



ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN

A routine publication providing environmental-related guidance to NDOT District Staff and Contractors



FALL 2021 IN THIS ISSUE

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Importance of Closing Stormwater Permits

This summer’s Vegetation Audit inspections went well in terms of vegetation cover. The next step for several projects is to remove the silt fence posts and fabric. These temporary BMPs must be removed before the project’s stormwater permit can be closed.

With winter coming, not having to inspect some projects will certainly save the districts time and effort. If you aren’t sure which projects are affected, check with your District Environmental Coordinator or Carol Wienhold.

Excessive duration of open permits due to non-removal and restoration of temporary controls has been documented to result in higher non-projects costs for erosion control, regulatory compliance monitoring and documentation.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Carol Wienhold at 402-479-3917

NDOT Erosion and Sediment Control Training Course Guidance

NDOT Erosion and Sediment Control Inspector Certification

There are currently two options for obtaining your new Inspector Certification.

- **Option A (Classroom)** – Attend one of the classroom style courses scheduled around the state. Currently these courses are very limited and are not being scheduled until there enough people signed up to attend. When courses are scheduled, they will be posted here: [Erosion Control Class Listing](#)
- **Option B (Online)** – Enroll and complete the following two online classes.
 - First enroll and complete the “Installer Certification” course: [Online Installer Course](#)
 - Next enroll and complete the “Inspector Re-Certification” course: [Online Re-certification Course](#)

Participants who successfully complete these courses are awarded a five-year inspector certification and can conduct construction stormwater site inspections on NDOT projects.

NDOT Erosion and Sediment Control Inspector Re-Certification Course

There are currently two options for obtaining your Inspector Re-Certification.

- **Option A (Classroom)** – Attend one of the classroom style courses scheduled around the state. Currently these courses are very limited and are not being scheduled until there enough people signed up to attend. When courses are scheduled, they will be posted here: [Erosion Control Class Listing](#)
- **Option B (Online)** – Enroll and complete the online “Inspector Re-Certification” course: [Online Re-certification Course](#)

Participants who successfully complete these courses are awarded a five-year inspector re-certification and can conduct construction stormwater site inspections on NDOT projects.

NDOT Erosion and Sediment Control Installer Certification Course

This online course is designed for NDOT construction site operators, supervisors, and technicians who will be installing or maintaining erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) on NDOT construction sites. Enroll and complete the “Installer Certification” course at the following link: [Online Installer Course](#)

Participants who successfully complete this course are awarded a five-year installer certification and can install and/or maintain erosion and sediment control BMPs on NDOT projects.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Gabe Robertson at 402-479-4685 or gabe.robertson@nebraska.gov

Steps for Completing the ECOD “Environmental Commitment Checklist”

The Environmental Commitment Checklist is a one-time project report for documenting environmental commitments during a roadway construction project. This is done in addition to any required scheduled stormwater inspections. The environmental commitments may be similar for each project, but the checklist needs to be completed for each project as part of the project record.

The following is the recommended process for managing and completing the “Environmental Commitment Checklist:”

Step 1. Prior to construction starting (pre-con meeting), log into ECOD and print of a copy of the “ECOD Inspection Summary.” The last page of the highlighted document below contains the Environmental Commitment Checklist questions.

Tool - ECODATABASE - 40.4606

NEBRASKA ECODatabase - Projects List

Sync Status: 9/23/2021

Corrective Actions Log out

| Inspection | Name | Control# | Project Number | Project Status | ECOD Inspection Summary | Date of last inspection | Corrective Actions |
|------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | DENTON SOUTH | 13332 | HSIP-33-6(111) | Establishment | | 9/22/2021 | |
| | GOEHNER - MILFORD | 13358 | NH-80-8(160) | Construction | | 9/22/2021 | |

Step 2. Using the Environmental Commitment Checklist questions that you printed off in the previous step, document how commitments are fulfilled throughout construction, making notes as you go.

Environmental Commitment Checklist

Answer this question after you have addressed all of the commitments below.

This question is here to prevent you from accidentally submitting this report before all questions have been answered below. When you are satisfied with your documentation in this report, select "Yes" and proceed to Finalize section. Otherwise, leave this question unanswered until the project is complete and you are ready to submit the final report.

NEPA Conditions

Has coordination with the utility companies occurred? Please document the date(s) this was completed and reference the location (SiteManager, OnBase etc.) of any documentation for this commitment in the notes section below.

Was a news release posted to the required medias as stated in the project contract? Please document the date(s) this was completed and reference the location (SiteManager, OnBase etc.) of any documentation for this commitment in the notes section below.

Has the contractor avoided night time work as stated in the project contract? Please add additional comments in the notes section below.

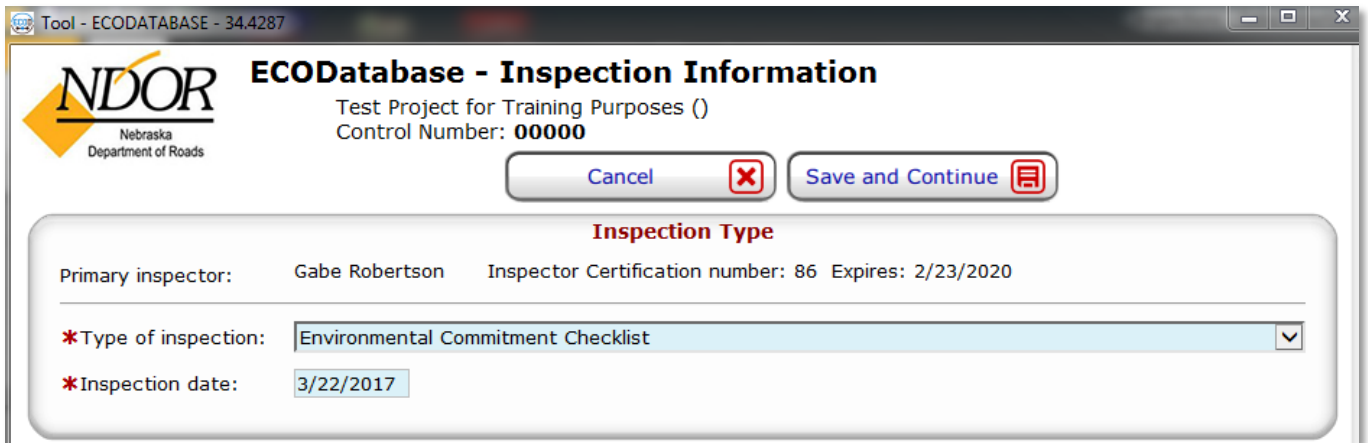
If cultural resources (Pottery Pieces, Stone Tools, Bone Pieces, Human Skeletal Remains) are encountered during construction were the the appropriate notification procedures followed? Please document whether or not cultural resources were encountered during construction and what notification procedures were followed in the notes section below. Notification procedures are outlined in project contract.

Have all borrow, waste and plant sites gone throught the material source site waste site approval process? Please document how this commitment was fulfilled in the notes section below.

Have temporary right-of-way delineators been provided during the construction project? Please document how and when the temporary fences were used during construction in the notes section below.

Have existing permanent right-of-way delineators been replaced prior to completing the construction project? Please document when permanent right-of-way delineators were replaced in the notes section below.

Step 3. After construction is completed, log into the ECODatabase Inspection Tool and start a new inspection. Select the “Environmental Commitment Checklist” inspection type from the drop down as shown below. Transfer your notes from the hard copy sheet into ECOD and submit the final report.



Step 4. Once the ECOD report is submitted, the Project Manager will need to clear the Environmental Commitment Checklist – Recurring Contract Time in AASHTOWare Project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
 Contact Gabe Robertson at 402-479-4685 or gabe.robertson@nebraska.gov

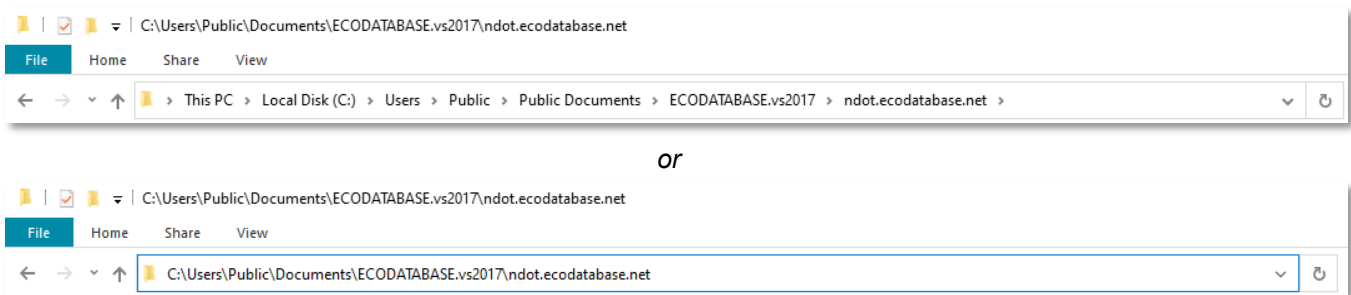
ECODatabase Inspection Tool – Update Instructions

If you are experiencing problems with your ECOD system not syncing correctly, or if you recently received a new computer and ECOD no longer recognizes your credentials when you try to log in, please use the following instructions to resolve the issue:

Step 1. Restart your computer if ECOD has run or is running on your computer since you logged into your computer.

Step 2. Open File Explorer and navigate to the following location to remove the existing local ECODatabase:

- C:\Users\Public\Documents\ECODATABASE.vs2017\ndot.ecodatabase.net
- Your screen should look like one of the following:



- Locate folder **csw.4606** and you must **delete it**.
(**Note** - This will remove inspections that have been started but not completed. For example, if the “Environmental Commitment Checklist” has been started, print off prior to doing this process so inputs can be re-entered.)

Step 3. Click and open [\\dotfs\TempPublic\ECOD](#). Right click on **csw.4606** and select “copy”.

Step 4. Navigate back to the location outlined in **STEP 2** and “paste” the new **csw.4606** file there to replace the file you deleted.

Step 5. Open ECOD and log in with your username and password. You should get to the “Projects List” page relatively quickly and the “Sync Status” should be closer to the current date. You will need to let it finish the final sync for a few minutes until you see the current date in the upper right-hand corner.

If you continue experiencing issues getting to the Project List page, try closing ECOD and restarting your machine. Then log in again and see if that helps.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Gabe Robertson at 402-479-4685 or gabe.robertson@nebraska.gov

When You Start to Smell Gasoline...

A short story about unexpected waste, a phone call, and the Unexpected Waste Action Plan (UWAP) and Form.

Recently a project in Bennington was trenching along the street. This project was working in conjunction with the local municipality to install storm sewer pipe along the road while NDOT performed work on the street parallel to the sewer installation. This project was located within the Town of Bennington, so naturally this trenching ran right by an old filling station. As the backhoe trenched by the filling station, the smell of gasoline filled the air. The backhoe operator notified his supervisor, who notified the project engineer, who then called NDOT's Environmental Section about what to do.

The UWAP is designed to help NDOT field staff identify, document, and mitigate unexpected waste discovered within the limits of construction. The UWAP outlines the proper procedures, the chain of communication, and the necessary documentation to handle the situation. The UWAP form is a simple document that when properly completed, significantly helps the field staff communicate with the Environmental Section to communicate the depth and breadth of the situation. The form includes information on the project, control number, date of discovery, who discovered it, pictures of the issue, and location within the project.

All in all, everything worked out fine in Bennington. The field engineer filled out the form, took appropriate situational pictures, and sent the completed document in a short amount of time after discovery. The Environmental Section then interacted with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), who took over the ultimate disposition of the contaminated soil. NDEE arranged for one of their consultants to go to the site, evaluate the situation, and then decided on the proper course of action. Based upon the UWAP form and an investigation of the site, the consultant concluded that NDOT was not the responsible party for the contaminated soil and arranged for proper disposal at a nearby landfill, all at their expense!

The UWAP, in conjunction with the rest of the Environmental Section, is committed to the timely completion of NDOT projects. The UWAP is designed for those very specific circumstances when the operators in the field discover some unexpected waste and would like some direction and guidance on mitigation. With the UWAP, the Environmental Section and field engineers/operators can properly assess the situation, design outcomes that benefit us all, and keep our project deadlines intact.



Pictured: Crews find contaminated soil at a project in Bennington, NE.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact John Buhrmann at (402) 479-4766 or john.buhrmann@nebraska.gov

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Updates

The Spring 2021 issue of the Environmental Bulletin talked about the addition of the timber rattlesnake, the thick-billed longspur, and the eastern black rail as new species that were added to either the state or federal listed species. Additionally, the state has de-listed the river otter.

NDOT is currently in the process of renewing the T&E Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Through the PA, NDOT has developed great relationships with our agency partners and is able to coordinate implementation of T&E species conservation conditions on our construction projects across the state.

American Burying Beetle (ABB)

The American Burying Beetle, pictured right, is a federally listed threatened species that is found in the Sandhills and Loess Canyon areas in Nebraska. It is a large black and orange colored carrion beetle that scavenges animal carcasses. The beetles bury the carcasses as a food source for their young, which also helps contribute nutrients to the soil. The ABB range is estimated to include 28 counties that span Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Current conservation conditions include utilizing the ABB Conservation Measures Protocol for mowing, carrion removal, and lighting.



In April 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed a 4(d) rule to tailor protections and recovery of ABB populations in Nebraska. The 4(d) rule would prohibit the incidental “take” of ABB, when in suitable habitat, due to soil disturbances. This would potentially require NDOT to obtain permits for incidental “takes” in suitable habitat or pursue ABB mitigation. NDOT will continue to work closely with the federal agency partners on the proposed 4(d) rule and will distribute information when it becomes available.

More information on this species can be found at the USFWS website:

<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/ambb/index.html>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jon Soper at (402) 479-3546 or jon.soper@nebraska.gov

Personnel Changes

Below is a list of personnel changes within the NDOT environmental team. Please update your contacts accordingly.

New Technical Resources Unit (TRU) Program Manager

Jeff Hartman has been selected as the new TRU program manager. Jeff comes from the wetlands unit where he was responsible for wetland delineations, Section 404 permitting, and wetland mitigation and monitoring for districts 1 and 7. As the TRU Program Manager, Jeff is responsible for the wetlands program, the Section 106 program, and the threatened and endangered species program.

Jeff Hartman

jeff.hartman@nebraska.gov

402-479-4768

New Environmental Project Manager

Dillon Dittmer has been selected as the new Environmental Project Manager, replacing Nick Burnham who has left the NDOT Environmental Section. Dillon is returning to the NDOT Environmental Section after working for JEO as a Senior Environmental Scientist. There is a change in district assignments as Dillon will be responsible for Districts 3 and 6 and Frank Albrecht will now be responsible for Districts 4 and 8. Dillon started Oct. 12, 2021.

Dillon Dittmer

dillon.dittmer@nebraska.gov

402-479-3624

New NEPA Specialists

Anna Ondracek joined the Environmental Documents Unit as a NEPA Specialist in the fall of 2021. Anna will be responsible for compiling the NEPA documentation for federal aid projects in Districts 2,3,5 & 6.

Anna Ondracek

anna.ondracek@nebraska.gov

402-479-4411

New Wetlands Unit Environmental Specialists

Ben Trenne was hired as a wetlands environmental specialist in fall 2020, taking over for Mercy Manzanares when she moved to the T&E Species position. Ben is responsible for wetland delineations, Section 404 permitting, and wetland mitigation and monitoring for districts 2 and 5. As a wetlands biologist, Ben is also available to conduct bird and T&E surveys throughout the state.

Ben Trenne (Districts 2 and 5)

ben.trenne@nebraska.gov

402-479-4464

Alex Sutton was originally hired as a NEPA specialist in the spring 2021 but has recently moved to the wetlands environmental specialist position, taking over for Jeff Hartman when he moved to the TRU program manager position. Alex is responsible for wetland delineations, Section 404 permitting, and wetland mitigation and monitoring for district 1 and 7. As a wetlands biologist, Alex is also available to conduct bird and T&E surveys throughout the state.

Alex Sutton (Districts 1 and 7)

alex.sutton@nebraska.gov

402-479-4836

Continue on next page.

Lauris Hollis has recently been hired to fill the wetlands environmental specialist position that was vacated by Katie Krajcek in January 2021. Lauris is coming to NDOT from east Texas, where he has broad experience in wetland restoration and adaptive management plans in Texas and Louisiana coastal wetlands. Lauris has completed post-doc research and a doctoral degree at LSU, and a master's and bachelor's degree at Stephen F. Austin State University. Lauris has a broad background in wetland ecosystems and FHWA / USACE regulations, and he'll be a strong addition to the NDOT Environmental Section. Lauris will be responsible for wetland delineations, Section 404 permitting, and wetland mitigation and monitoring for districts 3 and 6. As a wetlands biologist, Lauris is also available to conduct bird and T&E surveys throughout the state. Lauris will start in this position on November 1, 2021.

Lauris Hollis (Districts 3 and 6)
lauris.hollis@nebraska.gov
402-479-3812

New Threatened and Endangered Species Environmental Specialist

Mercy Manzanares has recently left the Environmental Section, and NDOT will be backfilling the position. Mercy was responsible for threatened and endangered (T&E) species surveys and coordination in districts 1, 4, 7, and 8. In the interim, please direct your survey requests or any questions on T&E compliance to Jon Soper. We will continue to work with and assist District Environmental Coordinators that are assisting the Environmental Section by completing species surveys work within their districts. Additionally, any Environmental Section wetland biologists are available to conduct bird and T&E surveys throughout the state, any time of the year.

Jon Soper (Districts 2, 3, 5, 6)
jon.soper@nebraska.gov
402-479-3546

Section 404 Nationwide Permits Expiration

Projects with wetland impacts require a Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The NWPs are re-issued every five years, and the current set of 2017 NWPs expire on March 18, 2022. Any NWPs obtained before March 18, 2022 will require a new permit, unless the project is currently active or under contract, in which case an additional 12 months is added to the permit expiration (March 18, 2023). The wetland environmental specialists will be assessing projects that may require a new NWP verification. If district staff or contractors have any project specific questions, please contact the project's wetland environmental specialist.

For more information, contact:
Jeff Hartman
jeff.hartman@nebraska.gov
402-479-4768