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January 7, 2008

William E. Dodd
ND Public Service Commission
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

RE: Reclamation Activities and Sinkhole Filling Project Proposals

Dear Mr. Dodd:

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department has reviewed the above referenced proposals with locations in Burke, Williams, Mercer, Grant, Divide, Ward, Bowman, McLean, and Burleigh counties.

Our agency scope of authority and expertise covers recreation and biological resources (in particular rare plants and ecological communities). The project as defined does not affect state park lands that we manage or Land and Water Conservation Fund recreation projects that we coordinate.

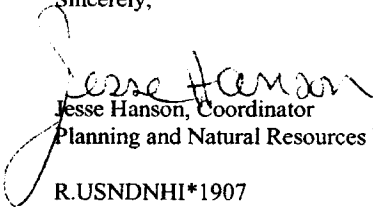
The North Dakota Natural Heritage biological conservation database has been reviewed to determine if any plant or animal species of concern or other significant ecological communities are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the project areas. Based on this review, we do have records for the occurrence of *Grus americana* (whooping crane) in a section adjacent to the Williams County Road 9 project area indicating that the habitat in the project area may be suited for these species or other rare, threatened, sensitive or endangered species. Please see attached spreadsheet and map for more information on these occurrences. We defer further comments regarding animal species to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Because this information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be species of concern or otherwise significant ecological communities in the area that are not represented in the database. The lack of data for any project area cannot be construed to mean that no significant features are present. The absence of data may indicate that the project area has not been surveyed, rather than confirm that the area lacks natural heritage resources.

Regarding any reclamation efforts, we recommend that any impacted areas be revegetated with species native to the project area.

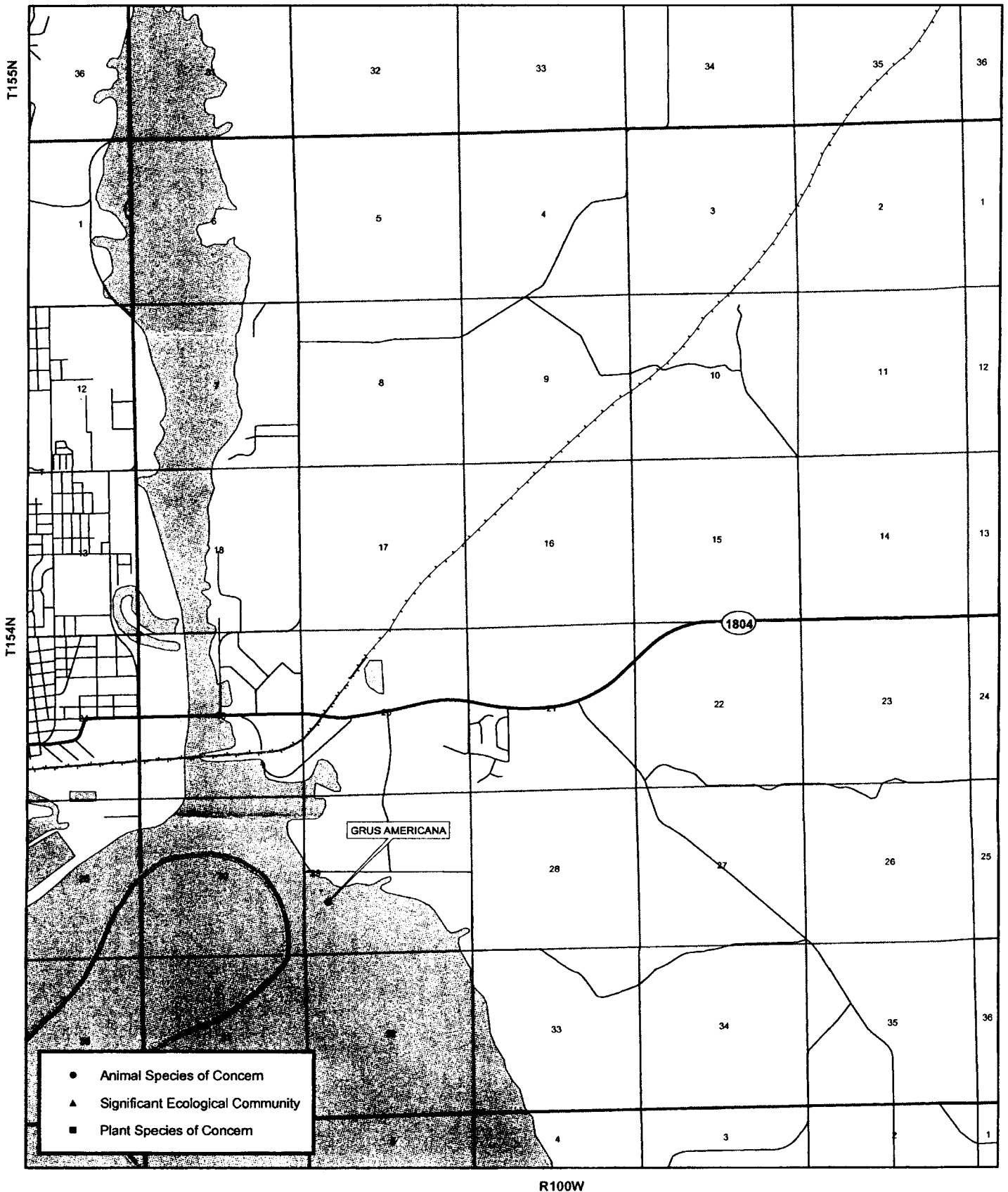
We appreciate your commitment to rare plant, animal and ecological community conservation, management and inter-agency cooperation to date. For additional information please contact Kathy Duttonhefner (701-328-5370 or kgduttonhefner@nd.gov) of our staff. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project.

Sincerely,


Jesse Hanson, Coordinator
Planning and Natural Resources Division
R.USNDNHI*1907

.....
Play in our backyard!

North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory Species of Concern and Significant Ecological Communities



North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory
Species of Concern and Significant Ecological Communities

State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Township & Range	Section	TRS Notes	State Rank	Global Rank	Federal Status	Last Observation
GRUS AMERICANA	WHOOPIING CRANE	154N100W	29		SX	G1	(LE,XN)	1963-10-19

North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory Biological and Conservation Data Disclaimer

The quantity and quality of data collected by the North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals and organizations. In most cases, this information is not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys; many natural areas in North Dakota have never been thoroughly surveyed, and new species are still being discovered. For these reasons, the Natural Heritage Inventory cannot provide a definite statement on the presence, absence, or condition of biological elements in any part of North Dakota. Natural Heritage data summarize the existing information known at the time of the request. Our data are continually upgraded and information is continually being added to the database. This data should never be regarded as final statements on the elements or areas that are being considered, nor should they be substituted for on-site surveys.