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November 17, 2025

Robert Hill, Director
Brookings County Development
520 3rd Street, Suite 110
Brookings, SD 57006

**RE: Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel - Dike Reestablishment Project
Brookings County
Environmental Assessment Scoping Letter**

Dear Mr. Hill:

The Brookings County Development Department and Banner Associates are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to support the proposed “Medary Township Big Sioux River Diversion Channel Dike Reestablishment Project” (Proposed Action). The Proposed Action is located in the northwest ¼ of Section 9, Township 109 North, Range 50 West in Brookings County, South Dakota. Banner Associates (Banner) has been contracted by the Brookings County Development Department to complete hydrology and environmental services for the Proposed Action.

A previously installed diversion structure in the same location allowed a portion of the main channel flow of the Big Sioux River to be redirected into a diversion ditch. The flow in this diversion ditch served as a source of water for livestock downstream. The diversion structure failed at some point prior to 2011, and the Big Sioux River flow began to shift into the diversion ditch, especially during flood stages. Since 2011, the hydrology of the Big Sioux River in the area has changed due to increased flows in the diversion ditch, flooding farmland and causing concerns for transportation infrastructure. The Proposed Action would reconstruct a diversion structure at the confluence of the Big Sioux River and the diversion ditch, restoring the majority of the flow pattern of the Big Sioux River back to the main channel and only diverting a small amount. The Proposed Action would be funded by Brookings County.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) holds a wetland easement in the Project Area. The Big Sioux River and adjacent wetlands found within the Project Area are jurisdictional under the federal Clean Water Act.

To complete the proposed action, Brookings County will need to request a temporary subordination of the wetland easement from the NRCS and will apply for a Section 404 Permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers for fill activities occurring in the river and wetlands. The NRCS has required an EA as part of the County’s application for a temporary subordination. Therefore, on behalf of the Brookings County Development Department, Banner is preparing an EA in accordance with NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and applicable requirements from NRCS and USACE. Brookings County and Banner are seeking input from stakeholders, interested individuals, organizations, and agencies to help identify potential issues and considerations relevant to this environmental compliance effort. Your feedback will assist in refining the EA, identifying affected or interested parties and/or resources, and developing potential project alternatives.



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We welcome your comments and encourage you to share any concerns, insights, or suggestions related to the Proposed Action. Comments received in response to this request, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this Proposed Action. Please submit your comments in writing by **December 14, 2025**.

Comments may be sent to my email address (kellib@bannerassociates.com) or to the following address:

Banner Associates, Inc
409 22nd Avenue South
Brookings, SD 57006

If you have questions, please contact me at the email or phone number provided below. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelli D. Buscher".

Kelli D. Buscher, P.E.
Environmental Project Manager
kellib@bannerassociates.com
605.696.9207
Banner Associates, Inc.

Enclosure: Proposed Action Map