



27 JUN 2025

## PUBLIC NOTICE 09-02-25

All interested parties are herein notified that the Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District, has received application materials dated 13 February 2025 from Wisconsin Central Ltd. (WCL), for approval of location and plans for the proposed replacement of the movable span of a bridge over a navigable waterway of the United States.

**BRIDGE, WATERWAY AND LOCATION:** Canadian National Railroad Bridge, across the Rainy River, Mile 85.0, between Rainier, Koochiching County, Minnesota and Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada.

**CHARACTER OF WORK:** WCL proposes to replace the movable span of the existing structure with a new movable span. The existing movable span is a single-leaf Scherzer rolling lift trunnion bascule with a Warren-type through truss span. It provides navigational clearances as described below. The proposed replacement movable span would be a rolling bascule through plate girder span. All proposed work would occur on the portion of the bridge located within the United States. No change is proposed to the fixed portion of the bridge located in Canada.

Rail traffic would be detoured. Pedestrian and vehicle traffic would not be impacted since this is exclusively a railroad bridge. Although final means and methods of construction have not been determined, contractors may utilize temporary work platforms that would temporarily encroach into the navigation channel or barges that could be moved with advanced notice by mariners. All in-water work would be coordinated with mariners and subject to Coast Guard approval to ensure the maintenance and continuity of navigation throughout the project.

The purpose and need of the proposed project is to address and mitigate structural difficulties on the existing bridge, which is reaching the end of its serviceable life. The proposed movable span replacement would address these deficiencies, provide safe rail transportation while also meeting the reasonable needs of navigation.

### MINIMUM NAVIGATIONAL CLEARANCES:

The proposed replacement span would have clearances as described in the table below. These clearances will not result in a change to vertical or horizontal navigational clearances.

|                      | Existing (Movable)                           | Proposed (Movable)                           |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Vertical<br>(Closed) | 11.00-feet throughout the navigation channel | 11.00-feet throughout the navigation channel |

|                                | <b>Existing (Movable)</b>                                          | <b>Proposed (Movable)</b>                                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Vertical<br/>(Open)</b>     | 84.00-feet across a 90.00-foot wide navigation channel             | 84.00-feet across a 90.00-foot wide navigation channel             |
| <b>Horizontal<br/>(Closed)</b> | 125.00-feet face-to-face of the piers                              | 125.00-feet face-to-face of the piers                              |
| <b>Horizontal<br/>(Open)</b>   | 90.00-feet eastward from the western pier as the navigable channel | 90.00-feet eastward from the western pier as the navigable channel |

**Datum:** All elevations are referenced to Low Water Datum (LWD), elevation 1,105.13-feet, International Great Lakes Datum of 1985 (IGLD 85).

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Coast Guard, as the Lead Federal Agency (LFA), has made a tentative determination that the proposed replacement warrants a categorical exclusion for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) because it satisfies criteria for such actions listed in the Coast Guard's NEPA Implementing Instructions.

Preliminary analysis indicates that the project would result in adverse effects as described in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project consists of an 87.4-acre area which includes the boundaries of WCL's Right-of-Way and their adjacent property where all project activities associated with the removal of the existing movable span and construction of the proposed replacement movable span would occur. It also includes areas where potential changes within the setting may occur to the character of historic properties, whether auditory or visual.

The Coast Guard has found that the project would result in an unavoidable adverse effect to the following properties:

- The CN Railroad Corridor Historic District (XX-RRD-CNR001), which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A under NRHP eligibility for its significance to transportation history in Minnesota.
- Rainy Drawbridge (KC-RAC-00005), the existing structure, which is individually eligible for listing in the NHRP under Criteria A and C for its significance to transportation history in Minnesota, architecture, and engineering. It also serves as a contributing element to the CN Railroad Corridor Historic District.

It is not known whether the proposed project would result in a ground disturbance to an archaeologically-sensitive area located south of the railroad Right-of-Way between the railroad and Rainy River known as the Railroad Point Site (21KC0037). A Phase I archaeological survey was completed on 28 through 31 May 2025. The survey results will be compiled in a forthcoming technical report.

The following have agreed to serve as Section 106 consulting parties: The Historic Bridge Foundation, the Koochiching County Historical Society, the City of Ranier, Minnesota, Voyageurs National Park, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Prairie Island Indian Community of Minnesota, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa, Upper Sioux Community, Red Lake Nation, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. Discussions are ongoing with the consulting parties and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Since the proposed project would result in an adverse effect to the Rainy Drawbridge, the Coast Guard, Minnesota SHPO, and consulting parties will develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to resolve any Adverse Effects. Should any eligible archaeological sites be adversely affected by the project, the Coast Guard will expand the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation efforts in the MOA. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has been invited to participate in the process. It is anticipated that an MOA will be prepared and signed in the coming months. The Coast Guard anticipates that the avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures documented by an MOA will result in no extraordinary circumstances necessitating an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The project is located across the Rainy River and Rainy Lake, both Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The proposed temporary impacts to the area are 0.25 acres, and permanent impacts are anticipated to be 0.02 acres. According to information presented by the Applicant, no wetlands are present within the proposed project area. The project is located across the Rainy River and Rainy Lake, both Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The proposal includes 0.25 acres of temporary impact and 0.02 acres of permanent impact. The Coast Guard defers to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permitting. The St. Paul District Regulatory Division is evaluating the project under a Regional General Permit, for compliance with CWA Sections 401 and 404. The USACE Regulatory point of contact is Daryl W Wierzbinski at (218) 350-1491 or [daryl.w.wierzbinski@usace.army.mil](mailto:daryl.w.wierzbinski@usace.army.mil).

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification determination on 21 May 2025.

The bridge is located in the floodplain. The 100-year flood elevation is 1,113.16-feet, while elevation of the low member of the navigation span is 1,116.51 feet. Approximately 1,250 cubic yards of temporary fill material would be placed below the 100-year flood elevation for the construction of the bridge and approaches. Approximately 500 cubic yards of permanent fill would be placed below the 100-year flood elevation for construction of the proposed piers and abutments. Approximately 450 cubic yards of fill would be permanently removed as part of the removal of two of the existing structure's piers. All elevations are referenced to LWD elevation 1,105.13-feet, IGLD 85.

The Coast Guard conducted informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as well as reviewed the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Critical Habitat Mapper. The following species and critical habitat may be affected; however, the proposed project is not likely

to adversely affect any of these species or habitat. No other species or critical habitat protected by the Endangered Species Act would be affected by the proposed project:

- Canada Lynx (*Lynx Canadensis*) – Threatened - Critical Habitat Present in Vicinity of Project – May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect
- Gray Wolf (*Canis Lupus*) – Endangered – No Critical Habitat Present in Vicinity of Project – May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect
- Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus*) – Proposed Threatened – No Critical Habitat Present – No Effect
- Suckley’s Cuckoo Bumble Bee (*Bombus Suckleyi*) – No Critical Habitat Present – No Effect

Two aquatic invasive species are located within the project area: the Zebra Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and the Spiny Waterflea (*Bythotrephes longimanus*). The Applicant has engaged with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) regarding any potential impacts and has agreed to perform all work in accordance with *Best Practices for Meeting DNR General Public Waters Work Permit GP2004-0001* (4th Version, October 2014).

The project is located across what has been determined as an Ecologically Significant Area by MDNR. The Coast Guard will require that the applicant follow MDNR recommendations.

No take of migratory birds, Bald Eagles, or Golden Eagles are anticipated. The proposed project is located outside of the boundaries of any Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) covered by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The proposed project is not located within boundaries of the State of Minnesota’s Coastal Zone Management Act area managed by MDNR’s Lake Superior Coastal Program. It is similarly not located at or near any segment of the Coastal Barrier Resources System. The proposed project is not located on a segment of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. No Marine Mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act are located in the project area, and the project is located outside of any Marine Protected Area. It is not located in a non-attainment or maintenance area for purposes of the Clean Air Act. The proposed project does not involve and is not located near a Superfund site or any site regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), or Minnesota law regulating hazardous materials, substances or wastes.

## **SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS:**

Mariners and waterway users are requested to comment on the proposed navigation clearances, placement of a bridge protective system and other navigational safety issues, including the need for clearance gauges, extent of nighttime navigation to determine the need for bridge lighting, and operating schedules or regulations. Interested parties are also requested to express their views, in writing, on the proposed bridge project including its possible environmental impacts. All comments should be of sufficient detail to establish a clear understanding of reasons for support or opposition to the proposed replacement. Comments will be received for the record at the address noted in the header or via email to [michael.o.walker2@uscg.mil](mailto:michael.o.walker2@uscg.mil) through **28 July 2025**.

Map of location and plans attached.

W.B. STANIFER  
Chief, Bridge Branch  
U.S. Coast Guard  
By Direction

I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Engineer under the laws of the state of Minnesota.

Kevin W. Johns, P.E.  
June 19, 2025  
License Number 51126

CONCEPTUAL PLANS  
UTILIZED TO OBTAIN COAST  
GUARD BRIDGE PERMIT

THIS BRIDGE HAS BEEN DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF AREMA MANUAL FOR RAILWAY ENGINEERING.

**PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE**  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS RAINY RIVER,  
MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOOCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA,  
AND FORT FRANCES, ONTARIO, CANADA

## LOCATION MAP

Office of Chief Engineer  
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DATE-02/27/2024

SHEET 01 OF 08

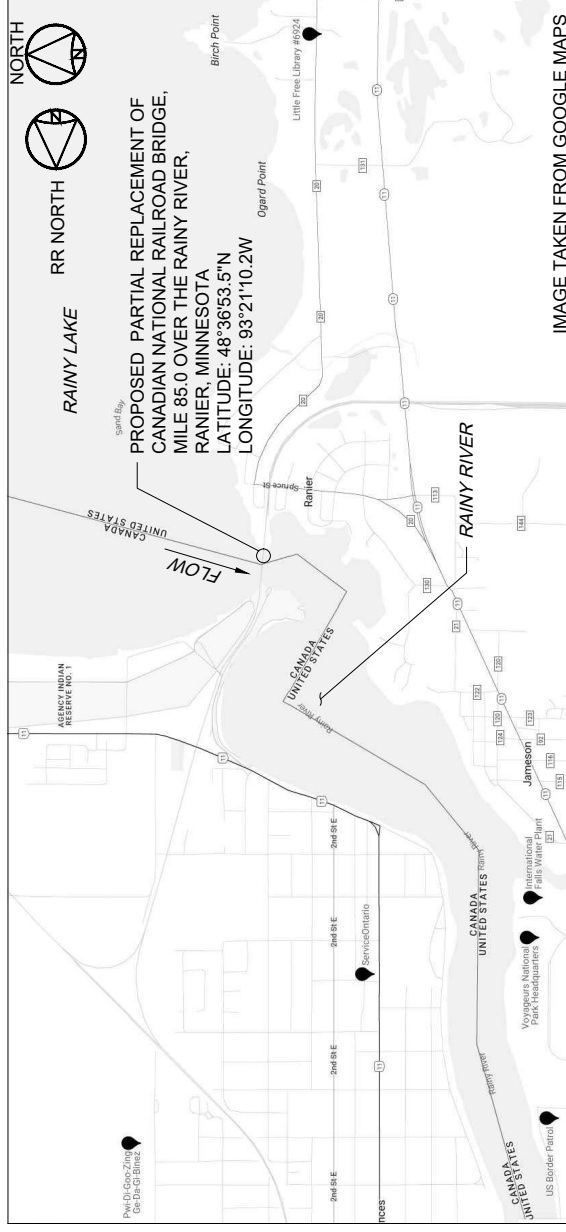
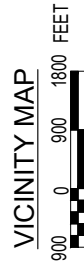
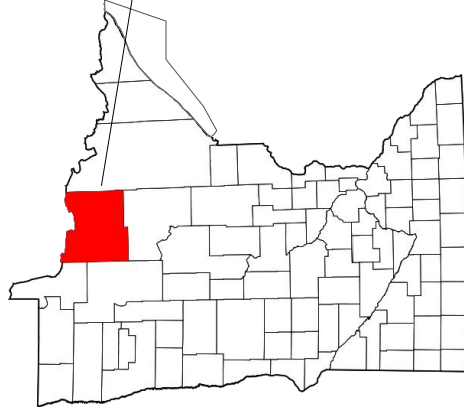


IMAGE TAKEN FROM GOOGLE MAPS



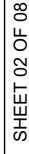
- PROJECT LOCATION



STATE OF MINNESOTA

KOOCHICHIING COUNTY

**MODJESKI and MASTERS**



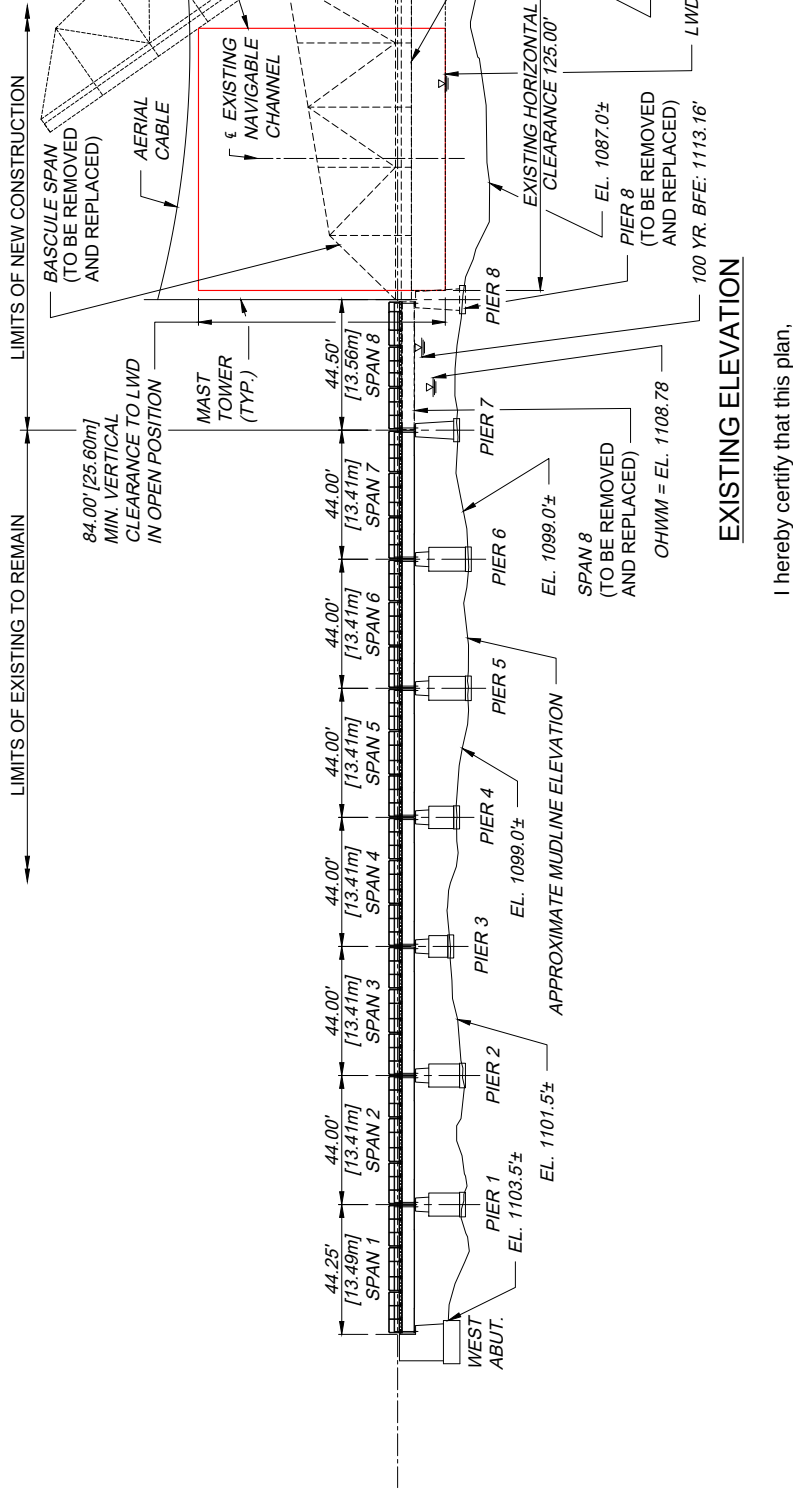
# EXISTING BRIDGE & SITE PLAN

3

**MODJESKI and MASTERS**

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Bureau de l'Ingénieur en





EXISTING ELEVATION

I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Engineer under the laws of the state of Minnesota.

Kevin W. Johns, P.E.  
June 19, 2025  
License Number 51126

- NOTES:
- DATUM: IGLD85
- LOW WATER DATUM (LWD) IS TAKEN FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN DRAWINGS (CONVERTED TO IGLD85)
- 100 YR. BASE FLOOD ELEVATION (BFE) IS TAKEN FROM HYDROLOGY AND HYDRAULIC REPORT, BY GANNETT FLEMING, DATED: JULY, 2023 (CONVERTED TO IGLD85)
- CHANNEL BOTTOM ELEVATIONS TAKEN FROM SURVEY BY COLLINS ENGINEERS, INC., DATED NOVEMBER, 2020 (CONVERTED TO IGLD85)
- ORDINARY HIGH WATER MARK (OHWM) ELEVATION OF 1108.78 TAKEN FROM A STATE OF MINNESOTA DNR WATERS MEMO DATED FEBRUARY 28TH, YEAR UNKNOWN, PROVIDED BY USAGE VIA EMAIL ATTACHMENT.



PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS RAINY RIVER,
MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA,
AND FORT FRANCES, ONTARIO, CANADA
EXISTING BRIDGE ELEVATION



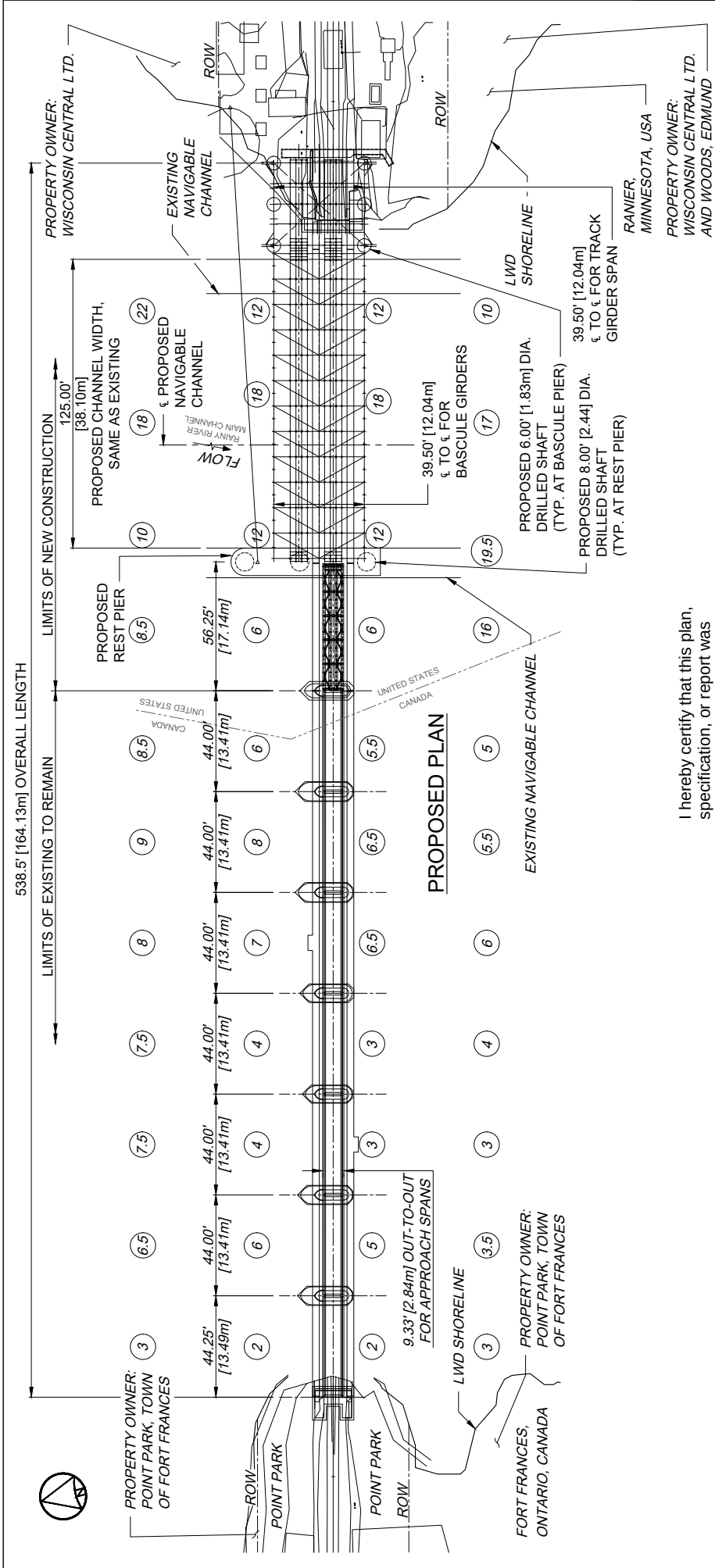
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DATE-02/27/2024

SHEET 03 OF 08





NOTES:

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- LOW WATER DATUM (LWD) IS TAKEN FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN DRAWINGS (CONVERTED TO IGLD85)
- (XX) DENOTES APPROXIMATE WATER DEPTH FROM LOW WATER DATUM (FT.) WATER DEPTHS TAKEN FROM SURVEY BY COLLINS ENGINEERS, INC., DATED NOVEMBER, 2020.

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*Kevin W. Johns*  
Kevin W. Johns, P.E.  
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**PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE**  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS RAINY RIVER,  
MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOOCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA,  
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**PROPOSED BRIDGE PLAN VIEW**

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A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments. It is marked with '20', '0', '20', and '40' at the bottom, with the word 'FEET' at the right end.

## PROPOSED BRIDGE ELEVATION

3

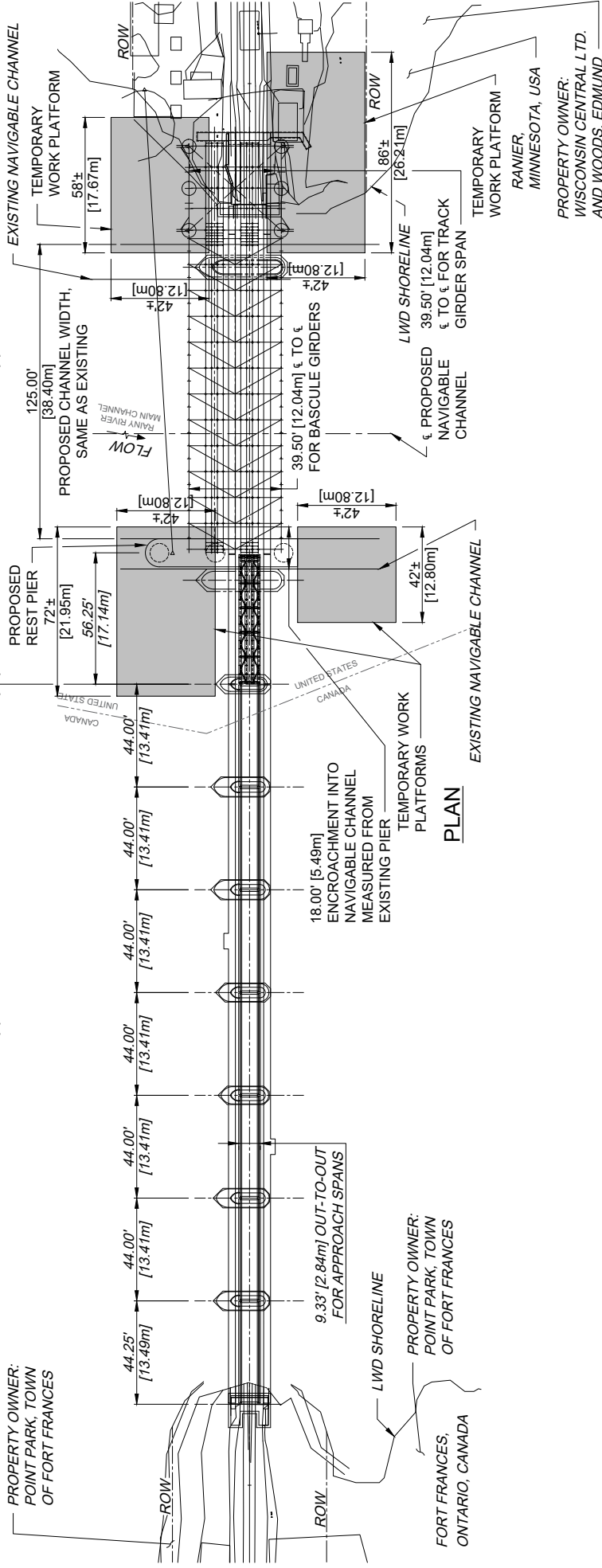
SHEET 05 OF 08



PROPERTY OWNER:  
POINT PARK, TOWN  
OF FORT FRANCES

LIMITS OF EXISTING TO REMAIN

LIMITS OF NEW CONSTRUCTION



## PLAN

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# PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS RAINY RIVER, MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOOCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA, AND FORT FRANCES, ONTARIO, CANADA

## PLAN VIEW SHOWING TEMPORARY NAVIGATIONAL IMPACTS

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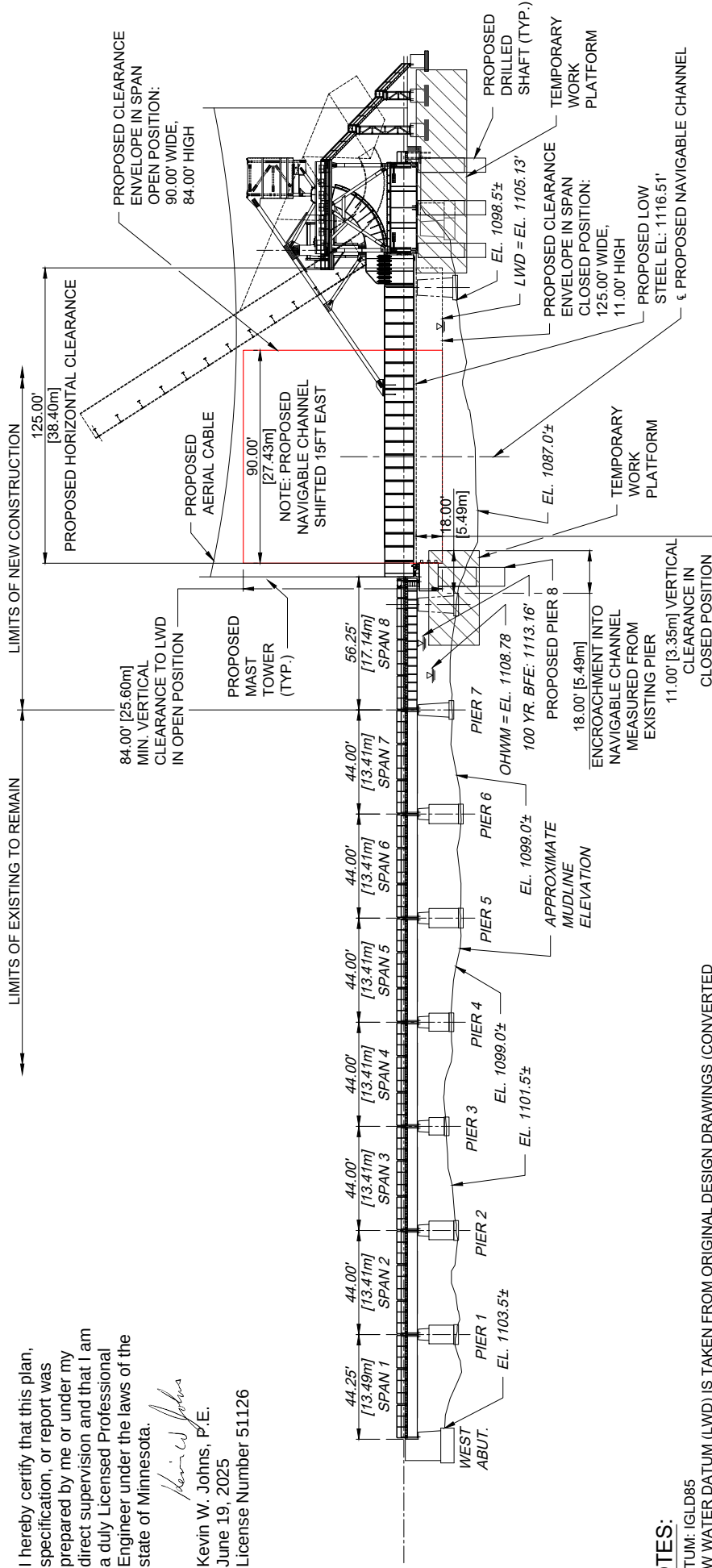
DATE-02/27/2024

SHEET 06 OF 08

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PROPOSED ELEVATION

PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE  
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS RAINY RIVER,  
MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOOSCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA,  
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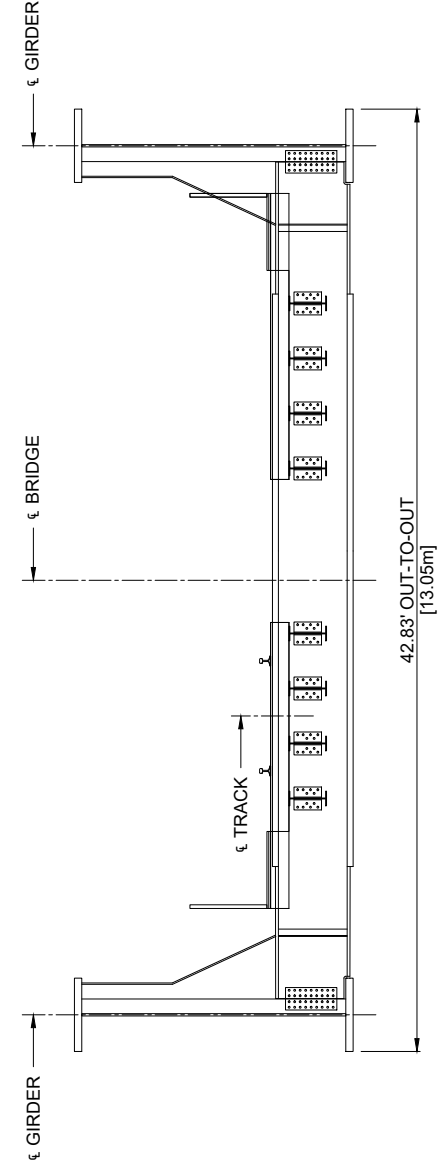
ELEVATION VIEW SHOWING  
TEMPORARY NAVIGATIONAL IMPACTS

Office of Chief Engineer  
Bureau de l'Ingénieur en chef

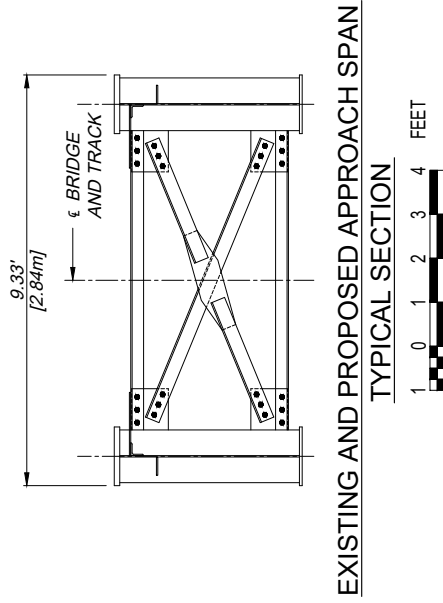


DATE-02/27/2024

SHEET 07 OF 08



PROPOSED BASCULE SPAN TYPICAL SECTION



EXISTING AND PROPOSED APPROACH SPAN  
TYPICAL SECTION

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PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF  
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MILE 85.0, BETWEEN RANIER, KOOSCHICHING COUNTY, MINNESOTA,  
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TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

DATE-02/27/2024

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