

# SDWLP Environmental Review Guide

Direct environmental review questions to [DNRCFLEnvironmentalReview@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRCFLEnvironmentalReview@wisconsin.gov)  
Learn about the Environmental Loans programs and find guidance at [dnr.wi.gov/aid/eif.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/eif.html)

The online Environmental Review (ER) module has been created to provide an efficient area for external applicants to provide and receive information related to the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA)-like environmental review (ER). The NEPA-like ER is a required aspect of receiving funding from the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP). The information below is an instructional walk through of the online ER module and additional information about the NEPA requirements.

## Why SDWLP Requires an Environmental Review

The NEPA compliance SDWLP projects are, in part, federally funded; therefore, federal requirements apply. For SDWLP projects receiving Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRFs), the SDWLP must document the potential environmental impacts of projects and activities receiving assistance (40 CFR §35.3580 Environmental Review Requirements). For this reason, projects causing ground disturbance or building restoration, including siding or roof repair, must undergo a NEPA or "NEPA-like" review.

The SDWLP will accept a review completed by another federal funding source or regulatory agency. If one has not been previously conducted, the SDWLP requires that the applicant includes with or prior to the application, project site information and maps for all disturbance areas and staging areas. All standard SDWLP project maps should be as detailed as possible, be consistent with the plans and specifications, and clearly show the disturbance footprint(s) and surrounding area.

## Previously Conducted Environmental Review

If another federal agency such as Community Development Block Grant, Rural Development, or the U.S. Department of Transportation is involved in funding any part of a project, their ER will satisfy SDWLP requirements for all or part of the project. If the previous review does not encompass the entire SDWLP project footprint, the remaining portion of the project must undergo the DNR's SDWLP environmental review process.

- Proof of any review completed by another federal funding agency or regulatory agency and its findings, along with support documentation including maps, must be attached in Section 1 of the ER module.

## DNR Review

If another ER has not been completed, the applicant must fill out and submit all questions and materials listed in the online ER module in order to meet the requirement of a complete form. Once the ER has been submitted, the SDWLP will begin the DNR's review. If additional information is needed, the ER specialist will contact the applicant's consulting engineer or will notify the applicant and engineer of completion of the review. Once the review is complete, the SDWLP will publish a public notice and allow for public comment prior to funding the project.

## Access

An applicant can access the ER module within the [online application system](#) once the Intent to Apply (ITA) has been approved. The ER module is submitted separately from the online loan application and allows for status updates.

## Lead Service Line (LSL) Replacement Projects

All LSL projects should submit an ER through the online system. Any service line breaks for LSLs that would otherwise result in an eligible replacement and was not included in the original submission should be sent directly to the SDWLP ER Specialist using the previous [Environmental Review Guide for LSL Projects](#).

DNR, Environmental Loans Section—CF/2, 101 S. Webster Street, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921

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PUB-CF-060 07/2023 Wisconsin DNR Environmental Loans Section CWF 608-358-3330 SDWLP 608-720-0802

Program implementation details are outlined in chs. [NR 162](#) and [NR 166](#). Wis. Adm. Code. [Legal notice](#): This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in federal regulations or state statutes or administrative rules are referenced. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing federal regulations and state statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is offered in other formats upon request, call 608-267-9481.



# Starting an Environmental Review

Select 'Environmental Review' in the top right menu.



If you are just starting the environmental review process, select the 'Start a New Environmental Review' button.



If you are creating a new Environmental Review you need to have an Intent to Apply (ITA) submitted for the project. You can search for and select an existing ITA project in the interface. Once you have found the ITA you want to create an Environmental Review for, select the 'Add Project' button. This will take the user to the ER module.

**Select Project**

Municipalities:  Program Type:

Project #:

Total record found:1 Refine Search:

Action	Municipality	Project No ↓	SFY	Program type	Project Description
<input type="button" value="+ Add Project"/>	MILWAUKEE MSD	B222	2023	SDW	two two

If a review already exists, you may select a review you've already created and edit an existing Environmental Review from the search list.

Action	Municipality	Program type ↓	SFY	Status	Project No	Project Description	Start Date	Submitted on
<input type="button" value="edit"/>	MILWAUKEE MSD	SDWLP	2023	DRAFT	Projects - 1 B222	two two	03-03-2022	
<input type="button" value="edit"/>	MILWAUKEE MSD	SDWLP	2022	DRAFT	Projects - 1 3210-03	Testing	02-28-2022	
<input type="button" value="edit"/>	MILWAUKEE MSD	SDWLP	2022	DRAFT	Projects - 1 123	TESTING	02-28-2022	
<input type="button" value="edit"/>	MILWAUKEE MSD	SDWLP	2023	SUBMITTED	Projects - 1 88889	9999	12-29-2021	12-29-2021 7:03 PM

## Environmental Review Form

The ER module will display the project number, project description, and construction start and end dates associated with the Environmental Review. The questions within **Section 1: Project Information** are utilized to categorize and frame the Environmental Review of the project. The questions are used to further classify project activities as well as provide an opportunity to upload a completed NEPA-like review for some or part of the project area, if one has been conducted. The information in these questions is also collected in part during the NHI Public Portal Preliminary Assessment.

## Section 1: Project Information screen:

### Section 1: Project Information

Municipality: MILWAUKEE MSD

Program: CWF      Year: 2022      Status: DRAFT

[+ Add Project](#)

Project No	Project Description	Construction Start Date	Construction End Date	Delete
3100-05	testing email template	02/26/2021	02/26/2022	

Does this project involve ground, siding or roof disturbance?       YES  NO

Will there be tree removal?       YES  NO

Will there be building demolition?       YES  NO

Will there be building rehabilitation?       YES  NO

Has a state or federal agency, or certified firm, conducted a NEPA or NEPA-like environmental review for all or part of the project disturbance footprint(s)?       YES  NO

Was the review completed for the entire project disturbance footprint or only a portion of it?       Entire Project  Portion of the Project

Please submit the results of that review along with supporting documentation.

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen

## Categorical Exclusions

Many of the projects funded through the SDWLP, are considered "Categorically Excluded" because the project requires the replacement and or minor upgrade of existing infrastructure; however, a preliminary review is required to eliminate the possibility of extraordinary circumstances. If there are extraordinary circumstances, a more thorough review may be needed. For instance, if the replacement of existing infrastructure coincides with endangered species habitat or archeological/historical resources, the project may not be considered categorically excluded.

In part A of **Section 2: Environmental Review**, the applicant is able to confine the scope of the project to broad categories to better define the review determination. Similarly, in part B of Section 2 the applicant is able to describe aspects of the project. However, if any areas within part B aren't selected, because of anticipated "significant effect" or "significant controversy" then the project may need to go through an [environmental impact statement \(EIS\) process](#), following the procedures set forth in [s. NR 150.30, Wis. Adm. Code](#).

### Section 2: Environmental Review

A. The project(s) type is eligible for a Categorical Exclusion:

- i.  Rehabilitation of existing facilities,
- ii.  Replacement of existing water lines,
- iii.  Construction of ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities,
- iv.  Construction of new or minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities.

B. The municipality has indicated that all of the following are true:

- i.  Project(s) that did not or are not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively.
- ii.  Project(s) that did not or are not expected to have a significant adverse effect on any community including minority, low-income, and or any Federally-recognized Indian tribe.
- iii.  Project(s) that did not or are not expected to cause significant public controversy.

## Section 3: Project Site Information

Section 3 comprises locational information as well as a description of the land-use and habitat available. The habitat and land-use descriptions can be useful when reviewing the applicability of crosscutters for a project as well as for creating guidance for applicable crosscutters. The size of the project can impact permitting, and requirements attached to a project. If a project disturbs  $\geq 1$  acre of land, a [Construction Site Storm Water Permit](#) may be required.

### Section 3: Project Site Information screen:

#### Section 3: Project Site Information

##### Locations

Provide the disturbance footprint(s) location. +

Activity	Town	Range	Section	Delete
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="N"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="X"/>

Current Land Use Description:

Habitat Description:

Total Area (acres):

### Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary

Section 4 is a collection of NEPA crosscutters that are commonly utilized.

#### Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary

#### Required (\*) Environmental Review Documentation

All SDWLP projects causing **any** ground disturbance or building restoration (as described above) that have not undergone the environmental review process with another federal or regulatory agency, **must submit the following four (4) items** in the ER module.

The **Biological Resources** (\*) part in Section 4 is a representation of the Endangered Species Act and associated crosscutters. The evaluation of the impacts to Endangered Species can be initiated through the [Natural Heritage Inventory \(NHI\) Public Portal](#) or requesting an [Endangered Resources Review](#) by a professional within the Endangered Resources Review Program. The documents generated from these reviews can be uploaded as well as any other related documents.

#### Biological Resources

Documentation +

Documentation	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/> NHI Public Portal Portal Review # <input type="text"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Endangered Resource Review	

Endangered Resources Review - Submit the NHI Public Portal Preliminary Assessment Results. [NHI portal](#)

Select pdf (50MB Max):  Test Doc 1.pdf

File	Delete
Test Doc 1.pdf	<input type="button" value="X"/>

#### Item 1. Endangered Species Review

The required documentation is an Endangered Resources Preliminary Assessment. If the applicant has completed an Endangered Resources Review, the results will be accepted as well. Note: Endangered Species Reviews (including Preliminary Assessments) **are time sensitive**.

#### A. Endangered Resources Preliminary Assessment - Recommended

The [Natural Heritage Inventory \(NHI\) Public Portal](#) (guidance for use included below) allows municipalities to determine whether federally protected resources exist within the project area, online and free of charge. If there are no resources present, Item 1 of the SDWLP environmental review is completed.

- Attach a PDF of the Preliminary Assessment summary and in Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary – Biological Resources.

OR

**B. Endangered Resources Review (ERR)**

Requesting an [Endangered Resources Review \(ERR\)](#) is an option for projects that have known federally protected resources in or near the project site. Municipalities that are aware of existing resources may choose to skip the Preliminary Assessment (via the NHI Public Portal) and submit the [ERR Request \(Form 1700-047\)](#) to the department instead.

- The SDWLP Environmental Review Specialist will need a copy of this submitted form **and its corresponding response**, including any construction requirements, prior to closing.
- Attach in Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary – Biological Resources.

The **Historic Resources (\*) section** covers archaeological and historic crosscutters. The evaluation of these crosscutters often begins with the provision of a topographic map (which can be created on the Surface Water Data Viewer mapping tool [guidance for use included below]) with the project areas delineated on the map that is then submitted to the Wisconsin DNR Archaeologist. Additional relevant documentation can be uploaded to assist with the review or as a result of the review.

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Historic Resources'. At the top is a blue header with a '+' icon. Below is a 'Documentation' table with two rows: 'DNR Approval' and 'SHPO Approval', each with an unchecked checkbox and a 'Delete' button. Underneath is a text prompt: 'Archaeological/Historical Review - Submit a 7.5 minute, 1:24,000 max scale USGS topo map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)'. Below this is a file selection area with a 'Choose File' button, the text 'Test Doc 1.pdf', and an 'Upload File' button. At the bottom is a file list with one entry: 'Test Doc 1.pdf' with a 'Delete' button.

**Item 2. Archeological/Historical Review**

**A. United States Geological Survey Topographic (USGS Topo) Map - Recommended**

The municipality is advised to create and submit a USGS Topo map(s) to the DNR with or prior to the SDWLP Application submittal. Use the Surface Water Data Viewer mapping tool (guidance for use included below) to create a USGS Topo map(s).

- Submit in PDF format USGS 1:24,000 (max scale), 7.5 minute topo map(s) in Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary – Historical Resources section.

AND/OR

**B. Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Firm**

A cultural resource management firm can also be consulted instead of submitting a USGS Topo map, or at the request of the DNR archeologist.

- If a CRM firm is utilized, please consult with the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) or the SDWLP Environmental Review Specialist for a list of approved firms.

The **Important Farmland section** is tied to the Farmland Protection Policy Act, Pub. L. 97-98 NEPA crosscutter. This crosscutter targets “important farmlands, including lands identified with soils that are prime, unique, or statewide or locally important farmland, are subject to the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act”. This crosscutter is only

applicable if your project is occurring on existing farmland that is considered prime, unique, or state and locally important farmlands and causes the farmland to be irreversibly converted. The [USDA Farmland Protection Policy Act \(FPPA\) website](#) for Wisconsin provides a guide to the applicability of this crosscutter to your project and how to develop the necessary project documentation.

The screenshot shows the 'Important Farmland' form. At the top is a blue header with the title and a '+' icon. Below is a 'Documentation' section with a 'Delete' button on the right. It contains three checkboxes: 'NRCS Map', 'Farmland Conservation Impact Rating', and 'NA'. The 'Upload File' section includes a 'Select pdf (50MB Max):' label, a 'Choose File' button, a text input containing 'Test Doc 1.pdf', and an 'Upload File' button. Below this is a 'File' section with a 'Delete' button and a red 'x' icon next to the filename 'Test Doc 1.pdf'.

The **Air Quality section** of this module is tied to the Clean Air Act crosscutter within NEPA. The application of this crosscutter is closely aligned with construction on facilities that require an [Air Permit](#). This information is not applicable for most projects, however a [link](#) is provided with information about situations which may qualify.

The screenshot shows the 'Air Quality' form. It has a blue header with the title and a '+' icon. The 'Documentation' section has a 'Delete' button and two checkboxes: 'Air Permit' and 'NA'. The 'Upload File' section features a 'Select pdf (50MB Max):' label, a 'Choose File' button, a text input with 'No file chosen', and an 'Upload File' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Comment:' label followed by a text input field.

The Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 crosscutter as well as other crosscutters are addressed in this section. The **Socio-Economic Issues section** of this module can be better understood and summarized by EPA's [Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#) (Version 2.0). This mapping tool captures a number of metrics within and near the project area.

The screenshot shows the 'Socio-Economic Issues' form. It has a blue header with the title and a '+' icon. The 'Documentation' section has a 'Delete' button and a checkbox for 'NA'. Below this is an 'Enter Text' label and a text input field. The 'Upload File' section includes a 'Select pdf (50MB Max):' label, a 'Choose File' button, a text input with 'No file chosen', and an 'Upload File' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Comment:' label followed by a text input field.

The **Floodplains/Waterway/Wetland (\*) section** can be linked to a number of crosscutters within NEPA. These crosscutters include Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Protection of Wetlands, Executive Order 11990, Flood Plain Management as well as pertinent Wisconsin rules and requirements related to floodplains, waterways and wetlands. The documents required in this section can be created on the Surface Water Data Viewer mapping tool (guidance for use included below) and uploaded to the ER module. The proximity of a project to a waterway, wetland, or floodplain

may activate [permitting requirements](#) within the Wisconsin DNR as well as incorporate specific guidance to avoid damaging these resources. This mapping tool captures a number of metrics within and near the project area.

Floodplains/Waterway/Wetland

+

DocumentationDelete

Surface Water Data Viewer Map  
 Other

Submit a wetlands/waterways map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen Upload File

Submit a floodplain map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen Upload File

### Items 3. & 4. Floodplain and Waterway/Wetland Review

Use the Surface Water Data Viewer (SWDV) mapping tool (guidance for use included below) to make wetland and floodplain maps.

- Attach a PDF of the maps in Section 4: Environmental Impact Summary – Floodplains/Waterway/Wetland section.

The **Section 5: News Release** portion of the review module is intended to satisfy the public involvement requirement of NEPA. The notice is usually created and released by the environmental review specialist. However, because of the connection of other funding source and other NEPA reviews to a project a news release with affidavit or evidence of other forms of outreach can be uploaded.

Section 5: News Release

Public Notice Date  Comment Period?  YES  NO

Duration  14 Days  30 Days Comment Received?  YES  NO

Public Notice Comment

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen Upload File

## DNR Environmental Review

The **Categorical Exclusion: Review Determination** portion of Section 2 is only able to be entered by Wisconsin DNR staff and will only be displayed after DNR staff complete their review. This is the final categorization of the project based on the information supplied by the applicant.

Review Determination:

i.  Exempt (Categorical Exclusion Type 1:6.204(a)(2)(iii) and/OR(iv).)

ii.  Categorical Exclusion (Categorical Exclusion Type 2:6.204(a)(1).)-No Construction Requirements

iii.  Categorical Exclusion (Categorical Exclusion Type 2:6.204(a)(1).)-Construction Requirements

iv.  Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)(Environmental assessments. 6.205)-No Construction Requirements

v.  Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)(Environmental assessments. 6.205)-Construction Requirements

vi.  Environmental Impact Statement(EIS) - WDNR Environmental Analysis and Sustainability program(EAS)

The 'Resources Present' and 'Actions' drop-down menus as well as any guidance are only able to be entered by Wisconsin DNR staff and will only be displayed after DNR staff have completed their review. Once review is complete, the applicant can go back into the online ER module and view the Environmental Review required and recommended actions for the project.

Biological Resources			
Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
Yes	Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NHI Public Portal Portal Review # <input type="text" value="DNR TEST#"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Endangered Resource Review	
Endangered Resources Review - Submit the NHI Public Portal Preliminary Assessment Results. <a href="#">NHI portal</a>			
Select pdf (50MB Max): <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen			
File			Delete
Test Doc 1.pdf			
Construction Requirements:	<input type="text" value="TEST REQUIRED ACTIONS"/>		
Construction Recommendations:	<input type="text" value="TEST RECOMMENDED ACTIONS"/>		

Historic Resources			
Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
No	None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNR Approval <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Approval	
Archaeological/Historical Review - Submit a 7.5 minute, 1:24,000 max scale USGS topo map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). <a href="#">Surface Water Data Viewer</a>			
Select pdf (50MB Max): <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen			
File			Delete
Test Doc 1.pdf			
Construction Requirements:	<input type="text" value="TEST NO REQUIRED ACTIONS"/>		
Construction Recommendations:	<input type="text"/>		

Important Farmland			
Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
No	None	<input type="checkbox"/> NRCS Map <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland Conservation Impact Rating <input type="checkbox"/> NA	
Upload File.			
Select pdf (50MB Max): <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen			
Construction Requirements:	<input type="text" value="TEST NO REQUIRED ACTIONS"/>		
Construction Recommendations:	<input type="text"/>		



**Air Quality** +

Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
Yes	Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Permit <input type="checkbox"/> NA	

Upload File.  
 Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen

Comment:

**Socio-Economic Issues** +

Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
Yes	Recommended	<input type="checkbox"/> NA Enter Text <input type="text" value="EPA Env.Just Screen"/>	

Upload File.  
 Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen

Comment:

**Floodplains/Waterway/Wetland** +

	Resource Present	Actions	Documentation	Delete
a. 100 Year Floodplain	No	None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surface Water Data Viewer Map	
b. Wetlands	No	None	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
c. Waterways	Yes	Required		
d. Wild and Scenic Rivers (St. Croix and Wolf rivers)	No	None		

Submit a wetlands/waterways map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen

File	Delete
<a href="#">Test Doc 1.pdf</a>	

Submit a floodplain map(s) clearly delineating the disturbance footprint(s). [Surface Water Data Viewer](#)

Select pdf (50MB Max):  No file chosen

File	Delete
<a href="#">Test Doc 1.pdf</a>	

Construction Requirements:

Construction Recommendations:

## Contact Information

Direct Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) environmental review questions to  
[DNRCFEEnvironmentalReview@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRCFEEnvironmentalReview@wisconsin.gov)

# Using the NHI Public Portal for SDWLP Funded Projects

Endangered Species Reviews (including Preliminary Assessments) are time sensitive—some projects may be required to resubmit updated documentation.

## Endangered Resources Preliminary Assessment

To do a review using the [Natural Heritage Inventory \(NHI\) Public Portal](#) that is online and free of charge, you will need to answer a few questions, **click YES for federal funding**, and create a polygon for the **entire disturbance footprint**.

- Standard SDWLP projects involving multiple disturbance footprints should conduct a review with a footprint that covers each disturbance footprint.

## Results

The NHI Public Portal will pull data for the selected polygon(s) to determine if state or federally listed endangered species, habitats, or both are present and then return the findings. Include the results with the online ER module (including applications for LSL projects).

**Further actions will be required to ensure compliance if the portal returns this message:**



# Using the Surface Water Data Viewer to Create Topo maps and Surface Water Maps

The Surface Water Data Viewer (SWDV) is available at [dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/swdv/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/swdv/).

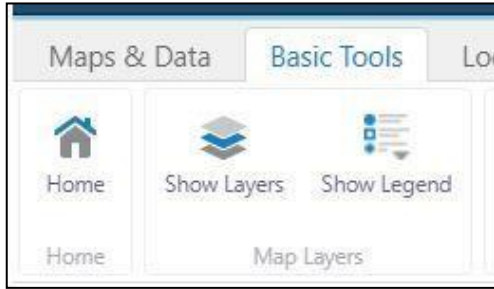
## To draw a polygon for the project's disturbance footprint(s):

1. Click on the "Draw & Measure" tab then locate the "Draw on Map" tool and expand its list
2. Click the drop down on the "Draw" Tab to select the "Polygon"
3. Draw a custom shape on the map consistent with the plans and specs
4. Double click to finish the shape



## To create a U.S. Geological Survey Topographic (USGS Topo) map:

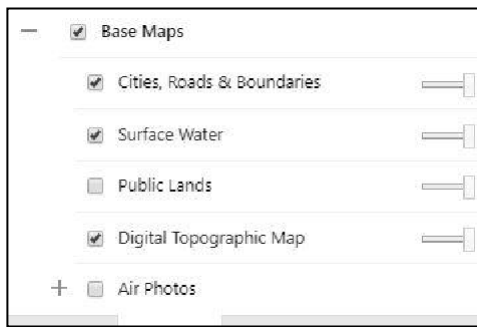
1. Click "Show Layers" to access its list



4. Check the box for "Administrative, Political & Cadastral" and expand its list
5. Check the box for "PLSS" and expand its list, ensure that "Township and Section" checked

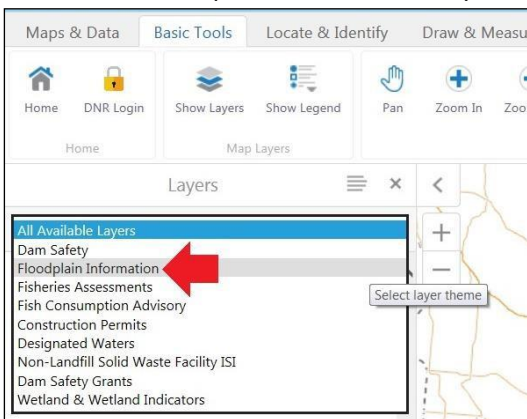


2. Check the box for "Base Maps" and expand its list
3. Check the boxes for "Digital Topographic Map"



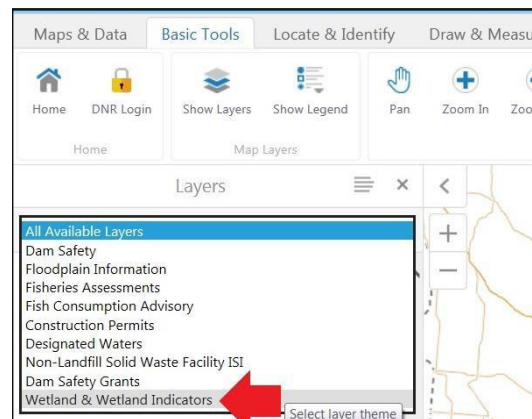
## To create a Floodplain map:

1. Click "Show Layers" to access its list
2. Click "All Available Layers" menu to expand its list
3. Select "Floodplain Information" layer



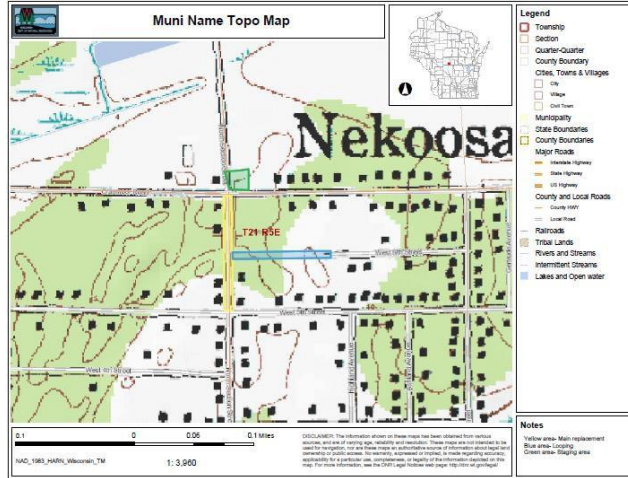
## To create a Wetland/Waterway map:

1. Click "Show Layers" to access its list
2. Click "All Available Layers" menu to expand its list
3. Select "Wetland & Wetland Indicators" layer

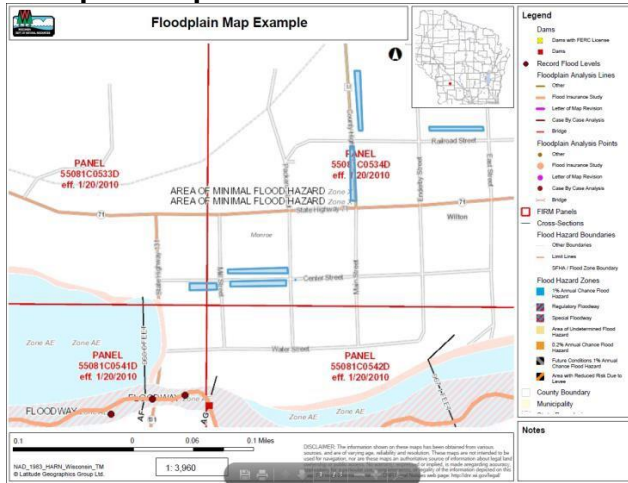


# Examples of Completed Maps

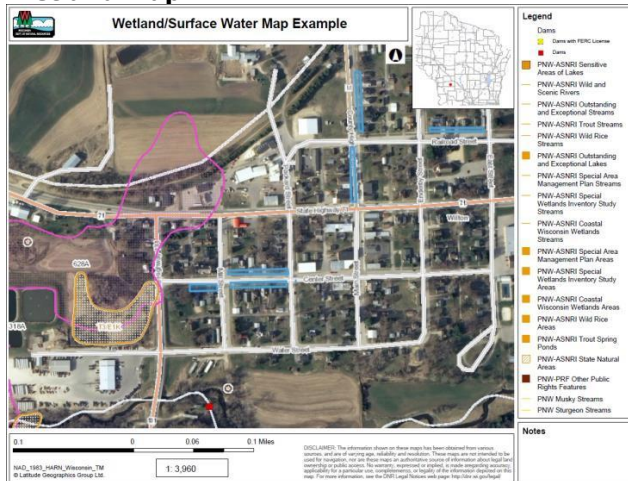
## USGS Topographic Map



## Floodplain Map



## Wetland Map



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