

Bill Persinger
905 Quail Hollow Circle
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

May 31, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E. Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line, Park Rapids

Commissioners:

My wife and I are property owners along County 18 in Park Rapids. The proposed transmission line will go over a significant amount of our property. We are writing today to encourage you to use an alternate route and to bury the proposed transmission line wherever it is routed. The charm of the lake country is its beautiful scenery. This draws tourists to the area which is a key ingredient of the local economy. We are concerned that the proposed transmission line will ruin the aesthetics of the area thereby impacting tourism and the value of our property. Please take a long term view and do not allow an ugly transmission line ruin the beautiful lake country.

Thank You

Bill & Lynn Persinger

Comment Form



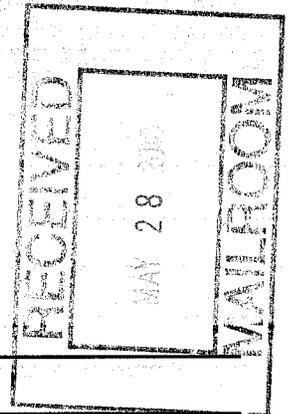
Public Information and Scoping Meeting Comment Form

Great River Energy – Potato Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project (PUC No. ET2/TL-10-86)

We need your input. Please take a few minutes to provide your comments or questions for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission high-voltage transmission line routing and environmental review process. You are welcome to use this form or your own correspondence.

Please check the following issues that are important to you for the siting of this proposed transmission line project.

- Project Purpose *Need?*
- Visual and Aesthetics *Towers and line too big for our small area.*
- Proximity to Residences/Businesses *Too close to our house!*
- Land Use (zoning and future planning)
- Public Health and Safety (EMF, stray voltage, implantable devices) *Major worries about health and safety issues!*
- Interference (radio, television, satellite, GPS)
- Water Resource (lakes, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, floodplains)
- Biological Resources (flora, fauna, habitat)
- Endangered/Threatened Resources
- Historic and Cultural Sites
- Noise *once again too close to our house.*
- Recreational Resources
- Other – Please explain: _____



Please expand upon or provide more specifics with respect to the issues you checked above.

Our home sits only 200' off of 141st Avenue, this is way too close for health and safety issues! Also noise.
There are 6 other homes along 141st Ave and they to all have short driveways like we do. None of us want this line to come through!

Continued on reverse side

Comment Form



Reasonable alternative routes, route segments or alignments. If the proposed route is not your preferred route, please suggest reasonable route/segment/construction alternatives that may be included in the scoping decision document and evaluated in the environmental assessment.

We suggest that the North Emmerville route be taken as it would impact a lot less families, or not to build it at all.

Additional information and comments. Please identify relevant site-specific information for the environmental analysis. In your opinion, what are the most sensitive resources (biological, historical, recreational, land/water, etc.) in the project area and why? *Additional space is provided on the last page of this form.*

Comment Form



Additional information and comments. Please identify relevant site-specific information for the environmental analysis along the proposed and alternative routes. In your opinion, what are the most sensitive resources (biological, historical, recreational, land/water, etc.) in the project area and why? *Additional space is provided on the back of this sheet.*

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PARTICIPATE.
Please submit comments by the following means:

- Leave this form at the meeting tonight.
- Mail, email or fax the form or a letter to the following address:

Scott Ek
Office of Energy Security, Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500 | St. Paul, MN | 55115
Email: scott.ek@state.mn.us | Facsimile: 651-297-7891

- Electronically at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/publicComments.html>

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS BY 4:30PM, TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2010

NAME: Victor & Kathy Pickett

REPRESENTING (Optional): _____

ADDRESS: 22854 141st Ave

CITY: Park Rapids STATE: MN ZIP: 56470

EMAIL: _____

Completing this form will automatically add you to our project mailing list. If you prefer to not be on the mailing list, please check the box below.

I do not wish to be on the project mailing list.

Visit <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=26124> for more information.

May 25, 2010



MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
121—7TH PLACE EAST
SUITE 350
ST PAUL, MN 55101-2147

Re: Great River Energy—In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Potato Lake 115kV Transmission Line and Substation in Park Rapids, MN.
Docket No. ET2/TL-10-86

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing this letter following the public informational meeting of May 18, 2010, in Park Rapids, Minnesota, regarding the above project.

At this meeting data was given regarding the issues of this proposed line. The transmission line is a corporation/cooperative proposal that is not sensitive to Premier Lakes/Wetlands/Landowners/Wildlife/Fisheries and the complete Mississippi River Watershed.

For over 30 years I have worked with the Potato Lake Association to protect this major watershed area and will continue to fight for it. I feel the applicant has not submitted sufficient relevant information regarding the route description, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS and mitigation measures. This should render a complete rejection of the application in its entirety.

The proposed GRE routes affect over 50 property owners, many having a significant investment in property, homes, farms, investment acreage, resorts and other businesses. Several are over a million dollars. In a few cases taking property away from the lake home owners would make their lots nonconforming with the shore land ordinances.

I personally believe ongoing research points us to a revolution in how energy is generated, transmitted and distributed. Clean technological companies are spending millions of dollars to solve our energy issues and cutting the capital cost of solar energy (power). Developing new power, new transmitting methods and distributing energy is in the very near future.

A question remains as to whether power demand increased or decreased for Itasca Mantrap Cooperative which buys wholesale power from GRE. I believe this project can be delayed until new technologies are developed. We've seen what happens when our US Auto Industries and Banking/Financial Corporations do business as usual. I ask that Great River Energy/Itasca Mantrap Cooperative not do business as usual. Look for a better solution!

I am upset with GRE's finished project on Highway 34 East of Park Rapids. Their track record is not good. It shows their lack of sensitive to our beautiful Park Rapids Lakes and Tourism Area. Please deny them the right to do this type of development and destruction on anymore of the natural resources in our area.

GRE's application mentions needs based into the future for 5+ years, 7+years and 20-30+years for the total powering of this transmission line. (What is the REAL NEED? And when does it really happen?) GRE, by their own application, seems to hedge on the needs issue and skirts around it using their own timelines. A good plan of action would be to wait until our economy has stabilized to better project future demand and needed development.

As the PUC you have the power, right (and maybe obligation) to reject this application and require additional information to be submitted, or accept the application as complete upon filing of supplemental information.

In closing I raise a final concern as to GRE's methods of developing substations and transmission lines. GRE has completed several projects in the Park Rapids Area. I questions how these projects are usually (always) under 10 miles in length. Is it because they know a Certificate of Need is not a requirement for less than 10 miles? It doesn't seem to pass the smell test!

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and submit it to your file on Docket No. ET2/TL-10-86. Hopefully this application will not be rubberstamped by the PUC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tony Platz, Dorothy Platz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Tony and Dorothy Platz
15576 Co Rd #18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Ek, Scott (COMM)

From: Riley, Michael [mriley@prukc.com]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 01, 2010 4:14 PM**To:** Ek, Scott (COMM)**Cc:** Riley, Michael**Subject:** Proposed 115 kilovolt Potato Lake Substation, Project ID : 023601200

Mr. Scott Ek

State Permit Manager

Office of Energy Security

85 7th Place East. Suite 500

86 St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Mr. Ek,

I own a small vacation home at 22628 Green Day Dr. on the west side of Potato Lake in Park Rapids, Minnesota. Some time in the next couple of years, I plan on building a substantial home on this lot and spending from six to eight months a year in this home. I was recently notified by my neighbors that there is a proposed new transmission line on a route that directly impacts the south end of Potato Lake which is where I access my home from Green Day Drive. The reason I started vacationing yearly in the Park Rapids area in 1971 was based on several factors, including the number of lakes, seclusion, "home town" atmosphere and most of all the...general beauty of the area. My home is not in the 500 ft. "impact area" but, whatever affects the neighborhood also impacts my property value and, more importantly...my lifestyle. Within 3 or 4 hours drive of my home in Overland Park, KS there are literally hundreds of thousands of acres of lakes...including the Lake of the Ozarks that has more shoreline than all of the Great Lakes combined...however, I still chose to drive 10.5 hours each way to Park Rapids three or four times a year to vacation.

I understand that there is an alternative northern route that impacts many fewer homes. Also, I was told that there may not be an immediate (ie. 5-20 years) need for a new power line. Please consider the total cost (financial, emotional, economical, etc.) to the number of people affected, the ecological impact to the community and visitors / vacationers and time frame needed for the improvements before choosing a final route for the power line.

Sincerely,

*Michael J. Riley***Broker Associate****Prudential Kansas City Realty****8101 College Blvd., Suite 100****Overland Park, KS 66210**

Office: 913-661-2323 / 800-590-5804**Mobile: 913-707-0006****Efax: 913-981-8408****mriley@prukc.com**

Gordon Ruhnke
15397 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 2010

Office of Energy Security
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Re: Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr. Ek:

I live at a "pinchpoint" on County 18, the proposed route by Great River Energy to construct a 115 kV transmission line. I am against any action that would allow Great River Energy (GRE) to construct a transmission line on County 18. I would experience a tremendous loss if the line were to run in front of my home. My only buffer on County 18 are the trees my wife and I planted together about 50 years ago.

This region is a highly visual sensitive area. Distribution lines are already buried on County 18. If there is a need for "reliable" power, then put the line on state and county land as it stretches from Highway 71 to CSAH 4. If there is a need to travel down CSAH 4, there is already a corridor and distribution lines in place to accommodate I ask the state to also place the substation further north in alignment GRE's plans to expand west.

I have concern that Great River needs to build a nearly outdated mode poles and lines in an age when burying the lines is a desirable option. The need for 115kV of power is not immediate nor have they made the case that it will be needed in 10 to 40 years

The northern route is made up of primarily county and state land, affecting as few private properties as possible while preserving the aesthetics of our lake sensitive region and tourism industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gordon Ruhnke
Property owner



Jonathan and Kelly Schupp
Northern Pines Lodge Family Resort
14588 230th Street
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 2010

Office of Energy Security
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Re: Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr. Ek:

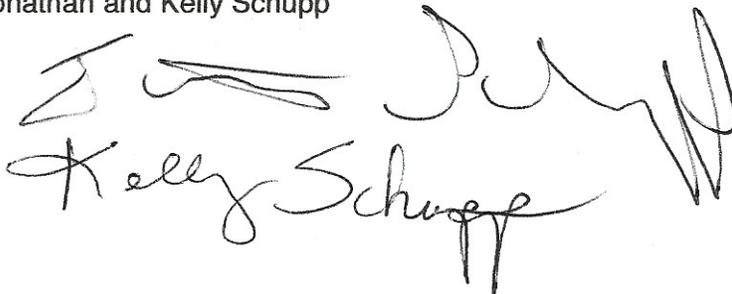
We own and operate Northern Pine Lodge on Potato Lake. Our resort is nestled among 140 acres of pine and birch trees at the end of a private road. This road would be impacted by construction if Great River Energy were to erect a 115 kV transmission line on their proposed or alternate routes. The affect would also impact our business, the people who work here, and the people who come to explore what we have to offer.

Our guests come to enjoy 2,000 feet of shoreline with a safe sandy beach for swimming. Activities were offer include tennis, shuffleboard, ping-pong, basketball, miniature golf, hiking trails, croquet, volleyball, badminton, bicycles, horseshoes, indoor/outdoor play for children, a recreational lodge, and library. We promote our scenic, private drive as a play to get out and jog.

We oppose action that would allow Great River Energy (GRE) to construct a transmission line on County18 and 230th Street. We ask the Office of Energy Security and Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to consider other options to mitigate impact to businesses such as ours along GRE's proposed route. People are asking about need and the possibility that lines could be buried as technologies progress. There is also a solution on a citizens' Northern Route that would be a way to mitigate concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jonathan and Kelly Schupp



The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is for Jonathan Schupp, and the bottom signature is for Kelly Schupp. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Shaw
15410 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 2010

Office of Energy Security
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

DOCKET #TL-10-86

Dear Mr. Ek:

I would like to thank the Office of Energy Security (OES) for allowing citizens a voice in regard to Great River Energy's (GRE) proposed transmission line and substation. It is beyond my scope of comprehension to learn most property owners, who have land compromised with the taking of easements and destruction of personal property, don't usually get this luxury. Utility companies can and do hold the power of eminent domain above the heads of many, and, in my opinion, have taken advantage of innocent people when wielding that power for the "greater good."

As a resident on County 18 and a would-be casualty if the line were to be approved as proposed, my thanks also extend to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) who gave us property owners an opportunity to do some scoping of our own in finding the best possible solution to resolve this matter for our region.

The easement GRE is requesting steps over our garage, paces away from our front door. Directly across from us, the easement swallows our neighbor's home and garage completely. He, too, knows how easily big energy can take one's dreams. Because he is quite ill and lost his wife in November, he hasn't been able to represent himself well. I am writing on behalf of him and others who share a unified voice. We want this line to do as little harm to human settlements, our cultural values, an integral tourism industry, threatened species, and the environment as possible while meeting the needs of Itasca-Mantrap (I-M) customers.

At the March 25 meeting with the PUC, several property owners put forth various route options in addition to what GRE proposed as a way to demonstrate a variety of choices to be looked at further. GRE had addressed County 40 in their application. There were thoughts of putting it south of County 18. Another viable solution, one the OES declared to be "reasonable," would run a linear path through a Northern Route on predominately state and county land. The PUC determined there were enough route options with merit to be studied further by local residents with first-hand knowledge of the cultural values and riches in this community.

That task was not taken lightly. People had a lot to say about route options when asked. Over time, some routes began to stand out with clear advantages. The focus of our neighborhood went beyond personal hardships (knowing full-well what it felt like to have a transmission line sent to your doorstep) to doing what was best for the overall scope of the project.

As it turns out a citizens' Northern Route eventually stood out as the optimum solution, one favored by community members and the County 18 group majority. The timing of this line was also weighed knowing technologies and advancements in burying lines should also be considered.

Why Counties 18 and 40 are not good options

Many of the residents on County 18 saw the same negative issues to also be located on County 40. Once fully studied, County 40 made no more sense for a transmission line than County 18.

- Both impact Potato Lake, a premier 2,100-acre, recreational lake.
- Both have distribution lines already buried to create an aesthetically desirable north woods appeal. Having buried distribution lines is great for businesses, property values, housing developments, and overall tourism-industry appeal.
- Both are a part of a recreational lake chain system in the heart of vacationland. It is a prime source of tourism dollars, direct and indirect, to the region.
- Both have lake resorts or mom and pop industries that depend on year-long survival with operations drawing customers three to four months out of the year. Resorts struggle in today's economy. Boulder Beach Resort (Attachment A) and Northern Pines Lodge (Attachment B), located along GRE's route, work hard to make a living and provide employment to area residents. Northern Pines boasts 140 acres of forest and lakeshore, and the route proposed by GRE would directly devastate their livelihood and potential to draw guests. Guests from across the country come here and make it a family tradition to stay at area resorts annually. Because of the resort industry, more people are able to celebrate lake living without having to make major investments in properties. Guests are not likely to want to take their scenic morning walk under towering potential health hazards (EMFs). We can't take livelihoods away from local resort owners. Visitors shop, eat, and play at local establishments and take in special events, so we aren't just talking about two resorts. The impact would create a ripple effect.
- Both have residents with a vested interest in keeping Potato Lake alive. Lakeshore property owners work as stewards to maintain the lake's environmental health. Potato Lake is a delicate and rare state feature that needs protection from clearing, run-off, and hazardous chemicals that would be used to spray the undergrowth of transmission lines.
- Both rely on a tree buffer as a shelter to homes and to mitigate road traffic, noise, and disturbance.
- Both have extreme curves and turns that would take more room for necessary guide wires and extra towers.

- Both have premium lakefront properties that would be significantly impacted by the taking of easements and trees. Waterfront property values account for about 60 percent of the total property value of Hubbard County. When combined, 80 percent of the total property value of Arago, Crow Wing Lake, Lake Emma, Lakeport, Mantrap, and Nevis Townships is waterfront. Lake Emma Township waterfront property values alone exceed the total combined value of all cities in Hubbard including Park Rapids, Nevis, Akeley, and LaPorte. (In our case, our property was an investment for our retirement. The line would turn our property into a non-conforming lot, rendering it impotent for further development within Hubbard County's Shoreland Ordinance guidelines. We already have a 100-foot setback from the lake. GRE's easement eats up the portion of our property from the road and over our garage. That only leaves us with our home, the steps, and short walkway in which we can make home improvements. A transmission line would be a tremendous de-value to our investment.)
- Both have major rivers and a sizeable recreational-lake chain that would be impacted. We only get one shot at protecting these four gems. This is no place for transmission lines. Eagle, Island, Potato, and Blue lakes would all be located in the path of this line. This makes no sense in an area that draws on a pristine north woods and lake country appeal as a draw to vacationers. This line would drive a stake through the heart of lake country.
- Both would connect to the proposed substation that would force the transmission lines to run on Highway 71. Highway 71 is the gateway to Itasca State Park and the Mississippi Headwaters. It is a sterling tourism destination location since the Mississippi River is one of the five major rivers of the world. It is a world-class attraction drawing visitors to the region throughout the year. On this path are businesses (shops), a campground/RV site, mini amusement park, golf course, cross-country ski trail, private airport, restaurant, and more. There is a group lobbying to continue the Heartland Trail, a recreational (bike) trail, north on 71 to Itasca State Park. The Highway 71 corridor also impacts the major lakes chain including Eagle and Island. Why this is so critical to point out is that GRE's field representative spoke to a group of property owners following the March 25 hearing with the PUC. At that time we learned this route is part of a larger picture. That, in fact, GRE plans to continue their "loop" to Pine Point in Becker County. Apparently this proposed route is one big project, but diced into increments of less than 10 miles thereby avoiding having to meet Certificate of Need requirements. I don't think anyone who is capable of connecting dots could say this was a small project. In any event, knowing what GRE did to the entrance of Park Rapids on Highway 34 east in 2009 (Attachment C), there is almost no one I have talked with who thinks this line should go on Highway 71. It would be best for all if lines on 71 could be mitigated as much as possible on this route at every possible instance.

More reasons why County 18 is not a good option

County 18 has additional reasons why it would be one of the least viable options for a transmission line.

- Threatened Species (state and federal) live, fly, and hunt in Potato River and dam site. (Attachments D & E) Yes, the trumpeter swans, bald and golden eagles are also beautiful creatures that we cherish. Onlookers come to photograph wildlife at the river because there is such an abundance of waterfowl here, and the river becomes such a hotbed of activity especially during the winter months when ice covers Potato Lake. You will find other areas in the county with eagles and trumpeters, but I doubt you will find an area with such a hub of activity. Potato River can have dozens of trumpeters at one time. This is another reason it is such a feeding ground for the eagles. The number one recommendation from the Minnesota DNR states that as a way to protect these birds, “avoidance” such as an alternate route or underground lines be used to mitigate harm to them. These threatened species have incredible wing spans that make navigating between lines difficult and result in electrocution. Other mitigation measures such as putting up deflectors, they say, “only serve to minimize impacts and will not be 100 percent effective.” We must do better than that.
 - Potato Lake, Potato River, and the Potato River dam are dynamic and rare feature here. It is unlike any other location in Hubbard County. It is an active hunting ground for eagle species feeding on waterfowl and small game. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act say it is illegal to “take” or bald eagles and further defines “taking as... wound, kill or disturb.” An alternate route would be a solution at this rich site. Yes, there are eagles and swans in other areas of the county, but not this many and not to this degree.
 - Other unique and threatened species on the County 18 proposed route are the heelsplitter mussels, Blanding turtles and colonial ducks.
- “Pinchpoint.” This is a phrase coined by GRE to describe difficult or awkward junctures at which no one wins. We, and our neighbor across the road, live at such a location. (Attachment F) Our neighbor’s home is located 92 feet from the road’s center line. Part of our garage is also within 150 feet. From the scoping we could see, this happens at a couple of locations. Yes, other alternative routes have homes within 100 feet of the center line, but they have room on the opposite of the road to make accommodate an alternative line placement. On County 18, “pinchpoints” are created at several locations. GRE show little attempt to work with property owners in these instances. They told us they take direction from the state. I certainly hope that’s true, but am not convinced.
- Rapid River Logging Camp Restaurant and shop (Attachment G) is located in one of those “pinchpoints” mentioned earlier. In existence for at least 55 years, this restaurant is a destination must-stop. A home hugs the road on the opposite side of the road. It appears GRE would be forced to clearcut the main entrance to this unique attraction that features hungry-man meals in the style

of our logging past. This place has historical, educational value for the generations of people who have eaten there.

- Developers and investors on County 18 will take a substantial hit to say the least if the proposed line were approved. Their developments are located across from a home in a “pinchpoint” situation (Attachment H). Take out the woods and their investment becomes less desirable.
- Because of all of the difficult locations along County 18, the lines will be forced to zigzag and further create a visual mess in a highly visual sensitive area.

Substation location

I continue to struggle with GRE’s proposed location of the substation. Actually, from our conversation with GRE, come to find out it wasn’t their preferred location either. I-M developed, leveled, and seeded the proposed site. (Attachment I) It seems as though an assumption had been made in regard to this project as being a “done deal.” As far as I know the PUC hasn’t permitted the substation project yet.

When looking at a map (Attachment J), the Mantrap substation is located to the east with the proposed Potato Lake substation located to the west. Quite obviously there’s a 2,100-acre lake smack dab between the two. An obvious body of water sits in the way of the substation sites. Why not eliminate the pain of going around all of those lakes, tender watersheds, and premium property value, and avoid them entirely? It makes sense that in finding an alternate route, the substation location should be moved in tangent with a new, alternate route.

Why not go around these land features as best as possible? Why not avoid high-traffic businesses and prime-dollar real estate on Counties 18 and 40? Why not mitigate a route on Highway 71 as much as possible and protect the diverse habitat for high numbers of threatened species on Potato River?

Further, this line won’t simply run from Highway 71 to CSAH 4 as presented by GRE. A transmission line is not an island. Once GRE is through with all of their plans, they will likely have connected the Long Lake Line to the Mantrap Substation. This proposed line on County 18, in fact, is not a small project as GRE would have anyone think. It is a part of bigger picture to complete a loop and line system to Pine Point. To be sure, they would be heading north on Highway 71 if the proposed route is approved.

Many residents saw the lack of regard for our cultural values in a highly visual sensitive area when GRE constructed the Long Lake Line in 2009 past the Lake Country Scenic Byway sign (Attachment C). The aftermath grew negative attention from residents and business owners. To use the words of MNDot’s Mark Anderson, Scenic Byways Coordinator, Transportation Enhancements Coordinator: “The Scenic Byways Program is a recognition program that identifies exceptional highway routes throughout the state that showcase scenic natural recreational, archaeological, historic or cultural intrinsic qualities.” Yet, the Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce executive director and chair of the Lake Country Scenic Byway organization wasn’t contacted when the line came

through Highway 34. She was displeased, but didn't make it an issue at the time because the trees had already been cut.

Why this subject is mentioned here, is because we don't want the same thing to happen on visually-sensitive roads as such as Highway 71 and Counties 18 and 40. In 2009, the work done by GRE's contractors demonstrated a lack of sensitivity.

In summary, to locate the substation further north, in line with expansion west to Pine Point, or at least in that vicinity, would solve all of the above problems. A citizens' Northern Route would be a solution to mitigate all of the above concerns and still meet the desires for reliable electrical service for I-M customers. The Northern Route would run from Highway 71 east to 280th Street on a straight path for eight miles. A luxury on this route is that it covers mostly state and county land for five miles. (Attachment J) . This route is located on the southern border of Clay and Clover Townships. From the vantage point of an aerial map, it is almost all compromised of undeveloped land.

Citizens' Northern Route (1 & 2)

The Northern Route runs from Highway 71 east to County 4 connects with 280th Street. It morphed from one thought into two during the Advisory Task Force (ATF) meetings for reasons that will be explained.

1) Northern Route 1 (Attachment J) is the solution referred to above. It is eight miles long. Ideally, the substation would be located one-half mile east of Highway 71 on public land. This route is preferred because it:

- Would tuck the substation away from the Highway 71 viewshed and protect the integrity of the Park Rapids region as the gateway to the Mississippi Headwaters for visitors driving from the south. Since a line on Highway 71 would also have to carry a distribution line, the poles would need to be designed closer together and on higher towers which would greatly stand out in the setting that is already there.
- Is still less than 10 miles in length so GRE would not have to secure a Certificate of Need.
- Would be located on state (1 mile) and county (4 miles) land, impacting as few property owners as possible.
- Impacts NO major lakes or major recreational lakes.
- Impacts NO major river formations.
- Crosses private property that is mostly undeveloped.
- Is in the vicinity of an existing pipeline. If these two utility companies would like to share easements, then that would spare property owners and users of Highway 71 as well. At the ATF meeting the point of whether or not that would happen was debated. Still an unknown at this time.
- Would impact fewer threatened species than the County 18 route, just because of the numbers of waterfowl in Potato River at the dam site.
- Would cost GRE less than the prime lakeshore properties located on Counties 18 and 40 and on Highway 71.

- Would avoid major businesses, attractions, shops, lake resorts, a golf course, campground, private airstrip and more.
- Would open snowmobile and ATV trails for multi-purpose use. I guess I see that as a good thing. There are some exiting snowmobile trails in that vicinity. It could connect users to other trails.
- Would create a natural firebreak as a safety precaution.
- It would run in a straight line for efficiency in pole placement.

As per which side of the township line this line would run, the ATF asked that public land be used. As per properties, the ATF indicated they would like whichever side impacts as few private owners in a negative way as possible.

I believe this proposed route is the most ideal for this GRE project. The one unknown at this time is the voltage of the present distribution line on CSAH 4. If it is a 34.5kV line, then GRE's line need go no further at this time, just as they proposed to do from the proposed Potato Lake substation to CSAH 4. It's important to remember that at this time GRE would not be connecting substation to substation on their proposed route anyway. They are saving that project for later. At the ATF meeting May 18, GRE's representative didn't know the voltage of the line on CSAH 4 north of the Mantrap substation, so this question has not been answered.

On a side note: I have to re-state that this really is a two-phase project. The lines GRE proposes to erect are built for 115kV of power, but they will only be used as 34.5 kV to help Itasca-Mantrap with their "reliability" service in the short term. Here is where everyone tends to get on edge with the entire project. GRE's long-range plans are to boost the system to 115 kV in the future. Just when that future will happen is an unknown at this time. Using the figures GRE put in their original application, that need was five to 10 years in the future. They are still using those numbers in their presentations.

However, on March 25 the PUC granted a request to include 2009 usage in their Yearly Adjusted Net Demand/Capability Chart that altered the projections significantly. Like everywhere else, the economy here took a downward turn and building and new construction has slowed. Only one new home was built in Park Rapids last year. There were 14 built the previous year and as many as 35 the year before that. Building permits issued by Hubbard County Environmental Services office last year were at their lowest since 2002 (I didn't investigate beyond 2002). This is my opinion, but I anticipate the new building projects to level off for some time to come.

Given the new figures and when speaking to a GRE engineer, she clearly stated that they may not plan to boost power to 115kV for another THIRTY TO FOURTY YEARS. I asked her again to make sure I heard correctly. This is why so many people are asking, "Why now?" Why build these enormous and, quite frankly, ugly towers that will be obsolete in the near future? Why do this to us property owners and businesses? It will be on our backs that these lines are built. Everyone knows we will not be compensated adequately for the disturbance to our homes. New technologies to bury lines will be available. Europe and parts of Asia have already made strides to bury 500 kV lines, 230 kV lines

are even more predominant. The Coalition for an Underground Alternative says that in San Diego “all new projects will be underground, and by the year 2020, all existing overhead lines will be buried.” This is only a 115 kV line. I believe it is time to expect more from utility companies.

I would propose that if the line on CSAH 4 were not 34.5 kV that at this time that:

1) 34.5 kV lines be put in on the existing distribution lines and hold off building outdated transmission towers until new technologies to bury lines becomes available, or

2) GRE completes the transmission line when they do decide to connect the Long Lake line to the Mantrap substation. **When they put in that line, it would run from Highway 34 to 280th Street and still meet the under 10-mile mark. This would allow private property owners on CSAH 4 to have some public input in this process. They should at least be allowed that much.**

2) Northern Route 2 would extend from Highway 71 to CSAH 4 and run south on CSAH 4 to the Mantrap substation. The route exceeds the 10 miles GRE would prefer because they would have to show need.

I have heard many say that is not a bad thing. Residents want them to have to show need. I could go either way and look to the PUC for guidance. I have seen numbers that GRE has come up with and question their transparency and ability to be forthright. I have seen what they can do with numbers to get them to work for them.

The route would be approximately 12.3 miles long, according to my calculations. GRE projected the route would be 13.2 miles. It could stop at the Mantrap substation and not continue on as shown in the ATV route. (For some reason there is an extra little tail there.)

This route would mitigate the problems that occur on Counties 18 and 40 and Highway 71, and would be preferred for the following reasons:

- It would force GRE to get a certificate of need and demonstrate as such to the private properties they would encounter.
- It impacts one recreational lake. (Blue Lake on the eastern edge).
- It impacts NO major river crossing. There are a few small river features, however.
- There is already an existing corridor in place. In the 1990s, CSAH 4 underwent road improvements, and federal dollars were used at that time. With the federal monies came safety mandates to be put in place. They included easements/clearing and taking out major curves in the road. As a result, CSAH went from a visually pleasing drive to one of efficiency and safety for motorists. The charm was lost. In any case, the route already has distribution lines in place and is set up to handle the utility upgrade; both physically and visually.

- Distribution lines are already in place. On Counties 18 and 40 they are not. If GRE could work with what is there, all that would need to be done is replacing the poles. Perhaps this could be included in the permit and GRE would not have to push their lines back into private properties.
- There are three homes within 100 feet from the center line compared with two both on Counties 18 and 40. The point I would like to make is that they don't appear to be at "pinchpoint" locations as on County 18. If one home were to be impacted, the line could cross the road to mitigate hardship.
- It would have fewer homes within 500 feet of the center line.
- Five fewer acres of wetlands would be impacted.
- The east tip of Pickerel Lake would be impacted, but because of past construction on CSAH 4 in the 1990s, there is clearing on the opposing side and work was done at that time build up that land. Pickerel Lake is not a recreational lake that I am aware.
- No lake resorts would be impacted.
- CSAH 4 doesn't have the business presence and tourism interests one finds on Highway 71.
- Would cost GRE less than the prime lakeshore properties located on Counties 18 and 40 and on Highway 71.
- Given the fact that this extended line is 12.3 miles, it is actually not impacting private property owners for five miles that belongs to the state and county. That leaves 7.3 miles. Of that, 7.3 miles, much of it is undeveloped land and would not impact homes, garages, businesses and children playing. Then, when looking at the larger picture, the Northern Route is better situated for expansion to the west and sparing another 3 miles of businesses and homes from future transmission line burden when connecting to the "loop." The Northern Route actually impacts fewer people and businesses in the scope of the larger picture when GRE plans its expansion.

I believe the Northern Route option 1 or 2 to be the best solution overall.

Worst-case scenario, if County 18 route approved Requests to be written into permit

In the event the PUC decides to grant GRE a permit to build a substation at the Potato Lake Substation site and run transmission lines along County 18, I have a few requests I would hope the commission takes into consideration.

GRE has indicated they would only need 100 feet in which to build their lines along County 18. I am asking commission members to restrict that route width to the least amount that could be taken and still be safe. I would go so far as to request 70 to 100 feet only be allowed.

On Memorial Weekend, several of us traveled up GRE's transmission line from Osage to the Pine Point substation. I have to say I thought this line was far more discreet than the workmanship that went into constructing the line on Highway 34. It was tastefully done with obvious consideration built in regard to the farm fields and personal property. At

some points, the poles were placed only 35 from the center of the road. I would request that lines similarly be placed within a 35-foot right of way or as close as possible especially in the “pinchpoint” segments. We property owners would prefer to have that in writing, if we may ask that of the PUC. We have heard stories from property owners on the Long Lake route in 2009. More was taken than was promised.

Our neighbor, Gordon Ruhnke and we live at the worst possible “pinchpoint” on the route. He is quite ill and lost his wife in November. We have spoken with him and asked for his input. He is not in favor of the route and does not want the line to run over his home. Further, he doesn’t want to see the red pines he and his late wife planted 50 years ago to be disturbed. That is his request, and my husband and I will honor his requests. That, of course, would mean the line would run to our property. If that is to occur, we would ask that special wording be written into the permit. **Would it be possible for the transmission tower to be placed as close to the road as possible? Would 35-feet be doable?** In a meeting with GRE’s field representative and engineer, we understood the pole would be placed on the Shield/Shaw property line. Our garage is within 150 feet of the center line.

Since we are not pushing the line on our unfortunate neighbor, we are asking for the best possible solution to this matter. Please have GRE place the line as close to the center line as possible at our location. This is quite a difficult “pinchpoint” location. (Arago: Section 36, SE/Todd: Sec. 1, N) (Attachment F)

GRE also said tower placements would be kept at 400-foot increments since distribution lines are already buried. Could that be written into the permit as well? The lines from Osage to the Pine Point substation looked to be about 400 feet.

As for transmission pole height, could this also be kept to a minimum size such as on the Osage/Pine Point line? Again, could this also be written into the permit? I believe the GRE engineer said they don’t have to be as tall when they aren’t carrying the distribution line. She was always straightforward and candid with us. We understood the poles on County 18 could be in the range of 60 feet or so. We would take whatever recommendation you would have that would still be considered safe. We are further requesting that the clearing be limited and reasonable by the OES.

As I said, we would request these issues be written into the permit ONLY if County 18 were chosen as a preferred route. Hopefully, I have given you insight to our cultural values and environmental concerns that will help you to see that there are solutions elsewhere.

You do not have an easy task in front of you, but I thank you for taking the time to minimize destruction to our homes, businesses, and the lakes area that is so dear to our hearts, and giving us the opportunity to be heard.

I hope you and your families are able to come to Park Rapids and enjoy what this region has to share.

Thank you again for your time and talents.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Shaw
Property Owner
Advisory Task Force member

Attachment A



Boulder Beach Resort- County 18

Attachment B



Northern Pines Lodge Family Resort – The road into this resort would be wiped out by transmission lines and the resort experience diminished for guests. This is located on GRE's pink alternate route as it runs north of County 18.

Attachment C

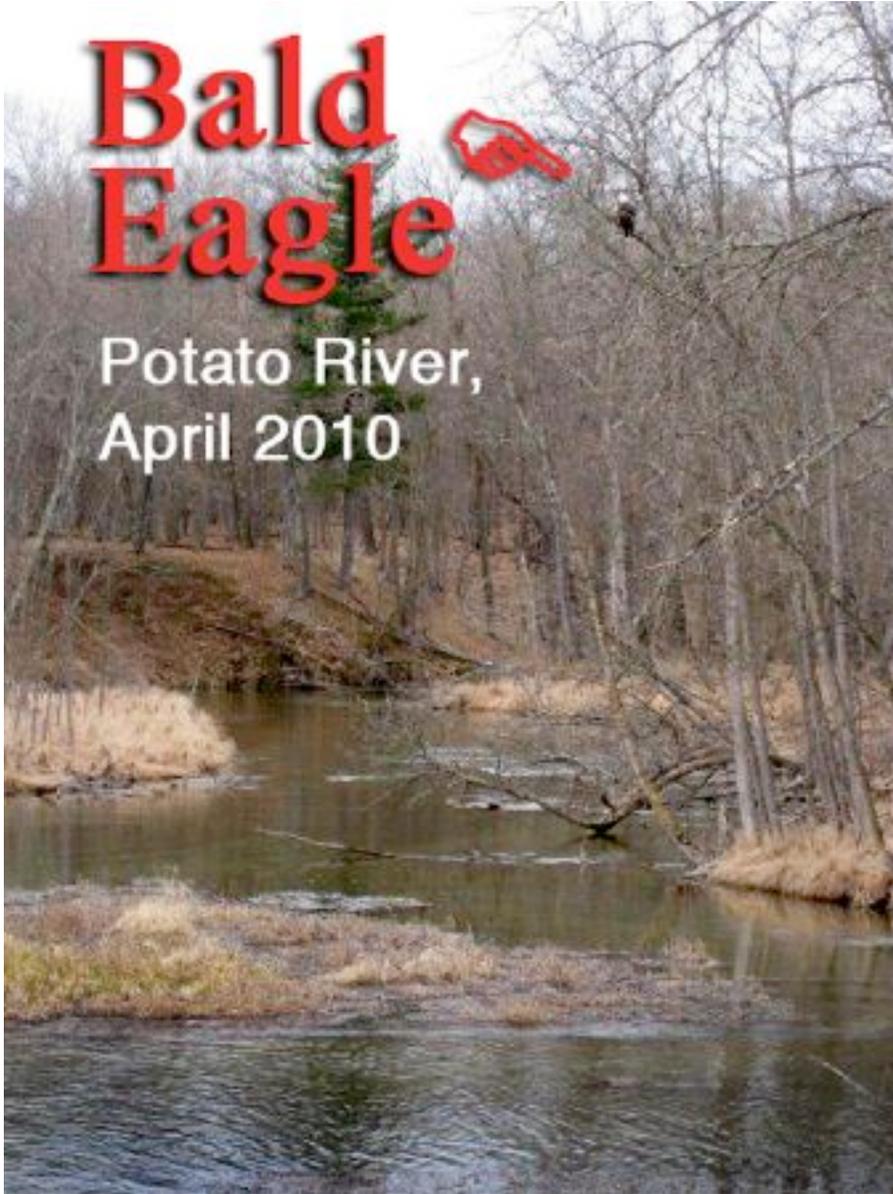


Great River Energy set a precedent when they constructed their “Long Lake” transmission line in 2009. Park Rapids’ welcome and Lake Country Scenic Byway sign, once nestled in a red pine stand, was stripped of its warmth with a clearcut, and a transmission tower was placed in its very vicinity. Park Rapids’ Chamber President and Lake Country Scenic Byway chair had not been notified. Residents and business owners were unhappy with the manner in which this was handled. Other stories such as this played out along the 2009 route, leaving a sense of distrust for Great River Energy’s sensitivities to our cultural and environmental values. A field of Showy Ladyslippers was wiped out. Some homeowners were unhappy with their treatments. One property owner in 2009 discovered more trees were cleared than were promised. Another drove past her drive because she didn’t recognize her own home. A possible lack of transparency in regard to the proposed Potato Lake line and substation made many question the trust issue.

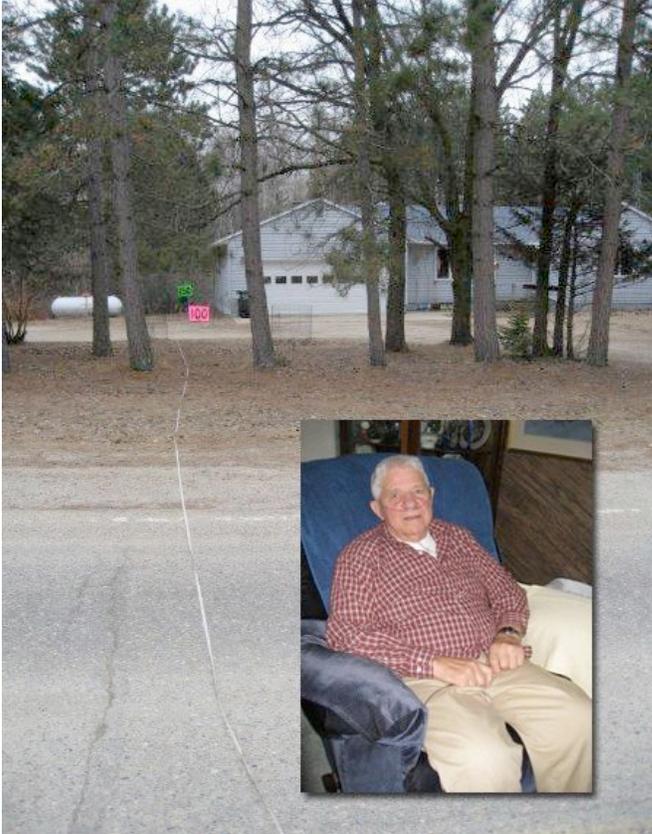
Attachment D



Attachment E



Attachment F – Gordon Ruhnke residence (Arago, Section 36, SE & Todd, Section 1, NE)



Shaw residence



Attachment G (Todd, Section 1, N & Arago, Section 36, S)



Attachment H & I – Another pinchpoint between home within 150 feet of center line and Logging Camp Restaurant which would lose its buffered entrance to a one-of-a-kind destination attraction for residents, summer residents and vacationers.

Siltalas residence



Attachment H (Arago, Section 36, S & Todd, Section 1, N)



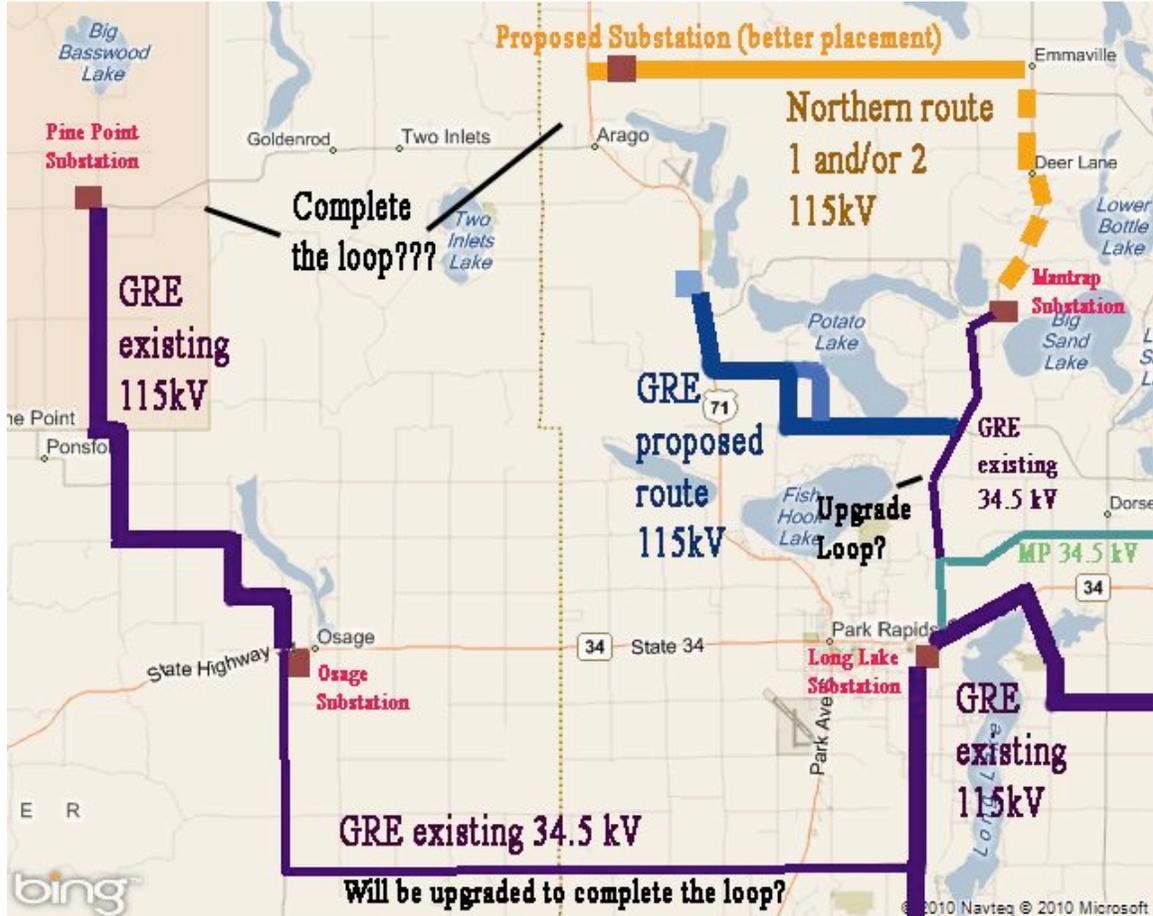
Pinchpoint – Home within 100 feet across from home development on river lot for sale.
Rothermel

Attachment I



The proposed site for the Potato Lake Substation has already been developed, leveled and seeded. Yet, as I understand, the substation is a part of Great River Energy's route application. Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative Services put out a newsletter to customers the weekend prior to the first Minnesota Public Utilities-appointed task force meeting on May 4. The newsletter featured the route and substation location. The word "proposed" was never used to explain their efforts to upgrade their system. This has created a lot of confusion for those directly and indirectly involved in our own scoping efforts.

Attachment J



Following the March 25 meeting with the Public Utilities Commission, a GRE representative informally stated to Sandy Struggelmeyer, Tay Odor, Gary and Liz Shaw GRE’s intention to complete “the loop” as they make upgrades for customers in Itasca-Mantrap’s service area. As we were trying to understand Great River’s intentions, this is where we heard the “115kV loop development” proposal. “Looping” is also noted in GRE’s application (Page 2-3). At this time we first understood the “loop” to be to Pine Point. GRE has at time backed away from the “Point Point loop” concept, but it was something we took to heart when studying the issue for the people in our service region. We wanted to understand what concerns were being looked at to help us in our scoping and finding a solution that works for the sensitivities in our region and at the same time making sure energy customers’ needs are being met, To build the Potato Lake line as proposed as presented makes it a 115 kV island in a sea of distribution and 34.5 kV lines. GRE is working in their under 10 mile limits so as avoid documentation requirements. Looking at a map makes it more obvious to what is being done. When you pull back and see the larger picture, locating the substation further north makes more sense. There is a great big lake and premium property standing between the Mantrap Substation and the proposed Potato Lake substation. A substation in line with the Northern route makes the most sense when all factors are weighed in this case. There will be a 115 kV line connecting the Long Lake Substation to Mantrap’s. They will be heading up CSAH 4 in any event. Why not keep the line off of such an obvious tourism industry route (Highway 71) as much as possible and protect about a dozen businesses and tourism interests on the yellow brick road, so to speak, to Itasca State Park.