

**Working Group – Great Northern Transmission Line Project
High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit Application**
PUC Docket No. E015/TL-14-21

September 30, 2014

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Timber Lake Lodge
144 SE 17th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
<http://www.timberlakelodgehotel.com/>
218.326.2600

1. Introductions

- a. Department of Commerce (DOC) Energy and Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)/BARR
 1. Bill Storm (DOC EERA)
85 7th Place East
Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55010-2198
bill.storm@stat.mn.us
651-538-1844
 2. Louise Segroves (Barr)
 3. Mike Strong (Barr)
- b. Minnesota Power (MP) (Applicant)
 1. Jim Atkinson (MP)
 2. Christian Winter (MP)
 3. Sean Touey (HDR)
- c. Other
 1. Rian Reed (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) NE Region)
1201 East Highway 2
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
rian.reed@state.mn.us
218-999-7826

d. Working Group Members
In Attendance:

	Name	Affiliation/Title	Address	Email	Phone Number
1	Roger Falk	Roseau County Commissioner	35191 500th Avenue Salol, MN 56756	rdfalk@centurylink.net	218-242-0172
2	Jeanne Newstrom	Trout Lake Township Supervisor	TLC Center 24951 County Road 10 Bovey, MN 55709	jealeone@yahoo.com	218-245-2057
3	Larry Salmela	Carpenter Township Supervisor	22838 Roller Coaster Road Effie, MN 56639	meadlake.larr@gmail.com	218-780-9712
4	John Kannas	Balsam Township Supervisor	40874 Co. Rd 336 Bovey, MN 55709	jbkannas@northlc.com	218-245-1561
5	Charlene Sturk	Beltrami County Recorder	701 Minnesota Avenue NW Bemidji, MN 56601	Charlene.Sturk@co.beltrami.mn.us	218-333-8345
6	Frank Olson	Lawrence Township Supervisor	24867 County Road 57 Bovey, MN 55709	None	218-245-2074
7	Rich Libbey	Izaak Walton League	18603 Hale Lake Drive Grand Rapids, MN 55744	rdlibbey@MCHSI.com	218-326-1874
8	Mike Gibbons	Itasca County Assistant Land Commissioner	1177 LaPrairie Ave Grand Rapids, MN 55744	Michael.Gibbons@CO.ITASCA.mn.us	218-3272855
9	David Leonhardt	Waskish Township Supervisor	32528 Konig Road NE Waskish, MN 56685	dvdleonh@paulbunyan.net	218-647-8565
10	Todd Miller	Roseau County Commissioner	526505 20th Avenue Warroad, MN56763	gentlemanfarmer.miller@gmail.com	218-689-3717

Not in attendance

	Name	Affiliation/Title
1	Rob Ecklund/ Dale Olson	Koochiching County Commissioner/ Koochiching County Environmental Services Dept.
2	LeRoy Carriere	Roseau River Watershed District Chairman

- e. We went around the table and each representative identified their interest/concerns. The primary concerns expressed were related to the routing process and potential impacts on constituents.
 - f. Rich Libbey asked Bill Storm to describe the difference between working group and advisory task force (Rich Libbey). Bill described the statutory definition of the advisory task force and specific constituents of the statutory advisory task force. Since statutory task force composition couldn't be met -we have an informal working group. From a mission standpoint Bill sees no significant difference. From a structure and formality standpoint, the working group may be slightly less formal than a "Task Force".
2. Regulatory Review Process Overview (provided by Bill Storm)
- a. High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) route permitting process
 - b. Certificate of Need process
 - c. Timing of routing vs. need process
 - d. Role of DOC in each process
 - i. Environmental Report for certificate of need
 - ii. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for routing
 - e. Rich Libbey asked Bill Storm to describe Department of Energy (DOE's) role in this Project. Bill Storm described that because there is a federal action - border crossing - DOE and DOC are partnering to produce a joint state and federal EIS
 - f. Overview of routing factors considered by the commission
 - g. Decisions to be made by the commission: Is EIS adequate? Should a route permit be granted? What should be included in that route permit?
 - h. Overview of route permit
 - i. What does it include: permitted route, Right of Way (ROW), alignment
 - ii. Special conditions
 - iii. Does not dictate easement, eminent domain, "buy the farm"
 - i. Project contacts
3. Project Overview (provided by Jim Atkinson)
- a. The GNTL Project is part of a bigger plan to achieve an energy mix of 1/3 Natural Gas, 1/3 Coal, 1/3 Renewables. Jim Atkinson was asked about MP's current natural gas generation. Jim Atkinson replied that MP currently has minimal natural gas in their mix (market purchases) but has long term plans for natural gas
 - b. Project goals:
 - i. flexibility, diversity, efficiency -- reduce carbon emissions
 - ii. also address load from iron range (additions over last several years)
 - iii. Reliability - only one 500 kV line in the area - this is one of the biggest contingencies in MISO system
 - c. Overview of siting and permitting strategy
 - i. study area
 - ii. constraints, opportunities
 - iii. public engagement:
 - 1. elimination of western routes (stakeholder concerns, populated areas)
 - 2. iterative effort to address constraints near Roseau and Littlefork
 - iv. Major permits needed: Certificate of Need (CON), Route Permit, Presidential Permit, Section 404 permit from US Army Corps of Engineers, State land crossing permits
 - v. Several Questions were raised by workgroup:

- Rich Libbey: At one point considering Shannon Substation and Blackberry Substation both as possible endpoints. What would it take for this to be back on the table? Why doesn't this satisfy the need?
 - Christian Winter/Jim Atkinson point out this was addressed on CON. Shannon Substation was not as good an option as Blackberry Substation and it fails to meet the need. Transmission line capacity was a big consideration (more capacity on 230 kV line at Blackberry Substation). Shannon Substation option also came with some land ownership concerns (active taconite facility, lease with cancellation clause) that made it a poor location for a significant new infrastructure investment.
 - Bill Storm pointed out that from a regulatory perspective system configuration/alternative endpoint is still under evaluation in the Certificate of Need. At this time the Department of Commerce's Division of Energy Resources DER has concurred with MP's evaluation, but there is still opportunity in near term to comment.

- Rich Libbey asked that Jim Atkinson provide an overview of how the hydro will dovetail with wind. Jim Atkinson responded that when MP is producing excess wind power (low demand, high production periods e.g., night) Manitoba Hydro (MH) will actually purchase wind power and stop releasing water out of their dam and then MP will buy the power from MH when demand on their system is greater. This arrangement takes an intermittent resources like wind and makes it almost like a dispatchable resource - reduces costs for MP and reduces costs to customers.

- Rich Libbey asked: How significant is line loss? Christian Winter responded that the industry doesn't look at line loss on a per line basis, they look on a system basis because addition of a new line can actually increase the efficiency of the system. This is addressed in CON which actually shows an overall improvement in terms of line losses.

- Mike Gibbons asked: In terms of constraints where do county resource easements play into the lineup of constraints (e.g., Itasca county easements? Mopis, Lessard-Sams). Jim Atkinson responded that these easements are not strong constraints because they are so numerous, they are almost impossible to avoid. Mike Gibbons requested shapefiles so he can overlay with forest resource inventory (Barr to provide).

4. Environmental Review process overview (provided by Bill Storm)

- a. Alternative vs. full process
- b. Public scoping meetings, Draft EIS, Draft EIS comment period, Final EIS -- flow chart of full review process steps, decision making steps
- c. Scoping decision basics
 - i. Topics
 - ii. Alternative routes to mitigate potential impacts
 - iii. For Local Units of Government (LUGs), looking mostly for land use issues, comprehensive plan, local/regional issues that should be addressed in the permit.
- d. Role of other agencies

- e. Location of additional Project information/resources
5. Overview of working Group “Charge” (provided by Bill Storm)
- The working group is “charged” with assisting the EERA staff in developing the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) that will be prepared for the Project. Specifically, the working group will:
- (1) Assisting in identifying specific impacts and issues of local concern that should be analyzed in the EIS, and
 - (2) Assisting in determining potential route and route segment alternatives that should be analyzed in the EIS.
- These efforts are designed to assure that conflicts with, or issues relative to, regional and local planning are identified for consideration in the EIS.
6. Review of the DRAFT Scoping Summary (Department/BARR)
- a. Overview of what the scoping report is
 - i. Provides overview of work to date
 - ii. Table 2-1 summarizes comments by category
 - iii. CD: every comment, searchable table of comments
 - iv. Placeholder for outcomes of working groups: summary, any resolution the work group might come up with
 - v. Comments/alternative routes/alignment modifications: generated based on comments, maps/narrative - had to pull routes out of comments
 - vi. Micro level planning at this point will need to be balanced by a big picture look at how changing something in one area might impact something downstream as recommendations are developed
 - vii. Overview maps: Alignments in mauve, route alternatives identified in green
 - b. Bill Storm asked how people would like to proceed: Review comments received to date? Review alternatives and alignments to date? Or jump right into discussion of their particular issues.
 - c. John Kannas voiced preference for jumping right in and talking about routing since most people around the table identified routing as a concern.
 - i. John Kannas asked if there is an existing route to Essar. Christian Winter pointed out there is existing 115kV corridor could be followed from Essar sub, and a 230kv permitted but not built.
 - ii. John Kannas noted two potential route alternatives that he likes
 - 1. Use Delich route down to Nashwauk, but then follow existing route (two 115 kV lines plus permitted 230 kV line) east, across the highway and then down south from Nashwauk - existing 115 kV lines.
 - 2. He noted an alternative between Grass Lake and Bray Lake - use orange to Blue with the Boyle Alignment Modification. Short angle on Boyle to make it less impactful to Bray Lake residents - Boyle residence is rarely used vs. year round residences on Bray Lake.
 - iii. Frank Olson voiced concerns that Lawrence Township doesn't want it in their township and doesn't understand how they can impact the outcome. Bill Storm provided an overview of the purpose of the task force -- routes to study to mitigate impacts. Frank

Olson let the group know that the Blue route is the one that the Township would rather see permitted.

- iv. Jeanne Newstrom pointed out that Iron Range Township no longer exists - it is now part of Taconite - note for Mike Strong
- v. Rich Libbey proposed a number of other potential alternatives in the Balsam/Lawrence area
 - 1. Rich Libbey suggested a route that extends south from DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment/DNR East Bear Lake Alternative Route Segment (which avoid preliminary high biodiversity site) and extends south to connect to NE corner of Delich Alternative Route Segment (use existing corridor). Rich pointed out that connecting the two would potentially shorten the route and minimize new corridor. John Kannas pointed out that there is pretty wild country west of Buck Lake. Rich Libbey's potential alternative in this area crosses through Blandin land, almost all spruce swamp. Dave Brook snowmobile trail goes through the area this potential alternative would run through however.
 - 2. Rich Libbey also pointed out that we could consider angling just east of DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment to bring the line straight south. John Kannas thought corner to corner option Rich Libbey initially pointed out would be more appropriate.
 - 3. Rich Libbey pointed out that even using DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment then tying back into Orange Route and then using Delich Alternative Route Segment might work to address Balsam/Lawrence issues while avoiding preliminary high biodiversity site.
 - a. We all looked at Delich Alternative Route Segment together and took stock of the number of houses and number of sharp angles. The existing line there is a 230 kV (much narrower corridor than if a 500 kV ROW was added) and the corridor has a lot of homes near it. Bill pointed out that a route with so many homes along/in the corridor would likely be a challenge from the commission's standpoint.
 - 4. Rich Libbey pointed out then that maybe taking DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment to the Orange route to the Blue route would address the Balsam /Lawrence area concerns.
 - 5. We also briefly looked at DNR East Bear Lake Alternative Route Segment vs. angling directly NW/SE off of the existing line.
- d. Larry Salmela pointed out that the common theme so far in the group's discussion is minimizing impacts on homeowners. Bill Storm pointed out that this is a major consideration for MP and is something that will be addressed in the EIS. Larry Salmela proposed that the task force make the statement as a group that we're charged with minimizing impacts to homeowners.
- e. John Kannas suggested that we move south to north and each person in the group weigh in with their concerns
 - i. We started the review in the Blackberry Substation area (Trout Lake Township), moving north.
 - 1. Jeanne Newstrom mentioned that she drove the route and took a look at the sub, but she pointed out that it was not especially visible. She believes the blue route is more practical than the orange route and that in this area the orange has more wetland impacts.

2. We looked at the White Alignment Modification. Jeanne Newstrom mentioned that she is fine with blue route in this area.
 3. Where orange and blue routes merge and there are no alternatives, Jeanne pointed out that this is prime mining land. Jim Atkinson pointed out that MP talked with Magnetation, RGGs, and DNR lands and minerals to identify this particular crossing of the iron formation. Rian Reed pointed out that the DNR letter comment letter did address mineral resource impacts in this area. Jim Atkinson pointed out that the consulted parties consider the blue/orange route in this area is the "least worst option". Christian Winter pointed out that Iron range crossing between diamond lakes follows existing 115 kV line that serves magnetation.
- ii. John Kannas picked up moving north into Balsam Township.
1. John Kannas identified the next issue area as the portion of the route that passes near Richard Lorenz's place on 57. John Kannas pointed out that Webber Alternative Route Segment pushes the line pretty close to home owners on Bass Lake (Moose Lake?). John Kannas expressed a preference for the Webber Alignment Modification that would cross Deadman's Lake. Jim Atkinson pointed out that given the distance across Deadman's Lake they could likely span it. Mike Strong noted that Deadman's Lake is a PWI. Rian Reed pointed out that DNR likely would not permit a PWI crossing if there is a feasible alternative.
 2. Moving further north John Kannas pointed out again that residents of Bray Lake would probably prefer a sharper angle on the Boyle Alignment Modification and residents on Lake Thirty would prefer north leg of the Boyle Alignment Modification "trapezoid" to connect a little further north.
 3. Jim Atkinson pointed out that the Blue and Orange routes near Hartley Lake have been developed with lots of input from lake association members. Jim Atkinson pointed out that the alignment MP has developed with this input were really well received by lake associations.
 4. John Kannas pointed out that there is a cabin on Pickerel Lake not identified in GIS
 5. John Kannas also pointed out there is a cabin on East River, near Hartley Lake between Orange and Blue routes, (Robert DelZappo).
 6. Jim Atkinson pointed out that Orange and Blue routes also avoid an old CCC camp that should maybe factor into the development of alternatives
- iii. Rich Libbey took over moving north to provide some rationale for proposed alternatives
1. Alternative route has been proposed (DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment) that avoids Bass Lake Park, Long Lake Bog (high biodiversity site), would widen existing corridor and would avoid forest fragmentation through the northern part of the county. He wonders if adding another 500 kV line in addition to the 230 and 500 there now is really a big change. Jim Atkinson indicated that from MP's point of view this is not a good option. They don't like 3 circuits together (reliability) tripling up would mean 3 out of 5 tie lines from Manitoba to US would be in the same corridor that corridor. Christian Winter pointed out that there are special protection systems in place to maintain system reliability if lines go down. But you have potential to lose a significant amount of power to the region if all three lines were knocked out. This would impact MP's ability to use efficient generation, and puts big stress on Manitoba's system

2. Rich Libbey asked: What is an appropriate separation? Christian Winter responded that it's a grey area, it's hard to come up with a concrete number for an appropriate separation. When it comes down to it, further away is better and within the same corridor is subpar.
- iv. Continuing north Mike Strong pointed out:
 1. Ostlund Alignment Modification was reviewed
 2. Perry Alignment modification, avoid Bass lake campground - Mike Gibbons pointed out that they would want to keep this portion of the line as far southwest as possible. We discussed cost of angle structures. Rian Reed pointed out that DNR would like a viewshed analysis for state campground on west side of lake just south of bass lake (if Perry Alignment Modification makes it through).
 - vi. Sticking with the blue route and moving north
 1. Larry Salmela mentioned his interest in the Hwy 1 crossing area.
 2. He reiterated his point about minimizing impact on residences and had nothing additional to add
 - vii. Moving further north we looked at the connecting point with beginning of DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment.
 1. David Leonhardt pointed out this is where he'd prefer to see the route continue northwest on 500 kV line through SNA through Big Bog.
 2. Jim Atkinson pointed out that SNAs were designated after the existing power line was put up and pointed out that state rules say you can't go through an SNA.
 3. David Leonhardt pointed out end of the bog walk and pointed out that it is almost certain that the line will be visible.
 - viii. Jumping to Roseau Co
 1. Roseau County would like to see a different crossing (existing 500 kV), but understand that existing 500 kV is not workable for MH.
 2. Jim Atkinson pointed out that the new and agreed upon border crossing would be just east of Pine creek DNR Pine Bend crossing but west of the SNA -- split the distance between the stream and the SNA.
 3. Bill Storm pointed out that for this effort, we are not limited to the one route crossing that Jim pointed out. Roger Falk indicated that the new proposal would be the best in his opinion because it would bypass a lot of productive farmland.
 4. Todd Miller also brought up figures 6 and 7 in the Scoping Summary report. He pointed out that paralleling existing lines as the route enters the US would be amenable. However, Roseau County's preference would be to follow MP's proposed route south where the existing 230 kV and 500 kV lines split versus taking the route east (e.g., DNR Cedar Bend WMA Alternative Route Segment). Todd Miller understands that following the existing 230 kV or 500 kV transmission lines across the border, however, is probably not feasible with MH constraints. Given the constraints for the border crossing, Roseau County supports MP's proposed routes and does not support DNR or USFWS alternative route segments.

7. Follow-up

- a. Next meeting (week of October 20th)? Wednesday the 29th. Same venue, same time split, works for everyone
- b. Homework (survey form). Trying to direct some focus from a LGU perspective to think about ordinances, comp land use plan, zoning. Route permit will supersede local ordinances but there's no reason these concerns can't be wrapped up into route permit.
- c. Meeting Minutes.
 - i. Bill will send out emails to rest of group so they can communicate
 - ii. Will send out final meeting minutes as well

Working Group – Great Northern Transmission Line Project
High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit Application
PUC Docket No. E015/TL-14-21

October 29, 2014

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Timber Lake Lodge
144 SE 17th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
<http://www.timberlakelodgehotel.com/>
218.326.2600

1. Introductions

- a. Department of Commerce (DOC) Energy and Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)/BARR
 1. Bill Storm (DOC EERA)
85 7th Place East
Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55010-2198
bill.storm@stat.mn.us
651-538-1844
 2. Louise Segroves (Barr)
 3. Mike Strong (Barr)
 4. John Wachtler (Barr)
- b. Minnesota Power (MP) (Applicant)
 1. Jim Atkinson (MP)
 2. Christian Winter (MP)
 3. Christina Rolfes (HDR)
- c. Other
 1. Rian Reed (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) NE Region)
1201 East Highway 2
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
rian.reed@state.mn.us
218-999-7826
- d. Working Group Members
In Attendance:

	Name	Affiliation/Title	Address	Email	Phone Number
1	Todd Miller	Roseau County Commissioner	526505 20th Avenue Warroad, MN56763	gentlemanfarmer.miller@gmail.com	218-689-3717
2	Rich Libbey	Izaak Walton League	18603 Hale Lake Drive Grand Rapids, MN 55744	rdlibbey@MCHSI.com	218-326-1874
3	Mike Gibbons	Itasca County Assistant Land Commissioner	1177 LaPrairie Ave Grand Rapids, MN 55744	Michael.Gibbons@CO.ITASCA.mn.us	218-3272855
4	Frank Olson	Lawrence Township Supervisor	24867 County Road 57 Bovey, MN 55709	None	218-245-2074
5	Steve Blair	Koochiching County Environmental Services Department	715 4 th St., International Falls, MN 56649	Steve.Blair@co.koochiching.mn.us	218 283-1158
6	Roger Falk	Roseau County Commissioner	35191 500th Avenue Salol, MN 56756	rdfalk@centurylink.net	218-242-0172
7	John Kannas	Balsam Township Supervisor	40874 Co. Rd 336 Bovey, MN 55709	jbkannas@northlc.com	218-245-1561
8	David Leonhardt	Waskish Township Supervisor	32528 Konig Road NE Waskish, MN 56685	dvdleonh@paulbunyan.net	218-647-8565

Not in attendance

	Name	Affiliation/Title
1	LeRoy Carriere	Roseau River Watershed District Chairman

2	Jeanne Newstrom	Trout Lake Township Supervisor
3	Rob Ecklund/ Dale Olson	Koochiching County Commissioner/ Koochiching County Environmental Services Dept.
4	Larry Salmela	Carpenter Township Supervisor
5	Charlene Sturk	Beltrami County Recorder

2. Bill provided an overview of the agenda
 - a. The group agreed that the proposed agenda is amenable
 - b. Bill also pointed out a new handout of route alternative/alignment alternative names updated without commenter/proposer names

3. Review/tour Proposed Routes and alternatives (continuing from last meeting):
 - a. Picking up where we left off last month and going south Mike Strong brought up the map looking at the area near Roseau
 - i. Todd Miller reiterated that Roseau County supports Minnesota Power's (MP's) proposed route through the Roseau area and is not in support of any of the scoping alternatives
 - ii. Zooming in on the map the group looked at the DNR Roseau Lake WMA Alternative Route Segment
 1. Roseau County (Todd Miller and Roger Falk) indicated that they do not support DNR routes because there are too many impacts to homes. They also pointed out that the scoping maps don't show the houses in this area however, if they did, it would be apparent that there are a lot of houses along the DNR's proposed routes in Roseau County.
 2. Todd Miller and Roger Falk reiterated that Roseau County board is amenable to MP's proposed route and that they recognize limitations of options for crossing into the US and do not oppose MP's proposed crossing
 - b. Jim Atkinson pointed out that MP is working on a Presidential Permit amendment that eliminates original crossing proposal and moves over to just east of DNR's Pine Creek Alternative Route Segment, a bit further east of Pine Creek channel and just west of SNA boundary with enough separation to eliminate any concerns about impacts to hydrology (although MP wouldn't necessarily expect any hydrologic impact – it eliminates any perceived concern). MP worked with Manitoba Hydro to identify a crossing point as far east as possible. The line would diagonal slightly further to the east as the line continues south after border crossing. Amended Presidential Permit showing this crossing is available as of today.
 - i. Todd Miller pointed out that he recognizes there are limitations with regard to where Manitoba Hydro and MP can coordinate the crossing. So they recognize that with the border crossing they may not get exactly what may be ideal for Roseau county, however, they will support MP's proposed crossing as it keeps the line as far east as possible

- ii. Todd Miller pointed out that a resident near the MP's new proposed crossing, Mr. Rice, has indicated he would like to keep the line as far from his home as possible. Jim pointed out that the route will essentially split the difference between the Rice house and the SNA
- c. John Kannas wanted to know how certain is it that a given route proposed during scoping will be evaluated and eventually built
 - i. Bill clarified that the group is picking routes for consideration, Minnesota Power will comment on routes, Bill will determine which alternatives are viable (e.g., engineering feasibility, maybe one route that solves routing problems raised by multiple people, multiple proposed alternatives) and prepare a recommendation for the commissioner on what should be carried forward for further study.
 - 1. Rich Libbey asked if DNR will be able to provide a rebuttal to MP's comments.
 - 1. Bill Storm responded that when he prepares his briefing and presents to the commission there is an opportunity for comment before the PUC.
- d. Steve Blair asked why the proposed line doesn't follow the existing 500 kV line for its entire length
 - i. Jim pointed out that in some areas they can't follow the existing line because they need to avoid SNAs that were created after existing 500 kV line was built
 - 1. Steve Blair asked if similar restrictions exist for WMA? Jim indicated that WMA's are handled differently
 - 2. David Leonhardt pointed out that he has done some research and he has found that DNR can issue a variance to allow a transmission line to be routed through an SNA
 - 3. Rian Reed pointed out that state statute does not allow it, there may be the potential to provide a variance if the infrastructure could be co-located in an existing corridor
 - 4. Jim Atkinson pointed out that the rule does provide for a variance if no prudent and feasible alternatives exist
 - 5. Rian Reed mentioned that Peggy Booth is the SNA coordinator in St. Paul and Bill Storm indicated that DOC and Barr would pursue clarification around the legality of routing through the SNA. MN Rules 7850.4300 was read aloud to the group for reference
 - 6. Rich Libbey asked if there was any way to double circuit to include the new line within existing ROW though the SNA, Jim Atkinson said that this would not be feasible from an engineering perspective
- e. Steve Blair asked if maybe MP doesn't want to follow the existing line if that creates issues (e.g., from an engineering perspective)
 - i. Jim Atkinson pointed out that they do want to follow existing lines, but the preference is for following one line vs. several for safety and reliability reasons
- f. Returning to the previous topic, Ryan Reed said he spoke with Peggy Booth about the SNAs and she pointed out that the peatlands in the SNA are of national significance – the level of importance makes it even more difficult to get a variance to pass through
 - i. Jim Atkinson pointed out that there is actually a lot of federal land participating in SNA as well

- ii. Bill Storm agreed that his team would follow up on this – if we find that it will be impossible from a legal perspective to cross the SNA, those routes that go through SNAs would be eliminated
- g. Picking up on the maps the group looked at the area where the proposed route runs south of lake of the woods
 - i. The group looked at USFWS Alternative Route Segment 1
 - 1. In this area MP's Proposed route stays south of existing 500 to avoid crossing the 500 kV line and to avoid homes
 - 2. Todd Miller pointed out that their preference would be to follow existing ROW in this area
 - ii. The group looked DNR Cedar Bend Alternative Route Segment that follows the existing 230 kV line
 - 1. MP pointed out that they eliminated this segment during routing process due to high number of impacts to homes
 - 2. The group reviewed USFWS Alternative Route Segment 2
 - 1. General consensus was that this seems like a significant deviation with impacts to private land
 - 2. Todd Miller reiterated that the only routes they support are the route proposed by MP – all the other routes have greater impact to homes/human settlement/private land use
 - iii. We zoomed into area where USFWS Alternative Route Segment 7 option jumps from following the 500 kV line to following the 230 kV line.
 - 1. Jim pointed out human settlement impacts along this line
 - 2. Roger Falk pointed out that the Lake of the Woods Commissioner called Roger and pointed out that he would prefer MP's proposed line that follows 500 kV line in Lake of the Woods County
 - iv. Bill focused in on USFWS Alternative Route Segment 3 and pointed out where this alternative passes between two adjacent blocks of USFWS land. Bill pointed out that he and his team are working to understand whether the concern is placing a pole in vs. spanning USFWS land, or if there are particular features to be avoided
 - v. The group zoomed in on USFWS Alternative Route Segment 5
 - 1. Richard Libbey asked: Does USFWS have to issue a permit for a crossing? Jim Atkinson responded yes.
 - 2. Stephen Blair asked: Some pipelines must cross USFWS land, how do they get through that? (e.g., why in this instance is USFWS pushing alternatives that avoid crossings)
 - 3. Bill pointed out that a willingness/desire to cross/permit crossings shouldn't necessarily be taken as given, the downstream permitting adds an element of uncertainty the company might want to eliminate
 - vi. Bill pointed out in the vicinity of the USFWS Alternative Route Segment /Myers Alternative Route Segment, he will work to narrow the list of routes focusing in on analyzing routes that address multiple issues if possible
- h. We zoomed in on the Myers Alternative Route Segment – right where the proposed route splits from the existing 500 kV line
 - 1. The concern these alternatives address was related to the line overlapping with Richard Myers property
 - 2. John Kannas pointed out that there is a major intersection in this area

3. Bill Storm and Mike Strong both pointed out that this area is critical in the sense that the Blue route and Orange routes split and there are not opportunities to switch between the two until much further south
- i. The group continued reviewing moving south along the Orange route
 - i. David Leonhardt asked: If MP could have followed the existing 500 kV line through the SNA, would MP have preferred the orange route? Jim indicated that was possible.
 - j. Continuing south, the group looked at USFWS Alternative Route Segment 6 which avoids USFWS interest parcel
 - i. Continuing south we looked at USFWS Alternative Route Segment 4, Bill pointed out that USFWS has indicated that they need to survey the corner of the parcel on the north end of this line
 - k. On Jim Atkinson's request we moved back to look at the area just south of USFWS Alternative Route Segment 1 and USFWS Alternative Route Segment 3 where MP has option on land for a Compensation station – site needs to be somewhere close to the midpoint on the circuit between Winnipeg and the iron range. They have willing land owner, ideal site and option with owner. He pointed out that changes in routing that change the total route length could cause issues in terms of locating this Compensation station
 - i. Christian Winter pointed out that MP needs to locate the Compensation station within 10 miles either way of the line's midpoint - so there is a little bit of leeway, but not a lot
 - l. Moving south into Big Bog area, the group looked at the Red Lake Peatland SNA and where Orange route skirts around the western edge of the Red Lake Peatland SNA
 - i. Rich Libbey asked how much lower towers could be? In areas where they are visible could they lower them and put them closer together? Jim agreed that if the towers are closer together they can be shorter, but couldn't identify a definite minimum structure height at this point
 - ii. Various discussion ensued about the Big Bog Recreation area, the bog walk, visual impacts and the possibility of crossing the Red Lake Peatland SNA:
 1. If SNA already has a line through it Stephen Blair indicated that he didn't see it as quite as significant and issue to put another transmission line through
 2. Rian Reed shared DNR thought process re: the fact that there is an existing line through the SNA and indicated that if this could be built within the existing ROW, a variance may be possible, but otherwise this is not workable
 3. Christina Rolfes pointed out that taking a step back, the purpose of the SNA is to protect a resource that can't exist anywhere else. An SNA may protect a fen, for example, where there's the possibility that even seemingly localized impacts could alter hydrology, damage the fen and ultimately damage the integrity and value of the entire SNA
 4. David Leonhardt pointed out that he thinks it would be helpful to weigh the impacts to SNA against viewshed impacts at the boardwalk.
 1. Bill countered that the first bar is to determine whether it is legally possible and this comparison might be the next step if the first bar is met
 5. Richard Libbey would like Bill to look into a possible legislative solution

6. Stephen Blair Co raised Pine island peat bog approval as an example
- m. The group continued its review moving south into Kelliher area
 - i. The group looked at MP's alternative route segment J2 – MP's alternative to the Orange route
 1. The group also looked at Lindner Alternative Route Segment off of Orange route between Kelliher and Effie. Bill pointed out that this might be an example of something that might become part of the route permit – vs. just an opportunity for the land owner to work with MP to identify a workable alignment within the route width (post permit)
 2. We also looked at Strand Alternative Route Segment (on MP's alternative route segment J2). Stephen Blair asked if the angles will be less sharp when this alternative is actually implemented. Bill Storm confirmed
 3. At Jim's request we looked for Bois Forte reservation. We did not find it in the Barr GIS files but there is a township north of the Orange route and West of the Blue route east of Effie that is Boise Forte reservation. Barr to follow up and get shapefiles with this information
 - ii. Backing up west of Effie and following the Orange route
 1. The group looked at the Peterson Route Segment – this alternative would change the angle of MP's proposed line
 2. The group looked at the Francisco Alignment Modification proposed to avoid gravel pit just east of Effie
 - n. The group backed up on the map to the point where MP's Blue route and Orange route split and began working back to the south
 - i. The group looked at web of routes in this area that give the option to jump to blue route slightly further north or further south
 - ii. The group followed along as the Blue route continues on along south side of the existing 230 kV line. Where the existing 230 kV line turns south, DNR North Black River route segment was proposed, following existing corridor to avoid mineral resources. Jim Atkinson pointed out that they routed the blue through this area not along the existing 230 line to avoid homes. There is not a lot of room along the east side of the 230 kV to fit a 500 kV line – thus more impacts to residents. North Black River segment rejoins blue route where 230 kV line splits off.
 - iii. The group zoomed in to the C2 alternative (splits off of Blue route). Jim Atkinson pointed out there are a lot of homes in this area. Furthermore this route is much longer (14 miles longer) and much more expensive due to the number of turns. Steve pointed out that there may be issues as Hwy 11 is a scenic byway.
 - iv. The group zoomed in to the DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment where 230 kV, existing 500 kV and new 500 kV would be within the same corridor. Jim pointed out that there are serious issues for maintenance, induced/stray voltage.
 1. Richard Libbey suggested that these are issues that should be studied in the EIS – the route should be carried forward
 2. Bill Storm walked through the steps in the process to determine what will be pulled forward for study at in the EIS and pointed out that if something is eliminated in scoping and there is disagreement, there will be on open commission meeting where people can weigh in again

3. Mike Gibbons pointed out that Itasca county land department on face value likes the idea of three lines coming down on the same corridor along the same side of the county. Mike Gibbons cited land/forestry issues but he would appreciate seeing and being able to weigh the limitations that MP understands exist in with this arrangement where three lines are in the same corridor.
 4. Stephen Blair asked if the DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment would cross Big Fork River. We noted that this would not cause an additional crossing.
 5. Richard Libbey mentioned potential mineral routes in the 60-24 and 60-23 – Cu Ni leases and preliminary area of high biodiversity
- v. John Kannas indicated he would like to add some thoughts about routes discussed during the previous work group.
1. The group looked at the Mattfield Alternative Route Segment that is furthest west, Jim Atkinson described process for acquiring ROW for Essar and the need to cross Blandin land that had been recently incorporated into Lessard Sams easement. As part of adding new circuit in MP was no longer going to need a portion of existing 230 kV line, so they made an agreement with Blandin to set aside the no longer needed 230 kV corridor as a sort of “swap”. Since the westernmost Mattfield Alternative Route Segment uses this corridor, it would break MP’s understanding with Blandin.
 2. The group looked at the Boyle Alignment Modification near Grass Lake. John Kannas pointed out that proposed alignment change goes over Bray Lake road –John Kannas expressed concerns about minimizing impacts to one home by shifting them to others. He proposes starting the angle of the southern part of the alignment modification further north.
 3. The group looked at the Webber Alternative Route Segment and Webber Alignment Modification – John Kannas expressed concerns about minimizing impacts to one home by shifting them to others and suggested consideration of an even split of the distance between the Weber and Lorenz residences
- vi. Richard Libbey passed out proposed alternatives.
1. First proposed alternative that would use DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment and then connect DNR Effie Alternative Route Segment to a combination of Blue and Orange routes
 2. Second proposed alternative would come south on the Blue route then couple the DNR East Bear Lake route with a combination of the Orange and Blue (will require tripling up 500 kV, 500 kV and 230 kV for approximately 4 miles)
 1. Jim Atkinson pointed out that they’ve already expressed their concerns about tripling up
 2. Rian Reed pointed out that DNR drew their corridor quite wide along the east bear lake proposed route.
- vii. John Kannas asked if we’ve discussed the Delich Alternative Route Segment. The group agreed that we had discussed this during our previous workgroup meeting

viii. Bill asked if we could move on. The group agreed.

3. Review Homework (LUG Survey) Discussion of local/regional issues

- a. Bill Storm explained the purpose of the homework
- b. Bill Storm indicated that completed LUG surveys would be included as appendices. He noted that any LUG surveys not turned in today should be turned in soon for inclusion in the Scoping Summary Report

4. Memorializing/Documenting Working Group Efforts

- a. Bill asked if the group wanted to make a resolution and requested that the group give some feedback on what they want to do to summarize their efforts for the record (Resolution, WG Statement, Alternatives)
- b. John Kannas suggested just including meeting minutes. David Leonhardt agreed. Jim pointed out that just including the notes maybe be so general that the group is missing an opportunity to have an influence on the process
- c. Discussion produced the items below. Group consensus was reached on the highlighted items
 - i. Todd advocated for the statement: This is a public purpose project and should therefore be routed as much as possible on public land, minimizing impact to human settlement and private property use.
 - ii. Libbey added: As much as practical and feasible, the route should follow existing infrastructure corridors.
 - iii. David Leonhardt advocated to expressing a concern about the bog walk. He agrees with a statement such as: We have a concern about the Big Bog State Recreation Area and would like the EIS to evaluate impacts to the Big Bog State Recreation Area and boardwalk and detail mitigation measures to address impacts in this area. The group did not have collective support for this point.
 - iv. Libbey advocated including a statement advocating minimizing visual impacts and impacts to outstanding natural resources.
 - v. At this time the working group prefers the Blue route (as modified by Minnesota Power's amended border crossing) over the Orange route.
 - vi. Specific to Roseau county, we don't want any of the DNR routes
 - vii. The working group would like the department of commerce to investigate the legality of following an existing transmission line corridor through an SNA as an alternative route
 - viii. The working group would like to put forth two alternative routes for consideration during scoping.

5. Final Scoping Report

- a. Bill asked if the working group would like to review the working group summary and pointed out that turnaround time would be very short – likely 24 hours
- b. The group indicated that they would like an opportunity to review and would be able to work with the short turnaround time