

PUBLIC NOTICE

Antidegradation Decision – Exceptional Resource Waters Northern Natural Gas Anomaly Dig Project

The Tribe seeks comments on the proposed Antidegradation Decision related to the Northern Natural Gas Anomaly Dig Project.

Project Summary

Northern Natural Gas (NNG) is proposing to complete two verification digs near a Bad River Tributary south of Winks Creek (FID 29087, and FID 32610) to evaluate anomalies identified by the company's inline inspections of the natural gas pipeline. Dig FID 29087 and dig FID 32610 are both located west of Potato River Road along the Rib Lake Branch of the pipeline. The purpose of the verification digs is to allow for the visual inspection of the pipeline to determine if a repair or replacement is needed.

NNG engineering and environmental contractors will prep the access route (including the installation of construction matting and/or temporary span bridges where crossing wetlands and other waters), excavate (including topsoil segregation), visually inspect the pipeline, and complete repairs to the pipeline as necessary. NNG is proposing to use one workspace per dig for access, equipment staging, and to complete any necessary repairs.

The application materials describe twenty-seven (27) wetlands identified within the proposed temporary workspace (TWS) and access routes (AR) along with fourteen (14) waterways. Anticipated impacts (as described in the application materials) include approximately 2.31 acres of wetlands are anticipated to be temporarily impacted by excavation, temporary storage of excavated material, and placement of construction matting within access routes. In addition, approximately 0.04 acres of waterway impacts for the excavation and temporary placement of construction matting. NNG has proposed to use nine (9) temporary span bridges to avoid impacts to waterbodies for access routes. Total ground disturbance associated with project activities is anticipated to be approximately 10.44 acres. All surface waters, including wetlands within the proposed project footprint, are classified as Exceptional Resource Waters (Tier 2 Waters) under the Tribe's Antidegradation Policy and are protected for cultural, wetland, wildlife, aquatic life and fish, and recreational uses among other uses.

The Tribe is currently evaluating whether the project meets the Antidegradation Demonstration requirements, and the Decision criteria described in the Tribe's WQS and seeks comments on the proposed work and conditions needed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to the water resources. All comments are considered during the project review. Written comments may be emailed or sent by US Mail to:

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Posted: February 9, 2026

Comment deadline is March 11, 2026.

Background

On July 6, 2011, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians adopted **Water Quality Standards (WQS)**. The Antidegradation policy within the Water Quality Standards protects existing uses and prevents clean water from being unnecessarily degraded. Under this policy, each waterbody is assigned to a tier that provides a basis for addressing activities that have potential to lower water quality. Tiers identified in the Tribe's antidegradation policy include Outstanding Tribal Resource Waters (Tier 3 waters), Outstanding Resource Waters (Tier 2.5 waters), and Exceptional Resource Waters (Tier 2 waters). The Antidegradation policy holds that no new or increased discharges or alterations of the background conditions are allowed to Outstanding Tribal Resource Waters; however, a short-term, temporary lowering of water quality may be allowed if applicable Antidegradation Demonstration and Decision requirements are met, as described in the Water Quality Standards.

A web map of the Reservation waterways and wetlands, highlighting the tier associated with each waterbody, may be found on the Bad River website (under Services>Natural Resources>Maps & GIS Services. The link found in the Interactive Maps section).
<http://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=6f44c371217e4ee8b5f1c2c705c7c7c5>