown in Figure 1-8 of the Draft EIS.
- Additional research has been conducted regarding the REC site currently known as Lincoln Amoco by reviewing LUST files of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR) for the site. Based on the research, there appears to be no present need to conduct a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.¹⁷ See Chapter 4 for further information.
- A survey was conducted using a magnetometer¹⁸ to detect any steamboats that wrecked in the Missouri River and over the course of time were buried along the ROW for Alternative 3 (Archaeo-Physics, 2005). Two anomalous areas were detected and were investigated using subsurface exploration (Tallgrass Historians, L.C., 2005). Both anomalies were determined to be related to a structure built by USACE to stabilize the channel of the Missouri River. No steamboat sites were detected during the field surveys.
- Sarpy County floodplain boundaries were revised in December 2005 (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2005). Floodplains in Mills County have not been remapped and remain unchanged from the boundaries shown in the Draft EIS. The minor changes in floodplain boundaries along the alignments are reflected in updated figures provided in Chapter 4.
- USACE pile dikes have been discovered beneath the ground surface along Alternative 3. The pile dikes were used to accrete sediments and create a constrained Missouri River channel to stabilize the banks of the river and aid navigation¹⁹. The steamboat survey discussed above detected one of the pile dikes and associated debris.
- Monitoring of the groundwater at the PCS Nitrogen site has continued by means of a series of monitoring wells. The monitoring has shown that, since the Draft EIS was published, the groundwater plumes of nitrate and ammonia have migrated from the PCS Nitrogen site, primarily in an eastern direction. Nitrate concentrations in the shallow well at MW-20 (see Figure 4-3A for the well location) were low during the 2000 monitoring event, undetected in the 2002 event, and at their highest concentration in spring 2005 (10.6 milligrams per liter [mg/L]) (Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality [NDEQ], October 28, 2005). However, the nitrate concentration decreased to approximately 1 mg/L in the next two quarterly events, and was below detection limits in the most recent quarterly

¹⁷ A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment would involve collecting additional data (potentially including sampling data) from the site.

¹⁸ A magnetometer is a scientific instrument used to measure the strength of a magnetic field. Magnetometers measure variations in the earth's magnetic field in order to locate mineral deposits, archaeological sites, buried treasure, or submerged objects such as submarines or shipwrecks.

¹⁹ Since 1912, seven acts of Congress have provided for the construction and maintenance of the Missouri River channel; the collection of projects is known as the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project. A pile dike is a bank stabilization structure consisting of timber pilings lashed together and driven into the streambed from the bank outward. These dikes are permeable, allowing for flow between piles and accretion (buildup) of sediment behind the piles.

sampling event during the spring of 2006 (NDEQ, October 11, 2006). Ammonia concentrations in the shallow well have ranged from a high of 4.75 mg/L in 2003 to below detection limits, with the most recent sample at 2.3 mg/L. Ammonia and nitrate concentrations of samples from the deep well at MW-20 were below detection limits in the spring 2006 sampling data.

- Schilling WMA has recently been modified by a USACE project (Plattsmouth Chute) with a 100-foot-wide and 15-foot-deep channel extending from immediately downstream of the confluence of the Platte and Missouri rivers, through the southern portion of the WMA and through Rhoden WMA, and emptying back into the Missouri River (USACE, February 28, 2006). The purpose of the project is to create more backwater habitat. There is a control sill at the upstream end of the chute to prevent flow into the chute during low-flow conditions. The sill also is designed to minimize sedimentation of the channel from influx of sediment carried by the Platte River. USACE coordinated closely with USFWS and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) on the design of the chute (USACE, March 22, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS analyzed the potential beneficial and adverse impacts, both direct and indirect, that the alternatives under consideration may have on the natural and human environment of the Study Area. It also addressed cumulative impacts potentially resulting from incremental Project impacts when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. For example, projects upstream from the proposed location of the new bridge would also affect downstream water quality.

In addition, a Draft and a Final BA were prepared to evaluate potential impacts on Federally listed species and on habitat that could support these species in the Study Area, as explained in responses 14-1 and 14-5 in Chapter 5, Comments and Coordination. The BA concluded that although direct effects of the Project on T&E species are possible, as are indirect and cumulative effects, no adverse effects are anticipated if specified conservation measures are implemented. The BA is incorporated into this Final EIS by reference.²⁰

Since publication of the Draft EIS, the analysis of potential environmental impacts has been ongoing. Section 4.1 of this chapter summarizes the potential impacts of Alternative 3, as modified; and includes a table comparing the impacts of Alternatives 2 and 3. Section 4.2 contains additional impact-related information since publication of the Draft EIS. The resources addressed in this chapter were evaluated based primarily on available, existing data; limited field studies were conducted to collect additional data and further investigate potential effects.

During Project design, resources will be avoided and impacts will be minimized to the extent reasonable. When avoidance and minimization are not reasonable, specific Project impacts will be addressed by cost-effective mitigation measures. This Final EIS identifies preliminary mitigation measures; the actual mitigation measures to be implemented will be determined during the design and construction phases of the Project.

4.1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As discussed in Chapter 2, Alternatives, FHWA, in coordination with Iowa DOT and NDOR, has identified Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. Some resource agencies have expressed a preference for Alternative 2 because of their concerns regarding the impacts of Alternative 3 on the natural environment (see Chapter 5 for the comment letters and the signatory agencies' responses). The majority of the resource agencies' concerns focus on the issue of future indirect development along the proposed corridor of the constructed highway rather than on the direct impacts from construction and operation of the bridge and associated roadway. The resource agencies also cite cumulative impacts as a concern. The major issues raised in their comments are loss of farmland and wildlife habitat (forested, riparian, and wetland areas) and the potential effects on wildlife, including T&E species.

In response to the resource agencies' concerns, a number of changes have been made. Several conservation measures have been identified to address potential indirect impacts on the natural environment, as discussed at the end of this chapter (see letters #11, #14, #15, and #20 and in

²⁰ This is done in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.21, Incorporation by reference, of the Regulations for Implementing NEPA.

responses to these letters in Chapter 5). In addition, the comments on the Draft EIS, along with further Project-related analysis and continued coordination with the resource agencies, have resulted in some refinements to Alternative 3, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2-2 for the modified alignment and Chapter 5 for the comments and responses). Because of an alignment shift to avoid PCS Nitrogen and Lincoln Amoco properties, as well as additional regrading and repavement of U.S. 34 east of I-29, the modified Alternative 3 is slightly longer than the original Alternative 3 defined in the Draft EIS. In addition, areas of ROW needed for the approach to the Missouri River bridge and for the interchange of I-29 with U.S. 34 have increased since the Draft EIS was published.

The potential environmental impacts of Alternative 3, as modified, are compared with those of Alternative 2 in Table 4-1, which updates Tables S-1 and 4-14 of the Draft EIS. The comparison shows that Alternative 3 would involve only one residential relocation, would affect less prime farmland, and would not affect an existing trail system. In addition, Alternative 3 would disturb less acreage of existing wetlands and forested habitat than Alternative 2. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 illustrate the Project ROW for Alternative 2 on an aerial photograph and topographic map base, respectively. Figures 4-3 and 4-4 illustrate the Project ROW for Alternative 3 on an aerial photograph and USGS topographic map base, respectively. These figures include an estimate of the area of required ROW as well as construction easements for building the Project.

The following clarifies the changes in impact estimates since the Draft EIS:

- **ROW** – Approximately 307 acres of new ROW would be required for Alternative 3, as modified, compared to 272 acres evaluated in the Draft EIS; the majority of the increase is attributable to the larger area needed for a partial cloverleaf interchange. At the proposed St. Mary’s Island restoration site, approximately 38 acres of transportation ROW would be required (see Section 4.2 for additional information). The Project would benefit USACE by providing an easement across the property.
- **Relocations** – The use of a partial cloverleaf design instead of a diamond design for the interchange of I-29 with U.S. 34 would require acquisition of a residence and associated farmstead outbuildings northeast of the existing interchange.
- **Farmland** – Prime farmland within total ROW for the Project would amount to 295 acres, compared to the 221 acres listed in the Draft EIS; the larger area needed for the partial cloverleaf interchange accounts for most of this increase. Although indirect development as a result of farmland conversion may eventually occur in the Study Area, planned conservation areas, such as the proposed St. Mary’s Island restoration site, would decrease the potential for development in Iowa near the Missouri River.
- **Noise-sensitive receivers** – Although the modification of Alternative 3 in Nebraska would not change the number of receivers affected, there would be a slight decrease in noise levels for one receiver along La Platte Road, who in any case would not be adversely affected. In Iowa, the Project boundary has been extended approximately 1,000 feet along U.S. 34 and would include one additional noise receiver, but the receiver would not be adversely affected.
- **Waters of the U.S.** – Wetland determination and wetland classification information has been updated, as explained in Section 4-2. The acreage of wetlands potentially affected by Alternative 3 is estimated at 9.0 acres, an increase of 0.3 acre from the Draft EIS. The potential wetland impacts listed in Table 4-1 are based on field determinations.

**Table 4-1
Summary of Potential Impacts**

Resource	Alternative 1 No-Build Alternative	Alternative 2 South of Offutt AFB	Alternative 3 Southern Sarpy County
Right-of-Way New ROW (acres) Acquisitions (number) ¹ Displacements (number)	Expansion of existing roads, if needed, would likely involve ROW acquisition, and displacements could also occur.	297 1 3	307 1 1
Farmland Impacts Prime Farmland (acres)	Prime farmland is likely to be converted to roadway ROW as part of urban development and any expansion of existing roads.	316	295
Major Utility Relocations Electrical Transmission Lines Fiber Optic Lines Sludge Line Petroleum Pipelines	Utility relocations, if necessary for expansion of existing roads, would require coordination with utilities.	1 0 0 0	1 0 1 0
Recreational Trail (linear feet)	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	580	0
Noise-Sensitive Receivers Residential Commercial	Traffic noise levels are likely to increase along Highway 370 and along any expanded roadway.	0 0	11 0
Waters of the U.S. Wetlands ² (acres) Waterways ³ (feet)	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	14.2 1,052	9.0 3,000
Floodplain (acres)	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	16.3	35.2
Fish and Wildlife Habitat Agricultural (cropland and pastureland acres) Forested Nonwetland (acres) ⁴ Rangeland Nonwetland (acres) Wetlands (emergent and forested acres) Missouri River (acres)	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads would minimally affect fish and wildlife habitat because most construction would likely occur within existing ROW.	347.3 14.6 26.5 14.2 4.4	300.0 6.6 101.1 9.0 4.7
Historic and Archaeological Resources	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	0	0
Section 4(f) Properties ⁵	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	1	0
Regulated Materials Sites	Impacts from any undetermined expansion of existing roads are unknown.	0	0

Notes:

- ¹ Acquisitions involve purchase of an entire land parcel that does not include a residence. Displacements involve a residential relocation (purchase of a home and relocation assistance).
- ² USACE will determine jurisdiction after final wetland delineations are completed.
- ³ Waterways are determined by the presence of a definable bed and bank.
- ⁴ Nonwetlands include uplands and lowland areas that are not deepwater aquatic habitats, wetlands, or other special aquatic sites. For this analysis, nonwetlands used for crops and pastures are reported separately.
- ⁵ Alternative 2 crosses the Bellevue Loop Trail. Continuity of the trail would be temporarily disrupted during construction for several months but would be restored after completion of construction.

The estimate of impacts is conservative, based on the assumption that the total area of wetlands in the bridge footprint would be affected. However, the actual acreage of wetlands affected beneath the bridge would depend on the pier locations and would be less than the estimated amount. Final design would account for the location of delineated wetlands and the Section 404 permitting process would determine measures to minimize impacts, including areas that would not be filled, but could be disturbed for access to pier construction.

The design process reviewed areas where culverts and other surface water conveyance structures were needed. Approximately 5,400 linear feet of 30 conveyance structures would be needed to facilitate potential surface water flow beneath the new roadway. Six areas have been identified where replacement of natural channels of waterways with structures (a concrete box culvert or corrugated metal pipe, for example) would occur. Although seven crossings (excluding the Missouri River) were initially planned and reported in the Draft EIS, field review revealed a change in existing waterway drainage in the area of the partial cloverleaf interchange where two drainages were combined. As a result, a total of approximately 3,000 feet of intermittent and perennial waterways would be affected. The increase from the 2,250 feet of waterway length reported in the Draft EIS is primarily from the extra structures for waterways in the expanded area needed for the I-29 interchange.

- **Floodplain** – Based on the revised boundaries of the 100-year floodplain in Sarpy County and the revised alignment of Alternative 3, the impacts of fill placed in interior floodplains would be approximately 35.2 acres for Alternative 3; slightly greater than the 34.8 acres reported in the Draft EIS. The change in Sarpy County floodplain boundaries resulted in approximately 16.3 acres of floodplain within the ROW for Alternative 2, slightly less than reported in the Draft EIS.
- **Fish and wildlife habitat** – The habitat affected for Alternative 3 would total 421.4 acres (approximately 118 acres more than in the Draft EIS), consisting of 300.0 acres of agricultural habitat (cropland and pastureland), 6.6 acres of forested nonwetland, 101.1 acres of rangeland nonwetland, 9.0 acres of emergent²¹ and forested wetlands, and 4.7 acres of Missouri River habitat (see Section 4.2 for additional information regarding wetland impacts). The increase is attributable primarily to the additional land needed for the partial cloverleaf interchange. To mitigate the impacts on fish and wildlife habitat, several conservation measures have been identified (see the discussion at the end of this chapter and letter #20 in Chapter 5).
- **REC sites** – The shift in Alternative 3 alignment results in avoidance of the PCS Nitrogen and Lincoln Amoco properties. Consequently, although the Draft EIS reported impacts on these two sites, no REC sites would be affected by Alternative 3.

4.2 MORE DETAILED UPDATES TO CHAPTER 4

The following provides more detailed updated information for relevant resources and potential impacts on those resources since publication of the Draft EIS:

ROW – Figures 4-3 and 4-4 show the modified ROW for Alternative 3. Figures 4-1B, 4-2B, 4-3B, and 4-4B include the revised boundary of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site. The Project benefits USACE by providing an easement across the property. Although the site

²¹ The emergent wetland class is characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. This wetland class is usually dominated by perennial plants, and the vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years. Emergent wetlands are known by many names, including marsh, meadow, fen, prairie pothole, and slough.

now encompasses approximately 2,315 acres compared to 2,488 acres as reported in the Draft EIS, the Alternative 3 ROW requirements on the restoration site remain unchanged (38 acres). Only approximately 2 percent of the land proposed for the St. Mary's Island restoration site is within the Alternative 3 ROW. (See letter #9 and response 9-4 in Chapter 5.)

Relocations – Figure 4-3C shows the one property identified for relocation under Alternative 3. Modification of the interchange to a partial cloverleaf configuration for improved traffic operations required additional ROW northeast and southwest of the interchange, including the farmstead residence and outbuildings. Section 4.4.4 of the Draft EIS provided detailed information regarding relocation assistance under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended (42 USC 460-1 et seq.), and the Iowa relocation assistance law (Iowa Code, Chapter 316). The Uniform Act ensures fair compensation of relocated property owners.

Farmland – Although the amount of total ROW (including areas of existing ROW) for Alternative 3 increased (approximately 74 acres) from what was reported in the Draft EIS, the farmland analysis conducted through the Form AD-1006 process and the conclusion that the conversion would not result in a significant impact are still valid. As indicated in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 of the Draft EIS, the previous analysis process conservatively assumed that all of the ROW needed would be agricultural land, whereas the actual amount is much less.

Recreational trail – The conclusion that Alternative 3 would not impact trails (or other recreational resources) has not changed since the Draft EIS was issued. However, additional information on trail plans was presented by commentors (see letters #8, #10, #17, and #18 in Chapter 5), and options for including a separated facility for bicyclists and pedestrians were considered by the signatory agencies. Although there are proposed trails on levees beneath the proposed Missouri River Bridge, the Bellevue Loop Trail is the only existing trail in the area of the proposed bridge. It is located approximately 3,000 feet from the bridge at its closest point.

Trail users could use Harlan Lewis Road to access the new roadway leading to the bridge. Comments by agencies and public representatives concerning pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations on the Missouri River Bridge involved re-examination of the proposed accommodation. At this time, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation is anticipated on the widened shoulders with an increase in shoulder width to 12 feet as opposed to the standard 6 feet. Final design will more completely address the method of providing for pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the bridge.

Noise-sensitive receivers – The noise contours for the Project derived from running the FHWA Traffic Noise Model were based on the alignment shown in the Draft EIS. In the locations of the alignment changes, the noise contours are not shown on Figures 4-3A, 4-3B, and 4-3C. However, for the portions of the alignment that have been revised, the noise contours would be approximately parallel to the new alignment. Running the model again was not deemed necessary because noise receivers would be exposed to noise levels similar to, or less than, previous predictions.

In Nebraska, the alignment shift to avoid acquisition of PCS Nitrogen property moved the alignment farther away from the only receiver in the area of the shift, so noise levels would actually decrease in this area. Near Lincoln Amoco, the alignment shift is minimal and the noise levels would essentially be the same as predicted in the Draft EIS; no receivers would be exposed to traffic noise levels approaching or exceeding the noise abatement criteria (NAC).

In Iowa, repaving has been extended approximately 1,000 feet along U.S. 34 from the area previously assumed to be included in the noise analysis. Because this extension is along an existing alignment, the noise contours would continue parallel to the alignment, as shown in

Figure 4-3C. As a result of this change, an additional receiver, located approximately 380 feet east of noise receiver number 414, is now located in the noise analysis area. Figure 4-3C indicates that this receiver falls outside of the 66 a-weighted decibel (dBA) noise contour line and would not be exposed to traffic noise levels approaching or exceeding the NAC.

Waters of the U.S. – As noted in Chapter 3, preliminary wetland impacts were estimated based on field determinations. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 (replacing Tables 4-8 and 4-9 in the Draft EIS, respectively) list the estimated acreages and classifications of wetlands within the ROW of the build alternatives. These tables (like their corresponding tables in the Draft EIS) include only existing wetlands, not possible future wetlands.²² After the Final EIS is issued, field delineations during the Section 404 permit application process will more accurately assess direct and indirect impacts on existing wetlands along the alignment of the preferred alternative. (See letters #7 and #13, and #15 and responses 7-2, 13-1, 13-3, and 15-10 in Chapter 5.) During design, impacts on the delineated wetlands will be avoided and minimized to the extent possible. Any necessary mitigation for impacts will be included in the Section 404 permit application (see letter #15 and response 15-10 in Chapter 5). Given the national goal of “no net loss” of wetlands, reasonably foreseeable efforts to preserve, enhance, restore, and create wildlife habitat would offset the potential indirect loss of wetlands.

**Table 4-2
Wetlands in ROW of Alternative 2**

Type	Nebraska (acres)	Iowa (acres)	Total (acres)
PEMA ¹	0.9	2.3	3.2
PEMC ²	0.1	7.0	7.1
PFOA ³	1.0	1.5	2.5
R2UB ⁴	0.0	1.4	1.4
Total	2.0	12.2	14.2

Notes:

- ¹ PEMA = palustrine emergent temporarily flooded.
- ² PEMC = palustrine emergent seasonally flooded.
- ³ PFOA = palustrine forested temporarily flooded.
- ⁴ R2UB = riverine lower perennial unconsolidated bottom subsystem.

Under the current design, the placement of the bridge would provide for wetland avoidance. The alignment of Alternative 2 has been configured to avoid 0.4 acre of PFOA wetlands in Nebraska and 1.5 acres of PFOA and 1.4 acres of R2UB wetlands in Iowa. The current alignment of Alternative 3 would avoid 1.75 acres of PFOA and 1.0 acre R2UB wetlands in Iowa. As design of the preferred alternative proceeds, efforts to avoid wetlands will continue. In the case of any unavoidable wetland impacts, efforts will be made to minimize impacts to the extent possible and to provide compensatory mitigation. Iowa DOT and NDOR are considering the possibility of mitigation on site or in close proximity to the Project. Options will be evaluated during the Section 404 permit application process (see letters #9, #11, and #14 and responses 9-5, 11-2, and 14-3 in Chapter 5).

²² As noted in responses 13-3 and 14-4 in Chapter 5, the Project is not expected to affect future wetlands on land belonging to Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD). MUD has indicated willingness to consider its property for wetland mitigation, as stated in response 11-2 but currently has no plans for developing wetland areas on the site it had previously proposed for wetland mitigation for its Platte West project.

**Table 4-3
Wetlands in ROW of Alternative 3**

Type ¹	Nebraska (acres)	Iowa (acres)	Total (acres)
PEMA	2.6	0.0	2.6
PEMC	1.0	0.0	1.0
PEMF ¹	0.0	1.5	1.5
PFOA	0.0	2.9	2.9
R2UB	0.0	1.0	1.0
Total	3.6	5.4	9.0

Note:

¹ PEMF = Palustrine emergent semi-permanently flooded

See notes in Table 4-2 for definitions of the other wetland type abbreviations.

Wetland mitigation sites could be created as a result of establishing borrow sites. Offutt AFB has expressed concern regarding the location of potential borrow sites and wetlands along the flight path of Offutt AFB runways (see letter #16 and response 16-2 in Chapter 5). Namely, the wetlands and ponds associated with borrow sites attract waterfowl, which poses a hazard to flight operations. Coordination regarding this issue has subsequently occurred between Iowa DOT and Offutt AFB. Potential borrow sites closest to the Offutt AFB runway and along the approach path would be ranked low compared to other potential sites and would be avoided if at all possible. Borrow sites would be established and wetland mitigation sites would be created in coordination with the base and relevant natural resource agencies.

Floodplain – Sarpy County issued regulatory revised flood insurance rate maps and a flood insurance study in December 2005. Figures 4-1 and 4-3 have been revised using the most recent approved floodplain boundaries. In addition to complying with floodplain development criteria for the 100-year flood event, the roadway design will include a water conveyance system to minimize potential impacts associated with flood events exceeding the 100-year frequency (see letter #11 and response 11-3 in Chapter 5). Conservation measures have been developed to mitigate the potential impact of future floodplain development and protect existing habitat (see Section 4.2 as well as letters #1 and #9 and responses 1-3 and 9-3 in Chapter 5).

The bridge and roadway would be constructed to avoid degrading the effectiveness of pile dikes and other bank stabilization structures.

Construction in the floodway has the potential to increase the Missouri River surface elevation. Hydraulic modeling projects a rise of 0.008 foot. Coordination with USACE has occurred to confirm that this incrementally small rise qualifies as a no-rise condition. No-rise certification for the portions of the Project in the floodway will be submitted as part of the floodplain development permit applications. Hydrologic modeling will continue during design. The Missouri River flow impact, along with scour depths, will also be considered during final bridge design (see letter #9 and responses 9-6, 9-7, and 9-10 in Chapter 5).

Fish and wildlife habitat – Modifications to the stormwater regime and water quality resulting from construction of the bridge and highway, in addition to modifications from future development, could have adverse effects on the pallid sturgeon and other fish known to occur in the area of the confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers. Any adverse modifications to the stormwater regime and water quality have the potential to degrade the recovery priority management area and inhibit the recovery of the pallid sturgeon. Therefore, conservation measures, listed below, have been adopted to minimize the potential for adverse impacts on the pallid sturgeon and the bald eagle, as well as other Federally listed species. The measures also address indirect impacts on fish and wildlife resources. Implementation of these measures leads

to a determination that the Project would not likely adversely affect listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of Federally designated critical habitat (see letter #21 in Chapter 5). The following summarizes these measures (see letter #20 for the complete text and response 20-1 in Chapter 5):

- a. Conservation easement – Iowa DOT shall acquire a 167-acre conservation easement located west of the ROW for Alternative 3 in Iowa and adjacent to the south side of the proposed St. Mary’s Island restoration site. This area shall be managed for the benefit of riverine fish and wildlife species, including the pallid sturgeon and bald eagle. The proposed area for the conservation easement includes approximately 3.4 acres of wetlands based on USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) boundaries.
- b. The segment of the proposed highway alignment in the vicinity of the conservation easement will be shifted northeastward. The shift is intended to allow a Federal levee on the Iowa side of the river to be set back to restore riverine processes and functions. The purpose of the highway realignment and levee setback, together with the conservation easement, is to prevent future commercial and industrial developments and subsequent modification of the stormwater regime and water quality in the Platte and Missouri confluence area.
- c. The bridge abutments and earthen embankments shall be constructed landward of the current Federal levees to avoid hydrological changes, including passage of flood flows.
- d. Tree clearing shall not occur during the bald eagle wintering period and shall be minimized during the remainder of the year to the extent possible.
- e. A survey for active bald eagle nests shall be completed 60 to 90 days before construction of the Project if construction is planned to occur during the nesting period. If active nest(s) are found within 0.5 mile or line of sight of the Project, all construction activities within 0.5 mile or line of sight of the nest shall cease and FHWA will consult with USFWS.
- f. Cofferdam installation and removal as well as pile-driving activities in the Missouri River shall occur from July 1 through January 31 to avoid impacts on pallid sturgeon.
- g. A minimum of 450-foot clear span shall be maintained to prevent the attraction of pallid sturgeon into the mixing zone²³ of the wastewater treatment plant located upstream and to minimize the number of piers in the river.
- h. The single river pier and first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River shall be constructed to minimize scouring of small pool areas above and below the bridge location for Alternative 3 and thereby avoid creating wintering habitat for the pallid sturgeon in the area of the mixing zone of the wastewater treatment plant.
- i. Spill prevention materials and trained personnel shall be readily available at the proposed construction site to respond to accidental spills.
- j. FHWA shall reinitiate Section 7 consultation with USFWS if borrow pit(s) on the Nebraska side of the Project result in the exposure of groundwater that may be hydrologically connected to the Platte River.

²³ The creation of habitat in the mixing zone is undesirable because water quality at the mixing zone does not need to meet water quality standards for the protection of aquatic life.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among Iowa DOT, Iowa DNR, USACE, and FHWA has been prepared for commitment in implementing the recommendations specified in letter #20. The MOA is included in Appendix A.

Noise (from traffic or future development) is another factor to consider for evaluating wildlife impacts. Potential future development in the Study Area is unlikely to cause a noticeable increase in noise levels in the area of Schilling WMA because restrictions on floodway construction would help maintain a buffer between the WMA and any potential development north of the Platte River and east of the Missouri River. Planned conservation areas (the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site and the adjacent conservation easement) would likely provide a balance, so that increases in background noise levels are negligible (1 or 2 dBA). These conservation areas would likely balance any future development in the Study Area, keeping increases in background noise levels negligible (1 or 2 dBA). (See the discussion of conservation measures below as well as response 14-2 and letter #20 in Chapter 5.)

Historic and archaeological resources – The results of the steamboat survey and subsequent archaeological investigation revealed no evidence of steamboats. Based on the preliminary ROW and locations of sites potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP, no historic properties or archaeological sites would be affected by construction of Alternative 3. The Iowa DOT sent a letter to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for concurrence on a finding of no potential to affect historic properties (Iowa DOT, June 16, 2005), and the SHPO concurred with the determination on June 29, 2005; Appendix B includes the letter.

The modified alignment of Alternative 3 in Nebraska was surveyed for historic and archaeological resources and none were identified (NDOR, January 6, 2006). The Nebraska SHPO archaeological office within the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) concurred with the findings of the NDOR letter report determining that no archaeological, architectural, or historic context property resources historic properties in Nebraska would be affected by Alternative 3 (NSHS, January 17, 2006). Appendix B includes the concurrence letter and the NDOR letter report.

The proposed conservation easement was also evaluated for archaeological resources (Tallgrass, L.C., January 2006). The Phase IA archaeological assessment of the proposed conservation easement concluded that the potential for significant unrecorded archaeological sites appears to be extremely low. No further archaeological investigation was recommended. The Iowa DOT sent a letter to the Iowa SHPO for concurrence on a finding of no potential to affect historic properties (Iowa DOT, February 16, 2006), and the SHPO concurred with the determination on February 21, 2006; Appendix B includes the letter.

REC sites – The continued migration of an ammonia and nitrate plume (reported in Chapter 3, Affected Environment) warranted shifting the alignment to avoid PCS Nitrogen property.

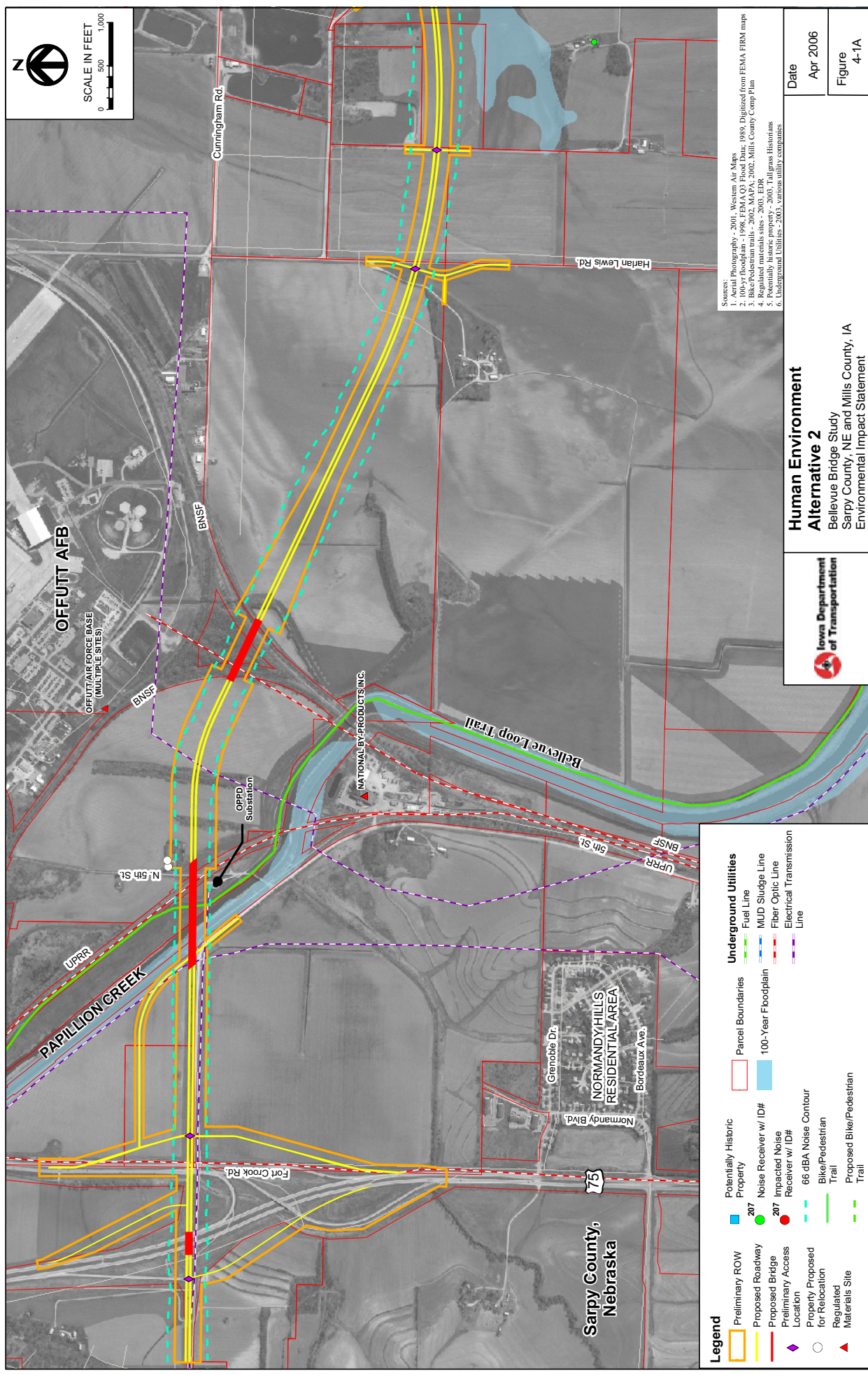
Regarding the Lincoln Amoco site, further investigation has determined that the identified area of current groundwater contamination from the LUST is located west of the site and outside of the preliminary ROW for Alternative 3 (see response 11-5 in Chapter 5). However, preliminary design indicated that the waste stabilization lagoons would likely need to be relocated. An option to avoid the lagoons was considered but would still have resulted in impacts on the outflow system and would have required a permit modification by Lincoln Amoco. Based on the aforementioned design issues and the EPA comment recommending shifting the alignment to avoid site impacts (see letter #11 and response 11-5 in Chapter 5), Iowa DOT decided to shift the alignment slightly to the south to avoid impacting the lagoon system and acquiring Lincoln Amoco property. Additionally, the 190th Street access road was shifted westward to move farther away from a LUST release on Lincoln Amoco property.

Indirect impacts associated with Plattsmouth Bridge improvements – As noted in Section 1.5, the Plattsmouth Bridge is now planned for redecking and other minor structural improvements rather than replacement. Although improvements to the deck and structure are proposed, the width of the bridge would not change. The improvements would remove the current load restrictions. With the new Bellevue Bridge, traffic projections for the Plattsmouth Bridge for the Year 2030 indicate that 1,750 vehicles per day (vpd) would use the existing Plattsmouth Bridge versus 2,000 vpd that would have used the new Plattsmouth Bridge. If the Plattsmouth Bridge were not replaced, less traffic originating in Iowa and traveling toward Omaha, especially wider vehicles, would use the Plattsmouth Bridge and instead might use the new Bellevue Bridge. The new Bellevue Bridge would be able to handle wider vehicles and faster speeds than the improved Plattsmouth Bridge and would cause the following indirect impacts:

- Toll revenues from use of the Plattsmouth Bridge would drop slightly.
- The lifespan of the Plattsmouth Bridge might be slightly longer because of reduced heavy vehicle traffic.

Neither of these indirect impacts is projected to be significant. Given that the existing Plattsmouth Bridge is listed on the NRHP and that the improvements would be made to maintain the historic integrity of the existing Plattsmouth Bridge, the potential extension of its lifespan would aid in the retention of an NRHP resource.

Indirect impacts on Toll Revenues from the Existing Bellevue Bridge – As noted in Section 1.5, the existing Bellevue Bridge was repaired to extend its life. The Bellevue Bridge Commission acquired a loan in 2004 to repair the bridge and extend its life for another 25 years. The Draft EIS indicated in Section 4.6.3 that Alternative 3 would cause a reduction in traffic over the existing Bellevue Bridge, with a consequent decrease in toll revenue. Traffic projections indicate that 2,300 vehicles per day would use the existing bridge in 2030 compared to the current 2,500 vehicles per day. The Bellevue Bridge Commission considered the reduction in future toll revenues and recently determined to continue collecting tolls after the loan for the repairs is paid off in 2009 (Omaha World Herald, March 14, 2007). The toll money will go into a fund that could be used to operate, maintain, renovate, tear down, or rebuild the bridge.



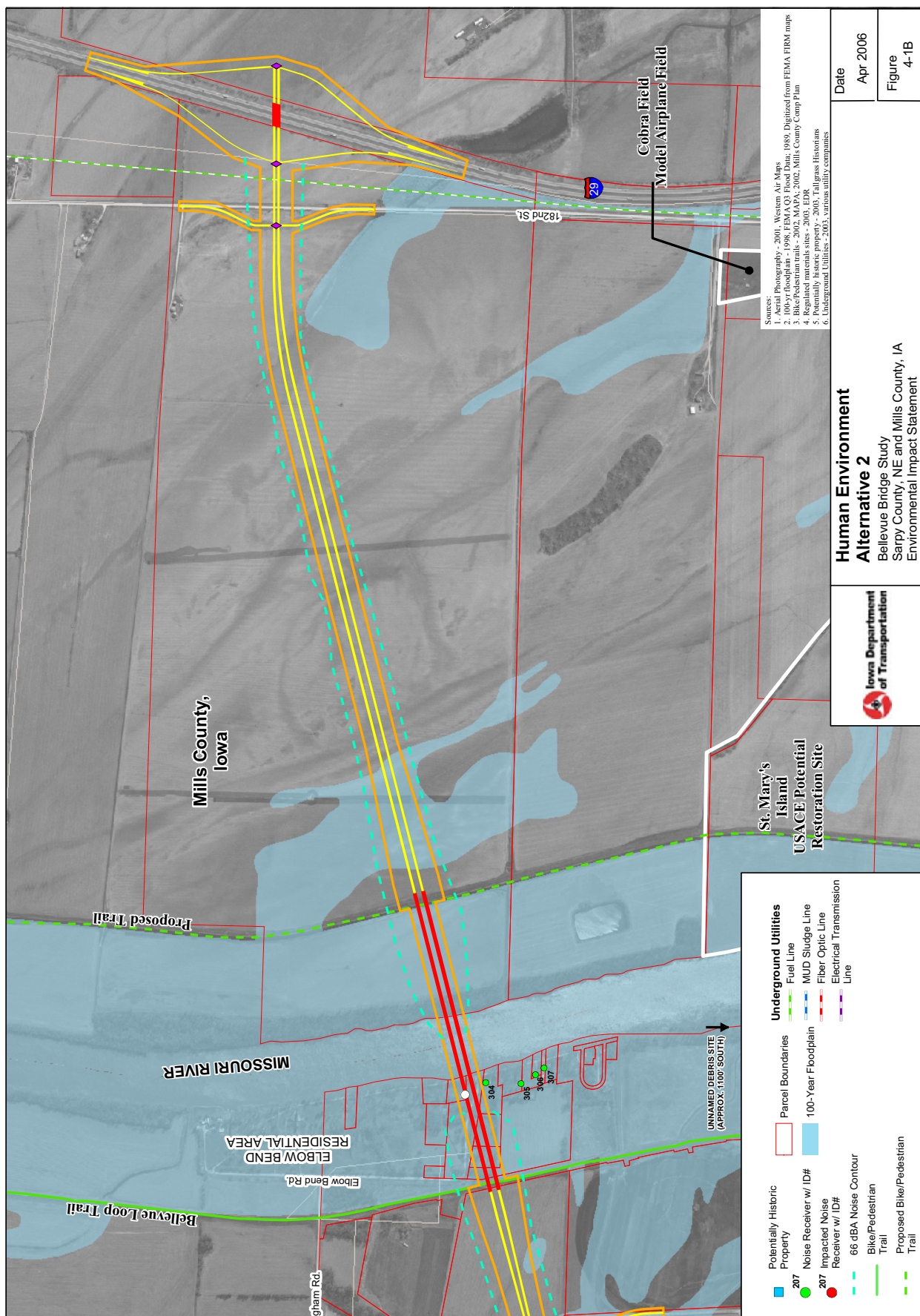
Sources:
 1. Aerial Photography - 2001, Western Air Maps
 2. 100-yr floodplain - 1998, FEMA Q3 Flood Data; 1989, Digitized from FEMA FIRM maps
 3. Bike/Pedestrian trails - 2002, MAPA; 2002, Mills County Comp Plan
 4. Regulated materials sites - 2000, EPA
 5. 2003, Tallgrass Histadrone
 6. Underground Utilities - 2003, various utility companies

**Human Environment
 Alternative 2**
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date	Apr 2006
Figure	4-1A

Legend

Preliminary ROW	Potentially Historic Property	Fuel Line	Parcel Boundaries
Proposed Roadway	Noise Receiver w/ ID# 207	MUD Sludge Line	100-Year Floodplain
Proposed Bridge	Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID# 207	Fiber Optic Line	
Preliminary Access Location	66 dBA Noise Contour	Electrical Transmission Line	
Property Proposed for Relocation	Trail		
Regulated Materials Site	Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Trail		



- Sources:**
1. Aerial Photography - 2001, Western Air Maps
 2. 100-yr floodplain - 1998, FEMA Q3 Flood Data; 1989, Digitized from FEMA FIRM maps
 3. Bike/Pedestrian trails - 2002, MAPA; 2002, Mills County Comp Plan
 4. Regulated materials sites - 2006, EPA
 5. 2003, Tallgrass Histories
 6. Underground Utilities - 2003, various utility companies

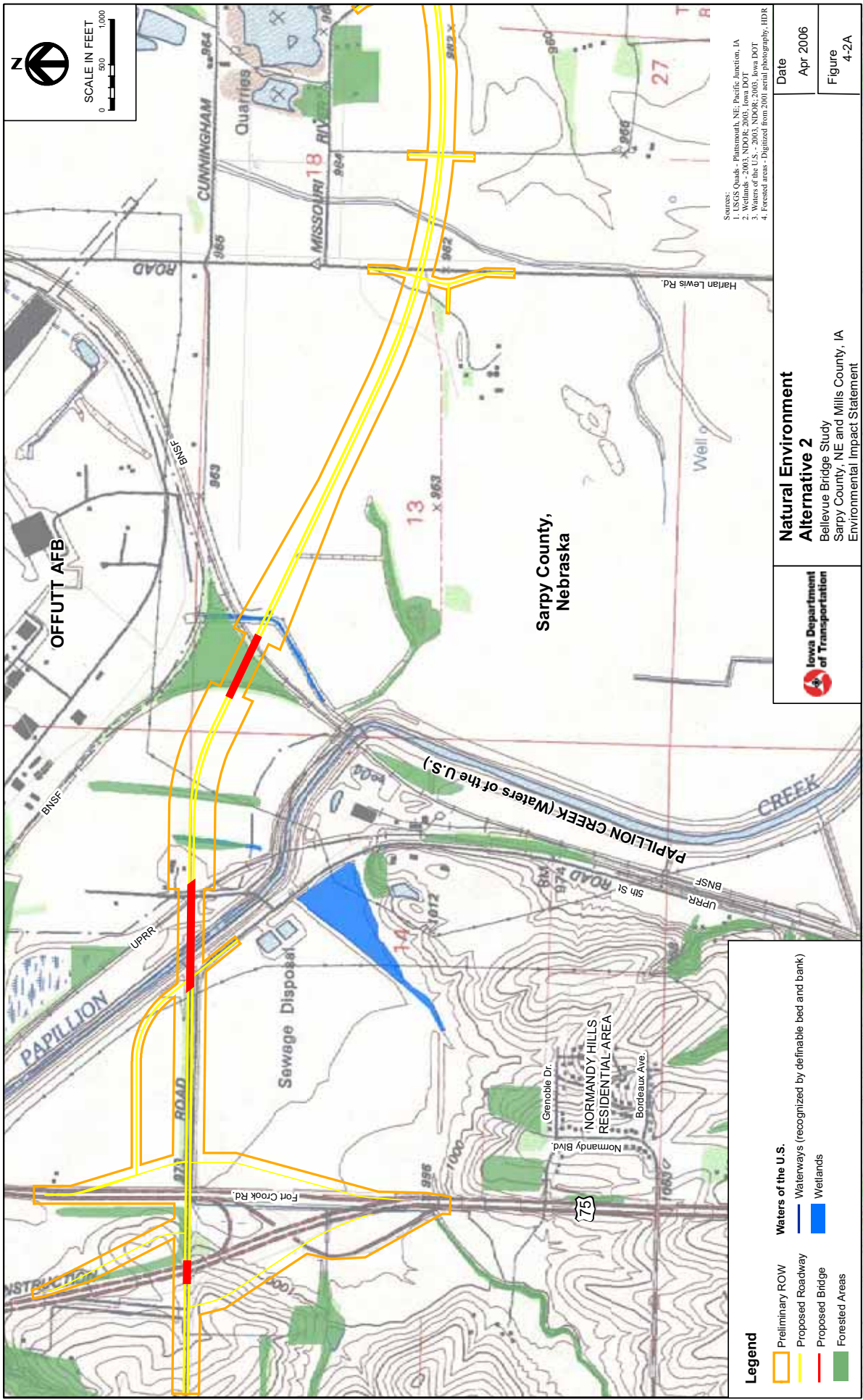
Iowa Department of Transportation

**Human Environment
Alternative 2**
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sary County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Apr 2006
Figure: 4-1B

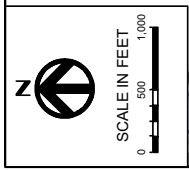
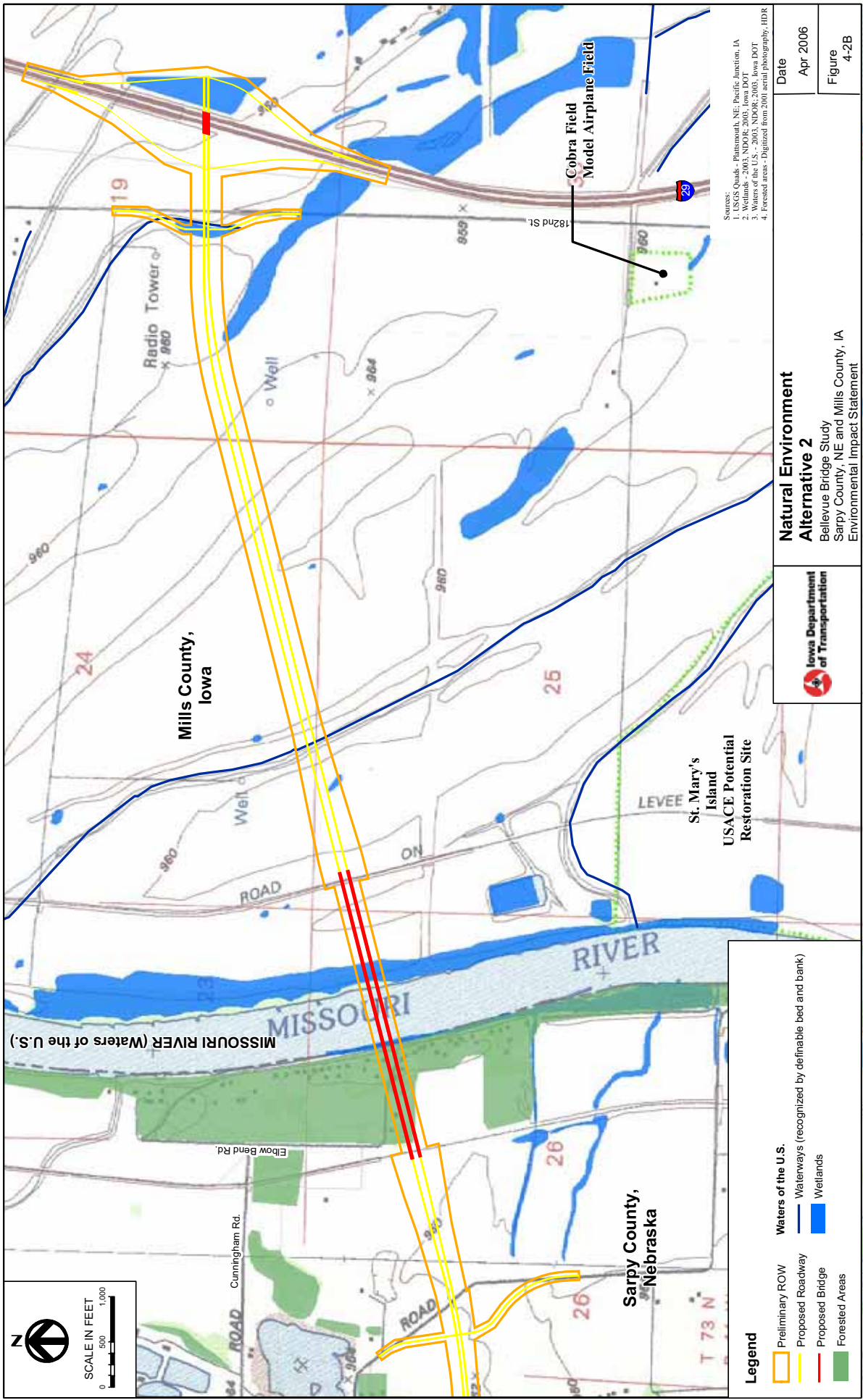
Legend

Preliminary ROW	Potentially Historic Property	207 Noise Receiver w/ ID#	Fuel Line	100-Year Floodplain	MUD Sludge Line
Proposed Roadway	207 Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID#	207 Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID#	Fiber Optic Line	66 dBA Noise Contour	Electrical Transmission Line
Proposed Bridge Location	Property Proposed for Relocation	Bike/Pedestrian Trail	Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Trail		
Preliminary Access	Regulated Materials Site				



Sources:
 1. USGS Quads - Plattsburgh, NE; Pacific Junction, IA
 2. National Wetlands Inventory
 3. Waters of the U.S. - 2003, NDOR 2003 Iowa DOT
 4. Forested areas - Digitized from 2001 aerial photography, HDR

Date	Apr 2006
Figure	4-2A



Legend

- Preliminary ROW
- Proposed Roadway
- Proposed Bridge
- Forested Areas

Waters of the U.S.

- Waterways (recognized by definable bed and bank)
- Wetlands

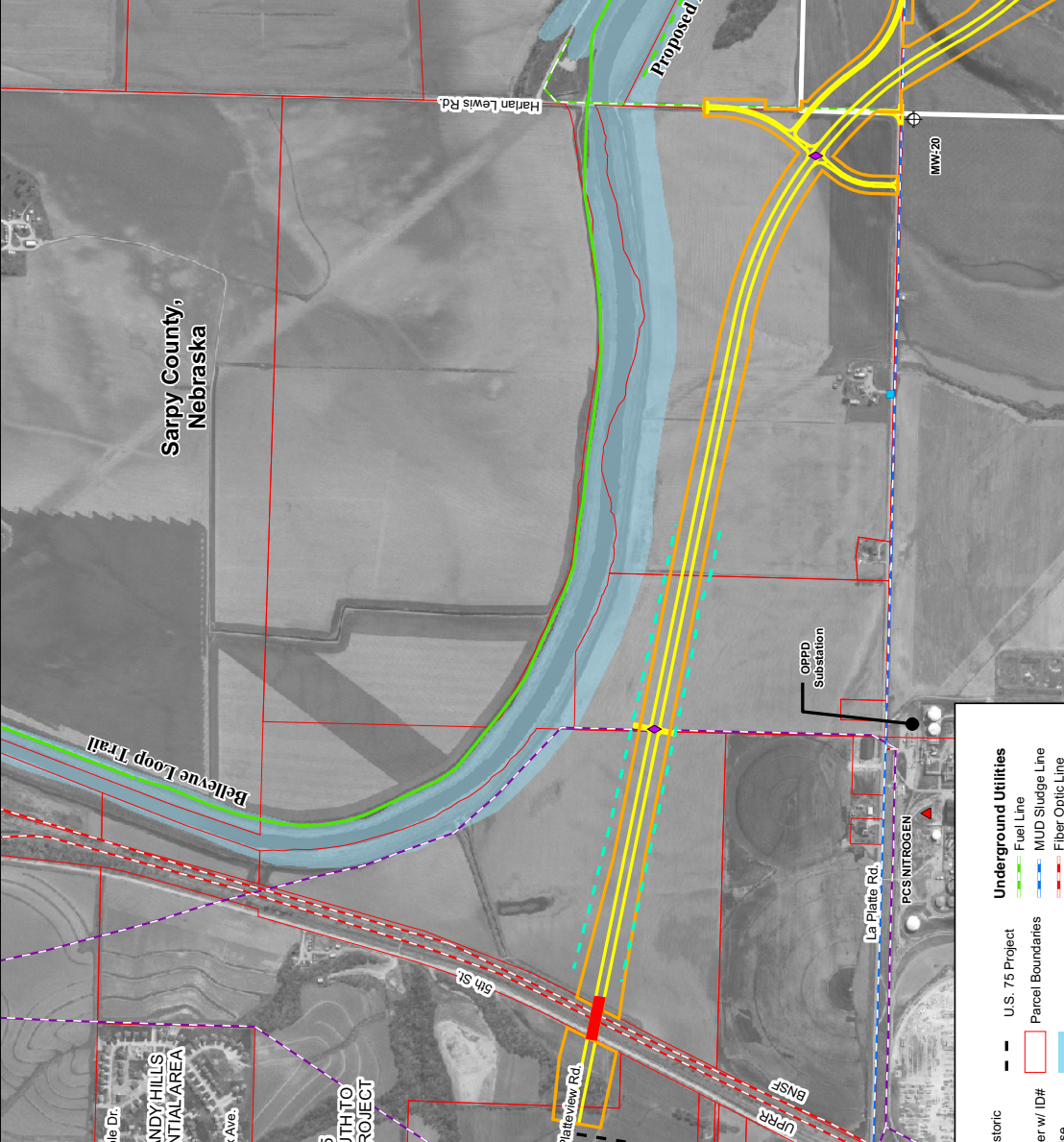


**Natural Environment
Alternative 2**
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Date	Apr 2006
Figure	4-2B

- Sources:
1. USGS Quads - Plattsburgh, NE; Pacific Junction, IA
 2. National Wetlands Inventory - Iowa DOT
 3. Waters of the U.S. - 2003, NDOR 2103, Iowa DOT
 4. Forested areas - Digitized from 2001 aerial photography, HDR

- Sources:
1. Aerial Photography - 2001, Western Air Maps
 2. 100-yr floodplain - 1998, FEMA Q3 Flood Data; 1989, Digitized from FEMA FIRM maps
 3. Bike/Pedestrian trails - 2002, MAPA; 2002, Mills County Comp Plan
 4. Regulated materials sites - 2005, EDR
 5. Potentially historic property - 2005, Tallgrass Historians
 6. Underground Utilities - 2005, various utility companies



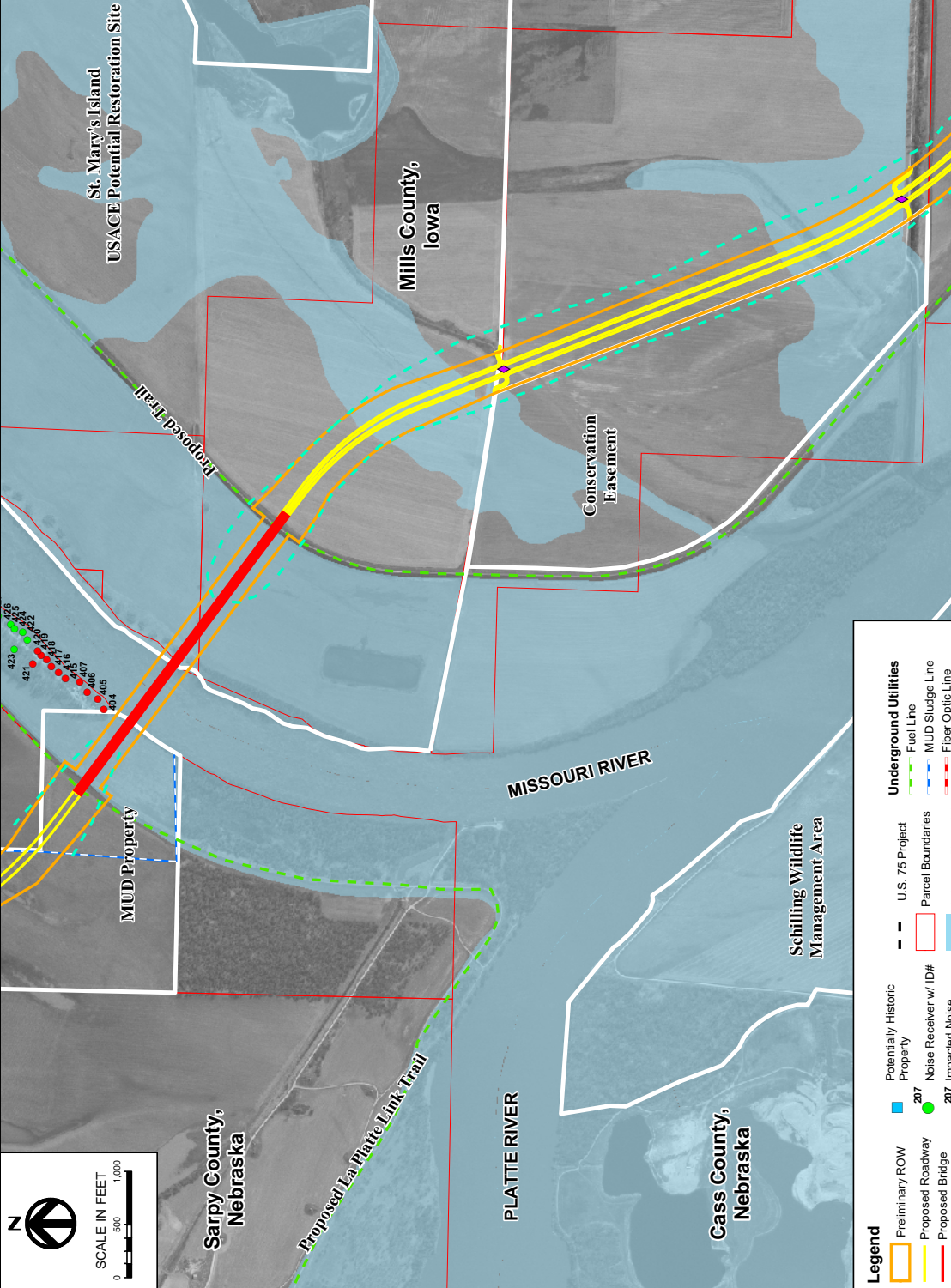
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Human Environment
Alternative 3
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Oct 2006
Figure: 4-3A

- Sources:
1. Aerial Photography - 2001, Western Air Maps
 2. 100-yr floodplain - 1998, FEMA Q3 Flood Data; 1989, Digitized from FEMA FIRM maps
 3. Bike/Pedestrian trails - 2002, MAPA; 2002, Mills County Comp Plan
 4. Regulated materials sites - 2005, EDR
 5. Potentially historic property - 2005, Tallgrass Historians
 6. Underground Utilities - 2005, various utility companies



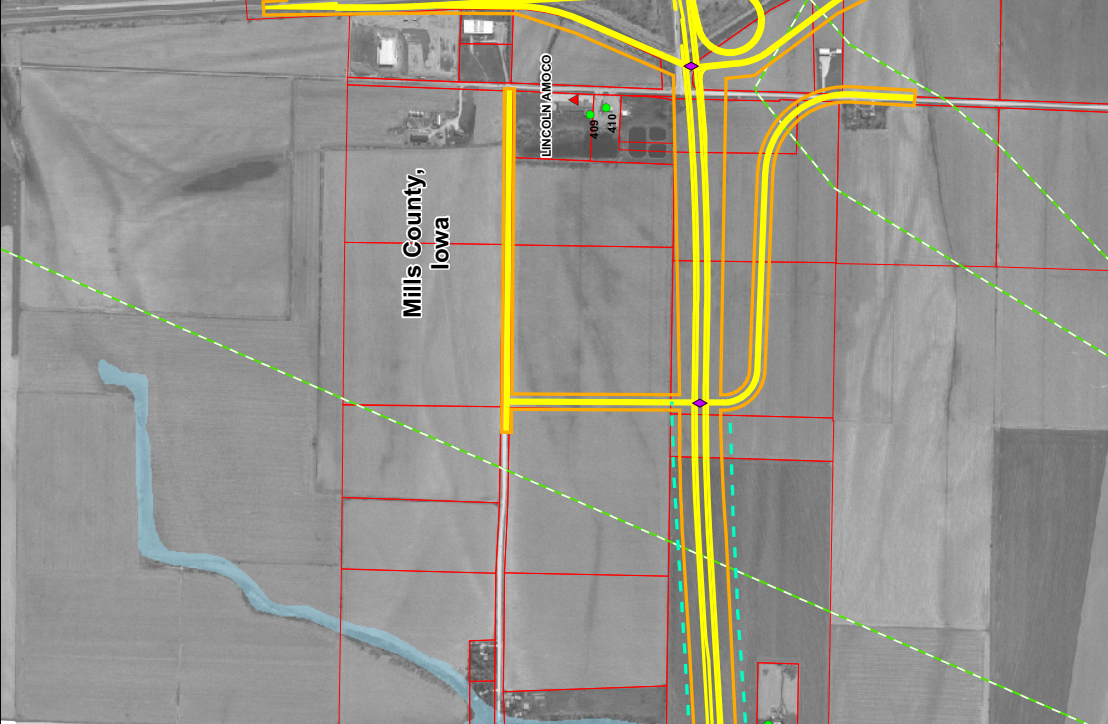
- Legend**
- Potentially Historic Property
 - 207 Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 207 Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 66 dBA Noise Contour
 - Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Preliminary ROW
 - Proposed Roadway
 - Proposed Bridge
 - Preliminary Access Location
 - Property Proposed for Relocation
 - Regulated Materials Site
 - U.S. 75 Project
 - Parcel Boundaries
 - 100-Year Floodplain
 - Potentially Historic Property
 - 207 Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 207 Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 66 dBA Noise Contour
 - Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Preliminary ROW
 - Proposed Roadway
 - Proposed Bridge
 - Preliminary Access Location
 - Property Proposed for Relocation
 - Regulated Materials Site
 - U.S. 75 Project
 - Parcel Boundaries
 - 100-Year Floodplain
- Underground Utilities**
- Fuel Line
 - MUD Sludge Line
 - Fiber Optic Line
 - Electrical Transmission Line

Human Environment Alternative 3
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Saryp County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement



Date: Oct 2006
 Figure: 4-3B

- Sources:
1. Aerial Photography - 2001, Western Air Maps
 2. 100-yr floodplain - 1998, FEMA Q3 Flood Data; 1989, Digitized from FEMA FIRM maps
 3. Bike/Pedestrian trails - 2002, MAPA; 2006, Mills County Comp Plan
 4. Regulated materials sites - 2005, EDR
 5. Potentially historic property - 2005, Tallgrass Historians
 6. Underground Utilities - 2005, various utility companies



- Legend**
- Potentially Historic Property
 - 207 Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 207 Impacted Noise Receiver w/ ID#
 - 66 dBA Noise Contour
 - Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Proposed Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Preliminary ROW
 - Proposed Roadway
 - Proposed Bridge
 - Preliminary Access Location
 - Property Proposed for Relocation
 - Regulated Materials Site
 - U.S. 75 Project
 - Parcel Boundaries
 - 100-Year Floodplain
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 - 207 Noise Receiver w/ ID#
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 - Parcel Boundaries
 - 100-Year Floodplain
 - Underground Utilities
 - Fuel Line
 - MUD Sludge Line
 - Fiber Optic Line
 - Electrical Transmission Line

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Mills County, Iowa

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Human Environment

Alternative 3

Bellevue Bridge Study

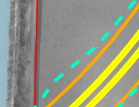
Sapry County, NE and Mills County, IA

Environmental Impact Statement

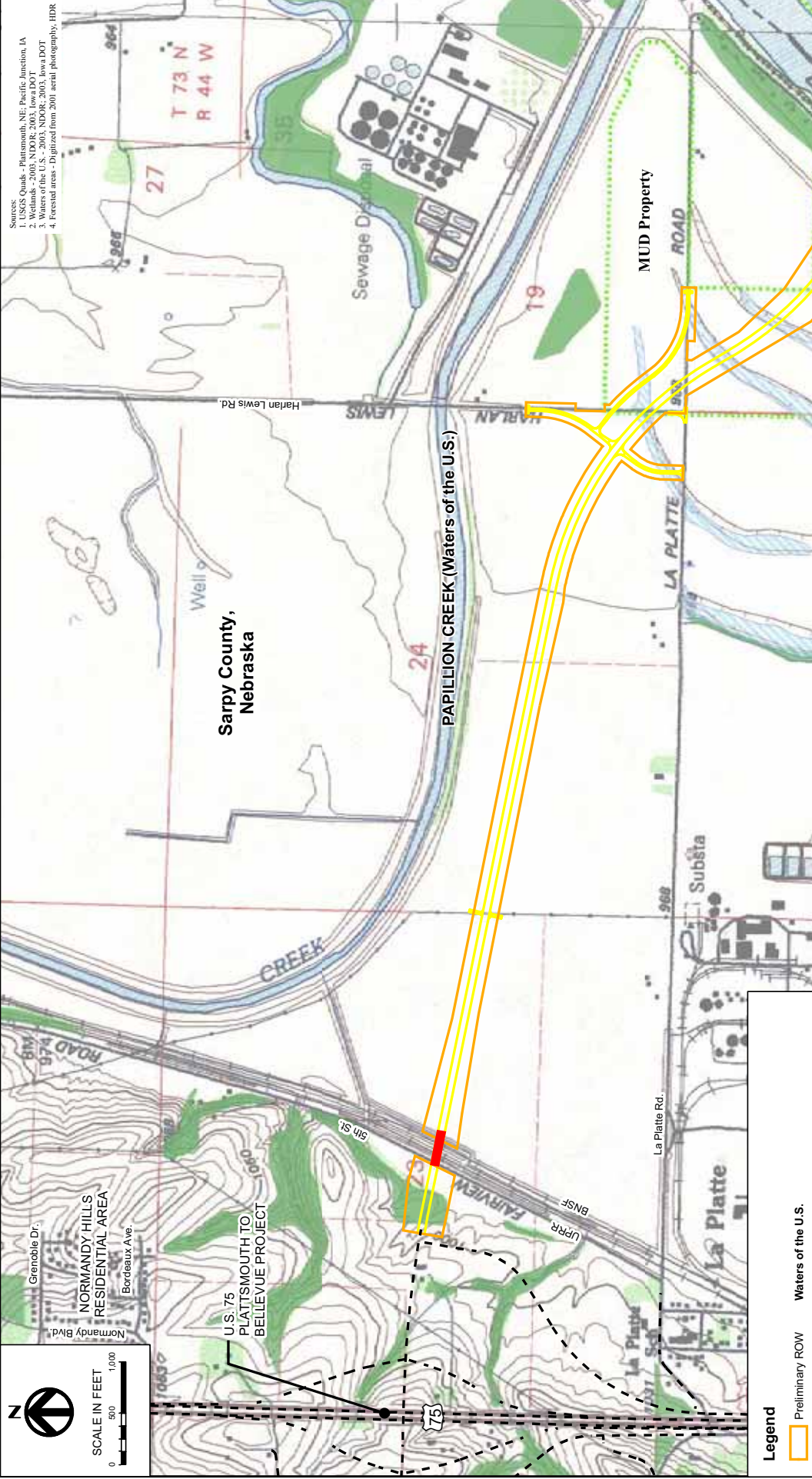
Oct 2006

Figure

4-3C



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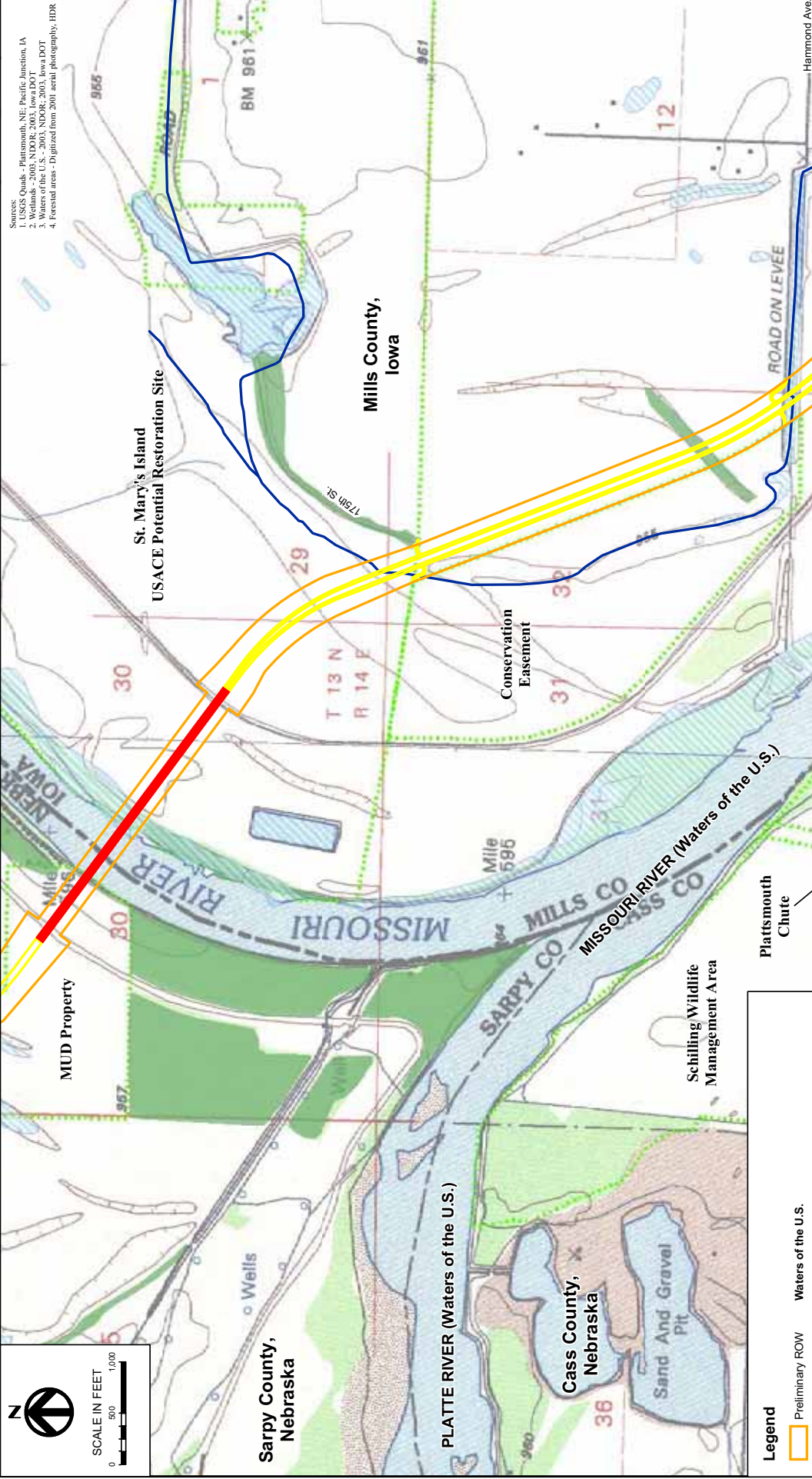
SARPY COUNTY, Nebraska
 1. USGS Quads - Plattsburgh, NE, Pacific Junction, IA
 2. Wetlands - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 3. Waters of the U.S. - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 4. Forested areas - Digitized from 2001 aerial photography, HDR



**Natural Environment
 Alternative 3**
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Oct 2006
 Figure: 4-4A

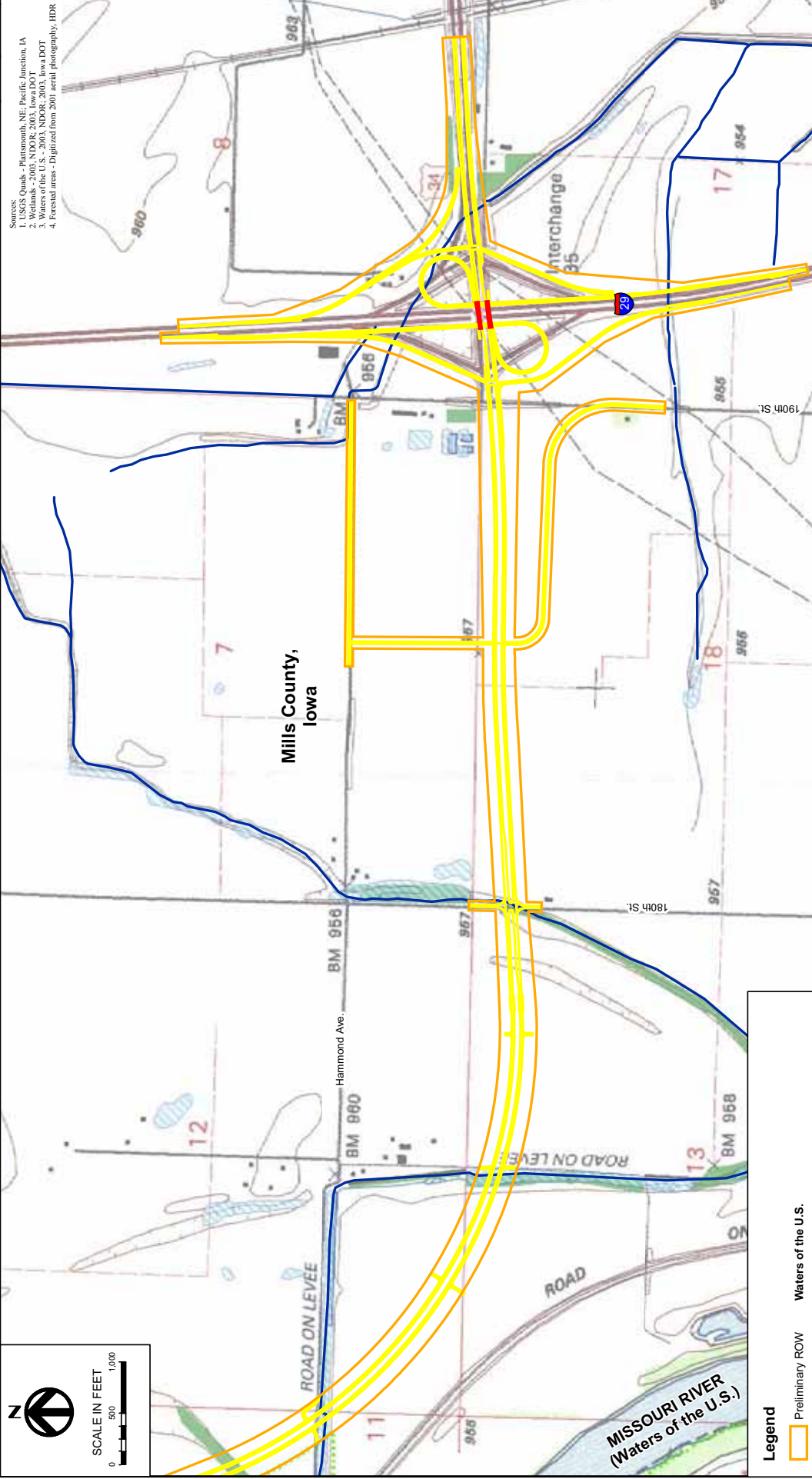
Sources:
 1. USGS Quads - Plattesmouth, NE, Pacific Junction, IA
 2. Wetlands - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 3. Waters of the U.S. - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 4. Forested areas - Digitized from 2001 aerial photography, HDR



**Natural Environment
 Alternative 3**
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Sarpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Oct 2006
 Figure: 4-4B

Sources:
 1. USGS Quads - Plattsburgh, NE, Pacific Junction, IA
 2. Wetlands - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 3. Waters of the U.S. - 2003, NDOR, 2003, Iowa DOT
 4. Forested areas - Digitized from 2001 aerial photography, HDR



**Natural Environment
 Alternative 3**
 Bellevue Bridge Study
 Serpy County, NE and Mills County, IA
 Environmental Impact Statement

Date: Oct 2006
 Figure: 4-4C

CHAPTER 5

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

CHAPTER 5

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

This chapter summarizes the public involvement and agency coordination that has taken place since the Draft EIS was issued. Diverging from the order in Chapter 5 of the Draft EIS, this chapter addresses public involvement first, followed by the agency coordination efforts. The comment letters received from the agencies subsequent to circulation of the Draft EIS, along with the signatory agencies' written responses to the comments, are reprinted at the end of this chapter. Tribal-specific coordination has not occurred since the Draft EIS because, as reported in Section 5.2 of the Draft EIS, comments received from tribes during preparation of the Draft EIS revealed no Project-related tribal issues.

5.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The extensive public involvement program to engage the general public and other parties interested in the Project continued after the Draft EIS was circulated for review. Throughout the course of the Project, correspondence received from the public was logged, and, if requested, a response was sent to the specific public entity or individual. A third formal meeting with the community advisory committee took place on January 13, 2005. Public information meeting No. 3 was held on January 18, 2005 in Bellevue, Nebraska, and a public hearing was held on January 19, 2005 in Glenwood, Iowa. To announce these meetings, a Project newsletter was sent to 486 individuals and businesses (included on the Project mailing list) during the first week of January 2005. The hearing was also advertised in area newspapers (*Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, *Bellevue Leader*, and *Glenwood Opinion Tribune*) and by press release to local media (radio and television).

The public information meeting in Bellevue was attended by 120 people, and the public hearing in Glenwood was attended by 98 people. At both meetings, a Spanish-speaking translator was available, but no one in attendance required a translator. The transcript of the meetings, which included all written comments and responses by Iowa DOT, was distributed to local officials. The transcript was also made available at the public libraries in Bellevue, Nebraska and Glenwood, Iowa or upon request.

The purpose of the public hearing was to present the Draft EIS and the preferred alternative to the public and to gather public input. A variety of displays were available at the meetings, including boards with text and graphics showing the preferred alternative and the alternatives carried forward and comparing the impacts of the alternatives that had been carried forward during the alternatives screening process. Also available was a handout that summarized the study process, including the Project purpose and need, the alternatives carried forward, and environmental and ROW considerations.

The following summarizes the informal²⁴ comments received at the meetings:

- Most comments were generally supportive of the Project, and many people indicated a preference for the Southern Sarpy County Alternative (the preferred alternative).

²⁴ Informal comments are those that were expressed to staff at the meeting/hearing but were not submitted as oral or written testimony.

- There were several questions regarding Project cost, schedule, and funding.
- Many people expressed a desire to have the Project constructed as soon as possible.
- Several people wanted to know how access would be provided to their property.
- Several people expressed opposition to using soil from the Loess Hills as borrow material.
- A few people commented that they would like to have a separate bicycle/pedestrian trail included in the Project.
- A few people from the Iske Park residential area expressed concern about noise impacts and inquired about abatement measures.

A total of 62 written comments were received from the meetings. The majority of comments was supportive of the Project and indicated a desire for it to proceed as quickly as possible. One comment expressed a preference for the South of Offutt Alternative, 13 expressed no preference, and 48 expressed a preference for the Southern Sarpy County Alternative (the preferred alternative).

Comments and issues identified in the written comments were similar to those expressed informally at the meetings and included:

- Support for the Project and a desire to have it proceed as quickly as possible
- Four letters expressing the need for bicycle accommodation on the bridge
- Three letters from persons living in the Iske Park residential area, who were concerned about noise and other impacts on the Iske Park area
- A letter signed by 16 individuals expressing concern for the Loess Hills area and requesting that this area not be used for borrow material

The design team considers comments received from the public as further Project development is completed. By seeking public involvement proactively and allowing the public to reach a decision with the design team, better decisions with more positive community support are ultimately achieved.

5.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

The signatory agencies used the comments received from resource agencies as well as the public to revise the EIS. The comment letters and the signatory agencies' responses are reprinted on the following pages. The letters are organized and numbered in the order in which they were received. The signatory agencies' responses, printed to the right of the letters, are keyed to the comments in the letters. For use in locating letters and responses, the following is a list of the Draft EIS comment letters:

- Agency Letter #1, December 30, 2004, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
- Agency Letter #2, January 7, 2005, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration
- Agency Letter #3, January 11, 2005, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Agency Letter #4, January 12, 2005, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration
- Agency Letter #5, January 18, 2005, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

- Agency Letter #6, January 26, 2005, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Agency Letter #7, January 26, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
- Agency Letter #8, January 27, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
- Agency Letter #9, February 4, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
- Agency Letter #10, February 15, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.
- Agency Letter #11, February 15, 2005, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII
- Agency Letter #12, February 24, 2005, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Agency Letter #13, February 28, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
- Agency Letter #14, February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- Agency Letter #15, March 30, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region²⁵
- Agency Letter #16, April 26, 2005, U.S. Department of the Air Force, Offutt Air Force Base
- Agency Letter #17, May 2, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
- Agency Letter #18, May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.
- Agency Letter #19, September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator
- Agency Letter #20, October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office
- Agency Letter #21, November 1, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

²⁵ A facsimile copy of the USFWS comment letter from the Mountain-Prairie Region was dated March 30, 2005, and was followed by the same letter from the Office of the Secretary, dated April 15, 2005. The first page of the facsimile copy and the entire April 15, 2005 letter are reproduced in this Final EIS.

Comment Letter #1, dated December 30, 2004, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF NEBRASKA



OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Roger K. Patterson
Director

RECEIVED

JAN 3 2005

December 30, 2004

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Mike Johanns
Governor

James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RE: Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Mr. Kost:

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources has reviewed this proposed project and has the following comments:

Surface Water/Ground Water

I have drawn in approximate locations of the proposed alternatives on the enclosed map titled, "Bellevue Bridge - Wells". Both Alternatives 2 and 3 appear to have little to no impact on registered ground water wells in our database. There are two registered wells situated close to Alternative 3 close to LaPlante Road. I have printed a second map which identifies the registration numbers for these wells. Information about the wells can be found at <http://dnrdata.dnr.state.ne.us/wells/wells.html>. Please keep in mind that any location of the Alternative 3 road may be a little bit off.

1-1

Floodplain Management

By State of Nebraska statute, any development which takes place in a regulated floodway must have an engineer's "no-rise" certification that the development will not be a restriction to water in the floodway during a flood event.

As you correctly stated in your report, there is a mapped floodway for the Missouri River in Sarpy County. If Alternative 2 is chosen, floodplain management comments for Sarpy County should come from the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District (PMNRND). On page 4-2 of your report, you state that current PMNRND land may be used for the construction of Alternative 2. The NRD land may be deed-restricted for any future construction since federal funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency were used to acquire and demolish many structures at Elbow Bend. I would encourage you to discuss this issue with NRD staff - a contact for you would be Paul Woodward at (402) 444-6222.

1-2

chabonengineering.com/nevater
301 Centennial Mall South, 4th Floor • P.O. Box 94676 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4676 • Phone (402) 471-2363 • TDD (402) 471-2900
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♿ Printer able to fit in unrecycled paper

1-1, The conclusion stated in your letter noting little to no impact on Nebraska wells supports the conclusion stated on page 4-25, second full paragraph of the Draft EIS. The two registered wells situated close to the alignment of Alternative 3, the preferred alternative, are the monitoring well pair discussed on page 4-46 of the Draft EIS. Based on a further review of contamination from PCS Nitrogen property, the alignment for Alternative 3 was adjusted to avoid the PCS Nitrogen property (including the monitoring well pair). Figures 2-2 and 4-3A in the Final EIS show the initial and revised alignment and the associated right-of-way (ROW) near PCS Nitrogen property.

1-2, The signatory agencies have coordinated with the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District (P-MRNRD) during this study and have received information on recent parcel acquisitions. In response to your comment, the signatory agencies contacted Paul Woodward of P-MRNRD. He provided an example of a warranty deed listing express conditions that indicate restrictions on future construction of potential floodway obstructions (likely to include bridge abutments and piers). If Alternative 2 had been the preferred alternative rather than Alternative 3, P-MRNRD and NDOR would have needed to develop mitigations for the Project to proceed. Given that Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative, this potential conflict no longer applies.

Comment Letter #1, dated December 30, 2004, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

James Rost
December 30, 2004
Page 2

In Section 3.13 – Floodplains, it is stated that the floodway boundary does not appear to be identified in Cass County. This is incorrect. The floodway boundary is shown on a separate map from the floodplain map – more recent map revisions puts both the floodplain and floodway on one map. It appears as though the proposed alignment will be situated in the jurisdiction of both Cass County and Bellevue. If Alternative 3 is chosen, you should coordinate with the appropriate local floodplain administrator for these two jurisdictions since a floodplain development permit will most likely be required. According to our records, these contact persons are:

Cass County
Kenneth Riddle
Deputy Zoning Administrator
145 N. 4th St.
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
Telephone: 402-296-0359

Bellevue
Chris Shewchuk
Planning Director
210 W. Mission
Bellevue, NE 68005
Telephone: 402-293-3032

Please call me at (402) 471-3957 if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,



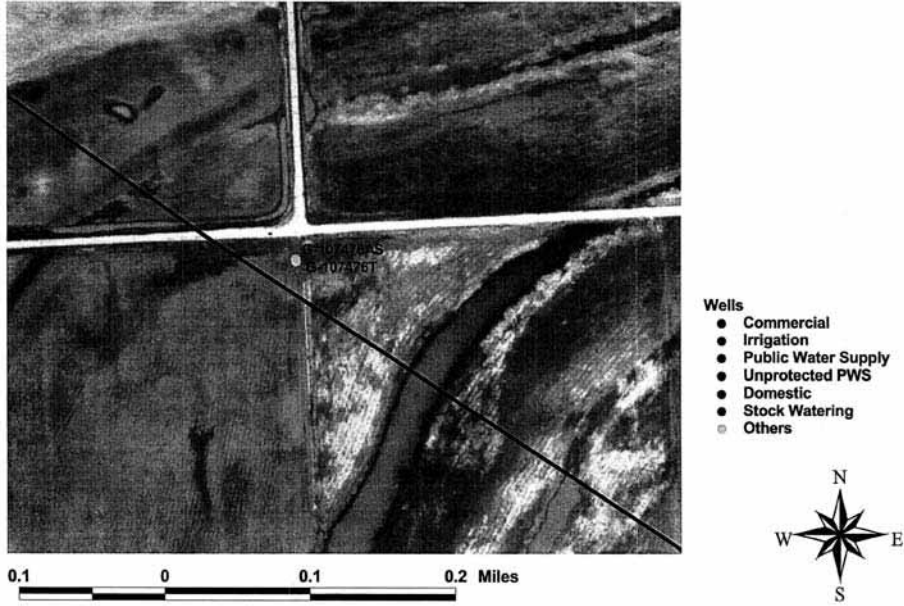
Steve McMaster
Water Resources Planner III

Enclosures
cc: Paul Woodward, PMNRD
Ken Riddle, Cass County
Chris Shewchuk, Bellevue

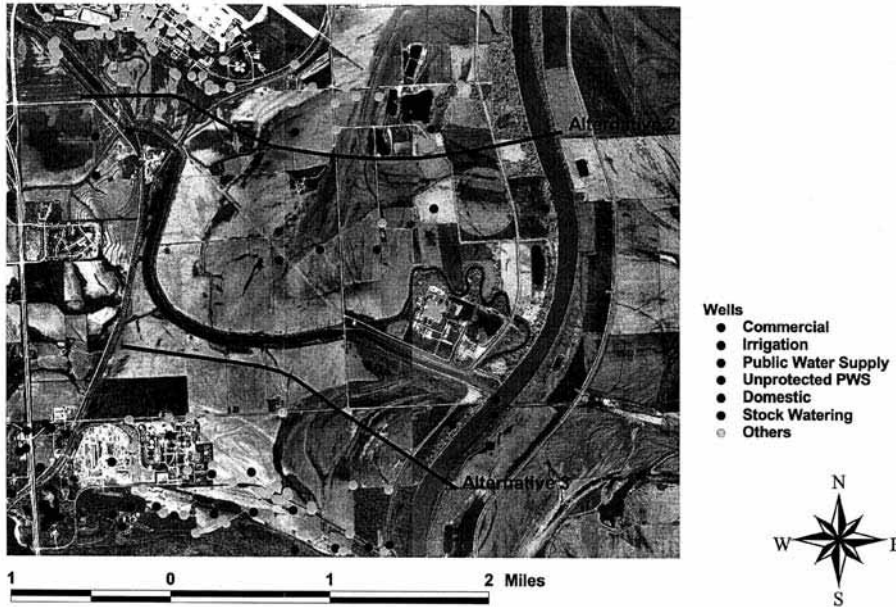
1-3

1-3, Thank you for your clarification with regard to a recent revision to the Cass County floodplain/floodway map. USACE – Omaha District indicated that flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) for Cass County are pending Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval; preliminary maps are expected to be available by mid-2006, and regulatory revised maps are expected to be issued by late 2006 or early 2007. However, the proposed alignment of Alternative 3 in Nebraska is north of Cass County and is within unincorporated land in Sarpy County. Consequently, Cass County will not be issuing a floodplain development permit for the Project. Sarpy County issued regulatory revised FIRMs and a flood insurance study (FIS) in December 2005. The Sarpy County Planning and Building Director, Ken Tex, was contacted for further information on the floodplain development permit. Mills County had FIRMs and a FIS published in August 1989. Table 4-13 of the Draft EIS identified the need for a floodplain development permit from Iowa DNR, Mills County, and the Sarpy County Planning and Building Director. The Final EIS contains figures that have been revised using the most recent approved floodplain boundaries.

Bellevue Bridge - Wells Close-up



Bellevue Bridge - Wells



Comment Letter #2, dated January 7, 2005, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Transit
Administration

REGION VII
Iowa, Kansas,
Missouri, Nebraska

RECEIVED
JAN 11 2005
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT
801 Locust Street
Suite 404
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-329-3920
816-329-3921 (fax)

January 7, 2005

Mr. James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Re: Draft EIS - Bellevue Bridge Study
Mills County, Iowa and Sarpy County, Nebraska
IDOT Project Number NHSX-34-1(63)-19-65

Dear Mr. Rost:

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bellevue Bridge Study in Mills County, Iowa and Sarpy County, Nebraska. We concur with the selection of Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. The future improvements included in this alternative will improve safety and transportation efficiency and, consequently, benefit Iowa and Nebraska transit operations that will utilize these improvements.

2-1

2-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Mark Bechtel of my staff at (816) 329-3937.

Sincerely,

Mokhtee Ahmad
Mokhtee Ahmad
Regional Administrator

cc: MAPA
RPA 18

Comment Letter #3, dated January 11, 2005, Iowa Department of Natural Resources



THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
JEFFREY R. VONK, DIRECTOR

January 11, 2005

Mr. James Rost
Iowa Department of Transportation
Office of Location and Environment
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RECEIVED
JAN 12 2005
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

RE: Draft EIS for the Bellevue Bridge Study in Mills County, IA; November, 2004

Dear Mr. Rost:

The Conservation and Recreation Division of the Department has no additional comment than already provided.

If you have any questions about this letter or if you require further information, please contact me at (515) 281-4967.

Sincerely,

KEITH L. DOHRMANN, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST
POLICY AND COORDINATION SECTION
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

Cc: Chris Schwake, Water Quality Bureau, Iowa DNR (by email)

FILE COPY: Keith L. Dohrmann

} 3-1

3-1, The signatory agencies received input from your office through letters dated February 3 and March 26, 2003 (reproduced in Appendix A of the Draft EIS) and addressed your concerns in the Draft EIS.

05-33471.doc
WALLACE STATE OFFICE BUILDING / 502 EAST 9th STREET / DES MOINES, IOWA 50319
515-281-5918 TDD 515-242-5967 FAX 515-281-6794 www.iowadnr.com

Comment Letter #4, dated January 12, 2005, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration



U.S. Department
Of Transportation

Federal Aviation
Administration

January 12, 2005

Mr. James Rost, Director
Office of Location & Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mr. Rost:

The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) reviews other federal Agency environmental documents from the perspective of the FAA's area of responsibility; that is, whether the proposal will have affects on aviation and other FAA responsibilities. We generally do not provide comments from an environmental standpoint. Therefore, we have reviewed the material furnished with your letter December 6, 2004, concerning Iowa DOT Project No. NHSX-34-1(63)-19-65, Bellevue Bridge Study, and have no comments regarding environmental matters.

However, we remind you that you will need to consider whether or not the project will require formal notice and review from an airspace standpoint. The requirements for this notice may be found in Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace. This regulation is contained under Subchapter E, Airspace of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations. We would like to remind you that if any part of the project exceeds notification criteria under FAR Part 77, notice should be filed at least 30 days prior to the proposed construction date. Questions concerning this matter should be directed to Ms. Brenda Mumper at (816) 329-2524.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Schenkelberg, P.E.
Environmental Specialist

RECEIVED

JAN 18 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

Central Region
Iowa, Kansas
Missouri, Nebraska

901 Locust
Kansas City, Missouri 64105-2325

4-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

4-2, As noted on page 4-56 of the Draft EIS, Form 7460 will be completed and filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) a minimum of 30 days prior to construction.

Comment Letter #5, dated January 18, 2005, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

STATE OF NEBRASKA

RECEIVED



Mike Johanns
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Michael J. Linder
Director
Suite 400, The Altman
Building
1401 S. 10th Street
P.O. Box 938922
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922
Phone (402) 471-2186
FAX (402) 471-2099

JAN 21 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

January 18, 2005

James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Dept. of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RE: Bellevue Bridge Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Distribution

Dear Mr. Rost:

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) has reviewed the above referenced project. We have no comments regarding this project that would fall under the jurisdiction of our programs.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at (402) 471-8697.

Sincerely,

Hugh Stirts, PhD
NEPA Coordinator

} 5-1

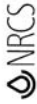
5-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

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Comment Letter #6, dated January 26, 2005, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

United States Department of Agriculture

RECEIVED



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street
693 Federal Building
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

JAN 27 2005
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

January 26, 2005

Mr. James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Subject: Bellevue Bridge Study Draft
Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
For Distribution

Dear Mr. Rost:

} 6-1

I appreciate the opportunity to review and provide comment on the above referenced Bellevue Bridge Study. In reviewing the three alternatives presented, the NRCS concurs that Alternative 3 would have the least environmental impacts.

} 6-2

However, the NRCS does have concerns regarding the affect the construction would have on water quality, air quality, and both short and long term negative effects on the wildlife community. I would expect that full mitigation be developed to offset those effects.

Sincerely,

Richard Van Klaveren
State Conservationist

cc: Jeff Zimprich, ASTC-FO, NRCS, Atlantic, IA
Kevin Kuhn, DC, NRCS, Malvern, IA

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

6-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

6-2, The Draft EIS evaluated potential long-term impacts on water quality (Section 4.11), air quality (Section 4.9), and fish and wildlife (Section 4.14). Those sections addressed mitigation for long-term impacts on water quality and fish and wildlife; however, no mitigation was proposed for long-term air quality impacts because future traffic emissions would be less concentrated in a particular area. Construction impacts on air quality, water quality, and fish and wildlife (as well as their mitigation) were addressed in Sections 4.24.4, 4.24.6, and 4.24.8, respectively. Additional mitigation to improve fish and wildlife habitat has also been proposed; see letter #20 and the response.

Comment Letter #7, dated January 26, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
CLOCK TOWER BUILDING - P.O. BOX 2004
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS 61204-2004
January 26, 2005
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

RECEIVED
JAN 31 2005

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Project Management Division
Planning, Programs, and

Mr. James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Mr. Rost:

I received your letter dated December 6, 2004, requesting comments regarding the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* for the Bellevue Bridge Study. Rock Island District staff reviewed the information you provided and have the following comments:

a. The lands involved are outside the geographic boundaries of the Rock Island District. You must coordinate with the Omaha District to determine if your project involves any Corps administered lands. The address is as follows:

District Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer District, Omaha
106 S 15th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

b. Based on information included in the DEIS, this project will require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Complete applications for the project should be submitted to this office and to our Omaha District as soon as possible. The applications should include wetland delineations, details of impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States, and types and relative functions of any wetlands to be impacted.

As you know, this office also requires your agency to complete sequential mitigation involving an alternatives analysis, minimization of impacts to wetlands, and compensatory mitigation for any unavoidable wetland impacts. We realize that you have been working on completion of the alternatives analysis. Please complete the remaining sequential mitigation steps as early as possible.

c. The Responsible Federal Agency should coordinate with Ms. Maria Pandullo, Iowa Historic Preservation Agency, ATTN: Review and Compliance Program, State Historical

7-1

7-2

7-3

7-1, The signatory agencies have coordinated with USACE – Omaha District regarding the Project. See letter #9 (dated February 4, 2005) and letter #13 (dated February 28, 2005) from USACE – Omaha District and the respective responses.

7-2, The signatory agencies concur that the Project will require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Information derived from the EIS will be utilized in developing permit applications for the Project. The applications will include wetland delineations, details of impacts on wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and types of any wetlands to be adversely affected. To mitigate effects, the signatory agencies will sequentially analyze alternatives, minimize impacts on wetlands, and provide compensatory mitigation for any unavoidable wetlands impacts. These steps will be completed as the design of the preferred alternative proceeds. The permit applications will be submitted to USACE – Omaha District and Rock Island District as appropriate.

7-3, The signatory agencies have coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the State Historical Society of Iowa as well as the SHPO office of the Nebraska State Historical Society with regard to historic properties and archaeological resources. Appendix A of the Draft EIS included letters to and from the SHPO offices. Section 4.16.2 of the Draft EIS addressed potential impacts on

Comment Letter #7, dated January 26, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District

-2-

Society of Iowa, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, Iowa 50319 to determine impacts to historic properties.

d. The Rock Island Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be contacted to determine if any federally listed endangered species are being impacted and, if so, how to avoid or minimize impacts. The Rock Island Field Office address is: 4469 - 48th Avenue Court, Rock Island, Illinois 61201. Mr. Rick Neilson is the Field Supervisor. You can reach him by calling 309/793-5800.

e. The Iowa Emergency Management Division should be contacted to determine if the proposed project may impact areas designated as floodway. Mr. Dennis Harper is the Iowa State Hazard Mitigation Team Leader. His address is: Hoover State Office Building, Level A, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. You can reach him by calling 515/281-3231.

No other concerns surfaced during our review. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposal. If you need more information, please call Dr. Sandra Brewer of our Economic and Environmental Analysis Branch, telephone 309/794-5171.

You may find additional information about the Corps' Rock Island District on our web site at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil>. To find out about other Districts within the Corps, you may visit web site: <http://www.usace.army.mil/div/distmap.html>.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Barr
Chief, Economic and Environmental
Analysis Branch

Enclosure

historic properties and archaeological resources; no known resources would be affected by the preferred alternative. As the Project proceeds, coordination will occur with the SHPO offices if unknown cultural resources are discovered.

7-4, During Federal agency scoping for the Project, USFWS – Rock Island and Grand Island field offices determined that the Grand Island field office will be the lead office for a coordinated USFWS response regarding the Project.

Correspondence submitted from the USFWS – Grand Island Field Office includes a courtesy copy recipient in the Rock Island Field Office, so the signatory agencies assume that internal coordination by the field offices has occurred.

7-5, Construction activities are planned to occur within the floodways, including placement of one pier in the Missouri River channel and other piers on land within the Nebraska and Iowa floodway. Coordination with Dennis Harper (Iowa Emergency Management Division) indicated that his agency is not the designated floodplain administrator for the Iowa and that he would have no comments on the Project. Mr. Harper stated that Iowa DNR is responsible for determining construction-induced floodway impacts throughout Iowa. Coordination with Iowa DNR has identified no outstanding concerns. Iowa DNR will review the Project for floodway impacts when the Iowa Joint Application Form “Protecting Iowa Waters” is submitted for review by Iowa DNR and USACE.

} 7-3
cont'd

} 7-4

} 7-5

Comment Letter #8, dated January 27, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY
 2222 Cummins Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4326
 Phone: (402) 414-6866 Fax: (402) 342-0949
 Email: mapa@mapa.org www.mapa.org
 In the MAPA Region: 1-800-827-6866



January 27, 2005

James Rost
 Office of Location and Environment
 Iowa Department of Transportation
 800 Lincoln Way
 Ames, IA 50010

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

RE: MAPA CASE #2005-014 - Iowa DOT, NDOR
 Bellevue Bridge Study (DEIS)
 MAPA CASE #2005-015 - Iowa DOT, NDOR
 Council Bluffs Interstate System
 Improvement Project (DEIS)

Dear Mr. Rost:

Enclosed is a copy of the MAPA Board action concerning the projects listed above.
 Thank you for the opportunity to review these projects.

Sincerely,

 Aline A. Ramsey
 Administrative Services Director

AAR/drv

Enclosures

- Douglas County, NE
- Beverlyton
- Boys 100+
- Chadron
- Omaha City Council
- Reliance
- Wiley
- York
- Yutan
- Sarpy County, NE
- Bellevue
- Blair
- Lincoln
- Phelan
- Springfield
- Washington County, NE
- Argos
- Blair
- Fort Calhoun
- Herman
- Kennett
- Waverly
- Miss County, IA
- Emerson
- Greenwood
- Hudson
- Malvern
- Pacific Junction
- Silver City
- Polk County, IA
- Avoca
- Carlton
- Center Lake
- Conroy
- Harwood
- Maucksville
- McDonald
- North
- Osland
- Taylor
- Underwood
- Wheat
- Bellevue Public Schools
- Council Bluffs Airport
- City of Council Bluffs
- Council Bluffs Planning Commission
- Bellevue Resource Conservation and Development District
- Iowa Western Community College
- Metropolitan Community College
- Metropolitan Utility District
- Midwest Suburban Fire District
- Omaha Airport Authority
- Omaha Housing Board
- Omaha Planning Board
- Omaha Public Schools
- Palumbo (La Vista Public Schools)
- Papay, Missouri River
- Pinney, Missouri River
- Pinney Creek Community District
- Rossion Public Schools
- Washington County, IA
- District #8

Comment Letter #8, dated January 27, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2005 - 017

WHEREAS, the members of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Board of Directors have been formally designated by their respective legislative bodies to act as the official representative in planning matters of mutual concern; and

WHEREAS, the following application has been submitted to MAPA in accordance with Executive Order 12372 for intergovernmental review and coordination; and

WHEREAS, MAPA has given due consideration to said project; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that MAPA finds the project to be consistent with area-wide planning and forwards favorable comment along with the following additional consideration to the applicant.

"The final alternative should include a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility for considerations of safety and provision of alternative transportation."

MAPA CASE #2005-014 Iowa DOT, NDOR
Bellevue Bridge Study (DEIS)

PASSED this 27th day of January, 2005


Kathleen Kelley, Secretary/Treasurer
MAPA Board of Directors

8-1, On March 23, 2005, Iowa DOT responded to your letter; the Iowa DOT letter is reproduced at the end of your letter. The Draft EIS recognized that future trail plans in the Study Area show a Missouri River crossing. The proposed La Platte Link Trail, which would be constructed along the existing levee in Nebraska beneath the proposed bridge, is unfunded, with no assigned time frame for construction (Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, March 21, 2007). The closest existing trail to the proposed bridge is the Bellevue Loop Trail, located approximately 0.5 mile north of the preferred bridge location for Alternative 3. Iowa DOT and NDOR are committed to accommodating bicycle and pedestrian traffic across the Missouri River on a widened shoulder of the proposed bridge. The final design configuration of the accommodation has not yet been determined.

8-1

Comment Letter #8, dated January 27, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2005 - 018

WHEREAS, the members of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Board of Directors have been formally designated by their respective legislative bodies to act as the official representative in planning matters of mutual concern; and

WHEREAS, the following application has been submitted to MAPA in accordance with Executive Order 12372 for intergovernmental review and coordination; and

WHEREAS, MAPA has given due consideration to said project; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that MAPA finds the project to be consistent with area-wide planning and forwards favorable comment along with the following additional considerations to the applicant.

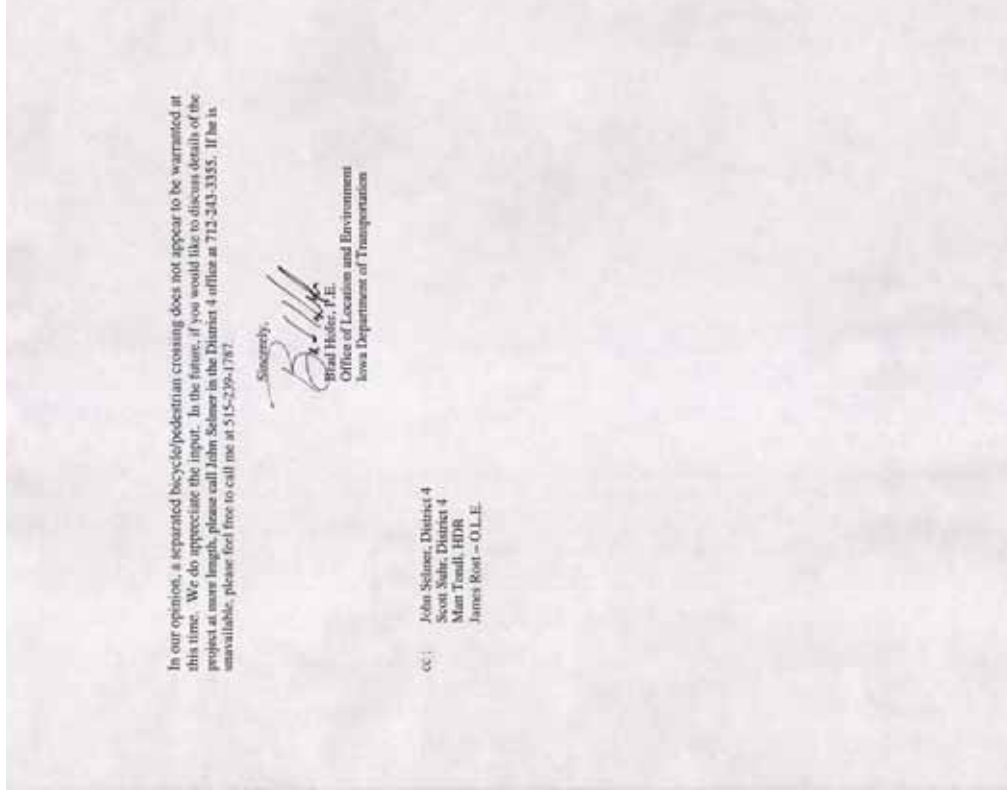
1. The College World Series and other important local events should be considered in the scheduling of construction along Interstate 80 in the final alternative selected.
2. The scheduling of any construction on the Missouri River Bridge on Interstate 80 should be coordinated with construction on the South Omaha Bridge (US 275, Iowa and Nebraska State Highways 92) so that both bridges are not simultaneously under construction.
3. Sufficient provision of alternate routes should be made during construction undertaken on the Council Bluffs Interstate System."

MAPA CASE #2005-015 Iowa DOT, NDOR
Council Bluffs Interstate Improvement Project
(DEIS)

PASSED this 27th day of January, 2005


Kathleen Kelley, Secretary/Treasurer
MAPA Board of Directors

Comment Letter #8, dated January 27, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency



Comment Letter #9, dated February 4, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District

9-1, The figures showing the boundary of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site have been updated in the Final EIS.

9-2, The information provided on the status of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site has been added to the Final EIS.

9-3, See response 1-3. FIRMs for Sarpy County were recently acquired from FEMA, and the floodplain boundaries shown in the Draft EIS have been adjusted. Although FIRMs for Cass County have been delayed, no floodplain impacts are expected to occur in Cass County because the portion of the Project in Nebraska is located solely within Sarpy County.

9-4, The overall area of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site encompasses approximately 2,315 acres based on the new proposed boundary, compared to 2,488 acres based on the boundary presented in the Draft EIS. The transportation ROW for Alternative 3 is the same with the revised boundary as with the original boundary—approximately 38 acres.

9-5, The potential use of St. Mary's Island for wetland mitigation will be evaluated during the Section 404 permit application process, including coordination with USACE personnel. Offutt AFB expressed concerns regarding on-site mitigation; see letter #16 and associated responses.

9-6, To determine the water surface elevation as a result of construction in the floodway, detailed hydraulic evaluations were performed using the USACE Hydrologic Engineering Center (HEC)-RAS model to facilitate the preliminary design process for the Project. Design parameters served as model inputs. An interactive design and modeling process was performed, with changes in the design to achieve a no-rise condition. Currently, the modeling shows a projected increase of 0.008 foot. Coordination with USACE has occurred and confirmed that this value is within acceptable mathematical limits as a no-rise condition (a rise of less than 0.01 foot qualifies as a no-rise condition).

9-7, Floodplain development permit applications will be submitted to the P-RNRD Floodplain Administrator for Sarpy County Nebraska and to the floodplain administrator for Mills County, Iowa. No-rise certification for the portions of the Project in the floodway for the respective jurisdictions will be submitted as part of the floodplain development permit applications.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
106 SOUTH 15TH STREET
OMAHA NE 68102-1618

RECEIVED
FEB 7 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

February 4, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Mr. James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mr. Rost:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Bellevue Bridge Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District (Corps) comments are as follows. Corps comments specifically regarding Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be sent under separate cover from the Corps' Nebraska Regulatory Office.

Figures 2-2 and 4-3B show an outline for the Corps' St. Mary's Island Restoration Site. Acquisition of this site was started in 2004 and will continue in 2005. Enclosed is a map that provides an updated probable boundary of the restoration site.

Page 3-2, second paragraph – The St. Mary's Restoration Site will be restored primarily for terrestrial wildlife. Very limited existing wetlands will be preserved, and some aquatic habitat will be developed along the Missouri River bank. The Corps has purchased about 1,500 acres in 2004 and will purchase an additional 500 acres in 2005.

Page 3-27, Floodplains – The Corps has recently completed a revised Flood Insurance Study for the lower Platte River. Preliminary maps, which show the floodway between Sarpy and Cass Counties, are being prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Page 4-5, second bullet – Based on an updated probable boundary, there will be less land use impact to the St. Mary's Restoration Site.

Page 4-28, fourth paragraph – There may be some opportunity to mitigate wetland impacts in the St. Mary's Restoration Site. Mr. Mick Sandrine from the Corps' Missouri River Project Office can be contacted at (402) 221-7324, if there is any interest.

Page 4-29, Floodplains – By definition, the floodway water surface elevation is typically set at 1 foot above the 100-year water surface elevation. Any construction occurring within the floodway must not increase the water surface elevation. If the proposed construction activity cannot be shown to cause no rise in elevation, mitigation for the adverse impact is required.

Page 4-29, section 4.13.2 – Crossing a floodplain will require a county/state floodplain permit. A no-rise certificate is only required for construction or fill in the floodway.

Printed on Recycled Paper

- 9-1
- 9-2
- 9-3
- 9-4
- 9-5
- 9-6
- 9-7

Comment Letter #9, dated February 4, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District

-2-

Page 4-54, Permits and Approvals – On the Nebraska side of the river, the bridge will cross Missouri River Levee R-613 which is under the control of the Pappo-Missouri River Natural Resources District. The point of contact for the levee is Mr. Martin Cleveland. He can be reached at (402) 444-6222. On the Iowa side of the river, the bridge will cross Missouri River Levee Unit L-611-614. The chairman of that levee district is Mr. John Poore. His home phone number is (712) 366-0090, his cell phone number is (402) 306-6895. If the bridge requires any modification to the Missouri River levees, then the Corps will require a review of the plans and specifications after approval by the levee districts.


Flood impacts for events associated with levee breaching should be evaluated for both of the build alternatives. Construction of an elevated roadway through the floodplain may serve to act as an embankment to pond floodwaters. The flood impact assessment should consider results tabulated in the Upper Mississippi River System Flow Frequency Study. The study is available at the following location: <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/pdsw/pdf/FlowFrequency/flowfreq.htm>.

The EIS did not appear to contain any design data referring to bridge pier and abutment design with respect to estimated scour depth. Final bridge design is expected to consider Missouri River flow impacts.

The EIS did not appear to address potential impacts to the Missouri River Bank Stabilization project. Construction may impact existing channel stabilization structures.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Bob Nebel at (402) 221-4621.

Sincerely,


Candace M. Gorton, Chief
Environmental, Economics, and
Cultural Resources Section
Planning Branch

Enclosure

9-8, The preferred alternative would cross the referenced levees. The conceptual design is based on fill being placed on the landward side of the R-613 and L-611-614 levees, and a pier potentially being placed near the toe of each levee within the floodway. The top of each levee, which could potentially support future trail systems, would not be modified. Coordination with USACE occurred with regard to placement of fill against the landward side of each levee, and USACE approved the concept. As the design process continues, coordination will occur with P-MRNRD in Nebraska and the levee district in Iowa to determine the pier and fill placement at the levees within their respective jurisdictions. Subsequent to approval by the levee districts, the design plans will be provided to USACE for review.

9-9, After contacting Mr. Bob Nebel for questions as advised in the letter, Mr. Nebel referred questions on the comment to Mr. Dan Pridal, USACE – Omaha District. Mr. Pridal was not aware of any geotechnical concerns with respect to the levees. In the vicinity of the Platte River confluence, the Upper Mississippi River System Flow Frequency Study calculated Missouri River water surface profiles that have less than the 3-foot freeboard required for the levees to remain certifiable. At Omaha, the levees have sufficient freeboard. If a breach of the levee were to occur upstream of the proposed roadway, the breach could affect floodwater depths; if it were to occur downstream, the proposed roadway would provide additional protection.

9-10, A preliminary analysis of scouring was conducted, primarily in support of predicting potential impacts on pallid sturgeon (see Sections 4.14.2, 4.14.3, 4.15.2, 4.21.2, 4.24-9, and 4.27.2 of the Draft EIS). The bridge pier would cause localized scour, which would stabilize very quickly. As discussed under response 9-6, an interactive process of hydrologic modeling and design will be conducted subsequent to the EIS preparation process. Estimated scour depths and the Missouri River flow impact will be considered during final bridge design.

9-11, Coordination with USACE – Omaha District produced construction reports and as-built drawings for structures associated with the Missouri River Bank Stabilization Project. The structures, such as dikes and revetments, have been emplaced to help stabilize the channel of the Missouri River. The roadway and bridge will be designed so as not to affect the nature of the stabilization project. The bridge would span the levees and consequently not impact structures along the banks of the Missouri River. Based on the information provided, it was determined that the alignment of the preferred alternative would transect two subsurface pile dikes in Mills County, Iowa. The design and construction in this area will account for the dikes to ensure that the Project does not affect the channel of the Missouri River.

Comment Letter #9, dated February 4, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District



Comment Letter #10, dated February 15, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

142233 FEB. 18. 2005 4:28PM HR. ENG. 51H 0544 482 359 1111



BACK TO THE RIVER, INC.

A NONPROFIT CORPORATION
Office located at: Pacific-Missouri River National Resource District, c/o Back to the River Administrator
8901 South 154th St., Omaha, Nebraska 68136-9521 (402) 444-6322 Fax: (402) 89-54543

February 15, 2005

John Selmer, District Engineer
Iowa Department of Transportation
District 4 Office
P. O. Box 406
Atlantic, IA 50022

Dear Mr. Selmer:

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Bellevue Bridge Study

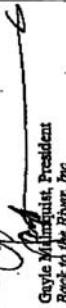
At the January 21, 2005 meeting of the Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.*, the Board took action to support Alternative 3, as identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bellevue Bridge Study. After due consideration of the project, the Southern Sary County Alternative emerges as the most appropriate location for a new Missouri River bridge. The location best meets the long-term transportation planning goals for both states.

The Board also asks that appropriate barriers be incorporated into the final bridge alternative to separate pedestrian/bicycle facilities from motor vehicle traffic.

Back to the River, Inc. is a unique partnership of state, local and federal agencies, non-profit groups and others incorporated with the goals of improving recreation and river access, supporting appropriate environmental strategies and expanding education opportunities along both the Nebraska and Iowa sides of the Missouri River from Sherman, Nebraska/Mondamin, Iowa to the mouth of the Platte River.

The Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.* strongly supports Alternative 3 - Southern Sary County as the site for the new Bellevue Bridge and asks that suitable barriers be included in the final alternative to separate motor vehicle traffic from pedestrian/bicycle users in the interest of safety and to promote alternative transportation opportunities.

Sincerely,


Gayle W. Lundquist, President
Back to the River, Inc.

cc: Steve Mc Beth, NDOR
Barry Cleveland, Iowa Transportation Commission

Enhancing the Missouri River Corridor for our communities' future

10-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

10-2, On March 23, 2005, Iowa DOT responded to your letter; the Iowa DOT letter is reproduced at the end of your letter. See response 8-1 for further information.

10-3, See response 8-1.

Comment Letter #10, dated February 15, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

FEB. 16. 2005 4:28PM HR ENG. 5TH OFFER 482 359 11114 FAX. 605 7-6973



BACK TO THE RIVER, INC.

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 Representing: Fontenelle Nature Association

Jane Bell, Public Relations Manager
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 2200 River Road, Council Bluffs, IA 51501
 Representing: Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce

Pete Ciandello, Operations Analyst
 Amnester Casino-Hotel Council Bluffs, Inc.
 2200 River Rd., Council Bluffs, IA 51501
 Representing: All-Large

Spencer Crava, Executive Director
 Western Gateway, Omaha's Historical Center
 100 Howard St.
 Omaha, NE 68108
 Representing: All-Large

Clara Davis, Consultant
 Douglas County Board of Commissioners,
 1819 Broadway St., Suite L-02, Civic Center,
 Omaha, NE 68108
 Representing: Douglas County, Nebraska

Larry Fester, Acting Director, City of Omaha
 Parks, Recreation & Public Property Department
 1819 Broadway St., Suite 701, Omaha, NE 68183
 Representing: City of Omaha, Nebraska

Kim Francis, Director
 Sarpy County Tourism
 14335 South Highway 31 - #C108
 Gretna, NE 68028
 Representing: Sarpy County Tourism

Chris Shawchuk, Planning Director, City of Bellevue
 210 West Mission St., Bellevue, NE 68005
 Representing: City of Bellevue, Nebraska

Rodney Sturm, City Administrator, City of Blair
 218 So. 16th St., Blair, NE 68008
 Representing: City of Blair, Nebraska

Michelle Wilcox, Environmental Specialist
 Fish & Wildlife Division, Iowa Department of
 Natural Resources,
 502 East 9th St., Des Moines, IA 50319
 Representing: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Rev 12-09-03-0404

Comment Letter #10, dated February 15, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

 **Iowa Department of Transportation**
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010
515-239-1225 FAX 515-239-1992

March 23, 2005

Gayle Malinquist, President
Back to the River, Inc.
8801 South 154th St.
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

Re: Draft EIS Statements - Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Mr. Malinquist:

Thank you for the support of this project, your continued involvement in this development process, and taking the time to forward your comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (D.EIS) this past month.

You mentioned in your letter dated February 15, 2005 that...

"The Board also asks that appropriate barriers be incorporated into the final bridge alternative to separate pedestrian/bicycle facilities from motor vehicle traffic."

We appreciate the input. Presently the Iowa Department of Transportation and Nebraska Department of Roads are pursuing accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on a widened shoulder on the proposed structure. There are several reasons for this.

- There are no existing trails within Nebraska or Iowa in the vicinity of the new bridge to which a separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing could be connected. With that in mind it would not appear to be financially advisable to provide a separated trail crossing without something to connect it to.
- It also does not appear that the current zoning and land development in the area of the bridge would be conducive to a significant increase in bicycle or pedestrian traffic should a trail be constructed sometime in the future.
- The trail users who have safety concerns with using a non-separated facility could simply travel north or south and traverse the river on a lower volume roadway or planned separated crossings in Omaha and Plattsmouth.

In our opinion, a separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing does not appear to be warranted at this time. Should this change in the future, we'd be happy to re-evaluate the situation.

We do appreciate the input. In the future, if you would like to discuss details of the project at more length, please call John Scherer in the District 4 office at 712-243-3355. If he is unavailable, please feel free to call me at 515-239-1787.

Sincerely,

John Scherer, P.E.
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation

cc: John Scherer, District 4
Scott Soth, District 4
Matt Tostol, HDR
James Rust - OLE

Comment Letter #11, dated February 15, 2005, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

RECEIVED

REGION VII
901 NORTH 5TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

FEB 21 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

15 FEB 2005

James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mr. Rost:

RE: Review of Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Bellevue Bridge Study, Mills County, Iowa, and Sarpy County, Nebraska
Iowa DOT Project Number – NHSX-34-1(63)-19-65

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bellevue Bridge Study. Our review is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 42 U.S.C. 4231, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508, and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). The DEIS was assigned the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) number 040385.

Based on our overall review and the level of our comments, the EPA has rated the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project LO (Lack of Objections). A copy of EPA's rating descriptions is provided as an enclosure to this letter.

We offer the following comments to address and minimize potential environmental impacts of the project:

Existing Bridge

We recommend that the Final EIS (FEIS) includes a thorough discussion of the fate of the existing bridge. The purpose and need discussion focuses on the inadequacy of the existing bridge and roadway, but only briefly mentions that the existing bridge will remain in place in Section 4.21, (the Bridge Background Summary requested by U.S. Coast Guard). Please clarify whether the existing bridge will continue to serve a transportation purpose, and whether continued use of the substandard structure will create a safety hazard and/or potentially put users at risk.

11-1

11-1. The existing Bellevue Bridge has been repaired and was reopened for traffic on October 18, 2004. The repairs are intended to extend the life of the bridge for vehicular traffic (see Section 1.5, Updates to Chapter 1), of the Final EIS. The bridge repairs have removed any weight restrictions, but the bridge has not been widened and therefore continues to be functionally obsolete. However, use of the structure will not create a safety hazard that will put users at risk.

11-2. The recommendation to further analyze potential local mitigation sites has merit. The Metropolitan Utility District (MUD) has indicated willingness to consider its property for wetland mitigation. USACE – Omaha District noted that wetland mitigation could be accommodated within the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site (see letter #9). Offutt AFB prefers no creation of new wetlands within 5 miles of its runway in accordance with FAA recommendations (see letter #16). Iowa DOT and NDOR will consider the MUD and USACE property for potential mitigation using local sites, as well as Offutt AFB's concern regarding local mitigation sites, during the Section 404 permit application process. If necessary, there are wetland mitigation banks that can be used in Iowa or Nebraska rather than performing local mitigation.

11-3. Alternatives 2 and 3 were compared with respect to a variety of resources (see Table S-1 of the Draft EIS). Table S-1 indicates that the floodplain is one of the few resources with impact numbers that are greater for Alternative 3 than for Alternative 2. Sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5 of the Draft EIS summarized the process followed to locate the alternative alignments between existing constraints. Given the limited area where new roadway corridors are possible, much of the area available for both alignments is undeveloped land and includes floodplains in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and Mills County, Iowa; the floodplains within the ROW for both alternatives occur mostly in Mills County. Neither alternative could avoid floodplains. Response 13-4 notes several reasons for identifying Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative.

Comment Letter #11, dated February 15, 2005, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII

In response to resource agency concerns, Iowa DOT is acquiring a 167-acre conservation easement (located west of the ROW for Alternative 3) to be managed by Iowa DNR (see letter #20). The easement includes 59.6 acres of 100-year floodplain which will be protected from future industrial, commercial, or residential development. In addition to complying with the floodplain development criteria for the 100-year flood event, the roadway design will include a system of culverts to facilitate drainage and flood flow; this conveyance system will minimize adverse impacts associated with flood events exceeding the 100-year frequency.

Wetlands

We recommend further analysis of potential wetland mitigation sites in the immediate project area. In our review of the DEIS, it appears that there are two proposed wetland mitigation sites nearby. One is the proposed Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) mitigation site on the Nebraska side, and the other is the St. Mary's Island (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) potential restoration site on the Iowa side. We encourage each state agency to explore a potential partnership with the appropriate entities to develop a local mitigation site rather than using a mitigation bank which is removed from the project area.

11-2

Floodplains

We recommend a comparison and analysis of the significant difference of floodplain impacts between Alternative 2 and 3. Section 4.13.2 states that Alternative 2 would involve fill placement in 16.7 acres of interior drainage floodplains. Whereas, Section 4.13.3 states that Alternative 3 would require placement of roadway fill on 34.8 acres of floodplain drainages. Although both Alternatives are not expected to affect the 100-year flood elevations, additional floodplain fill as required in Alternative 3 could create or contribute to adverse environmental impacts during flood events exceeding the 100-year frequency.

11-3

Preliminary Access Locations

We recommend further analysis of the location and number of access points proposed in Alternative 3. Currently there are four proposed access points along the extended curve on the Iowa side of the Missouri River crossing. These access points appear to serve less than 10 home sites/farms. Reduction of the number of access points would reduce environmental and cumulative impacts in the area.

11-4

Regulated Materials

Until the full extent of contamination is determined at the Fast Break Amoco three-cell waste stabilization lagoon and potential Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) site, EPA recommends considering an alignment shift for Alternative 3 to avoid right-of-way acquisition.

11-5

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding this project and your DEIS. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (913) 551-7975.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Q. Johnson, P.E.
NEPA Reviewer

Enclosure

11-4, The four preliminary access locations referenced in your comment were proposed based on criteria for maintaining access for existing landowners and are unrelated to the number of homeowners. As an aside, all of these access locations are outside the proposed boundaries of the St. Mary's Island restoration site noted in your comment 11-2. As design proceeds for the preferred alternative, access points will be further evaluated to consider minimizing environmental and cumulative impacts in the area.

11-5, The Lincoln Amoco (referred to as "Fast Break Amoco" in the Draft EIS) site is immediately north of the extension of U.S. 34 from the Glenwood Interchange along I-29. After the Draft EIS was issued, further investigation of the Lincoln Amoco site revealed that the notice of violation associated with the lagoons was due to recordkeeping issues with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit rather than any contamination problems. Free product removal associated with a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) is ongoing, and the potentially responsible party is cooperating with Iowa DNR to resolve the LUST issues. The identified area of groundwater contamination associated with the LUST site is west of the site and outside of the preliminary ROW for Alternative 3. Before proceeding with final design of the roadway, Iowa DOT will coordinate with Iowa DNR to discuss any concerns relative to the LUST issue. The design has been modified to shift the alignment of U.S. 34 slightly to the south and avoid impact to the lagoons and their discharge system, and avoid acquisition of Lincoln Amoco property. Section 3.2, Updates to Chapter 3, and Section 4.1, Summary of Updates to Chapter 4, of the Final EIS address the subsequent evaluation and new information on the Lincoln Amoco site.

Comment Letter #11, dated February 15, 2005, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Rating Definitions

Environmental Impact of the Action

"LO" (Lack of Objectives)

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

"EC" (Environmental Concerns)

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EO" (Environmental Objections)

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EU" (Environmentally Unsatisfactory)

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

"Category 1" (Adequate)

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

"Category 2" (Insufficient Information)

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

"Category 3" (Inadequate)

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

Comment Letter #12, dated February 24, 2005, Iowa Department of Natural Resources



STATE OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
JEFFREY R. VONK, DIRECTOR

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

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FEB 28 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

February 24, 2005

Mr. James Rost
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Subject: Draft EIS for the Bellevue Bridge Study, Mills County

Dear Mr. Rost:

Thank you for inviting our comments on the impact of the above referenced project. We have reviewed the information and have no additional comments other than those provided at the concurrence meetings.

We would also like to thank you for the copy of the Final Biological Assessment you sent us. If you have any questions or require additional information from us, please write me at the address shown below, or call (515) 281-6615.

Sincerely,

Christine M. Schwabe

Christine M. Schwabe
Environmental Specialist
Water Quality Section

12-1

12-1, No changes are needed based on your comment.

WALLACE STATE OFFICE BUILDING / 502 E. 9th STREET / DES MOINES, IOWA 50319-0034
515-281-5145 TDD 515-242-5967 FAX 515-281-8895 www.state.ia.us/dnr

Comment Letter #13, dated February 28, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District

13-1, In response to your comment, the tables have been revised to include the wetland classification. The respective table numbers in the Final EIS are 4-2 and 4-3. A formal wetland delineation will be completed for preparation of the Section 404 permit application for the alignment of the preferred alternative (Alternative 3).

13-2, The proposed alignments carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS were identified after evaluating a wider corridor, with consideration for avoiding wetlands or minimizing the amount of ROW within wetlands. As design of the preferred alternative (Alternative 3) proceeds, further efforts will be made to avoid wetlands, and if they cannot be avoided, to minimize impacts on the wetlands. Alternative 3 would affect less acreage of existing wetlands than Alternative 2. Any wetland impacts would be mitigated (see Section 4.12.4 of the Draft EIS).

13-3, Wetland determinations were conducted to identify existing wetlands within the ROW for Alternatives 2 and 3. Wetland delineations of the preferred alternative will be completed as part of the Section 404 permit application process. The acreage of wetland impacts reported in Tables 4-8 and 4-9 of the Draft EIS included only existing wetlands, not potential future wetlands, within the preliminary ROW; possible wetland impacts outside the ROW at the proposed MUD mitigation site and the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site were not included. MUD has indicated willingness to consider its property for wetland mitigation. However, coordination with MUD and USACE indicated that there are no current plans for developing specific areas of wetland on the MUD land or the St. Mary's Island Restoration Site included in the ROW of either alternative. The MUD land is currently not under active consideration for wetland mitigation for MUD's Platte West project (MUD, March 24, 2005). As noted in Section 4.27.2 of the Draft EIS, USACE plans to acquire and adapt the St. Mary's Island restoration site for terrestrial habitat and has identified no specific locations for wetland development (USACE, March 22, 2005).

Consequently, the estimate of potential wetland impacts under Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, as presented in Tables 4-8 and 4-9 of the Draft EIS, respectively, is valid for current wetlands as well as future wetlands. In response to resource agency concerns, 167 acres adjacent to the south side of the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site will be purchased as a conservation easement to protect natural resources (see letter #20). The conservation easement currently includes approximately 3.4 acres of wetlands based on the NWI boundaries.

13-4, Resource agency scoping comments, early coordination letters, minutes from concurrence point meetings, and teleconference summaries were reviewed in preparing the Draft EIS. Public hearing comments and letters regarding the Draft

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OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
NEBRASKA REGULATORY OFFICE-WEHRSFANN
8001 SOUTH 156TH STREET, SUITE 1
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68138-3821
February 28, 2005



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Mr. James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

RE: BELLEVUE BRIDGE STUDY - NBSX-34-1(163)-19-65

Dear Mr. Rost:

The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office received the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the above referenced project on December 21, 2004. The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office has reviewed the Draft EIS and has the following comments.

- 1. The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office suggests that the water regime be listed with the Cowardin classification for each type of wetland in Table 4-8 and 4-9. Also, the Corps of Engineers suggests that a formal wetland delineation following the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual be completed once a preferred alternative is selected. 13-1
- 2. The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office suggests that proper sequencing (avoidance, minimization, mitigation) be followed for the preferred alternative. 13-2
- 3. The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office suggest that possible wetland impacts from the Mud Mitigation Site and the St. Mary's Island Corps of Engineers Mitigation site be included into the wetland impacts for Alternative 3—Southern Sappy Alternative. Include these wetland impacts into the total wetland impacts which would give a more actual depiction of wetlands that will be impacted by Alternative 3. 13-3
- 4. The Corps of Engineers-Nebraska Regulatory Office also suggests that the Iowa DOT and NDOR review all past comments regarding Alternative 3 in consideration of a preferred alternative. 13-4

If you have any question regarding this determination, please feel free to contact me at the address above or call at (402) 896-0896 and reference file number NE 2003-10140.

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Wray
Matthew T. Wray
Environmental Resources Specialist

Comment Letter #13, dated February 28, 2005, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District

EIS were considered in preparing the Final EIS. The signatory agencies recognize that some resource agencies prefer Alternative 2. However, the signatory agencies prefer Alternative 3 for the following reasons:

- An evaluation of the existing and planned transportation network indicated that Alternative 3 best meets the purpose of and need for the Project.
- Compared to Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would require less new ROW, would involve no residential relocations, would affect less prime farmland, would not affect an existing trail system, would impact less wetland acreage, and would impact less forested habitat.
- Alternative 3 would cost less than Alternative 2 and would take less time to construct because it would require no new interchanges and fewer bridges, translating to fewer environmental impacts.
- Alternative 3 received the most public support.

In recognition of USACE's and other resource agencies' concerns about impacts of Alternative 3 and USACE's initial preference for Alternative 2, Iowa DOT will purchase a conservation easement, which will be managed by Iowa DNR, to protect natural resources.

Comment Letter #14, dated February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St. / P.O. Box 30370 / Lincoln, NE 68503-0370
Phone: 402-471-0641 / Fax: 402-471-5528 / www.outdoornebraska.org

February 28, 2005

James Rost
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RECEIVED
MAR 03 2005
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

**RE: Review of Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Bellevue Bridge Study
across the Missouri River, Sarpy County, Nebraska and Mills County, Iowa**

Dear Mr. Rost:

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) staff members have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bellevue Bridge Study. Three potential alternatives have been developed in the DEIS for the Bellevue Bridge project, and they include the No-Build alternative, the South of Offutt Air Force Base alternative, and the Southern Sarpy County alternative. The Southern Sarpy County alternative has been chosen as the preferred alternative.

NGPC has several concerns regarding the selection of the Southern Sarpy County alternative as the preferred alternative. In the DEIS, the discussion regarding impacts to the natural environment, including fish and wildlife resources, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species, that were used to select a preferred alternative are focused primarily on construction of a new highway, construction of a new bridge over the Missouri River, and construction of several access locations along the new highway. We feel that the discussion regarding impacts should also address how future development that is likely to occur along the proposed corridor as a result of this transportation project, will also impact the natural environment. The evaluation and comparison of impacts due to future development along the transportation project would be especially important because of the proximity of the Southern Sarpy County alternative to the confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers, an important habitat area for a variety of fish and wildlife species, including state-listed threatened and endangered species. The preferred alternative includes a Missouri River bridge crossing that is less than 1 mile upstream of the Platte River confluence and an alignment adjacent to the confluence area on the Iowa side. Future development that is likely to occur as a result of the constructed highway along the proposed alignment could have additional adverse impacts on the natural environment, including fish and wildlife resources, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species. These impacts, including increased contaminant loading in stormwater runoff due to more impervious surfaces, additional habitat loss, and additional wetland loss, should be considered during the comparison of alternatives.

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

14-1, The signatory agencies understand that resource agency concerns regarding the Project go beyond the impacts from construction and operation of the bridge and associated roadway. On March 24, 2005, Iowa DOT responded to your letter; the Iowa DOT letter is reproduced at the end of your letter. In addition, the following text provides expanded responses to your specific comments.

The Draft EIS addressed potential impacts of the Project, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on fish and wildlife, their habitat, threatened and endangered (T&E) species, and wetlands in the Study Area. In addition, a Draft Biological Assessment (BA) identified Federally listed species and habitat that could support these species in the Study Area and evaluated the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of implementing Alternative 3. A Final BA prepared for Alternative 3 incorporated additional information to address concerns relative to indirect impacts on T&E species. The BA (Draft and Final) is incorporated into the Final EIS by reference in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.21 of the Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. The results of the BA were considered in identifying Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative.

Based on a comparison of preliminary ROW needs for Alternatives 2 and 3, more acreage of wetlands and trees would be disturbed for Alternative 2 than Alternative 3 (see Table 4-14 of the Draft EIS). The Draft EIS acknowledged, however, that some indirect development could occur as a result of the Project. It is not possible to predict exactly where indirect development would occur in order to compare individual areas of specific future wetland and habitat loss. For example, development could occur near the ROW for Alternative 2 even if the Project were constructed along the Alternative 3 alignment. Although development will likely occur in the Study Area, there are also some other projects in the area that would decrease the potential for development. For example, USACE has purchased land from farmers for creation of the St. Mary's Island restoration site to convert the land for terrestrial wildlife habitat, with some aquatic habitat planned for development along the Missouri River. Additionally, an area including the St. Mary's Island restoration site is proposed as park land in the Mills County Plan (RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, August 2002).

Section 4.27 of the Draft EIS addressed cumulative impacts that could occur as a result of the incremental impact of the Project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Study Area. The major cumulative impacts issues associated with the Project were determined to be loss of farmland and wildlife habitat (forested, riparian, and wetland areas) and the potential effects on wildlife, including T&E species. The direct and indirect impacts that are

14-1

Comment Letter #14, dated February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

project-related components of these cumulative impacts will be mitigated by the measures identified in Comment Letter # 20. Consistent with the national goal of “no net loss” of wetlands, the cumulative loss component of other actions on wildlife habitat would be offset by reasonably foreseeable projects designed to preserve, enhance, restore, and create wildlife habitat.

14-2

As we addressed in a previous letter (dated March 3, 2003 from NGPC to HDR Engineering), the proposed alignments would not directly impact the Randall W. Schilling Wildlife Management Area (Schilling WMA). However, in the discussion on noise impacts, it was stated that noise levels on the Schilling WMA would increase and be above normal background noise levels as a result of the Southern Sary County alternative as stated in Section 4.14.3. It was also stated that, even though noise levels would be increased, wildlife resources at Schilling WMA would not be adversely affected. Again, this was based on increases in noise due only to construction of a new highway. Future development likely to occur as a result of highway construction would also increase noise levels, and the potential need for mitigation measures to offset noise impacts with the Southern Sary County alternative should also be considered in comparison of alternatives.

As part of ongoing consultation with resource agencies, including the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) and USFWS, a series of conservation measures have been adopted to minimize the impacts of the Project as well as other potential indirect and cumulative impacts on natural resources including Federally listed T&E species. See response 20-1 and letter #20.

14-3

Section 4.12.4 indicates that wetland impacts due to the project in Nebraska would be mitigated at the Lincoln Bend Wetland Mitigation Bank located in Nemaha County. We feel the DEIS lacks discussion of the feasibility of on-site wetland mitigation, as the document only discusses the use of a wetland mitigation bank. Wetlands in the project area provide many localized benefits such as improved water quality and habitat. These localized benefits become all the more important in an area that is or will be experiencing development pressure. Therefore, we encourage the use of on-site mitigation, before the use of the mitigation bank, and we recommend the DEIS include evaluation of on-site wetland mitigation.

14-2, Because new construction is restricted within floodways, it is unlikely that any development as a consequence of the Project would occur within the floodways of Nebraska and Iowa along the Missouri and Platte Rivers. The restrictions on floodway construction will help maintain a buffer between Schilling Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and any potential development north of the Platte River and east of the Missouri River. Although some indirect development may occur along the new transportation corridor, the planned conservation areas (the restoration site and the 167-acre conservation easement discussed in letter #20) would likely provide a balance that would lead to negligible increases in background noise levels (1 or 2 A-weighted decibels [dBA]).

14-4

Section 4.1.3 indicates that the preferred alternative would cross a potential wetland mitigation site for the MUD Platte West Water Production Facility and a potential terrestrial habitat restoration site on Saint Mary’s Island for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These restoration sites are proposed to offset impacts to wetlands and habitat in other locations. Construction of a highway and associated future development would reduce the functional value of these areas for wildlife habitat, and the impacts to these areas should be accounted for in the DEIS to be considered during the comparison of alternatives.

As stated in the Iowa DOT letter, potential future development in the Study Area is unlikely to cause a noticeable increase in noise levels at Schilling WMA. Noise level increases of 1 dBA are unnoticeable to the human ear, and noise level increases of 3 dBA are deemed to be barely perceptible to the human ear. It would take a doubling of “energy” to yield an increase of 3 dBA. For example, traffic levels from indirect development would have to be the same or greater than the traffic from the proposed alternative to raise noise levels a noticeable amount (3 dBA) over those predicted in this area.

14-5

As stated earlier, the confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers is an important area for riverine fish and wildlife species, including listed species. NGPC is concerned that construction of the Bellevue Bridge as outlined in the Southern Sary County alternative, less than 1-mile upstream from the confluence, and the subsequent development that will likely ensue adjacent to the confluence, will have an adverse affect on several state and federally listed species. NGPC echoes the concerns that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have regarding the impact that the Southern Sary County alternative will have on the state and federally listed pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). NGPC has records of both species in the area as outlined in Section 3.15 and recognizes that the confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers has been designated as a Recovery Priority Management Area for the pallid sturgeon (USFWS 1993). Confluence areas, such as at the location of the Missouri and Platte Rivers, are recognized as areas having high potential for habitat restoration for the pallid sturgeon. Current projects in the confluence area along the Nebraska bank include restoration of a chute on the Schilling WMA and a backwater restoration project as part of the mitigation measures for the MUD Platte West Water Production Facility. Construction of the Southern Sary County alternative, including the alignment adjacent to the confluence area on the Iowa side and the associated future development that is likely to occur, would eliminate or reduce the

14-3, The Draft EIS indicated the potential for wetland mitigation at on-site or off-site locations but focused on the use of wetland mitigation banks. Based on comments received from NGPC and other resource agencies, Iowa DOT and NDOR are also considering the possibility of mitigation on site or in close proximity to the Project. There are options nearby for supporting wetland mitigation. For example, MUD owns land considered for wetland mitigation within the Study Area in Nebraska and USACE has offered to discuss the use of the proposed St. Mary’s Island restoration site for wetland development in Iowa. However, creating wetlands within 5 statute miles of an airport’s approach and departure airspace is not

Comment Letter #14, dated February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

advised per FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33. Wetlands may attract waterfowl, which increase the possibility of bird-aircraft collisions. Offutt AFB opposes the MUD location for wetland mitigation as it is within 5 statute miles of the base's approach and departure airspace. Offutt AFB prefers a reduction in local wetlands whenever possible (see letter #16 and associated responses).

Further mitigation sites will be identified as the design process continues. The Section 404 permit process will result in the calculation of precise wetland impacts. It may be possible to avoid some wetlands near the edge of the Project ROW, which would preclude the need for mitigation of those wetlands.

14-4, The presence of potential mitigation and restoration sites in the Study Area was considered when proposing alternative corridors to meet the purpose of and need for the Project. Because there are many constraints in the area, such as Offutt AFB, rail lines, Papillion Creek, Omaha Papillion Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, Schilling WMA (see Sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5 of the Draft EIS), much work was performed to locate the alignments between existing constraints. Early in the process, coordination was conducted with MUD and USACE regarding Alternative 3 crossing through a portion of MUD's potential wetland mitigation site and the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site.

Sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 of the Draft EIS addressed impacts of Alternatives 2 and 3, respectively, on future park land and the proposed St. Mary's Island restoration site. Section 4.1.3 also addressed potential impacts on the MUD land as a potential wetland mitigation site.

MUD indicated that the total area required for wetland mitigation on its site could be accommodated outside the area of the ROW (MUD, February 22, 2003). MUD is currently not actively considering the site for wetland mitigation for its Platte West project (MUD, March 24, 2005). The initial plan for the proposed St. Mary's restoration site identified a potential ROW corridor for the Project. Based on the revised boundary of the restoration site, only approximately 2 percent of the land proposed for acquisition of the site is within the ROW for Alternative 3. USACE considers the Project to be a consistent land use (USACE, March 22, 2005). Both areas of potential conservation lands can function as planned.

14-5, The confluence of the Missouri and Platte rivers is recognized as a sensitive area, given its proximity to Schilling WMA and its inclusion in a pallid sturgeon Recovery Priority Management Area, as well as other information provided by NGPC.

opportunity for future habitat restoration in the confluence area and along the Iowa bank(G. Mestl, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, pers. com. 2005), NGPC has additional concerns regarding the state listed lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) and sturgeon chub (*Macrhybopsis gelida*). As stated in the final biological assessment, the lake sturgeon and pallid sturgeon use much of the same habitat and NGPC feels that the impacts of the Southern Saryp County alternative on the lake sturgeon would be similar to the impacts on pallid sturgeon. Further, NGPC has records of sturgeon chub just downstream of the confluence. Concerns of contaminant loading at the confluence due to stormwater runoff from commercial or industrial development adjacent to the Southern Saryp County alternative, as it extends southeasterly along the river, will likely have a similar adverse impact on this species.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. If you have any questions, please contact me at (402) 471-5423.

Sincerely,



Carey Grell
Environmental Analyst
Realty and Environmental Services Division

References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993. Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) Recovery Plan. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- cc: Steve Anschutz, USFWS
- Troy Rahmig, NGPC
- ArtYonkey, NDOR
- Gerald Mestl, NGPC
- Gene Zuerlein, NGPC
- Scott Luedtke, NGPC
- Frank Albrecht, NGPC

14-5
cont'd


Comment Letter #14, dated February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

The majority of concerns expressed by resource agencies focus on the issue of future indirect development, rather than on the Project bridge and roadway. Portions of the ROW for Alternative 3 in Iowa and Nebraska currently contain a network of roads, and existing land use plans indicate future commercial, industrial, and other land uses. Development is already projected in these areas regardless of whether the Project is constructed.

The BA determined that it is possible for the Project to have direct effects (as well as indirect and cumulative effects) on T&E species, but no adverse effects are projected to occur. Although the BA focused on the two key species of concern identified by USFWS, the bald eagle and pallid sturgeon, it also addressed potential effects on lake sturgeon and sturgeon chub and determined that these species would not be adversely affected.

Letter #20 and response 20-1 address conservation measures that have been adopted to minimize adverse impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of the Project on Federally listed species and the commercial and industrial developments that may occur within the Federal action area. Also see response 20-2 regarding the acceptance of these mitigation measures resulting in the conclusion of the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process. NGPC participated in agency meetings to discuss potential conservation measures. Letter #20 is the response from USFWS concurring with the no adverse effect determinations for T&E species if the specified conservation measures are implemented.

Comment Letter #14, dated February 28, 2005, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

**Iowa Department of Transportation**
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010
515-239-1225 FAX 515-239-1982

March 24, 2005

Carry Greff
Realty and Environmental Services Division
Nebraska game and parks Commission
2500 N 3rd St.
P.O. Box 20370

Re: Draft EIS Statement - Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Carry:

Thank you for the support of this project, your continued involvement in this development process, and taking the time to forward your comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that past month.

You raised several concerns in your letter dated February 28, 2005. I'd like to take a moment to try to address each.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Throughout the NEPA process, we are accountable for impacts associated with our construction and we will avoid or mitigate appropriately in compliance with the project's Section 9 and Section 404 permits. Non-highway impacts, beyond reasonably foreseeable secondary and cumulative impacts described in the environmental document, are outside our jurisdiction, outside our codified responsibility, and beyond our ability to project or responsibility to mitigate.

Commercial and industrial development in the potential project corridor is projected to occur with or without the project. In fact, there likely could be more development without the project takes up land that would otherwise be subject to developments. The land use outside our ROW is not controlled or regulated by the Transportation Department. Any discussion outside of what is already included in the DEIS would be speculative at best.

As long as the general area remains in private ownership and the two rivers remain a dynamic force of nature, there is always a potential for degradation. We recognize your concern for long-term mitigation opportunities and recommend you pursue cooperative agreements with local jurisdictions on both sides of the river and pursue protective purchases or the establishment of Environmental Management Easements.

We have taken measures through our normal process of avoidance/minimization, to reduce impacts in potential areas of habitat. This has included building one hedge rather than two which reduced the impacted habitat from 11.6 Acres to approximately 6.9 Acres. Please reference the DEIS table 4.9 and 4.11 which shows total area of forested wetland of 2.9 Acres and 4.0 Acres of forested non-wetland area. As final design progresses, and in cooperation with appropriate regulatory agencies, we would expect this number to continue to decrease.

Note

Regarding the noise in the area of the Schilling Wildlife area, Section 4.14.3 of the DEIS states "This distance (between the roadway and WMA) would equate to an expected noise level of approximately 55 dBA. This sound level is slightly above background sound levels and would be similar to the noise produced from a window air conditioner. This estimate does not account for noise-buffering impacts of trees

along the perimeter of the WMA. Birds and wildlife are tolerant of moderate noise increases, and no adverse impacts are projected to occur"

To put this in perspective...the dB level of normal conversational speech is (on average) slightly less than 60dB. In our opinion, based on the available evidence that our statement within the DEIS that "...no adverse impacts are projected to occur" is accurate.

Woodlands and Wetlands

State law also requires replacement of woodlands impacted. As part of the project, additional land would be bought and preserved to replace that taken as part of the project. We also mitigate wetlands as part of our normal project processes.

If supported by NDOR and COE, on-site mitigation will be considered. As for impacts in Iowa, we always first consider on-site mitigation. However, at this point, we will not limit ourselves to any reasonable and practicable mitigation strategy. If adequate information is available to warrant, mitigation will be discussed in the DEIS.

MUD & St. Mary's Island

In the event possible, we have accounted for *POTENTIAL* impacts to the *POTENTIAL* wetland mitigation site for the MUD Prairie West Water Production Facility and the *POTENTIAL* terrestrial habitat restoration site on St. Mary's Island for the U.S. C.O.E. The DEIS was signed on November 13, 2004 and we presently have no factual evidence that:


- Either mitigation sites will be developed
- That they could not be developed in harmony with a highway project
- Any future development would adversely affect the effectiveness of either site.

MUD has confirmed that even if they use their land for wetland mitigation, there is sufficient land available for mitigation outside the potential Right of Way (ROW). They are no longer actively considering that site for mitigation for the Prairie West Project. To meet construction requirements for the Prairie West project, they intend to mitigate for lost wetlands within the wet field.

Regarding the St. Mary's Island Restoration Site, the Corps currently does not have any wetlands planned for the area included within the Bellevue Bridge Project ROW area, but are open to discussions with the IDOT concerning use of the site for potential wetland mitigation.

To the best of our ability, we have addressed the direct, indirect and cumulative effects within the DEIS. We believe we have acted in good faith in our attempt to select an alternative that best fits the purpose and need for the project while being least damaging to the environment.

We do appreciate the input. If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 515-239-1787.

Sincerely,

Brad Hufer, P.E.
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation

cc: John Schanz, District 4
Scott Sahr, District 4
Matt Trask, HDR
James Best - O.L.E.

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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02/11/05 08:59 FAX 303 235 0027

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region



IN HANDY REFER TO:

FWS/R6
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Post Office Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Blvd.
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

MAR 30 2005

Memorandum

To: Regional Environmental Coordinator, Midwest Regional Office, NPS, Omaha, Nebraska (Attn: Nicholas Chevance)

From: Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services

Subject: Comments Regarding Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Bellevue Bridge Study Across the Missouri River from US-75 to I-29 (EK 05/0031)

ALC

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the subject draft environmental impact statement. Please include the attached comments in the Departmental response to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Iowa Department of Transportation, and Nebraska Department of Roads. We have been participating in the development of this project since April 2003 and have expressed these concerns on numerous occasions. We intend to meet with FHWA again on April 15, 2005, to continue our coordination. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Anschutz, Nebraska Field Office Supervisor at (308) 382-6468, extension 12.

Attachment

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240



ER 05/31

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APR 18 2005

Mr. Philip Barnes
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
105 Sixth Street
Ames, Iowa 50010-6337

Dear Mr. Barnes:

As requested, the Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the **Bellevue Bridge Study** across the Missouri River from U.S. 75 to I-29, Mills County, Iowa, and Sarpy County, Nebraska. The Department offers the following comments for your consideration.

Project Description

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) present three alternatives in the draft EIS for the proposed Bellevue Bridge Project (Project). Alternative 1 - the "No Action" alternative, proposes comparatively small modifications of the existing bridge alignment. Alternative 2 proposes construction of a new bridge over the Missouri River, including eight highway access and interchange locations along a 5.9-mile-long four-lane highway through the Missouri River Valley (south of Offutt Air Force Base). Alternative 3 proposes construction of a new bridge over the Missouri River at a different location, with 12 highway access and interchange locations along a 6.7-mile-long four-lane highway through the Missouri River Valley (four interchange locations are at U.S. 75 in Nebraska, Southern Sarpy County). Alternative 3, the Southern Sarpy Alternative, has been identified by the project proponents as the preferred alternative.

The purposes of the proposed Project include improving connectivity and fulfilling transportation needs of the region (i.e., the southern Omaha Metropolitan area, including eastern Sarpy County and the city of Bellevue, Nebraska, and western Mills County in Iowa) by providing a safe and free-flowing connection across the Missouri River from U.S. 75 in Nebraska to I-29 in Iowa. The needs to be addressed by the proposed project include accommodating planned development in the southern Omaha, Nebraska, metropolitan area. The southern Omaha metropolitan area, as defined in the draft EIS, includes eastern Sarpy County, the city of Bellevue, Nebraska, and western Mills County, Iowa.

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

2

Section 4(f) Comments

The draft EIS considers impacts to properties that may be considered under section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (48 USC 1653(f)). The draft EIS identifies recreational properties, including Haworth Park, Baldwin Field Baseball, Bellevue Marina, Bellevue Loop Trail (Trail), Schilling Wildlife Management Area, and Folsom Lake, as well as several cultural resources including several archeological sites. None of these properties, with the exception of the Trail, would be impacted by any of the three alternatives (no-build and two-build alternatives). Alternative 2 would cause a temporary closure of the Trail during construction of the bridge. Avoidance alternatives are not available because it would be impossible to completely avoid the Trail with the alternative, and there are no viable detours for the Trail. Alternative 3 would avoid use of the Trail.

The draft EIS identifies Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. The Department would concur with a determination that there are no Section 4(f) properties affected by this alternative. Should Alternative 2 become the selected alternative, the Department would likely concur with a determination that there are no feasible or prudent alternatives to the use of the Trail. The Department would likely concur with a determination that all possible measures to minimize harm to the Trail would be employed, under the condition that reasonable measures are employed to minimize, to the greatest degree, the closure times of the Trail segments.

Section 6(f) Comments

The Department has reviewed this project in relation to any possible conflicts with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) and Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) programs. We have found L&WCF project 19-00535, the Folsom Recreation Area Development in Mills County, Iowa, is located within the study area. Section 6(f)(3) of Public Law 88-578 (as amended) states:

"No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary [of the Interior], be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location."

We recommend you consult directly with the official who administers the L&WCF program in the State of Iowa to determine any potential conflicts with section 6(f)(3). The administrator for the program in Iowa is Ms. Kathleen Moench, Federal Aid Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, East Ninth Street and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.

15-1, The preferred alternative (Alternative 3) would not impact the Folsom Recreation Area Development in Mills County (the alignment is approximately 1.5 miles from Folsom Lake) nor other potential Section 4(f) properties. Consequently, the Section 6(f) coordinator did not need to be contacted for further information.

15-1

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

3

No L&WCF projects would be impacted in Nebraska by the preferred alternative (Alternative 3). If Alternatives 1 or 2 are further considered in Nebraska, we recommend you consult directly with the official who administers the program in Nebraska. The administrator in Nebraska is Mr. Neal Bedlan, Federal Aid Coordinator, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, P.O. Box 30370 Lincoln, Nebraska, 68503-0370.

General Comments

A comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) prepared for this area states the proposed Project would lead to or enhance economic development by retaining business and industry and encouraging its expansion (Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) 2004). This is consistent with the statement in the draft EIS that the existing roadway system does not accommodate the planned growth in the southern Omaha metropolitan area. As one of the purposes of the project is to provide a roadway sufficient to accommodate that planned growth, the environmental consequences of that growth need to be adequately described in the EIS. Accordingly, in our review of the draft EIS, we have attempted to analyze the effects (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of the proposed Project on fish and wildlife resources for each of the three alternatives (pursuant to 40 CFR 1502.16 (a)). Effects could result from the proposed construction of a four-lane highway, bridge, access locations, interchanges, and the anticipated future commercial and industrial developments associated with the proposed alternatives.

In general, we believe the long-term effects on riverine fish and wildlife resources, specifically under Alternatives 2 and 3, have not been adequately analyzed and addressed in the draft EIS. Potential indirect and cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project may be substantially greater under Alternative 3 than under Alternative 2 and should be fully evaluated in the final EIS before the final preferred alternative is selected. See our specific comments below for a more detailed discussion of these concerns.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has been coordinating on the planning for this Project for the last two years, and looks forward to working with the project proponents during development of the final EIS and Record of Decision in an effort to adequately assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with the project, to identify measures that could be taken to avoid and minimize these impacts to the greatest extent practicable, and to develop appropriate mitigation for the remaining unavoidable Project effects.

Specific Comments

Identification of the Preferred Alternative

Both build alternatives meet the Project purpose and need as described in the draft EIS. Identification of Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative appears to be based in large

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

4

part on cost considerations. Specifically, Alternative 2 would cost about 25 percent more than Alternative 3, primarily due to the need to construct a bridge over Papillion Creek and a new interchange at I-29 in Iowa.

It appears that indirect and cumulative effects would be greater for Alternative 3 than for Alternative 2 as a result of the reasonably foreseeable development proposed to occur in the affected counties' economic development plans. However, based on the information available to the Department, we were not able to determine whether similar development would occur under both Alternatives 2 and 3. This should be clarified in the final EIS, including a comparative assessment of the environmentally related avoidance and minimization measures for each alternative and the associated mitigation measures necessary to offset the unavoidable environmental effects of each alternative. The final costs associated with construction and mitigation for the related environmental impacts of each alternative may favor a different decision.

Interconnected Projects

Section 1.4.3, System Linkage, indicates the Sarpy County Comprehensive Development Plan (JCO and Daly, May 1993) has identified the Platteview Road (Road) in Nebraska as a future highway corridor across the southern half of Sarpy County, linking I-80 in Nebraska with I-29 in Iowa. The draft EIS further states, "Developing a free-flow facility (i.e., a highway) from U.S. 75 to I-29 would allow this system linkage to be extended across the southern Omaha Metropolitan area; thereby improving traffic movement between I-80 on the west and I-29 on the east." The 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (MAPA, et al., 2000), prepared by the MAPA, IDOT, NDOR, the U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, and the Federal Transit Administration, also includes the extension of the Road (proposed in the future to be a four-lane highway) to I-80.

Based on the reference to these planning documents in the draft EIS, the environmental effects of the Road extension should also be fully analyzed in the final EIS as an interconnected project. Although the Road extension seems specifically linked to Alternative 3, we were unable to determine, based on the available information, whether a similar extension of the Road would occur under Alternative 2. This should be clarified in the final EIS and appropriate analyses included for each of the alternatives. Specifically, the associated effects of this component of the proposed Project would likely have additional impacts on important resources, including fish and wildlife resources, wetlands, and streams that flow into the nearby Platte River.

Future Actions

The impacts of reasonably foreseeable commercial and industrial developments on fish and wildlife species are not adequately considered in the draft EIS for any of the alternatives. For example, section 3.1.1 of the draft EIS indicates that industrial development is planned to occur in an area bounded by U.S. 75, the Missouri River, the Platte River, and Bellevue corporate limits, an area through which the Nebraska

15-2

15-2, The signatory agencies' interaction with USFWS subsequent to the issuance of this letter resulted in the identification of conservation measures (including acquisition of a conservation easement) to address potential indirect impacts on the natural environment. An October 3, 2005, letter from your agency (letter #20 in this chapter) lists the proposed conservation measures. See response 14-5 relative to the cumulative effects of development.

15-3

15-3, Specified termini (U.S. 75 in Nebraska and I-29 in Iowa) are identified in the Project purpose and need; the Project is not planned as part of a linkage to I-80 through Platteview Road. An April 12, 2005, letter from the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) (reproduced at the end of your letter) notes that the Projects are independent. The letter was provided to USFWS and is reproduced as part of this response.

15-4

15-4, See response 15-2 regarding indirect and cumulative impacts associated with future actions related to development.

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

5

segment of the preferred alternative would extend. As for the Iowa side of the preferred alternative, section 3.1.1 of the draft EIS indicates that within the study area, Mills County is expected to remain primarily agricultural with a small area proposed for industrial development north of existing Highway 370 and a small area proposed for mixed-use development west of I-29, near the U.S. 34 Glenwood, Iowa, exit.

In addition to continued agricultural practices, the Mills County Comprehensive Plan identifies commercial and industrial mixed-use developments, and this comprehensive plan will guide development within the planning jurisdiction of Mills County (RDG Crose Gardner Shukert 2002). These mixed-use development areas are intended to attract development to an area covering about 4-square-miles, from approximately 1-mile north of the preferred alternative south to the existing Highway 34 to Plattsmouth. The access and interchange locations identified in the preferred alternative would facilitate commercial and industrial developments in this area.

It is unclear from the information provided in section 3.1.1, whether this same development would occur under the other alternatives. In any case, the additional effects from this development should be better assessed in the final EIS for each applicable alternative. For example, the Mills County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan (RDG Crose Gardner Shukert 2002), identifies a proposed north-south roadway approximately 0.33-mile west of 190th Street. This roadway would extend north from Highway 34 to the four-lane highway proposed under Alternative 3 and then continue northward approximately 1 mile before it would make an abrupt east turn and link back to 190th Street. The proposed road and its connections to the preferred alternative and Highway 34 would facilitate commercial and industrial developments in the mixed-use district described above. This same alignment does not appear to be consistent with Alternative 2.

The CEDS for the MAPA region identifies the proposed Project as one that would lead to or enhance economic development by retaining business and industry and encouraging expansion (Goal 1-1; MAPA 2004). Mills County is listed as having jurisdiction over the proposed Project (MAPA 2004) and as such, Mills County would presumably be the entity receiving the benefits described in Goal 1-1 of MAPA. Therefore, the number of access and interchange locations proposed on the Mills County side of the river under the preferred alternative, the absence of zoning in Mills County (allowing unrestricted development (MAPA 2004)); access locations that appear to support new connecting roads; and new roads proposed to service the nearly 4-square-mile mixed-use commercial and industrial district between the Missouri River and I-29 as described in the Mills County Comprehensive Plan, support the need to include analyses of the associated environmental effects in the final EIS.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are the impacts associated with the proposed Project, including past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future Federal and non-Federal impacts. Cumulative impact issues identified in section 4.27 of the draft EIS should be expanded

15-4
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Mr. Philip Barnes

6

to address impacts to fish and wildlife resources due to the reasonably foreseeable future commercial and industrial developments facilitated by the proposed Project. Specific impact evaluations should include an assessment of water quality following highway, bridge construction, and development and the associated effects of water quality on fish and wildlife resources, including federally listed species. An evaluation of environmental contaminant inputs following highway and bridge construction and development and their effect on the Missouri River (an already stressed aquatic system) and pallid sturgeon, should also be included in the final EIS. In addition, section 4.27 of the draft EIS should assess impacts associated with the future expansion of the Road from U.S. 75 (the western terminus of the proposed Project) to I-80 as described in section 1.4.3 and in the Sarpy County Comprehensive Development Plan (JEO and Daily, May 1993). The above recommended evaluations should be used to compare cumulative impacts between the three alternatives.

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Fish and Wildlife Habitat Effects

The confluence of the Missouri and Platte Rivers is important for a diversity of riverine fish and wildlife species. Potential Project impacts (including the potential indirect and cumulative effects from reasonably foreseeable development as discussed above) extend beyond the footprint of the bridge. The final EIS should explain the differences in effects to fish and wildlife from each of the alternatives with respect to foreseeable future actions and should analyze those effects as appropriate for each alternative.

Section 4.14.3 of the draft EIS states the types of direct impacts expected to occur under Alternative 2 would also occur under Alternative 3, although less habitat (including less forested land and wetlands) would be disturbed under Alternative 3 due to smaller right-of-way (ROW) requirements. Other sources of habitat loss and degradation, including loss associated with commercial, industrial developments, and degradation due to noise and activity resulting from the proposed alignment under each alternative should be evaluated under indirect effects in the final EIS. For Alternative 3 specifically, proximity to the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers and nearby Schilling Wildlife Management Area (WMA) should be more fully considered.

In section 4.14.2, the draft EIS recognizes "...there is limited suitable habitat... available adjacent to the proposed project sites and "...it is unknown if the adjacent areas could withstand the increase in wildlife populations or if the carrying capacity of those areas is exceeded." Limitations of the surrounding areas are of concern, particularly under Alternative 3, given its proximity to the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers and the Schilling WMA. Bald eagles use this confluence area in midwinter and are reliant on the ice-free water, which also attracts an abundance of waterfowl. Midwinter bald eagle surveys completed in early January 2003 showed that 10 bald eagles were observed in an area from Bellevue to Plattsmouth (NGPC 2003). Of these, four were observations of bald eagles at the Schilling WMA (NGPC 2003).

Based on this information, and the uncertain capacity of adjacent existing habitats to support wildlife, the implementation of Alternative 3 would appear to have a greater

15-5, Mitigation of impacts on fish and wildlife habitat was considered during the development of the conservation measures identified in letter #20. Iowa DOT is evaluating locations for recovery of fill for the Project. Based on concerns expressed by USFWS and Iowa DNR, potential fill recovery locations in the Loess Hills are no longer under consideration for the Project.

15-5

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

7

Impact than if the bridge were built further away from these more sensitive habitats. Limited suitable habitat and uncertainties regarding the capacity of existing habitats to accept displaced wildlife should be addressed in the final EIS for each of the alternatives. If the Project relies upon a strategy of simple displacement, the final EIS should provide information supporting this rationale. For example, the final EIS should demonstrate that displaced wildlife, specifically bald eagles, would simply relocate without any adverse effects. If done correctly, a carrying-capacity analysis would help to support this conclusion by determining the amount of suitable habitat currently available for resident and migratory wildlife species. Based on the information available to us, it appears as though there would be a greater level of displacement associated with Alternative 3 given the proposed location of the Bellevue Bridge. The results of a carrying-capacity-type analysis would help to develop appropriate mitigation for the Project, potentially through the creation and restoration of degraded wetlands and purchase of perpetual conservation easements.

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The Loess Hills, a narrow ridge that extends along the edge of the Missouri River Valley in Iowa and Nebraska, was formed by wind-blown deposits of loess following the last Ice Age. The Loess Hills, especially those in Iowa, contain a complex of mixed and tall grass prairies and bur oak savannas that provide habitats for a diversity of neotropical migrants, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. Additionally, a variety of unusual prairie plants are also known from these habitats. Residential development, soil erosion, and mining of fill materials for construction projects represent threats to the continued existence of these important habitats in the Loess Hills and the unique plant and wildlife species that occupy them. Construction of the proposed Bellevue Bridge and its associated four-lane highway will require fill materials to elevate road grades and construct bridge approaches. Should fill materials be required from the Loess Hills area, the Department recommends that it be mined from already existing borrow sites and not from undisturbed areas.

Endangered Species

Section 4.15.2 states: "The BA [biological assessment] provides additional information on the species and the potential effects of either build alternative." This information should be included in the EIS for public review. However, the BA only addresses potential effects to listed species under Alternative 3 and only those direct effects associated with construction of the Project. It is necessary to completely describe the alternative in the BA, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects (i.e., the extension and widening of the Road and the cumulative effects associated with the foreseeable future actions). We also note consideration of our comments may lead to a different decision with respect to the preferred alternative. The final EIS should include an evaluation comparing the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of Alternatives 2 and 3 on federally listed species.

The confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers has been designated a Recovery Priority Management Area because of its high use by pallid sturgeon (USFWS, 1993). The alignment proposed under Alternative 3 intersects this area. As a result, this

15-6, Impacts related to Federally listed T&E species are addressed in responses 20-1 and 20-2 and through the adoption of all conservation measures identified in the October 3, 2005, letter from your agency (see letter #20). Items "d" and "e)" specifically apply to minimizing impacts on bald eagles, and items "f)", "g)", and "h)" specifically apply to minimizing impacts on pallid sturgeons.

15-6

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

8

alternative may have a much greater adverse effect to the federally listed pallid sturgeon than the other alternatives. The addition of contaminants into the Missouri River from the combined effects of the Project (i.e., runoff from the bridge, highway, and associated development) could also potentially increase stress and adverse impacts to a segment of the river that is already impaired. The final EIS should better evaluate these potential effects on listed species for each alternative. This information should also be included in the BA.

15-6
cont'd

In addition to the information discussed previously for bald eagles, surveys for bald eagle nests should be conducted prior to clearing in an effort to avoid potential impacts to the species. Should any signs of nesting be found, the USFWS Nebraska Field Office should be contacted before any clearing or construction activity begins.

Environmental Contaminants

According to sections 4.15.2 and 4.27.2 of the draft EIS, scouring of small pool areas above and below the proposed bridge location for Alternative 3 may provide wintering habitat for pallid sturgeon and other fish. The proposed bridge location is approximately 1/2-mile downstream from the discharge of the Papillion Creek Treatment Plant, on the Nebraska side of the river. This plant has an average discharge into the Missouri River of 50 million gallons of treated wastewater per day. The current discharge permit allows a mixing zone that extends 5,000-feet downstream on the Nebraska side of the river. Because the Alternative 3 bridge location would be within the mixing zone, there is concern the bridge pier and the created wintering fish habitat would also be in the mixing zone. Since water quality within this mixing zone does not need to meet water quality standards for the protection of aquatic life, the bridge pier may create habitat that would result in exposure of pallid sturgeon and other fish to concentrations of contaminants that exceed chronic life criteria. The final EIS should provide details regarding the bridge pier location for Alternative 3. A bridge pier located closer to the Iowa side of the river and designed to eliminate resting habitat may address this potential issue.

15-7

15-7, Your comment noted concern relative to impacts on pallid sturgeon resulting from their exposure to treated wastewater while using habitat in deep scour holes adjacent to piers. Your concern has been addressed through the use of a “v”-shape or rounded-nose design at the upstream and downstream ends of the single river pier and the first landward pier on the Nebraska side. Use of this design would minimize scouring and development of pallid sturgeon habitat. This criterion is from item “h)” of the conservation measures identified in your agency’s letter dated October 3, 2005 (see letter #20).

Several life history characteristics make the endangered pallid sturgeon sensitive to contaminant exposure and effects. The pallid sturgeon has a long life span and delayed reproductive maturity, and extended time between reproductive attempts. These characteristics make the pallid sturgeon susceptible to contaminants which bioaccumulate in body tissues over time and may be reduced at the time of egg laying by distributing much of the contaminant load into the eggs. The contaminant load in the eggs can directly affect the survival of the growing embryo or larval fish. The pallid sturgeon also is piscivorous and spends much of its time on or near the river bottom, both of which may result in exposure to higher levels of contaminants. Standardized laboratory toxicity tests indicate that sturgeon can be more sensitive to contaminants than species such as the fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*) and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), which are species that are frequently used for freshwater toxicity testing (Dwyer, et al., 1999; Dwyer, et al., 2000).

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

9

The segment of the Missouri River included in the project area has been identified as an impaired waterbody segment under the Clean Water Act, specifically for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and the pesticide dieldrin. Dieldrin and PCBs are contaminants that bioaccumulate. In addition, dieldrin and some PCB-similar materials are hormonally active compounds (HACs) that can affect reproductive systems in fish. Adverse reproductive effects in fish exposed to PCBs, in particular, are well documented and include ovarian atresia, decreased egg viability, and reduced growth of larvae (Nimi, 1996). The USFWS has conducted a study of fish health in the lower Platte River using shovelnose sturgeon as a surrogate for pallid sturgeon (Schwarz, et al., in review), relevant given the consistent movements of the shovelnose and pallid sturgeons between the Missouri and the lower Platte River (Swigle, 2003, and Snook 2001). Results of this recent work have confirmed that PCBs are elevated in shovelnose sturgeon. Selenium concentrations were at levels in shovelnose sturgeon that are known to cause reproductive impairment in some fish (USDOI, 1998). The pesticide atrazine also was detected in the blood plasma of shovelnose sturgeon and previous studies indicate that atrazine can disrupt reproductive systems in fish (Moore and Waring, 1998; Spano, et al., 2004). In addition to this chemical data, examination of gonadal tissue and reproductive biomarkers suggest some level of reproductive impairment.

Accidental Spills

Section 4.18 discusses the potential for impacts from historic spill and soil contamination events such as the 1980 rupture of a 2-million gallon liquid fertilizer tank and the subsequent soil contamination. The final EIS should also identify what area or sub-area contingency plans have been developed for response to spill events in this portion of the Missouri River, what response action would likely be taken, and whether impacts to important habitats would differ under each of the alternatives. This information should be available from Region 7 of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

15-8

15-8, The comment on the issue of potential contamination from spill events has been addressed in item "j)" of the conservation measures identified in your agency's letter dated October 3, 2005 (see letter #20).

Quality of Stormwater Runoff

As discussed previously, contamination resulting from stormwater runoff should be better evaluated for each of the alternatives. The draft EIS has not adequately evaluated the potential volume and quality of stormwater runoff from either the highway or any reasonably foreseeable commercial and industrial development. There are several studies that have evaluated the effects of runoff from highways and urban development on fish and wildlife resources that can be used as examples (Barrett, et al., 1995; Lopes and Dionne 1998; and USGS 1999). The National Highway Runoff Water-Quality Data and Methodology Synthesis website, maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with FHWA (<http://ma.water.usgs.gov/fhwa/default.htm>), has many other pertinent references. Barrett, et al., (1995) also discusses a variety of methods of reducing the contaminant loads that may be associated with stormwater runoff. An evaluation of stormwater quantity and quality for each of the alternatives should be included in the final EIS.

15-9

15-9, The potential impacts on fish and wildlife resources from stormwater runoff that you indicate would occur from the Project and future development would be mitigated through the acquisition of a 167-acre conservation easement (see letter #20).

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

10

including consideration of the reasonably foreseeable commercial and industrial developments. This evaluation should incorporate a proximity-based measure of land-use impacts, as described by Wentz (2000). Any control measures that might be used to manage the runoff should also be identified in the final EIS.

15-9
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Wetlands

Section 4.12 indicates that 14.2 and 8.7 acres of wetlands would be directly impacted as a result of Alternatives 2 and 3, respectively. The final EIS should also include an assessment of wetland impacts that may result from the indirect and cumulative effects of the alternatives, under the conditions discussed previously.

Wetlands, such as those present in the study area for both Alternatives 2 and 3, function to improve water quality by reducing pollutants that may otherwise flow via stormwater into the Missouri River. The functions provided by these wetlands would benefit fish and wildlife, including federally listed species. Delineations should be completed and included in the final EIS for any wetlands that would be impacted by the preferred alternative. Avoidance and minimization measures should also be identified and measures should be proposed in the final EIS to mitigate for the unavoidable losses. Although a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Clean Water Act section 404 permit may also be required, the delineations and proposed mitigation should be included in the final EIS pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and Executive Order 11990. Creation, restoration, and the purchase of perpetual conservation easements may be a reasonable approach for mitigating unavoidable losses.

Section 4.1.3 indicates the alignment for Alternative 3 would cross a 187-acre parcel of land which is under consideration as a wetland mitigation site for the Platte West Water Production Facility. Although only approximately 31 acres of this site would be acquired for the ROW, the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) has indicated the remaining land could potentially be acquired as mitigation for the Project. However, Alternative 3 would reduce the associated functional habitat value by introducing a source of wildlife mortality, traffic noise, and fragmentation. Future commercial and industrial developments in the adjacent area would also reduce the functional value of the site for wildlife habitat.

Saint Mary's Island, a terrestrial habitat restoration project proposed by the COE, also has the potential to provide habitat for a variety of riverine fish and wildlife species, although the proposed four-lane highway and anticipated effects under Alternative 3 would reduce the function of this site for fish and wildlife as well. Therefore, due to habitat fragmentation and reduced function of the MUD mitigation site and St. Mary's Island, the total acreage of impact at these sites should be calculated and included in the acres of fish and wildlife habitat lost in table S-1. This information should also be included in section 4.27.2 and a comparison of the impacts resulting from each of the alternatives on this site should be provided in the final EIS.

15-10

15-10, Wetland impacts associated with potential future development noted in your comment have been addressed through incorporation of conservation measures identified in your letter of October 3, 2005 (see letter #20). Additionally, future development will need to comply with wetland requirements and be responsible for mitigation of wetland impacts if wetlands cannot be avoided. The proposed area for a 167-acre conservation easement includes approximately 3.4 acres of wetlands based on NWI boundaries. The land will be managed by Iowa DNR for the benefit of riverine fish and wildlife species, including the pallid sturgeon and bald eagle.

Your comment noted that wetlands should be delineated and that the Final EIS should address specific impacts on those wetlands. The potential wetland impacts addressed in the EIS are based on field determinations; the estimate of affected acreage is conservative because the total area of wetlands in the bridge footprint is assumed to be affected. The actual acreage of wetlands affected beneath the bridge depends on the pier location and will be less than the estimated amount. Wetlands along the alignment of the preferred alternative will be delineated subsequent to the Final EIS publication. The estimates of wetland impacts from determinations are suitable for use in the Final EIS but will be revised through field delineations as part of the Section 404 permit application process. The Project design will consider avoidance and minimization of impacts on the delineated wetlands. Direct and indirect impacts on existing wetlands as a result of the Project, and the necessary mitigation for those impacts, will be addressed concurrently in the Section 404 permit application.

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

11

Summary Comments

In summary, the Department would generally concur with a determination of effect on section 4(f) properties, depending on which alternative is finally selected. We also have provided resources to contact concerning eligible 6(f) properties also depending on the selection of the final preferred alternative. We recommend that indirect and cumulative effects on fish and wildlife resources as a result of reasonably foreseeable development be evaluated for each alternative and a proposed mitigation package for the preferred alternative address all of the associated unavoidable project effects. The USFWS stands ready to help in whatever way possible in the evaluation of potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources.

The Department has a continuing interest in working with the FHWA, the NDOR, and the IDOT to ensure impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. For matters related to section 4(f), please contact Regional Environmental Coordinator Nick Chevanee, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, telephone 402-661-1844. For matters related to section 6(f) (L&WCF and UPARR programs), please contact Outdoor Recreation Planners Dan Wiley (Nebraska projects) in the same office, telephone 402-661-1572, or Roger A. Knowlton (Iowa projects) in the same office, telephone 402-661-1558. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding the preceding comments and recommendations related to fish and wildlife resources and threatened and endangered species, please continue to coordinate with Steve Anschutz, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office, 203 West Second Street, Federal Building, Second Floor, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801, telephone 308-382-6468, extension 12.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,



Willie R. Taylor
Director, Office of Environmental
Policy and Compliance

Attachment: References

cc: (next page)

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

12

Mr. Arthur Yorkey
Planning and Project Development Engineer
Nebraska Department of Roads
1500 Highway 2
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4759

Mr. James P. Rost, Director
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Philip Barnes

13

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Mr. Philip Barnes

14

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Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



FHWA - Iowa Division
105 6th Street
Ames, IA 50010-6337

July 8, 2005

Mr. Steve Anschutz
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, NE 68801

Dear Mr. Anschutz:

This letter is to formalize the mitigation measures discussed at our previous meetings in Council Bluffs, as a part of Section 7 consultation on the relocated US 34 Bridge. The following measures are proposed to address all possible effects to the Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphiromchus albus*; endangered) and the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucoccephalus*; threatened). It is our belief that your acceptance of these measures would serve as an adequate basis for a determination that this project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the above listed species.

Conservation Measures:

1. Purchase forested or agricultural property in the vicinity of the bridge crossing, along the banks of the Missouri River, in fee title or by perpetual easement to ensure future protection of the area for bald eagle and connection to the Missouri River flood plain for pallid sturgeon (see attachment).
2. Focus property acquisition in Iowa adjacent to St. Mary's Island, owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, and in Nebraska in the vicinity of the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers (see attachment).

Mitigation for Federally Listed Species:

1. Locate bridge abutments and earthen embankments outside of the current federal levee to avoid hydrological changes, including passage of flood flows, to limit scour and sediment deposition, and to ensure little or no modification of nutrient and sediment cycling between the river and its floodplain.
2. Shift the horizontal alignment of Alternative 3 approximately 100 feet further northeast between stations 265+00 (+/-) and 325+00 (+/-) compared to the alignment shown in the draft EIS (see attached figure), provided the shift does not result in harm or harassment to

bald eagles or bald eagle nests. Shifting the horizontal alignment will allow for additional land to be available in proximity to the Platte and Missouri Rivers for future floodplain restoration by others in this area.

3. Acquire approximately 99 acres (predominately located in parcel numbers 000010702300001 and 000010702300003) in Iowa in the vicinity of the proposed bridge crossing for protection of pallid sturgeon and bald eagle. The acquisition area would consist of that property west of the existing federal levee, commencing at the south property line of St. Mary's Island (Parcel numbers 000010702100002, 000010702100003 - United States of America) and continue south for approximately 2,300 feet along the east bank of the Missouri River (see attached figure).
4. Acquire a tract of land identified as an approximate 68 acre parcel at the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers, located between the levee and the west bank of the Missouri River, owned by Arcadian Fertilizer, LP (see attached figure). The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) shall make its best effort to acquire a conservation easement on the identified property by condemnation; in the event NDOR is unable to acquire the land or a conservation easement on the land by contract.
5. It is the intent that the 167 acres (from items 3 and 4 above) be developed by the respective state wildlife agencies for pallid sturgeon, bald eagle, and other fish, wildlife, and plant species.
6. Construct Alternative 3 such that impacts to forested areas along the Missouri River will be minimized to the extent possible.
7. No tree clearing will occur during the bald eagle wintering period (December 15 - February 20).
8. Conduct a survey for presence of bald eagles and active bald eagle nests on the eye of construction (need more input here from FWS; 2-5 days prior?). Bald eagles should not be harassed, harmed, or disturbed, including nests and nest trees. If, during this survey, nesting bald eagles or an active bald eagle nest is found, the Iowa DOT will consult the USEFWS for instructions.
9. Conduct cofferdam installation/removal and pile driving activities in the Missouri River outside of the period February 1 through July 1 to avoid impacts to the pallid sturgeon during its reproductive and early life stages.
10. Maintain a minimum of 450 feet of clear span (no piers in the river) commencing at the first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River eastward to the first river pier to avoid the mixing plume of the upstream wastewater treatment plant and to minimize the number of piers in the Missouri River.
11. Design the single river pier and the first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River utilizing a "Y" shape or rounded nose design and orient the river pier as close as practicable to parallel the river flow so as to minimize downstream scour and eddy effect, thus minimizing loss or modification of habitat for the pallid sturgeon.

Comment Letter #15, dated March 30, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

12. Maintain spill prevention materials on-site during construction and be prepared to deploy should a spill occur in the vicinity of the Missouri River.

13. Construct potential borrow pits on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River in accordance with previous guidance from USFWS' Grand Island Ecological Services Field Office. Implementing the USFWS guidance will reduce impacts to pallid sturgeon by not cutting borrow sites to a depth that exposes the groundwater lens, which can negatively impact surface waters in the Platte River.

As you are aware, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Nebraska DOR, and the Iowa DOT are anxious to move this important project forward. We believe that the proposed mitigation strategies are appropriate to offset the anticipated project effects on the environment. FHWA would like to conclude this matter informally with a finding of "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" finding. If the included proposal is acceptable, FHWA would conclude this Section 7 action under the informal process. If this offer is not acceptable as provided herein, we would ask you to provide a Biological Opinion (BO) on or before August 22, 2005 to conclude the formal Section 7 consultation.

Please keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the Fish and Wildlife Service to document the connection between federally listed species and our transportation project. While we have useful information from USFWS in past correspondence, it is necessary that we have documentation pertaining directly to effects to the Pallid Sturgeon and the Bald Eagle, and how the proposed mitigation strategies minimize or eliminate these effects. This connection is required to justify our mitigation acquisition and measures, and it is not something that NDOR, Iowa DOT, or FHWA can do.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to call me at (515) 233-7302.

Sincerely,



Michael La Pietra
Realty and Environment Manager

Attachments

cc:
James Rost (Iowa DOT), w/attachment
Ed Kosola (FHWA - Nebraska), w/attachment
Art Yonkey (Nebraska DOR), w/attachment



Comment Letter #16, dated April 26, 2005, U.S. Department of the Air Force, Offutt Air Force Base



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 5TH WING (ACG)
OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, NEBRASKA

APR 26 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR OFFICE OF LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
800 Lincoln Way
Ames IA 50010
ATTENTION: MR JAMES ROST

FROM: 55 CES/CD
106 Peacekeeper Dr., Ste 2N3
Offutt AFB NE 68113-4019

SUBJECT: Bellevue Bridge Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

1. In response to the 6 Dec 04 request, Offutt submits the following information. Of the alternatives offered, Offutt prefers Alternative 3, the Southern Sary County route. Alternative 2, the South of Offutt Air Force Base route causes Offutt a number of concerns. Of high concern is public safety. The completed roadway would be directly under the approach to the southeastern end of our runway. It would pass through an area shown in our Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Report as Accident Potential Zone 1. Though transportation is considered a compatible use for that area, it is an area of extremely high accident potential. Each aircraft approaching or departing Offutt from that end of the runway will pass directly over the roadway at a very low altitude. An aircraft malfunction at that location does not allow the pilot much time to react. The aircraft stationed at Offutt are classified as "heavy" aircraft by the FAA and create a great deal of wake turbulence that under certain conditions might affect vehicular traffic. The lights and traffic movement could also be a distraction to approaching and departing pilots. Also aligning the roadway close to Offutt's southern boundary brings the public closer to the Installation causing our Security Personnel serious concerns about Force Protection. An additional concern is that during the construction of the bridges and overpasses required to span Papillion Creek, the railroad and various roadways, dewatering may be required. That activity may cause groundwater contamination currently being contained or monitored by Offutt, to move towards the dewatering location increasing our long term remediation costs.

16-1

16-1, Offutt AFB comments regarding Alternative 2 and the location of the proposed bridge along the airfield's flight path, the security concerns arising from the location of the roadway in close proximity to the base boundary, and the potential impacts on existing groundwater contamination are noted. Alternative 3 would avoid the impacts noted in your letter.

2. Offutt would also like to go on record supporting creation of any displaced wetlands at the Lincoln Bend site in Nemaha County. FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33, *Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or near Airports*, dated 1 May 97, advises that wetlands not be included within 5 statute miles of airport approach and departure airspace. Because both alternatives 2 and 3 would be within 5 miles of Offutt's southeast approach and departure zone, Offutt recommends any needed wetlands mitigation be done at another location. Offutt would like to see a reduction in local wetlands whenever possible. Additionally, Offutt continues to oppose the Metropolitan Utility District proposal to mitigate the wetland damage from their Platte River West plant at the location

16-2

16-2, Natural resource agencies have recommended on-site mitigation for wetlands adversely affected by the Project. However, given concerns relative to bird-aircraft strike hazard when wetlands are near airports, Iowa DOT and NDOR will coordinate with the resource agencies with regard to the potential use of wetland mitigation banks outside of 5 statute miles of the Offutt AFB approach and departure airspace.

Comment Letter #16, dated April 26, 2005, U.S. Department of the Air Force, Offutt Air Force Base

} 16-2
cont'd

south of Offutt. We believe we will be successful in opposing their wetlands mitigation at that location.

3. If there are questions or you need additional information, please contact Mr. Ed Lueninghoener in 55 CES/CEV at 294-4087.


MARK E. JACOBSEN, R.A.
Deputy Civil Engineer

Comment Letter #17, dated May 2, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY
 2222 Curving Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4328
 Phone: (402) 444-8866 Fax: (402) 342-0949
 Email: mapa@mapa.org www.mapa.org
 In the MAPA Region: 1-800-367-4366

MAPA
 A Council of Governments

RECEIVED
 MAY 4 2005
 OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

May 2, 2005
 Mr. Brad Hiler, P.E.
 Office of Location and Environment
 Iowa Department of Transportation
 800 Lincoln Way
 Ames IA 50010

Re: March 23, 2005 IDOT letter re Bellevue Bridge Study (DEIS)
 Please consider MAPA Board of Director comments on your letter of March 23, 2005 to Aileen Ramsey, MAPA Administrative Services Director.

- While a "widened shoulder" could perhaps be viewed as better than no bicycle/pedestrian access, the lack of a barrier between high-speed vehicles and bicycles/pedestrians is not, in our opinion, an appropriate design. Given the cost of a new highway bridge across the Missouri River, the additional expense of a barrier to separate vehicles from bicycle/pedestrians is minimal. The additional expense is a good investment.
- Interest in trail development and alternative (to motorized vehicles) transportation options has never been higher. Adding appropriate bicycle/pedestrian facilities on bridges when they are built makes the most sense. To argue that there is nothing to connect to (now) is shortsighted and does not take into account the development of the metropolitan Omaha trails system in the past decade and the Trail System in the MAPA 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- For IDOT to say that there are, "no existing trails within Nebraska or Iowa in the vicinity of the new bridge," is just not accurate. The Bellevue Loop trail exists now and is certainly "in the vicinity" of the new bridge. (See Appendix G, page 45 of the MAPA 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, dated September 2000)
- A look forward to future development and transportation needs requires a more proactive design now. Including a barrier-separated bicycle-pedestrian facility in design plans would enhance alternative transportation modes. We also urge you to take into consideration future Army Corps of Engineers' environmental and recreational plans for this area (on both sides of the river).

17-1

17-1, On May 19, 2005, Iowa DOT responded to your letter; the Iowa DOT letter is reproduced at the end of your letter. Subsequently, additional meetings regarding this issue were held between the design consultant and the signatory agencies. Final design configuration of the widened shoulder to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic has not yet been determined.

Comment Letter #17, dated May 2, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

17-1
} cont'd

The MAPA Board of Directors requests that IDOT reconsider their position with respect to this bridge and include a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility in their design.

Sincerely,



John Abbott,
Chairman, MAPA Board of Directors

- Cc: John Selmer District 4
Scott Suhr, District 4
Matt Tondl, HDR
James Rask, IDOT O.L.E.
Congressman Steve King
Senator Chuck Grassley
Senator Tom Harkin
Congressman Jeff Fortenberry
Congressman Les Terry
Senator Chuck Hagel
Senator Ben Nelson
Steve McBeth, NDOR, Corridor Studies Engineer
Chuck Shevchuk, Bellevue Planning Director
Mark Wayne, Sappy County
Gale Malinquist, Back to the River
Kent Holm, MAPA Project Review Committee
Blake Mayberry, Glenwood Planning & Zoning Director
Jim Ehrmeier, Mills County Engineer

Comment Letter #17, dated May 2, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2005 - 017

WHEREAS, the members of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Board of Directors have been formally designated by their respective legislative bodies to act as the official representative in planning matters of mutual concern; and

WHEREAS, the following application has been submitted to MAPA in accordance with Executive Order 12372 for intergovernmental review and coordination; and

WHEREAS, MAPA has given due consideration to said project; therefore be it

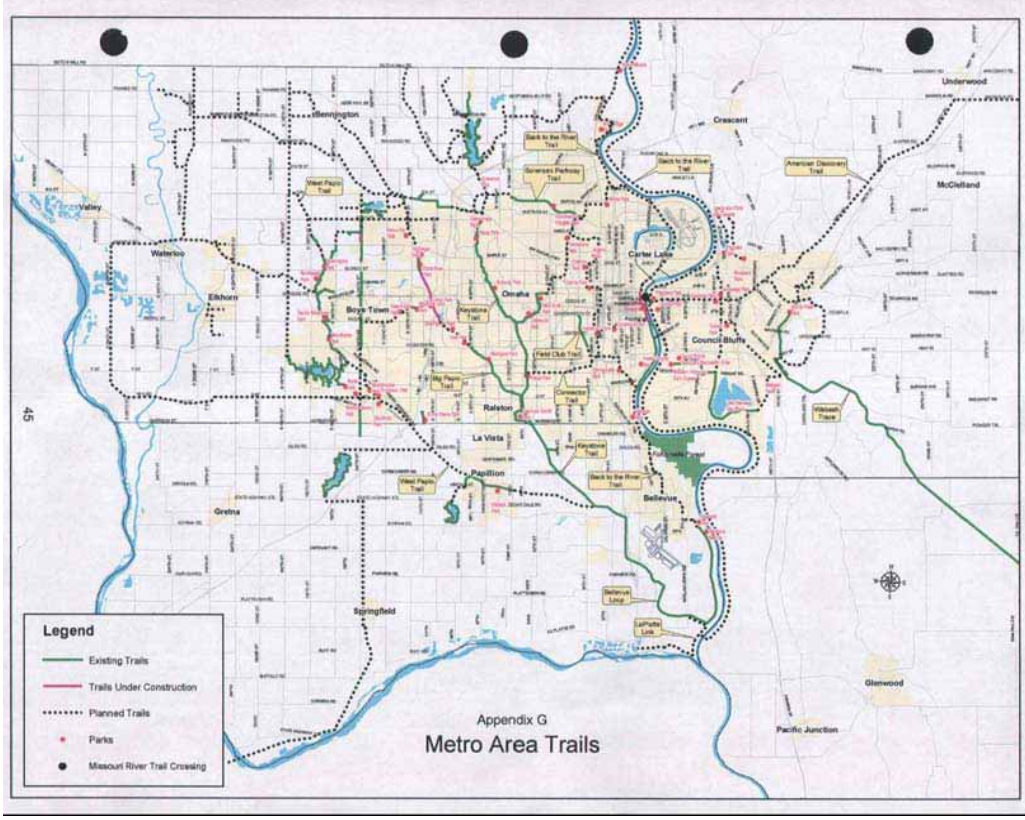
RESOLVED, that MAPA finds the project to be consistent with area-wide planning and forwards favorable comment along with the following additional consideration to the applicant.

"The final alternative should include a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility for considerations of safety and provision of alternative transportation."

MAPA CASE #2005-014 Iowa DOT, NDOR
Bellevue Bridge Study (DEIS)

PASSED this 27th day of January, 2005

Kathleen Kelley
Kathleen Kelley, Secretary/Treasurer
MAPA Board of Directors



Comment Letter #17, dated May 2, 2005, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency



Iowa Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4 OFFICE
P.O. BOX 406, ATLANTIC, IA 50022

712-243-3355
FAX 712-243-6788

May 19, 2005

Re: Mills County
US 34

Mr. John Abbott
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
2222 Cumming Street
Omaha, NE 68102-4328

Subj: Request for Barrier-Separated Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility, US 34 Bridge

Dear Mr. Abbott:

Thank you for expressing the MAPA Board of Directors' request for a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility on the proposed US 34 bridge. The Iowa Department of Transportation desires to meet the needs of all transportation users when future improvements are being considered. Meeting these various needs have costs associated with them and, as we are all aware, there are more needs than the availability of funds.

While realizing the unique opportunity this new bridge provides for the metropolitan area trail system, the cost of providing a barrier-separated facility is quite significant. The additional cost to provide this facility is expected to be in the range of \$3.5 to \$4 million as the bridge will be approximately 3200 feet long. The department has evaluated the cost of a barrier-separated facility and potential use of this facility. In evaluating the type of accommodation, we reviewed several items:

- Location and distance to a significant residential area (50+ homes)
- Location of employment centers
- Location of schools and libraries
- Location of park/recreational/scenic areas
- Existing trails
- Future land use

In looking at these items, the potential trip generation is marginal. The closest residential area of significance is Normandy Hills that is over three miles away. The existing employment centers have small numbers of employees and, based on the location of the bridge, they most likely would not use the trail as an alternative means of transportation. There are no schools or libraries that would generate trips. The location of the nearest park is four miles to the north. As indicated in your letter, the Bellevue Loop trail is in the vicinity of the bridge, but there is no trail to connect to in Iowa. Your long-range plan does show a proposed trail on the Iowa side of the river, but our understanding is that minimal

planning has been done to this date and that other components of your plan would most likely be of higher priority.

Local and county land use plans indicate that the majority of the land in Nebraska bound by the Platte and Missouri Rivers, US 725 and Offutt Air Force Base will be used for commercial/industrial purposes. In Iowa, it will be agricultural with some mixed use adjacent to Interstate 29. These future uses would not tend to generate significant trips. Your letter also indicated the potential for future park and recreational area development by the Army Corps of Engineers along the Missouri River in this location. In our discussion with the Army Corps of Engineers, they indicate that any actions by them would not happen within the foreseeable future. Additionally, the Department of Defense is concerned about any activity that would increase the presence of birds/waterfowl. This would present a risk to their aircraft.

Based on the above review, it was determined that the cost of a separated facility was not warranted. However, the department would provide accommodation by use of a ten-foot shoulder in both directions. Concern was expressed about the safety of this type of accommodation given the traffic volumes and prevailing speed. The speed limit on the bridge would most likely be set at 45 mph. Guidelines issued by the Federal Highway Administration for this speed and predicted traffic volumes recommend a shoulder width of six feet minimum for all categories of bicyclists including children. We would be exceeding this recommendation by 4 feet and don't expect a high number of young children using this trail.

While the department will not fund a barrier-separated facility, if the region feels this is a significant need, we would be open to incorporating this feature into our design if local funds are made available. We are just beginning the design process and would need to know your intentions fairly soon.

Sincerely,

John R. Selmer, P.E.
District Engineer

JRS/mj

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.



BACK TO THE RIVER, INC.

A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
 Office located at: Pacific-Missouri River National Forest, Bellevue District, c/o Back to the River Administrator
 8901 South 154th St., Omaha, Nebraska 68138-9321 (402) 444-6222 fax: (402) 895-6543

May 17, 2005

John Selmer, District Engineer
 Iowa Department of Transportation
 District 4 Office
 P. O. Box 406
 Atlantic, IA 50022

RECEIVED

MAY 19 2005

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT
 Re: Environmental Impact Statement
 Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Mr. Selmer:

At the April 15, 2005 meeting of the Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.*, the Board adopted the enclosed resolution regarding the Bellevue Bridge Study. The resolution identifies two areas of concern: 1. The need for separating non-motorized from motorized traffic through barriers. 2. Assurance of substantive flood plain protection and development limitations to protect existing habitat from degradation.

The Board feels that additional information should be forwarded in response to Brad Hofer's letter dated March 23, 2005 citing IDOT's reasons for limiting bicycle/pedestrian facilities to a widened shoulder rather than a separated and protected lane. The Board remains concerned about the lack of separated, non-motorized lanes to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross the bridge.

While there may not be a complete trail network in the vicinity to connect to the proposed bridge, the Trails and River Crossing Plan completed on December 10, 1998, clearly shows trails in the vicinity of the new bridge on both the Nebraska and Iowa sides of the Missouri River. The Bellevue Loop, near the potential bridge location, already exists as an integral part of the metropolitan trails system. It would be short-sighted not to accommodate a safe, separate pedestrian lane when the bridge is constructed rather than attempt to incorporate it later. The final alternative should be designed to separate motor vehicle traffic from pedestrian/bicycle users in the interest of safety and to promote alternative transportation opportunities.

A copy of the Trails and River Crossings Plan transmittal letter is enclosed along with maps and text relating to trail segments in both states adjacent to and connecting to a future Missouri River bridge. A copy of the Metro Trails Plan, approved by MAPA as part of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, is also enclosed, shows existing and planned trails in the vicinity of the proposed bridge.

Enhancing the Missouri River Corridor for our communities' future

18-1, In response to your second area of concern, with regard to protecting floodplain from potential future development, the signatory agencies worked with USFWS, NGPC, Iowa DNR, and USACE to develop conservation measures to mitigate the potential impact of future floodplain development and to protect existing wildlife habitat. Letter #20 specifies the proposed mitigation measures.

18-2, In response to your first area of concern, regarding bicyclist/pedestrian accommodations on the proposed Missouri River Bridge, Iowa DOT responded to Senator Charles Grassley (see letter #19 and response 19-1), who forwarded your comment letter dated June 21, 2005. Also see response 17-1.

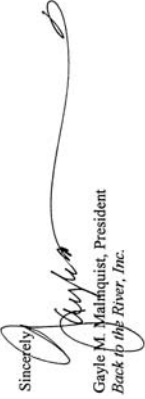
18-1

18-2

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

The Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.* remains committed in support of Alternative 3 – Southern Sarry County as the site for the new Bellevue Bridge and asks your serious consideration of the issues identified above as you proceed with project development.

Sincerely,



Gayle M. Mahquist, President
Back to the River, Inc.

cc: Steve McBeth, NDOR
Brad Hofer, IDOT
Barry Cleveland, Iowa Transportation Commission

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

J. ROBERT KERREY
NEBRASKA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 1998

We are pleased to announce the completion of the *Back to the River Trails and River Crossing Plan*. It represents the joint efforts of the City of Omaha, the City of Council Bluffs, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District and the rest of the Back to the River Steering Committee. The Big Muddy Workshop, with the assistance of Ehrhart Griffin & Associates, and Kirkham Michael Consulting Engineers, has produced not only an illustration of our dream for improved public access to our riverfront, but a roadmap to making that dream a reality.

The trails plan envisions over 100 miles of riverfront trails on both sides of the Missouri River and over 50 miles of connector trails in Omaha. The plan's most dramatic feature calls for at least one pedestrian crossing over the Missouri River. The crossing will strengthen our existing ties to the riverfront.

Tenil use in the Omaha and Council Bluffs metropolitan area continues to grow. Simple observation proves that the trails in the area are used frequently. More in-depth research concludes that riverfront trails will receive enthusiastic focus group attention with residents on both sides of the river. The studies concluded, among other things, that citizens desire increased access to the riverfront for recreation and entertainment. When properly developed, pedestrian facilities become a destination themselves. They will literally bring people back to the river.

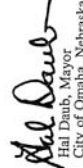
The process of completing this plan involved significant cooperation among many local, regional, state, and national units of government as well as many individuals and organizations. We thank the participants for their services. When built, the riverfront trail will physically cross hundreds of jurisdictions. The construction and financing phase of this plan, especially for the river crossing, will require some collaboration than before. As demonstrated by the many miles of trails already built in the area over the past few years, the task promises to be difficult, but not impossible.

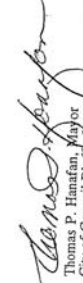
Constructing the trails in this plan also promises to be rewarding. More important than the physical improvements to our lands, is the value this project adds to our quality of life. The *Back to the River Trails and River Crossing Plan* builds upon our ongoing redevelopment activities along the riverfront. These trails will become additional selling points in marketing our homes and neighborhoods as well as recruiting businesses and employees to the area. Our experience shows these endeavors attract private investment and generate economic activity far beyond their initial costs. Pursuing the proposals in this plan will certainly add value to our community. We believe the citizens we serve will agree.

Sincerely,


J. Robert Kerrey
United States Senate, Nebraska


Steve Ollmann, General Manager
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District


Hal Daub, Mayor
City of Omaha, Nebraska


Thomas P. Hanafan, Mayor
City of Council Bluffs, Iowa

Room 207 Finance Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-5246

707 Pacific Street
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 391-3411

Western Nebraska
Regional Office
17 East 23rd Street
Lincoln, NE 68501
(402) 422-2026

**Resolution from Back to the River, Inc.
April 15, 2005**

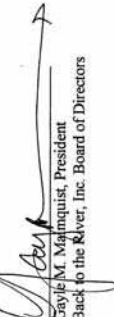
Whereas, *Back to the River, Inc.* has adopted the goals of wildlife habitat restoration, recreation and river access, education, economic development, cultural resources and floodplain management,

Whereas, *Back to the River, Inc.* encompasses both sides of a 64-mile stretch of riverfront from Mondamin, Iowa, and Herman, Nebraska, to the mouth of the Platte River,

Whereas, the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Nebraska Department of Roads intend to construct a bridge crossing the Missouri River somewhere north of the mouth of the Platte River and two alignments are currently being examined,

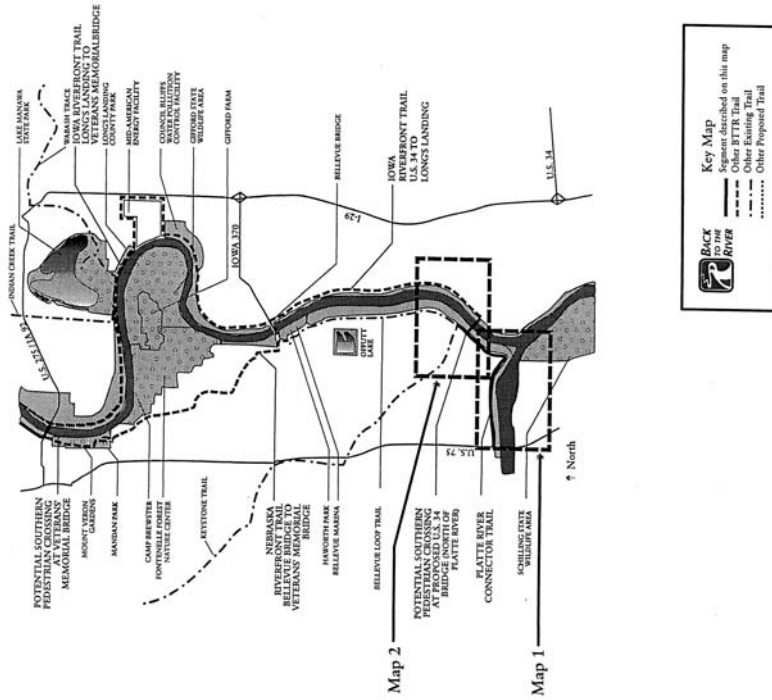
Now, therefore, be it resolved, that *Back to the River, Inc.* would like to continue to be on record supporting separated pedestrian/bicycling facilities on the span and approaches to any bridge constructed over the Missouri River.

Furthermore, *Back to the River, Inc.* supports all actions to protect the floodplain from development that could preclude future habitat work, including but not limited to levee movement away from the river, wetland restoration, conservation easements on lands extending up to one mile outward along both sides of the river and modification of the current south alignment to minimize impacts to the floodplain and retain flexibility for the future.


Gayle M. Malmquist, President
Back to the River, Inc. Board of Directors

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

**CONNECTOR TRAILS
Platte River Connector Trail
Key Map**



Trail Narrative

Trail Overview

This trail segment follows the north side of the Platte River east from U.S. Highway 75 to the Platte's confluence with the Missouri River. The trail then turns north and runs along the Missouri River to Papillion Creek where a new pedestrian bridge across the creek will connect the Platte River Connector Trail to the existing Bellevue Loop Trail. The trail follows the top of a flood control levee (R-613) that runs along the north side of the Platte River and the west side of the Missouri River. This trail segment crosses only one public road, which is La Platte Road east of its intersection with Harlan Lewis Road.

Trail Segment Length

Total length of this segment is approximately 3.7 miles.

Trail Connections

South End: Beginning of Platte River Connector Trail. Future connection to additional trails running south to Cass County across the Platte River near Louisville, Nebraska and Plattsmouth, and west along the Platte River.

Proposed U.S. 34 Highway Bridge Pedestrian Crossing to the Iowa Riverfront Trail:

Future connection along U.S. 34 east to Wabash Trace at Malvern, Iowa.

North End: Connection to Bellevue Loop Trail & Nebraska Riverfront Trail.

Cultural, Historic and Environmental Sites along this Segment

This trail segment runs along the Missouri River levee. The area surrounding the trail is primarily agricultural. Two large industrial complexes are north of the trail near the village of La Platte. A water well field serving one of the industrial sites occurs along the north side of the trail. A barge loading facility exists immediately north of the Platte and Missouri River confluence that serves one of the industries.

Potential Trailhead Parking Area- A triangular parcel of land exists approximately 1,000 feet east of the intersection of U.S. 75 and Allied Road. This area on the south side of Allied Road abuts the levee on its south edge, Allied Road on its northwest edge and Gene Eppley Camp on its eastern edge. The area appears to be large enough for a small parking area to serve trail users. One to two feet of fill would be required to elevate the parking lot and provide access to the trail.

Gene Eppley Camp & Retreat- This Salvation Army residential camp serves families and groups. The Platte River levee forms the southern boundary to the Camp. The levee is 4-6 feet higher than the camp, allowing easy access to the trail.

Back To The River Trails & River Crossings Plan -- December 10, 1998

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

Trail Topography

The trail follows the gentle grade of the Missouri River levee. Accessible ramps to the U.S. 34 highway bridge and the pedestrian bridge over Papillion Creek will be the only significant grade changes on the trail.

Trail Right-of-Way Issues

The trail follows a public levee (R-613). Records indicate that easements across private property were granted for the construction and maintenance of the levee. Those agreements may need to be amended to include recreational trail access as a permitted use. Access to the levee at the trail's west end appears to be within the public right-of-way for Allied Road. The at-grade trail crossing at La Platte Road will require coordination with the Sarpy County Engineer.

Detailed Description of the Trail & Design Issues

This trail will begin the south side of Allied Road where the flood control levee blends with the U.S. Highway 75 embankment. The levee is only 1-2 feet higher than Allied Road at this point, allowing easy access to the levee top. The trail will begin at the south edge of Allied Road and extend south 20 feet to the levee top and then turn east to follow the levee. The trail will be centered on the top of the levee. The levee follows Allied Road for the first 1,000 feet of the trail. The road then turns north but the levee and trail continues due east into the Gene Eppley Camp and Retreat property. After passing south of the camp, the trail continues east past a private water wellfield that serves one of the La Platte industries. Each well appears to be contained in a well house structure. A chainlink fence will be erected along the base of the levee where the wellfield is adjacent to the trail. The top of the Platte River levee from U.S. 75 east to the Missouri River levee is 10-11 feet wide, allowing the construction of a 10 foot trail surface. Additional fill may be required along this section to create 2 foot wide shoulders on each side of the trail.

Near the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers, the trail turns north and follows the Missouri River Levee. The top of the Missouri River levee is not as wide as the Platte River Levee. The Missouri River levee is approximately 9 feet wide. Construction of 10 foot wide trail with two foot shoulders along each side will require continuous fills along the levee top. The trail will extend north to La Platte Road. La Platte Road crosses over the levee at a right angle to the trail. The road has a crushed rock surfacing. The trail pavement will extend across the road with a thicker pavement depth. North of La Platte Road the trail continues to the Papillion Creek levee. The trail will swing west and follow the Papillion Creek levee top for a distance of about 250 feet. A new 450' pedestrian bridge will cross Papillion Creek at this location. The bridge will cross from the levee on south bank of Papillion Creek to the levee on the north bank of the creek. The trail will

Back To The River Trails & River Crossings Plan -- December 10, 1998

87

turn a right angle at the south end of the bridge and form a "T" intersection with the existing Bellevue Loop Trail at the bridge's north end. The bridge intersects the Bellevue Loop Trail about 100 feet west of where the Papillion Creek levee bends north to become the Missouri River levee.

Several Natural Resource District access gates cross this trail segment where land ownership changes or in one case, a public road crosses over the levee. Gates at each crossing prevent vehicle access to the top of the levee. These gates will need to be modified to either allow trail users to pass around the ends of the gates or the gates will need to be re-located or removed. Some of the gates appear to be located where property boundaries occur. The gates on the north and south sides of La Platte Road will need to remain and be modified similar to those on the Bellevue Loop where it crosses public roads at grade.

Trail Construction Cost Opinion

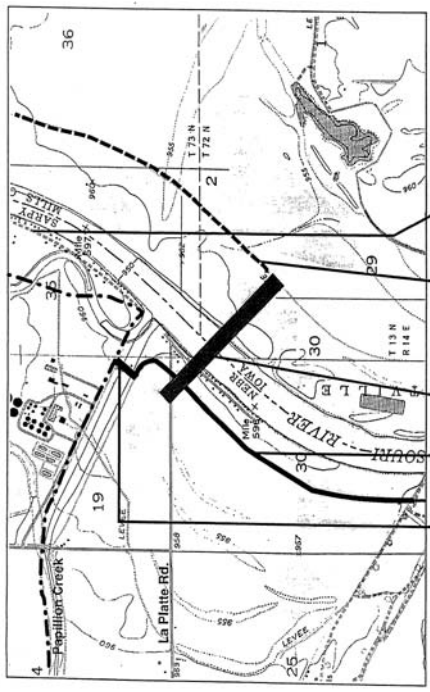
The costs of the trail segments, including construction, design, and contingency costs, are summarized in the following tables. Right-of-way acquisition, relocation, and wetland mitigation costs are not included.

Construction	\$1,148,000
Contingency (20%)	\$229,600
Design (12%)	\$137,760
Total	\$1,515,360

Back To The River Trails & River Crossings Plan -- December 10, 1998

88

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

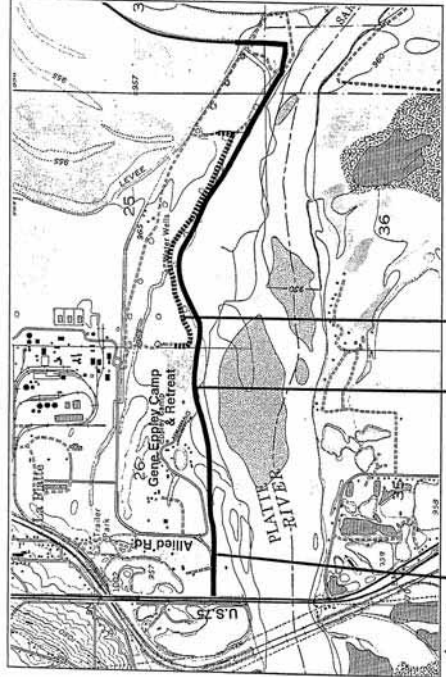


- Belleuve Loop Trail.
- Iowa Riverfront Trail. U.S. 34 to Longs Landing Segment.
- Proposed U.S. 34 Bridge - Connection to pedestrian crossing on bridge. Trail passes below bridge.
- Trail along top of levee, 10' wide trail from bridge to Platte River.
- New 10' wide pedestrian bridge across Papillion Creek.

BACK TO THE RIVER Platte River Connector Trail

- Trail Segment
- Segment described on this page
- - - Other BTTR Trail
- · · Other Existing Trail
- · · · · Other Proposed Trail

Map 1



- Fencing installed to limit access to wellfield.
- Trail on top of levee, 10' wide trail.
- Trail runs on south side of Allied Road from U.S. 75 to Gene Eppley Camp and Retreat. Trail continues east on levee to Missouri River.

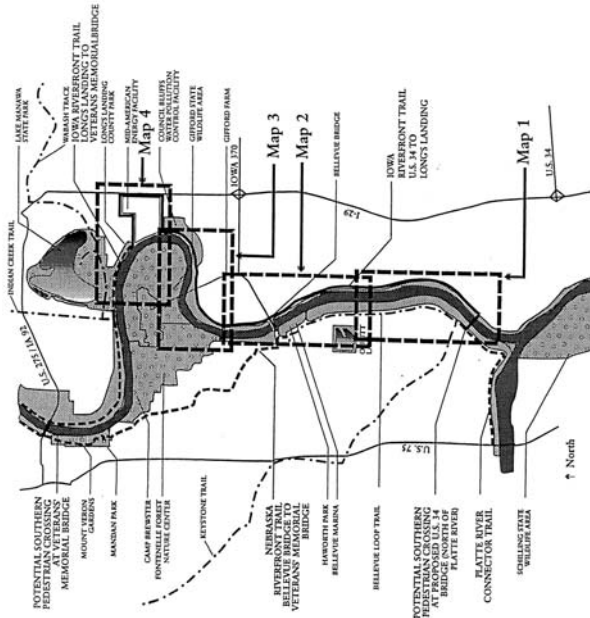
BACK TO THE RIVER Platte River Connector Trail

- Trail Segment
- Segment described on this page
- - - Other BTTR Trail
- · · Other Existing Trail
- · · · · Other Proposed Trail

Map 2

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

IOWA RIVERFRONT TRAIL
U.S. 34 To Long's Landing
Key Map



BACK TO THE RIVER

Key Map
Segment described on this map
Other BTRR Trail
Other Existing Trail
Other Proposed Trail

Trail Narrative

Trail Overview

This section of trail follows the top of a Missouri River levee controlled by a local Iowa levee district. The trail segment's construction is dependent upon the completion of a new U.S. Highway 34 bridge with a pedestrian crossing across the Missouri River from Interstate 29 to U.S. Highway 75. If constructed north of the Platte River, the new U.S. Highway 34 bridge would be sited just south of where the Papillion Creek empties into the Missouri River. Should the new U.S. Highway 34 bridge be built south of the Platte River, it would be appropriate to extend the Back to the River trails south to Plattsburgh. The southern location of the bridge would significantly increase the distance of trail on both sides of the river and would require construction of a pedestrian bridge on the Nebraska side to cross the Platte River.

The trail will begin at the east end of the new U.S. 34 bridge where the pedestrian crossing ends. The trail will run north along the top of the flood control levee to the Bellevue Bridge where it passes under the east end of the bridge. The trail continues along the levee to just west of the City of Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant. The Midwest Energy power generation plant is immediately north of this location. The trail then turns east around the perimeter of the power plant property. The trail crosses Pony and Mosquito Creeks in this section of trail. A separate pedestrian bridge is required at each creek. The trail crosses the railroad spur line near the north end of the power plant property. The trail then continues south and west to Navajo Road near the entry to Long's Landing County Park. The trail crosses Navajo Road from east to west at the point where the road bisects the Sieck flood control levee that protects Council Bluffs. At this location this trail segment ends and the next trail segment of the Iowa Riverfront Trail, Long's Landing to Veterans' Memorial Bridge, begins.

Trail Segment Length

Total length of this segment is approximately 12.4 miles.

Trail Connections

South End: Beginning of Iowa Riverfront Trail.

South Pedestrian River Crossing: Proposed pedestrian crossing over the Missouri River to the Nebraska Riverfront Trail if the U.S. Highway 34 bridge is completed.

Wabash Trace: Proposed extension of the Trace will intersect the riverfront trail in the Long's Landing/Lake Manawa State Park area.

North End: Continuation of Iowa Riverfront Trail, Long's Landing to Veterans' Memorial Bridge segment.

Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

Cultural, Historic and Environmental Sites along this Segment
This trail segment runs along the Missouri River levee. Most of the trail runs through an agricultural landscape. Panoramic views of Omaha, Bellevue and the forested hills of Fontenelle Forest are visible from many areas along the trail.

Long's Landing: Long's Landing provides direct river access. Picnicking and fishing opportunities exist along the river bank. A boat launch provides access for water craft use on the Missouri River.

Trail Topography

The trail follows the gentle grade of the Missouri River levee. An accessible ramp at the south end of trail from the U.S. 34 bridge crossing represents the only significant grade change on the trail. Some minor grade changes will occur as the trail wraps around the east perimeter of the Midwest Energy power plant.

Trail Right-of-Way Issues

The trail runs primarily on a levee controlled by a private levee board and on land owned by the City of Council Bluffs and Mid-America Energy. From the proposed U.S. 34 bridge north to the Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant, the trail runs along the top of a flood control levee that is operated by a private levee board. At the Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant, the trail runs along the northern side of the plant to property owned by Mid-America Energy Company. At Mid-America Energy, the trail runs along the south, east and north edges of their property, crossing a private rail spur that serves the power plant.

Detailed Description of the Trail & Design Issues

The trail will begin at the east end of the new U.S. 34 bridge where the pedestrian crossing ends. It is assumed that the bridge project will include any ramps or embankment required to extend the pedestrian crossing to the top of the levee where this trail segment begins. The trail will run along the top of the levee to the Bellevue Bridge. The trail passes under the east end of the Bellevue Bridge. This section of the bridge has a solid deck with concrete curbs. It appears that no modification work on the bridge to control storm drainage is needed. The trail continues on the levee to just west of the City of Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant.

The levee for this entire length has an average top width of 13-14 feet. An existing crushed rock road runs along the levee top. Construction of a 10 foot wide concrete trail on this levee will require minimal work. Several locations along the levee portion include farm equipment crossings and in some sections the existing rock road serves as the farm equipment access route to isolated fields adjoining the levee. At the equipment crossings

Back To The River Trails & River Crossings Plan -- December 10, 1998 125

and along the trail sections used as field access routes, a thicker pavement section of 6 inches, instead of the typical 5 inch pavement section should be used. Because farm equipment often tracks off mud as it first travels on pavement, the agency who will manage the trail will need to develop a maintenance plan to remove this mud when it occurs. Since this levee is controlled by the rural land owners that the levee protects, the placement of a trail on the levee will require cooperation of both of these farmers and trail users. Since mud on the trail is a safety concern only to trail users and not farm equipment operators, the maintenance responsibility for mud removal will most likely fall to the agency managing the trail.

At the City of Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant, the trail will leave the riverfront levee and follow the east perimeter of the Midwest Energy power generation plant to Navajo Road. Continuation of the trail through the power plant property near the river's edge is not possible due to the presence of the plant's water intake facilities and the need for continual heavy equipment access to service the intake equipment. Near the northwest corner of the City of Council Bluffs Water Pollution Control Plant, the trail will turn east and run along the southern edge of the power plant property, east to the south plant entry road. This road runs east along the south edge of the power plant ash storage ponds to Interstate 29. The trail would run along the south edge of the plant entry road to a point about 100 feet west of where the plant road turns south to Iowa 370. At this location, the trail will cross from the south side of the road to the north side and then continue east to the levee that borders the east side of the ash storage pond. The trail will turn north at the pond levee and follow it north for about one-half mile to Pony Creek. The trail will cross Pony Creek on a ten foot wide by 300 foot pedestrian bridge. The trail will continue north for another half mile to the northeast corner of the northern ash storage pond. Here the trail will turn west following the pond perimeter levee. The trail runs west to where the pond levee intersects with the east levee along Mosquito Creek (Mosquito Creek runs along the west side of the ash storage pond). The trail will cross Mosquito Creek on a ten foot wide by 350 foot pedestrian bridge from the east to west levee tops. The trail will then turn south and traverse down the west side of the Mosquito Creek levee. At the base of the levee, the trail will turn west and cross the railroad spur line that serves the power plant. This crossing is located about one-quarter mile north of the train unloading facility so that, the majority of the time, coal trains in the process of being unloaded will not block the trail.

After crossing the railroad tracks, the trail parallels them south to a point directly east of the intersection of Navajo Road and the entry road to Long's Landing County Park. The trail will be located on the north side of a service road that borders the power plant perimeter fence. The trail will cross Navajo Road from east to west at the point where the road bisects the Sieck flood control levee that protects Council Bluffs. At this location this

Back To The River Trails & River Crossings Plan -- December 10, 1998 126

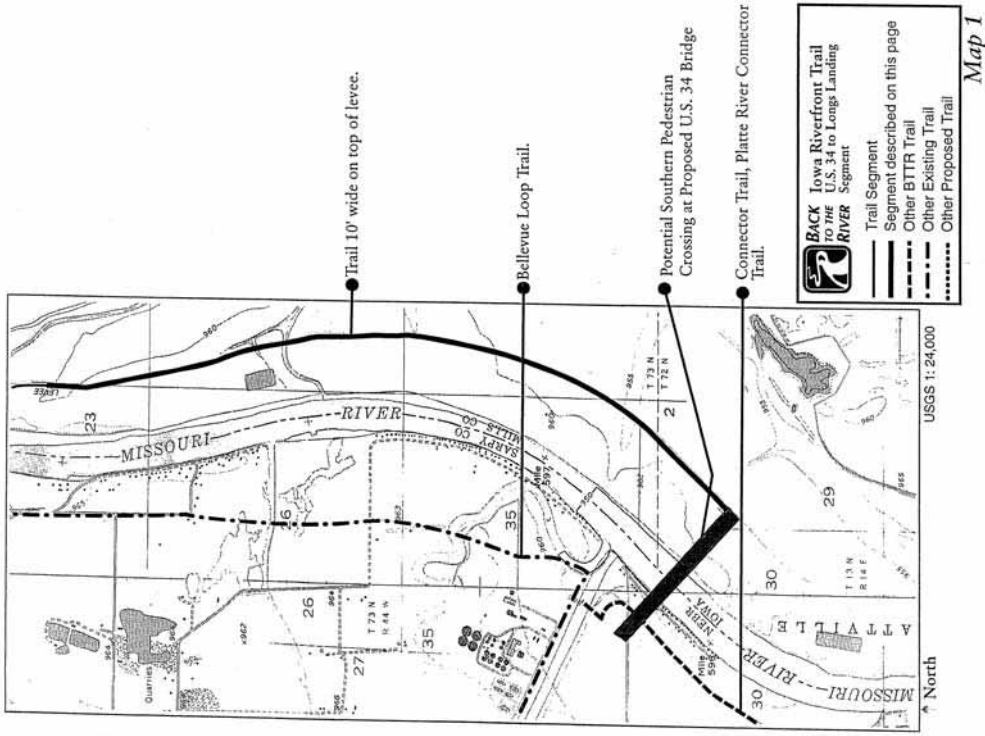
Comment Letter #18, dated May 17, 2005, Back to the River, Inc.

trail segment ends and the next segment of the Iowa Riverfront Trail, Long's Landing to Veterans' Memorial Bridge, begins.

Trail Construction Cost Opinion

The costs of the trail segments, including construction, design, and contingency costs, are summarized in the following tables. Right-of-way acquisition, relocation, and wetland mitigation costs are not included.

Construction	\$2,691,507
Contingency (20%)	\$538,301
Design (12%)	\$322,981
Total	\$3,552,790



Comment Letter #19, dated September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator

135 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
 550 S. CAPITOL BUILDING
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011
 TEL: (202) 224-4479
 FAX: (202) 224-4479
 E-MAIL: charles.grassley@us.senate.gov

211 Federal Building
 210 Walnut Street
 Ames, IA 50011
 TEL: (515) 281-1140
 FAX: (515) 281-1140

208 Federal Building
 101 1st Street SE
 Des Moines, IA 50319-1227
 TEL: (515) 281-4021
 FAX: (515) 281-4021

101 Federal Courthouse Building
 202 First Street
 Des Moines, IA 50319-1314
 TEL: (515) 281-1800
 FAX: (515) 281-1800

210 Warhawk Building
 210 Warhawk Building
 Des Moines, IA 50319-1447
 TEL: (515) 282-4687
 FAX: (515) 282-4687

171 West 18th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50321-1419
 TEL: (515) 282-4231
 FAX: (515) 282-4231

307 Federal Building
 307 Federal Building
 Council Bluffs, IA 51501-4204
 TEL: (319) 332-7128
 FAX: (319) 332-7128

United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

September 8, 2005

Mr. Mark F. Wandro
Director
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Mr. Wandro:

Enclosed please find a communication from Gayle Malmquist regarding pedestrian and cyclist use of the proposed Bellevue Bridge.

I would appreciate any assistance you could provide pertaining to this matter. Please mark your return correspondence to the attention of Nate Hertel when responding to my office.

Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

CRG/nh
Enclosure

Committee Assignments:
BUDGET
JUDICIARY
AGRICULTURE

Chairman
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL CAUCUS

Chairman
FINANCE

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

9-21 Track
19-1

19-1, Iowa DOT responded to your comment letter regarding pedestrian and cyclist use of the proposed Bellevue Bridge through a letter dated September 30, 2005; the Iowa DOT letter is reproduced at the end of your letter. Also see response 17-1.

Comment Letter #19, dated September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator

JUN. 23. 2005 12:29PM

US SENATOR C GRASSLEY C 8

NO. 0514 P. 2

JUN. 23. 2005 12:29PM

US SENATOR C GRASSLEY C 8

NO. 0514 P. 3



BACK TO THE RIVER, INC.

A NONPROFIT CORPORATION
Office located at: Peppo-Missouri River Natural Resources District, c/o Back to the River Administrator
8901 South 154th St., Omaha, Nebraska 68138-3621 Fax: (402) 935-5343

June 21, 2005

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
307 Federal Building
8 South 6th Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Re: Environmental Impact Statement
Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Senator Grassley:

At the April 15, 2005 meeting of the Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.*, the Board adopted the enclosed resolution regarding the Bellevue Bridge Study. The resolution identifies two areas of concern: 1. The need for separating non-motorized from motorized traffic through barriers. 2. Assurances of substantive flood plain protection and development limitations to protect existing habitat from degradation.

On May 17, 2005, the Board sent additional information to representatives of both the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Nebraska Department of Roads in response to Brad Hofer's letter dated March 23, 2005 citing IDOT's reasons for limiting bicycle/pedestrian facilities to a widened shoulder rather than a separated and protected lane. At the June 3, 2005 meeting, the Board asked that the same information be sent to our representatives in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Board remains concerned about the lack of separated, non-motorized lanes to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross the bridge as well as the potential for habitat loss.

While there may not be an existing trail network in the vicinity to connect to the proposed shows, the Trails and River Crossings Plan completed on December 10, 1998, clearly shows trails in the vicinity of the new bridge on both the Nebraska and Iowa sides of the Missouri River. The Bellevue Loop, near the potential bridge location, already exists as an integral part of the metropolitan trails system. It would be short-sighted not to accommodate a safe, separate pedestrian lane when the bridge is constructed rather than attempt to incorporate it later. The final alternative should be designed to separate motor vehicle traffic from pedestrian/bicycle users in the interest of safety and to promote alternative transportation opportunities.

Enhancing the Missouri River Corridor for our communities' future

A copy of the Trails and River Crossings Plan transmittal letter is enclosed along with maps and text relating to trail segments in both states adjacent and connecting to a future Missouri River bridge. A copy of the Metro Trails Plan, approved by MAPA as part of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, is also enclosed, which shows existing and planned trails in the vicinity of the proposed bridge.

The Board of Directors of *Back to the River, Inc.* remains committed in support of Alternative 3 - Southern Story County as the site for the new Bellevue Bridge, and asks your serious consideration of the issues identified above as the final design is developed.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at (712)323-4631 or by email at grasslingm1@aol.com. My mailing address is 209 Pent St., Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Sincerely,

Gayle M. Mahanquest, President
Back to the River, Inc.

cc: Mike Selmer, IDOT

etc.

Comment Letter #19, dated September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator

NO. 0514 P. 2/0

JUN. 23. 2005 12:38PM US SENATOR C GRASSLEY C 8

Iowa Department of Transportation



800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

515-239-1225 FAX 515-239-1982

March 23, 2005

Clayle Malmquist, President
Back to the River, Inc.
8901 South 154th St.
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

Re: Draft EIS Statements - Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Mr. Malmquist:

Thank you for the support of this project, your continued involvement in this development process, and taking the time to forward your comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (D.E.I.S) this past month.

You mentioned in your letter dated February 15, 2005 that...

"The Board also asks that appropriate barriers be incorporated into the final bridge alternative to separate pedestrian/bicycle facilities from motor vehicle traffic."

We appreciate the input. Presently the Iowa Department of Transportation and Nebraska Department of Roads are pursuing accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on a widened shoulder on the proposed structure. There are several reasons for this:

- There are no existing trails within Nebraska or Iowa in the vicinity of the new bridge to which a separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing could be connected. With that in mind it would not appear to be financially advisable to provide a separated trail crossing without something to connect it to.
- It also does not appear that the current zoning and land development in the area of the bridge would be conducive to a significant increase in bicycle or pedestrian traffic should a trail be constructed sometime in the future.
- The trail users who have safety concerns with using a non-separated facility could simply travel north or south and traverse the river on a lower volume roadway or planned separated crossings in Omaha and Plattsmouth.

NO. 0514 P. 4/6

JUN. 23. 2005 12:38PM US SENATOR C GRASSLEY C 8

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 1998

We are pleased to announce the completion of the *Back to the River, Trails and River Crossings Plan*. It represents the joint efforts of the City of Omaha, the City of Council Bluffs, the Pappo-Missouri River National Resources District and the rest of the Back to the River Steering Committee. The Big Muddy Workshop, with the assistance of Hinesman Griffin & Associates, and Kirkham Michael Consulting Engineers, has produced not only an illustration of our dream for improved public access to our riverfront, but a roadmap to making that dream a reality.

The plan envisions over 100 miles of riverfront trails on both sides of the Missouri River and over 50 miles of connector trails in Omaha. The plan's most dramatic feature calls for at least one pedestrian crossing over the Missouri River. The crossing will strengthen our existing ties to the riverfront.

Trail use in the Omaha and Council Bluffs metropolitan area continues to grow. Simple observation proves that the trails in the area are used frequently. More in-depth research concludes that riverfront trails will receive enthusiastic support. The Back to the River Steering Committee commissioned independent telephone survey and focus group research with residents on both sides of the river. The studies concluded, among other things, that citizens desire more access to the riverfront for recreation and entertainment. When properly developed, pedestrian facilities become a destination themselves. They will literally bring people back to the river.

The process of completing this plan involved significant cooperation among many local, regional, state, and national units of government as well as many individuals and organizations. We thank all the participants for their time and effort. When built, the riverfront trail will physically cross hundreds of jurisdictions. The construction and financing phase of this plan, especially for the river crossing, will require even more collaboration than before. As demonstrated by the many miles of trails already built in the area over the past few years, the task promises to be difficult, but not impossible.

Constructing the trails in this plan also promises to be rewarding. More important than the physical improvements to our landscape is the value this project adds to our quality of life. The *Back to the River Trails and River Crossings Plan* builds upon our ongoing redevelopment activities along the riverfront. These trails will become additional selling points for marketing our homes and neighborhoods to attract private investment businesses and employees to the area. Our experience shows that well-planned trails attract private investment and generate economic activity far beyond their physical extent. Promising the proposals in this plan will certainly add value to our community. We believe the citizens we serve will agree.

Sincerely,

J. Robert Kerrey
United States Senate, Nebraska

Steve Oltmann, District Manager
Pappo-Missouri River National Resources District

Hal Danah, Mayor
City of Omaha, Nebraska

Thomas P. Hansman, Mayor
City of Council Bluffs, Iowa

Room 307 Federal Building
102 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68503
(402) 471-4248

Western Nebraska
17 East 17th Street
Beatrice, NE 68310
(402) 637-2700

Comment Letter #19, dated September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

515-239-1225 FAX 515-239-1982

March 23, 2005

Alene Ramsey
Administrative Services Director
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
2222 Cuning Street
Omaha, NE 68102-4328

Re: MAPA Case # 2005-014 Bellevue Bridge Study

Dear Ms. Ramsey:

Thank you for forwarding Resolution 2005-017 Regarding the Bellevue Bridge Study. We appreciate MAPA's support of this project and look forward to a continued partnership on this project.

In the resolution, MAPA included the following for additional consideration:

"The final alternative should include a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility for considerations of safety and provision of alternative transportation."

We appreciate the input. Presently the Iowa Department of Transportation and Nebraska Department of Roads are pursuing accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on a widened shoulder on the proposed structure. There are several reasons for this:

- There are no existing trails within Nebraska or Iowa in the vicinity of the new bridge to which a separated bicycle/pedestrian crossing could be connected. With that in mind it would not appear to be financially advisable to provide a separated trail crossing without something to connect it to.
- It also does not appear that the current zoning and land development in the area of the bridge would be conducive to a significant increase in bicycle or pedestrian traffic should a trail be constructed sometime in the future.
- The trail users who have safety concerns with using a non-separated facility could simply traverse north or south and traverse the river on a lower volume roadway or planned separated crossings in Omaha and Plattsmouth.

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2005 - 017



WHEREAS, the members of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Board of Directors have been formally designated by their respective legislative bodies to act as the official representative in planning matters of mutual concern; and

WHEREAS, the following application has been submitted to MAPA in accordance with Executive Order 12372 for intergovernmental review and coordination; and

WHEREAS, MAPA has given due consideration to said project; therefore be it

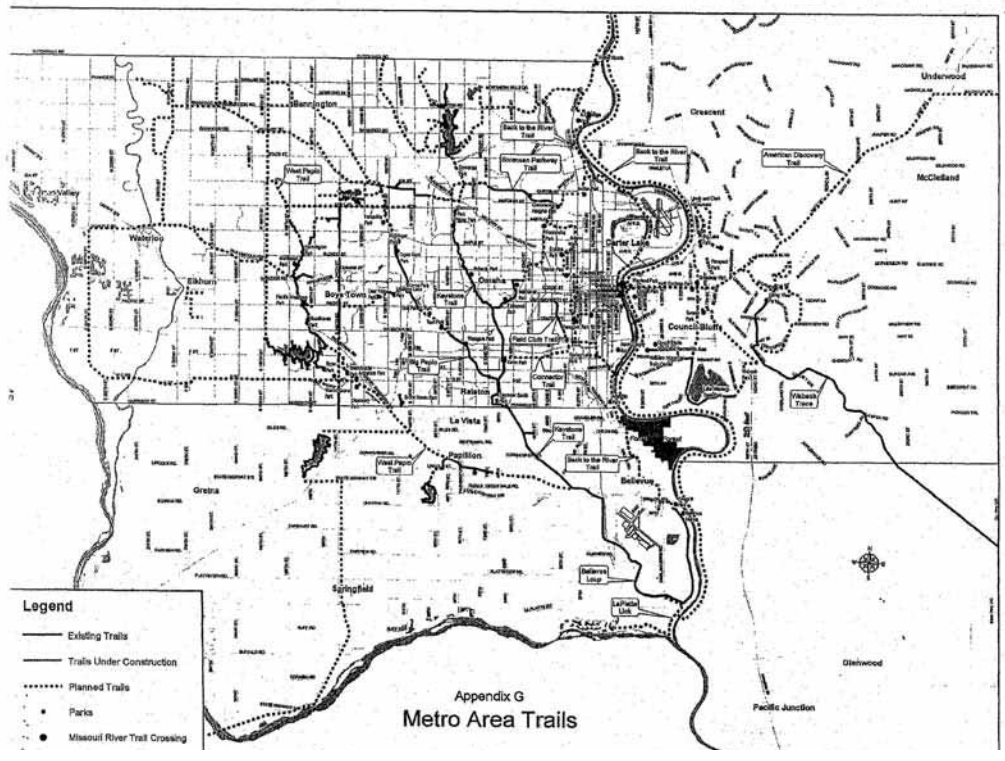
RESOLVED, that MAPA finds the project to be consistent with area-wide planning and forwards favorable comment along with the following additional consideration to the applicant.

"The final alternative should include a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility for considerations of safety and provision of alternative transportation."

MAPA CASE #2005-014 Iowa DOT, NDOR
Bellevue Bridge Study (DEIS)

PASSED this 27th day of January, 2005

Kathleen Kelley
Kathleen Kelley, Secretary/Treasurer
MAPA Board of Directors



Comment Letter #19, dated September 8, 2005, Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010
515-239-1111
FAX: 515-239-1639

September 30, 2005

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1501

Attention: Nate Hertel

Dear Senator Grassley:

Thank you for your September 8 letter forwarding correspondence from Gayle Malmquist, president of *Back to the River, Inc.* Ms. Malmquist's concern relates to the U.S. 34 Bellevue Bridge study. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) District 4 Engineer, John Selmer, provided the following information on DOT analysis of providing a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian trail on the proposed bridge. We try to meet the needs of all transportation users when future improvements are being considered; however, meeting these various needs requires funding, and there are more needs than funds available.

While realizing the unique opportunity this new bridge provides for the metropolitan area trail system, the cost to provide a barrier-separated facility is significant. The additional cost is estimated to be \$5 million, as the bridge will be 3,200 feet long. The DOT evaluated the cost and potential use of the facility to determine if this is an appropriate expenditure of public funds. We reviewed several items in making the evaluation:

- Location and distance to a significant residential area (50+ homes)
- Location of employment centers
- Location of schools and libraries
- Location of park/recreational/scenic areas
- Existing trails
- Future land use

DOT staff found the potential for bicycle/pedestrian traffic is marginal. The closest significant residential area is Normandy Hills, which is more than three miles away. The existing employment centers have small numbers of employees and, based on the location of the bridge, their employees would be unlikely to use the trail as an alternative means of transportation. There are no schools or libraries nearby that would generate bridge pedestrian traffic. The location of the nearest park is four miles to the north. The Bellevue Loop Trail is in the vicinity of the bridge, but there is no trail connecting to it in Iowa.

Senator Charles Grassley
September 30, 2005
Page 2

Local and county land use plans indicate that the majority of the land in Nebraska, bound by the Platte and Missouri rivers, U.S. 75, and Offutt Air Force Base, will be used for commercial/industrial purposes. Land use in Iowa will be agricultural with some mixed use adjacent to I-29. These future uses would not tend to generate significant pedestrian trips. While a trail plan was developed in 1998, minimal progress has been made on the Iowa side of the Missouri River. Some discussion has taken place about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developing a park and recreational area along the Missouri River in this location. The Corps and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources are acquiring property, but its future use has not been determined. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Defense has expressed concern about any development that would increase the presence of birds and waterfowl, which could present a risk to aircraft using Offutt Air Force Base.

Based on this review, the DOT determined that the cost of a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian facility was not warranted. However, the DOT would provide accommodation by the use of a 10-foot shoulder in both directions. The speed limit on the bridge would most likely be set at 45 miles per hour. National guidelines issued by the Federal Highway Administration for this speed and predicted traffic volumes recommend a minimum shoulder width of six feet for all categories of bicyclists, including children. The DOT proposal would exceed this recommendation by four feet, and few young children are expected to use this trail.

If you have any questions about this information, you may contact Mr. Selmer, District 4 Engineer, P.O. Box 406, Atlantic, IA 50022, telephone (toll free) 800-289-4368. He'll be pleased to help you.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Wandro
Director

MFW:et

cc: John Selmer, District 4 Engineer,
Bcci McHenry Christy ET

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
Nebraska Field Office
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

October 3, 2005

Mr. Gerald Kennedy
Federal Highway Administration
105 6th Street
Ames, IA 50010-6337

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

This is in response to a July 8, 2005, letter from Mr. Michael LaPietra of your staff regarding a number of conservation measures for the proposed Bellevue Bridge Project that were discussed, in part, during inter-agency meetings held on April 15 and May 27, 2005. The substance of the July 8 letter and other matters related to an ongoing section 7 consultation (pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973; 87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) on the proposed project were further discussed during a third inter-agency meeting that occurred on August 22, 2005. This formal reply to the July 8 letter is also responsive to the outcome of the August 22 meeting, and serves to formalize our mutual understanding of that meeting in an effort to conclude section 7 consultation on the proposed project. A written record of the August 22 meeting is enclosed.

During the August 22 meeting we focused our discussion on a number of conservation measures that could be implemented by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) as components of the proposed Bellevue Bridge project. An important outcome of that meeting was general agreement between representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), FHWA, IDOT, and NDOR that implementation of the conservation measures described below would either avoid or offset the potential adverse effects of the proposed project on the federally endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphiopygichus albus*) and threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

The collective purpose of the following conservation measures is to avoid adverse impacts to federally listed species resulting from the construction of the proposed project and the commercial and industrial developments that may occur within the federal action area. Information regarding the ill-effects of the proposed project on federally listed species was included in an April 18, 2005, letter from Mr. Wiltie Taylor of the Department of the Interior to Mr. Philip Barnes of FHWA. Further, the Service believes that implementation of the conservation measures would complement ongoing and near-term habitat restoration efforts by other federal and state agencies within the affected federal action area that includes the Platte and Missouri River confluences, and address concerns about cumulative impacts to federal trust fish and wildlife resources previously identified in the referenced April 18 letter. Important efforts by

20-1, The conservation measures identified in your letter were developed interactively with the signatory agencies. The measures address adverse impacts on Federally listed species resulting from the Project, as well as indirect impacts that are attributable to the Project and result from future commercial and industrial developments that may occur within the Federal action area. A draft of the conservation measures was provided to USFWS in a letter from FHWA dated July 8, 2005; the FHWA letter is reproduced at the end of your letter.

20-1

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

2
other agencies to restore riverine and riparian habitat in Iowa include recent and ongoing land acquisitions by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). In Nebraska, these efforts include the planned enrollment of lands into the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the purchase and restoration of land riverward of the federal levee by the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District.

Conservation Measures to be Implemented as Part of the Proposed Bellevue Bridge Project

- a) A 167-acre block of land shall be acquired by IDOT on the Iowa side of the Missouri River within an area bounded by the federal levee along the Missouri River and the proposed highway realignment. The acquisition area is located adjacent to the south side of the 500-acre St. Mary's Island parcel that is being acquired by the Corps and IDNR. The land area to be acquired by IDOT shall be transferred to IDNR, and managed for the benefit of riverine fish and wildlife species, including the pallid sturgeon and bald eagle.
- b) The segment of proposed highway alignment located between stations 265+00 (+/-) and 325+00 (+/-) in Iowa will be shifted northeastward as much as practicable (100 feet). The purpose of the shift to the northeast is to accommodate, to the maximum extent possible, a proposal by the Corps to set back a federal levee on the Iowa side of the river to restore riverine processes and functions. It may be necessary for the Corps and IDNR to acquire some additional land area (i.e., 100-plus acres) adjacent to the 167-acre parcel to be acquired by IDOT in order to better accommodate the planned eastward shift of the federal levee, and optimize the benefits to fish and wildlife resources that would be gained from such an action. It may also be necessary for the Corps, IDNR, and IDOT to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the means to achieve this objective.

20-1
cont'd

Note: The purpose of the land acquisition, highway realignment, and eastward shift of the federal levee described above in conservation measures a) and b) is to prohibit the future occurrence of commercial and industrial developments and subsequent modification of the stormwater regime and water quality within the ecologically important Platte and Missouri River confluence area. Modifications to the stormwater regime and water quality that would be facilitated by the proposed construction of the Bellevue Bridge and its associated four-lane highway could have adverse effects on multiple age classes of pallid sturgeon and other fish known to occur in the confluence area. Also, the confluence area is designated by the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993) as a Recovery Priority Management Area (RPMA), an area that is determined to be ecologically important for the conservation and recovery of the pallid sturgeon. Any adverse modifications to the stormwater regime and water quality have the potential to degrade the RPMA, and inhibit the recovery of the pallid sturgeon.

- e) The bridge abutments and earthen embankments shall be constructed landward of the current federal levees to avoid hydrological changes, including passage of flood flows.

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

- 3
- d) Tree clearing shall not occur during the bald eagle wintering period (December 15–February 20). The clearing of trees during the remainder of the year shall be minimized to the extent possible.
 - e) A survey for active bald eagle nests shall be completed 60-90 days before construction of the proposed project should such construction be planned to occur during the nesting period (February 15- July 15). The survey will be conducted within an area of 1-mile upstream and 1-mile downstream of the proposed project site. Should an active nest(s) be found within 0.5-mile or line-of-sight of the construction project, all construction activities within 0.5-mile or line-of-sight of the nest shall cease. The FHWA will contact the Service immediately for further section 7 consultation.
 - f) Cofferdam installation/removal and pile driving activities in the Missouri River shall be conducted from July 1 through January 31 to avoid impacts to pallid sturgeon.
 - g) A minimum of 450-foot clear span (no piers in the river) shall be maintained commencing at the first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River eastward to the first river pier to prevent the attraction of pallid sturgeon into the mixing zone of an upstream wastewater treatment plant, and to minimize the number of piers in the Missouri River.
 - h) The single river pier and first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River shall be constructed utilizing a "V" shape or rounded nose design at the upstream and downstream ends. The single river pier and the first landward pier shall be constructed as close as possible to parallel river flow and minimize downstream scour and eddy affects. The intent of the above conservation measures is to minimize, to the extent possible, the creation of habitat for the pallid sturgeon in the area of the mixing zone of an upstream wastewater treatment plant.
 - i) Spill prevention materials (i.e., spill kit) shall be readily available at the proposed construction site to contain and absorb accidental spills of fluids from construction equipment. Personnel trained in the implementation of the spill kit shall be readily available onsite to respond to accidental spills.
 - j) The FHWA shall reinstate section 7 consultation with the Service should the creation of a new or enhancement of an existing borrow pit(s) located on the Nebraska side of the proposed project result in the exposure of groundwater that may be hydrologically connected to the Platte River.

20-1
cont'd

Conclusion of the Section 7 Consultation Process

The Service requests that FHWA review the conservation measures described above in coordination with IDOT and NDOR, and provide us with your written confirmation in regards to whether they will be implemented as part of the proposed Bellevue Bridge project. Immediately following our receipt of your written confirmation regarding the acceptability of these conservation measures for inclusion as part of the proposed project, the Service will reconsider

20-2, FHWA responded on October 24, 2005, in acceptance of all conservation measures identified in the U.S. Department of the Interior, USFWS letter dated October 3, 2005.

20-2


Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

4
its previous stance regarding the project and its affect upon the pallid sturgeon and bald eagle. As you know, the Service's previously stated position was that it was unable to concur with FHWA's initial determination that the proposed project would not have an adverse affect on federally listed species. The Service's formal concurrence in response to your favorable reply to this letter will conclude the section 7 consultation process for the proposed project.

} 20-2
cont'd

The Service looks forward to FHWA's acceptance of the conservation measures described above, and appreciates your efforts toward the protection of federal trust fish and wildlife resources. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mr. Robert Harms within our office at (308)382-6468, extensions 12 and 17, respectively.

Sincerely,


Steve Anschutz
Nebraska Field Supervisor

Enclosure

LITERATURE CITED

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993. Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) Recovery Plan. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

cc: CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Mike George)
CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Randy Sellers)
FHWA; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Ed Kosola)
IDOT; Ames, IA (Attn: James Rost)
NDOR; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Art Yonkey)
IDNR; Des Moines, IA (Attn: Angi Bruce)
IDNR; Des Moines, IA (Attn: Andy Moore)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Mark Brohman)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Gene Zuerlein)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Troy Rahming)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Carey Grell)

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

2

MEETING NOTES

Date: August 22, 2005

Location: Iowa Department of Transportation Office, Omni Building (conference room), 300 West Broadway, Suite 401, Council Bluffs, IA

Subject: Bellevue Bridge Project, U.S. 75 to I-29, Mills County, Iowa and Stary County, Nebraska

Attendees: See attached copy of roster.

The meeting was opened with introductions by everyone in attendance. Hand-out items included a meeting agenda and a draft set of conservation measures developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Copies of the hand-out items are attached.

Land/Habitat Protection Conservation Measure

Steve Anschutz (USFWS) began the meeting by summarizing the outcome of a meeting that had been held at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) office in Lincoln, Nebraska on July 22, 2005. It was reported that the July 22 meeting was attended by a number of federal, state, and local government resource agency officials from Nebraska and Iowa along with representatives from conservation groups. The main purpose of the July 22 meeting was to obtain information from the participants on what land within the area affected by the proposed Bellevue Bridge Project was already or may come under some form of protection for environmental purposes, and to what extent such land was protected.

Anschutz indicated that a key discovery at the July 22 meeting was the Corps of Engineers (CoE) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) pending acquisition of an approximate 500-acre parcel (southern part of St. Mary's Island) located in the northern part of the proposed project area on the Iowa side of the Missouri River. Mike George (CoE) and Angi Bruce (IDNR) then explained the current status of this land acquisition. Bruce further explained that IDNR and CoE had been working toward purchasing the land from willing sellers in order to re-establish or restore as much of the natural hydrology to the site as possible that had historically occurred there. George indicated that CoE was confident that it will receive Fiscal Year 2006 funding to complete the acquisition of the St. Mary's Island property shortly after October 1, 2005. George also mentioned that it was CoE's intent to conduct a levee set-back in this area to be acquired, and if the opportunity arose, CoE would be interested in the acquisition of additional land to the south of that area for fish/wildlife habitat mitigation purposes along the Missouri River.

Anschutz also reported that during the July 22 meeting a representative of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had disclosed the receipt of an application from a landowner for a Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) easement on a property that was in excess of 180 acres within the foot print of the proposed bridge project in Nebraska. The NRCS official was optimistic that this property would become perpetually protected and restored to wetland habitat through WREP. In addition, Anschutz told about a July 22 field trip to the proposed project area in Nebraska with several members of the "Back to the River Group." During the July 22 field trip it was learned that most of the land area located riverward of the federal levee along the Nebraska side of the Missouri River was currently protected from further real estate development by county zoning restrictions, and that the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District was expending considerable funds for the reclamation of this area (i.e., removal of buildings and restoration of woodland/grassland habitat for wildlife).

Anschutz informed everyone that an additional outcome of the July 22 meeting and field trip was the recognition of the need for the formation of a special workgroup consisting of several federal, state, and local government agencies and conservation groups to collaborate in the development of a strategic plan for the identification and protection of environmentally sensitive lands within the Platte and Missouri River confluence area. He further reported that this special workgroup was scheduled to meet in Omaha, Nebraska on August 25, 2005.

Anschutz then referenced a July 8, 2005, letter that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had addressed to USFWS which, among other things, included a conservation measure proposal for a total of 167 acres of land (i.e., 99 acres in Iowa and 68 acres in Nebraska) to be acquired riverward of the federal levee system within the proposed project area. He explained that as an outcome of the July 22 meeting and field trip, and subsequent discussions with IDNR and NGPC officials, the USFWS was less concerned about the likelihood for future real estate development to occur riverward of the federal levee system on both sides of the river within the proposed project area. However, the greatest concern for future development and indirect adverse impacts to occur to federally listed species was perceived to be landward of the federal levee within the proposed project area in Iowa. In addressing that concern, Anschutz proceeded to describe the concept for a counter-proposal to one of the conservation measures included in the July 8 letter from FHWA whereby the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) might acquire a 167-acre block of land located immediately landward of the federal levee and adjacent to south side of the 500-acre St. Mary's Island parcel being acquired by IDNR and CoE. It was pointed out by Bruce that the property in question (totaling about 300 acres) belonged to a single landowner. Anschutz then mentioned the benefit of a previous proposal by FHWA/IDOT (that had been discussed during a May 27, 2005, meeting) for an approximate 150-foot eastward shift in the alignment along a portion of the new highway in Iowa. It was envisioned that the proposal for IDOT to acquire 167 acres of land in association with an eastward shift of the new highway alignment, and the acquisition being pursued by IDNR and CoE, would facilitate a landward set-back of the federal levee by as much as 0.25 to 0.50-mile at the widest point. In support of this concept, George indicated that CoE would be willing to fund the cost of the levee set-

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

3

back and the acquisition of any additional land (perhaps as much as 100 acres or more) that may be needed to facilitate the accomplishment of this conservation measure proposal for land/habitat protection described by Anschutz. George also indicated that CoE would be willing to make any suitable borrow/fill material from the levee set-back available at no cost to FHWA/IDOT for use in the construction of the proposed project. Anschutz indicated that FHWA/IDOT's acceptance of this concept for a land/habitat protection conservation measure would address the USFWS's remaining concerns with the proposed project, and would also present an opportunity for CoE to address some of its requirements for offsetting the adverse effects of Missouri River operations on federally listed species and other fish/wildlife resources.

At this point in the meeting, the FHWA, IDOT, and Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) officials took a short recess to consider the conservation measure proposal that had been presented to them. Following the recess, the FHWA, IDOT, and NDOR officials returned to the meeting room and asked a few questions to clarify their understanding of the conservation measure proposal. In response to a question about what would FHWA and IDOT get in return for acceptance and inclusion of the conservation measure proposal as part of the proposed project, Anschutz stated it would result in "regulatory certainty" and that the USFWS would also be willing to concur with a "no effect" determination for the proposed project. Such concurrence is also contingent upon all of the other conservation measures that were described in an August 19, 2005, E-mail message by the USFWS, and provided as a hand-out item (copy of attached), being incorporated into the proposed project (subject to some mutually acceptable wording changes being made to the conservation measures). Based on their understanding of the USFWS counter-proposal for a land/habitat protection conservation measure that had been discussed, the FHWA and IDOT officials indicated that it was acceptable to them.

Art Yonkey (NDOR) then asked Anschutz for more information about the status of a previously mentioned landowner application for an NRCS WREP easement on a property that was located within the proposed project area on the Nebraska side of the river. Yonkey also expressed some concern that if NRCS approved the landowner's application for a WREP easement without some allowance for the proposed project, it could result in a problem. Anschutz responded that Don Doty was the NRCS official who was responsible for implementation of WREP along the Missouri River corridor in Nebraska. Because Anschutz could not recall Doty's office phone number, it was agreed that the desired contact information would be provided to Yonkey at a later date.

Brad Hofer (IDOT) also inquired about how to address any potential design problem that may arise if the proposed bridge had to be lengthened due to the previously discussed federal levee realignment in Iowa. George responded by indicating that he did not foresee a problem in this regard, and that CoE would work closely with IDOT on proposed project design matters. To further address IDOT's concern, George recommended that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be developed between CoE, IDOT, and IDNR regarding the previously discussed need for land acquisition, levee realignment, and other matters related to the accomplishment of the conservation measure

4

for land/habitat protection that would be included as part of the proposed project. Specifically, the CoE and the IDOT would enter into a MOU/286 agreement concerning the purchase of the 167 acres, plus the remainder, and reimbursement for the remainder on the "wet" side of the levee. The CoE also indicated that easements across CoE property for highway construction could be at no cost to IDOT as long as environmental benefits were demonstrated. In response to George's recommendation for an MOU, there seemed to be a general consensus among the meeting participants regarding the need for such a plan of action. He then indicated that Randy Sellers (CoE) would be CoE's project manager and point of contact for development of the MOU and other matters related to the proposed project.

Other Conservation Measures

Anschutz inquired if the FHWA and IDOT officials had reviewed the draft set of other conservation measures which had been distributed via the referenced August 19, E-mail message, and provided as a hand-out item at the meeting. The FHWA and IDOT officials responded affirmatively to the question and proceeded to suggest a number of relatively minor changes to the wording of several conservation measures. Anschutz indicated that the suggested wording changes would be reflected in a revised draft set of the conservation measures that USFWS would re-submit to the FHWA and IDOT officials for their further review and comment. It was mentioned that a description of the previously discussed land/habitat protection conservation measure proposal would also be included in the revised set of conservation measures to be coordinated with FHWA and IDOT.

Administrative Matters Related to the Section 7 Consultation Process

Anschutz proposed that USFWS would prepare a draft reply to the previously mentioned July 8 letter which would be submitted to FHWA for review in coordination with IDOT. The proposed draft letter from USFWS would include a description of all the conservation measures that had been identified for incorporation into the proposed project to either avoid or offset adverse impacts on federally listed species. The draft letter would also present some biological rationale regarding the purpose and need for the conservation measures. He further indicated that the draft letter would reference the day's meeting and discussion regarding all of the conservation measures, including the one needed for land/habitat protection. In addition, the draft letter would state that USFWS is willing to concur with a "no effect" determination for the proposed project, contingent upon a formal response from FHWA that indicates all of the conservation measures will be included as features of the proposed project. The USFWS's draft letter would not be finalized and mailed to FHWA until after it had been reviewed and determined to be acceptable by FHWA in coordination with IDOT. Anschutz explained that the subsequent exchange of formal correspondence between USFWS and FHWA would then complete the section 7 consultation process in regards to the proposed project. He indicated that barring any unforeseen problems, this process should be completed by mid-October 2005. The FHWA and IDOT officials reacted favorably to the steps that Anschutz had outlined for concluding the section 7 consultation, and that the target date

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

5

for completing this process was compatible with the remainder of the schedule for the proposed project.

Other Discussion

Mark Brohman (NGFC) inquired if the proposed project design would allow for bicyclists and pedestrians to access and cross the bridge. Jim Rost (IDOT) responded that the bridge design currently includes wide shoulders to accommodate such a need, but that an extra wide shoulder or segregated path remains under consideration.

Bruce inquired about the current design for the proposed project that includes a connecting highway, along with a number of access points, to be built between Interstate 29 and U.S. Highway 75. Rost responded that all of the highway access points are still under consideration. Brohman then asked whether the access to the new highway at those locations would be limited or restricted in any way. Gerry Kennedy (FHWA) responded that all of the proposed highway access points were included to either accommodate the needs of local landowners or are linked to the presence of existing roads within the project area, and that these access points cannot be designated by uses due to county zoning authority. Rost added that IDOT can only account for the design and safe operation of these planned highway access points, and that they will not become individual interchanges. For access points for field entrances and existing roads, while the IDOT does not reasonably foresee that these will ever become intersections, they cannot state that they will "never" become intersections.

Brohman then asked about the type of culverts that would be used in the construction of the new connecting highway. Rost indicated that either box culverts or pipe culverts would be used, depending on the volume of flow within each drainage system that would be crossed by the new highway.

Bruce also indicated that IDNR would like to construct a boat ramp facility somewhere along the river on land to be acquired within the proposed project area. Rost did not believe that the future boat ramp facility would pose a problem provided that it was not sited too close to the bridge. He suggested that IDNR should address a letter to IDOT regarding future plans for the design and location of a boat ramp facility in relation to the bridge.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Anschutz indicated that USFWS would prepare a draft set of meeting minutes which would be submitted via E-mail to all of the participants within about one week for everyone's review and comment. The FHWA and IDOT officials responded affirmatively to the USFWS offer to prepare a set of meeting minutes.

Attachments

Proposed Agenda

Meeting to Discuss the Bellevue Bridge Project

August 22, 2005
10:00 am -3:00 pm
Iowa Department of Transportation Offices
Council Bluffs, Iowa

- Introductions
- Land/Habitat Protection Conservation Measure
- Other Conservation Measures
- Administrative Matters Related to the Section 7 Consultation Process
- Adjourn

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

US34 Bellevue Bridge Mtg.

8/22/05
10AM

Name	Agency	Email
BLAD THREE	Iowa DOT - Ames	blad.three@dot.iowa.gov
Carey Grell	NE Game & Parks	carey.grell@ngic.gov
Mike George	COE	michael.d.george@ceacoe.org
Mark Bohner	NE Game & Parks	mark.bohner@ngic.gov
GENE ZUERLEIN	NGA	zuerlein.g@ngic.gov
Andy Moore	IDNR	Andy.Moore@dnr.state.in.us
Ang Bruce	IDNR	Angie.Bruce@dnr.state.in.us
Steve Anschutz	USFWS	stev_a_anschultz@fws.gov
Robert Hauns	USFWS	robert_hauns@fws.gov
Brooke Stansberry	USFWS	Brooke.Stansberry@fws.gov
Randy Sellers	COE	randy.p.sellers@usace.army.mil
Jim Rost	IDOT	james.rost@dot.illinois.gov
Scott Munter	IDOT	scott.munter@dot.illinois.gov
AAT Yonke	NDOR	ayonke@dot.state.nd.us
MISE UPIETRA	FHWA	misse.upietra@fhwa.dot.gov
Gerry Kennedy	FHWA	gerald.kennedy@fhwa.dot.gov

DRAFT
Conservation Measures
Bellevue Bridge Project
August 22, 2005

The following is a partial list of conservation measures to avoid adverse effects to the federally endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) and threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) resulting from the proposed Bellevue Bridge project over the Missouri River. These measures primarily address components of the proposed project related to the design and construction of the bridge. Omitted are conservation measures related to the need for protection of land/habitat to address other adverse effects of the proposed project on federally listed species.

1. Bridge abutments and earthen embankments shall be constructed landward of the current federal levees to avoid hydrological changes, including passage of flood flows, to limit scour and sediment deposition, and to ensure little or no modification of nutrient and sediment cycling between the river and its floodplain.
2. Tree clearing shall not occur during the bald eagle wintering period (December 15-February 20). Clearing of trees will be minimized to the extent possible.
3. A survey for active bald eagle nests shall be completed immediately before construction of the proposed project. The Service recommends that the survey be conducted approximately 2 weeks before initiation of project construction. The survey will be conducted 0.5-mile upstream and 0.5-mile downstream of the proposed project site. Should an active nest (s) be found, construction activities will cease and the Federal Highways Administration will contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service immediately for further section 7 consultation.
4. Cofferdam installation/removal and pile driving activities in the Missouri River shall be conducted from July 1 through January 31 to avoid impacts to the pallid sturgeon.
5. A 450-foot clear span (no piers in the river) shall be maintained commencing at the first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River eastward to the first river pier to prevent the attraction of pallid sturgeon into the mixing zone of an upstream wastewater treatment plant, and to minimize the number of piers in the Missouri River.
6. The single river pier and first landward pier on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River shall be constructed utilizing a "V" shape or rounded nose design at the upstream and downstream ends. The single river pier and the first landward pier shall be constructed parallel to the river flow so as to minimize downstream scour and eddy effects. The intent of the above conservation measures is to avoid the creation of habitat for the pallid sturgeon in the area of the plume discharge from an upstream wastewater treatment plant.

Comment Letter #20, dated October 3, 2005, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office

Jim Rost, Iowa DOT



FHWA – Iowa Division
105 6th Street
Ames, IA 50010

October 24, 2005

Mr. Steve Anschutz
Nebraska Field Supervisor
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, NE 68801

Dear Mr. Anschutz:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in coordination with the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Nebraska Department of Roads accepts the conservation measures described in your October 3, 2005, letter and will implement them as part of the proposed Bellevue Bridge project. Based on this acceptance and agreed upon implementation, the FHWA has determined that the project is not likely to adversely affect the federally endangered pallid sturgeon and threatened bald eagle, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally designated critical habitat, and requests that the Service concur with that determination.

FHWA and its partners appreciate the opportunity to work with the Service on this project, and we are pleased to have arrived at a solution that successfully balances the responsibilities of each of our offices. FHWA looks forward to the Service's concurrence and conclusion of the Section 7 consultation process for the Bellevue Bridge project.

If there are any questions or additional information is needed, please feel free to call me at (515) 233-7302.

Sincerely,

Michael La Pietra
Realty and Environment Manager

cc: Art Yonkey, Nebraska DOR
Ed Kosola, FHWA Nebraska Division
Jim Rost, Iowa DOT
Gerald Kennedy, FHWA Iowa Division



2

7. Spill prevention materials (i.e., spill kit) shall be readily available at the proposed construction site to contain and absorb accidental spills of fluids from construction equipment. Personnel trained in the implementation of the spill kit shall be readily available onsite to respond to accidental spills.
8. The Federal Highways Administration shall reinstate section 7 consultation with the Service should the creation of a new or enhancement of an existing borrow pit (s) located on the Nebraska side of the proposed project result in the exposure of groundwater that may be hydrologically connected to the Platte River.

The following measure is recommended for inclusion as part of the proposed, federal action to assist the Federal Highways Administration with meeting its requirements pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712; Ch. 128 *as amended*) construction activities in grassland, wetland, stream, and woodland habitats, and those that occur on bridges (e.g., which may affect swallow nests on bridge girders) that would otherwise result in the taking of migratory birds, eggs, young, and/or active nests should be avoided. Although the provisions of MBTA are applicable year-round, most migratory bird nesting activity in the federal action area occurs during the period of April 1 to July 15. However, some migratory birds are known to nest outside of the aforementioned primary nesting season period. For example, raptors can be expected to nest in woodland habitats during February 1 through July 15, whereas sedge wrens which occur in some wetland habitats normally nest from July 15 to September 10. If the proposed construction project is planned to occur during the primary nesting season or at any other time which may result in the take of nesting migratory birds, the Service recommends that the project proponent (or construction contractor) arrange to have a qualified biologist conduct a field survey of the affected habitats and structures to determine the absence or presence of nesting migratory birds. Surveys must be conducted during the nesting season. It is further recommended that the results of field surveys for nesting birds, along with information regarding the qualifications of the biologist(s) performing the surveys, be thoroughly documented and that such documentation be maintained on file by the project proponent (and/or construction contractor) for potential review by the Service (if requested) until such time as construction on the proposed project has been completed. The Service's Nebraska Field Office should be contacted immediately for further guidance if a field survey identifies the existence of one or more active bird nests that cannot be avoided by the planned construction activities.

Comment Letter #21, dated November 1, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
Nebraska Field Office
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

November 1, 2005

Mr. Michael La Pietra
Realty and Environmental Manager
Federal Highway Administration
105 6th Street
Ames, Iowa 50010

RE: Biological Assessment: Bellevue Bridge Project; Sarpy County, Nebraska and Mills County, Iowa; Project Number NHSX-34-J (63)-19-85

Dear Mr. La Pietra:

This is in response to your October 25, 2005, letter which provides written confirmation of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) intention to implement several conservation measures to offset adverse effects to federally listed species resulting from the proposed Bellevue Bridge project crossing the Missouri River. After reviewing your October 25 letter, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has concluded that it concurs with the FHWA/IDOT determination that the proposed is not likely to adversely affect federally listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally designated critical habitat.

Please note that the Service may reinstate consultation if new species become listed or are proposed to be listed, critical habitat is proposed or designated, or new information about federally listed species becomes available that previously was not considered during this consultation. The FHWA should reinstate consultation with the Service if the current project is modified through a change in scope or design parameters, and/or if new information becomes available about the project that previously was not considered.

The Service appreciates the opportunity to work cooperatively with the FHWA, IDOT, and NDOR in assuming a shared responsibility for protecting federal trust fish and wildlife resources in Nebraska and Iowa. If you have any questions or require technical

21-1, The signatory agencies note your concurrence regarding the determination of no adverse effects on T&E species, considering implementation of conservation measures proposed in your letter dated October 3, 2005 (reproduced as letter #20) to mitigate adverse effects. The signatory agencies understand that consultation may need to be reinitiated with USFWS in regard to changes in T&E species and critical habitat status, as well as any future changes to the Project scope or design parameters.

21-1

Comment Letter #21, dated November 1, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2

assistance, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mr. Robert Harms within our office at (308)382-6468, extensions 12 and 17, respectively.

Sincerely,



Steve Anschutz
Nebraska Field Supervisor

cc: CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Mike George)
CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Randy Sellers)
FWA; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Ed Kosola)
IDOT; Ames, IA (Attn: James Rost)
NDOR; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Art Yonkey)
IDNR; Des Moines, IA (Attn: Angie Bruce)
IDNR; Des Moines, IA (Attn: Andy Moore)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Mark Brohmann)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Gene Zuerlein)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Troy Rahmig)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Carey Grell)

CHAPTER 6

REFERENCES

CHAPTER 6 REFERENCES

- 40 CFR 1500-15081. 1978. CEQ – Regulations for Implementing NEPA.
- 59 FR 7629. February 11, 1994. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations.
- 42 USC 2000d et seq. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 42 USC 4321-4347. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.
- Archaeo-Physics. January 2005. A Geophysical Investigation of the Bellevue Bridge Alternative 3 Corridor. A Search for Historic Boar Wrecks in the Missouri River Floodplain, Mills County, Iowa.
- FEMA. December 2, 2005. Flood Insurance Rate Map, Sarpy County, Nebraska. Panel 210 of 255 and 230 of 255.
- FHWA. October 30, 1987. Technical Advisory T 6640.8A. *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents.*
- Iowa DOT. July 1995. Iowa Primary Road Access Management Policy.
- Iowa DOT. February 16, 2006. Letter from Randall Faber, Office of Location and Environment, with Concurrence on February 21, 2006 from Douglas Jones, SHPO Archaeologist for the State Historical Society of Iowa.
- NDEQ. October 28, 2005. Personal communication with Steve Smith.
- NDEQ. October 11, 2006. Personal communication with Steve Smith.
- NDOR. 1996. Roadway Design Manual. Lincoln, Nebraska.
- NDOR. January 6, 2006. Letter from Len Sand, Highway Environmental Program Manager, to Bob Puschendorf, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer of NSHS. Letter includes January 6, 2006 report attachment from Rob Bozell, NSHS Highway Archeology Program.
- NSHS. January 17, 2006. Letter from Terry Steinacher, Highway Program Archaeologist, and Bob Puschendorf, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer.
- Omaha World Herald. March 14, 2007. End of Bridge's Debt Won't Bring an End to Tolls.
- Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. March 21, 2007. Personal communication with Gerry Bowen.
- RDG Planning and Design. December 2005. The Sarpy County Plan, A Comprehensive Development Plan for Sarpy County, Nebraska.
- Tallgrass Historians, L.C. April 2005. U.S. 34 Bellevue Bridge Remote Sensing – Archaeological Ground Truthing.
- Tallgrass Historians, L.C. January 2006. U.S. 34 Missouri River Crossing Between I-29 in Iowa and U.S. 75 in Nebraska, Alternative 3 Corridor of the Bellevue Bridge Project, Supplemental Phase 1A Investigation of a 167-acre Proposed Conservation Easement, Mills County, Iowa.
- TranSystems Corporation. June 28, 2005. Inspection Report for the Bellevue Bridge.

USACE. March 22, 2005. Personal communication with Randy Sellers.

USACE. February 28, 2006. Personal communication with Randy Sellers.

USACE. October 11, 2006. Personal communication with Mike Barnes.

USCG. May 23, 2005. Letter from USCG to Philip Rossbach, HDR.

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Among the

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

for

RELOCATED U.S. 34 (BELLEVUE BRIDGE) PROJECT

in

**Mills County, Iowa
and
Sarpy County, Nebraska**

**IDOT Preliminary Engineering Project Number
NHSX-34-1(63)--3H-65**

JANUARY 2006

WHEREAS, The Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Division Office (FHWA), in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), is proposing to improve the connectivity between US 75 south of the Omaha metropolitan area and I-29 in southwest Iowa by relocating U.S. 34 on new alignment between I-29 in Iowa and U.S. 75 in Nebraska, including a new bridge across the Missouri River (the PROJECT):

WHEREAS, FHWA and IDOT have consulted with the Nebraska Field Office of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, 50 CFR Part 402:

WHEREAS, the confluence area of the Platte and Missouri Rivers 1) provides important wintering and migratory habitats for the federally threatened bald eagle and 2) has been designated by the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993) as a Recovery Priority Management Area (RPMA), an area that is determined to be ecologically important for the conservation and recovery of the federally endangered pallid sturgeon:

WHEREAS, the FHWA has determined in a letter dated October 24, 2005 that that the PROJECT is *not likely to adversely affect* the federally endangered pallid sturgeon and threatened bald eagle, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally designated critical habitat, and has committed to implement, as part of the PROJECT, all of the conservation measures described in a USFWS letter dated October 3, 2005:

WHEREAS, the USFWS has concurred in a letter dated November 1, 2005, with the FHWA determination:

WHEREAS, the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is investigating and pursuing Missouri River mitigation opportunities in the PROJECT area, to include a potential eastward realignment of Missouri River Levee Unit L-611-614:

WHEREAS, the consulting parties agree that it is in the public interest and the best interest of the species within the PROJECT area to expend funds to implement the PROJECT:

AND WHEREAS, the IDOT and NDOR plan to construct the PROJECT and have participated in the consultation with FHWA, USACE, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and USFWS:

NOW, THEREFORE, IDNR, IDOT, USACE, and FHWA agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations relating to potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including federally listed species, within the proposed PROJECT area:

STIPULATIONS

- A. The IDOT will shift the proposed alignment northeast between stations 265+00 (+/-) and 325+00 (+/-) as much as practicable (approximately 100 feet) as shown in Attachment 1. The purpose of the northeastward shift is to accommodate, to the maximum extent possible, a proposal by the USACE to set back a federal levee on the Iowa side of the river to restore riverine processes and functions.
- B. The IDOT will acquire approximately 167 acres of land on the Iowa side of the Missouri River within an area bounded on the west by the federal levee along the east bank of the Missouri River and on the east and north by the proposed highway realignment, as shown in Attachment 1. The land would be purchased in the name of the State of Iowa for the use and benefit of the IDNR. The IDOT reserves the right to remove all necessary fill materials from these sites for the proposed PROJECT. The IDNR may assist in determining the location of fill removal areas after making such request to IDOT. The IDOT also reserves the right to cooperate with IDNR to restore or create wetlands as needed within these sites to serve as wetland mitigation for the proposed PROJECT. Upon completion of the PROJECT, the IDOT will relinquish all rights and interests in the subject properties to the IDNR, except for that portion determined by IDOT to be necessary for highway purposes. The IDNR agrees to accept these premises as provided by the IDOT at the conclusion of the PROJECT and manage the land for the benefit of riverine fish and wildlife species, including the federally endangered pallid sturgeon and threatened bald eagle.
- C. The IDOT will be responsible for obtaining approvals, permits, and clearances for the highway PROJECT.
- D. The IDNR will be responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals, permits, and clearances for future projects associated with the subject properties, including but not limited to Section 404 permits from USACE, threatened and endangered species surveys, Section 106 coordination with the Iowa SHPO, and approvals from the M&P Missouri River Levee District.
- E. The IDNR will be responsible for the development and implementation of habitat restoration and land management plans on the subject properties for the benefit of riverine fish and wildlife species, including the federally listed bald eagle and pallid sturgeon. These habitat restoration and land management plans will be developed in coordination with the Nebraska Field Office of the USFWS as necessary.
- F. The USACE has proposed to move the federal levee on the Iowa side, in the area of the Platte and Missouri River confluence. The IDNR and USACE may cooperate as necessary to move the

federal levee within or along the 167-acre parcel to be acquired by IDOT. The parties understand and agree that IDOT has not designed the PROJECT to act as a flood control levee. It may be necessary for the USACE and IDNR to acquire some additional land area adjacent to the 167-acre parcel to be acquired by IDOT in order to better accommodate any future shift of the federal levee and to optimize the benefits to fish and wildlife resources that would be gained from such an action. Costs, environmental reviews, permits, approvals, and clearances related to moving the federal levee will be the responsibility of the USACE, subject to the availability of funds.

- G. For properties owned or acquired by the USACE or IDNR that may be affected by the proposed IDOT PROJECT, USACE or IDNR will provide easements across said properties without monetary consideration to IDOT or FHWA.
- H. Agreement Amendments and Termination, and Dispute Resolution:
 - (1) Modification, amendment or termination of this agreement as necessary shall be accomplished by the signatories in the same manner as the original agreement.
 - (2) Disputes regarding the completion of the terms of this agreement shall be resolved by the signatories. If the signatories cannot agree regarding a dispute, any one of the signatories may request the resolution of the dispute by elevating the matter to the appropriate higher level of management.



Attachment 1. Proposed area of acquisition by Iowa DOT, to contain at least 167 acres, T 72N, R 44W, Section 11, Mills County, Iowa.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
RELOCATED U.S. 34 (BELLEVUE BRIDGE) PROJECT

Signature Page

The parties undersigned agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the previously described stipulations relating to potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including federally listed species, within the proposed PROJECT area.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

By: 
Director, Office of Location & Environment

Feb. 27, 2006
Date

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
RELOCATED U.S. 34 (BELLEVUE BRIDGE) PROJECT

Signature Page

The parties undersigned agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the previously described stipulations relating to potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including federally listed species, within the proposed PROJECT area.

UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

By: _____

Name and Title of Signer:

Jeffrey A. Bedey
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

3-9-06

Date

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
RELOCATED U.S. 34 (BELLEVUE BRIDGE) PROJECT

Signature Page

The parties undersigned agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the previously described stipulations relating to potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including federally listed species, within the proposed PROJECT area.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

By: Rebecca J. Hatt DOTING
for Iowa Division Administrator

February 7, 2006
Date

APPENDIX B

**AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE
NOT COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT EIS**



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Nebraska Field Office
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

December 28, 2006

Mr. Michael La Pietra
Realty and Environmental Manager
Federal Highway Administration
105 6th Street
Ames, IA 50010

**RE: Pre-Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Bellevue Bridge Project:
Sarpy County, Nebraska and Mills County, Iowa, Project Number: NHSX-34-
1(63)-19-65**

Dear Mr. La Pietra:

This is in regards to a November 30, 2006, letter requesting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) review the Pre-Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed construction of the Bellevue Bridge Project, Sarpy County, Nebraska and Mills County, Iowa, Project Number: NHSX-34-1(63)-19-65. The Service has reviewed the Pre-Final EIS and finds that it satisfactorily addresses affects to federal trust fish and wildlife resources including federally listed species and migratory birds.

The Service appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Pre-Final EIS and work cooperatively with Iowa Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to protect federal trust fish and wildlife resources. Should you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Ms. Brooke Stansberry within our office at Brooke_Stansberry@fws.gov or at (308) 382-6468, extension 16.

Sincerely,


for Steve Anschutz
Nebraska Field Supervisor

CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Mike George)
CoE; Omaha, NE (Attn: Randy Sellers)
FHWA; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Ed Kosola)
IDOT; Ames, IA (Attn: James Rost)
NDOR; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Art Yonkey)
IDNR; Lewis, IA (Attn: Angie Bruce)
IDNR; Lewis, IA (Attn: Andy Moore)
IDNR, Des Moines, IA (Attn: Keith Dorman)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Gene Zurlein)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Kristal Stoner)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Carey Grell)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
Eighth Coast Guard District

1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO 63103-2832
Staff Symbol: dwb
Phone: (314) 539-3900, Ext 2382
Fax: (314) 539-3755
Email: david.a.orzechowski@uscg.mil

RECEIVED

DEC 26 2006

16591.1/604.1 MOR
December 13, 2006

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

Ms. DeeAnn Newell
Iowa Department of Transportation
Office of Location and Environment
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Subj: PROPOSED BELLEVUE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, MILE 604.1, MISSOURI RIVER

Dear Ms. Newell:

Please refer to your letter dated November 30, 2006 regarding the review of the Preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement. The environmental documentation will adequately support an application for a Coast Guard Bridge Permit. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call Mr. David Orzechowski at the above telephone number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. K. Wiebusch".

ROGER K. WIEBUSCH
Bridge Administrator
By direction of the District Commander

FEB 20 2006



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010-6993

515-239-1215, FAX 239-1726

February 16, 2006

Ref. No. NHS-34-1(63)--19-65
Mills County
Primary

R&C# 960200086

Mr Douglas W Jones
Review and Compliance
Bureau of Historic Preservation
State Historical Society of Iowa
600 East Locust
Des Moines, IA 50319-0290

Dear Doug:

Enclosed are the results of a Phase IA records search and archaeological assessment for two areas of 167 and 125 acres (292 total) adjacent to the Missouri River in Mills County. The 167 acres is proposed as a permanent conservation easement by an agreement among the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FHWA, Iowa DNR, and Iowa DOT. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred. The additional 125 acres is a back-up if additional easement is needed.

The 167 acre area may also be used as a source of fill during construction of the new US 34 Highway and Bellevue Bridge after which the Iowa DOT will relinquish to the Iowa DNR, all rights and interests in the property except for that portion retained as right of way for the new highway. The Iowa DNR may also cooperate with USACE to relocate the existing flood control levee as necessary.

An archaeological assessment of these sites was made based on previous studies and the topography and geomorphology of the area. The majority of the area is of comparatively recent formation related to early to mid-twentieth efforts at navigation and flood control along the Missouri River. One previously recorded site, 13ML642, in the northern end of the conservation area consists of the remains of an early twentieth century dike structure which was found not eligible for the National Register. No further archaeological investigation is proposed because of the extremely low potential for identification of significant unrecorded archaeological sites in this area.

Mr. Douglas W. Jones
February 16, 2005

NHS-34-1(63)--19-65
Page 2

Based on the results of this investigation, we believe a finding of **No Potential to Affect Historic Properties** is applicable for the entire 292 acre area. If you can agree, please sign the concurrence line below, add any comments you wish to make, and return this letter.

Sincerely,



Randall B. Faber
Office of Location and Environment
randall.faber@dot.iowa.gov

RBF:
Enclosure

Concur: Douglas W. Jones Date: 2/21/2006
For the Iowa SHPO

Comments:



NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1500 R STREET, P.O. BOX 82554, LINCOLN, NE 68501-2554
(402) 471-3270 Fax: (402) 471-3100 1-800-833-6747 www.nebraskahistory.org

17 January 2006

Leonard J. Sand
Planning & Project Development
Department of Roads
P.O. Box 94759
Lincoln, NE 68509-4759

Re: NHSX-34-1(63)
Bellevue Bridge Study
Sarpy Co.
H.P. #0307-093-01

Dear Mr. Sand:

The cultural resources survey report (Bozell 2006) on the above referenced project has been reviewed by this office. We concur with the findings of the report that no archaeological, architectural, or historic context property resources will be affected by the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Terry Steinacher
H.P. Archaeologist

Concurrence:

L. Robert Puschendorf
Deputy NeSHPO

STATE OF NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

John L. Craig, Director

1500 Highway 2

PO Box 94759

Lincoln NE 68509-4759

Phone (402)471-4567

FAX (402)479-4325

www.dor.state.ne.us



Mike Johanns
Governor

January 6, 2006

Mr. L. Robert Puschendorf
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
PO Box 82554
Lincoln NE 68501-2554

Re: NHSX-34-1(63), Bellevue Bridge Study, Sarpy County, CN 21645

Dear Mr. Puschendorf:

Enclosed are documents regarding historic properties for the referenced project(s). Following is our determination of effect for this undertaking. Please review these documents within thirty days as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.

- No Historic Properties Affected. There are no historic properties present or historic properties present but the undertaking will have no effect upon them.
- No Adverse Effect. The undertaking's effects do not meet the criteria of adverse effect.

NDOR is requesting concurrence in the findings of the attached survey documents and the determination of effect. If you have any questions or wish additional information, please call.

Sincerely,

Leonard J. Sand
Highway Environmental Program Manager
Planning & Project Development

LJS/PDV4-GV1

xc: Michelle Furby

Enclosure



Highway Archeology Program

Project Survey Summary

Project Number: NHSX-34-1(63) Project Name: Bellevue Bridge
 County: Sarpy Nearest Water: Missouri River/Papillion Cr.
 Legal Description: SW Section 24; T13N R13E

Maps Used: Project location map.

Project Character: grading etc. Project Length/Area: 0.6m/7.2a

Survey Date: January 4, 2006 Survey Length/Area: 0.6m/7.2a

Name(s) of Survey Personnel: Rob Bozell

Person-Hours of Fieldwork: 2

Ground Cover (% - Visibility): plowed (75-100%)

Survey Interval/Provisions: 10 m zig-zag transect along entire project

Rationale for Nonsurveyed Area(s): _____

Result of Survey:

No Cultural Resources Discovered
 Site(s) Discovered [Number(s) 1]
 Other (explain) _____

Project Effect on Archeological/Other Properties Potentially Eligible for the *National Register of Historic Places*:

None
 Other (explain) _____

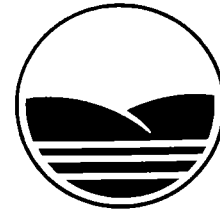
Are Further Cultural Resources Investigations Warranted? Yes No

Stipulations/Exceptions to Survey Results: Evaluate Buried Cultural Remains if Encountered (Nebraska Department of Roads Standard Specifications 107.10)

Comments: This project was surveyed in 2004 and this small segment is a minor revision to the proposed ROW.

Prepared By: R. Bozell  Date: January 6, 2006

PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER



NATURAL
RESOURCES
DISTRICT

18 October, 2005

Matt Tondle
HDR Engineering, Inc.
8404 Indian Hills Drive
Omaha, NE 68114-4098

8901 S. 154TH ST.
OMAHA, NE 68138-3621
(402) 444-6222
FAX (402) 895-6543
www.papionrd.org

Re: Bellevue Bridge Study – Mills County, Iowa and Sarpy County, Nebraska.

Dear Matt Tondle:

At the request of Senator Ben Nelson's State Director, W. Don Nelson, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District and *Back to the River, Inc.* are attempting to coordinate a meeting to discuss the U.S. 34 Bellevue Bridge. The specific topics are the design and funding needs necessary to include a barrier separation for the non-motorized/motorized traffic across the bridge.

I sincerely hope that the meeting date, time and location (below) will fit your busy schedule and allow you to participate.

Day/Date: Tuesday, 25 October, 2005.

Time: 1:30 p.m.


Location: IDOT District Engineer's Office – 300 W. Broadway; Council Bluffs, IA.

We are anticipating a meeting limited to a relatively short, two-hour time frame and an invited attendance of less than 12 individuals. However, you are encouraged to include other individuals you deem appropriate.

Please contact Jim Becic (402) 444-6222 or jbecic@papionrd.org or myself as soon as possible if you have any questions about the meeting or are unable to attend.

Thank you for your availability and patience to discuss this much desired, regional bridge enhancement, transportation and safety issue.

Very truly yours,


Steven G. Oltmans
General Manager

CC – participant list attached

W. Don Nelson – Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson’s State Director
John Selmer – IDOT, District 4 Engineer
Monty Fredrickson – NDOR, Deputy Director (tentative)
Matt Tondl – HDR Engineering, Inc., Project Engineer
Gayle Malmquist – Back to the River, President/Development Services Coordinator,
City of Council Bluffs
Mark Brohman – Back to the River, Director/Nebr. Game and Parks Commission
Jim Becic – Papio-Missouri River NRD, Environmental Coordinator
Art Yonkey – NDOR, Division Engineer - Planning and Project Development
Senator Tom Harkin’s Office
Barry Cleaveland – IDOT, Commissioner (Tentative)
Senator Charles Grassley’s Office

JUN 20 2005



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010-6993

515-239-1215, FAX 239-1726

June 16, 2005

Ref. No. NHS-34-1(63)--19-65
Mills County
Primary

R&C# 960200086

Mr. Douglas W. Jones
Review and Compliance
Bureau of Historic Preservation
State Historical Society of Iowa
600 East Locust
Des Moines, IA 50319-0290

Dear Doug:

Enclosed are the results of a supplemental archaeological investigation in support of the geophysical study conducted for the Alternative 3 Corridor of the Bellevue Bridge project. This investigation examined 6 acres using two backhoe trenches, four Giddings soil cores, and 25 shovel auger tests. Also enclosed is a copy of the report for the Geophysical investigation.

During late fall, 2004, a magnetic field strength survey of the area were conducted using a Geometrics G858 cesium magnetometer. The survey consisted of two phases, a low-resolution reconnaissance survey followed by high-resolution secondary surveys of any suspected boat wreck sites.

The archaeological investigation in the spring of 2005 involved testing at three locations pinpointed by the remote sensing study as anomalies warranting limited examination to determine any cultural identity and the significance of any features that might be present. Two anomalies near the surface were examined using metal detectors and shovel tests. The depth of the third anomaly required use of a Giddings probe and a backhoe.

One historic period site, 13ML⁶42, was located in the area where a suspected boat wreck anomaly had been pinpointed. This and an adjacent high-amplitude linear anomaly proved to be the impacted remains of a 1930's dike structure. The site was evaluated as ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Douglas W. Jones
June 16, 2005

NHS-34-1(63)--19-65
Page 2

No other potential boat wreck features were identified within the project corridor. Based on the results of this investigation, we believe a finding of **No Historic Properties Affected** is applicable for this corridor. If you agree, please sign the concurrence line below, add any comments you wish to make, and return this letter.

Sincerely,



Randall B. Faber
Office of Location and Environment
randall.faber@dot.iowa.gov

RBF:
Enclosure
cc: DeeAnn Newell, Location and Environment
Brad Hofer, Location and Environment

Concur: Douglas W. Jones Date: 6/29/2005
For the Iowa SHPO

Comments: