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To: [Von Holdt, Crystal L - DNR](#)
Subject: Docket Numbers IP-SC-2024-13-00581, 00582, and 00583
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Crystal,

These comments are regarding the application for a bridge crossing of the Sugar River floodplain near Verona (Docket Numbers IP-SC-2024-13-00581, 00582, and 00583). I cannot attend the presentation on May 8.

I'm a retired DNR research ecologist. I grew up, and still live, along the Sugar River NW of Verona, and know the valley well. There are three things I wish to share about the proposed project.

1) While I applaud the desire to move the channelized portions of the river back into its original channel, I question the need/justification to place a road across the floodplain and the resulting disturbance/loss of wetlands and flood water restrictions that will come with it. There is ample access to the Epic campus from existing new roads from the south off of US 18/151, the north off of County PD, and on the east along Northern Lights road.

2) There is an intact, high quality sedge meadow/fen/wet prairie wetland complex located 100 yds. NW of the proposed crossing of the floodplain. It is about 30 acres in size and nearly all now owned by Epic. Some of it has been invaded by aspen and shrubs, but those areas are still recoverable, and the rest (80%) is mostly free of trees and shrubs. The native plant community has been protected by the railroad bed on its NE side, which has kept upland runoff from the N reaching it, and on the W & S side the river protected it from upland runoff from the SW. This rare surviving example of the valley's original plant communities is of State Natural Area quality and should be transferred to the DNR Natural Areas program as part of this projects' mitigation. Forty-five years ago I provided info on this site to the old Scientific Areas Program.

3) Where the floodplain meets the upland on the SW side where the proposed bridge crossing is shown to start, that whole area has ground water seeps and springs. It looks like they might get buried by the bridge construction. The river should really be put back into the old stream channel that goes along the edge of the uplands at that location, and has water flow from springs and seeps, rather than it be filled in for the start of the bridge. At the very least that area should be carefully inspected and assessed.

Rich Henderson

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