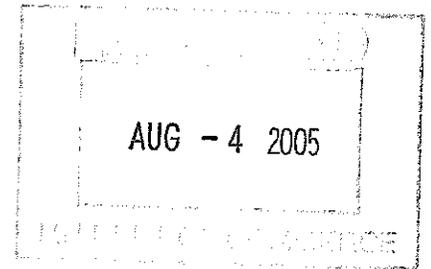


**Environmental Assessment
for the Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and
115 kV Transmission Line Tap
Meeker County, Minnesota**



Meeker County

August 2005

Table of Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| 1.0 | Summary | 1 |
| 2.0 | Proposed Facilities | 1 |
| 2.1 | Project Need | 1 |
| 2.2 | Proposed Location | 1 |
| 2.3 | Ownership | 1 |
| 2.4 | Substation Design | 1 |
| 2.5 | Transmission Facilities | 4 |
| 2.6 | Cost Estimate | 4 |
| 3.0 | Environmental Analysis | 6 |
| 3.1 | Natural Environment | 6 |
| 3.2 | Human Settlement | 7 |
| 3.3 | Noise | 7 |
| 3.4 | Aesthetics | 7 |
| 3.5 | Soils and Geology | 7 |
| 3.6 | Archaeological and Historic Resources | 7 |
| 3.7 | Transportation | 7 |
| 3.8 | Public Health and Safety | 8 |
| 4.0 | Permits, Approvals and Public Comments | 9 |
| 4.1 | Overview of the Minnesota Approval Process | 9 |
| 4.2 | EA Public Involvement | 9 |
| 4.3 | Local Permitting | 9 |
| 4.4 | Other Permits and Approvals | 10 |

Figures

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
| Figure 1 | Vicinity Area Map | 2 |
| Figure 2 | Project Map | 3 |
| Figure 3 | Substation Plot Plan | 5 |

Appendices

| | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix A | Agency Correspondence |
| Appendix B | Legal Notices/Correspondence/Meeting Minutes |
| Appendix C | Landowner Survey and Responses |

1.0 Summary

Great River Energy (GRE), located in Elk River, MN, provides generation and transmission to 28 member cooperatives in Minnesota. One of these cooperatives, Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative), is planning to construct and own a new 115/12.5 kV substation near Dassel, Meeker County, Minnesota (Figure 1).

GRE proposes to construct, own, and operate approximately 500 feet of 115 kV transmission line to energize the new substation (Figure 2). The line will be a single circuit design and will tap an existing 115 kV transmission line just east of the substation that is owned by and operated by GRE. GRE will also own transmission switching facilities located in the substation.

2.0 Proposed Facilities

2.1 Project Need

This project is needed because the electrical load growth in the east central portion of Meeker Cooperative's service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

2.2 Proposed Location

The new substation will be located on a 3-acre site south of 273rd Street, less than 1/8 mile east of County Road 4 (Section 2, T119N, R29W, Dassel Township, Meeker County - see Figure 2).

The new single circuit 115 kV transmission line will tap an existing 115 kV transmission line (owned by and operated by GRE) just northeast of the proposed substation site (Figure 2).

2.3 Ownership

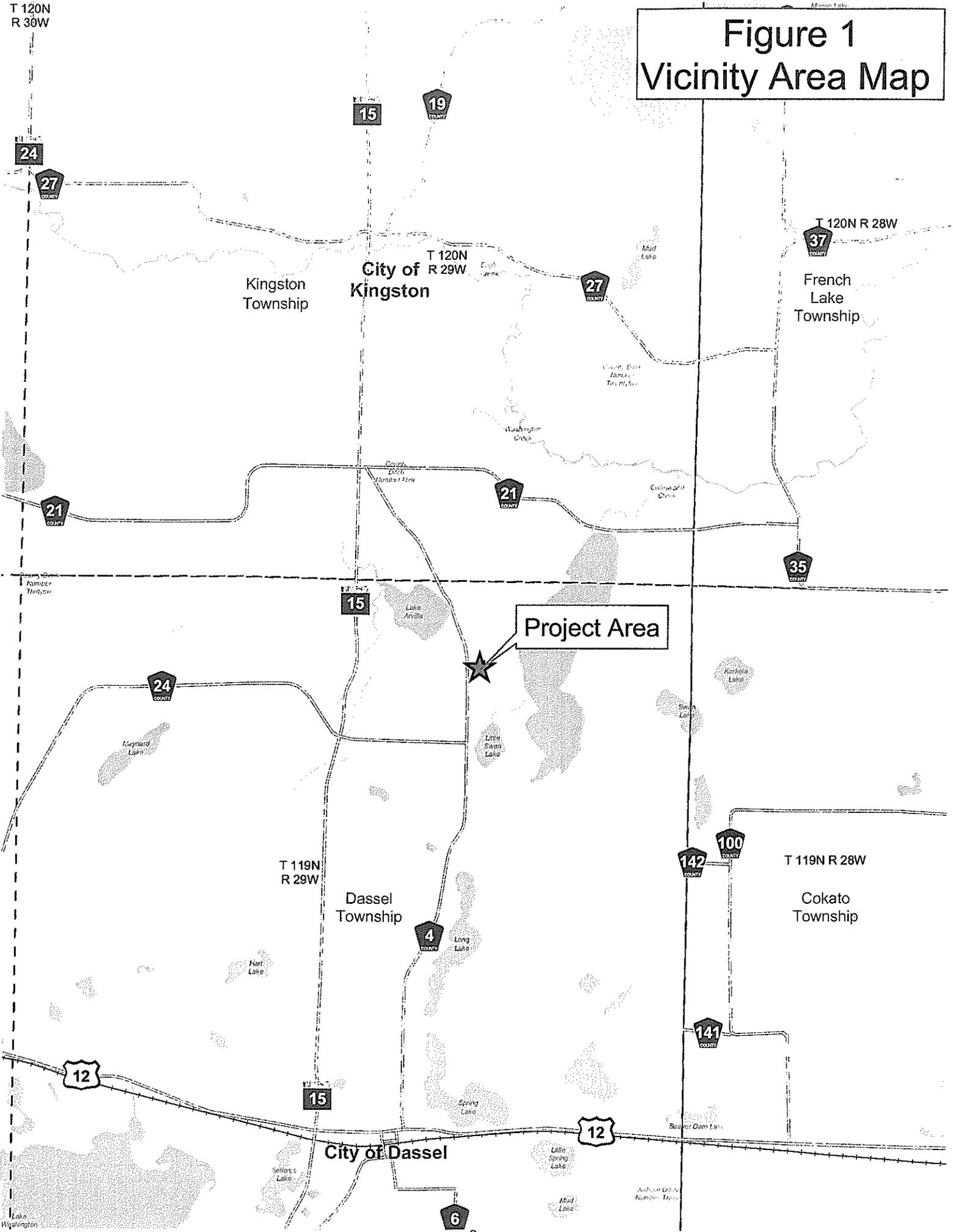
The substation site will be owned by Meeker Cooperative and all distribution facilities will be constructed, operated and maintained by Meeker Cooperative. The transmission line tap will be constructed, owned and operated by GRE. GRE will also own switching facilities in the substation.

2.4 Substation Design

The substation will be enclosed in a fenced area situated inside the 3-acre parcel. A 7-foot high chain link fence (with an additional one foot of barbed wire around the top) will be installed. The fence will be designed to deter animals. A typical distribution substation is shown on the fact sheet in Appendix A.

T 120N
R 30W

Figure 1 Vicinity Area Map



Project Area

City of Kingston

Kingston Township

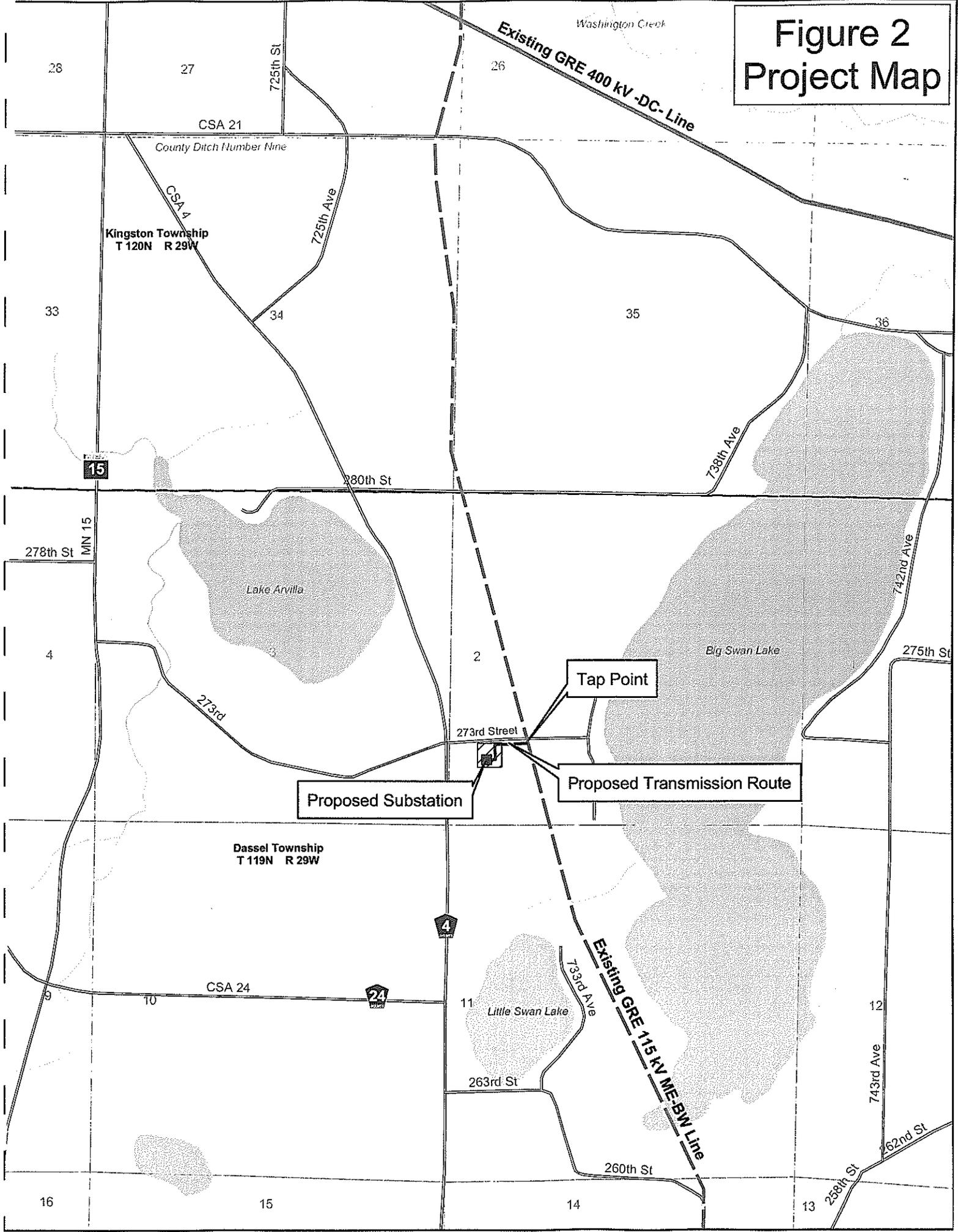
French Lake Township

Dassel Township

Cokato Township

City of Dassel

**Figure 2
Project Map**



Electric facilities in the substation will include a 115/12.5 kV distribution transformer (Figure 3).

Some equipment within the substation is filled with mineral oil for cooling. This equipment will be sitting on concrete pads with three (3) inches of crushed rock covering the entire fenced-in area in the event of an equipment leak. Substation sites are visited on a monthly basis to check for leaks.

2.5 Transmission Facilities

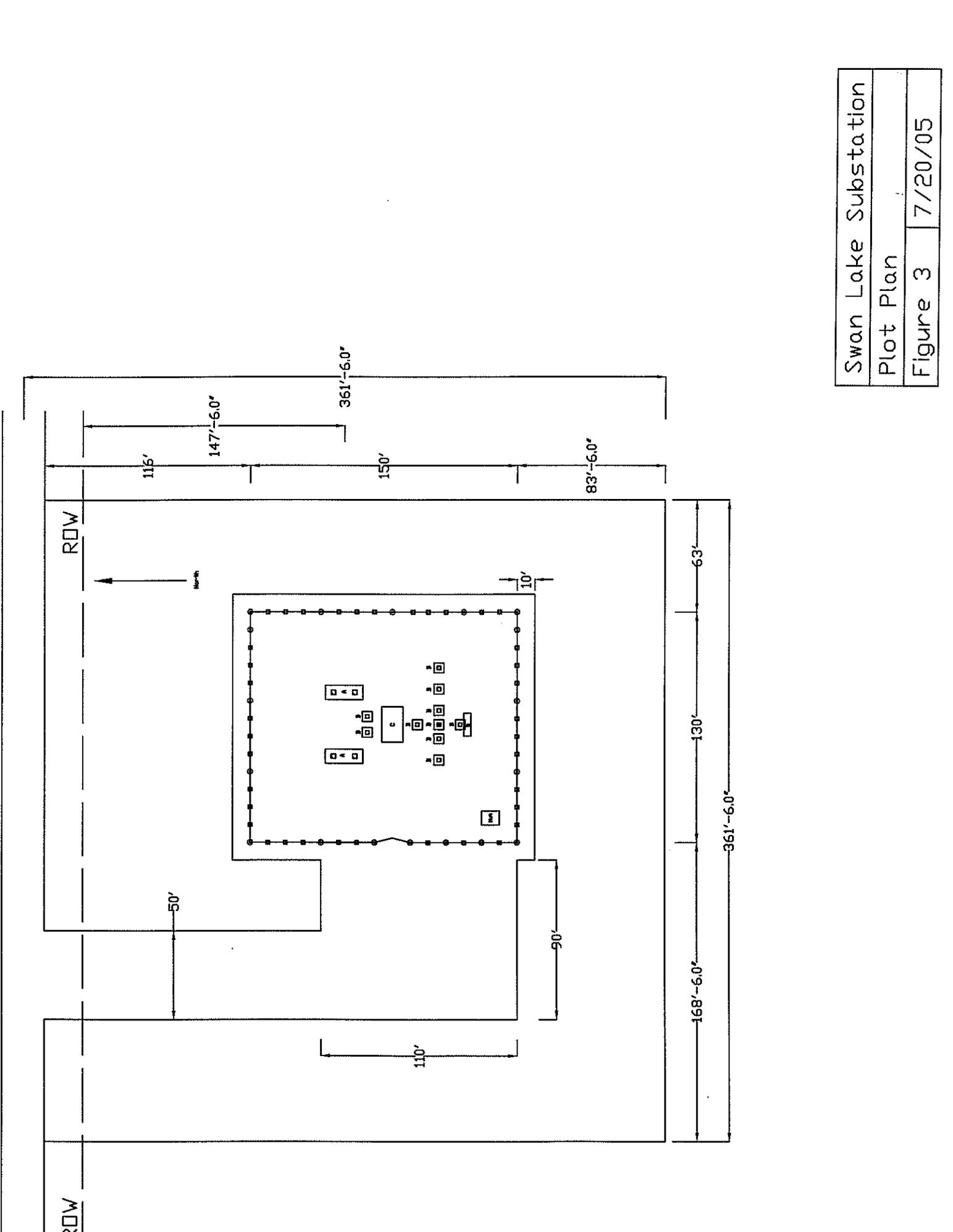
The transmission line will be a single circuit design. A typical structure is shown on the fact sheet in Appendix A.

A single span of wires will run from the tap point to two deadend poles, then turn in to the substation (Figure 3). The two deadend poles will be 65-75 feet tall, each carrying three wires and a single shield wire for lightning protection.

There will be a self-supporting, tapered tubular steel pole on a concrete foundation at the tap point.

2.6 Cost Estimate

The estimated cost for the distribution substation facilities is \$800,000 including all site preparation and equipment. The estimated cost for the transmission facilities is \$200,000. Total project cost is estimated to be \$1,000,000.



| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Swan Lake Substation | |
| Plot Plan | |
| Figure 3 | 7/20/05 |

3.0 Environmental Analysis

3.1 Natural Environment

The effects of the project on the natural environment, including air, water, vegetation and wildlife have been considered. Responses received from state and federal agencies that reviewed the project are provided in Appendix A.

Air Quality

Because electric substations and transmission lines do not affect air quality, there will be no long-term environmental impacts on the air. Temporary air quality impacts would be expected to occur during the construction phase of the project. However, adverse impacts to the surrounding environment will be minimal because of the short and intermittent nature of the emission and dust-producing construction phase.

Water Resources

No impacts to water resources are anticipated. The substation does not displace any existing wetlands or have any impact on groundwater or other surface waters. The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) was contacted regarding this project and in a response dated July 13, 2005, the Corps indicated the proposed work is not within its' regulatory jurisdiction.

There are no Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Public Waters in the vicinity of the project.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The DNR and the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) were contacted regarding vegetation and wildlife resources in the vicinity of the project.

In a letter of March 2, 2005, the DNR indicated that there is one known occurrence of a rare species in the project area (Bald Eagle). However, based on the nature and location (it occurs in a different section) of the proposed project, it will not affect this species.

The FWS (e-mail of January 28, 2005) indicated that there are no federally listed species in the project area.

Effects on area wildlife will be minimal. The substation is designed to deter animal entry.

3.2 Human Settlement

The proposed substation project is located in an area zoned agricultural and the land is currently used for agriculture. Impacts on human settlement will be very minimal, as the substation and transmission line will not cause the displacement of any residence or recreational area and will not affect any public services.

3.3 Noise

The proposed substation will be designed and constructed to comply with State of Minnesota noise standards. It has been determined that there will be negligible noise at the property boundaries. The substation transformer will be designed in accordance with ANSI standards.

3.4 Aesthetics

The substation and transmission line as designed will have some impact on aesthetics of the area, as they will be within the viewshed residences along 273rd Street. Trees will be planted around the substation to provide screening.

3.5 Soils

The proposed site will require some grading. Minimal erosion may occur at the site during construction, but these short-term impacts can be minimized through the use of Best Management Practices.

3.6 Archaeological and Historic Resources

The Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted about the presence of archaeological, historical or architectural resources located on or near the site. In a letter dated February 25, 2005, SHPO indicated that no historic properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by this project.

3.7 Transportation

The site will not affect any public right of ways. Access to the site will use existing county roadways. No roadway improvements will be needed for equipment delivery. The Minnesota Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics indicated in an e-mail of January 31, 2005 that there are no airports within 10 miles of the proposed substation and connection and they have no objection to the project.

3.8 Public Health and Safety

No threats to public health and safety are anticipated for this project. All facilities will be constructed in accordance with the National Electric Safety Code and other industry standards. Construction personnel will be required to follow OSHA regulations. Other safety measures such as warning signs, fencing, and gates will be utilized as needed.

Questions often arise about electric and magnetic fields (EMF), which are invisible lines of force that surround any electrical device. The term EMF refers to electric and magnetic fields that are coupled together such as in high frequency radiating fields. For lower frequencies such as for power lines, EMF should be separated into electric fields and magnetic fields. Transmission lines operate at a frequency of 60 hertz (cycles per second), which is in the non-ionizing portion of the electromagnetic frequency spectrum. Fields are considered ionizing when they cause electrons to eject from their orbits around a normal atom. This will typically occur with frequencies in the range of 10^{16} to 10^{22} hertz.

Magnetic fields result from the flow of electricity (current) in the transmission line. The intensity of the magnetic field is related to the current flow through the conductors. The magnetic field associated with the transmission line surrounds the conductor and rapidly decreases with the distance from the conductor. The value of the magnetic field density is expressed in the unit of gauss (G) or milligauss (mG).

Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) have not been calculated for this project. The most recent and exhaustive studies of the health effects from power frequency fields conclude that the evidence of health risk is weak. Some of these studies are listed below:

- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. 2002. *EMF. Electric and Magnetic Fields Associated with the Use of Electric Power*. National Institutes of Health.
- National Research Council. 1997. *Possible Health Effects of Exposure to Residential Electric and Magnetic Fields*.
- Minnesota Department of Health. 2002. *EMF White Paper on Electric and Magnetic Field (EMF) Policy and Mitigation Options*.
- Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF): Environmental Health in Minnesota. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/radiation/emf>

4.0 Permits, Approvals and Public Comments

4.1 Overview of the Minnesota Approval Process

This project falls under the State of Minnesota's Power Plant Siting Act, (Minnesota Statutes § 116C.51-.69 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400) for transmission projects over 100 kV and requires a permit from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission). However, for eligible projects, a utility may apply to the local unit of government that has jurisdiction over the project for approval instead of applying to the Commission (Minn. Rules pt. 4400.5000). This proposed 115 kV substation project is eligible for local review.

Meeker County has agreed to act as the lead local unit of government with jurisdiction to approve the project. Meeker County was afforded the opportunity to relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting that the Commission assume jurisdiction, but has elected to maintain jurisdiction of the project. As required by Minn. Rules pt. 4400.5000 Subp.3, a project notice was sent to those persons on the Power Plant Siting General Notification list (see Appendix B).

In accordance with Minn. Rules pt. 4400.5000 Subp.5, an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by the local unit of government with jurisdiction over the project must be completed. Specific requirements include an opportunity for public participation in developing the scope of the EA before it is prepared, published notice in the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Monitor when the EA is available for review, and the procedure for commenting on the EA. Final decision on the project will not be made until at least ten days after the notice appears in the EQB Monitor.

4.2 EA Public Involvement

Meeker County sent out a survey in late June 2005 to all landowners within ¼ mile of the proposed project to obtain input from the public on the scope of the environmental assessment. The survey and survey responses are provided in Appendix C.

4.3 Local Permitting

Meeker County requires a Conditional Use Permit for this project. Meeker County held a public hearing on July 28, 2005 regarding Meeker Cooperative and GRE's request for a Conditional Use Permit. Minutes from this meeting and the findings checklist are provided in Appendix B. The Meeker County Board will vote on the application after notice of the EA has been published in the EQB Monitor and the comment period requirements have been met.

4.4 Other Permits and Approvals

| Government Unit | Type of Approval | Regulated Activity | Status |
|---|---|---|--|
| USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) | Environmental Review | Construction of 115 kV transmission line and 115/12.5 kV substation | Substation approved by RUS 3/29/04; approval for transmission tap in process |
| US Dept. of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service | Threatened and Endangered Species Review | Review of records for federally threatened or endangered species that may exist at or near the substation site or transmission facilities | No federally listed species in the project area – e-mail dated January 28, 2005 |
| US Dept. of the Army Corps of Engineers | Wetland and Waterways Review | Review navigable water and the dredging or filling of US waters including wetlands | Proposed work not within regulatory jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers – letter of July 13, 2005 |
| MN Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) | Environmental Review – Wetlands, Water, Threatened and Endangered Species | Comprehensive review of substation site impacts | The project will not affect rare features – letter of March 2, 2005 |
| Minnesota Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division | Airspace Concerns | Public and private airports/airstrips | No airports within 10 miles of proposed project; e-mail of 1/31/05 |
| MN Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) | SHPO Review of Nationally Registered Historic Places | Historic preservation | No historic properties will be affected by the project – letter of February 25, 2005. |
| Meeker County | Conditional Use Permit | Construction of new facilities | Application in process |

APPENDIX A

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

St. Paul District Corps of Engineers
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1683

JUL 13 2005

RECEIVED JUL 18 2005

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Operations
Regulatory (2005-3190-BAJ)

Carole L. Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 East Highway 10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

We have reviewed information about the Swan Lake substation and transmission line in SW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 2, Township 119 North, Range 29 West, Meeker County, Minnesota.

The work proposed at the location stated is not within the regulatory jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers. No work will be done in a navigable water of the United States, and no dredged or fill material, including that associated with mechanical land clearing, will be discharged in any water of the United States, including wetlands. Therefore, a Department of the Army permit is not required to do this work.

Please note that this letter does not authorize the discharge of fill material in any water of the United States, including wetlands and is valid only for the project referenced above. If any change in design, location, or purpose is contemplated, contact this office to avoid doing work that may be in violation of Federal law. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS CONFIRMATION LETTER DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR STATE, LOCAL, OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS, SUCH AS THOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES OR COUNTY.

The decision regarding this action is based on information found in the administrative record, which documents the District's decision-making process, the basis for the decision, and the final decision.

If you have any questions, contact Bradley Johnson in our St. Paul Office at (651) 290-5250. In any correspondence or inquiries, please refer to the Regulatory number shown above.

Sincerely,

for 
Robert J. Whiting
Chief, Regulatory Branch



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Box 25
500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__

Phone: (651) 296-7863 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

March 2, 2005

RECEIVED MAR - 4 2004

Ms. Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 East Highway 10, PO Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information for vicinity of proposed Swan Lake Substation & Tap Line,
T119N R29W Section 2, Meeker County
NHNRP Contact #: ERDB 20050585

Dear Ms. Schmidt,

The Minnesota Natural Heritage database has been reviewed to determine if any rare plant or animal species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the area indicated on the map enclosed with your information request. Based on this review, there is 1 known occurrence of a rare species in the area searched (for details, see enclosed database printout and explanation of selected fields). However, based on the nature and location of the proposed project I do not believe it will affect any known occurrences of rare features.

The Natural Heritage database is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources. It is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, natural communities, and other natural features. Its purpose is to foster better understanding and protection of these features.

Because our information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be rare or otherwise significant natural features in the state that are not represented in the database. A county-by-county survey of rare natural features is now underway, and has been completed for Meeker County. Our information about natural communities is, therefore, quite thorough for that county. However, because survey work for rare plants and animals is less exhaustive, and because there has not been an on-site survey of all areas of the county, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist on the project area.

The enclosed results of the database search are provided in two formats: index and full record. To control the release of locational information which might result in the damage or destruction of a rare element, both printout formats are copyrighted.

The index provides rare feature locations only to the nearest section, and may be reprinted, unaltered, in an Environmental Assessment Worksheet, municipal natural resource plan, or report compiled by your company for the project listed above. If you wish to reproduce the index for any other purpose, please contact me to request written permission. **The full-record printout includes more detailed locational information, and is for your personal use only. If you wish to reprint the full-record printouts for any purpose, please contact me to request written permission.**

Please be aware that review by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program focuses only on *rare natural features*. It does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. If you require further information on the environmental review process for other natural resource-related issues, you may contact your Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Shannon

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929



Minnesota Natural Heritage Database
Element Occurrence Records

TWP RNG PRIMARY FED MN S RANK ELEMENT and OCCURRENCE NUMBER
SECTION STATUS STATUS

T120N R29W 36

LT

SFC

HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS (BALD EAGLE) #2020

RECORDS PRINTED = 1

SWAN LAKE 115 KV SUBSTATION & TRANSMISSION TAP LINE
T119N R29W SECTION 2, MEEKER COUNTY

MnDNR, Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program

10:18 Monday, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

Copyright 2005 State of Minnesota DNR

MANAGED AREA

Minnesota Natural Heritage Database
Element Occurrence Records

T120N R29W NWSE36 MEEKER COUNTY, MN

Element: HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS (BALD EAGLE) #2020

State Status: SPECIAL CONCERN

EO Size: EO Rank:

Site: KINGSTON 36

Ownership: Owner unknown

Managed Area(s): not managed or no record

Source: GELVIN-INNVAER, I. (DNR)

NESTING AREA. BIG SWAN LAKE.

SWAN LAKE 115 KV SUBSTATION & TRANSMISSION TAP LINE
T119N R29W SECTION 2, MEEKER COUNTY
MnDNR, Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program

Last Observed Date: 2001

Quad Map: KINGSTON (R12A)

Latitude: 45 9' 34" Long: 94 15' 56"

Precision: within 0.25 mile, confirmed

Voucher: ME -002

Verification: verified

DNR Region: 4

Wildlife Area: 405

Forestry District: 444

10:18 Monday, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

Copyright 2005 State of Minnesota DNR

Rare Features Database Print-outs: An Explanation of Fields

The Rare Features database is part of the Natural Heritage Information System, and is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Please note that the print-outs are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission

Field Name: [Full (non-abbreviated) field name, if different]. Further explanation of field.

-C-

CBS Site: [County Biological Survey site number]. In each county, the numbering system begins with 1.

CLASS: A code which classifies features by broad taxonomic group: NC = natural community; SA = special animal; SP = special plant; GP = geologic process; GT = geologic time; OT = other (e.g. colonial waterbird colonies, bat hibernacula).

Cty: [County]. Minnesota counties (ordered alphabetically) are numbered from 1 (Aitkin) to 87 (Yellow Medicine).

CURRENT STATUS: Present protection status, from 0 (owner is not aware of record) to 9 (dedicated as a Scientific and Natural Area).

-D-

DNR Region: 1=NW, 2=NE, 3=E Central, 4=SW, 5=SE, 6= Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro.

DNR Quad: [DNR Quadrangle code]. DNR-assigned code of the U.S. Geologic Survey topographic map on which the rare feature occurs.

-E-

ELEMENT or Element: See ELEMENT Name (Common Name)@

Element Name (Common Name): The name of the rare feature. For plant and animal species records, this field holds the scientific name, followed by the common name in parentheses; for all other elements (such as plant communities, which have no scientific name) it is solely the element name.

EO RANK: [Element Occurrence Rank]. An evaluation of the quality and condition of natural communities from A (highest) to D (lowest).

EO Size: [Element Occurrence Size]. The size in acres (often estimated) of natural communities.

-F-

FED STATUS: [Federal Status]. Status of species under the Federal Endangered Species Law: LE=endangered, LT=threatened, C=species which have been proposed for federal listing.

Federal Status: See AFED STATUS@

Forestry District: The Minnesota DNR's Division of Forestry district number.

-G-

GLOBAL RANK: The abundance of an element globally, from G1 (critically imperiled due to extreme rarity on a world-wide basis) to G5 (demonstrably secure, though perhaps rare in parts of its range). Global ranks are determined by the Conservation Science Division of The Nature Conservancy.

-I-

INTENDED STATUS: Desired protection status. See also ACURRENT STATUS.@ If a complete list of protection status codes is needed, please contact the Natural Heritage Program.

-L-

LAST OBSERVED or Last Observed Date or Last Observation: Date of the most recent record of the element at the location.

Latitude: The location at which the occurrence is mapped on Natural Heritage Program maps. NOTE: There are various levels of precision in the original information, but this is not reflected in the latitude/longitude data. For some of the data, particularly historical records, it was not possible to determine exactly where the original observation was made (e.g. "Fort Snelling", or "the south shore of Lake Owasso"). Thus the latitude/longitude reflect the mapped location, and not necessarily the observation location.

Legal: Township, range and section numbers.

Long: [Longitude]. See NOTE under ALatitude@

-M-

MANAGED AREA or Managed Area(s): Name of the federally, state, locally, or privately managed park, forest, preserve, etc., containing the occurrence, if any. If this field is blank, the element probably occurs on private land. If "(STATUTORY BOUNDARY)" occurs after the name of a managed area, the location may be a private inholding within the statutory boundary of a state forest or park.

Map Sym: [Map Symbol].

MN STATUS: [Minnesota Status]. Legal status of plant and animal species under the Minnesota endangered species law:

END=endangered, THR=threatened, SPC=special concern, NON=no legal status, but tracked. This field is blank for natural communities and colonial waterbird nesting sites, which have no legal status in Minnesota, but are tracked by the database.

-N-

NC Rank: [Natural Community Rank].

-O-

Occ #: [Occurrence Number]. The occurrence number, in combination with the element name, uniquely identifies each record.

OCCURRENCE NUMBER: See AOcc #@

OF OCCURS: The number of records existent in the database for each element within the area searched.

Ownership: Indicates whether the site is publicly or privately owned; for publicly owned land, the agency with management responsibility is listed.

-P-

Precision: Precision of locational information of occurrence: C (confirmed) = known within 1/4 mile radius, U (unconfirmed) = known within 1/2 mile, N (non-specific) = known within 1 mile, G (general) = occurs within the general region, X (unmappable)=location is unmappable on USGS topographic quadrangles (often known only to the nearest county), O (obscure/gone)=element no longer exists at the location.

PS: [Primary Section]. The section containing all or the greatest part of the occurrence.

-Q-

Quad Map: See ADNR Quad@

-R-

Rec #: [Record number].

RNG or Rng: [Range number].

-S-

SECTION or Section: [Section number(s)]. Some records are given only to the nearest section (s), but most are given to the nearest quarter-section or quarter-quarter-section (e.g., SWNW32 denotes the SW1/4 of the NW1/4 of section 32). A "0" is used as a place holder when a half-section is specified (e.g., 0N03 refers to the north 1/2 of section 3). When an occurrence crosses section boundaries, both sections are listed, without punctuation (e.g., the NE1/4 of section 19 and NW1/4 of section 20 is displayed as ANE19NW20").

Site: A name which refers to the geographic area within which the occurrence lies. If no name for the area exists (a locally used name, for example), one is assigned by the County Biological Survey or the Natural Heritage Program.

Source: The collector or observer of the rare feature occurrence.

S.RANK: [State Rank]. A rank assigned to the natural community type which reflects the known extent and condition of that community in Minnesota. Ranks range from 1 (in greatest need of conservation action in the state) to 5 (secure under present conditions). A "?" following a rank indicates little information is available to rank the community. Communities for which information is especially scarce are given a "U", for Arank undetermined@. The ranks do not represent a legal status. They are used by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to set priorities for research, inventory and conservation planning. The state ranks are updated as inventory information becomes available.

State Status: See AMN STATUS@

-T-

TWP or Twp: [Township number].

-V-

Verification: A reflection of the reliability of the information on which the record is based. The highest level of reliability is "verified," which usually indicates a collection was made or, in the case of bird records, nesting was observed. Plant records based on collections made before 1970 are unverified.

Voucher: The museum or herbarium where specimens are maintained, and the accession number assigned by the repository. In the case of bald eagles, this is the breeding area number.

-W-

Wildlife Area: The Minnesota DNR=s Division of Wildlife administrative number.

Data Security

Locations of some rare features must be treated as sensitive information because widespread knowledge of these locations could result in harm to the rare features. For example, wildflowers such as orchids and economically valuable plants such as ginseng are vulnerable to exploitation by collectors; other species, such as bald eagles, are sensitive to disturbance by observers. For this reason, we prefer that publications not identify the precise locations of vulnerable species. We suggest describing the location only to the nearest section. If this is not acceptable for your purposes, please call and discuss this issue with the Environmental Review Specialist for the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program at 651/296-7863.

Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

From: Nick_Rowse@fws.gov
Sent: Friday, January 28, 2005 5:07 PM
To: Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER
Subject: proposed Swan Lake substation and tap line and proposed Helena 69 kV transmission line

Dear Carole,

I have reviewed the proposed Swan Lake substation and tap line in Meeker County and the proposed 69 kV transmission line project in Scott County. I have found no federally listed species in either of these project areas.

Nick Rowse
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Twin Cities Field Office
4101 American Blvd. E.
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665
612-725-3548 x210



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RECEIVED FEB 28 2004

February 25, 2005

Ms. Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
PO Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

RE: Construction of a new substation and transmission line near Dassel
T119 R29 S2, Meeker County
SHPO Number: 2005-1040

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 State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

Based on available information, we conclude that **no properties** eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are within the project's area of effect.

Please contact Dennis Gimmestad at (651) 296-5462 if you have any questions regarding our review of this project.

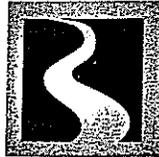
Sincerely,

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

From: Jim Groehler [Jim.Groehler@dot.state.mn.us]
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2005 8:03 AM
To: Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER
Subject: Proposed Swan Lake 115kV Substation & Transmission Tap Line

We have reviewed the proposed project submitted with your letter of January 26, 2005. There are no airports within 10 miles of the proposed substation with the nearest airport being Litchfield. We have no objection to the proposed substation and connection.



GREAT RIVER
ENERGY®

17845 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

26 January 2005

Ms. Yvonne Berner
US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District, Attn: CO-R
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

RE: Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Tap Line
Meeker County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Berner:

Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) to assess the environmental impacts of a new 115 kV substation and short transmission line near Dassel, Minnesota. Electrical load growth in the west central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

The proposed project will be located in Section 2, T119N, R29W. GRE 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. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information. No wetlands will be affected by the project.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, February 25, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@greenergy.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure



GREAT RIVER
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17845 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

26 January 2005

Mr. Thomas W. Balcom, Supervisor
Division of Ecological Services
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

RE: Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Tap Line
Meeker County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Balcom:

Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) to assess the environmental impacts of a new 115 kV substation and short transmission line near Dassel, Minnesota. Electrical load growth in the west central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

The proposed project will be located in Section 2, T119N, R29W. GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and other important state natural resources that occur in the project area. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

The proposed transmission project will not affect any DNR Public Waters. A review of the Minnesota Natural Heritage Program database indicates that the project is over 1.5 miles from the nearest Sensitive Area (see attached maps).

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, February 25, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@greenergy.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

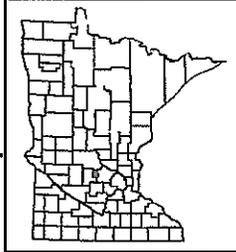
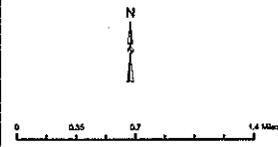
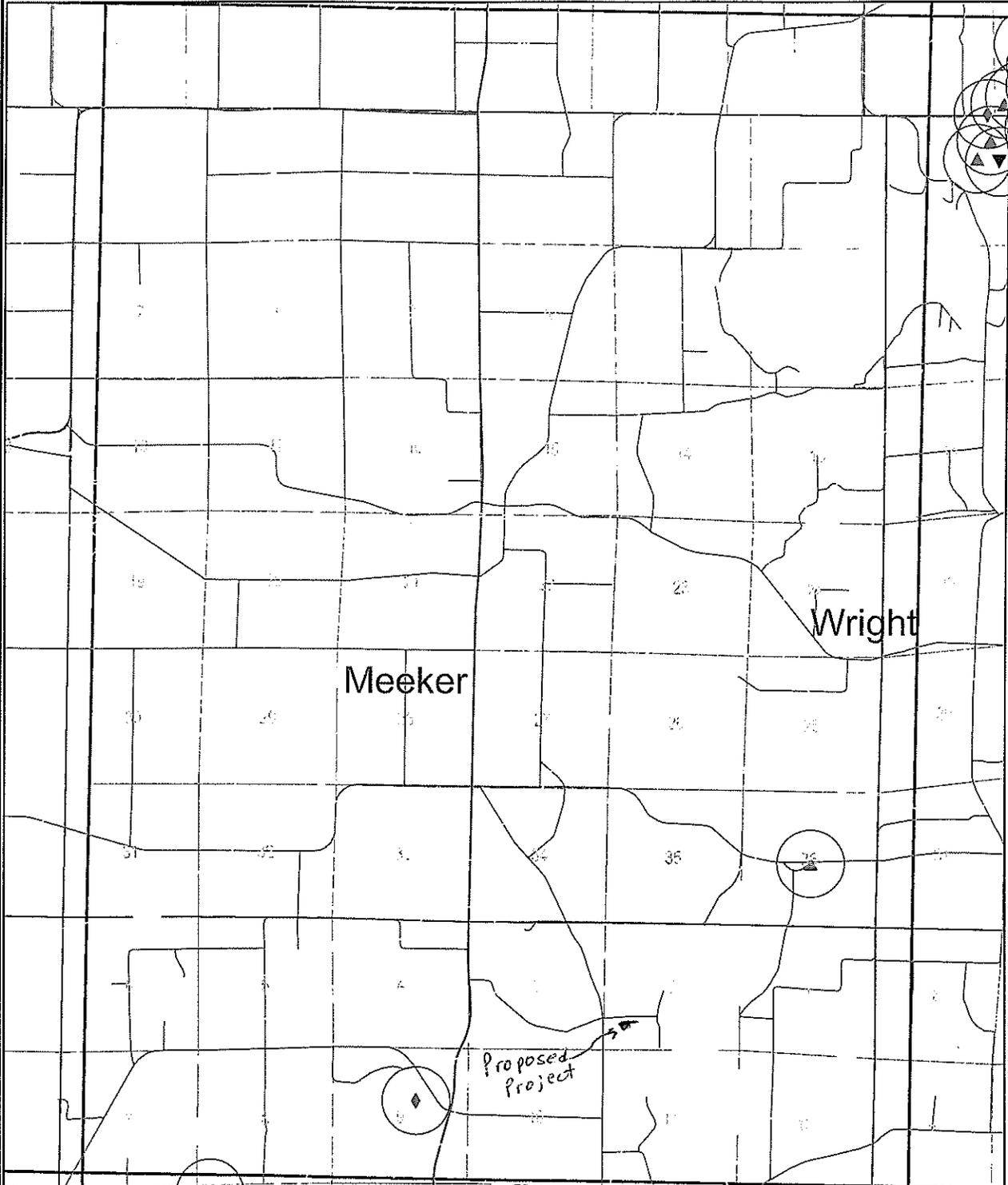
Enclosures

h:\cschmidt\Swan Lake\SWLDNR

Sensitive Areas

Kingston 1:24,000 U.S.G.S. Quadrangle (DNR Code = R12a)

Includes portions of Meeker County



- ★ Center of Highly Sensitive Areas
- ▲ Center of Sensitive Plant Areas
- ▲ Center of Sensitive Animal Areas
- ▼ Center of Significant Native Plant Community Areas
non-Minnesota County Biological Survey Counties Only
- Significant Native Plant Communities
Identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Buffer Designating Sensitive Areas
- Significant Railroad Prairie Right-of-Way Areas

- Water bodies
- County boundaries
- Township lines
- Section lines
- Quadrangle border
- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Railroads

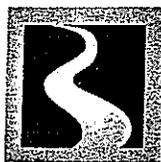
Point features data included here were provided by the National Heritage and Programs Research Program of the Division of Ecological Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and were current as of July 10, 2005. These data are not based on an official inventory of the state. The lack of data for any geographic area shall not be construed to mean that no significant findings are present. In addition, there may be inaccuracies in the data, for which the DNR is not aware and shall not be held responsible for. Please be sure to use these data does not imply endorsement or approval by the DNR of any interpretations or products derived from the data.

Map created January 26, 2005.

United Services Group
GIS Department
17645 East Highway 10
Elk River, MN 55330-0341
(763) 241-3766

UNITED SERVICES GROUP AND GREAT RIVER ENERGY
MAKE NO WARRANTY AS TO THE ACCURACY OR USABILITY
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26 January 2005

Mr. Nick Rowse, Habitat Conservation Biologist
United States Department of the Interior
Twin Cities Field Office
4101 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665

RE: Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Tap Line
Meeker County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Rowse:

Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) to assess the environmental impacts of a new 115 kV substation and short transmission line near Dassel, Minnesota. Electrical load growth in the west central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

The proposed project will be located in Section 2, T119N, R29W. GRE is requesting 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. The proposed project does not represent a "major construction activity" as defined in 50 CFR 402.02. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, February 25, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@greenergy.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Swan Lake\SWLFWS



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26 January 2005

Ms. Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. West
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

RE: Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Tap Line
Meeker County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Bloomberg:

Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) to assess the environmental impacts of a new 115 kV substation and short transmission line near Dassel, Minnesota. Electrical load growth in the west central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

The proposed project will be located in Section 2, T119N, R29W. GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on historic properties in the project area. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, February 25, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@grenergy.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Swan Lake\SWLMHS



17845 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

26 January 2005

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

RE: Proposed Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Tap Line
Meeker County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Groehler:

Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) to assess the environmental impacts of a new 115 kV substation and short transmission line near Dassel, Minnesota. Electrical load growth in the west central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association service territory has steadily increased and there is a need to improve reliability in the Dassel, Kingston, and Litchfield areas.

The proposed project will be located in Section 2, T119N, R29W. GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on airports or airstrips in the project area. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, February 25, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is cschmidt@greenergy.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

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Swan Lake Substation 115 kV Transmission Tap Line



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503 East Highway 12, PO Box 522
Litchfield, MN 55355-0522
1-800-232-6257
www.meeker.coop

Project Need

Electrical load growth in the east central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative) service territory has steadily increased. In addition, there is a need to increase reliability in serving the Dassel, Kingston and Litchfield loads during outages and other related contingencies.

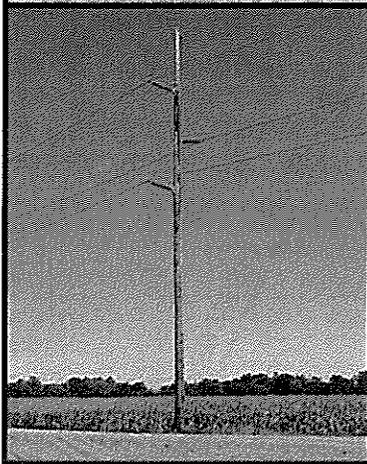
Project Description

Meeker Cooperative will construct an electrical substation facility on a three-acre parcel of land located along the south side of 273rd Street in Section 2 of Dassel Township. Great River Energy (GRE) will construct a short 500-foot section of 115 kV transmission line from an existing GRE transmission line that crosses 273rd St. just east of the proposed substation facility (see project map on back). Figure 1 shows a typical 115 kV transmission line structure and Figure 2 depicts a typical distribution substation. There will be a switch structure located at the convergence (tap point) of the new line and existing transmission lines.

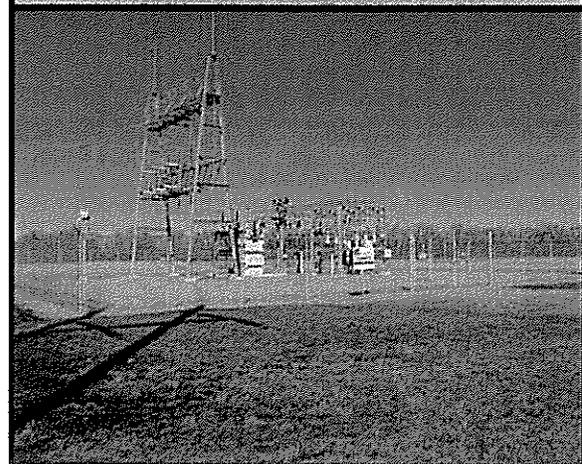
Project Schedule

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Public Input & Permitting..... | Spring 2005 |
| Land Rights Activities..... | Summer 2005 |
| Transmission Line Substation Construction..... | Fall 2005 / Winter/Spring 2006 |
| Energization..... | Summer 2006 |

**Figure 1: Typical GRE
115 kV Structure**



**Figure 2: Typical GRE
115 kV Distribution Substation**

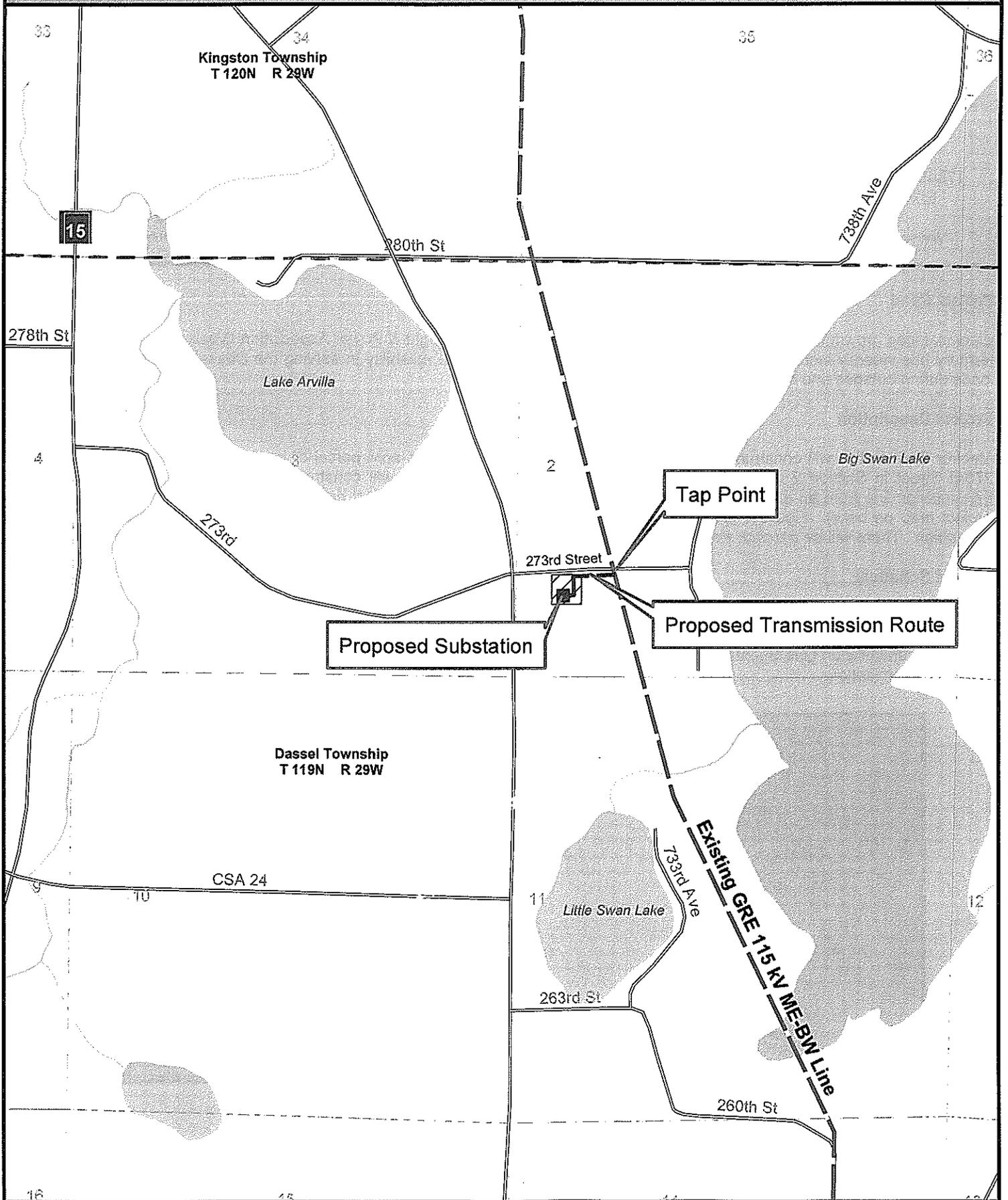


Contacts:

Gary Ostrom at Great River Energy
763-241-2377 Fax 763-241-6177
1-800-442-3013, ext. 2377 toll free

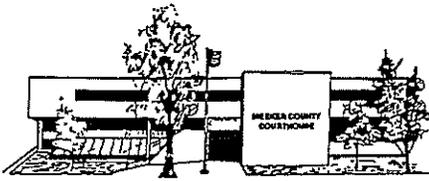
Kevin Louis at Meeker Cooperative
320-693-3231
Fax #320-693-2980

PROJECT MAP



APPENDIX B

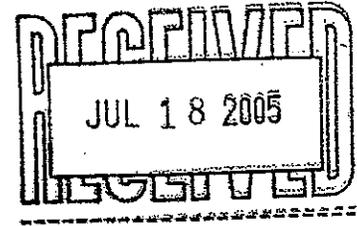
LEGAL NOTICES
CORRESPONDENCE
MEETING MINUTES



MEEKER COUNTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

325 North Sibley Avenue
LITCHFIELD, MINNESOTA 55355-2155
(320) 693-5290

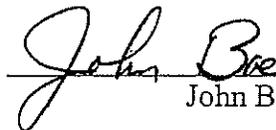
John Boe
Zoning Administrator



NOTICE

A Conditional Use Permit Application of Great River Energy (applicant), 17845 East Highway 10, Elk River, MN 55350 and Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association (owner), 503 East Highway 12, Litchfield, MN 55355. That Part of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼ of SW ¼), more fully described in the application, Section Two (2), Township One Hundred Nineteen (119), Range Twenty-nine (29), Dassel Township. A Conditional Use Permit Application to construct a 115 kV Distribution Substation and Transmission Line Tap in an Agricultural District will be held at the Courthouse in Litchfield, MN on July 28, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. The Meeker County Planning Commission will hear all interested parties at this time.

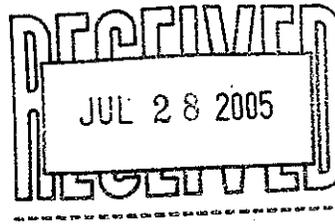
DATED: July 8, 2005



John Boe, Zoning Administrator



MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE



Copy: Carole S.

85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198
651.296.4026 FAX 651.297.1959 TTY 651.297.3067

July 25, 2005

Gary Ostrom
Great River Energy
17845 East Hwy 10, PO Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

Kevin Louis
Meeker Cooperative
503 East Highway 12, PO Box 522
Litchfield, MN 55355-0522

John Boe, Zoning Administrator
Meeker County
325 North Sibley Avenue
Litchfield, MN 55355

RE: Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission line Tap

Dear Sirs:

This letter confirms that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)¹ has received notification that Great River Energy (GRE) and Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative) propose to seek local review to build a new 115 kV Substation and a 500-foot section of 115 kV HVTL tapping into an existing GRE 115 kV line. The project would be constructed in Dassel Township in Meeker County.

This project falls under the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statutes § 116C.51-69 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400, which requires a permit from the PUC for most transmission line projects over 100 kV. However, for eligible projects, a utility may apply to those local units of government that have jurisdiction over the route for approval to build the project instead of applying to the PUC. The proposed 115 kV substation and transmission project is eligible for local review. [Minnesota Statutes § 116C.576 and Minnesota Rules 4400.5000 subps. 2. C., D.]

GRE and Meeker Cooperative have indicated that Meeker County is the only local unit of government with jurisdiction in permitting the project and that a Conditional Use Permit application was submitted to the County on June 28, 2005. A local unit of government may relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting the PUC to assume jurisdiction within 60 days of the filing of an application with the local unit of government. [Minnesota Rules 4400.5000 subp. 4.]

¹ On July 1, 2005, Minnesota Senate File 1368 transferred generation plant siting and transmission line routing authority from the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board to the Public Utilities Commission. EQB routing and siting staff were transferred to the Department of Commerce and continue to manage the application process.

Gary Ostrom, John Boe, Kevin Louis
July 25, 2005
Page 2

An environmental assessment must be prepared by the local unit of government with jurisdiction over the project. I acknowledge that Meeker County is the Responsible Government Unit for the Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and transmission line tap project.

Specific requirements with regard to the environmental review process include providing an opportunity for the public to participate in the development of the scope of the environmental assessment before it is prepared; publishing notice in the EQB Monitor of when the assessment is available for review and of the procedure for commenting on the assessment; and withholding a final decision on the project until at least ten days after the notice appears in the EQB Monitor. Meeker County also must provide a copy of the environmental assessment to the PUC when it is completed. [Minnesota Rules 4400.5000 subp. 5.]

GRE and Meeker Cooperative have sent the required notice to those persons on the PUC facilities permitting general notification list that a permit has been applied for from the local unit of government. [Minnesota Rules 4400.5000 subp. 3.]

If there are any other questions, please feel free to contact me by phone or email.

Sincerely,



DAVID BIRKHOLZ
Energy Facilities Permitting
Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2198
(P) 651.296.2878
(F) 651.297.7891
david.birkholz@state.mn.us

DB/ja

c: Bob Cupit, Public Utilities Commission



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June 29, 2005

WO #45151

Mr. Robert Schroeder, Chair
MN Environmental Quality Board
658 Cedar St., RM 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

SUBJECT: Swan Lake 115 kV Substation and Transmission Line Tap

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

In accordance with the Power Plant Siting Act, this letter serves as the required notice to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Chair that Meeker Cooperative Light & Power (Meeker Cooperative) and Great River Energy (GRE) have elected to seek local approval for the construction of a new 115 kV substation and transmission line tap near Dassel, Minnesota. A Conditional Use Permit application was delivered to Meeker County on June 28, 2005 (a copy of the cover letter is enclosed). Meeker County has been informed that they have 60 days to refer the permitting process to the EQB.

The proposed substation and transmission line tap would be located near Dassel completely within Meeker County. The new facility will meet the growing electrical demand and improve the service and reliability of electric facilities in the area. A fact sheet that provides more detail on the project is enclosed.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to John Boe, Zoning Administrator for Meeker County at 320-693-5290. I can also be reached at 763-241-2377. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Gary Ostrom
Land Rights Supervisor

Enclosures

CC: EQB General List of Interested Persons – w/encl. fact sheet only
Kevin Louis, Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association – w/encl. fact sheet only
John Boe, Meeker County – w/encl. fact sheet only

BCC: Carole Schmidt
Gene Kotz

GO:jhr:\lines\swanlake\acq\permit\meqb\swanlakeeqbnoticeltr.doc

Direct Dial (763) 241-2377

E-Mail gostrom@greenergy.com

FAX (763) 241-6177

www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Swan Lake Substation 115 kV Transmission Tap Line



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1-800-232-6257
www.meeker.coop

Project Need

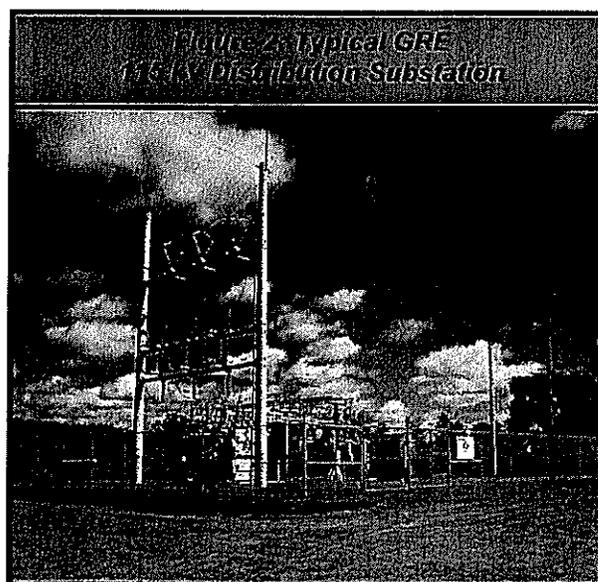
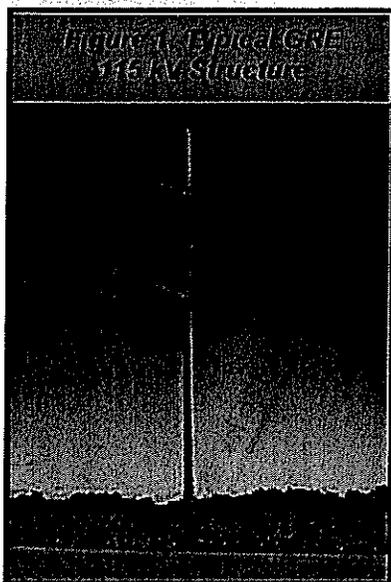
Electrical load growth in the east central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative) service territory has steadily increased. In addition, there is a need to increase reliability in serving the Dassel, Kingston and Litchfield loads during outages and other related contingencies.

Project Description

Meeker Cooperative will construct an electrical substation facility on a three-acre parcel of land located along the south side of 273rd Street in Section 2 of Dassel Township. Great River Energy (GRE) will construct a short 500-foot section of 115 kV transmission line from an existing GRE transmission line that crosses 273rd St. just east of the proposed substation facility (see project map on back). Figure 1 shows a typical 115 kV transmission line structure and Figure 2 depicts a typical distribution substation. There will be a switch structure located at the convergence (tap point) of the new line and existing transmission lines.

Project Schedule

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Public Input & Permitting..... | Spring 2005 |
| Land Rights Activities..... | Summer 2005 |
| Transmission Line Substation Construction..... | Fall 2005 / Winter/Spring 2006 |
| Energization..... | Summer 2006 |

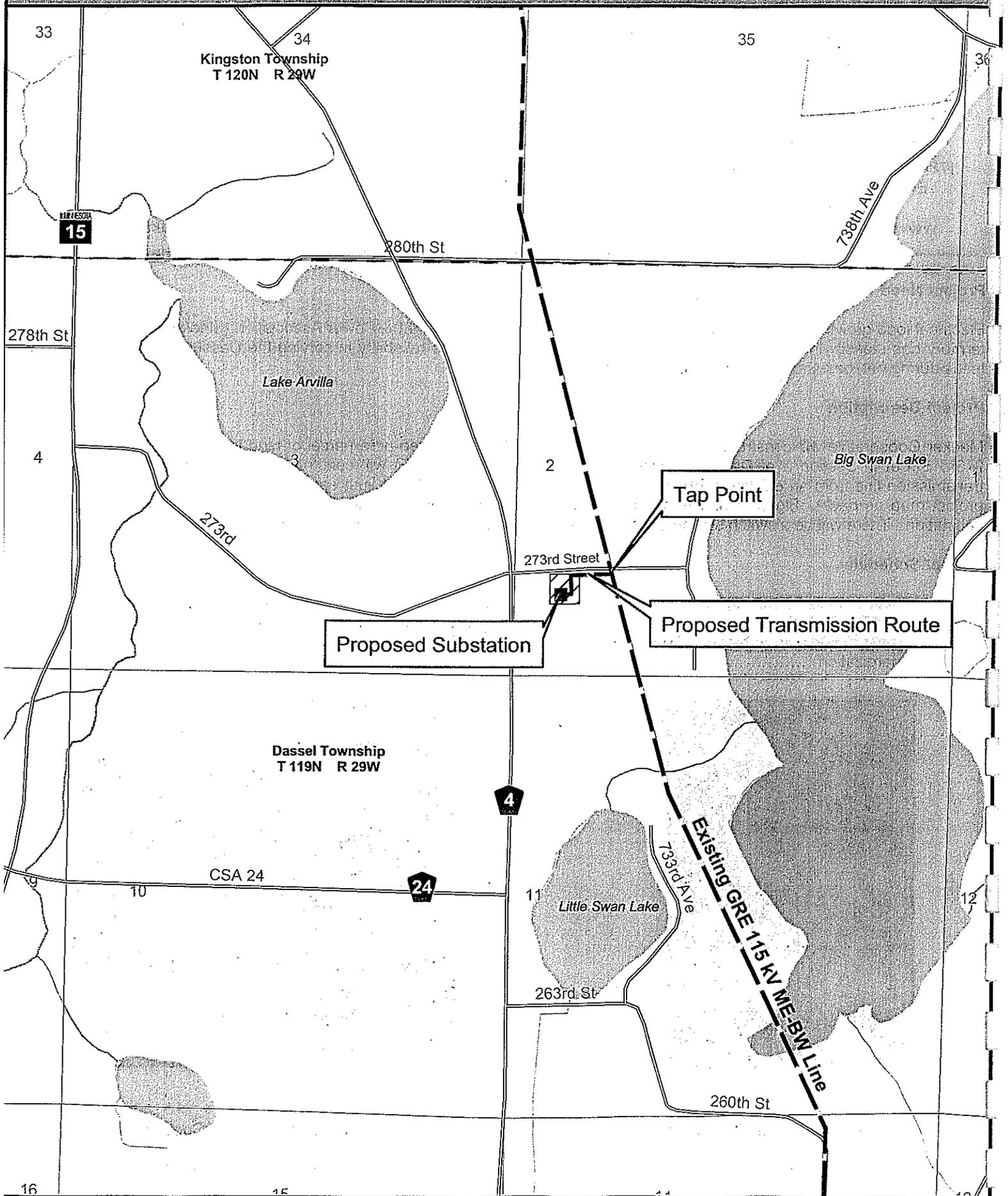


Contacts:

Gary Ostrom at Great River Energy
763-241-2377 Fax 763-241-6177
1-800-442-3013, ext. 2377 toll free

Kevin Louis at Meeker Cooperative
320-693-3231
Fax #320-693-2980

PROJECT MAP



April 22, 2005

WO #45151 Tap
45161 Tap Switch

SUBJECT: Great River Energy's Swan Lake Sub & Transmission Line
Parcel No.

In order to meet increased electrical demands and insure the reliable delivery of electrical service in the West Central portion of the Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative) service territory, it will be necessary to construct a distribution substation and a short segment of transmission line.

Meeker Cooperative will construct an electrical substation facility on a three acre parcel of land located along the south side of 273rd Street in Section 2 of Dassel Township. Great River Energy (GRE) will construct a short 500 foot section of 115 kV transmission line from an existing GRE transmission line that crosses 273rd St. just east of the proposed substation facility. There will be a switch structure located at the convergence (tap point) of the new line and existing transmission lines (note enclosed fact sheet).

Great River Energy will hold an informal public meeting to discuss this project with landowners living in the vicinity of the proposed project or any persons having an interest in the project. The meeting will involve a short presentation followed by an open house and will be held in the Community Room at Dassel City Hall on Tuesday, May 3rd, 2005 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. We will also discuss the environmental scope needed for the project (note attachment).

If you cannot attend this meeting but would like to receive additional information concerning the project and the environmental scope, please call Gary Ostrom at 763-241-2377 or 1-800-442-3013 ext. 2377.

Sincerely,
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Gary Ostrom, SRWA
Land Rights Supervisor

Enclosures

CC: Kevin Louis, Meeker Cooperative

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**MEEKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 28, 2005 – MINUTES**

The Meeker County Planning Commission met at the Courthouse in Litchfield, MN on July 28, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. to consider the following Conditional Use Permit Applications and other business before the Board. Members present were Dahlman, Varland, Nelson, Ortloff, Hennen, and Zoning Administrator Boe.

Chairman Dahlman calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Dahlman reviews the July 14, 2005 meeting minutes.

Dahlman: You have a copy of the July 14, 2005 meeting minutes, are there any corrections or additions?

No response.

Motion by Hennen to approve the July 14, 2005 meeting minutes as printed.

Seconded by Ortloff, carried 5-0.

Chairman Dahlman introduces and opens the public hearing of Great River Energy (applicant), 17845 East Highway 10, Elk River, MN 55350 and Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association (owner), 503 East Highway 12, Litchfield, MN 55355. That Part of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼ of SW ¼), more fully described in the application, Section Two (2), Township One Hundred Nineteen (119), Range Twenty-nine (29), Dassel Township. A Conditional Use Permit Application to construct a 115 kV Distribution Substation and Transmission Line Tap in an Agricultural District.

Dahlman: Who is present for this public hearing?

Gary Ostrom and Carole Schmidt with Great River Energy and Mr. Gilbertson with Meeker Co-op respond

Dahlman: Does anyone have any questions or concerns?

Several respond.

Dahlman: I will give you a chance to comment.

Ostrom: First of all just to give an explanation of who we are, Great River Energy is a power supplier to Meeker Co-op, we generate the power principally in North Dakota and we ship it into Minnesota. We are connected with Minnesota Power up North, Excel down South and with other utilities. Primarily we exist in our own buyer Cooperatives to provide power to the Cooperatives. We do that by virtue of transmission lines, the Cooperatives buy the substations, build the substations. That is who we are, the packet I passed out shows our service territory. We cover roughly 2/3rds of the state of Minnesota, from the Canadian border down to Iowa. The second page of the document gives just a little synopsis. It shows the typical 115 kV transmission line. It shows the substation that will be pretty representative of what we plan on building here at the site. The back of that page simply shows the substation location on a line map and the last page is just; it kind of gives you an idea of what the substation infrastructure is. Principally we are looking at height, so if you are wondering how tall the highest structure is, you can kind of pick that out. A little under two years ago we met with the Co-op, the identified a need and Al

can speak of that, there is a need to re-leave the Litchfield and Dassel substations. As with growth the substations overload and the Co-op is charged with providing reliable power and they look for a new source of power to feed their system. The way they do that is they look for a location that matches their system and is reasonably close to the transmission line. In this instance we have to go to a location that is central to the Co-op's load, there lines and we have a location that is central to the line that will energize it, it is just 500' back from the east. What we are proposing to do, the Co-op, we looked at the site the Co-op opted to buy the site, it was available, it was a prime site and then we were given the charge to help with permitting. There has been a little change on the state level, there is some state process you have to follow, it is new, and we offered to help as long as we have to permit the power line, we offered to do the substation to and like I said we work together, we are owned by the Co-op. It is about 1 year plus down the road. Great River Energy simply schedules these facilities in our overall scheduling. We hope to have gotten to it earlier; we will take the hit on that. The Co-op said you will help us go forth and we have been a little slow on that. The Co-op did there job, we are a little behind the eight ball. That is the long and the short of what we are proposing to do, in terms of overall cost to the customers, which you folks principally, it is the best site not only in terms of location but economics as well and it was available so it was purchased because of that. The item I talked about, normally we just come to you folks and get the conditional use permit and go through this process. There is just a little step that we have to take; we have to comply with state law. We have to prepare an environmental assessment. That has to be prepared by the County and we aide the County in preparing the assessment simply because most of the questions or the material in the assessment is pertinent to the facility that we know about. We prepared the EA, we covered different things. We sent out, John sent out a letter a while back asking citizens in the general area for comments and those comments, if they were germane or if they were a topic that needed to be covered in the environmental assessment we would include that. Certainly there were some comments that just didn't like the site and that is something that wouldn't be included. We prepared an EA that will eventually be sent to the Department of Commerce, in the old days it was the EQB, there have been some changes recently and then that gets filed publicly for a public comment and then after 10 days the County can declare it. That is the long and short of the project, it is a needed project and like I said Tim and Al can speak to the need if there are any questions on need, and the site is absolutely the best site.

Dahlman: Carole, do you have anything to add?

Schmidt: No, not unless there are any questions to answer.

Dahlman: I will go to the public, you people who raised your hands, do you have comments to make or questions direct them to the board and if we feel they need to be brought back to these people, we will do that. Please try to limit your time to 2 or 3 minutes and please state your name for the record.

Leo Lund: The letter that my attorney sent, did that get distributed to the Planning Commission?

Boe: No, it will be read.

Lund: I will have a comment after that.

Chairman Dahlman reads the letter from Mr. Lunds attorney, Mark McCullough (see attached letter.)

Lund: Well I think Gary mentioned they had looked at other sites or did you say this land was available?

Ostrom: Yes, other sites were evaluated, two up along 22 and one on the road just south of the road we are proposing here. The evaluation, a component of the evaluation, none of those sites looked like they were any advantage in terms of impact, it still deals with homes, there are residences to be concerned about, it would be moving it from one set of residents to another set of residents. We wish we could design these things so they don't appear tall; it is just the nature of the beast that they do show up. We try to do our best with screening. The problem is the cost to get the electrical infrastructure for Meeker Co-op back down to the central location was early on estimated to be about \$150,000 to \$250,000 and then the alternate sites along 21, those sites involved a certain amount of transmission line, so not only do you have the existence of a substation but then you have additional transmission line, and that has in and of itself raised objections as far as impact as well. The same would be the case to a little lesser extent to that south site. We have longer transmission and more costly distribution to get back down to the central location. Nothing we could see showed a clear-cut alternative where we wouldn't have any objections.

Lund: We have some land right next to the. . .

Dahlman: Leo, this isn't a question and answer session, it is you present to the board what you want to and we will direct it back to the applicant if necessary.

Lund: Gary said this land was available but I don't know if that is the only piece of real estate they looked at or not, they did indicate the preference of two other pieces, but we do have land available and nobody, I mentioned that to Gary on the phone when I spoke with him and I sent a letter to him in May mentioning that I had land for sale and I got no response. By putting this up in the area designated, it will impact the value of the land we have there as well as other lakeshore residents, I don't know if they have considered that but it is certainly a concern to the taxpayers of Meeker County, at least the ones in that area both who come in that road every morning and every night looking at this. I don't know what it will do to land values; we haven't had time to evaluate that. I guess before this would be approved I would certainly like to have an evaluation brought before the Planning Commission. I would have comments to Great River that the land that I have would be available. I know what they paid for this property, and it was a fore gone conclusion when I talked to Mr. Ostrom on it. I would have had some input if I had been informed of that prior to this.

Dahlman: Anything else?

Lund: Not right now.

Dahlman: Okay, would anyone else like to comment?

?: We totally agree.

Droege: I am looking at the picture and some of the things of have seen, Meeker County south of Dassel has a substation, which is exactly how they look. As a lake resident it will not be fun to look at that every single day and have that come through. I don't understand. I know there is land available across the street that is for sale; I

cannot imagine that a lot of people will be interested in that land anymore. It is an eyesore, there is so much land available along that transmission line that would not impact any residents of the lake, I noticed that there is an amount of land along Big Swan on the west side there, if that land ever gets sold there will be, I assume the road will go through and connect up to the other one on the northern end of the lake and then there will be more traffic through there. It is just not a good site as far as I am concerned.

Dahlman: Anything else?

Droege: No.

Dahlman: Any other comments?

Lund: To the Planning Commission, if this were near the area, next to your property, is this something that would be desirable in your opinion?

Dahlman: Does the Planning Commission have any questions?

Ortloff: Mr. Lund, you stated you had land for sale, to sell to them for a substation?

Lund: I didn't hear Orlin?

Ortloff: Is the land you spoke of to sell to them for a substation?

Lund: Sure.

Ortloff: Where is that in relation to this lake?

Lund: About maybe two miles north, but it is right, the transmission line there now it is 40 feet from it. There is 20 acres there.

Ortloff: On CSAH 21?

Lund: Right.

Boe: What Section is that in?

Lund: I don't know.

Dahlman: Kingston Township?

Lund: Yes.

Dahlman: Which side of CSAH 4?

Lund: The east side.

Boe: North of 21?

Lund: Yes. It is under Gary Lund if you look at the title on it.

Barka: Section 26 of Kingston.

General review of the aerial photo of Mr. Lund's property.

Dahlman: The River runs through it?

Lund: Yes, part of it. I also have land that is right directly north of Big Swan lake, that is 173 acres and the line is going across there also?

Boe: Who did you buy that from?

Lund: A Chastek.

Boe: Way over on the east side?

Lund: Yes, the east side of Big Swan.

Dahlman: That is a different line on the east side of Big Swan. Is your 20 high ground, low ground? How do you access that?

Lund: Off of 21.

Dahlman: The 20 acres that Gary has?

General discussion on property access.

Dahlman: How far off the road is that?

Boe: A quarter mile.

Lund: Yeah.

Boe: That is pretty much all swamp?

Lund: No, maybe half or less.

Dahlman: This line goes through there? The 115kV line?

Lund: I don't know if it is 115 or what. It is the big posts.

Mr. Ostrom shows possible substation sites considered.

General review of Mr. Lunds 20 acre site.

Ostrom: The line would be close but the river is a problem.

Dahlman: Are there any more comments?

?: Maybe you could comment as to why that area was not one of your top choices?

Ostrom: We looked along 21, the analysis as far as the distribution costs to get back into the central location.

Lund: Define central location.

Gilbertson: It is our load center, a lot of developments are going in around Dassel and are proposed in the future, our Dassel sub is near capacity, our Litchfield sub is near capacity and we are also going to take some load off of Kingston because of the developments around Kimball. We evaluate the best area for a substation, we pick 4 possible sites and then Gary evaluated those sites for us and the site that we chose was economically and electrically the best location for the substation.

Lund: With that attitude you could put it right in the middle of a residential area and say it is the best spot.

Gilbertson: That is true.

Lund: What I would like to see happen if the Planning Commission would postpone a decision tonight, I would like to get some appraisals of the value of the properties with and without this substation there and I would look at other available sites that I might discuss with Gary. That would be my request to postpone the decision.

Dahlman: Okay.

Hennen: This afternoon I looked at two substations by Watkins. One of them is 200' from a house, there is a 400-house development going up with two substations across the road. I stopped and talked to some of the people, I asked if it bothers them, they said they hardly realize it is there. There is a farmer living within 300' of one substation, I asked him and there is never interference on the radios or anything. You can drive by them on 2, they look the same size as this here, there has never been a complaint on them that we hear. I drive by them every day, I don't even notice them. I don't understand.

Lund: Are you saying that was put up after these residential units or was the substation there?

Hennen: The substation was there first then the residential came in.

Lund: That is different.

Hennen: One has been in 7 years and one has been in for 40 years. I don't think they would have put the second one in if the first had been bothersome. I don't think a guy would have spent 2 million dollars on a new development ½ mile from Watkins if it would have effected the development.

Lund: It is just like buying a house next to the airport, the airport is there.

Dahlman: I don't think they are the same. Airports and substations are not the same.

Lund: This is the physical appearance, Irv, in a residential area that is the problem.

Hennen: From Willmar going to Gold n' Plump in Cold Spring, they say 400 cars a day go on that road and they expect it to go up to 800 cars per day on that road, both substations are 100 feet off the road. I never hear any complaints on those from anybody.

Lund: It is after the fact, I can understand that.

?: It is one thing to drive by something; it is another thing to live with it if you have a choice. If you choose to do that, that is one thing, but if you are already there and it comes in, that is another.

Ortloff: What stage are you at on your EA?

Ostrom: It is essentially complete. We have had sign offs, you can go through the list, we have gone to all the different agencies we need to run it through.

Chairman Dahlman reviews the agency contact list.

Dahlman: Leo is asking for more time for a valuation analysis on the property. Irv is saying he doesn't sense there is a problem from what you have seen or heard.

Hennen: Yes.

Lund: I can probably get that done in 60 days.

Boe: What done?

Dahlman: The appraisal on the land before and after a substation. Leo is asking for the time to do that.

Ostrom: I have been doing this permitting for 27 years or so and I honestly need to, we deal mainly in transmission lines but we have certainly dealt with the substations. To give a little idea what it entails to study something like the impact of a transmission line on residential development, I have a staff member that all she does all day is issue releases so developments can back up against our facilities. On one hand when I am standing before folks like you and saying can we get these facilities in, which by the way are essential services, I have somebody in my office working with developers to get stuff pushed up against these transmission lines.

Mr. Ostrom shows photographs of substations located in residential developments.

Ostrom: I have had comments stating that initially it will be different to the community, once they are there, honestly people say I have a neighbor with a dog and kids with cars, I will take the substation any day. It is maintained, it sits there quietly, we have a meter crew that comes out occasionally, it is quite, clean, and maintained. I submit that a lot of people would rather live next to a substation than the potential of having a neighbor that is tough to deal with. We run into that all the time. As far as quickly getting an analysis done, analyzing what impact a transmission line will have, we are embarking on a massive project right through the heart of Maple Grove and Plymouth, Carole and I have worked on it for the last three years, part of that transmission line was right through a residential area. Before I started I new I would get the question of what impact will that line have on the value of property, so I wanted to know, because we have to get easements from these people and there is a segment of that transmission line existing that is a rebuilt and we need some documents to recognize a rebuild, so I commissioned a study. It takes many months to get something like this analyzed, if it is done right and done by a high quality appraisal firm. Most appraisal firms will turn it down simply because the volume of the work is too great. It is very expensive to have one of these done. They take sales that have occurred along a transmission line, compare the homes, make the

adjustments, compare them to sales that are 400 feet off the power line and compare them to sales that are away from the power line. I have read study after study that would indicate there is very little reduction in value. I am telling these appraisers, how can this be? There has got to be something, which is what the folks are telling me. We commissioned a study and statistically there was not enough reduction in value shown on the homes right up against the power line compared to the homes away from the power line to make any kind of a analysis at all. To make any statements as fair as reduction in value. The reason I had this study performed is simply because I have backing for what I say to folks like you. I have statistical backing. The trouble with substations are there are so few, you cannot get a large enough database to make a good statistical analysis. I submit on a daily basis we are dealing with this. High scale developments that are coming into our infrastructure. A lot of these are begging Great River Energy to get closer. I see it all the time. These arguments are not uncommon, next time I have a meeting like this I will probably be making the same statements, but they are necessary. From a societal standpoint we have to make the decisions to get this infrastructure built. I submit there is not enough data to do a good study on this. I submit once that substation is build and the land develops around it, it will pretty much be part of the landscape. We will landscape around the substation. To wait another two months simply puts us into next year for spring construction and I don't think anything will be discovered in that two-month period of any worth.

Nelson: What sort of landscaping do you have in mind at this point?

Gilbertson: Some shrubs and trees and grass of course. That will be kept mowed and groomed and we are considering the screening of the fence with the green strips on it. That hides everything but what sticks up above it. I could get you some drawings that would show you and show the driveway into the station and what the grading will look like.

Nelson: What is the size of the piece of ground you acquired there?

Gilbertson: Three acres.

General discussion on the substation site.

Gilbertson: The site itself will be about 150 x 170.

Dahlman: It is not even ½ acre; it is about 25,500, which is what is fenced in. Do you want to wait to get more information or do we have enough to act?

Lund: I think it is a little unfair to the residents, and I know Mr. Ostrom said that there is a need for speed here but that need for speed is based on his schedule, that it wasn't brought up to speed earlier. Therefore he is probably not in favor of giving us, the residents, time to at least get an appraisal to look at this. It may come back and say there is no difference in value, I don't know, the photos that we were shown, he said were homes built by power lines, if the power lines were there first or if the homes were built and then the power lines came, I don't know. I would implore the Planning Commission to consider if this were your entity, if you were living in this area and you had the residences in and then the power line got put in. We don't have any choice at this point, those people may have had a choice at that time, we don't have that. That is why I am requesting if we could get 60-days to get an appraisal done and also number two, look at other sites that might be available and I would implore Mr. Ostrom of that.

Boe: When was your first meeting, Mr. Ostrom, with the area residents out there?
Ostrom: I think it was the 5th of May.
Boe: May 5th?
Ostrom: Yes.
Boe: Did a lot of people attend that meeting?
Ostrom: I suppose about 15 or 20, somewhere in that neighborhood.
Boe: May 5th, so everybody has been well aware of this since the 5th of May.
Ostrom: Well, we sent letters out notifying everybody sometime in April.
Boe: I was just wondering if this was a shock to them now or if they have known for quite some time.
Dahlman: How far would your house be from this?
Lund: It probably won't effect my house that much but the property that we have right next to which has been in the process of, and John is probably aware of this, of development is right adjacent to it.
Boe: Probably 500 or 600 feet from it.
Lund: I don't know.
Boe: According to the drawing and that is what I am going by, this property is about 400 feet from the section line over by number 4, this is probably about 200 or 300 feet so that is about 700 feet, a quarter of a mile is 1320' so you are looking at about 500 or 600 feet.
Lund: Maybe putting it closer to the main road would be better; I don't think anybody would take offense at that. None of this came to the surface to the residents. That meeting was held and I did talk to Gary and he was very courteous on the phone and answered my questions, he said he was putting more emphasis on the Meeker County Co-op people. They are the ones to initiate the request for the permit, conditional use, and this is in an agricultural area so, I think it takes some consideration.
Boe: In other words you just said that if they moved it a little closer to 4, you would have no objection to it? How much closer do you think they would have to go? I am just asking.
Lund: I don't know, I would be happy to respond to that, but I would like to look at the area, John.
Boe: Well you have got about 400' there.
Lund: Well you have a slide rule up there, I don't have that. That would be okay because number 4 wouldn't effect everybody. There are 12 residents there, every day that go in and out of there.
Boe: Same line, same quarter-quarter, just a little closer to the road?
Lund: Yes, then it would only be number 4, not 273. If that had been brought to the residents there could have been some give and take, I know that the County or the Co-op paid dearly for that 3 acres of land.
Boe: I have no idea what they paid for it.
Dahlman: We don't get into that.
Lund: I think maybe the seller would say hey, take that property over here instead of over there. That could be considered if we had this 60-days, both of those things could be found out. I don't think it is fair to put that burden on the residents now, I know

Gary says he is under the gun because his contractors are saying we need, we need, we need, but if they had started earlier, we could have started earlier.

Ostrom: In my mind I am trying to think, a delay in my mind doesn't serve a lot. How many appraisers can we have look at this. One appraisal will say one thing, one appraisal will say the opposite, ours may say differently then his, this can be studied for months. We could study sites for years but I think we have gone through that, and generally it comes back to one prime site that is defensible. At the public meeting we did have in May, there was a question about going back to the west along CSAH 4, there is a lady on Lake Arvilla and I am certain if we ever moved it that direction, she would be here raising the same issues that we are hearing tonight. Very vocal. No matter where we put it or how long we deliberate it, a facility like this has to go somewhere. We are trying to be responsible, we understand all the issues, we have seen them before. The area right now is open, the land is available, it is a prime location in terms of the Co-ops circuitry and the amount of transmission line that has to be, which is a component of this. It is just a short segment of transmission line. All those factors considered will ultimately point us right back to this spot anyway, even if we do it tonight or two months, or two years from now.

Dahlman: Does the board want more information? In my mind I think we have enough information?

Varland: Yes.

Ortloff: I just don't see any appraisal making a lot of difference. You can sort of make one say whatever you want it to and to get a good appraisal will take 60-days or longer and I am not ready to wait that long. Maybe at the very most two weeks.

Dahlman: If it gets moved further west you are nearer to that place across the road.

Ortloff: You will be able to see the site no matter where it is. Another 200' west, you will still be able to see it. It won't make any difference to traffic. It will be the same.

Dahlman: Are there two Dassel substations?

Gilbertson: There is one Dassel substation, south of Dassel on 15.

Dahlman: Is there an old one south of town?

Gilbertson: That is Excel.

Dahlman: Okay, there was just a house built right behind that substation, on the curve.

Varland: There is a house going right across from the substation right now.

Dahlman: Yes, that is up a little ways. I stated that I personally think we have enough information. Does anyone think we need more?

Boe: I don't see a real problem with this site myself, but I think by looking at moving it west, the east line of the new site will be the same as the west line of this site. You have 460' to the centerline of the road. You have to be 100' off the road, and the site is 361', so they would be butting up against each other. That is not going to help. Furthermore you will have probably another set of poles. I don't see a real problem with any of it. If we look at all the developments down in the metro area, you have substations all over them. It is totally up to the Planning Commission.

Dahlman: Yes, and ultimately the County Commissioners.

Varland: Right.

Motion by Nelson to close the public hearing.

Seconded by Hennen, carried 5-0.

Dahlman: Are you ready to decide tonight? We should probably do our findings and see where it goes from there.

The Planning Commission does the findings of fact.

Motion by Ortloff to accept the findings of fact.

Seconded by Varland, carried 5-0.

Dahlman: Going through these I didn't see any that were in conflict. The only one we said that was very minimal was the structure of the site shall have a appearance, and that was very minimal. Do we have a motion to act or should we table the decision?

Motion by Ortloff to Approve a Conditional Use Permit Application to construct a 115 kV Distribution Substation and Transmission Line Tap in an Agricultural District with the conditions that:

1. Screening shall be implemented on-site to help screen the proposed substation from the public view.
2. The applicant shall implement stripping on both the east and west side of the proposed fence to help screen this facility.
3. The applicant shall use erosion control on-site until vegetative cover is established to prevent erosion of material during construction.

Seconded by Hennen, carried 5-0.

***** Please note - These are not the official proceedings of the Planning Commission. *****

CONSIDERATION AND FINDINGS
FOR CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATIONS

GRE/MC
July 28, 2005

Findings. For each application for a conditional use permit, the County Planning Commission shall make a recommendation to the County Board. The Planning Commission the following findings where applicable, and in all cases the findings shall be considered as being the opinion of the Planning Commission. The Conditional Use Permit may be denied by the Planning Commission if any one of the following findings cannot be satisfied:

1. The use is permitted as a conditional use within the zoning district. *Yes*
2. The applicant demonstrates a need for such a use. *Yes*
3. That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the proposed conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety or general welfare. *No*
4. That the conditional use is compatible with the existing land use and will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted *Yes*
5. The Conditional use will not substantially diminish and impair property values within the immediate vicinity. *Should not*
6. That the use will conform to all applicable regulations of the district wherein proposed and to all applicable performance standards. *Yes*
7. That the use is not in conflict with the comprehensive land use plan of the County, or the comprehensive land use plan of a political subdivision in the County that would be impacted by the proposed use, and is reasonably related to the overall needs of the county and to existing land use. *Not in conflict*
8. That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area. *will not*
9. The structure and site shall have an appearance that will not have an adverse effect upon adjacent or nearby residential properties. *Very Minimal. or not at all*
10. That adequate water supply and sewage treatment facilities are provided and in accordance with state and county health requirements. *NA*
11. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary public facilities have been or are being provided. *Yes*

12. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading space to serve the proposed use. *NA*
13. The conditional use will not cause a substantially traffic hazard or congestion. *No*
14. That soils and water conditions are adequate to accommodate the proposed use. *Yes*
15. The conditional use will not substantially affect the natural resources and environmental quality of the County with adverse impacts that can not be mitigated. *No*
16. The conditional use is compatible to the site's physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features. The planning Commission may require the applicant, at their own expense, to provide sufficient proof from a reliable source(s) that such features associated with the site are compatible to the purposed use. *Yes*
17. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise and vibration so that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result. *NA*
18. The use conforms to other applicable County Ordinances and plans, and state and federal laws, rules, and regulations; and is not contrary to established standards, regulations or ordinances of affected government agencies or political subdivisions. *Yes*

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission shall make a recommendation to the County Board within sixty (60) days after the public hearing at which the request for a Conditional Use Permit was considered by the Commission unless the public hearing is continued or additional hearings are required. The Zoning Administrator shall report the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission to the County Board at its next regularly scheduled board meeting. The report shall include the stipulation of additional conditions and guarantees that such conditions will be complied with when they are deemed necessary for the protection of the public interest.

DECISION

Upon receipt of the report and recommendation from the Planning Commission, the County Board shall take action on the Conditional Use Permit application within sixty (60) days. The County Board shall, upon receiving no report from the Planning Commission within ninety (90) days of the close of the public hearing, place the request on the agenda for its next regularly scheduled meeting and decide the issue within thirty (30) days.

APPENDIX C

LANDOWNER SURVEY AND RESPONSES

June 2005

Landowner

**RE: Survey for an Environmental Assessment - Proposed Substation and
Transmission Tap Line near Dassel, MN**

Great River Energy (GRE) and Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Cooperative (Meeker Cooperative) are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project in Section 2, T119N, R29W near Dassel in Meeker County, Minnesota. The proposed project includes construction of a new 115 kV substation and a short 500-foot section of 115 kV transmission line to energize the substation. The line will tap an existing GRE transmission line that crosses 273rd St. just east of the proposed substation (see enclosed fact sheet and map).

The project is needed to provide better reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

GRE and Meeker Cooperative are seeking approval for the project from Meeker County. As part of the permitting process, Meeker County must prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the project and afford the public an opportunity to participate in the development of the scope of the EA before it is prepared.

This survey is intended to allow the public to comment on the project and provide input on the content of the EA. A preliminary Table of Contents for the EA is attached as a starting point for what should be covered in the EA. We encourage you to provide comments on the project and additional topics you want to see addressed in the EA.

June 2005

Page 2

GRE requested environmental review of the project by several federal and state agencies. The status of those reviews is provided below.

- **United States Corps of Engineers** – no response received yet.
- **United States Fish and Wildlife Service** – no federally listed species in the project area.
- **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** – the proposed project will not affect any rare features in the project area.
- **Minnesota Historical Society** – no properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are within the project's area of effect.
- **Minnesota Department of Transportation (aviation issues)** – there are no airports within 10 miles of the proposed project. MnDOT has no objection to the proposed substation and connection.

Thank you for your input on this project. Please return your survey form in the self-addressed envelope provided by July 14, 2005.

Sincerely,
Meeker County



John Boe
Zoning Administrator
Meeker County

Enclosures

Preliminary Table of Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|----------|
| 1.0 | Summary | 1 |
| 2.0 | Proposed Facilities | 1 |
| 2.1 | Project Need | 1 |
| 2.2 | Proposed Location | 1 |
| 2.3 | Ownership | 4 |
| 2.4 | Substation Design | 4 |
| 2.5 | Transmission Facilities | 4 |
| 2.6 | Cost Estimate | 4 |
| 3.0 | Environmental Analysis | 6 |
| 3.1 | Natural Environment | 6 |
| 3.2 | Human Settlement | 7 |
| 3.3 | Noise | 7 |
| 3.4 | Aesthetics | 7 |
| 3.5 | Soils and Geology | 7 |
| 3.6 | Archaeological and Historic Resources | 7 |
| 3.7 | Transportation | 7 |
| 3.8 | Public Health and Safety | 8 |
| 4.0 | Permits, Approvals and Public Comments | 9 |
| 4.1 | Overview of the Minnesota Approval Process | 9 |
| 4.2 | EA Public Involvement | 9 |
| 4.3 | Local Permitting | 9 |
| 4.4 | Other Permits and Approvals | 10 |

Figures

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
| Figure 1 | General Vicinity Map | 2 |
| Figure 2 | Project Area Map | 3 |
| Figure 3 | Substation Site Plan | 5 |

Appendices

| | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix A | Agency Correspondence |
| Appendix B | Legal Notices/Correspondence/Meeting Minutes |

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

Swan Lake Substation 115 kV Transmission Tap Line



GREAT RIVER ENERGY
17845 East Hwy 10 P.O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800
1-800-442-3013
www.greatriverenergy.com

A Touchstone EnergySM Cooperative 
The power of human connections



MEEKER COOPERATIVE
503 East Highway 12, PO Box 522
Litchfield, MN 55355-0522
1-800-232-6257
www.meeker.coop

Project Need

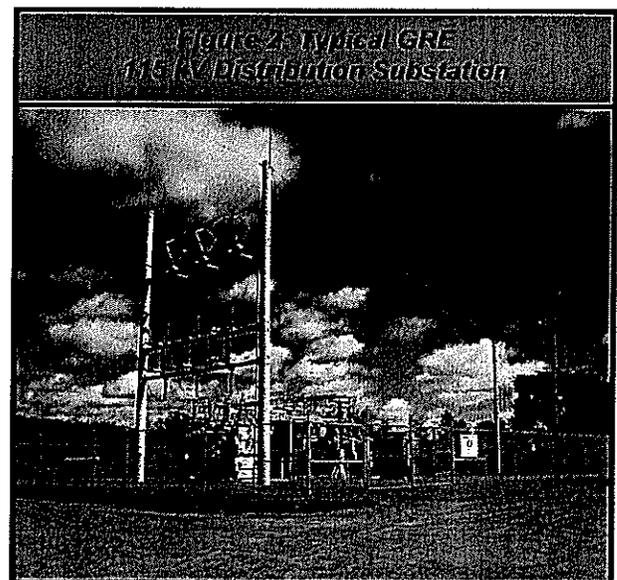
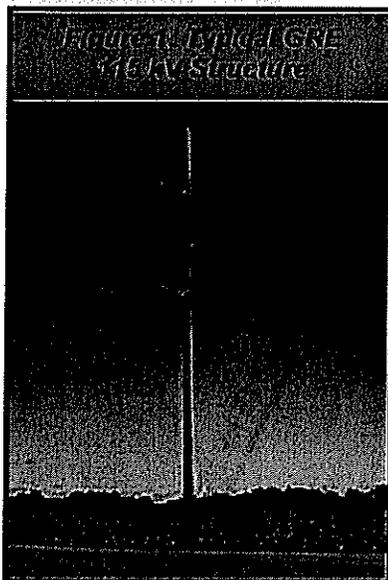
Electrical load growth in the east central portion of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association (Meeker Cooperative) service territory has steadily increased. In addition, there is a need to increase reliability in serving the Dassel, Kingston and Litchfield loads during outages and other related contingencies.

Project Description

Meeker Cooperative will construct an electrical substation facility on a three-acre parcel of land located along the south side of 273rd Street in Section 2 of Dassel Township. Great River Energy (GRE) will construct a short 500-foot section of 115 kV transmission line from an existing GRE transmission line that crosses 273rd St. just east of the proposed substation facility (see project map on back). Figure 1 shows a typical 115 kV transmission line structure and Figure 2 depicts a typical distributor substation. There will be a switch structure located at the convergence (tap point) of the new line and existing transmission lines.

Project Schedule

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Public Input & Permitting..... | Spring 2005 |
| Land Rights Activities..... | Summer 2005 |
| Transmission Line Substation Construction..... | Fall 2005 / Winter/Spring 2006 |
| Energization..... | Summer 2006 |

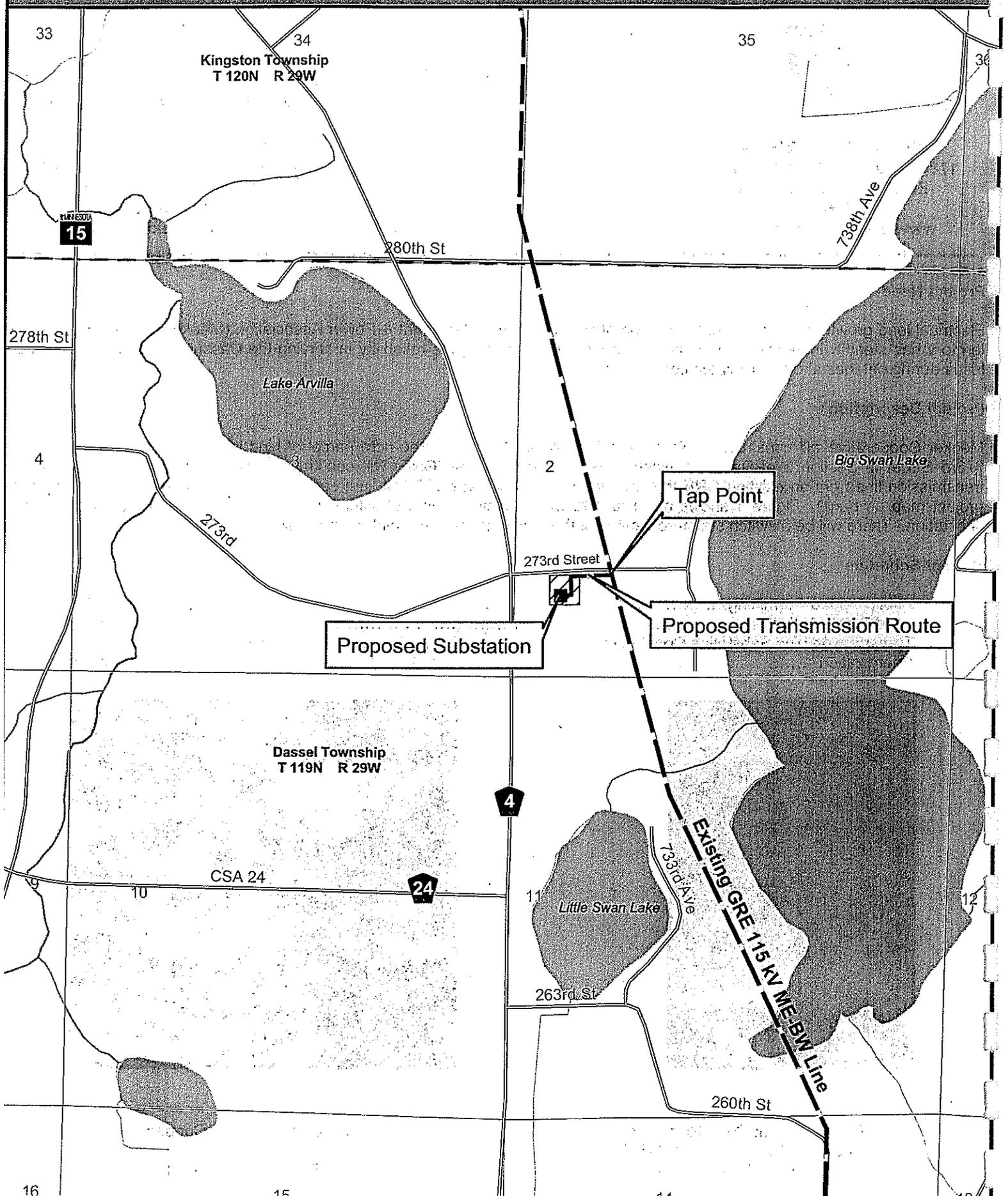


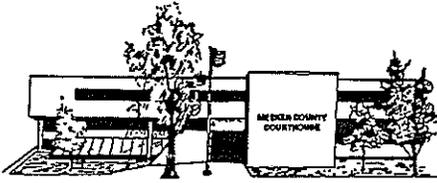
Contacts:

Gary Ostrom at Great River Energy
763-241-2377 Fax 763-241-6177
1-800-442-3013, ext. 2377 toll free

Kevin Louis at Meeker Cooperative
320-693-3231
Fax #320-693-2980

PROJECT MAP





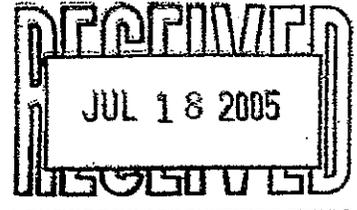
MEEKER COUNTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

325 North Sibley Avenue

LITCHFIELD, MINNESOTA 55355-2155

(320) 693-5290

*John Boe
Zoning Administrator*



July 15, 2005

Gary Ostrom
Land Rights Supervisor
Great River Energy
17845 East Highway 10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

Dear Mr. Ostrom:

Enclosed please find the public comments we received as a result of the June mailing of the EA scope survey.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Cote".

Kristin Cote
Meeker County Planning & Zoning

Enclosure



I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

Meeker Coop needs to keep updating it's facilities
so we have a reliable source of electricity. I am
in favor of the update. I live about 1/2 mile
North East on Swan Lake. (27926 738th Ave)

Harlan Dobecky

Mail 17690 42nd St
New Germany MN 55367



I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

-
- I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I THINK THIS IS A GOOD LOCATION. EASILY
ACCESSABLE AWAY FROM MOST RESIDENCES..
I HAVE A HOME ON 734TH, BUT
ARROR OF THE LOCATION THAT WAS CHOSEN.
I HOPE THIS WILL IMPROVE OUR ELECTRIC
SERVICES, ~~SEEK~~ TO HAVE LESS POWER INTERRUPTS.
WE ALL HAVE TO GIVE A LITTLE TO GET MORE
26825 734TH.

David H. Guenzler

- I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT
-

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

This project will be a real eyesore on our street. Does it really need to be so close to the lake area? Big Swan Lake already has a number of environmental problems due to the river running into it. Do we really need more problems with runoff? Surely there must be another place to tap in not so close to a lake —

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

Lee Heutsma

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

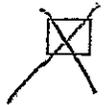
Oliver Iverson (Oliver Iverson)

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

What good does it do to send out a survey when this project
was decided long ago, unbeknown to the property owners, this involves.
We are aware that the property was purchased two years ago for the
substation project. . Whatever we agreed or disagreed to would make
no difference whatsoever.

If this fair to the property owners?????????????????

I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT



I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

I absolutely object, they
will be decreasing my
lot value - significantly.

Bernadette Keaser Realtor

612-718-0878



I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT



I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT

We realize there is a need for the Substation.
However, with all the open land in this
area, it would seem a better choice of location
could be made that would not impact
the property owners on Big Swan or the
land for sale across the street from the
proposed Substation.

Thank you for the opportunity to
Comment.



I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SWAN LAKE
SUBSTATION/TRANSMISSION TAP PROJECT
