



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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July 2, 2013

Ms. Suzanne Steinhauer
Environmental Review Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Re: Deer River High Voltage Transmission Line Project
Route Permit Application
PUC Docket Number: E015/TL-13-68

Dear Ms. Steinhauer:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Deer River High Voltage Transmission Line Project (Project), located in Itasca County, Minnesota. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff has reviewed the route permit application with respect to matters for which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has regulatory responsibility and other interests and has no comments at this time.

Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of this project please contact Karen Kromar of my staff by email at karen.kromar@state.mn.us or by telephone at 651-757-2508.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Affeldt".

Craig Affeldt
Supervisor
Environmental Review Unit
Prevention and Assistance Division

KK:bt

cc: Karen Kromar, MPCA, St. Paul
Patrick Carey, MPCA, Duluth

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, MN • 55155-40



July 3, 2013

Suzanne Steinhauer
Environmental Review Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: Route Permit Application and Environmental Assessment Scoping for the Deer River High Voltage Transmission Line Project in Itasca County
Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: E015/TL-13-68
DNR ERDB Number: 20130328

Dear Ms. Steinhauer:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Route Permit Application and provides the following comments regarding the application and for consideration when scoping the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Rare and Protected Species

Potential impacts to state-listed species should be included in the EA:

- Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) may nest in the area. Bald eagles are a state-listed species of special concern, and they are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Both acts prohibit killing, selling, or otherwise harming eagles, their nests, or eggs. If there will be any tree removal associated with the proposed project, the trees should be inspected for nests prior to being cut down. The USFWS issues permits for unintentional disturbance and for the taking of a tree. For more information regarding this permitting process, please visit the USFWS website at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MidwestBird/EaglePermits/index.html>.
- Pale moonwort (*Botrychium pallidum*), a state-listed endangered plant, was documented in 2009 and 2010 in a utility right-of-way in T56N R27W Section 36. As this may be in the immediate vicinity of the proposed 115 kV transmission line removal, impacts to this species are possible. Please note that Minnesota's endangered species law (*Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0895) and associated rules (*Minnesota Rules*, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the taking of threatened or endangered species without a permit. However, the state status of pale moonwort is proposed to change to special concern when the list is next revised (possibly in the next couple of months). Actual steps that will need to be followed will depend on the pole locations and actual disturbance areas in relation to the known plant location, and on the status of the species during the time of the line removal.



- The project proposer should also contact Lori Naumann with the DNR at (651) 259-5148 regarding removal of either an osprey nest or eagle nest as a DNR permit may be needed.

Bird Diverters

The DNR recommends using bird diverters in the locations shown on the enclosed map. These locations are on proposed new or rebuilt transmission lines running east/west perpendicular to feeding and resting routes from the fields where feeding occurs to the north and the White Oak Lake and Mississippi River to the south. Areas without trees to divert flight are included. The enclosed location recommendations include an east/west portion of the proposed 230 kV Alignment and the proposed 115 kV Rebuild. The nearby fields are often in grain that is attractive to waterfowl, mostly geese, which also use the nearby water to the south in the fall.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Deer River Transmission Line Project. Please contact me with any questions.

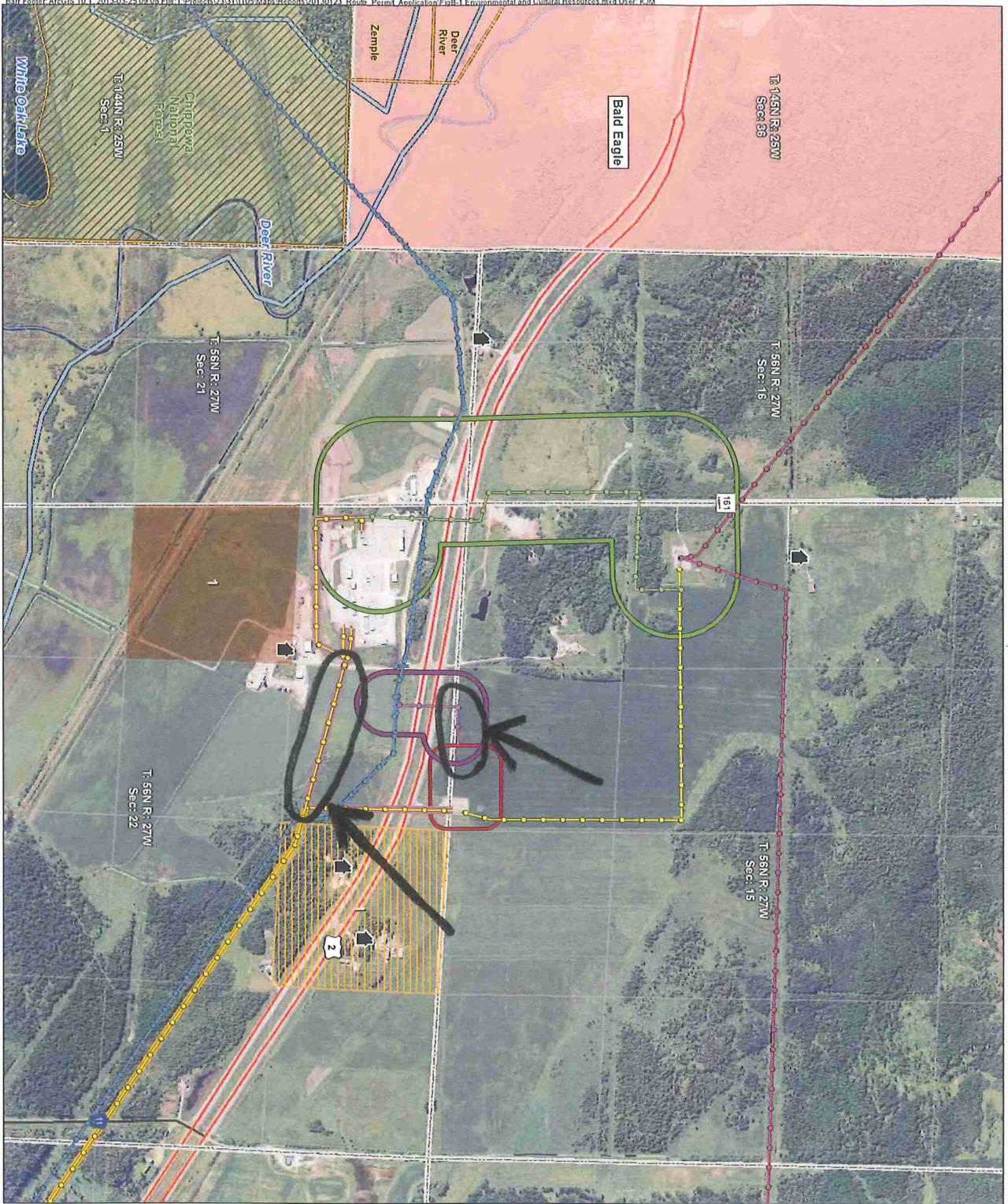
Sincerely,



Jamie Schrenzel
Principal Planner
Environmental Review Unit
(651) 259-5115

Enclosures: 1

C: Tricia DeBleekere, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Daniel McCourtney, Minnesota Power
Rian Reed, DNR



- Existing 115KV Line
 - Existing 69KV Line
 - CapX2020 230KV Line
 - 115 KV HVTL Proposed for Removal
 - Proposed 115 KV Rebuild
 - Proposed 115KV Alignment
 - Proposed 115 KV HVTL Route
 - Proposed 230KV Alignment
 - Proposed 230KV HVTL Route
 - Proposed Substation Location
 - Residence
 - PWS Watercourse
 - PWS Basin
 - National Forest Boundary
 - Rare Natural Feature*
 - Archaeological Site
 - Historic Site
 - PLS Quarter-Quarter Section
 - PLS Section
 - Municipal Boundary
- * Natural Heritage Information System Rare Features Data
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Image Source: 2010 Farm Service Agency



Figure B-1

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
Proposed 115 kV, 230 kV HVTL and Substation
Minnesota Power
Itasca County, MN