

Department of Highways
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October 26, 2020

JODI L. TEICH, P.E.
Highway Engineer

JEFF MILLER, P.E.
Asst. Highway Engineer

MATT ZINNIEL
Maintenance Superintendent

Dear Stearns County Resident,

The Stearns County Highway Department is proposing enrollment in a Monarch Butterfly conservation program. The Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands (CCAA) is authorized by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and administered by University of Illinois Chicago. The Eastern Monarch butterfly has seen a population decline of eighty percent over the last twenty years. This has led to a potential decision on December 15th, 2020 to list the Monarch Butterfly as a threatened or endangered species. If the species becomes listed, the Monarch Butterfly and its habitat will be subject to federal protection regulations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This decision has potential to effect and delay future and current maintenance and construction operations within Stearns County Highway Rights-of-Way.

The Stearns County Highway Department proposes to enroll **all** acres of county highway rights-of-way into the CCAA program. As part of the CCAA agreement, five percent of that acreage enrolled would need to be adopted as Monarch Butterfly conservation habitat. **You are receiving this letter because you are an adjacent landowner to highway rights-of-way selected to become Monarch Butterfly conservation habitat.** The following prohibitions and restrictions would be placed as conservation measures (CM) on these sections of highway rights-of-way:

1. Prohibited cutting or mowing of roadway rights-of-way from May 15th to September 20th. (This does not include landowner-maintained lawn areas within the highway rights-of-way) The vegetation on the in-slope of the roadway will still be managed for safety and line-of-site reasons.
2. Prohibited row-crop farming within highway rights-of-way (already prohibited by statute)
3. Prohibited broadcast herbicide and insecticide treatment within highway rights-of-way
4. Restricted ATV/UTV use within vegetated areas of highway rights-of-way from May 15th to September 20th.

These conservation measures are being considered for the purpose of promoting milk-weed growth. The Monarch Butterfly uses milkweed exclusively for laying eggs and producing the Monarch caterpillar. The Monarch caterpillar then feeds on the milkweed plant and forms a chrysalis and eventually an adult Monarch Butterfly.

If the County is successful in enrolling in the CCAA program and can meet the minimum requirements on the adopted Monarch Butterfly habitat acres, the County would be protected from further federal regulation and requirements on highway

rights-of-way if the Monarch Butterfly is listed.

If the Monarch Butterfly is listed in December 2020 and the County does not enroll in the CCAA program, there will likely be sweeping prohibitions and regulations on **all** county highway rights-of-way including the prohibitions and restrictions previously mentioned.

Included in this letter is a map showing the selected highway rights-of-way in the list below that would be adopted as Monarch Butterfly habitat. If you would like to learn more about the CCAA, visit <http://rightofway.erc.uic.edu/national-monarch-ccaa/>

Stearns County Proposed Butterfly Conservation Habitat

Highway	From	To
CSAH 17	CSAH 1	Todd County Line
CSAH 3	CSAH 75	Morrison County Line
CSAH 4	CSAH 2	CSAH 3
CSAH 2	CSAH 4	St. Stephen City Limits
CSAH 75	Millstream Park	MNDOT I-94
CSAH 75	Glenn-Carlson Drive	27 th Ave East (CR 143)
CSAH 51	CSAH 2	CSAH 50
CR 160	CSAH 2	Christmas Tree Road
CSAH 2	MNDOT I-94	CSAH 75
CSAH 16	CSAH 10	TH 4
CR 192	Padua Limits (CSAH 22)	Pope County Line
CSAH 30	CSAH 13	CSAH 11

- Excludes Highway Sections Within Municipal Limits and currently maintained lawn areas

Because enrollment into the CCAA has the potential to effect adjacent landowner activities within highway rights-of-way, the County would like to give the public a chance to ask questions and provide any comments or concerns. The Stearns County Highway Department can be reached via email: highway@co.stearns.mn.us or by phone at 320-255-6180.

Sincerely,

Jodi L. Teich, PE
Stearns County Engineer

enclosure