Species Evaluation Parameters

Form to assist in completing the Endangered & Threatened Species Evaluation Procedures Guide Sheet and Determining the Potential Effect

The following questions identify the potential for suitable habitat within the Action Area, or if the project is within the range of a federally or state listed species. If a species is listed during construction or implementation, the species will be addressed in the Individual Project Level Evaluation document.

Proposed Project Information

Project Sponsor and Contact:

Biologist Completing Assessment:

Project No.:

Control No.:

Project Name:

County:

Limits of Work

Start:

End:

Total Length:

Activity Checklist Date:

Project Description Date:

Project Description:

Project Limits: The Project Limits are defined as the area between the project beginning and end points, from right-of-way to right-of-way, as marked in the construction plans, including temporary construction easements, detours, and any designated waste, staging, stockpile or material sites.

Project Action Area:

Project Action Area Habitat Description:

Field Visit Summary, as applicable:

Nebraska Federal and State Listed Species and Critical Habitat

E = Endangered	P = Proposed for Listing	XN = Experimental Population
T = Threatened	C = Candidate (no specific review required)	CH = Critical Habitat

Animals

American Burying Beetle (T)
Black-footed Ferret (E)
Blacknose Shiner (E)
Eastern Black Rail (T)
Eskimo Curlew (E)
Finescale Dace (T)
Gray Wolf (E)
Interior Least Tern (E)
Lake Sturgeon (T)
Mountain Plover (T)
Northern Long-Eared Bat (E)
Northern Redbelly Dace (T)
Pallid Sturgeon (E)
Piping Plover (T)
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (E; CH)
Scaleshell Mussel (E)
Southern Flying Squirrel (T)
Sturgeon Chub (E)
Swift Fox (E)
Thick-Billed Longspur (T)
Timber Rattlesnake (T)
Topeka Shiner (E; CH)
Western Massasauga (T)
Whooping Crane (E; CH)

Plants

American Ginseng (T)
Blowout Penstemon (T)
Colorado Butterfly Plant (T)
Saltwort (E)
Small White Lady's Slipper (T)
Ute Ladies'-tresses (T)
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (T)

Species Information: http://www.fws.gov/nebraskaes/species.php and http://outdoornebraska.gov/naturalheritageprogram/#rangemaps
Nature Serve: http://www.natureserve.org

STEP 1: RANGE AND OCCURRENCE EVALUATION

Species	Is the Project Action Area in the estimated range of the species as identified by the USFWS and NGPC[1]?	Are there Natural Heritage records within 5-miles of the Project Limits in the last 30 years?
American Burying Beetle[2]	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
American Ginseng	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Black-footed Ferret	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Blacknose Shiner	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Blowout Penstemon	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Colorado Butterfly Plant	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Eastern Black Rail	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Eskimo Curlew	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Finescale Dace	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Gray Wolf	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Interior Least Tern[3]	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Lake Sturgeon	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Mountain Plover	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Northern Long-Eared Bat	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Northern Redbelly Dace	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Pallid Sturgeon[3]	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Piping Plover[3]	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Rufa Red Knot	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle Critical Habitat	☐ Yes ☐ No	NA
Saltwort	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Scaleshell Mussel	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Small White Lady's Slipper	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Southern Flying Squirrel	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Sturgeon Chub	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Swift Fox	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Thick-Billed Longspur	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Timber Rattlesnake	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Topeka Shiner	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Topeka Shiner Critical Habitat	☐ Yes ☐ No	NA
Ute Ladies'-tresses	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Western Massasauga	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Whooping Crane[3]	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Whooping Crane Critical Habitat	☐ Yes ☐ No	NA

[1] **Species ranges can be found at:** https://cert.outdoornebraska.gov/content/map AND/OR http://outdoornebraska.gov/naturalheritageprogram/#rangemaps **AND** https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/.

[2] American Burying Beetle (ABB) species range differs between USFWS and NGPC. Both species ranges will be reviewed, and the range question marked "yes" if action area is within either USFWS or NGPC species range for ABB.

[3] This species is a Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Target Species for enhancing, restoring, and protecting habitat.

If the species is not identified in either column, then there is a "no effect" to the species from action. If any "yes" boxes are checked, carry these species to Step 2.

Does the Project Action Area occur directly adjacent to or on Federal or Tribal land?*
☐ Yes ☐ No

***Federal and Tribal lands can be found at:** https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/ and http://news.legislature.ne.gov/lrd/files/2015/12/lrd_mow_2.pdf

If yes, the project Biological Evaluation documentation will be provided to the tribe and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), or the Federal land managing agency regardless of the effect determination. This documentation will be provided concurrently with the resource agency submittals in May Affect situations. If a tribe, BIA, or Federal land managing agency does not concur with the effect determination or conservation conditions, then a consultation with all parties, including the resource agencies, shall occur.

Has a survey, Natural Heritage Database, or other source identified an occurrence within 1.0 mile of the Project Action Area, within the last 30 years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, indirect effects of the activity will be analyzed below. Indirect effects may include but are not limited to hydrologic changes (ditching, diking, etc.). If any indirect effects are identified that are not captured elsewhere in the Matrix, then May Affect. (NDOT Environmental).

Indirect Effects Analysis

Will the project impact animal movements, such as by adding traffic capacity within occupied habitats, or will the project provide an opportunity to improve known existing habitat fragmentation conditions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, the effects will be analyzed below.

Habitat Connectivity Analysis

STEP 2: HABITAT EVALUATION

For each species checked above, complete the Yes/No questions to assist in scoping for the potential affects to the listed species. All the questions associated with a species need to be evaluated individually to determine Yes/No applicability (see below).

If ALL answers are "No" for the species or critical habitat below, then there is a "No Effect" to that particular species or critical habitat.

If ANY answer is "Yes" on this Habitat Evaluation worksheet, then carry the "Yes" species forward and proceed to the Step 3 – Federal or State Species Matrix for further effects guidance.
In rare situations, Unique Circumstances are present that justify a question be answered "No" where it would normally be checked "Yes." In these situations, check the "Unique Circumstances" box by the species name and provide detailed reasoning for this conclusion in the box at the end of Step 2.

SPECIES			
American Burying Beetle			
	*Note to practitioner: The ABB is not included in the Matrix Process. Utilize the species-specific ABB programmatic agreement in development, or in the interim, utilize IPLE's or the formal consultation process (see interim implementation guidance in PA appendix).		
American Ginseng		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include mature deciduous forest along a river bluff?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include mature deciduous forest along a river bluff? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Black-footed Ferret		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include, in whole or in part, a prairie dog town or complex which is 1,000 acres or more in size? A complex consists of two or more neighboring prairie dog towns with the spacing between the adjacent neighboring town being less than 4.0 miles.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Blacknose Shiner		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include a stream, connected backwater areas, and/or topographic floodplain?*	Yes ☐	No ☐
Blowout Penstemon		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include open areas of bare sand?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include open areas of bare sand? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes ☐	No ☐

Colorado Butterfly Plant		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include pasture, grassland, or hay land on floodplain and lower stream terraces along Lodgepole Creek?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include pasture, grassland, or hay land on floodplain and lower stream terraces along Lodgepole Creek? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Eastern Black Rail		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area contain dense or thick emergent vegetation with high vegetation density (interspersion) within 0.5 mile of the Harvard WPA as well as a mixture of new and residual growth?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Eskimo Curlew		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area contain wet meadows, burned over prairies, or newly plowed fields?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Finescale Dace		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include a stream, connected backwater areas, and/or topographic floodplain?*	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Gray Wolf		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the Heritage Database indicate known species occurrences within 5 miles of the in the last 30 years?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Interior Least Tern		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include un-vegetated or sparsely vegetated sand, shale, or gravel such as a beach, peninsula, or bar?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
	Is the action area (noise and sight) within suitable habitat to include but not limited to a beach area, sand pits, peninsula, sand, shale, or gravel bar?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Lake Sturgeon		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Is the action area within a large river system (i.e mainstem Missouri River, lower Platte, Elkhorn, or Niobrara rivers, or lower reach of their tributaries*)? *refer to the USFWS/NGPC construction timeframes for specific river reaches	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Mountain Plover		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area contain heavily grazed/disturbed short grass prairies or areas with very little cover such as tilled cropland on gently rolling to level topography?	Yes	No
		☐	☐

Northern Long-Eared Bat			
	*Note to Practitioner: The NLEB is not included in the Matrix Process. Utilize the FHWA/USFWS Range-wide Programmatic Agreement and IPaC for NLEB review (see Nebraska Implementation Guidance Document for Northern Long-eared Bat appendix).		
Northern Redbelly Dace		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Does the action area include a stream, connected backwater areas, and/or topographic floodplain?*	☐	☐
Pallid Sturgeon		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Is the action area within a large river system (i.e mainstem Missouri River, lower Platte, Elkhorn, or Niobrara rivers, or lower reach of their tributaries*)? *refer to the USFWS/NGPC construction timeframes for specific river reaches	☐	☐
Piping Plover		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Does the action area include un-vegetated or sparsely vegetated sand, shale, or gravel such as a beach, peninsula, or bar?	☐	☐
		Yes	No
	is the action area (noise and sight) within suitable habitat to include but not limited to a beach area, sand pits, peninsula, sand, shale, or gravel bar?	☐	☐
***Rufa* Red Knot**		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Does the action area contain open mud flats and/or mud and sandy shorelines free of vegetation?	☐	☐
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Are saline wetlands and/or salt flats present within action area?	☐	☐
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (Critical Habitat)		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Does the action area include exposed mudflats associated with saline wetlands, or exposed banks and islands of streams and seeps that contain adequate soil moisture and soil salinity, and adjacent vegetated wetlands within the Little Salt, Rock, Oak or Haines Branch Creeks?	☐	☐
Saltwort		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Are saline wetlands, salt flats, or saline soils present within the action area?	☐	☐
Scaleshell Mussel		Unique Circumstances ☐	
		Yes	No
	Is the action area within the topographic floodplain of the Missouri Recreational River segment below Gavin's Point dam and the associated lower portion of tributaries in this area?	☐	☐

Small White Lady's Slipper		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include an undisturbed native, sub-irrigated wet meadow or wet ditches adjacent to undisturbed wet meadows?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include an undisturbed native, sub-irrigated wet meadow or wet ditches adjacent to undisturbed wet meadows? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Southern Flying Squirrel		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Is the action area within or adjacent to a mature deciduous woodland with mast producing trees including walnut, hickory, or oak component?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Sturgeon Chub		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Is the action area within a large river system (i.e mainstem Missouri River, lower Platte, Elkhorn, or Niobrara rivers, or lower reach of their tributaries*)? *refer to the USFWS/NGPC construction timeframes for specific river reaches	Yes ☐	No ☐
Swift Fox		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include connected suitable habitat that contains vegetation <6 inches in height, including gently rolling to level intact upland grasslands and field borders that are outside of densely populated residential, commercial, industrial areas?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Thick-Billed Longspur		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include heavily grazed/disturbed short grass prairie, prairie dog towns, or areas with very little cover, such as tilled cropland on gently rolling to level topography?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Timber Rattlesnake		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include mature forest and limestone or sandstone rocky outcrops, or large rubble, down trees, logs or slash piles?	Yes ☐	No ☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include mature forest and limestone or sandstone rocky outcrops, or large rubble, down trees, logs or slash piles? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes ☐	No ☐
	Is the action area within 1.5-miles of a known den or occurrence site, according to records in the Nebraska Natural Heritage Database?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Topeka Shiner		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Is the action area within a stream, connected backwater areas and/or floodplain?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Topeka Shiner (Critical Habitat)		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does action area include intermittent or perennial, small, low order, prairie streams with good clear water quality, relatively cool temperatures, and low fish diversity within the Taylor Creek drainage?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Ute Ladies'-tresses		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area include wet meadow on floodplain and lower stream terraces along the Niobrara River?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include wet meadow on floodplain and lower stream terraces along the Niobrara River? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Western Massasauga		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Check which question applies:		
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area within a wet site (including, but not limited to wetlands, ditches, and floodplains) characterized by the presence herbaceous wetland vegetation OR an upland grassland habitat adjacent to said wet site?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area include a wet site (including, but not limited to wetlands, ditches, and floodplains) characterized by the presence herbaceous wetland vegetation and crayfish burrows OR an upland grassland habitat adjacent to said wet site? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	☐ Based on a desktop survey, does the action area have no history of cropping and include undisturbed wet mesic prairie and sedge meadows in alluvial soils of river floodplains or sandy soils of subirrigated meadows and prairie swales?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
	☐ Based on a field visit, does the action area have no history of cropping and include undisturbed wet mesic prairie and sedge meadows in alluvial soils of river floodplains or sandy soils of subirrigated meadows and prairie swales? (*include field visit information in the opening section of this form*)	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Whooping Crane		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Is the action area: • outside of densely populated residential, commercial, or industrial areas and… • does it include suitable habitat, such as sub-irrigated grasslands, meadows, shallow wetland habitat, farm ponds, or major rivers?	Yes	No
		☐	☐
Whooping Crane (Critical Habitat)		Unique Circumstances ☐	
	Does the action area include wide, open river channel with shallow sand and gravel bars with nearby bottomland areas, including wet meadows, that are isolated and provide protection from disturbance within the 56-mile-long by 3-mile-wide reach of the Platte River from the Lexington, Nebraska bridge to near Denman, Nebraska?	Yes	No
		☐	☐

*The topographic floodplain for this project is identified on the attached map.

Describe Unique Circumstances here, if applicable: