



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Dakotas Area Office  
304 East Broadway Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58501

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DK-5000  
2.1.4.17

Subject: Bureau of Reclamation's Preparation of an Environmental Assessment for the Heart Butte Safety of Dams Modification Project

Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the funding and construction of a Safety of Dams Modification Project for Heart Butte Dam. Reclamation is the lead Federal Agency responsible for ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and related Federal environmental and cultural resource legislation. Reclamation will use this EA to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with construction of the project.

Heart Butte Dam is located on the Heart River in southwestern North Dakota, approximately 100 river miles upstream of Mandan (Figure 1). It forms the principal feature of the Heart Butte Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program (authorized under Section 9 of the Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944, 58 Stat. 887). The dam was constructed in 1948-1949, and the modification project seeks to provide risk reduction by addressing potential internal erosion risks which have been identified through performance monitoring and extensive geologic exploration.

Reclamation has performed a Corrective Action Study to evaluate alternatives to ensure the continued safe condition of the dam. The selected design alternative includes conduit joint repair, a seepage cutoff system, and a seepage blanket filtration system constructed at the downstream toe of the dam. Construction is expected to require up to two years and a reduction of Lake Tschida to the minimum water elevation of 2030 feet. The reduction in reservoir elevation is necessary to reduce the water table in the vicinity of the project and to reduce the potential for uncontrolled spillway flow during the construction period.

We are requesting your input about the proposed action and any potential project effects. If no significant issues are identified during scoping or preparation of the EA, Reclamation would issue a Finding of *No Significant Impact*. Conversely, if any significant issues are identified, Reclamation would consider whether to proceed with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft EA will be available for review and comment in fall 2024, and, if no significant impacts are identified, construction is expected to begin in 2027. Reclamation defines significance in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.27.

To be most helpful to the preparers of the EA please provide any comments regarding this project by June 14, 2024. Questions or comments regarding the preparation of the EA may be directed to Ms. Ashley Persinger, Natural Resource Supervisor, at (701) 221-1282 or at [apersinger@usbr.gov](mailto:apersinger@usbr.gov), or in writing to: Area Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, 304 E Broadway Ave, Bismarck, ND 58501. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

Sincerely,

SCOTT HETTINGER

Digitally signed by SCOTT  
HETTINGER  
Date: 2024.05.15 14:37:05 -05'00'

Joseph E. Hall  
Area Manager

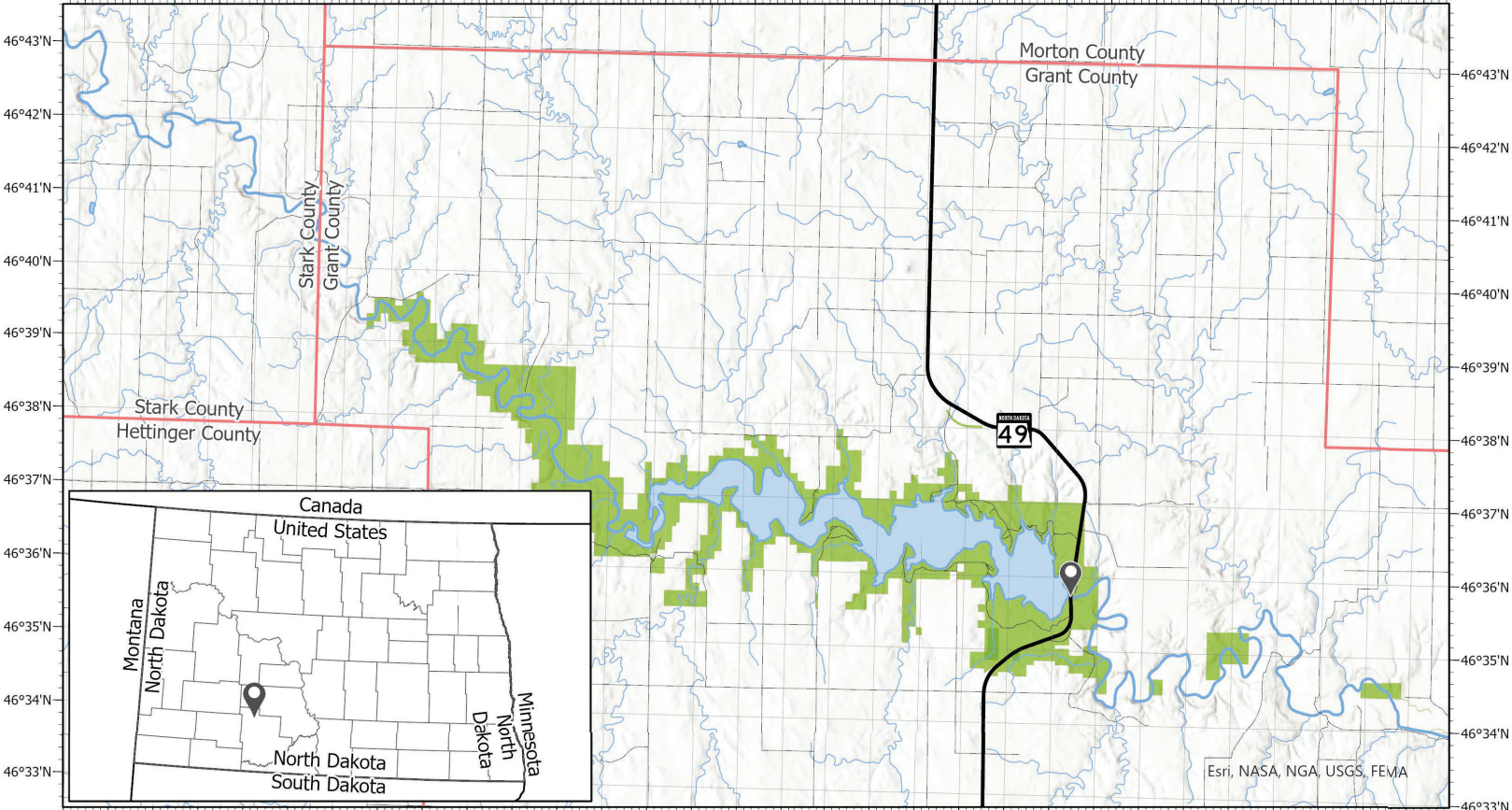
Enclosure










BUREAU OF RECLAMATION


# Heart Butte Safety of Dams Modification Project Lake Tschida | Elgin, North Dakota

102°11'W 102°9'W 102°7'W 102°5'W 102°3'W 102°1'W 101°59'W 101°57'W 101°55'W 101°53'W 101°51'W 101°49'W 101°47'W 101°45'W 101°43'W 101°41'W



 Heart Butte Dam	 USBR Lands	 ND Hwy 49
 ND Counties	 Lake Tschida	 Local Roads
	 Heart River	

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA