

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Incidental take notice for Dane County

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposes to issue an authorization for the incidental taking of a rare turtle, which could be possible from the Walking Iron Trail project in Dane County.

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.

Dane County, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, proposes to convert 2.8 miles of existing railbed into a multi-use trail. Construction activities will include vegetation clearing, grading, staging and trail construction.

Construction is expected to begin in fall 2026 with mobilization activities, installation of access roads and initial causeway work. Overall, the project is expected to be substantially complete by late 2027, with construction sequenced to balance bridge improvements, trail construction and environmental protection measures.

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.

Conservation measures to minimize the adverse effect on the species will be incorporated into the proposed Incidental Take Authorization and are detailed in the Jeopardy Assessment. They include herp exclusion fencing to keep turtles from

entering the project area and removing and relocating turtles that are found in the project area by a permitted biological monitor.

The DNR concludes that the proposed project will minimize the impacts to the species by adhering to conservation measures; is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of the state population of the species or the whole plant-animal community of which it is a part and has benefit to the public health, safety or welfare that justifies the action.

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 Stacy Rowe at 608-228-9796 or [Stacy.Rowe@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Stacy.Rowe@wisconsin.gov).

The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding project-related impacts to the ornate box turtle by April 11, 2026, to:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
c/o Stacy Rowe, DNR Conservation Biologist  
2514 Morse St.  
Janesville, WI 53546  
[Stacy.Rowe@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Stacy.Rowe@wisconsin.gov) or 608-228-9796