




# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Twin Cities Field Office  
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Bloomington, Minnesota 55425-1665

DEC 20 1999

  
Mr. Alan R. Steger  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Suite 490, Metro Square Building  
121 East Seventh Place  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2333

Dear Mr. Steger:

The following conditions were agreed to by the Federal Highway Administration in a September 27, 1996, letter in response to the Service's biological opinion issued on August 30, 1996 for the proposed bridge crossing of the St. Croix River between the City of Oak Park Heights, Minnesota and the Town of St. Joseph, Wisconsin. As the current proposed bridge project also requires barges and work boats for construction, we believe the same conditions would be appropriate to deal with the threat of zebra mussel infestation of the St. Croix River.

As discussed with you earlier today, the Service would appreciate confirmation from the Federal Highway Administration whether the following conditions will be made part of the current bridge crossing proposal:

All construction barges, work boats, and equipment must be decontaminated by elimination of zebra mussels and remain decontaminated prior to being allowed into the St. Croix River from the Mississippi River to the proposed bridge construction site using one of the following three options:

1. Cold season decontamination option

Construction barges, boats, and equipment must be completely lifted out of the Mississippi River downstream from the St. Croix River as close to Prescott, Wisconsin, as possible, and kept out of the water for at least 50 hours of sub-freezing air temperatures (*i.e.*, when air temperatures have been at or below 32°F). Then, while the Mississippi River surface water temperature does not exceed 50°F, lower the barges and boats back into the river and move them to the confluence with the St. Croix River and upriver to the bridge work areas; or,

2. Warm season decontamination option

When the air temperatures are above 32°F, construction barges and boats must be decontaminated by completely lifting them out of the Mississippi River downstream from the St. Croix River as close to Prescott, as possible, and then using one of the following procedures:

- 2.A. Power spraying the entire wetted surface of all vessels with hot water at a temperature of 140°F for 5 minutes; or,
- 2.B. Power spraying the entire wetted surface of all vessels with steam at a temperature >212°F for 5 minutes; or
- 2.C. Drying all vessels and requiring that they remain out of the water and be completely protected from rain for a minimum x number of days using the following temperature/humidity guidelines:

If relative humidity is between 0 and 50% and air temperature reaches 41°F, then barges, boats, and equipment must remain out of water for a minimum of 17 days.

If relative humidity is between 0 and 50% and air temperature reaches 59°F, then barges/boats must remain out of water for a minimum of 8 days.

If relative humidity is between 0 and 50% and air temperature reaches 77°F, then barges/boats must remain out of water for a minimum of 4 days.

If relative humidity is between 50% and 95% and air temperature reaches 41°F, then barges/boats must remain out of water for a minimum of 27 days.

If relative humidity is between 50% and 95% and air temperature reaches 59°F, then barges/boats must remain out of water for a minimum of 12 days.

If relative humidity is between 50% and 95% and air temperature reaches 77°F, then barges/boats must remain out of water for a minimum of 6 days.

In addition, all barge and boat bilges shall be disinfected using a sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) solution. The solution should be mixed at a ratio

of 1 part bleach per 50 parts water (for example 1 cup bleach per 3 gallons water). Bilge surfaces, which are exposed to the river, must be sprayed with the solution. Bilge water must also be treated by pouring the solution into each bilge. Any zebra mussel veligers and adults in the bilge water will be killed (Clarke 1996, Miller 1996). The solution must be properly disposed of according to the State's water quality control agency's regulations.

Following warm season decontamination, barges or boats shall be put back into the Mississippi River at the decontamination site while the river surface water temperature does not exceed 50°F. Construction barges and work boats may then be moved up into the St. Croix River and to the project site.

Barges or work boats must not be moved into the St. Croix River from the Mississippi River during warmer months (*i.e.*, when Mississippi River water temperature exceeds 50°F at the surface).

3. Overland transport option

Transport all barges, boats, equipment, and material overland to a launch site upstream of the Kinnickinnic Narrows on the St. Croix River. All barges and work boats must be decontaminated prior to being launched using either of the decontamination procedures as described above.

Again, we would appreciate confirmation whether the above conditions will be made part of the current bridge crossing project. This will allow us to complete our section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act for the proposed crossing of the St. Croix River.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Peterson  
Field Supervisor

cc: Adam Josephson, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Roseville, MN  
Greg Busacker, Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul, MN  
Anthony Andersen, National Park Service, St. Croix Falls, WI