

APPENDIX C

Agency Correspondence



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

August 23, 2011

651 234-7247

Ms. Carole L. Schmidt, Supervisor
Transmission Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard
Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718

**Subject: Proposed Shoal Lake 115kV Transmission Line and Substation Project
Itasca County, Minnesota**

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

We have reviewed your proposal for the Great River Energy and Lake Country Power Shoal Lake 115kV Transmission Line and Substation project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota. We do not anticipate any effect on publicly-owned airports; therefore the Office of Aeronautics has no objection to the proposed project.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Gene R. Scott'.

Gene R. Scott, P.E.
Regional Airport Engineer
gene.scott@state.mn.us

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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

August 29, 2011

Ms. Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor
Transmission, Permitting & Compliance
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd.
Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

RE: Shoal Lake 115kV Substation Transmission Line Project – construct overhead line and
Shoal Lake Substation
Itasca County
SHPO Number: 2011-3366

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

Based on our review of the project information, we conclude that there are no properties listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places, and no known or suspected archaeological properties in the area that will be affected by this project.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal permit or license, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the assisting federal agency.

Please contact our Compliance Section at (651) 259-3455 if you have any questions regarding our review of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Britta L. Bloomberg'.

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ST. PAUL DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
180 FIFTH STREET EAST, SUITE 700
ST. PAUL MN 55101-1678

August 22, 2011

REPLY TO
ATTENTION

Operations Division
Regulatory Branch (2011-03437-WAB)

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

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

We have received the document entitled "Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project" dated 19 August 2011. Due to limited staff and resources, it is unlikely that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory staff will review or comment on this document until we receive a jurisdictional determination request and/or a permit application. In lieu of a specific response, please consider the following general information concerning our regulatory program that may apply to the proposed project.

If the proposal involves activity in navigable waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (Section 10). Section 10 prohibits the construction, excavation, or deposition of materials in, over, or under navigable waters of the United States, or any work that would affect the course, location, condition, or capacity of those waters, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit.

If the proposal involves deposition of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including discharges associated with mechanical land clearing, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA Section 404). Waters of the United States include navigable waters, their tributaries, and adjacent wetlands (33 CFR § 328.3). CWA Section 301(a) prohibits discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit under Section 404. Information about the Corps permitting process can be obtained online at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory>.

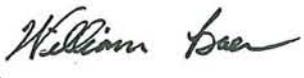
The Corps' evaluation of a Section 10 and/or a Section 404 permit application involves multiple analyses, including (1) evaluating the proposal's impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (33 CFR part 325), (2) determining whether the proposal is contrary to the public interest (33 CFR § 320.4), and (3) in the case of a Section 404 permit, determining whether the proposal complies with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) (40 CFR part 230).

If the proposal requires a Section 404 permit application, the Guidelines specifically require that "no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences" (40 CFR § 230.10(a)). Time and money spent on the proposal prior to applying for a Section 404 permit cannot be factored into the Corps' decision whether there is a less damaging practicable alternative to the proposal.

If an application for a Corps permit has not yet been submitted, the project proposer may request a pre-application consultation meeting with the Corps to obtain information regarding the data, studies or other information that will be necessary for the permit evaluation process. A pre-application consultation meeting is strongly recommended if the proposal has substantial impacts to waters of the United States, or if it is a large or controversial project.

For further information or to request a pre-application consultation meeting, please contact Bill Baer at (218) 444-6381, the Corps' project manager for the County in which this proposal is located.

Sincerely,


for
Tamara E. Cameron
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Cf:
Don Dewey, Itasca County ESD
Jim Gustafson, Itasca County SWCD
Erika Herr, MnDNR

Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG

From: Joyal, Lisa (DNR) [lisa.joyal@state.mn.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2011 7:14 PM
To: Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG
Subject: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation

I have received your letter dated 19 August 2011 regarding the above project. I concur with your assessment that there are no known occurrences of rare features within one mile of the proposed route. The reference number for this correspondence is ERDB #20120094.

Thank you for notifying us of this project, and for the opportunity to provide comments.

Lisa Joyal

~~~~~  
Lisa Joyal  
Natural Heritage 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](mailto:lisa.joyal@state.mn.us)  
[www.mndnr.gov/eco](http://www.mndnr.gov/eco)



---

**From:** Nick Rowse@fws.gov [mailto:Nick.Rowse@fws.gov]

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 11, 2011 4:59 PM

**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE-MG

**Subject:** Re: Shoal Lake Project

Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance  
Great River Energy  
12300 Elm Creek Blvd.  
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Dear Ms. Schmidt,

As Great River Energy plans this project, we ask that special attention be paid to Important Eagle Use Areas. This is defined under 50 CFR §22.3 as "an eagle nest, foraging area, or communal roost site that eagles rely on for breeding, sheltering, or feeding, and the landscape features surrounding such a nest, foraging area, or roost site that are essential for the continued viability of the site for breeding, feeding, or sheltering eagles." Disturbance or landscape alteration around Important Eagle Use Areas (including indirect effects) could result in take or disturbance of eagles. Great River Energy needs to examine effects on eagles of the construction phase, as well as the long-term impact of the transmission line. The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recommends siting potentially lethal infrastructure (such as transmission lines) away from nests, foraging areas, and communal roost sites. A typical bald eagle home range is two miles. We recommend the following actions be undertaken:

If eagle nests have historically been found near the line construction, surveys should be conducted to determine if new nests have been built. Because data in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources database might not be current for Itasca County, surveys should be done for any new nests. Nest surveys are most easily done when foliage is absent (fall, winter, or early spring). Complete an eagle nest survey within two miles of any potential line placement. Historic nest sites should be visited to determine if the nest is still present. Nests of other migratory birds should also be noted, such as other raptors and colonial nesting birds (herons, egrets, cormorants, etc).

- Nests are only one component of Important Eagle Use Areas. We recommend surveys be completed for foraging, roosting, or wintering areas within two miles of all potential line placements. Because use of these locations can change throughout the year, we recommend a fall (pre-water freeze) and a winter (post-freeze) survey to determine use and location. Activity of other migratory birds should also be noted at this time, including waterfowl and water bird concentration areas (especially during spring and fall migration).
- The Service also recommends Great River Energy examine the feasibility of constructing transmission lines at the same height as surrounding vegetation to reduce avian collisions. Additionally, transmission poles should be designed to discourage raptor nesting.
- If eagle nests are discovered, construction timetables should be designed to do much of the work outside the eagle and migratory bird nesting season. One consideration to this recommendation is if a winter use area is found near the preferred route.

Our records indicate there are no federally listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat within the action area of the proposed project. If project plans change, additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, or new species are listed that may be affected by the project, consultation should be reinitiated. This concludes section 7 consultation for proposed construction at the above location. Thank you for your cooperation in meeting our joint responsibilities under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If you have any further endangered species questions, please contact me at (612) 725-3548 x2210.

Sincerely,

Nick Rowse  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
win Cities ES Field Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4101 American Blvd. E.  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665





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19 August 2011

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

RE: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project  
Itasca County

Dear Mr. Scott:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

Lake Country Power proposes to construct the new "Shoal Lake" 115 kV Substation in Section 4, T57N, R23W just south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 in Nashwauk Township (see photo of typical substation on fact sheet).

Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power, proposes to construct approximately 7.75 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line to energize this new substation.

The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the line.

Mr. Gene Scott  
19 August 2011  
Page 2

- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When practical, Lake Country Power will attach an upgraded distribution system on wood crossarms (see photo on fact sheet). The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles. Where guys and anchors are not practical, a laminated wood pole or steel pole on foundation may be used.

During the permitting process for the Minnesota Power 230 kV line, an active private landing strip was identified within one mile of the route (approximately ½ mile south of the intersection of CSAH 8 and Highway 65, oriented in a northwest-southeast direction). Navigation to this airstrip is not expected to be affected by the transmission line.

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

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, September 16, 2011. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosure

# Shoal Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Line



**GREAT RIVER ENERGY**  
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
1-888-521-0130  
[www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com)



**LAKE COUNTRY POWER**  
2810 Elida Drive  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
1-800-421-9959  
[www.lakecountrypower.co](http://www.lakecountrypower.co)

## Project Need

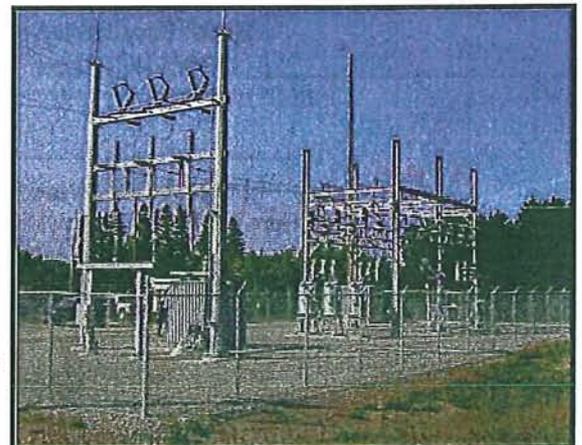
Lake Country Power members north of the City of Nashwauk are currently served by two substations. These substations are energized by a 23,000 volt (23 kV) transmission line built in 1958. This system can no longer support growth or the increasing demand for electric service and at times experiences low voltages.

To increase capacity and minimize the low voltages, Lake Country Power will build a new substation in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be fed by a new 115 kV transmission line built by Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power. The new substation and transmission line will provide a long-term solution to the area's electric needs. The two existing substations will be retired and their electric loads transferred into the new substation.

## Substation and Transmission Line

Lake Country Power will construct the new "Shoal Lake" Substation (similar to that shown right) on County Highway 56, approximately 3.5 miles west of Minnesota Highway 65 in Nashwauk Township. The substation will tap the new transmission line and contain a transformer that will lower the voltage to distribution levels. This substation location was chosen to bring a strong electric source to the middle of the demand area.

Great River Energy will build approximately 7.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line to energize the Shoal Lake Substation (see map on back). The new 115 kV transmission line will tap the Minnesota Power 115 kV "28" Line (that is to be relocated near the new McCarthy Lake Substation at the corner of Hilltop Road and County Highway 58). For the first five miles Minnesota Power and Great River Energy will construct a double circuit 230/115 kV transmission line sharing common poles. At County Highway 56, Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line will turn west and parallel the highway for 2.75 miles to the new substation. Where practical, the new line will overtake the existing Lake Country Power distribution system along Highway 56.



*Typical 115 kV  
Distribution Substation*

## Poles and Construction

Great River Energy will construct the new line along County Highway 56 using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. The shorter spans are necessary where Great River Energy overtakes Lake Country Power's distribution system. Where the distribution system is overtaken the distribution line will be attached to the transmission poles on wood crossarms (see photo). Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles in the line.

## Schedule

Permitting – Fall 2011  
Survey/Easement Acquisition/Engineering – Winter 2011-12  
Construction – 2012

For project updates and information, visit [greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake](http://greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake) or contact:

Dale Aukee, Sr. Field Representative  
Great River Energy  
763-445-5978  
or 1-888-521-0130, ext. 763-445-5978  
[daukee@grenergy.com](mailto:daukee@grenergy.com)



*Typical 115 kV  
Transmission Line  
With Distribution  
Underbuild*

Date last revised: 8/9/2011





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19 August 2011

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

RE: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project  
Itasca County

Dear Ms. Heidemann:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

Lake Country Power proposes to construct the new "Shoal Lake" 115 kV Substation in Section 4, T57N, R23W just south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 in Nashwauk Township (see photo of typical substation on fact sheet).

Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power, proposes to construct approximately 7.75 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line to energize this new substation.

The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for the line.
- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When practical, Lake Country Power will attach an upgraded distribution system on wood crossarms (see photo on fact sheet). The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles. Where guys and anchors are not practical, a laminated wood pole or steel pole on foundation may be used.

Ms. Mary Ann Heidemann  
19 August 2011  
Page 2

During the state permitting process, three architectural resources were noted within one mile of the five-mile Minnesota Power/Great River Energy portion of this project. The EIS issued for this route indicated that no adverse impacts to identified sites are anticipated.

For the 2.75 mile Great River Energy portion of the project, Westwood conducted a cultural resources literature review (see attached letter). A review of records indicated no previously recorded archaeological sites identified within the proposed route and a one mile buffer. Four historic structures have been inventoried within the one-mile buffer. These structures, including IC-NWT-001, IC-UOG-81, IC-NWT-002, and IC-UOG-082, were all inventoried in 1997 during a cultural resources survey of proposed upgrades to CSAH 56. All of these structures have been evaluated as *not* eligible for listing on the NRHP.

One previous cultural resource survey has been conducted in or immediately adjacent to the proposed project area. This survey is detailed in "Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of Proposed Upgrade of CSAH 56 Between CSAH 8 and TH 65, Itasca County, Minnesota" by Michael Justin and Martha Frey (available at MN SHPO, report number IC-98-02). No archaeological sites were identified during this survey.

As the proposed project is within or immediately adjacent to previously surveyed areas and much of the transmission route will be constructed using an existing distribution alignment, no additional work is proposed.

Great River Energy is requesting concurrence with the findings stated above. We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, September 23, 2011. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures

# Shoal Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Line



**GREAT RIVER  
ENERGY**  
A Hudson River Cooperative

**GREAT RIVER ENERGY**  
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
1-888-521-0130  
[www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com)



**LAKE COUNTRY POWER**  
2810 Elida Drive  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
1-800-421-9959  
[www.lakecountrypower.co](http://www.lakecountrypower.co)

## Project Need

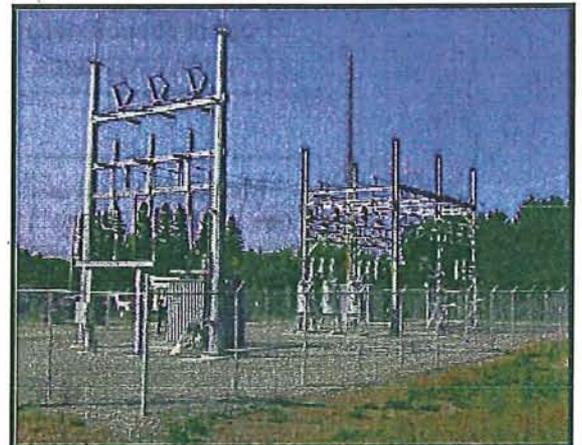
Lake Country Power members north of the City of Nashwauk are currently served by two substations. These substations are energized by a 23,000 volt (23 kV) transmission line built in 1958. This system can no longer support growth or the increasing demand for electric service and at times experiences low voltages.

To increase capacity and minimize the low voltages, Lake Country Power will build a new substation in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be fed by a new 115 kV transmission line built by Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power. The new substation and transmission line will provide a long-term solution to the area's electric needs. The two existing substations will be retired and their electric loads transferred into the new substation.

## Substation and Transmission Line

Lake Country Power will construct the new "Shoal Lake" Substation (similar to that shown right) on County Highway 56, approximately 3.5 miles west of Minnesota Highway 65 in Nashwauk Township. The substation will tap the new transmission line and contain a transformer that will lower the voltage to distribution levels. This substation location was chosen to bring a strong electric source to the middle of the demand area.

Great River Energy will build approximately 7.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line to energize the Shoal Lake Substation (see map on back). The new 115 kV transmission line will tap the Minnesota Power 115 kV "28" Line (that is to be relocated near the new McCarthy Lake Substation at the corner of Hilltop Road and County Highway 58). For the first five miles Minnesota Power and Great River Energy will construct a double circuit 230/115 kV transmission line sharing common poles. At County Highway 56, Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line will turn west and parallel the highway for 2.75 miles to the new substation. Where practical, the new line will overtake the existing Lake Country Power distribution system along Highway 56.



*Typical 115 kV  
Distribution Substation*

## Poles and Construction

Great River Energy will construct the new line along County Highway 56 using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. The shorter spans are necessary where Great River Energy overtakes Lake Country Power's distribution system. Where the distribution system is overtaken the distribution line will be attached to the transmission poles on wood crossarms (see photo). Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles in the line.

## Schedule

Permitting – Fall 2011  
Survey/Easement Acquisition/Engineering – Winter 2011-12  
Construction – 2012

For project updates and information, visit [greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake](http://greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake) or contact:

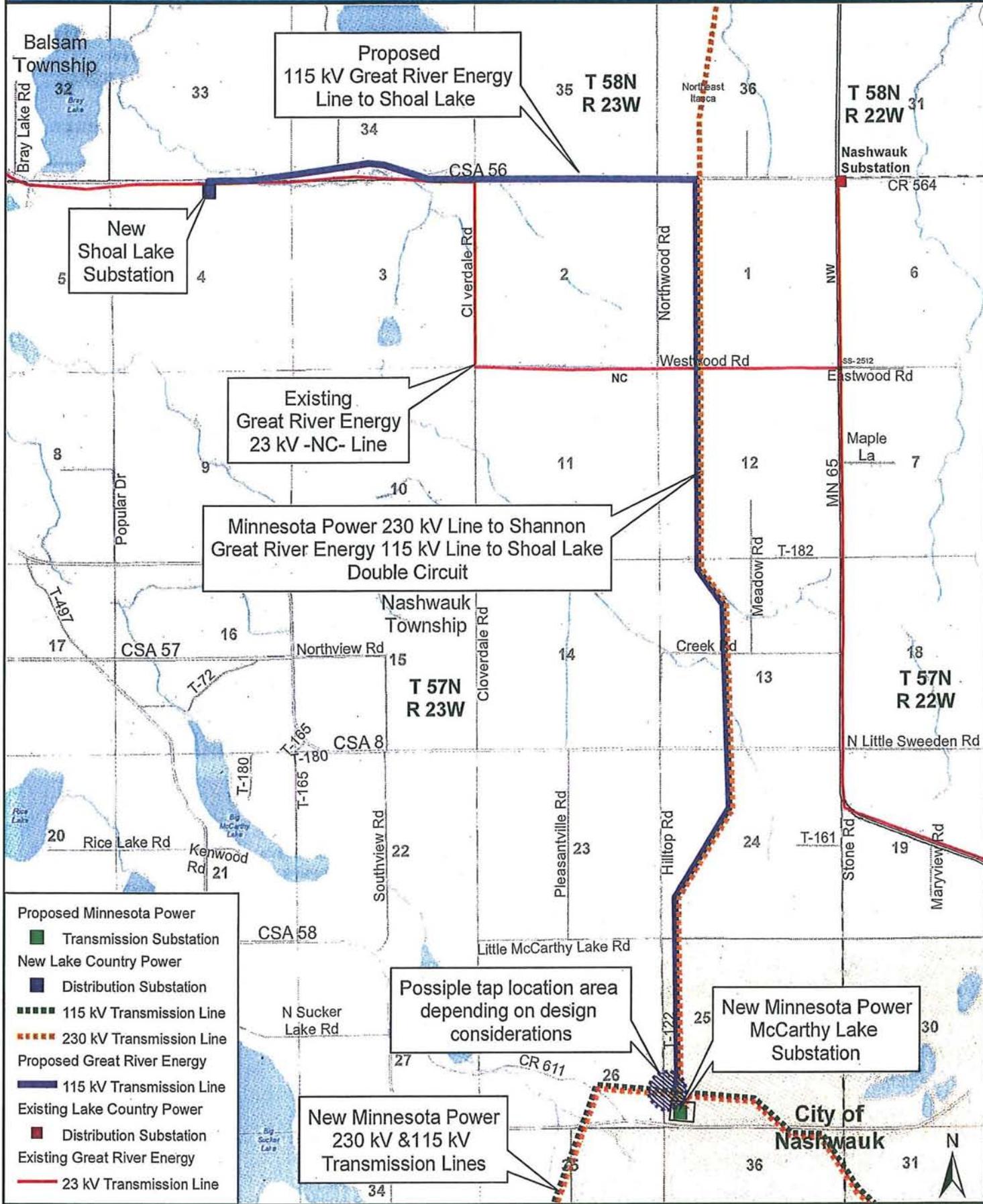
Dale Aukee, Sr. Field Representative  
Great River Energy  
763-445-5978  
or 1-888-521-0130, ext. 763-445-5978  
[daukee@grenergy.com](mailto:daukee@grenergy.com)



*Typical 115 kV  
Transmission Line  
With Distribution  
Underbuild*

Date last revised: 8/19/2011

# Proposed Project



August 19, 2011

Westwood Professional Services  
7699 Anagram Drive  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

MAIN 952-937-5150  
FAX 952-937-5822  
TOLL FREE 1-888-937-5150  
EMAIL [wps@westwoodps.com](mailto:wps@westwoodps.com)  
[www.westwoodps.com](http://www.westwoodps.com)



Ms. Carole Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance  
Great River Energy  
12300 Elm Creek Blvd.  
Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

**Re: Cultural Resource Literature Review for the Proposed Shoal Lake 115-kV  
Substation Transmission Line Project**

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Westwood Professional Services, Inc, (Westwood) was contracted by Great River Energy to conduct a cultural resources literature review of the location of portions of a new transmission line and substation construction project. The proposed transmission line route examined is approximately 2.75 miles in length and is located in Sections 33-36 of Township 58N, Range 23W (Unorganized Government) and Section 4 of Township 57N, Range 23W (Nashwauk Township) in Itasca County, MN. When possible the new line will overtake the alignment of an existing distribution system. The review consisted of an examination of resources including historic mapping, archaeological site files, historic structure inventories, and previous cultural resource survey reports.

On August 17 and 18, 2011, Westwood Cultural Resource Specialist Ryan P. Grohnke conducted a background literature search of the proposed transmission line route and a one-mile buffer at the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) located at Fort Snelling in St. Paul, MN, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) located at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, MN. Archaeological site files and the historic structure inventory files were examined to obtain a list of all previously recorded archaeological sites and historic structures within the proposed project area. Cultural resource reports were investigated to determine if the project area had been surveyed during previous cultural resource investigations. Other sources examined included the Andreas' Illustrated Atlas of Minnesota, 1874 and the historic Trygg maps.

A review of records at the Minnesota SHPO and OSA indicated no previously recorded archaeological sites have been identified within the proposed route and one-mile buffer. A review of Andreas' Illustrated Atlas identifies no cultural resources within the project area. The Trygg map shows information from the 1873 surveys of the townships in the project area. These maps identify no cultural resources and indicate that the majority of the area was still covered with the original pine lands at that time.

Ms. Carole Schmidt  
August 19, 2011  
Page 2



Four historic structures have been inventoried within the one-mile buffer. These structures, including IC-NWT-001, IC-UOG-81, IC-NWT-002, and IC-UOG-082, were all inventoried in 1997 during a cultural resources survey of proposed upgrades to CSAH 56. All of these structures have been evaluated as *not* eligible for listing on the NRHP. Although it is possible that additional architectural buildings or structures could have reached the 50 year threshold for historic properties since the 1997 survey, the proposed line will primarily follow an existing distribution alignment and no additional visual impact should affect any standing historic structures within the area.

One previous cultural resource survey has been conducted in or immediately adjacent to the proposed project area. This survey is detailed in "Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of Proposed Upgrade of CSAH 56 Between CSAH 8 and TH 65, Itasca County, Minnesota" by Michael Justin and Martha Frey (available at MN SHPO, report number IC-98-02). No archaeological sites were identified during this survey.

As the proposed project is within or immediately adjacent to previously surveyed areas and much of the transmission route will be constructed using an existing distribution alignment, no additional work is recommended. It is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned. Should construction plans change and the route is taken substantially further out of the ROW of CSAH 56, these recommendations would need to be revisited. If the project becomes federalized and is reviewed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Federal Lead Agency would determine if these findings are sufficient or if additional work would be required.

Sincerely,

WESTWOOD PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Ryan P. Grohnke  
Cultural Resource Specialist



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

19 August 2011

Mr. Bill Baer  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
Regulatory Branch, Bemidji Field Office  
4111 Technology Drive, Suite 295  
Bemidji, MN 56601

RE: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project  
Itasca County

Dear Mr. Baer:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

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The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the line.

Mr. Bill Baer  
19 August 2011  
Page 2

- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When practical, Lake Country Power will attach an upgraded distribution system on wood crossarms (see photo on fact sheet). The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles. Where guys and anchors are not practical, a laminated wood pole or steel pole on foundation may be used.

Great River Energy is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on floodplains, wetlands, and other important natural resources that occur in the project area. The transmission line will span several DNR public waters. Great River Energy will apply to the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals for a license to cross those waters.

There are a number of wetlands in the project area (see enclosed map), many of which can be spanned. For the 5-mile double circuit portion of the project, it is anticipated that Minnesota Power will submit an application to the Corps (as Minnesota Power will own the structures) to address impacts once design details are available. Great River Energy will submit a separate application to the Corps for the 2.75-mile portion along CSAH 56.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, September 16, 2011. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures

# Shoal Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Line



**GREAT RIVER ENERGY**  
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
1-888-521-0130  
[www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com)



**LAKE COUNTRY POWER**  
2810 Elida Drive  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
1-800-421-9959  
[www.lakecountrypower.co](http://www.lakecountrypower.co)

## Project Need

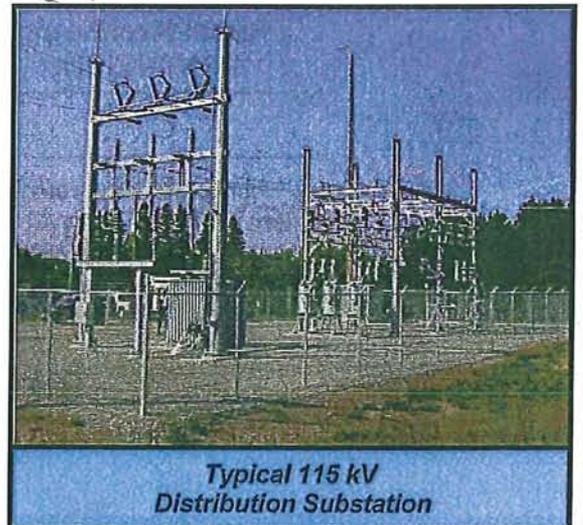
Lake Country Power members north of the City of Nashwauk are currently served by two substations. These substations are energized by a 23,000 volt (23 kV) transmission line built in 1958. This system can no longer support growth or the increasing demand for electric service and at times experiences low voltages.

To increase capacity and minimize the low voltages, Lake Country Power will build a new substation in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be fed by a new 115 kV transmission line built by Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power. The new substation and transmission line will provide a long-term solution to the area's electric needs. The two existing substations will be retired and their electric loads transferred into the new substation.

## Substation and Transmission Line

Lake Country Power will construct the new "Shoal Lake" Substation (similar to that shown right) on County Highway 56, approximately 3.5 miles west of Minnesota Highway 65 in Nashwauk Township. The substation will tap the new transmission line and contain a transformer that will lower the voltage to distribution levels. This substation location was chosen to bring a strong electric source to the middle of the demand area.

Great River Energy will build approximately 7.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line to energize the Shoal Lake Substation (see map on back). The new 115 kV transmission line will tap the Minnesota Power 115 kV "28" Line (that is to be relocated near the new McCarthy Lake Substation at the corner of Hilltop Road and County Highway 58). For the first five miles Minnesota Power and Great River Energy will construct a double circuit 230/115 kV transmission line sharing common poles. At County Highway 56, Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line will turn west and parallel the highway for 2.75 miles to the new substation. Where practical, the new line will overtake the existing Lake Country Power distribution system along Highway 56.



*Typical 115 kV  
Distribution Substation*

## Poles and Construction

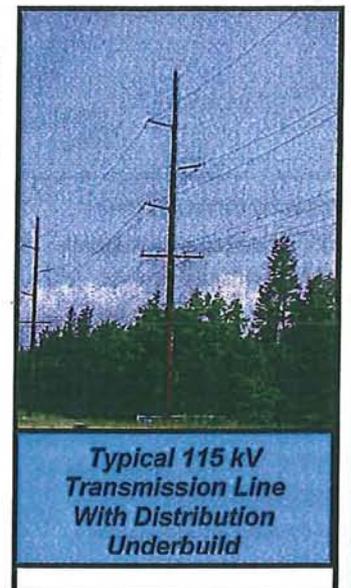
Great River Energy will construct the new line along County Highway 56 using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. The shorter spans are necessary where Great River Energy overtakes Lake Country Power's distribution system. Where the distribution system is overtaken the distribution line will be attached to the transmission poles on wood crossarms (see photo). Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles in the line.

## Schedule

Permitting – Fall 2011  
Survey/Easement Acquisition/Engineering – Winter 2011-12  
Construction – 2012

For project updates and information, visit [greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake](http://greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake) or contact:

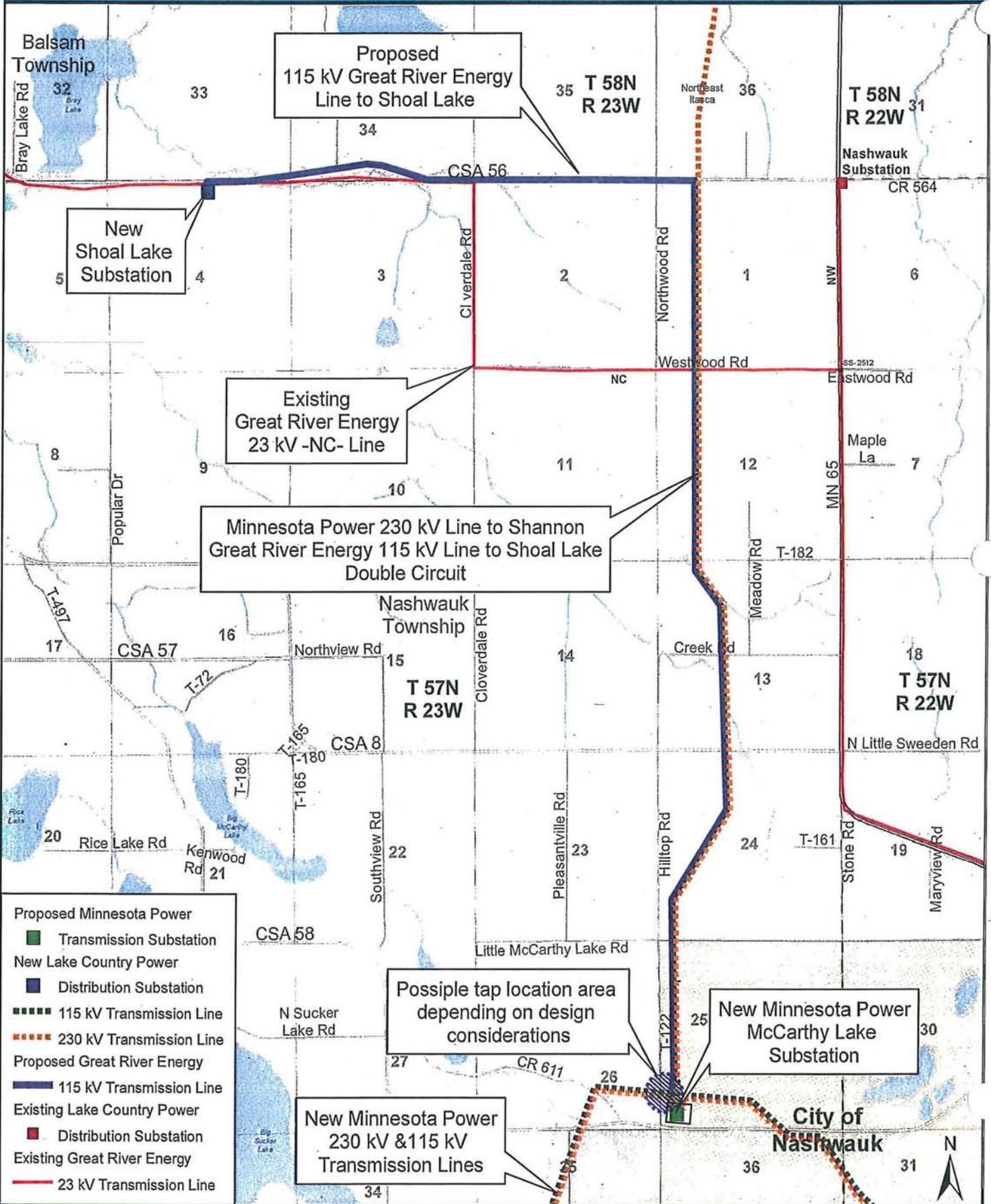
Dale Aukee, Sr. Field Representative  
Great River Energy  
763-445-5978  
or 1-888-521-0130, ext. 763-445-5978  
[daukee@grenergy.com](mailto:daukee@grenergy.com)

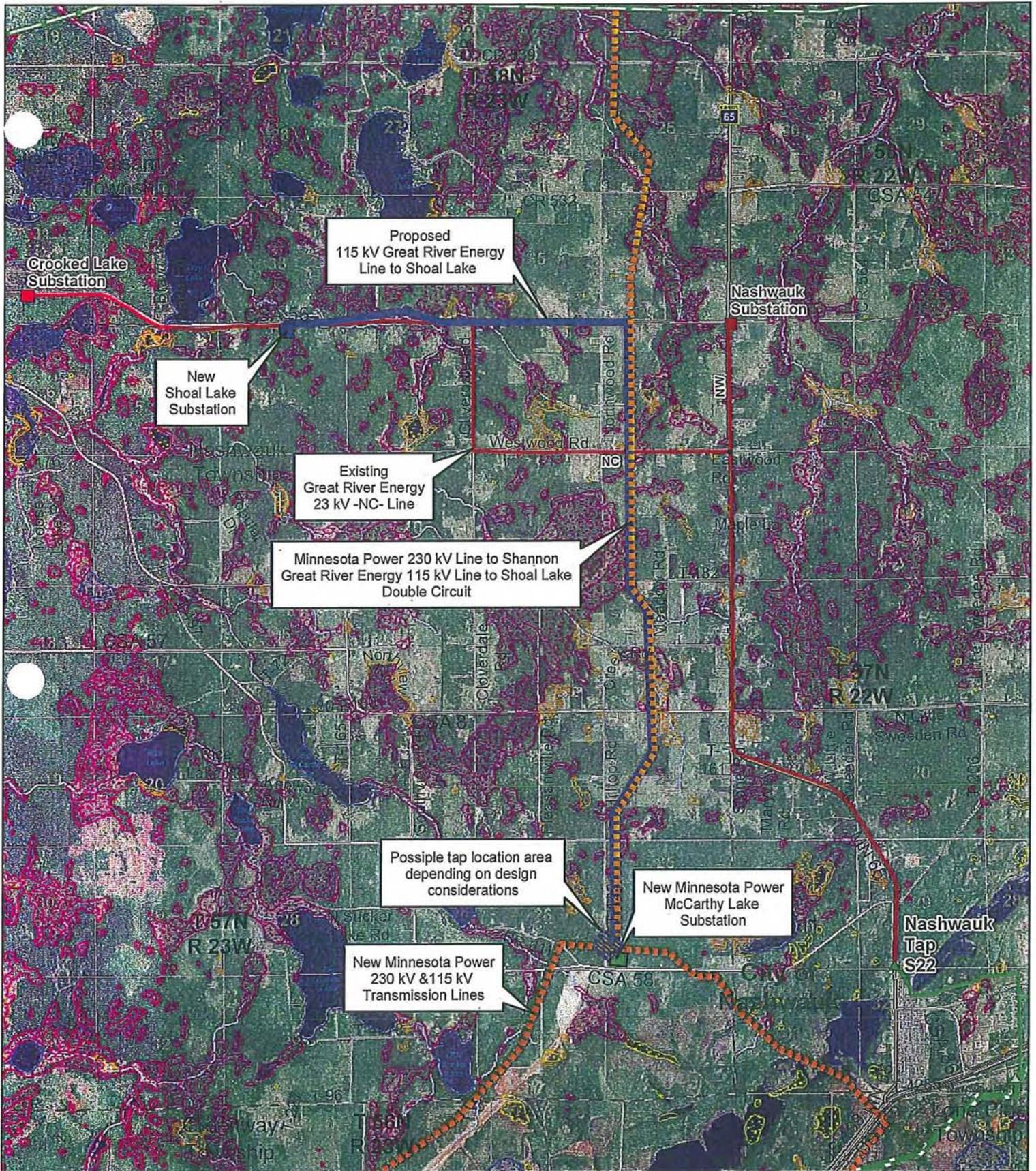


*Typical 115 kV  
Transmission Line  
With Distribution  
Underbuild*

Date last revised: 8/9/2011

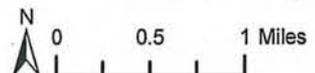
# Proposed Project



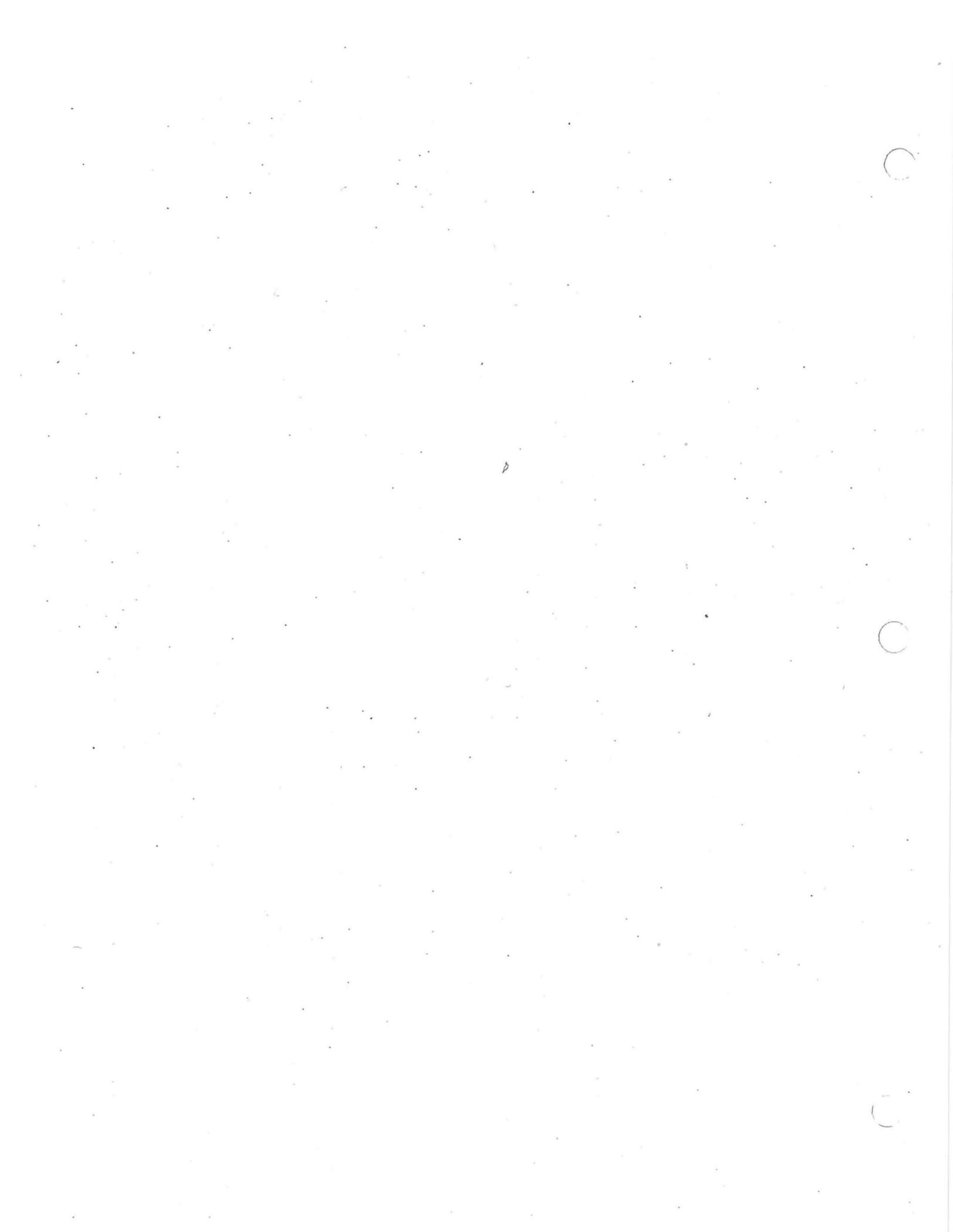


- |                                                        |                                                         |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Existing Lake Country Power<br>Distribution Substation | Existing Great River Energy<br>23 kV Transmission Line  | NWI Wetlands<br>Freshwater Emergent Wetland |
| Proposed Minnesota Power<br>Transmission Substation    | Proposed Great River Energy<br>115 kV Transmission Line | Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland           |
| New Lake Country Power<br>Distribution Substation      | Proposed Minnesota Power<br>115 kV Transmission Line    | Freshwater Pond                             |
|                                                        | 230 kV Transmission Line                                | Lake                                        |
|                                                        |                                                         | Riverine                                    |

**Shoal Lake  
115-kV Transmission Line  
Project  
Wetlands Map**



Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy. NWI Wetlands from the MNDNR. 2010 Color Orthophotos from Farm Services Administration (FSA)





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19 August 2011

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

RE: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project  
Itasca County

Dear Ms. Joyal:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

Lake Country Power proposes to construct the new "Shoal Lake" 115 kV Substation in Section 4, T57N, R23W just south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 in Nashwauk Township (see photo of typical substation on fact sheet).

Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power, proposes to construct approximately 7.75 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line to energize this new substation.

The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the line.

Ms. Lisa Joyal  
19 August 2011  
Page 2

- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When practical, Lake Country Power will attach an upgraded distribution system on wood crossarms (see photo on fact sheet). The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles. Where guys and anchors are not practical, a laminated wood pole or steel pole on foundation may be used.

Great River Energy is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on floodplains, wetlands, and other important natural resources that occur in the project area. The transmission line will span several DNR public waters (see attached map). Great River Energy will apply to the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals for a license to cross those waters. There are no rare features within one mile of the proposed route (see attached map).

We would appreciate receiving concurrence/written comments from your office by Friday, September 16, 2011. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures

# Shoal Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Line



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1-800-421-9959  
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## Project Need

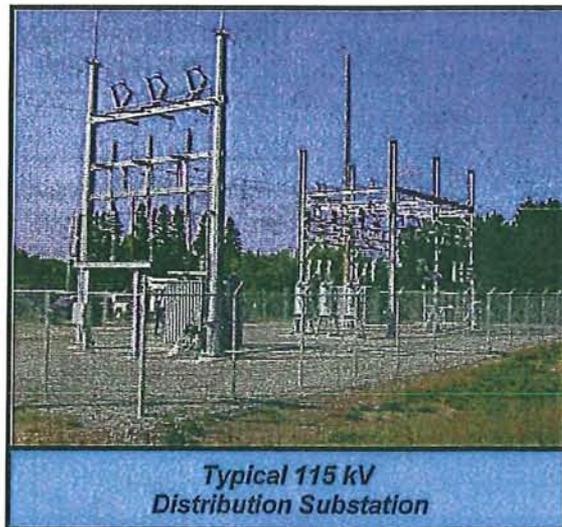
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To increase capacity and minimize the low voltages, Lake Country Power will build a new substation in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be fed by a new 115 kV transmission line built by Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power. The new substation and transmission line will provide a long-term solution to the area's electric needs. The two existing substations will be retired and their electric loads transferred into the new substation.

## Substation and Transmission Line

Lake Country Power will construct the new "Shoal Lake" Substation (similar to that shown right) on County Highway 56, approximately 3.5 miles west of Minnesota Highway 65 in Nashwauk Township. The substation will tap the new transmission line and contain a transformer that will lower the voltage to distribution levels. This substation location was chosen to bring a strong electric source to the middle of the demand area.

Great River Energy will build approximately 7.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line to energize the Shoal Lake Substation (see map on back). The new 115 kV transmission line will tap the Minnesota Power 115 kV "28" Line (that is to be relocated near the new McCarthy Lake Substation at the corner of Hilltop Road and County Highway 58). For the first five miles Minnesota Power and Great River Energy will construct a double circuit 230/115 kV transmission line sharing common poles. At County Highway 56, Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line will turn west and parallel the highway for 2.75 miles to the new substation. Where practical, the new line will overtake the existing Lake Country Power distribution system along Highway 56.



*Typical 115 kV  
Distribution Substation*

## Poles and Construction

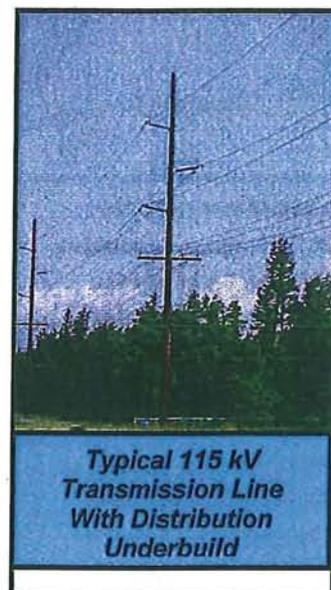
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## Schedule

Permitting – Fall 2011  
Survey/Easement Acquisition/Engineering – Winter 2011-12  
Construction – 2012

For project updates and information, visit [greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake](http://greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake) or contact:

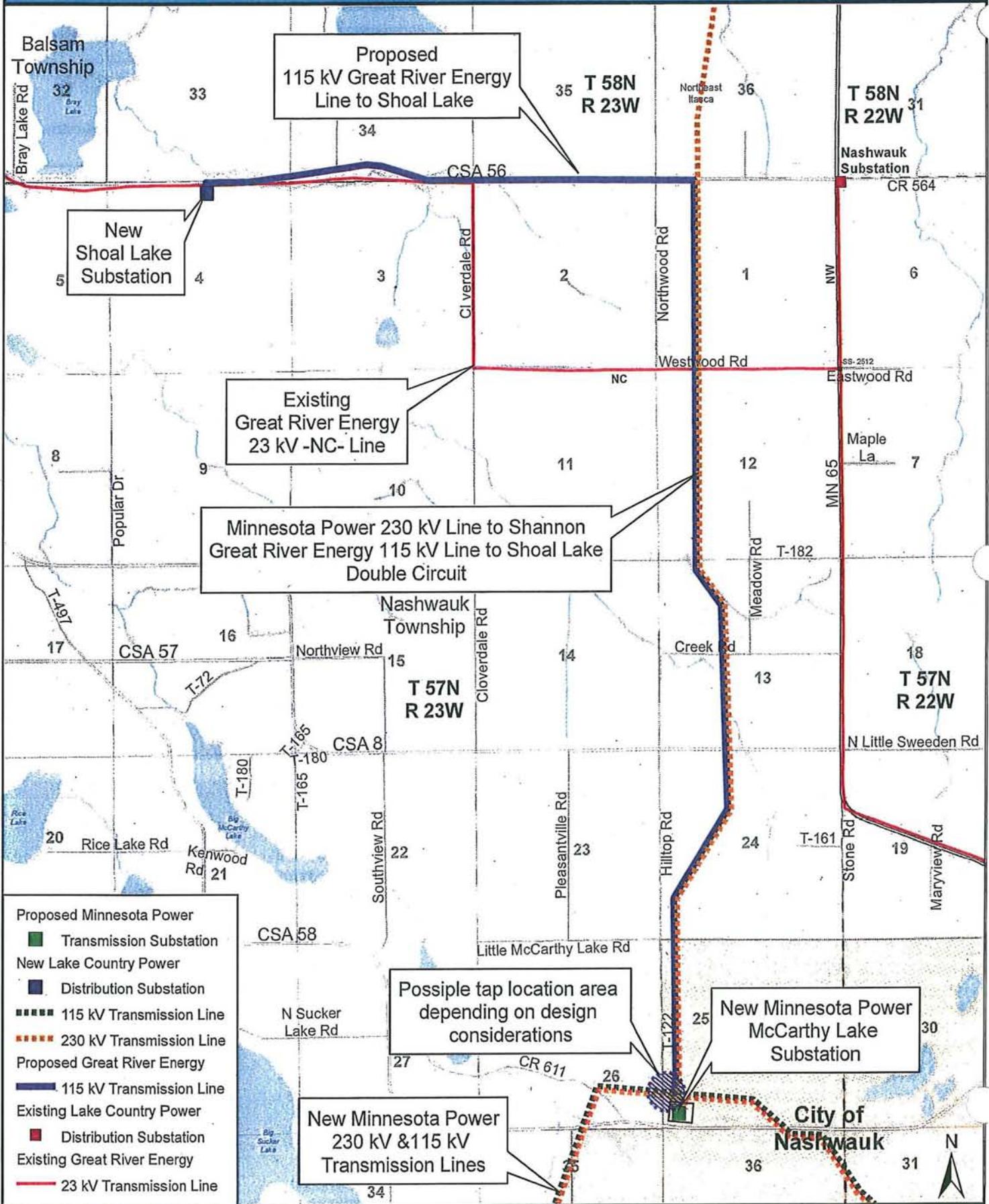
Dale Aukee, Sr. Field Representative  
Great River Energy  
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[daukee@grenergy.com](mailto:daukee@grenergy.com)

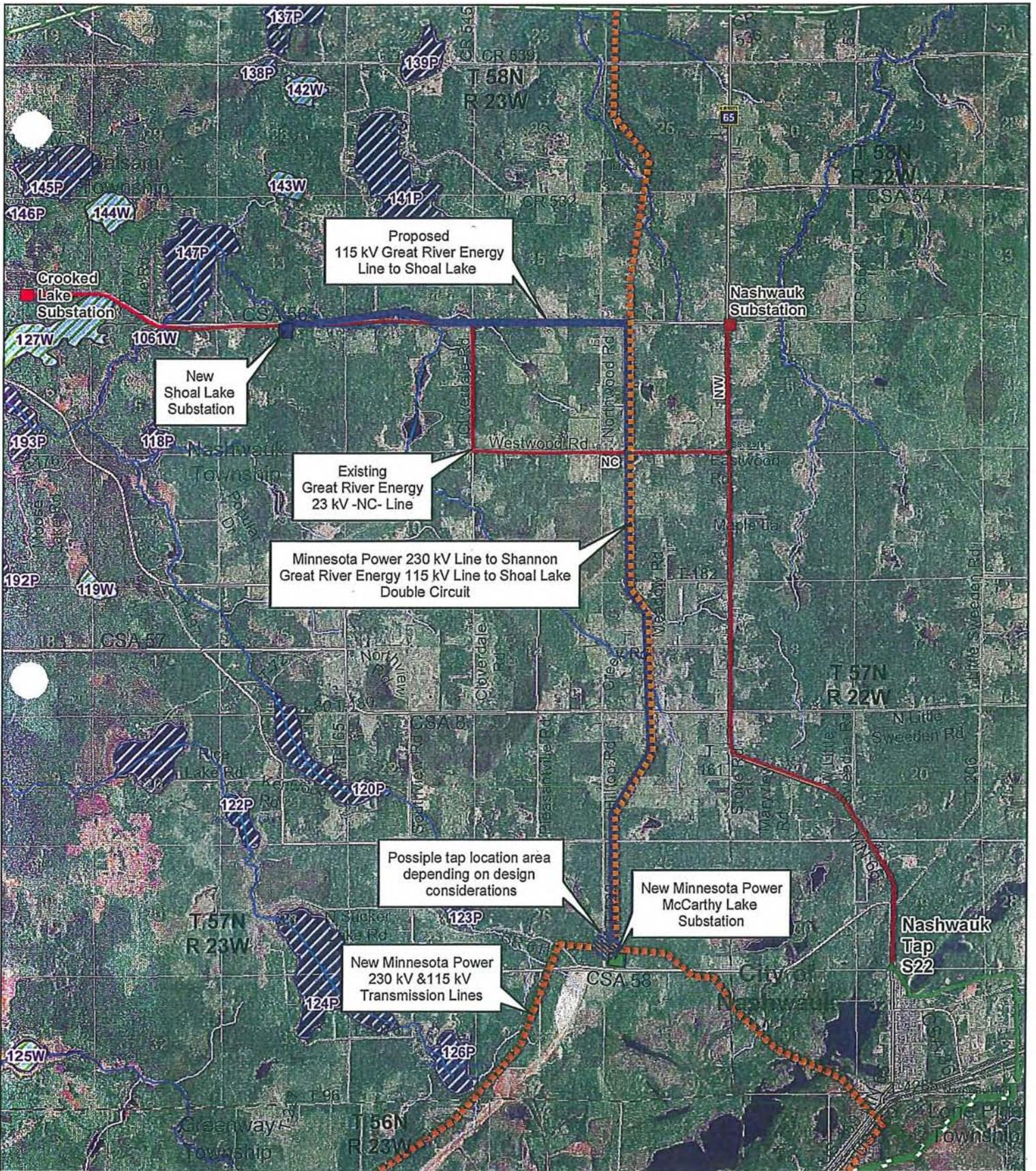


*Typical 115 kV  
Transmission Line  
With Distribution  
Underbuild*

Date last revised: 8/9/2011

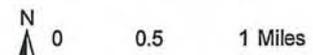
# Proposed Project





- |                             |                             |                                            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Existing Lake Country Power | Existing Great River Energy | Public Waters Inventory (PWI) Watercourses |
| Proposed Minnesota Power    | Proposed Great River Energy | PWI Lakes                                  |
| New Lake Country Power      | Proposed Minnesota Power    | PWI Wetlands                               |
| Distribution Substation     | 115 kV Transmission Line    |                                            |
|                             | 230 kV Transmission Line    |                                            |

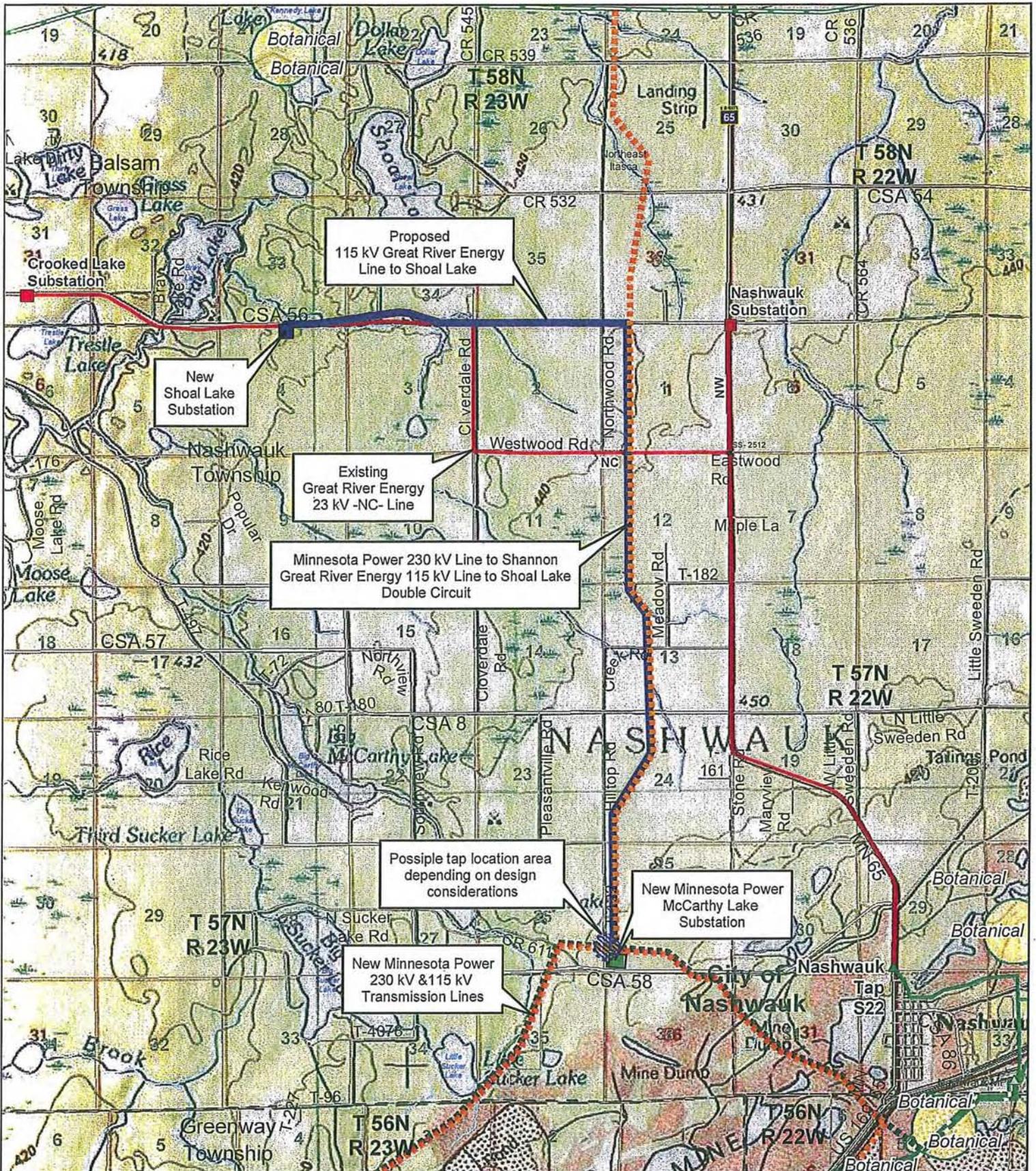
**Shoal Lake  
115-kV Transmission Line  
Project  
PWI Map**



Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy. Public Waters Inventory from MNDNR. 2010 Color Orthophotos from Farm Services Administration (FSA)

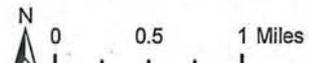
Updated: 8/18/2011. A TruEnergy Cooperative





- |                                                     |                                                            |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Existing Lake Country Power Distribution Substation | Existing Great River Energy 23 kV Transmission Line        | Rare Natural Features |
| Proposed Minnesota Power Transmission Substation    | Proposed Great River Energy 115 kV Transmission Line       | Botanical             |
| New Lake Country Power Distribution Substation      | Proposed Minnesota Power 230 kV & 115 kV Transmission Line | Ecological            |
|                                                     |                                                            | Zoological            |

**Shoal Lake 115-kV Transmission Line Project Sensitive Areas Map**



Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy. Topographic Maps from ESRI Basemap & National Geographic Society.

"Copyright (2011), State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources. Rare features data included here were provided by the Division of Ecological Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and were current as of (04-19-2011). These data are not based on an exhaustive inventory of the state. The lack of data for any geographic area shall not be construed to mean that no significant features are present."





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19 August 2011

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

RE: Shoal Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project  
Itasca County

Dear Mr. Rowse:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

Lake Country Power proposes to construct the new "Shoal Lake" 115 kV Substation in Section 4, T57N, R23W just south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 in Nashwauk Township (see photo of typical substation on fact sheet).

Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power, proposes to construct approximately 7.75 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line to energize this new substation.

The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the line.
- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When

Mr. Nick Rowse  
19 August 2011  
Page 2

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The Fish and Wildlife Service website lists the Canada lynx (threatened) and Gray wolf (delisted) in Itasca County. Great River Energy does not believe construction of the proposed transmission line will affect these species. The DNR Rare features database indicated there are no rare features in the vicinity of the proposed project (see attached map).

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 receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, September 16, 2011. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 445-5214. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cshmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cshmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

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GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt  
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Enclosures

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## Project Need

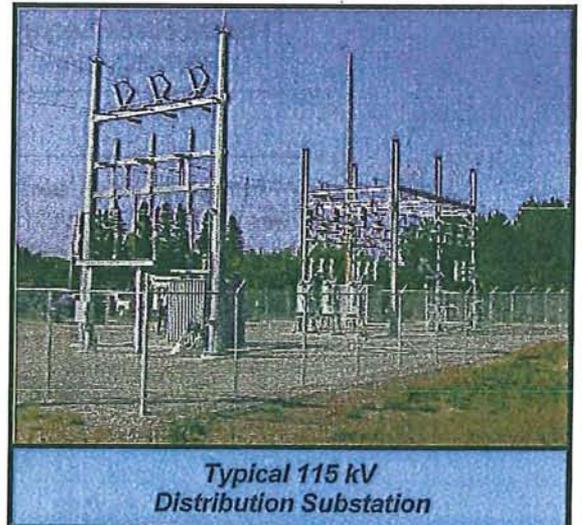
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*Typical 115 kV  
Distribution Substation*

## Poles and Construction

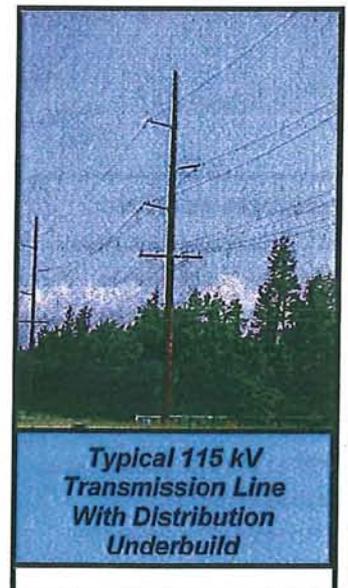
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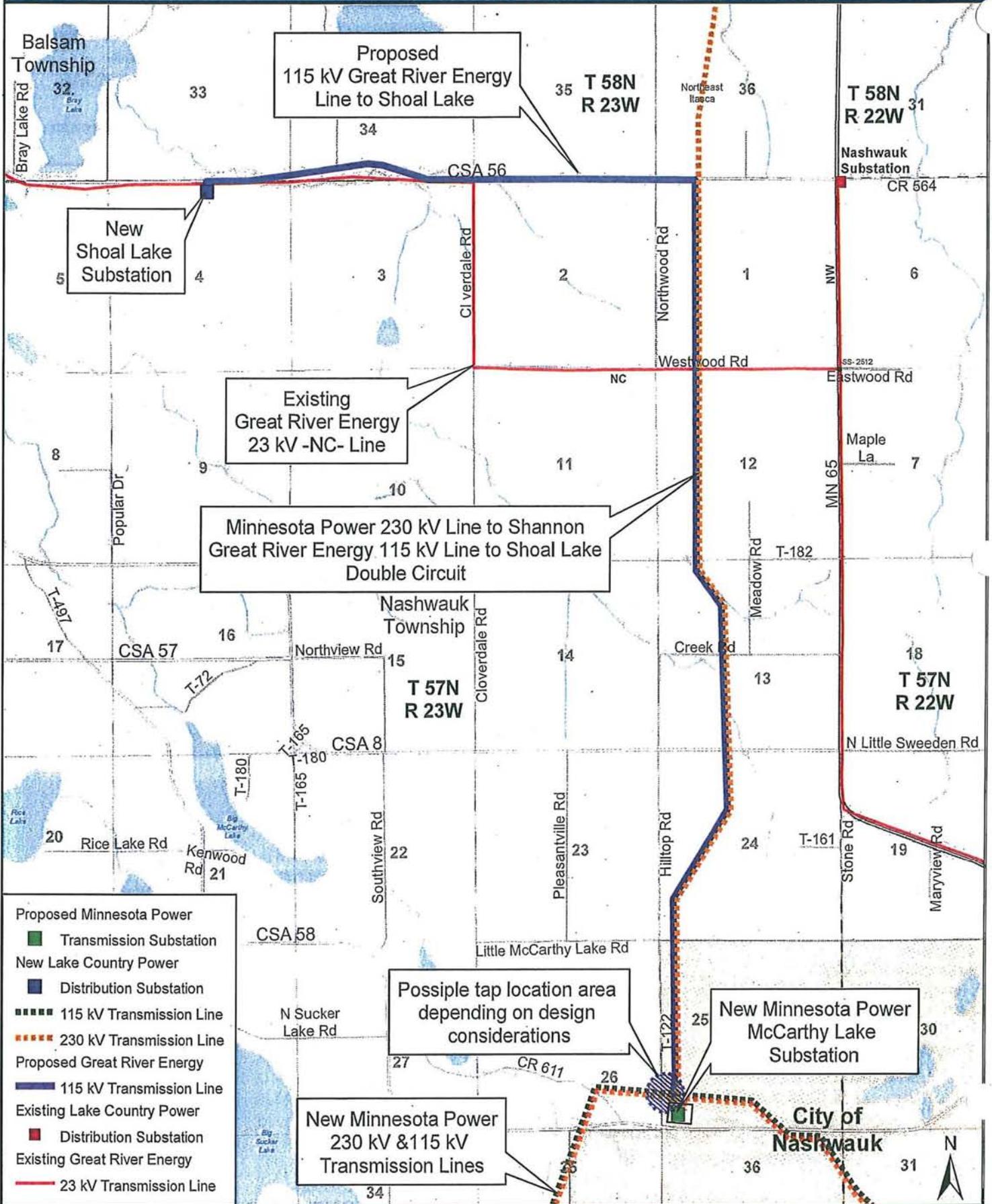
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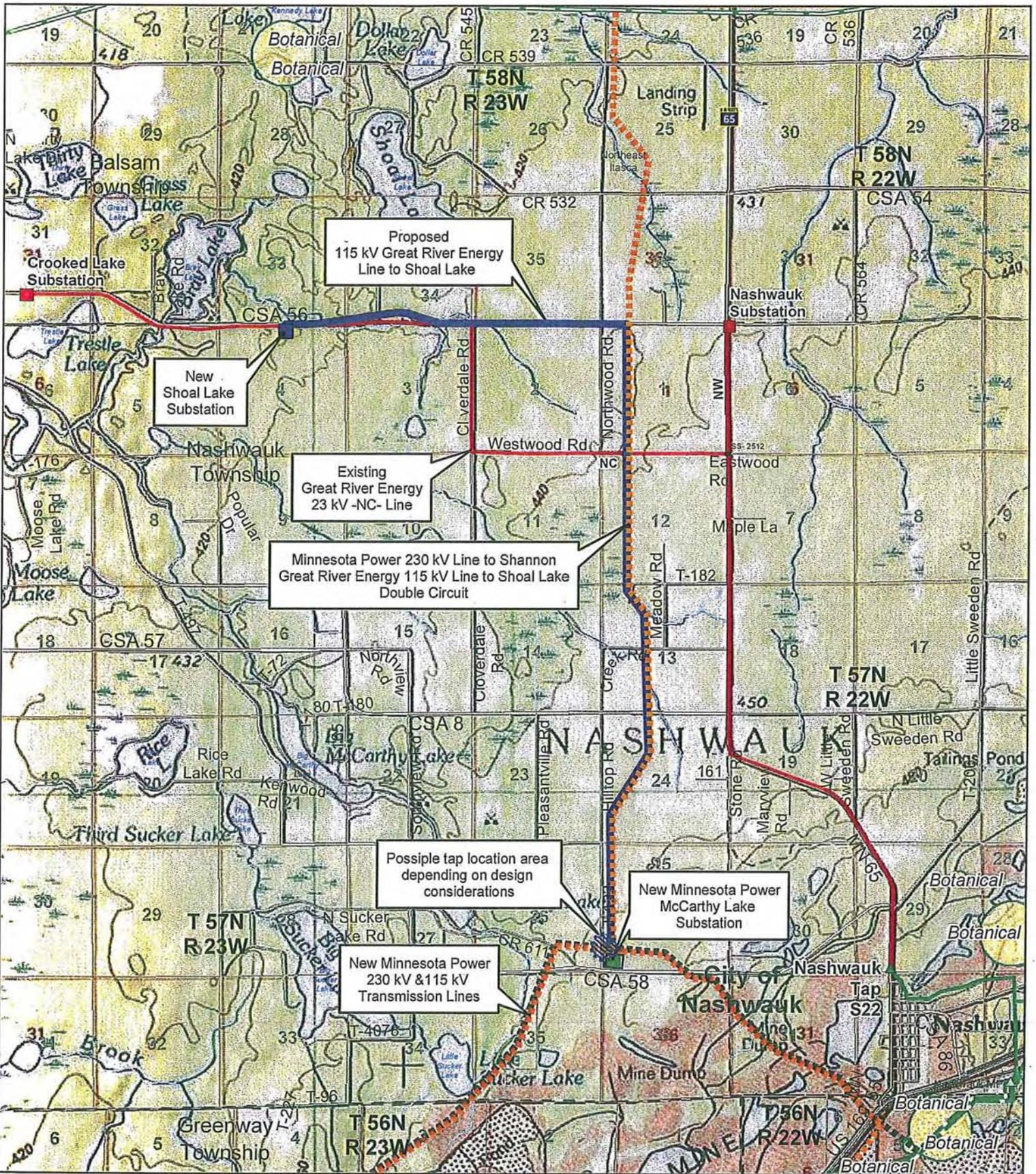


*Typical 115 kV  
Transmission Line  
With Distribution  
Underbuild*

Date last revised: 8/9/2011

# Proposed Project





|                                  |                                   |                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Existing Lake Country Power      | Existing Great River Energy       | Rare Natural Features | <b>Shoal Lake<br/>115-kV Transmission Line<br/>Project<br/>Sensitive Areas Map</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Existing Minnesota Power         | Proposed Great River Energy       | Botanical             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| New Lake Country Power           | Proposed Minnesota Power          | Ecological            | <p>Copyright (2011), State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources. Rare features data included here were provided by the Division of Ecological Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and were current as of (04-19-2011). These data are not based on an exhaustive inventory of the state. The lack of data for any geographic area shall not be construed to mean that no significant features are present.</p> <p>0 0.5 1 Miles</p> <p><b>GREAT RIVER ENERGY</b></p> <p>Updated: 8/18/2011 A Touchstone Energy Cooperative</p> |
| Existing Distribution Substation | Proposed 115 kV Transmission Line | Zoological            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| New Distribution Substation      | Proposed 230 kV Transmission Line |                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

