

Appendix F
DNR Consultations and Correspondence



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological Resources – Reg. 4

261 Hwy 15 South

New Ulm, MN 56073-8915

Phone: (507) 359-6073 Fax: (507) 359-6018 E-mail: kevin.mixon@dnr.state.mn.us

April 13, 2009

Mr. Bruce Jennings
DeWild Grant Reckert and Associates Company
1302 South Union Street
PO Box 511
Rock Rapids, IA 51246

In re: West Stevens Wind LWECS
Preliminary Review
Stevens County, MN

Dear Mr. Jennings:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has received information concerning the above referenced wind project located in Stevens County, MN. The DNR is providing the following comments as a mechanism to collaboratively work together to identify potential natural resource issues that should be considered during project development.

Our regional office review of the Natural Heritage Information System does not indicate that any known rare features exist in or adjacent to your project area. However, an official review should be submitted and any issues resolved prior to applying for the permit. A NHIS request form can be found at the following web link, http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/nhis_data_request.pdf. The NHIS tracks important information on the distribution of rare natural plants, animals and biological communities throughout Minnesota. This information will assist in the planning of your wind project. Please contact Lisa Joyal (651-259-5109) if more detailed information is needed to ensure the known locations of rare features are avoided.

National Wetland Inventory mapping indicates the presence of wetlands near turbine locations 4, 7, 9, 10, and on the access road between turbine 2 and 3. A qualified wetland scientist should review all turbine locations, access roads, and transmission lines, and substations for potential wetland impacts. The impacts should be avoided, however if avoidance is not possible then you need to contact the Board of Water and Soil Resources (www.bwsr.state.mn.us) to determine if a Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) permit is required. The wetland information should be submitted as part of your Site Application with the Public Utilities Commission. In addition, careful consideration should be given to the drainage patterns and ditches that will be intercepted by the access roads to ensure the hydrology to existing wetlands is maintained.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency issues the National Pollution Discharge and Elimination System/State Disposal System permit in order to control stormwater runoff from construction sites. Information on the permit process can be obtained at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwater-c.html>.

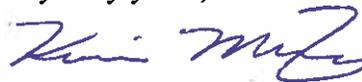
Minnesota Administrative Rules 7836.0500, Subpart 7, requires the applicant to analyze potential environmental impacts of the project, proposed mitigative measures, and any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided. Groundwater resources, surface waters, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, rare and unique natural resources, etc. are included. In order to address the potential environmental impacts the applicant should resolve all outstanding issues with the DNR prior to applying for the Large Wind Energy Conversion System permit from the Public Utilities Commission.

Wind projects disturb soils, surface water and associated ground cover. These disturbances create openings for invasive species that quickly colonize these sites putting adjoining lands and habitat at risk. In addition, this can cause erosion and sedimentation into adjacent waters. The DNR, Soil and Water Conservation District, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency or the Department of Agriculture may recommend Best Management Practices (BMP's) for different areas of the project. The BMP's help address construction and maintenance activities to minimize impacts to soil, water and existing ground cover. The BMP's may also provide site restoration recommendations.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife from wind development should be adhered to as part of the project. The guidelines and additional information can be found at the following site:
[http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/Service Interim Guidelines. PDF](http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/Service%20Interim%20Guidelines.PDF)

The DNR looks forward to working in a positive and collaborative manner on this project to ensure that sustainable energy sources are developed while protecting Minnesota's natural resources. Please contact me directly at 507-359-6073 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



Kevin Mixon
Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist
Division of Ecological Services

Cc: Mark Matuska, DNR
Lisa Joyal, DNR
Matt Langan, DNR
John Schladweiler, DNR
Ken Varland, DNR
Curt Vacek, DNR
David Trauba, DNR
Kevin Kotts, DNR
Peter Beusseler, DNR
Jill Utrup, U.S. FWS

For Agency Use Only:			
Received _____	Due _____	RUSH	
Related ERDB# _____			
Search Radius _____ mi.	ER/All	Map'd _____	EOs _____
NoR/ NoC/ NoE/ Std/ Sub	Let _____	Inv _____	Log out _____

MINNESOTA NATURAL HERITAGE INFORMATION SYSTEM (NHIS) DATA REQUEST FORM

DATE OF REQUEST May 22, 2009

WHO IS REQUESTING THE INFORMATION?

Name and Title Bruce Jennings

Agency/Company DeWild Grant Reckert and Associates Company

Mailing Address 1302 South Union St, PO Box 511 Rock Rapids IA 51246
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Phone 712-472-2531 FAX 712-472-2710 e-mail bjennings@dgrnet.com

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU NEED?

Preferred Reply Method: Email US Mail

- Printouts of known occurrences of federally and state listed plants and animals; native plant communities; and aggregation sites such as bat hibernacula, colonial waterbird nesting sites, and prairie chicken booming grounds.
 - With Environmental Review
 - Printouts Only; No Review Needed
- Printouts of information listed above, plus geological features and state rare species with no legal status.
 - With Environmental Review
 - Printouts Only; No Review Needed
- Other (describe) _____

INFORMATION WE NEED FROM YOU:

- 1) Enclose a map of the project boundary (topographic maps or aerial photos are preferred).
- 2) If possible, please provide a GIS shapefile (NAD 83, UTM Zone 15N) of the project area.
- 3) List the following locational information (attach additional sheets if necessary):

For Agency Use Only:	<u>County</u>	<u>Township #</u>	<u>Range #</u>	<u>Section(s) (please list all sections)</u>
	<u>Stevens</u>	<u>T125N</u>	<u>R44W</u>	<u>16, 17, 28, 29, and 33</u>
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

- 4) Please provide the following information (attach additional sheets if necessary):

Project Name <u>West Stevens Wind</u>
Project Proposer <u>West Stevens Wind, LLC</u>
Detailed Project Description (see instructions, please) <u>Construction of 13 wind turbines and associated access roads and buried power lines. Wind machines will be mounted on steel towers with concrete foundations, and will occupy less than one acre per machine. Power lines will be buried approximately four feet below grade. Temporary roadways will be constructed for machinery and equipment during construction, and minor permanent roadways will provide access.</u>
Current/Past Land-Use of Project Site <u>Tilled agriculture</u>

5) You will be provided with a response letter, an index database printout, and a detailed database printout. Describe how you plan to use this information, including in what form and detail, if any, you wish to publish this information. (Please note that we do not generally give permission to publish the detailed database printout.)

This information will be used to select specific sites for wind turbines which avoid to the extent practicable impacts on other resources, and to design mitigation for impacts which can not be avoided. Information will be published only to the extent needed to define or describe mitigation.

TURN-AROUND TIME

Requests generally take 3 weeks from date of receipt to process, and are processed in the order received. Rush requests are processed in 2 weeks or less, and include an extra fee.

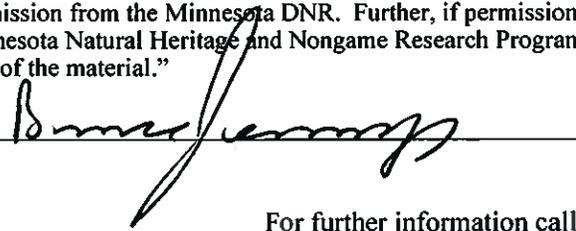
FEEES

For-profit organizations, including consultants working for governmental agencies, are charged a fee for this service. In addition, a fee may be charged for large requests from any source. A surcharge of \$50 is applied for ALL rush orders; if this is a rush order, please check the blank below. All fees are subject to change. Please do not include payment with your request; an invoice will be sent to you.

Rush - (\$50 fee for ALL rush orders)

"The information supplied above is complete and accurate. I understand that material supplied to me from the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System is copyrighted and that I am not permitted to reproduce or publish any of this copyrighted material without prior written permission from the Minnesota DNR. Further, if permission to publish is given, I understand that I must credit the Minnesota Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as the source of the material."

Signature
(required)



Mail or email completed forms to:

For further information call:

Lisa Joyal (for projects associated with environmental reviews; e.g., EAWs)
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator
lisa.joyal@dnr.state.mn.us

(651) 259-5109

or

Sharron Nelson (for general requests)
Assistant Database Manager
sharron.nelson@dnr.state.mn.us

(651) 259-5123

at

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Or FAX completed forms to: (651) 296-1811

Additional information about the Natural Heritage & Nongame Research Program is available at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/>

For Agency Use Only:

EO's requiring comment _____

Sources contacted	Topic	Response
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Response Summary _____

Responder _____



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological Resources, Box 25

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025

Phone: (651) 259-5107 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: heidi.cyr@dnr.state.mn.us

June 29, 2009

Correspondence # ERDB 20090903

Mr. Bruce Jennings
DeWild Grant Reckert & Associates Co.
1302 South Union Street
Rock Rapids, IA 51246

RE: Natural Heritage information in the vicinity of the proposed West Stevens Wind; T125N R44W Section 16, 17, 28, 29, & 33; Stevens County

Dear Mr. Jennings,

As requested, the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System has been queried to determine if any rare species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the proposed project. Based on this query, there are no known occurrences of rare features in the area searched.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Division of Ecological Resources, Department of Natural Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area.

This letter does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential effects to these rare features. Additional rare features for which we have no data may be present in the project area, or there may be other natural resource concerns associated with the proposed project. For these concerns, please contact your DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Nathan Kestner at 218-308-2672. Please be aware that additional site assessments or review may be required.

Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources. An invoice will be mailed to you under separate cover.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Cyr', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Heidi Cyr
Endangered Species Environmental Review Specialist