

# UPLAND WILDLIFE AND HABITAT EVALUATION

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

## Factor Sheet C-5

Alternative	Total Length of Center Line of Existing Roadway Length of This Alternative
Preferred <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> None Identified	

*Impacts on wildlife and vegetation/habitat may have Environmental Justice implications. For example, the wildlife may be a major protein source for low-income populations and vegetation may have cultural or medicinal significance to American Indians tribes. If there will be known impacts, they should be discussed here and on Factor Sheet B-4, Environmental Justice Evaluation.*

### 1. Proposed Work in Upland Areas:

- A. Describe the nature of proposed work in the upland habitat area (e.g., grading, clearing, grubbing, etc.):  
*This should not focus on what is being done to the highway, e.g., pavement replacement, milling, overlays, etc., but on what is being done to the roadside.*

### 2. Vegetation/Habitat:

- A. Give a brief description of the upland habitat area. Include prominent plant community(ies) at the project site (list vegetation with a brief description of each community type if more than one present).  
*Because most upland habitat is not protected by law (as wetlands are) correspondence from the WDNR will not usually provide this information. The vegetation along selected major highways was inventoried by a consultant, working for the WisDOT Central Office Maintenance unit. If your project is on a major state route, this source will give you a great deal of information about upland vegetation. Vegetation types that might be discussed include grasslands, deciduous forest, coniferous forest and wetlands. See The Vegetation of Wisconsin, John T. Curtis (1959-70). The Regional Environmental Coordinator may be able to provide a characterization of upland habitat.*
- B. Will the project result in changes in the vegetative cover of the roadside?  
*The usual impact to vegetation is that a predominance of native species will be replaced by non-native species. It is also typical that woody vegetation, trees and shrubs, are replaced by herbaceous vegetation. Sometimes native grass and wildflower species are planted and sometimes trees and shrubs are planted, so the "usual" impact may be mitigated by plantings. Often changes caused by highway projects are relatively permanent, but vegetation is dynamic and the roadside vegetation may return to a pre-construction composition over time.*

### 3. Wildlife:

- A. Identify and describe any observed or expected wildlife associations with the plant community(ies) listed in question #1:  
*If endangered or threatened species are identified, complete Endangered and Threatened Species, Factor Sheet C-7.*
- B. Identify and describe any known wildlife or bird use areas or movement corridors that will be severed or affected by the proposed action:  
*This information may be provided by the WDNR or through site visits. District 8 had to re-design to accommodate wolf crossings several years ago. Turtles and Butler's Garter Snakes crossing roads to go from one habitat to another, is a more common occurrence.*
- C. Discuss other direct impacts on wildlife and estimate significance:  
*Example: Higher speeds could cause higher mortality, however wider clear-zones could reduce mortality. Higher speeds could have the greatest impacts on slow-moving species, such as turtles and snakes. The conversion of roadside vegetation to turf may reduce habitat types and nesting opportunities.*
- D. Identify and discuss any probable indirect impacts on wildlife in the area expected due to the project:  
*Construction on a new alignment can cause fragmentation of habitat, which could affect breeding success of some species. Increased residential and commercial development resulting from a project could reduce habitat.*
- E. Describe measures to avoid and/or minimize adverse effects or to enhance beneficial effects:  
*Example: Slopes may be steepened to reduce impact. Re-vegetation may involve restoration with native species. "Critter passes" may be constructed in barrier walls. Silt fence barriers during construction or permanent passages for Butler's Garter Snakes are other examples.*

*All environmental commitments must be listed on Basic Sheet 8, Environmental Commitments.*