

APPENDIX B

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE



GREAT RIVER
ENERGY®

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

25 November 2003

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

RE: Proposed Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Scott:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on airports or airstrips in the project area. The single circuit structures will be 60-75 feet above ground and the double circuit structures will be 90-95 feet above ground.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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\Air Lake-Empire\ALEMND0



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Aeronautics
Mail Stop 410
222 East Plato Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55107-1618

Phone: 651/296-8202
Phone: 651/297-1600
Fax: 651/297-5643
Fax: 651/296-1828

RECEIVED JAN 02 2004

December 29, 2003

651 296-2788

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

Subject: **Proposed Airlake - Empire 115kV Transmission Line
and Vermillion River Substation
Hennepin County, Minnesota**

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

We have reviewed your proposal for the Airlake – Empire 115kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation project. The nearest public use airport (Airlake Airport) is approximately 2.5 miles from the proposed substation and our records do not indicate any private airstrips in the vicinity. We do not anticipate any effect on the Airlake Airport or any private airstrips in the project area; therefore the Office of Aeronautics has no objection to the project as proposed.

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

Sincerely,

Gene R. Scott, P.E.
Regional Airport Engineer



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25 November 2003

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

RE: Proposed Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Bloomberg:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. GRE will also prepare an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service.

The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on historic properties in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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\Air Lake-Empire\ALEMHS



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RECEIVED JAN 02 2004

December 30, 2003

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

RE: Proposed Air Lake-Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
T114 R20 S25, 34, 35, 36; T114 R19 S25-30, Dakota County
SHPO Number: 2004-0622

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 historic properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected** by this project

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



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25 November 2003

Mr. Thomas W. Balcom, Supervisor
Natural Resources Planning and Review Services
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Proposed Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Balcom:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, 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.

The proposed transmission line crosses the Vermillion River (three crossings) and two Public Ditches. GRE will apply to the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals for a license to cross those waters. The Minnesota Natural Heritage database was reviewed and there are no Sensitive Areas in the vicinity of the project (see attached maps).

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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,

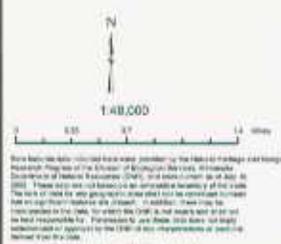
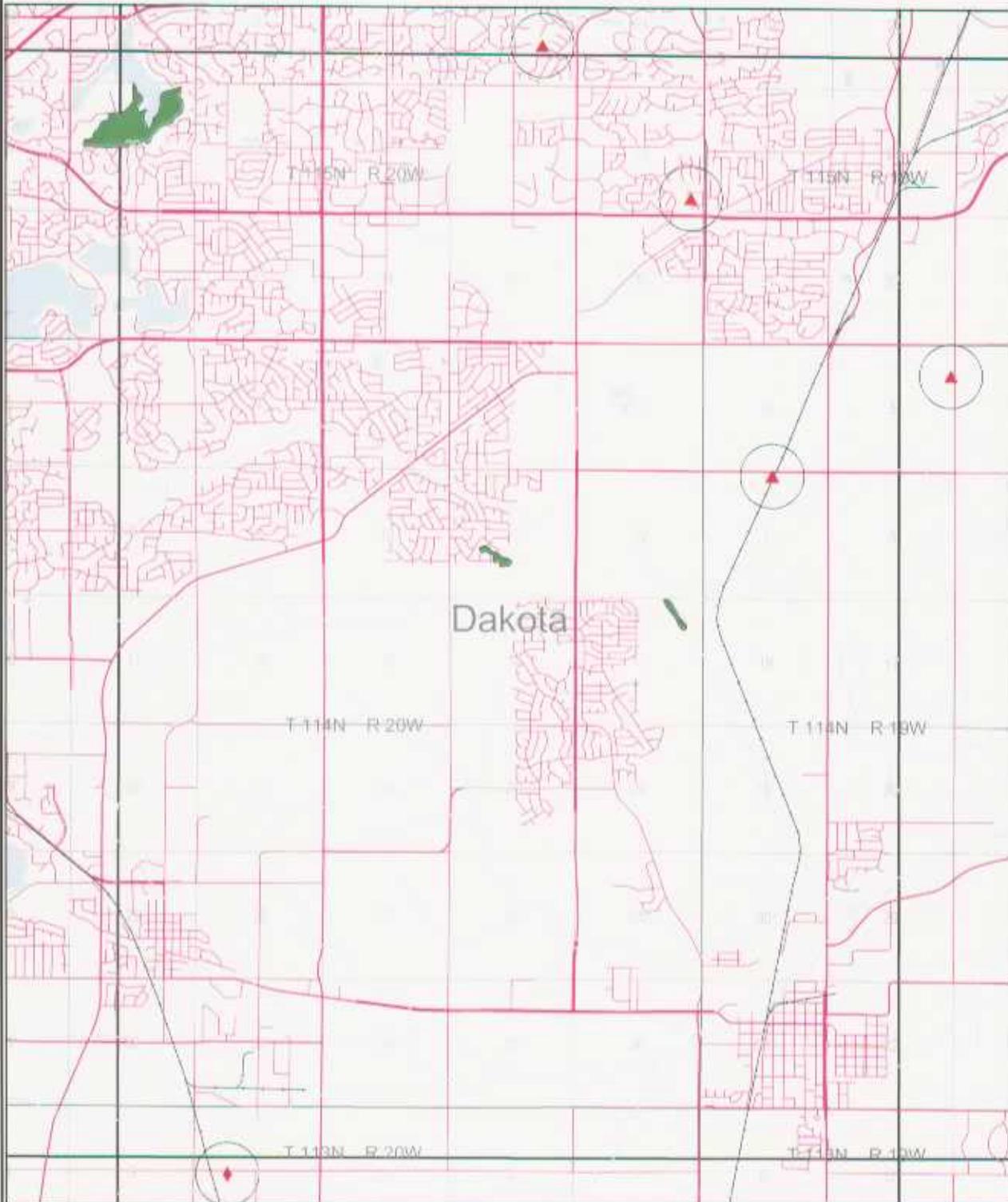
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosures

Sensitive Areas

Farmington 1:24,000 U.S.G.S. Quadrangle (DNR Code = T17b)
Includes portions of Dakota County



- Center of Highly Sensitive Areas
- Center of Sensitive Plant Areas
- Center of Sensitive Animal Areas
- Center of Significant Native Plant Community Areas
(see 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

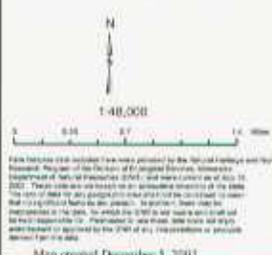
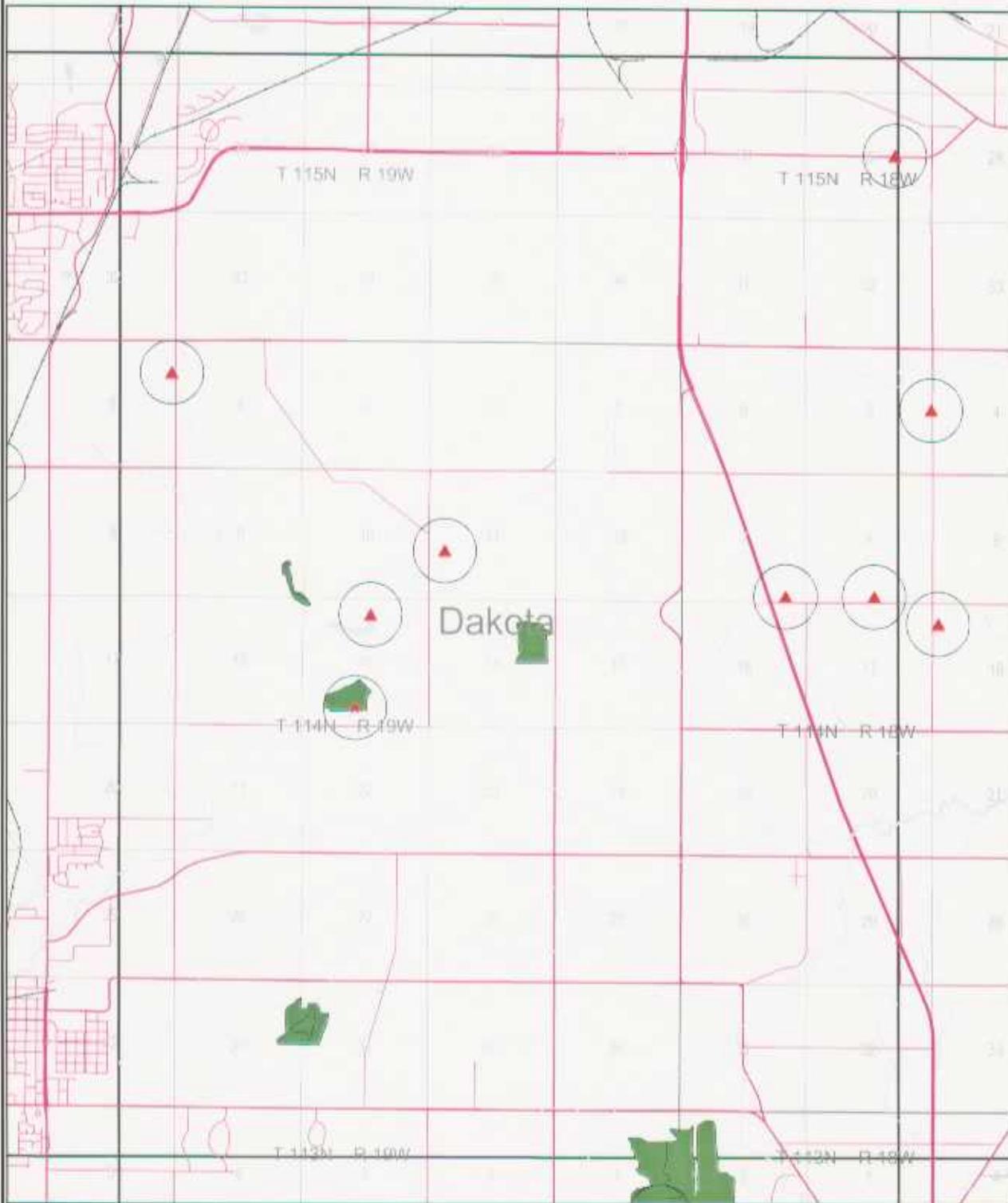
- Water bodies
- County boundaries
- Township lines
- Section lines
- Quadrangle border
- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Railroads

United Services Group
GIS Department
17845 East Highway 10
Eka River, MN 55330-0341
(763) 241-3786

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OF THE DATA ILLUSTRATED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Sensitive Areas

Coates 1:24,000 U.S.G.S. Quadrangle (DNR Code = T17a)
Includes portions of Dakota County



- ▲ Center of Highly Sensitive Areas
- ▲ Center of Sensitive Plant Areas
- ▲ Center of Sensitive Animal Areas
- ▲ Center of Significant Native Plant Community Areas
(in Minnesota County Biological Survey Counties Only)
- Significant Native Plant Communities
Identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Buffer Designating Sensitive Areas
- Significant Railroad Frame Right-of-Way Areas

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

United Services Group
GIS Department
17845 East Highway 10
Bix River, MN 55304-0341
(763) 241-3700

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Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

From: Tom Balcom [tom.balcom@dnr.state.mn.us]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2004 4:46 PM
To: Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER
Subject: Re: Air Lake-Empire

Hi Carole - It took us a while to track this and the revised Oakwood project down. We don't have any comments on either project. We appreciate that you have checked and include Heritage data.

Tom Balcom
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological Services
Environmental Review Unit Supervisor
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Mn 55155-4010
651-296-4796 (office)
651-296-6047 (fax)
tom.balcom@dnr.state.mn.us

>>> "Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER" <cschmidt@GREnergy.com> 1/22/2004 1:26:21 PM >>>

Hi Tom - am wondering about another project - in late November I sent out a review request letter for the Air Lake to Empire 115 kV project near Farmington, MN. GRE and Xcel Energy are working hard on the application to the EQB for a route permit and we are just wondering if you have had a chance to take a look at it. I know you guys are busy. Thanks, Tom!

Carole Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330



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25 November 2003

Mr. Joe Yanta
Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District, Attn: CO-R
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

RE: Proposed Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Yanta:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, 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. The proposed transmission line will span the Vermillion River and two public ditches.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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\Air Lake-Empire\ALEDOA

Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

From: Yanta, Joseph J MVP [joseph.j.yanta@mvp02.usace.army.mil]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2004 2:28 PM
To: Yanta, Joseph J MVP; Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER
Subject: RE: Air Lake-Empire (Corps File 2004-02227-JJY)

I hope the previous file was not too large. I didn't realize the enclosure would be 2 MB (which is almost 10 percent of my mailbox capacity). Apparently, instead of capturing just a small portion of the topo map, the file included a large electronic map.

-----Original Message-----

From: Yanta, Joseph J MVP
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2004 2:23 PM
To: 'Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER'
Subject: RE: Air Lake-Empire (Corps File 2004-02227-JJY)

The aerial lines would not require a permit: they do not cross any navigable water.

I should have followed up on the substation earlier.

The XCEL Energy substation (SW 1/4 SE 1/4 Sec 25, T. 114 N., R. 20 W.) appears to lie between two wetlands (see enclosed ARC-GIS file), and there are some hydric soils and ditches in the general location. If the substation does not encroach on existing wetlands or waters, it would not require a permit. Do you have any more detailed site plan/location map?

-----Original Message-----

From: Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER [mailto:cschmidt@GREnergy.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2004 1:29 PM
To: Yanta, Joseph J
Subject: Air Lake-Empire

Hi Joe - in late November I sent out a review request letter for the Air Lake to Empire 115 kV project near Farmington, MN. GRE and Xcel Energy are working hard on the application to the EQB for a route permit and we are just wondering if you have had a chance to take a look at it. I know you guys are busy. Thanks, Joe!

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
Great River Energy
763-241-2272



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25 November 2003

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 Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Rowse:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, 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.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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@grenergv.com. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Air Lake-Empire\ALEFWS

Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

From: Nick_Rowse@fws.gov
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2004 3:59 PM
To: Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER
Subject: Re: Air Lake-Empire

Carole,

I reviewed the project back in December and determined it would have no effect to any federally listed species. I did not draft a written response.

Nick

"Schmidt, Carole
GRE/ER"
<cschmidt@GREnerg
y.com>

To: <nick_rowse@fws.gov>
cc:
Subject: Air Lake-Empire

01/22/2004 01:35
PM

Hi Nick - am wondering about another project - in late November I sent out a review request letter for the Air Lake to Empire 115 kV project near Farmington, MN. GRE and Xcel Energy are working hard on the application to the EQB for a route permit and we are just wondering if you have had a chance to take a look at it. I know you guys are busy. Thanks, Nick!

Carole Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
Great River Energy
763-241-2272



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25 November 2003

Mr. John Crellin, District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farmington Field Office
4100 220th St. W., Suite 103
Farmington, MN 55024-9590

RE: Proposed Air Lake - Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation
Dakota County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Crellin:

Great River Energy (GRE) and Xcel Energy are in the process of preparing an application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a 115 kV transmission project in Dakota County, Minnesota. The project consists of approximately 6.5 miles of new 115 kV line (GRE portion), rebuilding approximately 2.75 miles of existing 69 kV line to 115 kV (Xcel Energy portion), and construction of a new 115 kV substation (Xcel Energy). The project is needed to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

The proposed project is located in Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T114N, R20W, and Sections 25-30, T114N, R19W. The project is within the city limits of Lakeville and Farmington, and in Empire Township, Minnesota. A project description/site map is enclosed for your information.

On behalf of GRE and Xcel Energy, GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on important or prime farmlands in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Wednesday, December 31, 2003. 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\Air Lake-Empire\ALENRC5

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
4100 220th St. West
Farmington, MN 55024-9590
Phone: 651-463-8665, ext. 3
FAX: 651-480-7775

RECEIVED DEC 09 2003

December 5, 2003

Carole L. Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 East Highway10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

RE: Proposed Air Lake – Empire 115 kV Transmission Line and Vermillion River Substation,
Dakota County, MN

Dear Carole:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project mentioned above in Dakota County, MN.

It is the responsibility of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service to monitor the effects of Federal programs or money on the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses through the Farmland Protection Policy Act (Public Law 97-98, Dec. 22, 1981).

It is stated that the proposed Vermillion River Substation is to be a joint use facility on the already built Xcel Energy and DEA facility on an 11.4 acre site. The rest of the proposed impacts appear to be located in areas already used for electric transmission or along road right of ways. If this is correct and new acreage for the substation is not affected then I would see this project as having very little if any impact on prime or statewide important soils. The nature and configuration of the power poles shown in the pictures you sent should also have a minimal effect on the soils beneath. If you think there is new land being acquired and impacted on the substation site, then you should send me a more detailed map of the area that may be affected. I can then fill out the portion of the AD-1006 form used for Farmland Protection Policy Act impact determinations for which I am responsible. I am sending an AD-1006 just in case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Crellin".

John Crellin
District Conservationist

Enclosure

Cc: NRCS file