

How to Write the NHI Prescription

First, let's do a quick review of what information generally should be included in the NHI Prescription narrative:

- Date of the NHI search.
- If there are no results from the NHI search, then indicate “No element occurrences (EOs) identified by the portal search.”
- If there ARE results from the NHI portal search, then document any measures that will be taken to protect or avoid the species identified.

This first example does a good job of indicating the search date and that the search was performed in the NHI database.

“Based on a search of the NHI database on October 28, 2013, the following species were found within the project area or within one mile of the project area: Azure Bluets and Blandings Turtle. The harvest should not impact these threatened and special concern species.”

However, it should not indicate the names of the species identified. Rather, it should indicate “one special concern damselfly” and “one special concern reptile”.

In addition, the last sentence should indicate that “no habitat is present for these species in the stand” rather than that the harvest “should not” impact these two species.

For example, detail such as “there is no sandy openings in the stand” would be useful information relating to the Blandings Turtle.

Here's an improved version of the example.

“Based on a search of the NHI database on October 28, 2013, the following species were found within the project area or within one or two miles of the project area: one at risk plant and one at risk aquatic species. No habitat is present for these two species in the stand, as there are no sandy openings in the project area.”

This second example is missing the date the NHI search was conducted, and the fact that the NHI database was searched.

“NA – no known NHI were found within the project area.”

Remember, a search of the NHI database provides data for not only the project area but the one or two mile buffers. If an element occurrence is identified within the one or two mile buffer, it's to be treated with the same weight as a hit in the project area.

As such, it may be more accurate to say “returned by the portal search” rather than “within the project area.”

Here's an improved version of the example, documenting the date and the specifics regarding the search.

“On February 10, 2014, a search of the NHI database was performed and no element occurrences (EOs) were identified by the portal search.”

The next example is missing the date the NHI search was conducted and that the NHI data were searched, but does a great job of generally identifying the concerned species—a special concern plant—and that habitat doesn't exist for this species in the project area.

“One special concern plant found within the project area. No sale modifications needed. This plant is found in habitat where no logging will be occurring.”

However, this example again does not indicate whether the search reviewed the one or two mile buffer as well as the project area.

Here’s an improved version of this example.

“On February 25, 2014, a search of the NHI database was performed. One special concern plant found by the portal search. No sale modifications needed. This plant is found in habitat where no logging will be occurring.”

The next example also needs the date the NHI database search occurred, whether the NHI data were searched, as well as an indication of whether the search was performed for the project area and the one or two mile buffer.

“Special concern, endangered and threatened plants within property boundaries, but located on rock outcrops and drainages. Care must be taken to not damage potential habitat. Avoid activity in spring/early summer during bloom.”

Here are some improvements:

- Date.
- NHI database reference.
- One and two mile buffer search reference.

“On February 25, 2014, a search of the NHI database was performed. The portal search identified special concern, endangered and threatened plants. These plants are located on rock outcrops and drainages. Care must be taken to not damage potential habitat. Avoid outcrops and follow BMPs for water quality to avoid the drainages.”

Although this next example indicates NHI data, it could be clarified the search was done in the NHI database or portal. The date the search was performed is also missing.

“NHI search (data) indicates no hits. Field visit to site showed scattered threatened plants at west, near access site, in road ditch.”

This example mentions a field visit. If endangered or threatened species are sighted on a field visit, an additional siting form must be completed. See the DNR Endangered Resources Forms page for a complete listing of associated forms.

And here’s the improved version.

“NHI search performed February 25, 2014 indicates no hits within the portal search. A WI Threatened plant was found near a road side during a field visit. This species uses dry, sandy habitats, so no habitat exists for it within the sale area. A rare plant reporting form was filled out and submitted to NHI.”

In summary, keep these items in mind when filling out the NHI prescription:

- Date of NHI database search.
- Specify NHI database searched.
- Indicate portal search completed, not just the project area searched.
- Describe element occurrences in general terms without showing actual species names.
- Explain why element occurrence will be protected, mention seasons to harvest and presence or lack of habitat for the element occurrence.

