# APPENDIX K

## Agency Correspondence

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GREAT RIVER ENERGY®

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

December 20, 2012

Mr. Gene Scott
Office of Aeronautics
Minnesota Department of Transportation
222 E. Plato Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55107-1618

RE: Proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kV Transmission Project
Scott and Rice Counties

Dear Mr. Scott:

Great River Energy is currently gathering data to be used in preparation of regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project in Scott and Rice counties (see enclosed fact sheet and map). Great River Energy intends to seek a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the Project from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

To improve reliability of the transmission system in the area and to address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading, Great River Energy proposes to construct a new double circuit 115 kV transmission line and rebuild existing 69 kV transmission lines as follows:

- Rebuild approximately 3.5 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" line to 115 kV standards from Prior Lake Junction south to Credit River Junction;
- Rebuild approximately 2.4 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-CR" line to 115 kV standards from Credit River Junction west past MVEC's Cleary Lake Substation to Xcel Energy's Credit River Substation;
- Permit the 2.0 miles of existing Great River Energy double circuit 69 kV "DA-AN" line to operate at 115 kV between the new Chub Lake Substation and Natchez Avenue (to be strung on quad circuit structures as part of the CapX2020 Brookings 345 kV project);
- Rebuild approximately 5.6 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" (New Market to Elko) 69 kV transmission line to 115 kV standards (along 250th Street between Panama Avenue and Natchez Avenue); and
- Construct approximately 5.4 miles of new double circuit transmission line from the New Market – Elko "MV-PN" line to Xcel Energy's Veseli 69 kV breaker station.

If you would like to learn more about the project, open house public meetings for the project will be held on:

**Tuesday, January 15, 2013**
**6:30-8 p.m.**
at:

Elko New Market - Scott County Library
110 J. Roberts Way
Elko New Market, MN 55054

**Wednesday, January 16, 2013**
**6:30-8 p.m.**
at:

Prior Lake High School
7575 150th St. W
Savage, MN 55372

In most cases, round wood transmission structures will be used that will range in height from 75 to 95 feet above ground.

Great River Energy is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on airports or airstrips in the project area.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, January 18, 2013. If you require further information or have questions regarding this project, please feel free to call me at 763-445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures: Fact Sheet/Project Map

s:\lega\environmental\transmission\projects\201719 Elko New Market Area Projects/ Agency Correspondence/ENMMnDOTltr.doc

# Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade

**Great River Energy**
**12300 Elm Creek Blvd**
**Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718**
**1-888-521-0130**
**www.greatriverenergy.com**

GREAT RIVER ENERGY®
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Project Need

Great River Energy, power supplier to Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) and 27 other Minnesota cooperatives, proposes to rebuild a portion of the existing 69 kV transmission system and construct a new double circuit transmission line in Scott and Rice counties. These upgrades will improve the reliability of the transmission system in the area, and address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading that were identified in a study of the 69 kV transmission system bounded by the Carver County, Scott County, Faribault and Owatonna areas.

## Project Goal/Description

This project includes constructing a new transmission line and rebuilding existing transmission lines. All lines will be built or rebuilt to 115 kV standards but will operate at 69 kV until load growth dictates the need for an increase in voltage. The lines that are rebuilt will generally remain in the current centerline; however, existing structures and other construction considerations may require that some portions be offset from the centerline. Where necessary, property owners along the existing lines will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements for additional transmission line right-of-way. Property owners along the new transmission line route will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements. The new transmission line route will require a 70-foot wide right-of-way, 35 feet on either side of the centerline.

Some segments of the transmission lines will carry distribution line underbuild **(see photo at right)**. In most cases, round wood structures ranging in height from 75 - 95 feet above ground will be used. Span lengths will range from 200 feet to 500 feet. This project will include the following components:

- Rebuild approximately 3.5 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" line to 115 kV standards from Prior Lake Junction south to Credit River Junction;
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- Construct approximately 5.4 miles of new double circuit transmission line **(see photo at right)** from the New Market – Elko "MV-PN" line to Xcel Energy's Veseli 69 kV breaker station.

*Typical 115 kV Wood Single Circuit Transmission Line Structure with Distribution Underbuild*

*Typical 115 kV Wood Double Circuit Transmission Line Structure without Distribution Underbuild*

## Trees

Removal of trees and vegetation along the transmission line right-of-way will be necessary for safety and maintenance purposes. A representative from Great River Energy will contact property owners before any tree work takes place to discuss the work and access to the easement area.

## Project Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Project contact and/or notifications | Winter 2012/2013 |
| Permitting | Winter 2013 – Spring 2014 |
| Survey/Design | Spring 2014 – Spring 2015 |
| Easement/Environmental permits | June 2014 – December 2014 |
| Transmission Line Construction | February 2015 - March 2016 |
| Energization | April 2016 |

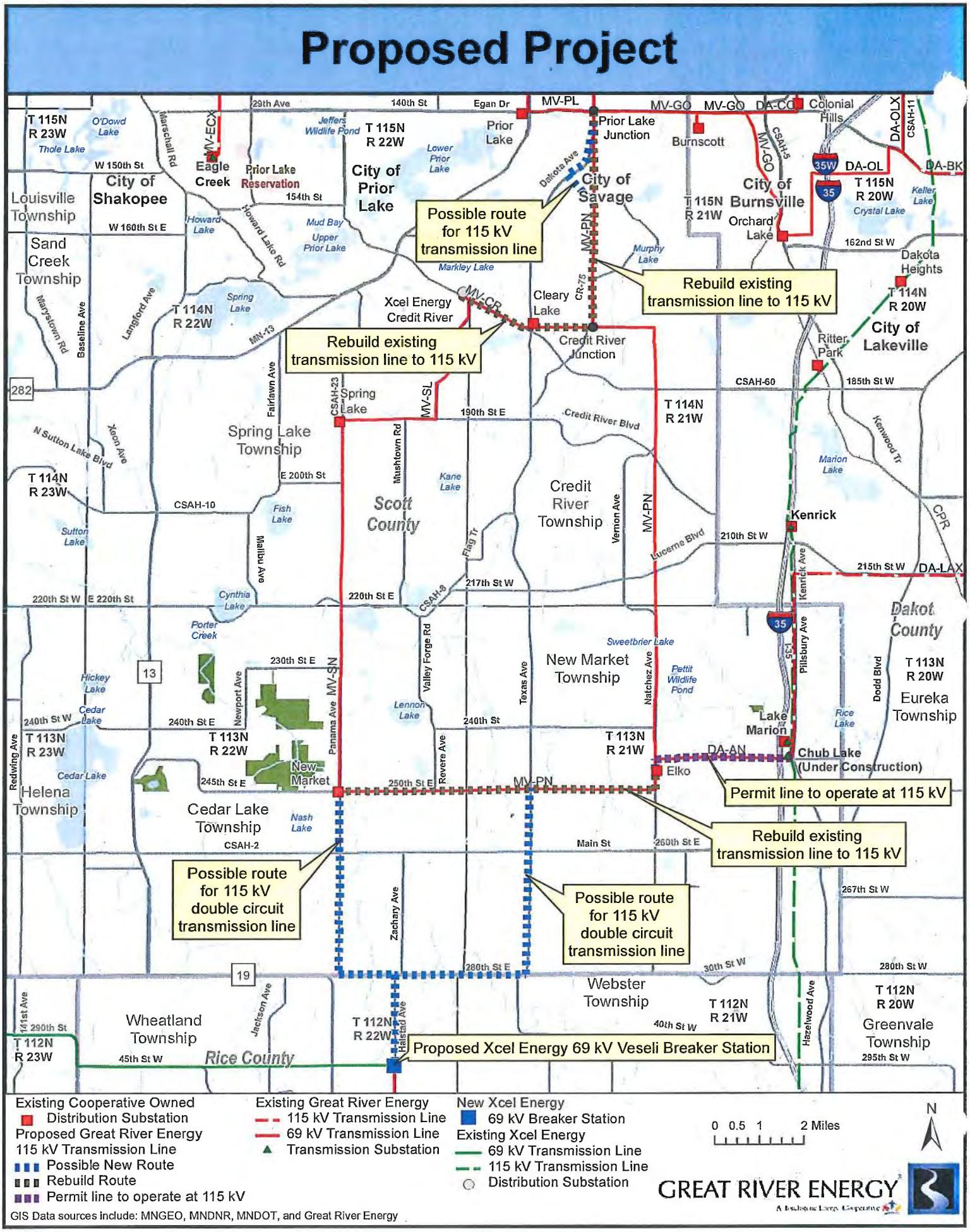
## For project updates and information contact:

Peter M. Schaub
Sr. Field Representative
Great River Energy - Land Rights Department
(763) 445-5976 or 1-888-521-0130
pschaub@grenergy.com

Carole Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy – Environmental Services Department
763-445-5214
cschmidt@grenergy.com

Date last revised: 12/7/2012

# Proposed Project



**Minnesota Department of Transportation**
**Office of Aeronautics**
Mail Stop 410
222 East Plato Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55107-1618



Phone: 651-234-7200
Fax: 651-234-7261

January 10, 2013

Ms. Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Thank you for your letter of December 20, 2012 concerning the proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115Kv Transmission Project. We have reviewed this project and find that it will not affect the airspace of any public airports. Further, the project appears to be far enough from all the private and personal use airports we are aware of, that it is not expected to have any impact on those airports.

I have enclosed a map that shows our understanding of the project and the locations of all the airports we have in our database. There may be additional personal use airports that we are not aware of because only those personal use airports within five miles of the nearest public airport are required to have a license from this office.

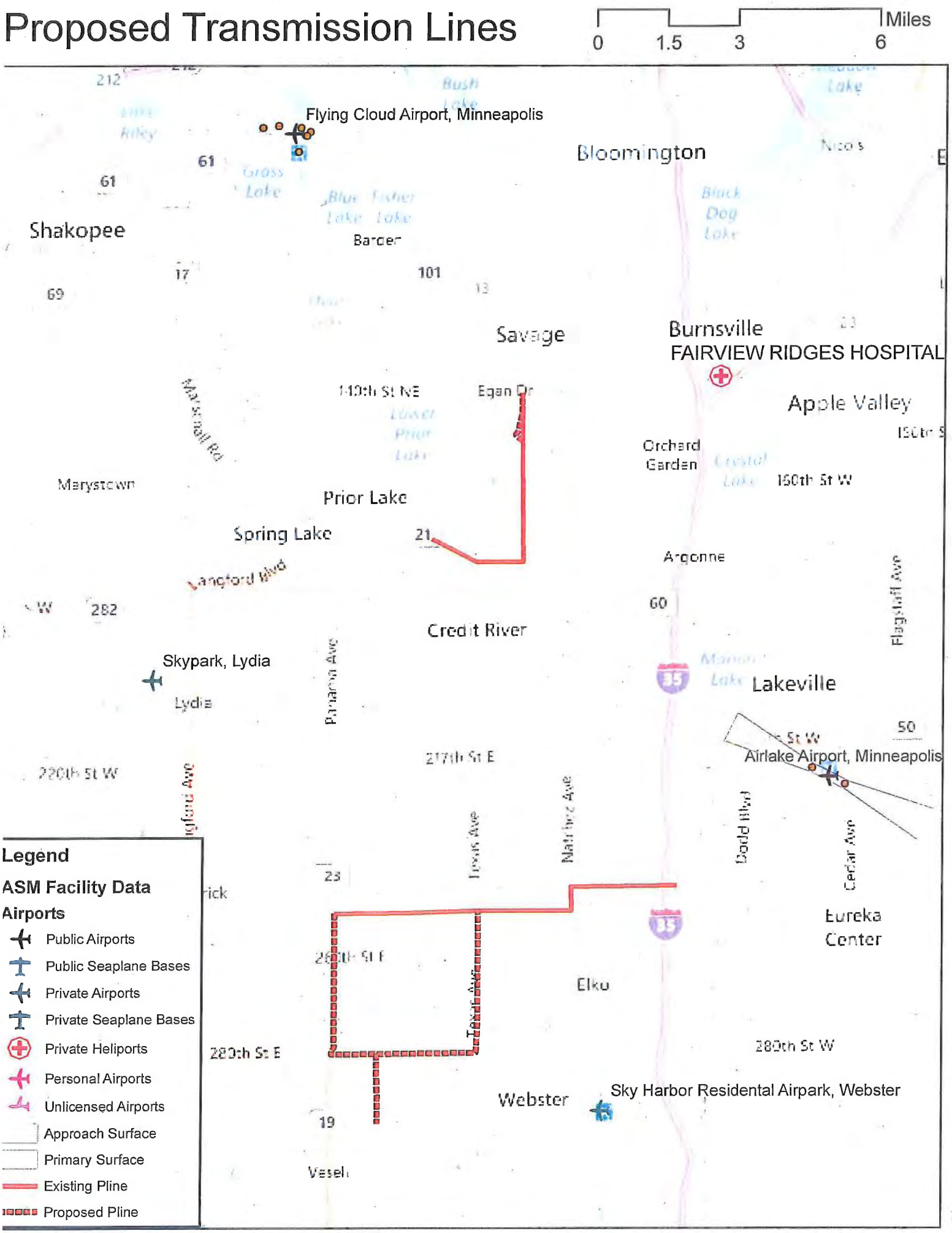
The Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Aeronautics has no objection to the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Braunig
Aviation Representative

Encl (1)

# Proposed Transmission Lines



GREAT RIVER ENERGY®

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

January 4, 2013

Ms. Mary Ann Heidemann
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

RE: Proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kV Transmission Project
Scott and Rice Counties

Dear Ms. Heidemann:

Great River Energy is currently gathering data to be used in preparation of regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project in Scott and Rice counties (see enclosed fact sheet and map). Great River Energy intends to seek a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the Project from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

To improve reliability of the transmission system in the area and to address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading, Great River Energy proposes to construct a new double circuit 115 kV transmission line and rebuild existing 69 kV transmission lines as follows:

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**6:30-8 p.m.**
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Prior Lake High School
7575 150th St. W
Savage, MN 55372

HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR) conducted a Cultural Resource Literature Review of the proposed project (see attached letter) and found seven archaeological sites and two architectural sites (one of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) within the study area. HDR recommended a Phase I archaeological reconnaissance survey of the Project ROW once the routes are defined.

A letter and fact sheet were sent to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. The project will require a Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Great River Energy is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on cultural and archaeological resources in the project area.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, February 1, 2013. If you require further information or have questions regarding this project, please feel free to call me at 763-445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures: Fact Sheet/Project Map, Letter from HDR

s:\lega\environmental\transmission\projects\201719 Elko New Market Area Projects/ Agency Correspondence/ENMSHPOltr.doc

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Great River Energy – Environmental Services Department
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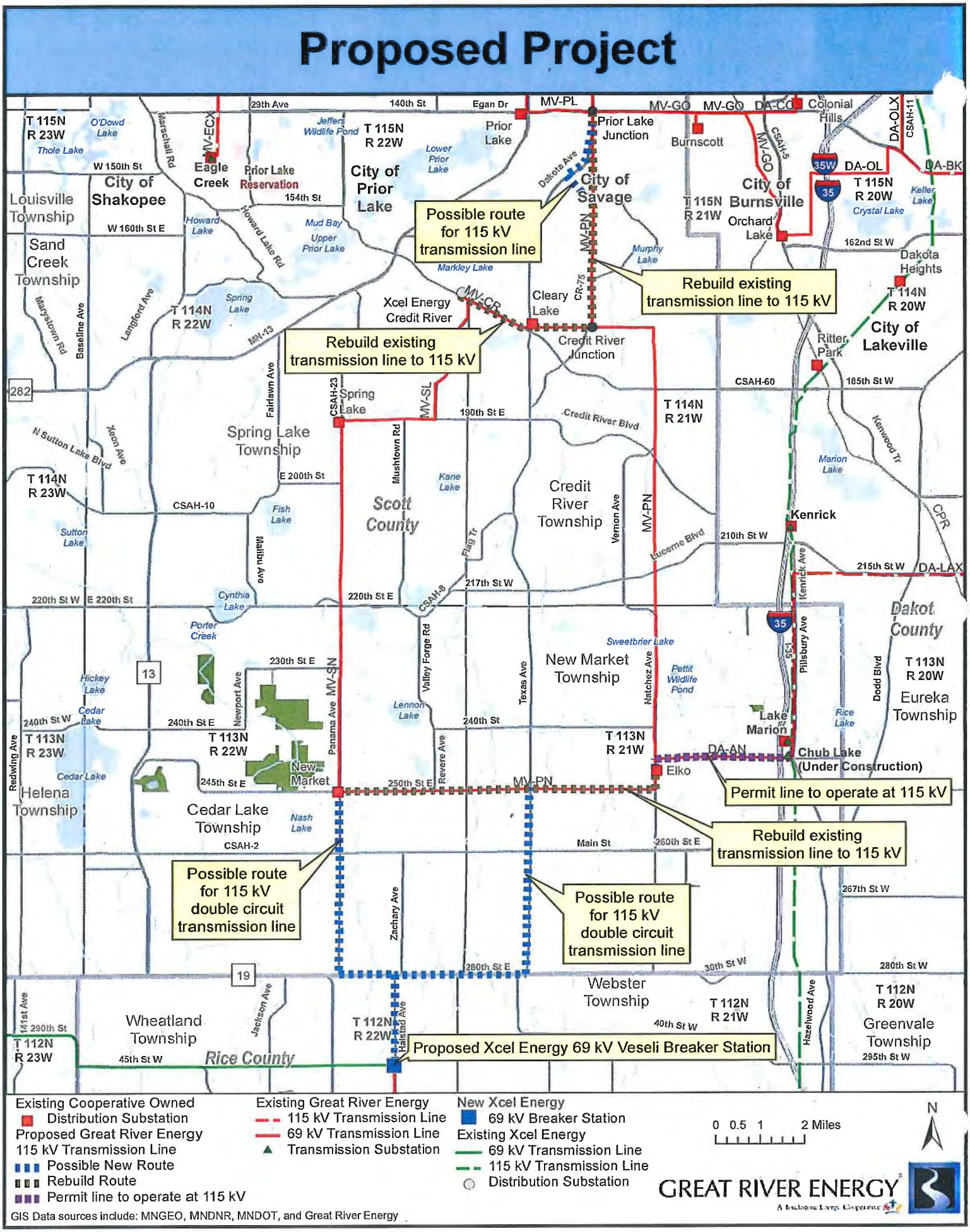
Date last revised: 12/7/2012

# Proposed Project



**Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG**

**From:** Kelly Gragg-Johnson [kelly.graggjohnson@mnhs.org]
**Sent:** Monday, January 14, 2013 10:37 AM
**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG
**Subject:** Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Line

Carole - we received your letter dated 4 January 2013 on this project. Since this project will require a COE permit, we will need to consult with the COE under Section 106 and the terms of our Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the COE. They will need to initiate consultation with SHPO under Section 106 and the provision of this agreement. We will file this project until we hear from the COE.

Thanks and feel free to contact me with any questions about this process.

Kelly

--

**Kelly Gragg-Johnson, Review & Compliance Specialist**
Government Programs & Compliance | State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society | 345 Kellogg Blvd W | St. Paul, MN 55102
tel: 651.259.3455 | fax: 651.282.2374 | e: kelly.graggjohnson@mnhs.org

HDR | ONE COMPANY *Many Solutions*℠

# Memo

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To: | Carole Schmidt | | |
| From: | Stephen Sabatke, M.A.<br>Michelle Porwoll, B.A. | Project: | Great River Energy Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Area Transmission Upgrade |
| cc: | | | |
| Date: | January 04 2013 | | |

## Re: Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade Critical Impact Analysis

This memorandum presents the results of a critical impact analysis (CIA) search completed for the proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade (Project) in Rice and Scott counties, Minnesota. HDR was asked to conduct a CIA search for the Project and provide recommendations for future Project cultural resource needs. The study area for this Project is defined as the proposed transmission line route with an adjacent one mile buffer around the route.

HDR staff conducted background research at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on December 21, 2012. Research data gathered at SHPO encompassed previously identified archaeological sites and previously identified architectural properties.

The Project consists of the construction of approximately 5.4 miles of new transmission line and the rebuild of approximately 11.5 miles of existing transmission lines. All transmission lines will be built or rebuilt to 115 kV standards. The new transmission line route will require a 70-foot wide right-of-way (ROW), 35 feet on either side of the center line. If construction activities were to occur outside of the identified ROW, those areas would also require cultural resource review and investigation.

The Project is located in the Township, Range, and Sections shown in Table 1 and represented in Figure 1.

Table 1: Study Area Legal Descriptions

| County | Township | Range | Sections |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rice | 112N | 21W | 5, 6 |
| Rice | 112N | 21W | 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| Scott | 113N | 21W | 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32 |
| Scott | 113N | 22W | 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36 |
| Scott | 114N | 21W | 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18 |
| Scott | 114N | 22W | 1, 12 |
| Scott | 115N | 21W | 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 |

## MINNESOTA REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Previously recorded resource data were reviewed online via the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota SHPO. Records were reviewed to see if state preservation statutes, laws, or guidance would apply. There are a few state laws and regulations that may potentially apply to the Project. These include: the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (MS 138.661-669); the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31-138.42); and the Private Cemeteries Act (MS 307.08).

Minnesota Historic Sites Act (MS 138.661-669). The Minnesota Historic Sites Act requires state agencies to consult with the Minnesota Historical Society before undertaking or licensing projects that may affect properties on the State Historic Sites Network under the administration and control of the Minnesota Historical Society, or properties on the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31-138.42). The Minnesota Field Archaeology Act requires licenses to engage in archaeology on non federal public land and requires state agencies to submit development plans to the State Archaeologist, The Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council for review when there are known or suspected archaeological sites in the area.

Private Cemeteries Act (MS 307.08). This Act protects all human burials or skeletal remains located on public or private land.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH RESULTS

### Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites

Seven previously recorded archaeological sites were located within the study area (Table 2). Five of these sites are associated with the precontact period, and two of these sites are associated with the historic time period.

The precontact sites include three isolated lithic finds and two lithic scatters. The historic sites consist of a sawmill and a depression with associated artifact scatter.

**Table 2: Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites within the Study Area**

| Site Number | County | Township | Range | Section | Site Type | NRHP Eligibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21SC0041 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 29 | Precontact Lithic Scatter | Unevaluated |
| 21SC0042 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 29 | Precontact Isolated Lithic Find | Unevaluated |
| 21SC0043 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 28 | Precontact Isolated Lithic Find | Unevaluated |
| 21SC0044 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 33 | Precontact Lithic Scatter | Unevaluated |
| 21SC0053 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 32 | Historic Depressions and Artifact Scatter | Unevaluated |
| 21SC0083 | Scott | 115N | 21W | 32 | Precontact Isolated Lithic Find | Unevaluated |
| 21SCu | Scott | 114N | 21W | 4 | Historic Sawmill | Unevaluated |

**Previously Recorded Architectural Properties**

Two previously recorded architectural properties were located within the study area (Table 3), consisting of a farmhouse and a farmstead. One of the architectural properties, SC-NMT-005, a farmstead, is listed on the NRHP.

**Table 3: Previously Recorded Architectural Properties within the Study Area**

| Property Number | County | Township | Range | Section | Property Type | NRHP Eligibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SC-CRV-001 | Scott | 114N | 21W | 17 | Farmhouse | Unevaluated |
| SC-NMT-005 | Scott | 113N | 21W | 19 | Farmstead | Listed |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the proposed Project study area identified seven previously identified archaeological sites and two previously identified architectural properties. The majority of identified precontact sites within the study area were located in areas near permanent water sources or along prominent landforms, most notably terraces along the Credit River. The previously identified historic sites were also identified near the Credit River.

Of the seven identified archaeological sites, three consisted of precontact isolated finds, two consisted of precontact lithic scatters, one was a historic depression with associated artifact scatter, and one was a historic sawmill. Of the two previously recorded architectural properties, one is a farmhouse, and one, SC-NMT-005, a farmstead, is listed on the NRHP.

The review of previously identified sites and the knowledge HDR cultural resource professionals have regarding the area's historical context suggest that additional, as yet undiscovered, sites may be present within the Project area. The study area transects drainages, creeks, and streams,

including the Credit River and its tributaries, and sizeable bodies of water including Cleary Lake. The topography of the area includes rolling hills and uplands adjacent to water bodies. All these factors suggest the Project area contains a moderate probability of containing additional intact archaeological sites, historic archaeological sites, and/or architectural properties.

Based on the summation of the data reviewed, HDR recommends a Phase I archaeological reconnaissance survey of the Project ROW. The scope and scale of this investigation should be determined after the Project route is well defined. If needed, evaluation of any newly identified archaeological resources impacted by the Project and associated potentially required mitigation will be determined on a case-by-case basis and discussed in an additional scope. In addition to the investigation for archaeological resources, affects on architectural properties may also need consideration as the Project construction and/or upgrade could potentially impact adjacent properties. All work should be conducted in accordance with the *SHPO Manual for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota* (Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office 2005) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation (National Park Service 1983).

## References Cited

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office

2004 *SHPO Manual for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota.* Available online at: http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/survey/archsurvey.pdf

National Park Service

1983 *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*. Current version available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm. National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington D.C.

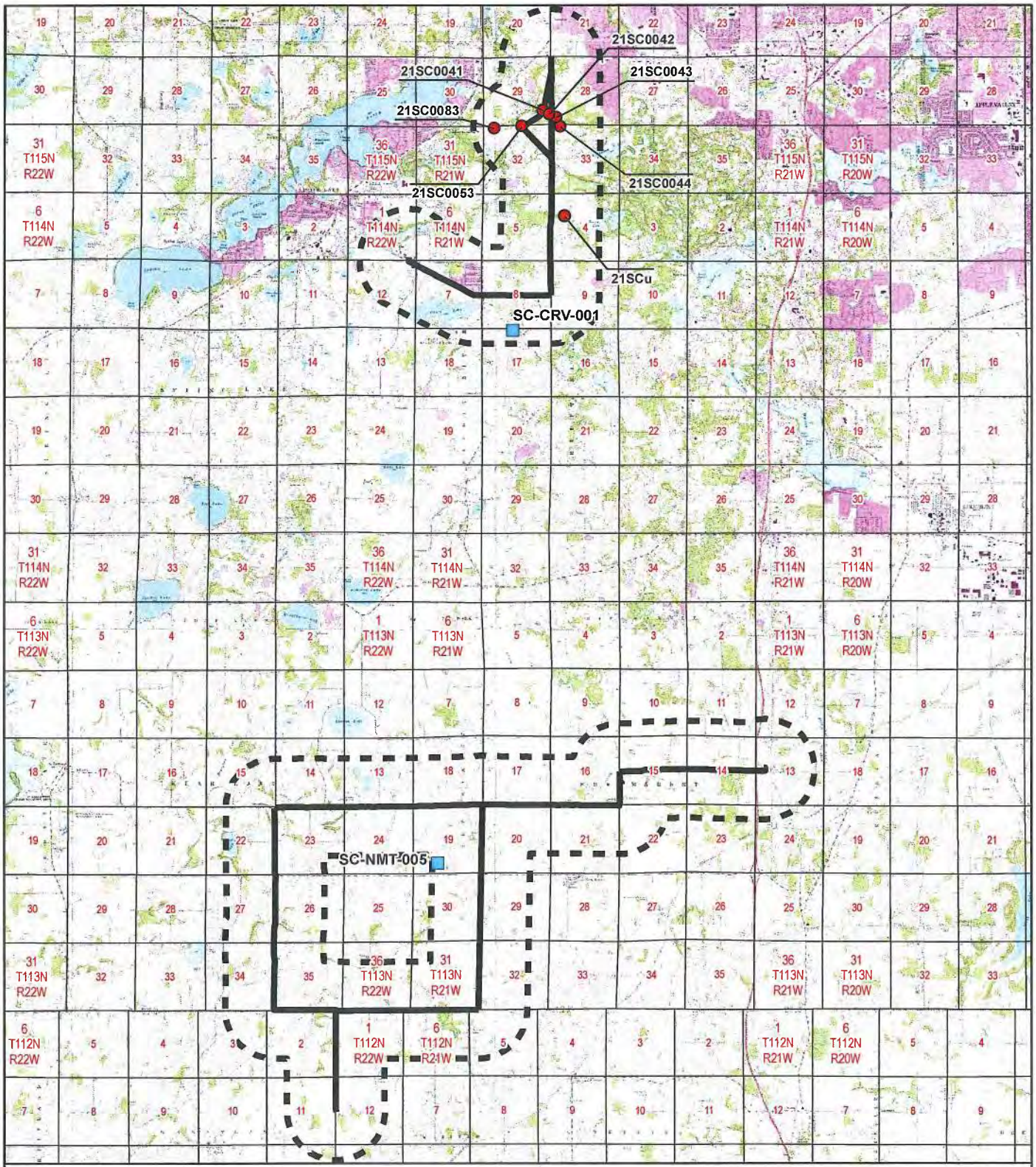



Figure 1
Elko New Market and
Cleary Lake Areas
Transmission Upgrade Project

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

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GREAT RIVER ENERGY®

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

December 20, 2012

Mr. Nick Rowse, Habitat Conservation Biologist
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Twin Cities Field Office
4101 American Blvd. East
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665

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Scott and Rice Counties

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7575 150th St. W
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The Fish and Wildlife Service website list for threatened and endangered species within Rice County includes Dwarf trout lily (endangered) and Prairie bush clover (threatened). Great River Energy does not believe the proposed transmission project will affect either of these species. There are no species listed on the website for Scott County.

The DNR Rare features database indicates the presence of the cowbane, kittentails and Blanding's turtles in the project area (see attached maps). These species will be evaluated further once the routes are permitted, but we do not anticipate impacts to these species from construction of the project.

Great River Energy is requesting concurrence or information on the possible effects of the proposed project on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and designated or proposed critical habitat that may be present in the project area.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, January 18, 2013. If you require further information or have questions regarding this project, please feel free to call me at 763-445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures: Fact Sheet/Project Map, Rare Features Maps

s:\lega\environmental\transmission\projects\201719 Elko New Market Area Projects/ Agency Correspondence/ENMFWSltr.doc

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Project Need

Great River Energy, power supplier to Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) and 27 other Minnesota cooperatives, proposes to rebuild a portion of the existing 69 kV transmission system and construct a new double circuit transmission line in Scott and Rice counties. These upgrades will improve the reliability of the transmission system in the area, and address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading that were identified in a study of the 69 kV transmission system bounded by the Carver County, Scott County, Faribault and Owatonna areas.

## Project Goal/Description

This project includes constructing a new transmission line and rebuilding existing transmission lines. All lines will be built or rebuilt to 115 kV standards but will operate at 69 kV until load growth dictates the need for an increase in voltage. The lines that are rebuilt will generally remain in the current centerline; however, existing structures and other construction considerations may require that some portions be offset from the centerline. Where necessary, property owners along the existing lines will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements for additional transmission line right-of-way. Property owners along the new transmission line route will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements. The new transmission line route will require a 70-foot wide right-of-way, 35 feet on either side of the centerline.

Some segments of the transmission lines will carry distribution line underbuild **(see photo at right)**. In most cases, round wood structures ranging in height from 75 - 95 feet above ground will be used. Span lengths will range from 200 feet to 500 feet. This project will include the following components:

- Rebuild approximately 3.5 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" line to 115 kV standards from Prior Lake Junction south to Credit River Junction;
- Rebuild approximately 2.4 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-CR" line to 115 kV standards from Credit River Junction west past MVEC's Cleary Lake Substation to Xcel Energy's Credit River Substation;
- Permit the 2.0 miles of existing Great River Energy double circuit 69 kV "DA-AN" line to operate at 115 kV between the new Chub Lake Substation and Natchez Avenue (to be strung on quad circuit structures as part of the CapX2020 Brookings 345 kV project);
- Rebuild approximately 5.6 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" (New Market to Elko) 69 kV transmission line to 115 kV standards (along 250th Street between Panama Avenue and Natchez Avenue);
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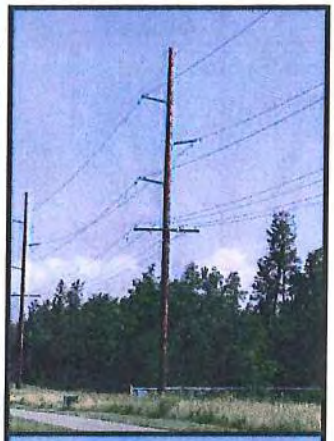

*Typical 115 kV Wood Single Circuit Transmission Line Structure with Distribution Underbuild*

*Typical 115 kV Wood Double Circuit Transmission Line Structure without Distribution Underbuild*

## Trees

Removal of trees and vegetation along the transmission line right-of-way will be necessary for safety and maintenance purposes. A representative from Great River Energy will contact property owners before any tree work takes place to discuss the work and access to the easement area.

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| Permitting | Winter 2013 – Spring 2014 |
| Survey/Design | Spring 2014 – Spring 2015 |
| Easement/Environmental permits | June 2014 – December 2014 |
| Transmission Line Construction | February 2015 - March 2016 |
| Energization | April 2016 |

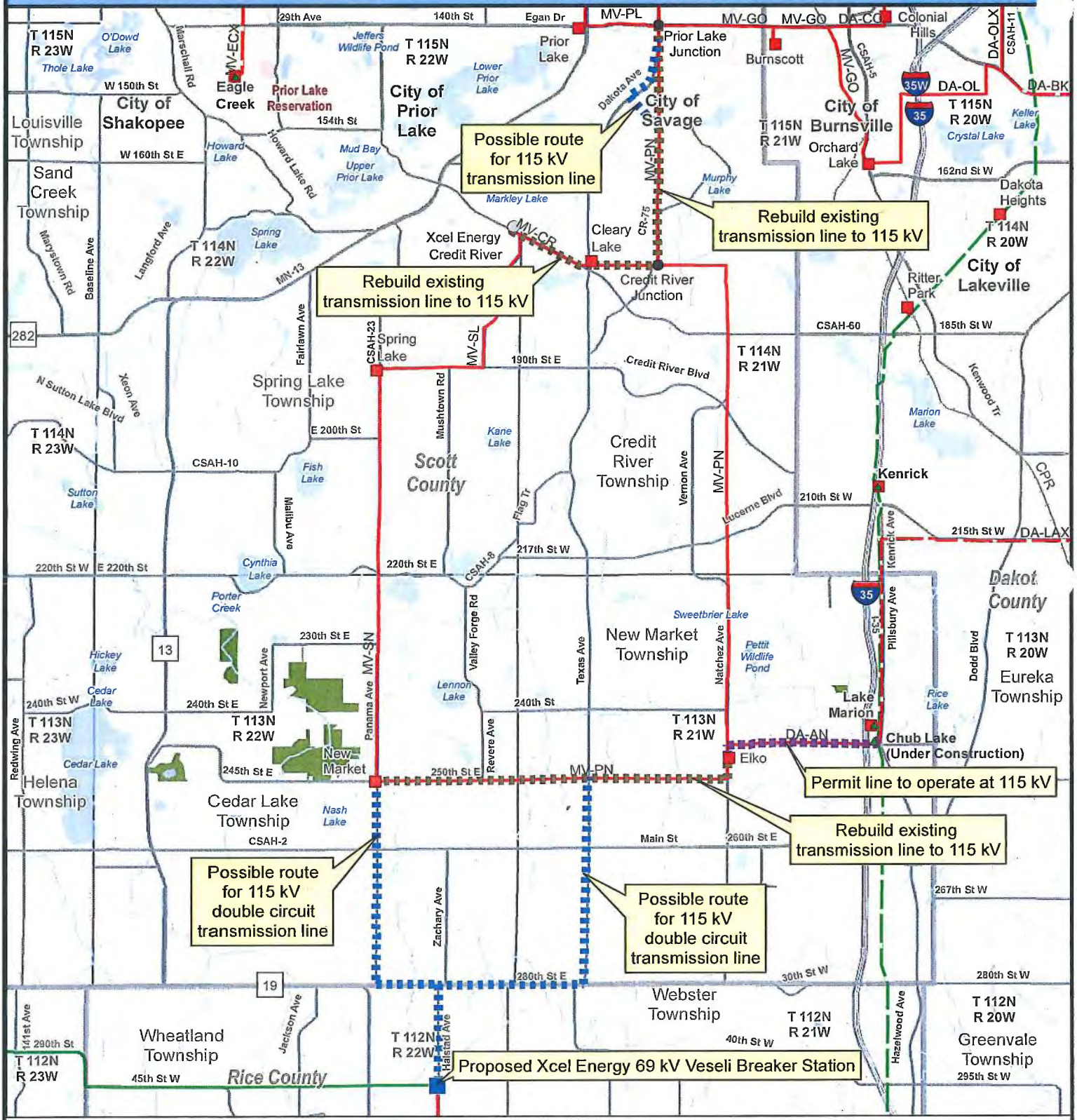
## For project updates and information contact:

Peter M. Schaub
Sr. Field Representative
Great River Energy - Land Rights Department
(763) 445-5976 or 1-888-521-0130
pschaub@grenergy.com

Carole Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy – Environmental Services Department
763-445-5214
cschmidt@grenergy.com

Date last revised: 12/7/2012

# Proposed Project



**Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG**

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Horton, Andrew [andrew_horton@fws.gov] |
| **Sent:** | Monday, January 07, 2013 3:19 PM |
| **To:** | Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG |
| **Cc:** | Mike Malling; Gerry Shimek |
| **Subject:** | Proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115kV Transmission Project |
| **Attachments:** | elko_new_market_cleary_lake.pdf; elko_new_market_cleary_lake_fact_sheet.pdf |

RE: **03E19000-2013-CPA-0021**

Thank you Carole for contacting our office. First, I wanted to let you know that Nick Rowse has retired as of last month and I will be taking over his project area. I have reviewed the project area and agree that we have no listed species near the proposed transmission line in Scott and Rice County. We do, however, have two USFWS conservation easements located in the South 1/2 of Section 34, Township 113N, Range 22W. Since this is an important waterfowl area, if the western new 115kV line is selected, we recommend installing bird flight diverters along the SW1/4 of Section 35 to prevent bird collisions and raptor perch deterrents on top of the transmission poles. This possible new route also crosses between wetland complexes along the western 1/2 of Section 27 and the SE4NE4 of Section 22, Township 113N, Range 22W. Since there may be migratory bird movement between these locations, we recommend bird flight diverters be installed. Please continue to work with our office and the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) if the western new route is selected to insure that wetland impacts are minimized and that construction within an established ROW does not interfere with the conservation easement designations.

The 115kV Rebuild route located at SE4SE4 of Section 32 and NE4NE4 of Section 5, Township 114N, Range 1W is adjacent to an Murphey-Hanrehan Park Reserve Important Bird Area (IBA) designated by the National Audubon Society. To prevent bird collisions in this area, we also recommend bird flight diverters placed along the SE1/4 of Section 32 and NE4NE4 of Section 5. Thank you for your cooperation in meeting our joint responsibilities under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. I am copying Mike Malling and Gerry Shimek with the Refuge and attaching the project information submitted to me for their reference. If you have any further questions, please contact me at (612) 725-3548 x2208.

--

Andrew Horton
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Twin Cities ES Field Office
4101 American Blvd East
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665
(612) 725-3548 ext. 2208

GREAT RIVER ENERGY®

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

December 20, 2012

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

RE: Proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kV Transmission Project
Scott and Rice Counties

Dear Ms. Joyal:

Great River Energy is currently gathering data to be used in preparation of regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project in Scott and Rice counties (see enclosed fact sheet and map). Great River Energy intends to seek a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the Project from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

To improve reliability of the transmission system in the area and to address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading, Great River Energy proposes to construct a new double circuit 115 kV transmission line and rebuild existing 69 kV transmission lines as follows:

- Rebuild approximately 3.5 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" line to 115 kV standards from Prior Lake Junction south to Credit River Junction;
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If you would like to learn more about the project, open house public meetings for the project will be held on:

**Tuesday, January 15, 2013**
**6:30-8 p.m.**
at:

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**Wednesday, January 16, 2013**
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Prior Lake High School
7575 150th St. W
Savage, MN 55372

The transmission lines will span several DNR public waters (see attached maps). Great River Energy will apply to the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals for a license to cross those waters.

There are a few rare features in the project area; primarily Blanding's turtles, cowbane and kittentails (see attached maps). These features will be evaluated in detail once routes are permitted.

Great River Energy is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on these features and other important natural resources that occur in the project area. Please advise if there is specific guidance relative to the rare features in the area.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, January 18, 2013. If you require further information or have questions regarding this project, please feel free to call me at 763-445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures: Fact Sheet/Project Map, PWI Maps, Rare Features Maps

s:\lega\environmental\transmission\projects\201719 Elko New Market Area 115 kV Projects/ Agency Correspondence/ENMDNRltr.doc

# Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade

**Great River Energy**
**12300 Elm Creek Blvd**
**Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718**
**1-888-521-0130**
**www.greatriverenergy.com**

GREAT RIVER ENERGY®
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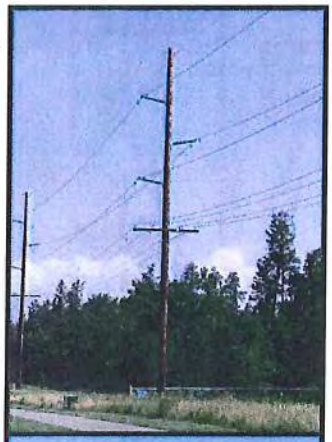

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Date last revised: 12/7/2012

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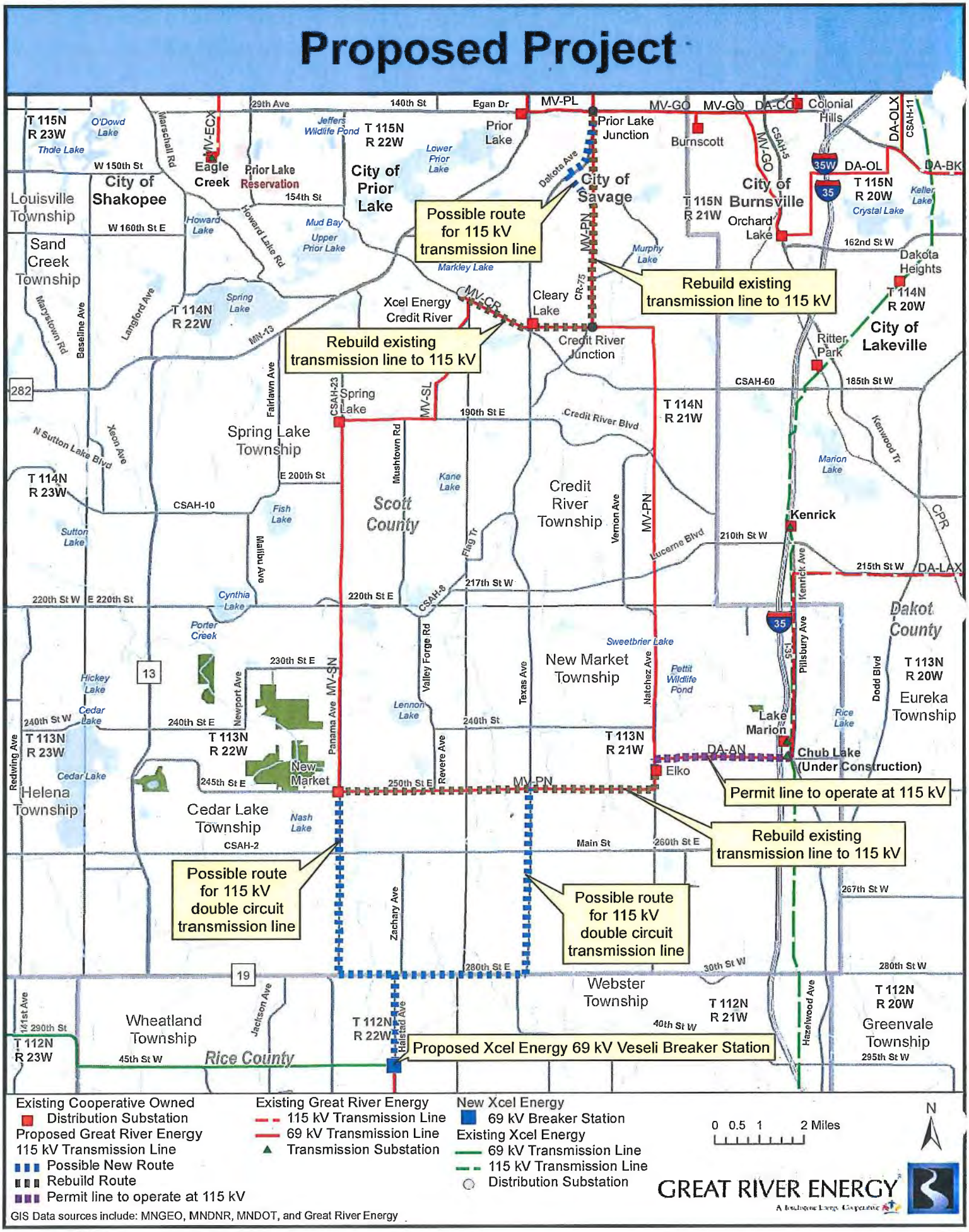

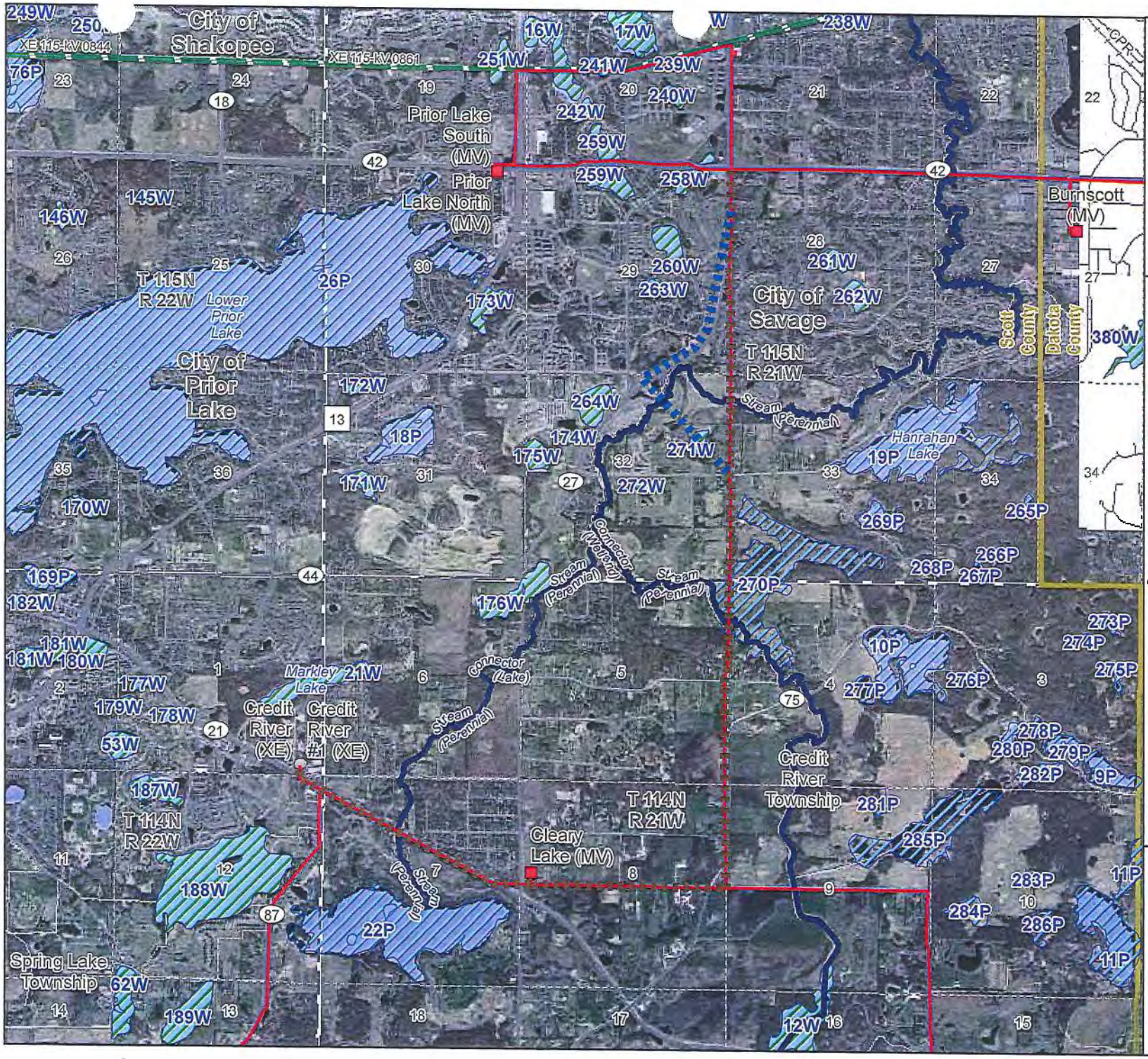


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Proposed Great River Energy
115 kV Transmission Line
- Possible New Route
- Rebuild Route
- Permit line to operate at 115 kV

Existing Cooperative
- Distribution Substation

Existing Great River Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

New Xcel Energy
- 69 kV Breaker Station

Existing Xcel Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
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**Public Waters Inventory (PWI)**
- Public Water Wetland
- Public Water Basin
- Watercourse Delineations

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy
Aeria from MNGEO
Map Projection:
UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters
Updated: 12/13/2012

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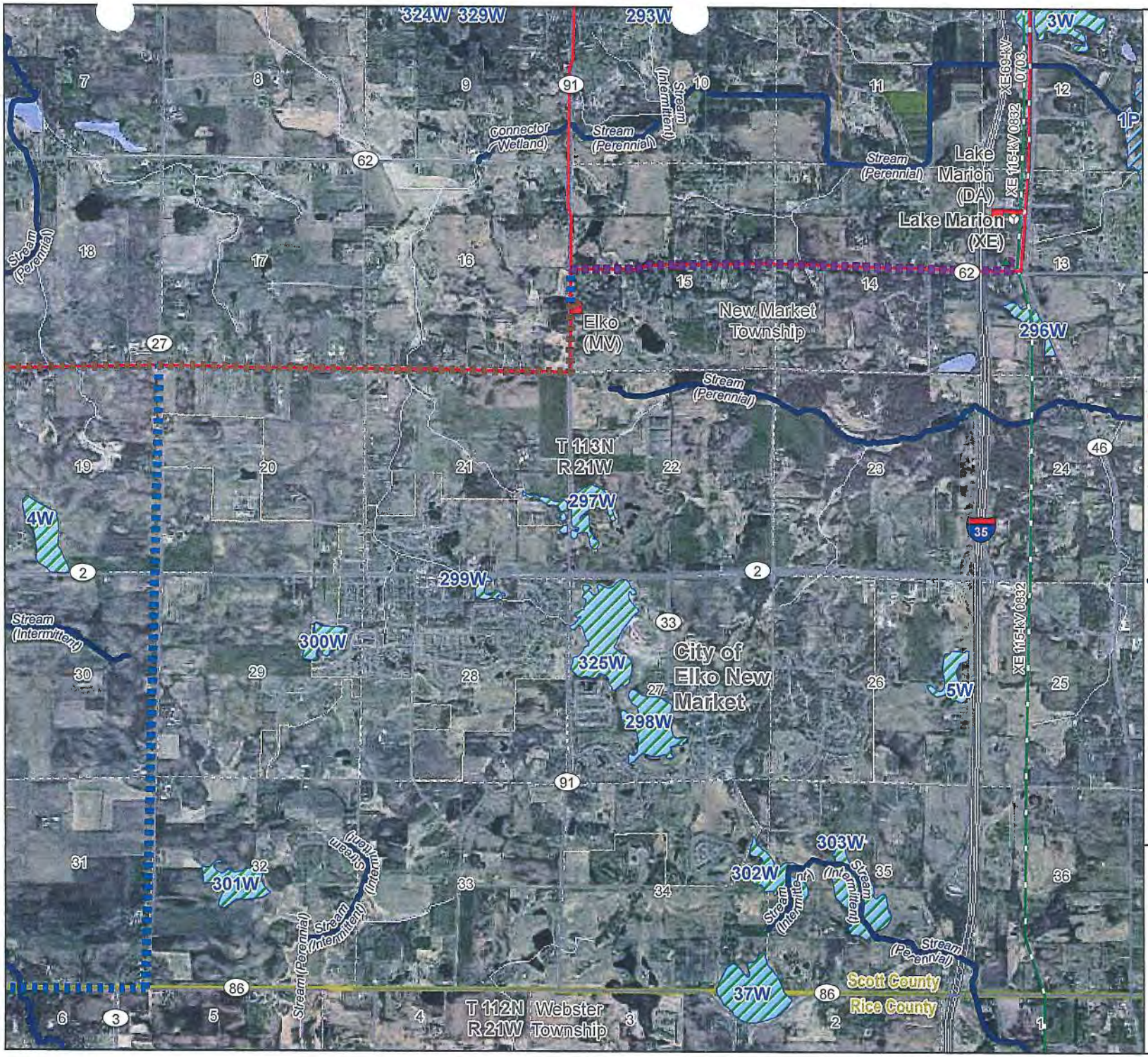
# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *PWI*

## *Cleary Lake Map 1 of 3*

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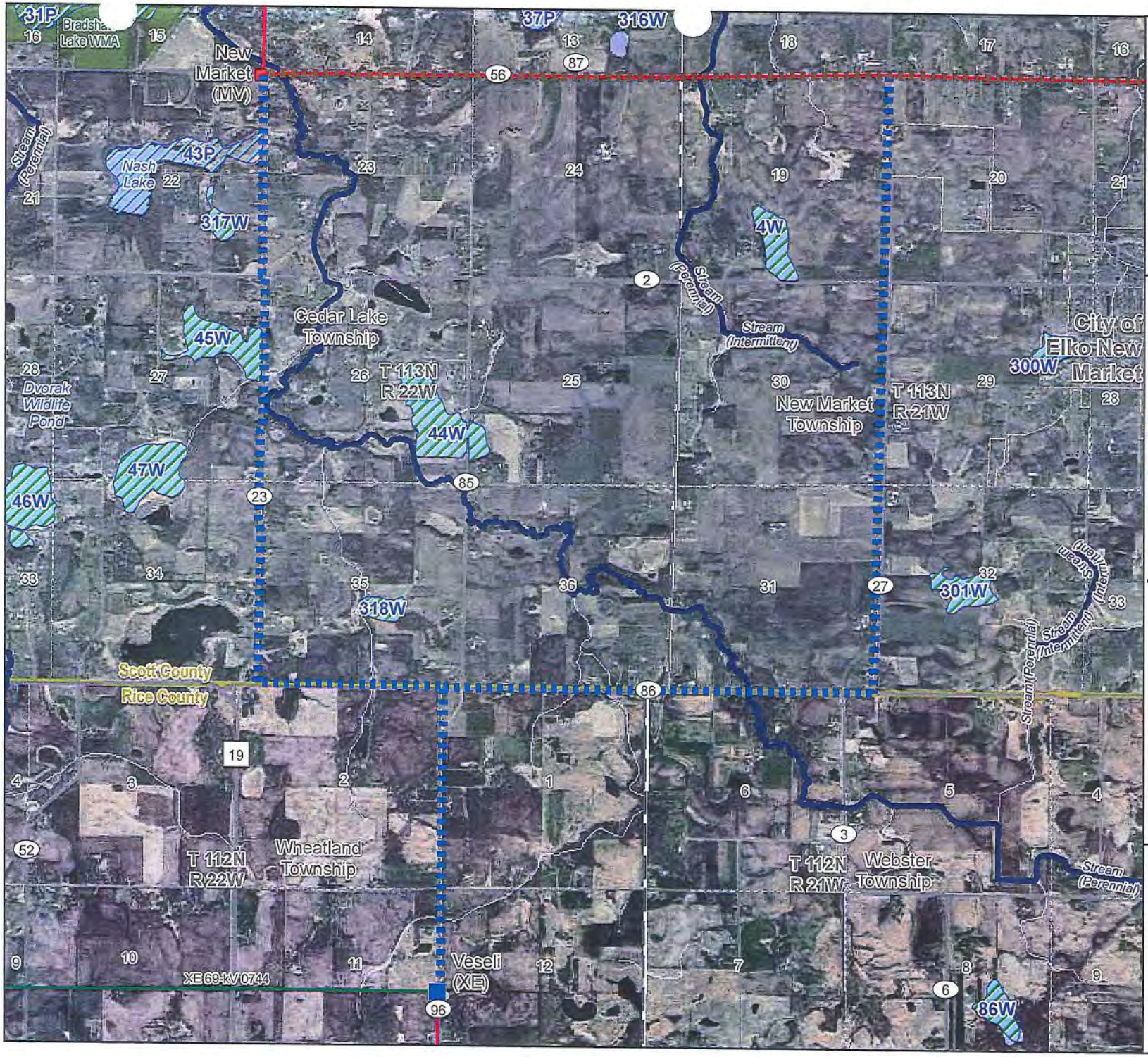
***Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade***

***PWI***

***Lake Marion to Elko***
***Map 2 of 3***

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Map Projection:
UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters
Updated: 12/13/2012

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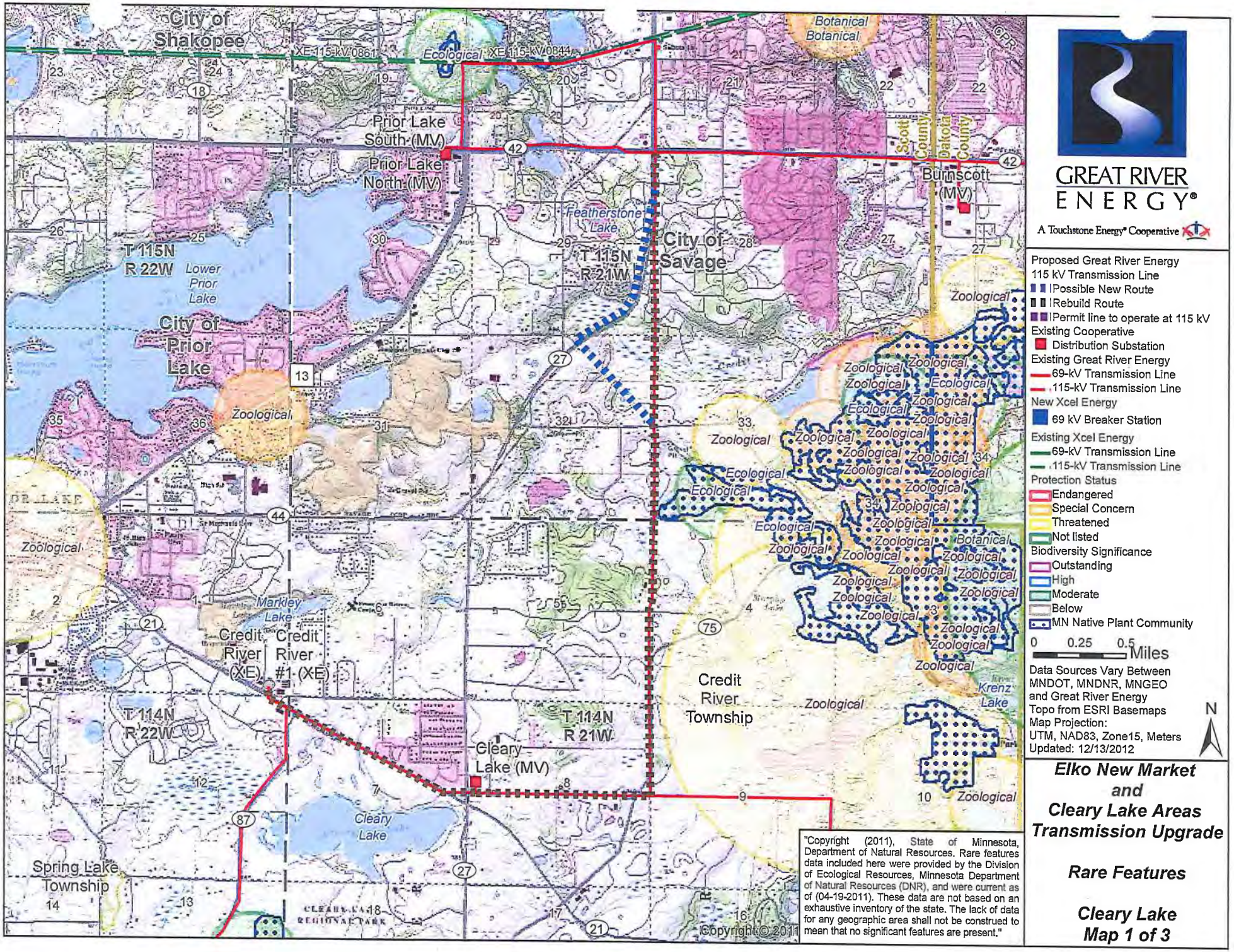
# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *PWI*

## *New Market to Veseli*
## *Map 3 of 3*

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Existing Xcel Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

Protection Status
- Endangered
- Special Concern
- Threatened
- Not listed

Biodiversity Significance
- Outstanding
- High
- Moderate
- Below
- MN Native Plant Community

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy
Topo from ESRI Basemaps
Map Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters
Updated: 12/13/2012

N

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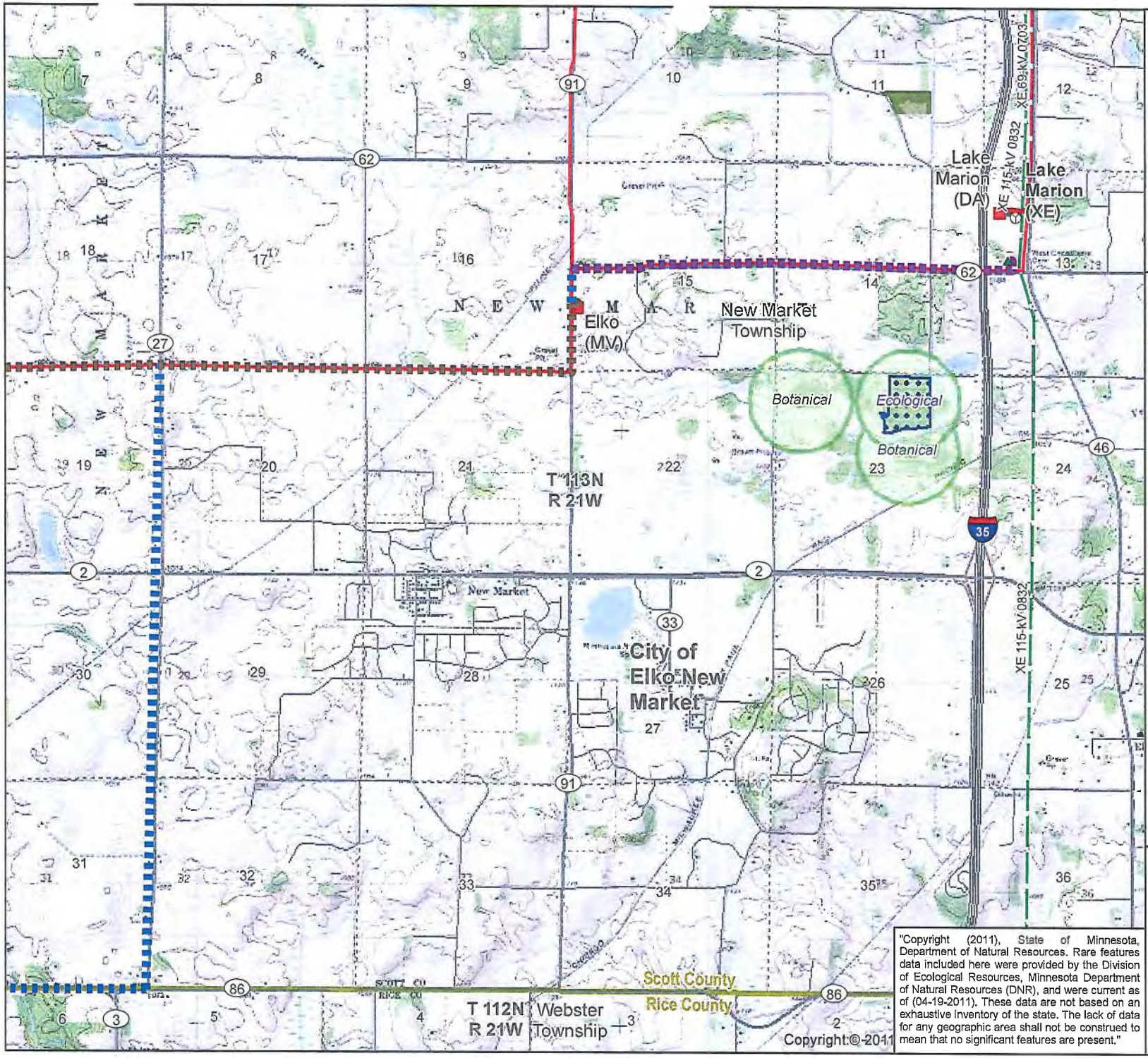
# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *Rare Features*

## *Cleary Lake Map 1 of 3*

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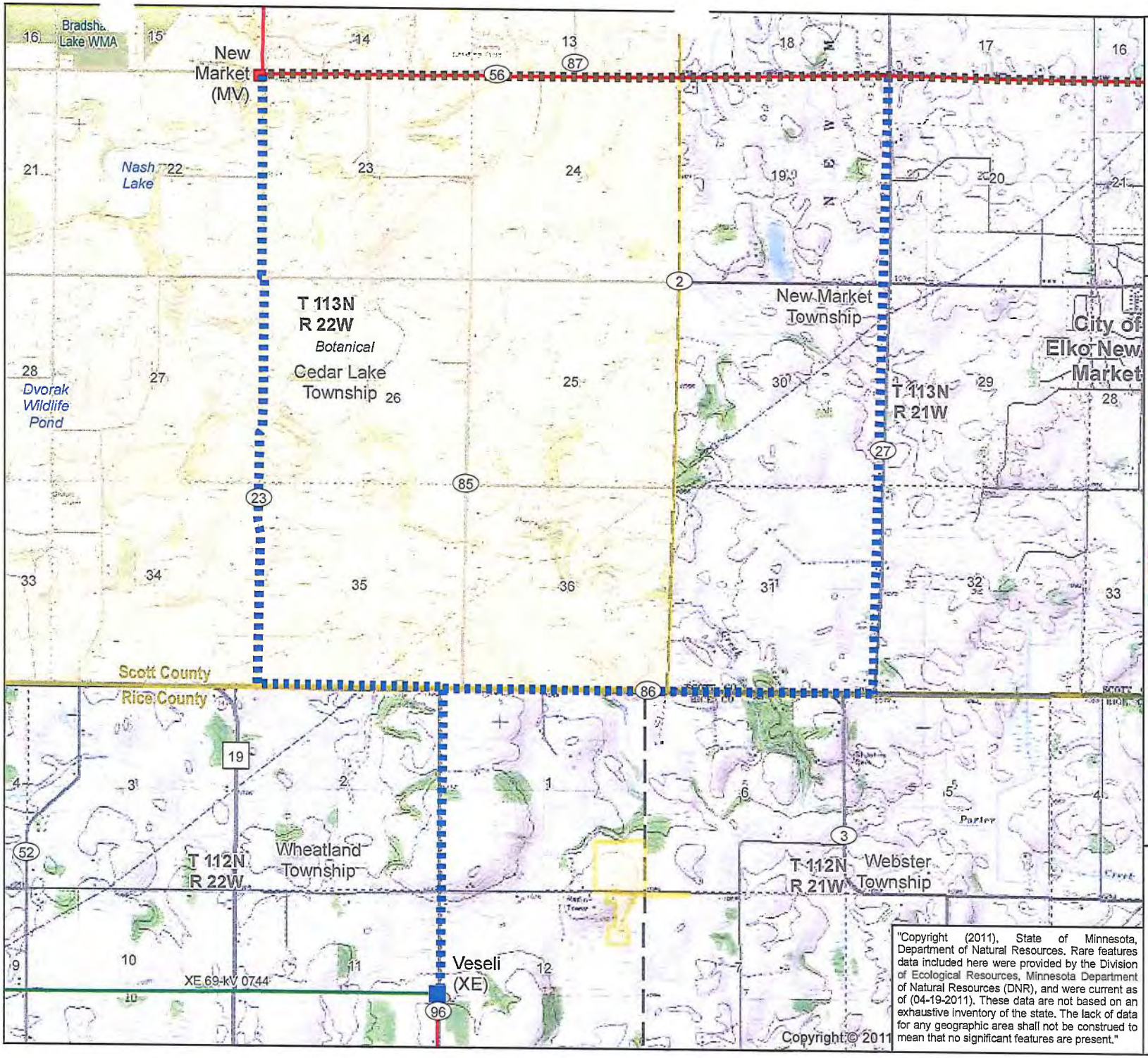
# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *Rare Features*

## *Lake Marion to Elko*

*Map 2 of 3*

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# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *Rare Features*

## *New Market to Veseli Map 3 of 3*

## Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG

**From:** Joyal, Lisa (DNR) [Lisa.Joyal@state.mn.us]
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 2:40 PM
**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG
**Subject:** Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Project
**Attachments:** Ebfactsheet2008.pdf

Hi Carole,

I've reviewed your letter regarding the above project. The letter states that Blanding's turtles, cowbane, and kittentails occur in the area, and that effects to these rare features will be evaluated in detail once routes are permitted. Alternate routes may affect the rare features to differing degrees, so I encourage an assessment of potential effects to rare features prior to the determination of the final route. The assessment should include whether any known occurrences will be impacted and whether any potential habitat will be affected. If so, surveys may be required. I've attached the Blanding's Turtle Fact Sheet. In addition, please visit the Rare Species Guide at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rsg/index.html for more information on the biology, habitat use, and conservation measures of the above rare species

Because Great River Energy has a license agreement to use the Rare Features Data, you can assess potential effects to rare features and then send that assessment to me for review/concurrence. This service is free provided I do not need to spend a lot of time on comments. Sending just a list of the species within a one-mile radius is generally not very helpful as I am concurring with your assessment, not the list of rare species/features. Also, sending a GIS shapefile along with the assessment is very much appreciated!

If you would like me to do the assessment of potential effects, please fill out a NHIS Data Request Form (http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/nhis_data_request.pdf). There is a fee for this service.

Sorry for the delay.

Thank you!

*Lisa Joyal*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Lisa Joyal
Endangered Species Review Coordinator
NHIS Data Distribution Coordinator
Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155

phone: 651-259-5109
lisa.joyal@state.mn.us
www.mndnr.gov/eco
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12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

December 20, 2012

Mr. Michael Setering
US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District
180 5th Street East, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

RE: Proposed Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas 115 kV Transmission Project
Scott and Rice Counties

Dear Mr. Setering:

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The project will cross a number of NWI wetlands (see enclosed maps), many of which will be spanned. Great River Energy will work with the Corps and the counties to address impacts once design details are available.

A literature survey of cultural resources in the project area is currently being conducted by HDR Engineering, Inc.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, January 18, 2013. If you require further information or have questions regarding this project, please feel free to call me at 763-445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

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Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures: Fact Sheet/Project Map, NWI/PWI Maps

s:\lega\environmental\transmission\projects\201719 Elko New Market Area Projects/ Agency Correspondence/ENMCOEltr.doc

# Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade

**Great River Energy**
**12300 Elm Creek Blvd**
**Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718**
**1-888-521-0130**
**www.greatriverenergy.com**

GREAT RIVER ENERGY®
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Project Need

Great River Energy, power supplier to Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) and 27 other Minnesota cooperatives, proposes to rebuild a portion of the existing 69 kV transmission system and construct a new double circuit transmission line in Scott and Rice counties. These upgrades will improve the reliability of the transmission system in the area, and address risks associated with low voltage and transmission line overloading that were identified in a study of the 69 kV transmission system bounded by the Carver County, Scott County, Faribault and Owatonna areas.

## Project Goal/Description

This project includes constructing a new transmission line and rebuilding existing transmission lines. All lines will be built or rebuilt to 115 kV standards but will operate at 69 kV until load growth dictates the need for an increase in voltage. The lines that are rebuilt will generally remain in the current centerline; however, existing structures and other construction considerations may require that some portions be offset from the centerline. Where necessary, property owners along the existing lines will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements for additional transmission line right-of-way. Property owners along the new transmission line route will be contacted to discuss acquisition of easements. The new transmission line route will require a 70-foot wide right-of-way, 35 feet on either side of the centerline.

*Typical 115 kV Wood Single Circuit Transmission Line Structure with Distribution Underbuild*

Some segments of the transmission lines will carry distribution line underbuild **(see photo at right)**. In most cases, round wood structures ranging in height from 75 - 95 feet above ground will be used. Span lengths will range from 200 feet to 500 feet. This project will include the following components:

- Rebuild approximately 3.5 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" line to 115 kV standards from Prior Lake Junction south to Credit River Junction;
- Rebuild approximately 2.4 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-CR" line to 115 kV standards from Credit River Junction west past MVEC's Cleary Lake Substation to Xcel Energy's Credit River Substation;
- Permit the 2.0 miles of existing Great River Energy double circuit 69 kV "DA-AN" line to operate at 115 kV between the new Chub Lake Substation and Natchez Avenue (to be strung on quad circuit structures as part of the CapX2020 Brookings 345 kV project);
- Rebuild approximately 5.6 miles of the existing Great River Energy single circuit 69 kV "MV-PN" (New Market to Elko) 69 kV transmission line to 115 kV standards (along 250th Street between Panama Avenue and Natchez Avenue);
- Construct approximately 5.4 miles of new double circuit transmission line **(see photo at right)** from the New Market – Elko "MV-PN" line to Xcel Energy's Veseli 69 kV breaker station.

*Typical 115 kV Wood Double Circuit Transmission Line Structure without Distribution Underbuild*

## Trees

Removal of trees and vegetation along the transmission line right-of-way will be necessary for safety and maintenance purposes. A representative from Great River Energy will contact property owners before any tree work takes place to discuss the work and access to the easement area.

## Project Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| Project contact and/or notifications | Winter 2012/2013 |
| Permitting | Winter 2013 – Spring 2014 |
| Survey/Design | Spring 2014 – Spring 2015 |
| Easement/Environmental permits | June 2014 – December 2014 |
| Transmission Line Construction | February 2015 - March 2016 |
| Energization | April 2016 |

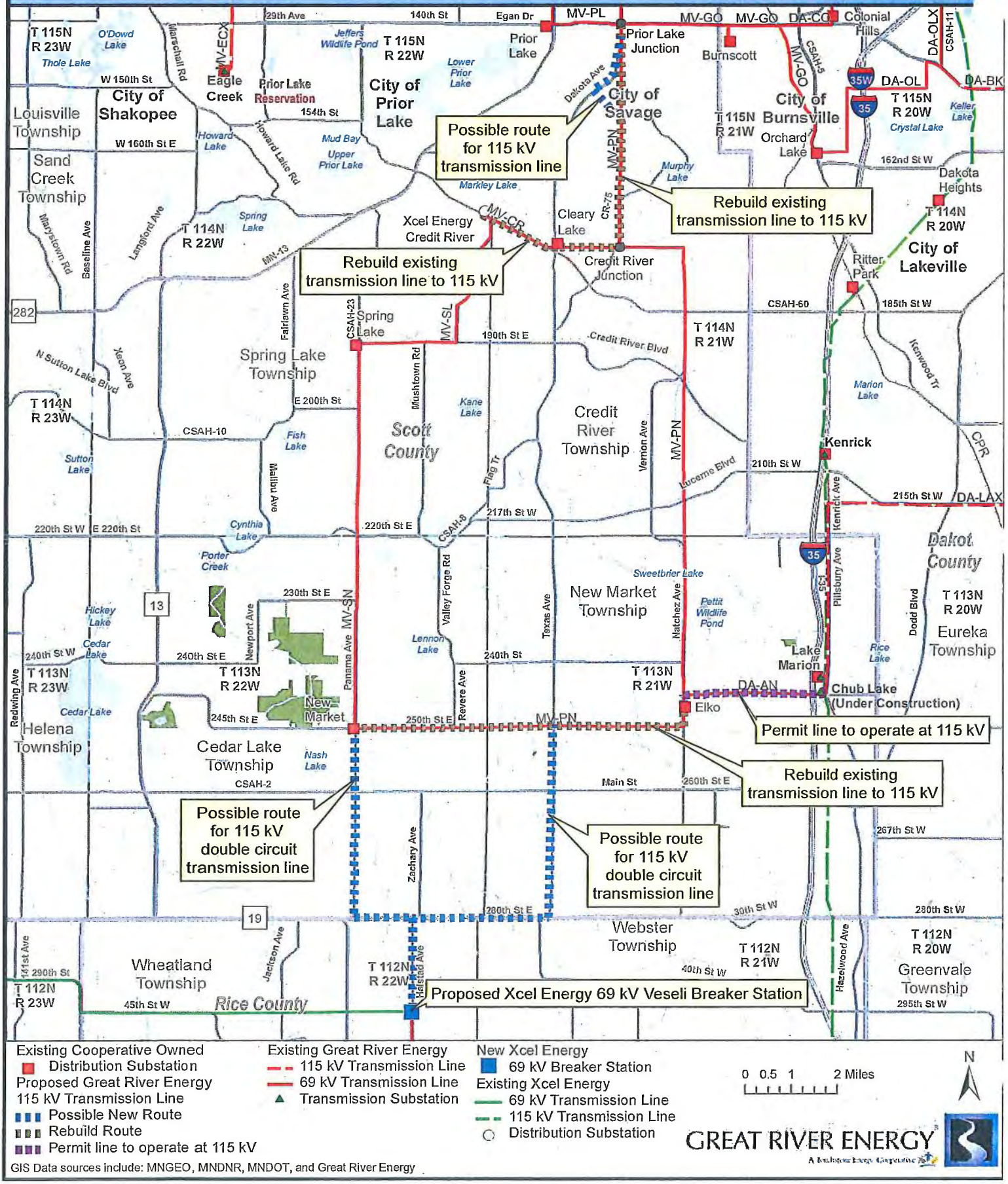
## For project updates and information contact:

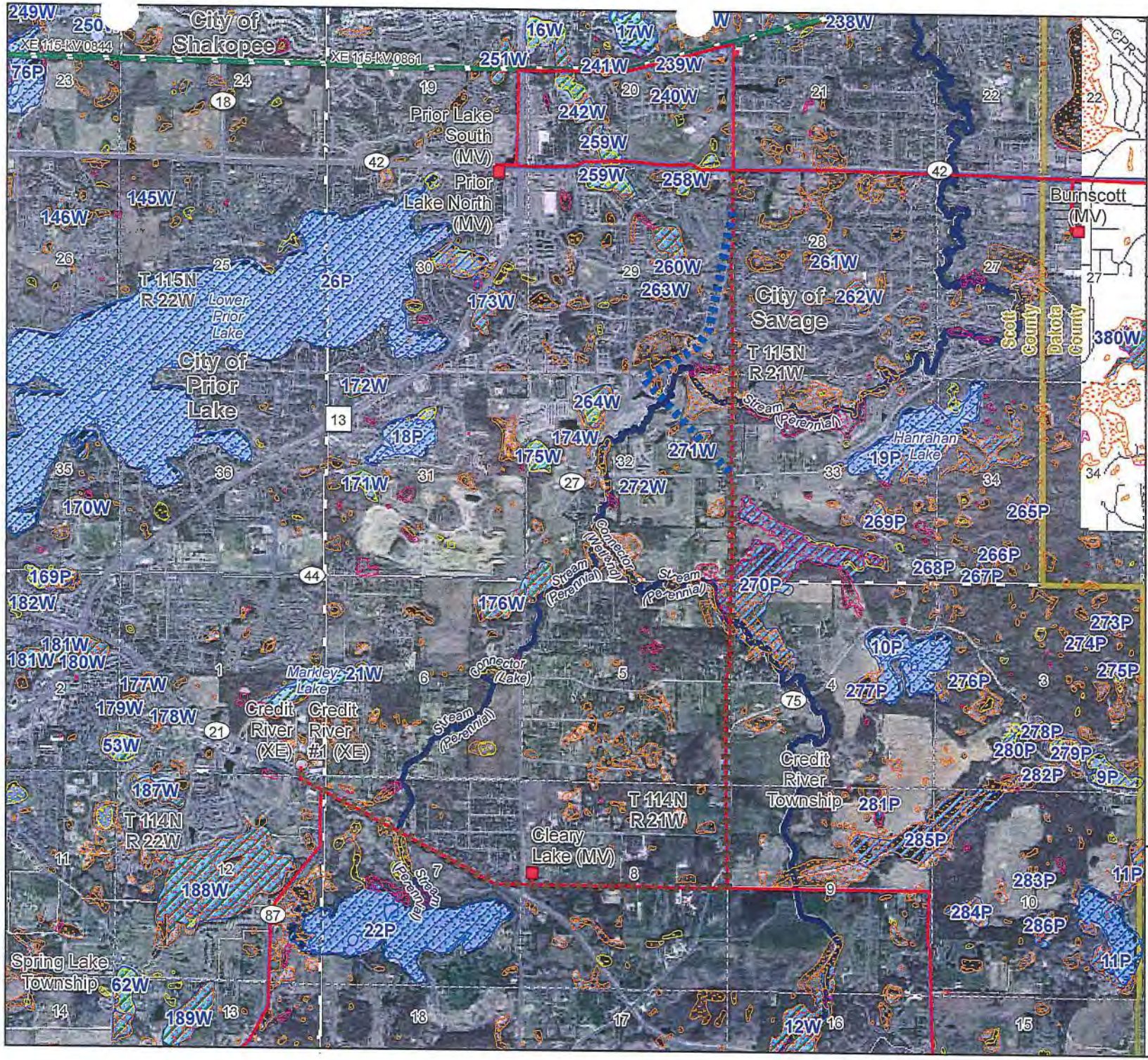
Peter M. Schaub
Sr. Field Representative
Great River Energy - Land Rights Department
(763) 445-5976 or 1-888-521-0130
pschaub@grenergy.com

Carole Schmidt
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy – Environmental Services Department
763-445-5214
cschmidt@grenergy.com

Date last revised: 12/7/2012

# Proposed Project



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Proposed Great River Energy
115 kV Transmission Line
- Possible New Route
- Rebuild Route
- Permit line to operate at 115 kV

Existing Cooperative
- Distribution Substation

Existing Great River Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

New Xcel Energy
- 69 kV Breaker Station

Existing Xcel Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

**NWI Wetlands**
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

**Public Waters Inventory (PWI)**
- Public Water Wetland
- Public Water Basin
- Watercourse Delineations

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy
Aeria from MNGEO
Map Projection:
UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters
Updated: 12/13/2012

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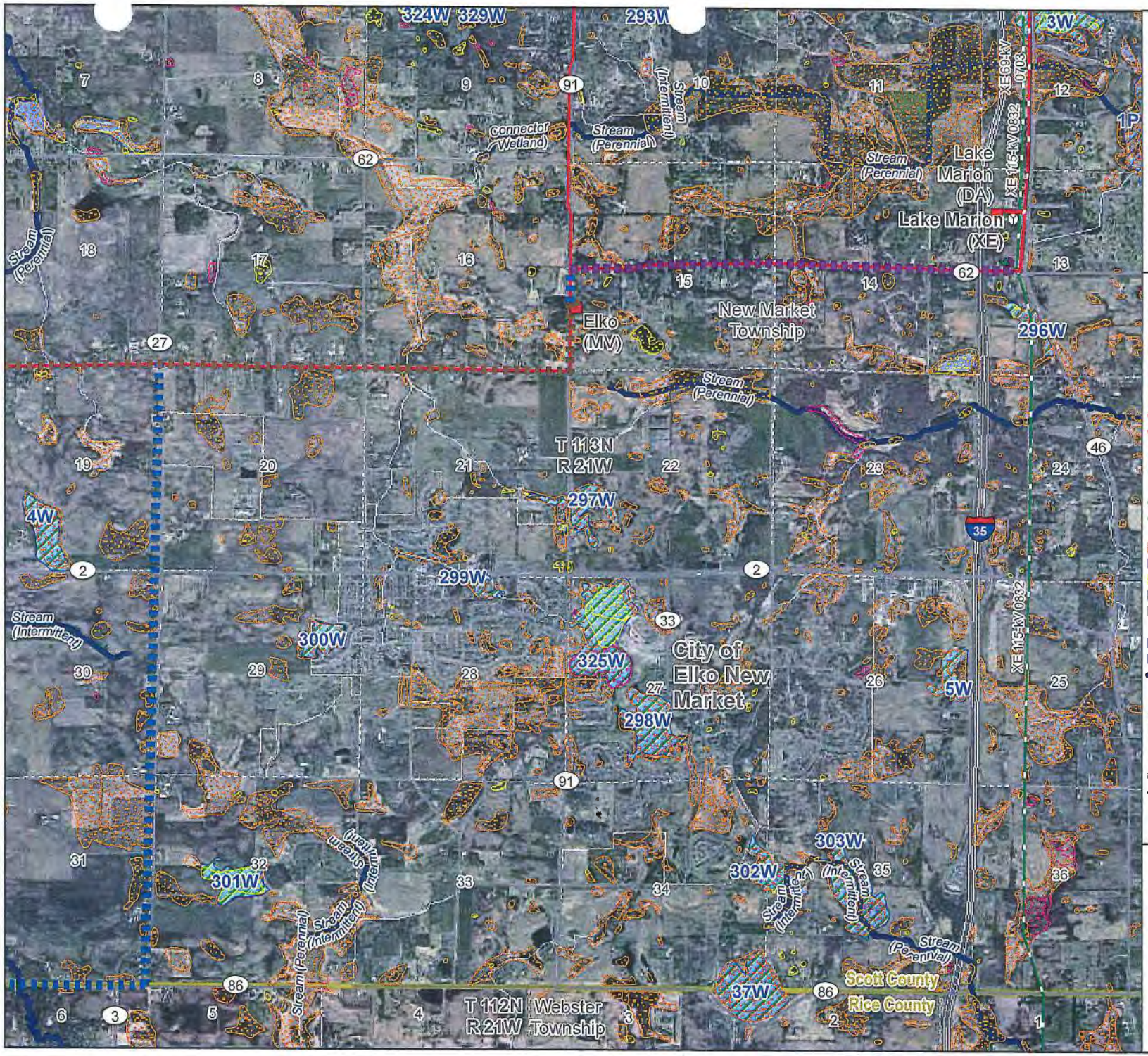
# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *NWI / PWI*

## *Cleary Lake Map 1 of 3*

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Existing Cooperative
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Existing Great River Energy
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- 115-kV Transmission Line

New Xcel Energy
- 69 kV Breaker Station

Existing Xcel Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

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UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters
Updated: 12/13/2012

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***Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade***

***NWI / PWI***

***Lake Marion to Elko***
***Map 2 of 3***


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Proposed Great River Energy
115 kV Transmission Line
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Existing Cooperative
- Distribution Substation

Existing Great River Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

New Xcel Energy
- 69 kV Breaker Station

Existing Xcel Energy
- 69-kV Transmission Line
- 115-kV Transmission Line

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# *Elko New Market and Cleary Lake Areas Transmission Upgrade*

## *NWI / PWI*

## *New Market to Veseli*
## *Map 3 of 3*