

Dept. of Natural Resources: Incidental take notice for Rock County

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposes to issue a permit for the incidental taking of a rare turtle, which may result from the paving of the Peace Trail, which is a bike and pedestrian trail running from Janesville to Beloit.

Incidental take refers to the unintentional loss of individual endangered or threatened animals or plants that does not put the species' overall population at risk.

The Peace Trail is currently comprised of crushed limestone with a proposal to pave the trail. A recurring theme during public meetings was the idea of a Rock River route that would provide a link to Janesville from the Beloit/Stateline area. Additionally, the Rock River gained National Water Trail status in April 2013, and a designation of the Rock River Trail Scenic and Historic Route.

The trail will provide users of the existing on-road route a safer alternative and will improve the connection between Beloit, Afton and Janesville. This trail section is vital to the continued establishment of a completely off-road bike/pedestrian route between the two cities and will improve regional connectivity in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

The presence of the state endangered ornate box turtle is confirmed in the vicinity of the project site. DNR staff determined that the proposed project may result in the incidental taking of some turtles.

The DNR concludes that the proposed project is not likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival or recovery of the species within the state, the whole plant-animal community of which it is a part of or the habitat that is critical to its existence.

Conservation measures to minimize the adverse effect on the endangered species will be incorporated into the proposed Incidental Take Permit. Copies of the jeopardy assessment and background information on the ornate box turtle are available by visiting the [DNR Incidental Take Public Notices webpage](#) or upon request from DNR Conservation Biologist Rori Paloski at 608-516-3742 or rori.paloski@wi.gov.

The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding project-related impacts to the ornate box turtle by July 27, 2022 to:

Department of Natural Resources
c/o Rori Paloski, DNR Conservation Biologist
101 S. Webster St. Madison, WI 53703
rori.paloski@wisconsin.gov or 608-516-3742