

6.13 Lester Prairie

The proposed Lester Prairie facility has a capacity of 3.5 MW AC and is located in Section 25 of Winsted Township in McLeod County. The site is located northeast of the city of Lester Prairie, northeast of the intersection of State Highway 7 and County Highway 9. Aurora anticipates that the facility will be accessed through a newly constructed access road off of County Road 9. Preliminary plans anticipate a development area of approximately 26.0 acres within the 29.9 acres of Aurora’s site control. Electricity from the facility will be delivered to Xcel Energy’s Lester Prairie Substation located approximately one mile west of the facility.

The facility is located within the Minnesota and Northeastern Iowa Morainal Section of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province. Land cover within the preliminary development area (Table 29) is dominated by cultivated crops (92.3 percent). The proposed facility location avoids the developed area around Lester Prairie to the south, but is otherwise similar to the predominantly agricultural in the study area surrounding the Lester Prairie Substation (Figure 55).

Table 29: Lester Prairie Facility

Land Cover	Control Area		Development Area		Study Area	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Open Water	-	-	-	-	348.0	2.8%
Developed, Open Space	0.4	1.3%	0.1	0.4%	251.4	2.0%
Developed, Low Intensity	3.2	10.7%	1.8	6.8%	428.9	3.4%
Developed, Medium Intensity	-	-	-	-	209.6	1.7%
Developed, High Intensity	-	-	-	-	55.7	0.4%
Barren Land	-	-	-	-	3.5	--
Deciduous Forest	-	-	-	-	635.6	5.1%
Evergreen Forest	-	-	-	-	10.3	0.1%
Mixed Forest	-	-	-	-	4.5	--
Shrub/Scrub	-	-	-	-	252.5	2.0%
Grassland Herbaceous	-	-	-	-	73.4	0.6%
Pasture/Hay	0.3	1.1%	0.1	0.5%	2,734.3	21.8%
Cultivated Crops	26.0	87.0%	24.0	92.3%	7,348.4	58.5%
Woody Wetlands	-	-	-	-	15.9	0.1%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	-	-	-	-	182.4	1.5%
Totals	29.9	100.0%	26.0	100.0%	12,554.3	100.0%

6.13.1 Effects on Human Settlement

The facility is located on a cultivated parcel in a rural area with scattered rural residences. The nearest home is located approximately 140 feet east of the preliminary development area. Construction of the facility will not result in displacement of any homes or businesses. The facility is located in an area zoned as Agricultural by McLeod County.¹³⁵

A snowmobile trail maintained by the Crow River Sno Pros follows County Road 9, on the western edge of the proposed facility. There are no other recreational trails, state, county or local parks identified within one-half mile of the proposed facility. Construction and operation of the facility would not impact the use of nearby recreational resources.

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.2 are identified for the Lester Prairie facility.

6.13.2 Effects on Land Based Economies

The proposed facility would remove approximately 24 acres of farmland from agricultural use. Aurora's proposed West Waconia facility is located within 10 miles of the Lester Prairie facility; together the two facilities would remove approximately 97 acres from agricultural production in the region.

Approximately 11 acres (42 percent) of the developed area are considered to be prime farmland and 15 acres (59 percent) are considered to be prime farmland if drained (Table 13). Within the study area surrounding the Lester Prairie Substation, approximately 37 percent is considered to be prime farmland and 38 percent is considered to be prime farmland if drained. Given the preponderance of prime farmland or prime farmland if drained in the study area, it is likely that any alternate locations would also be sited on prime farmland or prime farmland if drained (Figure 57).

The proposed project would not impact tourism, mining or mineral extraction activity, or forest resources of economic importance.

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.3 are identified for the Lester Prairie facility.

6.13.3 Effects on Archaeological and Historic Resources

No archaeological sites were identified in a survey of the Lester Prairie facility. No mitigation measures beyond those identified in Section 5.4 are identified.

¹³⁵ McLeod County Zoning Map, http://co.mcleod.mn.us/departments_files/Zoning/LandUseMap2009v12.pdf

6.13.4 Effects on Natural Environment

There are no rivers, streams or lakes within the area of facility site control. Field delineations performed in the summer of 2014 did not identify any wetlands in the area of land control.¹³⁶

The preliminary design for the facility anticipates grading of approximately 7.5 acres of the site during construction.¹³⁷

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.5 are identified for the Lester Prairie facility.

6.13.5 Effects on Rare and Unique Natural Resources

A review of the NHIS database did not identify any documented instances of state or federally listed endangered, threatened or special concern species within one mile of the area of site control for the Lester Prairie facility.¹³⁸

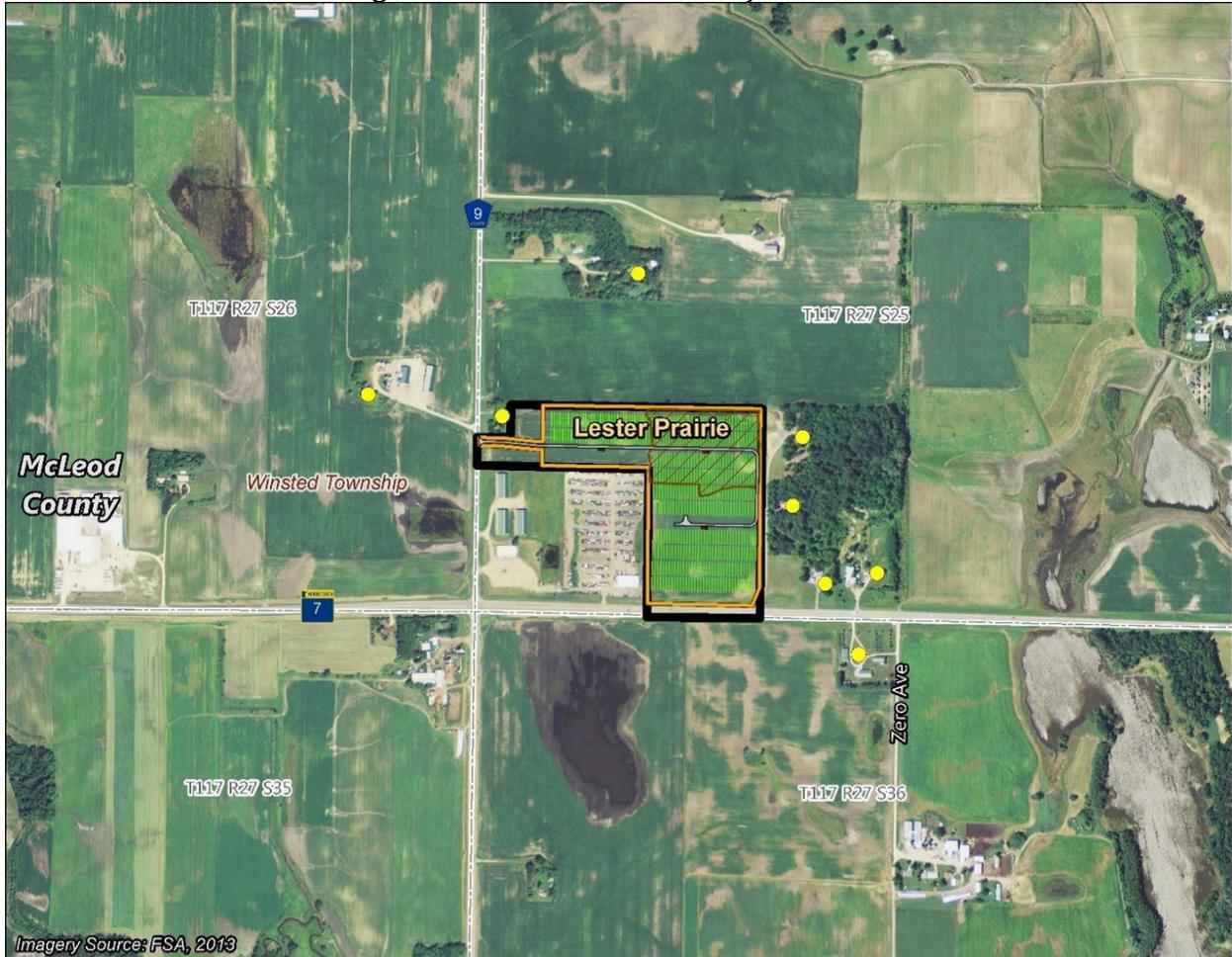
No mitigation measures beyond the field survey described in Section 5.6, are identified for the Lester Prairie facility.

¹³⁶ Appendix C

¹³⁷ Application, at Appendix F

¹³⁸ Application, at p. 81

Figure 54: Lester Prairie Project Detail



McLeod

- Residence Location
- Proposed Inverter
- Proposed Arrays
- Proposed Road
- Proposed Grading Area
- Preliminary Development Area
- Facility Land Control

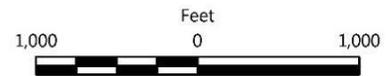


Figure 55: Lester Prairie Land Cover Overview



Figure 56: Lester Prairie Generally Incompatible Areas

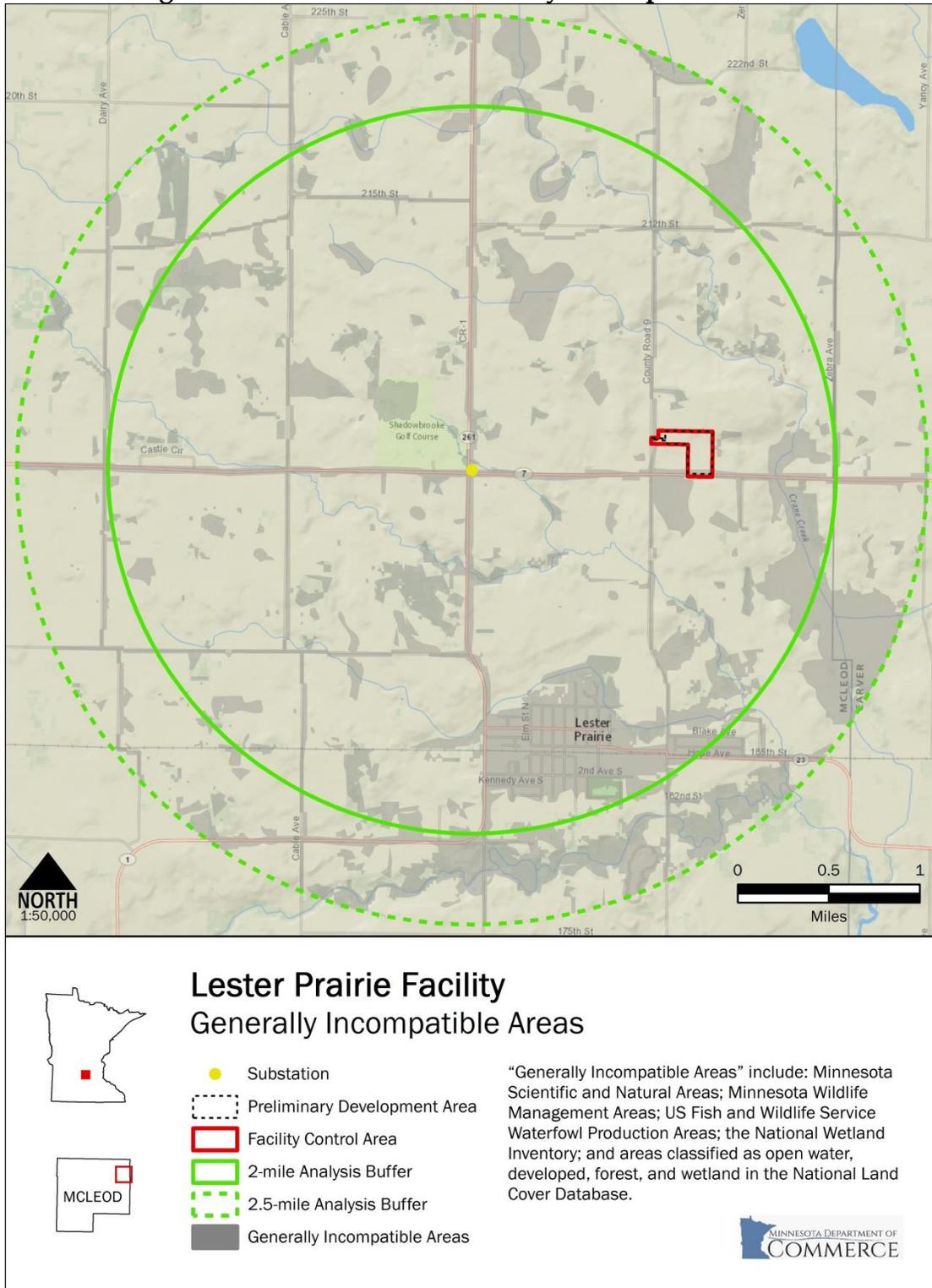


Figure 57: Lester Prairie Prime Farmland

