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patterns were also altered, resulting in changes to the local hydrology. If future use of the right-of-way is not for transportation or trail purposes, strong consideration should be given to removing all fills and restoring the original contours and vegetation. Any work in wetlands may require local, state and/or Corps of Engineers permits.

More detailed wetland information such as maps, boundaries, types, and function is available at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/wetlands/mapping.shtml>. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), (262) 547-6721 may also have useful data.

### **Floodplains**

The abandonment itself should have no impact on the 100-year floodplain if no additional fill is placed in the floodplain as a result of the abandonment. If the right-of-way is to be used for transportation or trail purposes, the existing bridges and culverts may remain in place if maintained. However, if this is not the case, all structures must be removed completely and the embankments regraded and permanently stabilized.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is implementing a map modernization initiative to upgrade the Floodplain Map development process in which maps are created and distributed in a geographic information systems (GIS) format. The Department's floodplain management program has scanned the existing paper maps and geo-registered them. They are displayed on our web interactive maps, <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/dsfm/section/mapindex.htm>, and can be overlaid on top of Air Photos or Topographic Maps. See FEMA's floodplain mapping website, <http://www.fema.gov/maps.shtml>, for more information on floodplain maps. SEWRPC (262) 547-6721 may also have useful data.

### **Endangered or Threatened Species**

If the disturbance caused by the track and tie removal is limited to the ballast area only, there should be no adverse impacts to the endangered species found along the route. However, railroad right-of-ways (ROW) are often found to have rare plants and remnants of prairies occurring along the undisturbed corridor. There are occurrences of natural communities; state special concern crustaceans and plants; state threatened birds, fish, and plants; and state endangered fish present in the WCL corridor area. I have attached a general map of the occurrences. Any prairie habitat disturbed as a result of the project activities should be reseeded with DNR certified native prairie seed. Every effort should be made to ensure that invasive exotic species are not introduced to the site.

Prior to ROW conversion to trails or other uses, surveys should be conducted to determine if native grassland savanna, prairie or wet meadow remnants occur along the corridor. If these habitat types are present then rare and endangered species may occur. Additional surveys of these habitat types should be conducted to determine whether rare or endangered species occur. If these species are present, then the remnants should be mapped and the rare species noted. Prior to implementing any actions associated with rail abandonment that may disrupt the ROW or any other development of the area, including staging of equipment, ties and rails, a plan should be developed to avoid or minimize impacts to the remnant habitats and the associated species.

If rare species cannot be avoided in the project's impact area, then an incidental take consultation may be conducted to determine if take of the species is allowable. Please contact Ms. Lisie Kitchell, Bureau of Endangered Resources – Environmental Review Specialist, (608) 266-5248 to discuss your project and determine if special coordination is needed.



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