



Staff Report

Property Owner: Derrick Phillips

Parcel Number: 77120510

Physical Address: 31511 Old Bridge Road, Merrifield, MN 56465

Township: Mission

Legal Description: E ½ of SW ¼ of Little Pine River
Section 12 Township 136 Range 27

Little Pine River – General Development – River Setback of 100 feet

Unnamed Lake (18-567 W) – Natural Environment – Lake setback of 150 feet

Development Review Team Meeting: 7/13/2026

Application Submitted: 8/19/2026

60 Day Action Deadline: 10/17/2026

60 Day Waiver: N/A

Wetland: Delineation 8/18/2026

Septic: No septic – primitive cabin

Land Use District: Shoreland

Adjacent Land Use:

North: Shoreland and Rural Residential 10

South: Shoreland and County Administered land

East: Shoreland and Agricultural/Forestry

West: Shoreland and Rural Residential 10

Request:

To construct:

- 480 sq ft primitive cabin
- 192 sq ft screen porch
- 160 sq ft deck

Variance for:

- Lake setback of 74 feet where 150 feet is required to proposed primitive cabin
- Lake setback of 89 feet where 150 feet is required to proposed screen porch
- Lake setback of 69 feet where 150 feet is required to proposed deck

Potential Conditions: TBD



Staff Report

9/03/2026 On-Site Comments: Pence, Dunlap, Westhoff

- Notification published in the Brainerd Dispatch on 8/22/2026
- Rebuilding due to Flanders Fire
- The project is a minimal expansion to what they had
- Located in a rural area

Permit History:

- None

Agencies Notified and Responses Received:

MN DNR: No comment received

SWCD: No comment received

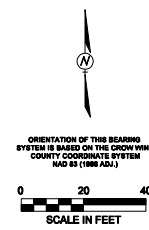
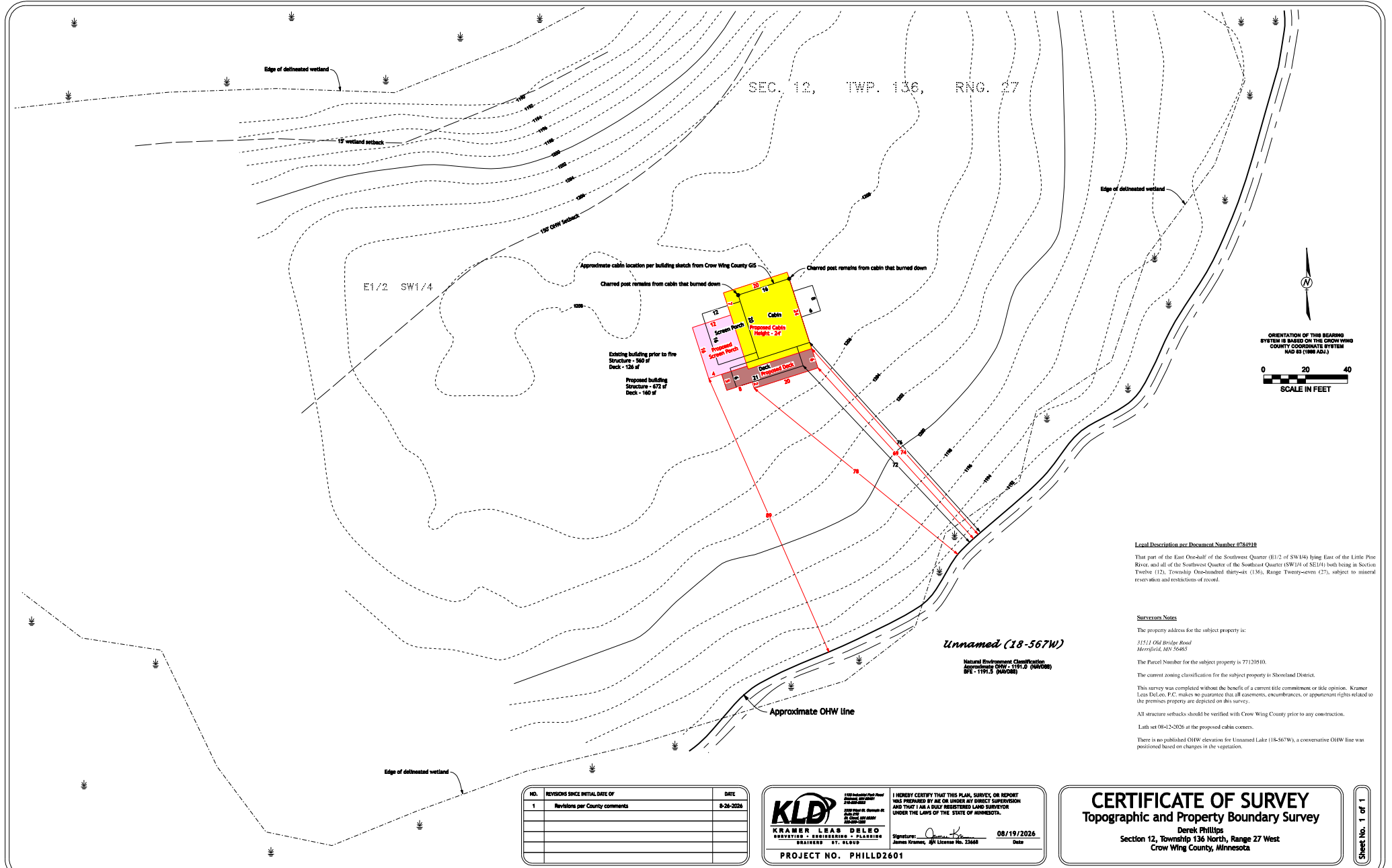
Mission Township: No comment received

Public Hearing notifications:

Published in the Brainerd Dispatch on 9/02/2026

Mailing notification sent on 9/04/2026 to owners in a 500 ft radius of parcel.

Per findings of fact discussed 9/17/2026, the application submitted 8/19/2026, the staff report, on-site conducted 9/03/2026, public testimony, and as shown on the Certificate of Survey 8/19/2026; Located in Mission township, Crow Wing County, Minnesota



Legal Description per Document Number 0784910
That part of the East One-half of the Southwest Quarter (E1/2 of SW1/4) lying East of the Little Pine River, and all of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4 of SE1/4) both being in Section Twelve (12), Township One-thirty-six (136), Range Twenty-seven (27), subject to mineral reservation and restrictions of record.

Surveyors Notes
The property address for the subject property is:
31511 Old Bridge Road
Merrifield, MN 56463
The Parcel Number for the subject property is 77120510.
The current zoning classification for the subject property is Shoreland District.
This survey was completed without the benefit of a current title commitment or title opinion. Kramer Less DeLoe, P.C. makes no guarantee that all easements, encumbrances, or appurtenant rights related to the premises property are depicted on this survey.
All structure setbacks should be verified with Crow Wing County prior to any construction.
Lots set 08-12-2026 at the proposed cabin corners.
There is no published OHW elevation for Unnamed Lake (18-567W), a conservative OHW line was positioned based on changes in the vegetation.

NO.	REVISIONS SINCE INITIAL DATE OF	DATE
1	Revisions per County comments	8-26-2026



KRAHER LEAS DELOE
SURVEYING • ENGINEERING • PLANNING
BRANDERS ST. ELROY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN, SURVEY OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A FULLY REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

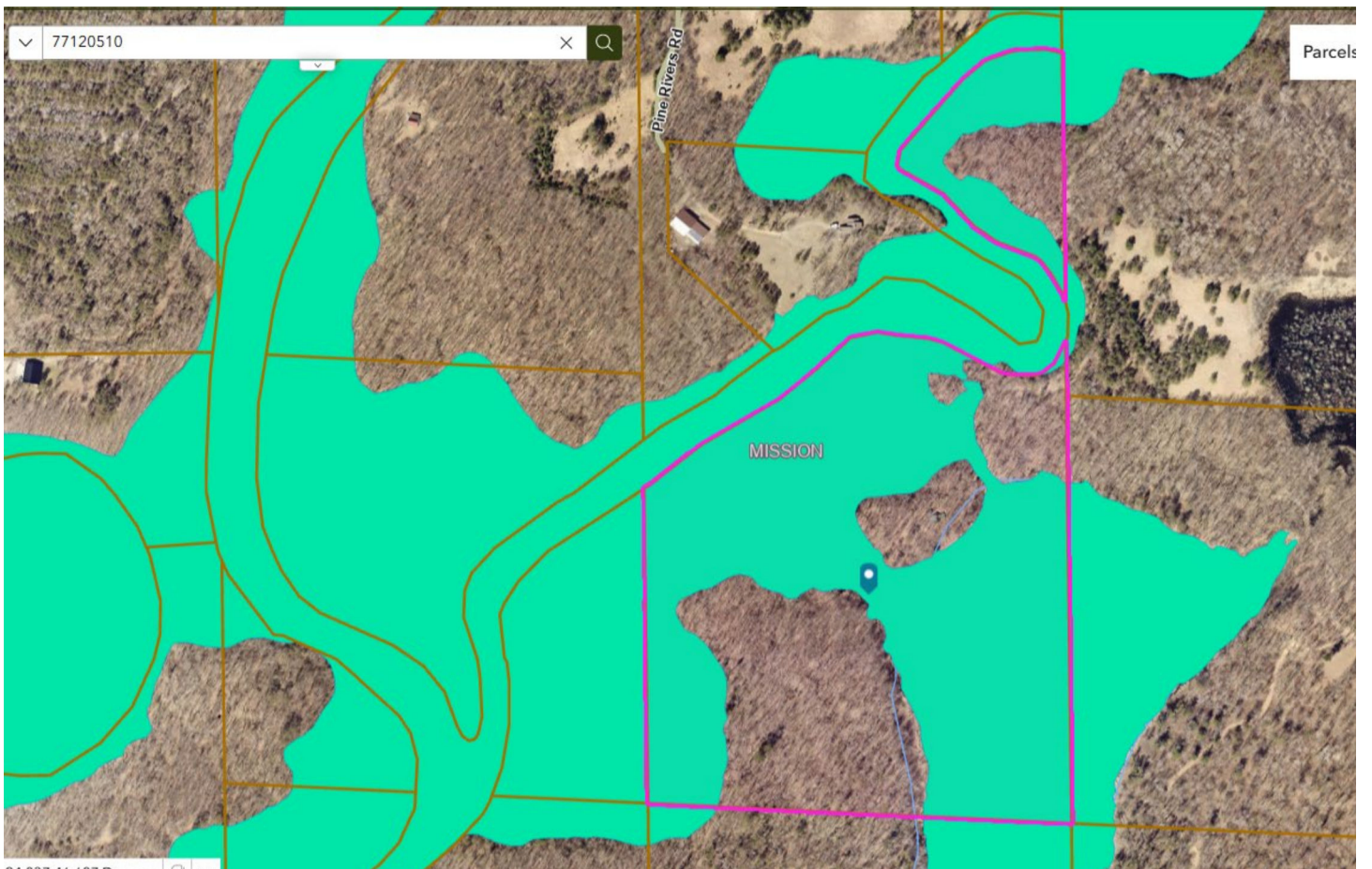
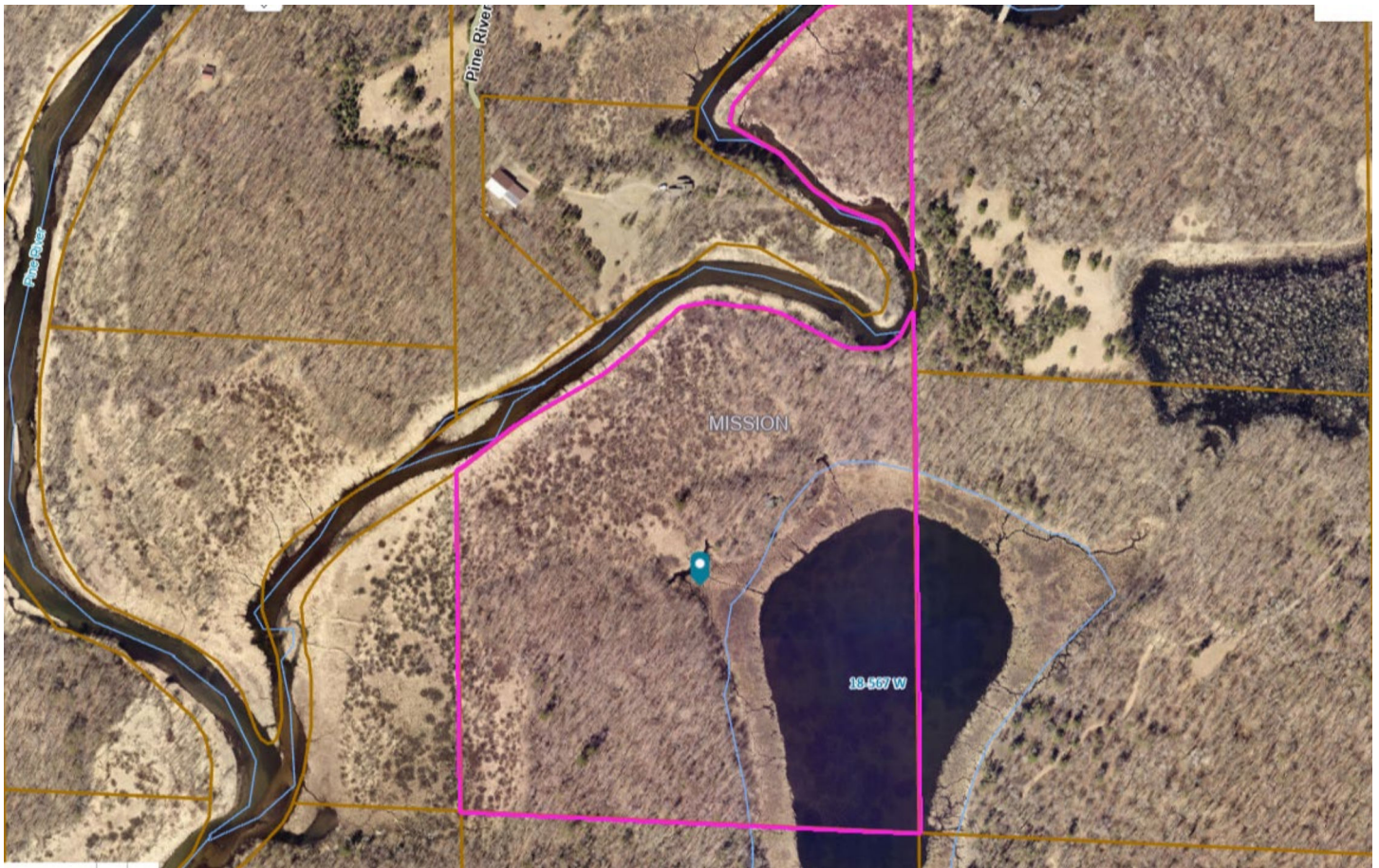
Signature:  Date: 08/19/2026

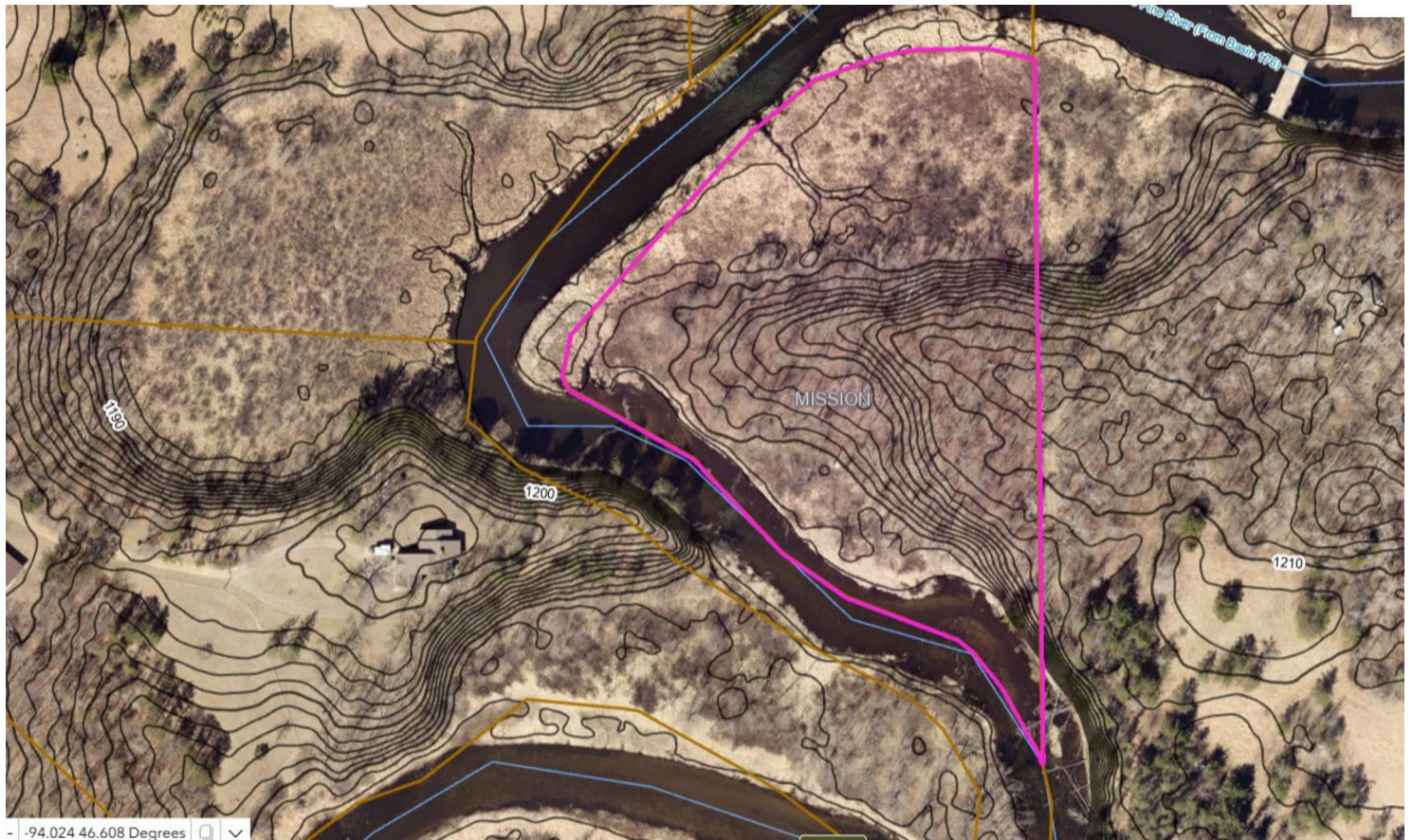
James Kraher, MN License No. 23668

PROJECT NO. PHILLD2601

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY
Topographic and Property Boundary Survey

Derek Phillips
Section 12, Township 136 North, Range 27 West
Crow Wing County, Minnesota





DEVELOPMENT REVIEW TEAM MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: July 13, 2026

Meeting Time: 11:00 AM

Attendees

- Nicholette Dunlap, Senior Environmental Specialist
- Stacy Westhoff, Planning Coordinator
- John Auge, Mission Township Supervisor
- Chris Pence, Environmental Services Manager
- Applicants:
 - Derrick Phillips and Asa Pearson – Property Owners

Project Information

Property Address / PID: 31511 Old Bridge Road, Merrifield, MN 56465 / 77120510

Waterbody: Unnamed lake - Natural Environment

Proposed Project Summary: Rebuild a seasonal cabin destroyed in the Flanders Lake / County Road 11 fire. Applicant wishes to either rebuild in the same footprint or expand approximately four feet (20x24 structure) while maintaining a primitive, low-impact dwelling.

Project Overview

- Cabin was destroyed in a wildfire.
- Prior cabin was seasonal, primitive, with no pressurized water or electric service.
- Owners would like to rebuild and possibly expand slightly.
- Rebuilding in existing footprint is allowed without a variance if done within 180 days of the fire event.
- Expansion requires a variance due to the 150-foot natural environment lake setback.
- Property is under a land trust conservation easement and is managed with environmental sensitivity.
- Applicant reports Blanding's turtles present on the site.

Key Discussion Points

- Setback requirements: Natural Environment lakes require a 150-foot OHW setback for new construction.
- If rebuilt exactly in the same footprint within 180 days, no variance is needed.
- Any expansion of the footprint requires a variance. Height limits apply; structure cannot exceed original height unless a variance is granted.
- Stormwater runoff protection is a major focus due to proximity to the lake.
- The county recommends maintaining natural vegetation, considering gutters, rock drip lines, and erosion control measures.
- Property has no lawn and is already maintained naturally, which helps reduce runoff risks.

- Presence of Blanding's turtles adds an environmental consideration; nesting seasons must be respected.
- No architectural blueprints are required. County does not enforce state building code.
- For a variance: Certificate of Survey is required. Survey must show property boundaries, structure footprint, and proposed height.
- A wetland delineation will be required within the exhibit area.
- Surveyors commonly used by the county can prepare boundary surveys and wetland exhibits.

Required Submittals for Variance

- ☐ Certificate of Survey (boundary + exhibit area)
- ☐ Wetland Delineation (within exhibit area)
- ☐ Completed Variance Application
- ☐ Proposed structure dimensions included on survey
- ☐ Stormwater considerations (as needed)

Next Steps

- Decide whether to pursue variance or rebuild within original footprint.
 - If variance is desired, select a surveyor from list provided by staff.
 - Coordinate with surveyor and county staff regarding exhibit area, structure location, and footprint details.
 - Submit variance application and required materials.
 - Review meeting deadline calendar provided by staff (green = application deadline; orange = public hearing date).
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Crow Wing County Land Services

Variance Application

Crow Wing County Land Services Department • 322 Laurel Street Brainerd, MN 56401 • 218-824-1010 • landservices@crowwing.gov

Applicant Name: derrick phillips

Date application submitted: 08-19-2026

Parcel Number(s): 77120510

Mailing Address: 2461 como ave.

City: Saint Paul

Zip: 55108

Property Owner Information:

Owner Name: PHILLIPS, DERRICK A

Physical Address: 31511 OLD BRIDGE RD

City: MERRIFIELD

Zip: 56465

Township: MISSION TOWNSHIP

Zoning: AGF

Deeded Acres: 45.92 Riparian: Yes

Lake/River Name: LITTLE PINE RIVER

Required Information:

Did you attend a Development Review Team (DRT) meeting?: Yes

Date of Development Review Team (DRT) meeting?: 07-13-2026

Certificate of survey on file?: Yes

Existing Septic Information: There is no septic system on this property

Wetland information on file?: Yes

Project Specifics

Type of Variance: Lake/River Setback; Other

If other, please specify:

Please explain your request:

We are wanting to rebuild our primitive cabin that burned down, slightly larger than the original footprint and height in the same location, but still a primitive cabin. The variance request is due to proximity to pond/swamp edge. We will not be adding any impervious ground cover beyond footprint of the building, or adding lawn.

APPLICANT FINDINGS OF FACT - VARIANCE

Name of Applicant: Derrick Phillips

PID: 77120510

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Is the Variance request in harmony with the purposes and intent of the Ordinance?

- I believe so, as we strongly support clean water and use the land accordingly

Is the Variance consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?

- Yes, because we are not and do not want to make any major changes to the land or its use. This being a primitive cabin will help protect water resources by not adding lawn or impervious landscaping.

Is the property owner proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Land Use Ordinance?

- yes, though we are closer to the pond than current setback requirements. since we do not use any fertilizer and use the property as a primitive space we think we will not have a negative impact.

Is the need for a Variance due to circumstances unique to the property and not created by the property owner?

- needed due to wildfire that destroyed original building

Will the issuance of a Variance maintain the essential character of the locality?

- yes, We have enjoyed the property as is for many decades and strongly want to maintain it that way

Does the need for a Variance involve more than economic considerations?

- not sure how to answer this