

## Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments

November 10, 2023

Jan Voit, Executive Director  
Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts  
1005 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN 55343

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Executive Director Voit,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

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<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

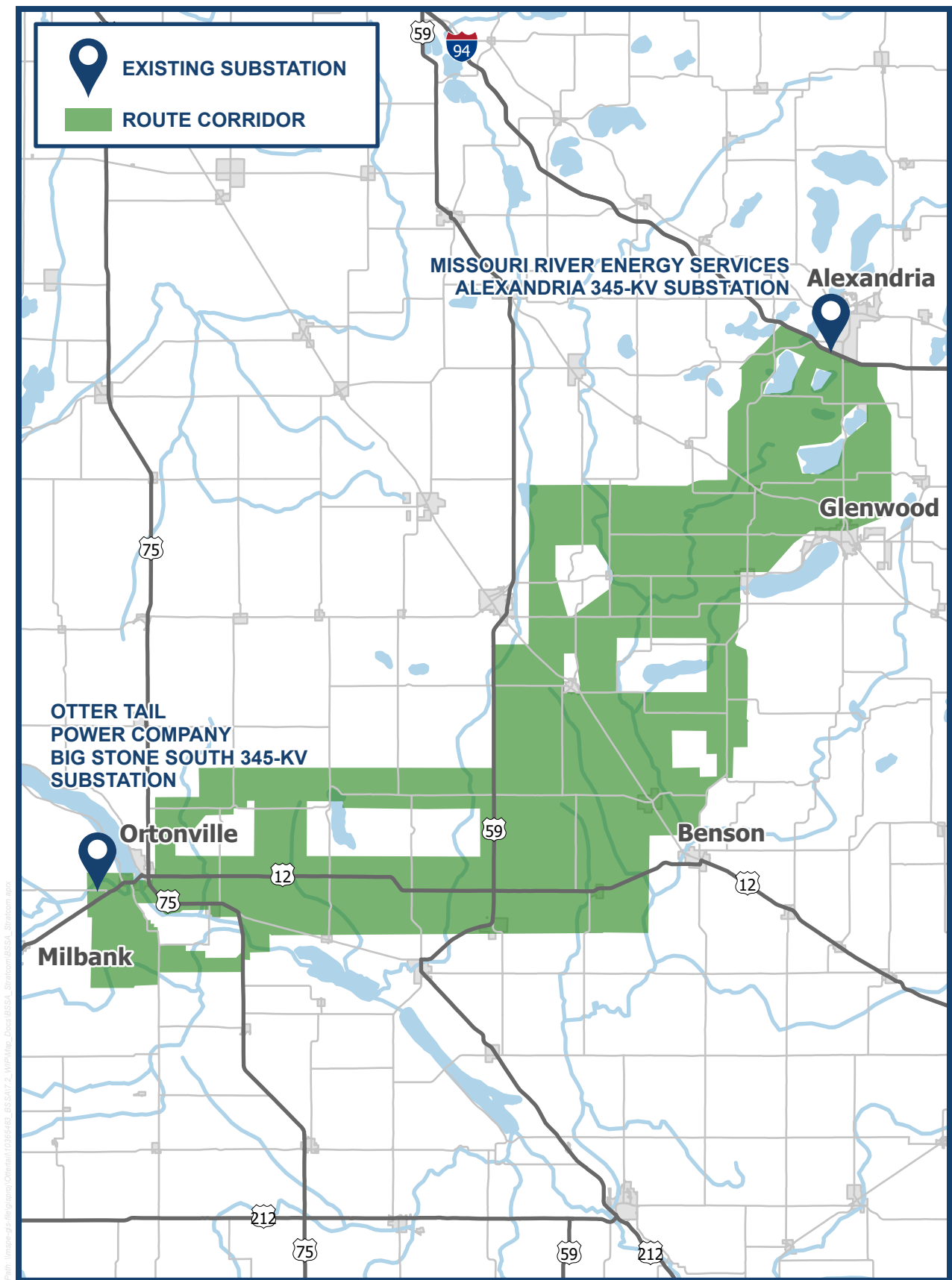
Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map





▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

## Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
December 7, 2023	Email	Applicants	BWSR	Request for comments on BSSA Project
December 11, 2023	Email/Attachment	BWSR	Applicants	Response to request for comments on BSSA Project
June 11, 2024	Email	Applicants	BWSR	Applicants requesting BWSR to review and provide input on BSSA Project shapefiles
June 12, 2024	Email	BWSR	Applicants	Response to Applicants' request for review of BSSA Project shapefiles
June 25, 2024	Email	BWSR	Applicants	Response to Applicants' request to review and provide input on BSSA Project shapefiles and payment report
June 25, 2024	Email	BWSR	Applicants	Additional response to Applicants' request to review and provide input on BSSA Project shapefiles and payment report
October 2, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	BWSR	Provided updated project shapefiles
October 2, 2024	Email	BWSR	Applicants	Response to updated project shapefiles
October 18, 2024	Email/Attachment	BWSR	Applicants	Response to updated project shapefiles providing data

November 10, 2023

Steve Hofstad, Wetland Specialist  
Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources  
1732 N. Tower Rd.  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. Hofstad,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

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HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
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If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

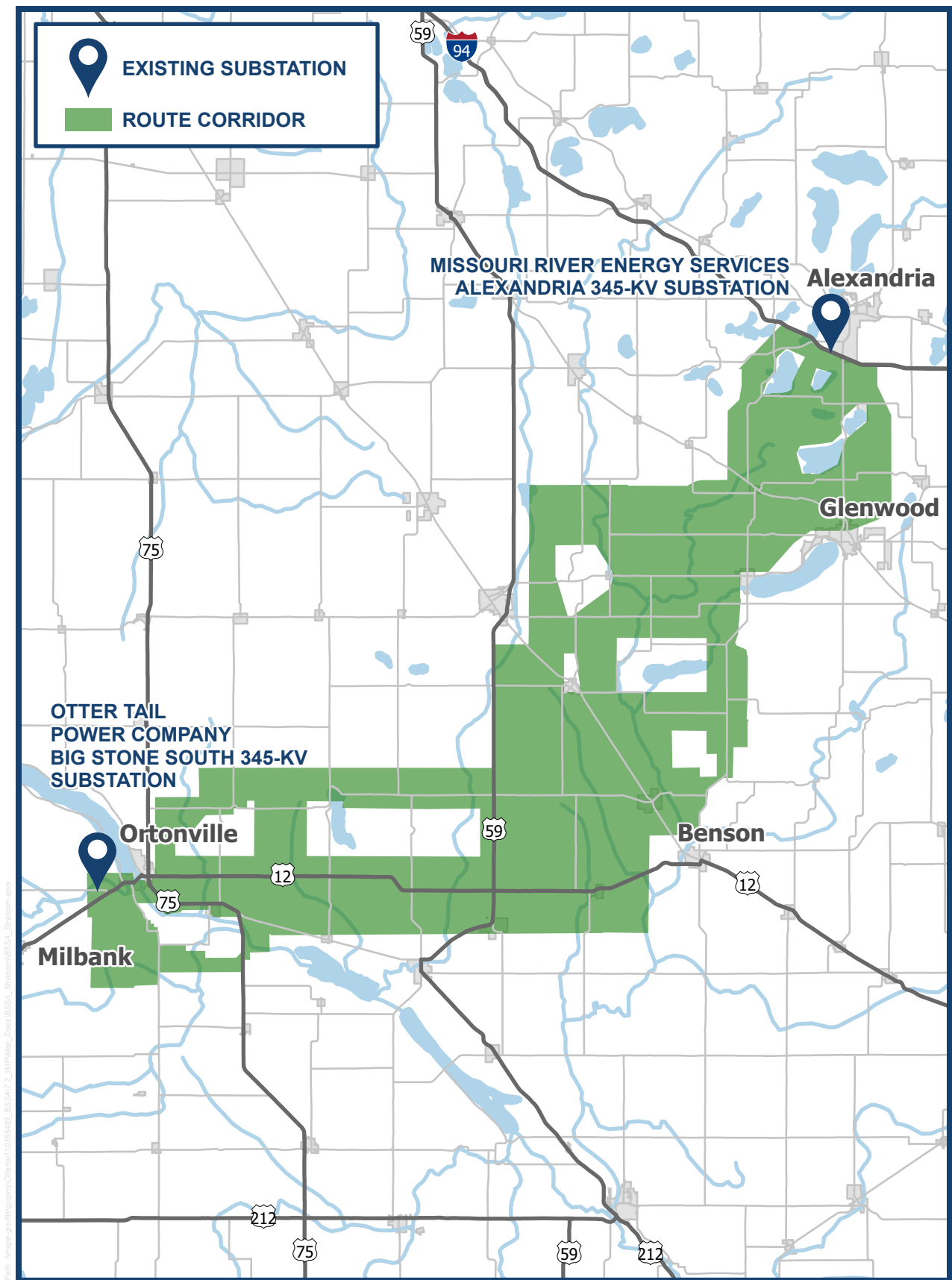
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:44 AM  
**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** BSSA Transmission Project

You don't often get email from [kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Karli,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota have begun outreach activities to various agencies and stakeholders that may be involved in some way with the routing process. That process has begun with the selection of a study area (see attached handout). Within that study area, we will select study corridors and finally preferred routes based on factors relating to environmental resources, cultural resources, engineering, and public outreach. We are aware that there are a number of easements in our study area that are administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources through such programs as RIM and CREP . Our routing process attempts to avoid as many areas as possible that may be perceived as barriers to selecting a route, however, there is always a chance that we would have to look at seeking right-of-way on lands that are already enrolled in other easement programs such as the ones administered by BWSR. We have reviewed your easement alteration policy but would also like to get some feedback from you in the event that we cannot completely avoid these easement areas.

Would you be able to provide some general feedback on the feasibility of crossing a RIM or CREP easement with our transmission project? It may be that we would only need to span the easement but we would still have to acquire an easement for that crossing. Another scenario would be where we must place a structure or two on the easement but that can often be avoided. I would be happy to give you a call as well if you would find that easier and certainly, we can talk more specifically when we have actually selected our primary and secondary routes.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)



**From:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 9:15 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Cc:** Doucette, Sharon (BWSR) <Sharon.Doucette@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project

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Hi Kevin,

Thank you for reaching out. I've attached a copy of our Easement Alteration Policy to start. Though some utility easements are compatible with the terms and conditions of our RIM easements, certain activities that may occur as the result of transmission line construction may not be. BWSR easements do not allow permanent changes in vegetative cover, permanent structures, access roads, or any activity that causes a permanent disturbance to the restored habitat. Because the state has paid for a perpetual easement interest as well as restoration costs in most cases, we would require an easement alteration for any crossings that would result in permanent impacts to the RIM easement. Referring to the "Public Benefitted Projects" section of our policy, BWSR would require compensation at 2x the current RIM rate for any areas released from the RIM easement, as well as reimbursement of state funds spent on conservation practices on those areas, and a non-refundable \$500 application fee per easement. In the case of a transmission line, we would require an alteration request to release the entirety of the new utility right-of-way if there will be any permanent impacts to the RIM easement proposed for this project. The utility company should also demonstrate that no alternative route is feasible if proposing to cross a RIM easement and release land from the easement.

Feel free to give me a call if you would like to discuss this in more detail.

Thanks!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

**651-440-2456**

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# ***Conservation Easement Alteration Requests and Board Policy***

December 20, 2017

## **RIM Reserve Rule Affecting Alteration Requests**

*MN Rule 8400.3610 - Alteration, Release or Termination of Conservation Easements*

The Board may alter, release, or terminate a conservation easement after consultation with the commissioners of agriculture and natural resources. The Board may alter, release, or terminate an easement only if the Board determines that the public interests and general welfare are better served by the alteration, release, or termination.

The Board must be provided the following information at least 30 days prior to a Board meeting, before the Board will consider a request to alter, release, or terminate a conservation easement:

- A. a copy of the letter from the landowner to the district Board justifying the change and identifying how the public interest and general welfare will be better served;
- B. a letter from the district Board recommending either approval or disapproval of the proposed change;
- C. a letter from the Department of Natural Resources area wildlife manager recommending either approval or disapproval of the proposed change; and
- D. other supporting documents, including:
  - 1) an aerial photo identifying the requested change;
  - 2) a soil survey map of the area;
  - 3) cropping history information; and
  - 4) other pertinent documentation that will support the request.

The Board reserves the right to require special provisions to ensure at least equal resource value as a condition of approving the request. The Board must be compensated by the landowner for all damages and loss of benefits to the conservation easement and the Board may also require reimbursement for administrative expenses and costs incurred in the alteration, release, or termination of a conservation easement.

## **Policy Developed by RIM Committee and adopted by the BWSR on 12/20/2017**

This policy applies to all state RIM, PWP and CREP easements currently in place and all future state conservation easement acquisitions. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the BWSR Board and staff on how to implement MN Rule 8400.3610 to ensure consistent and fair treatment of easement alteration requests, conservation benefits are not diminished, and ensure that rule requirements are met.

All easement alteration requests that come to BWSR will be accompanied by a \$500 processing fee per easement. Checks should be made payable to the BWSR. For alterations where actual costs to amend the easement exceed \$500 the Board reserves the right to charge the applicant the actual cost.

### **Public benefitted projects -**

Easement staff has the authority to tentatively approve of releases for public infrastructure projects. However, releases are not considered final until after the release request is presented to and approved by the Board and all fees have been paid.

In addition to the fee as outlined above, public entities must pay:

- 1) Two times the current RIM payment rate for acres released, and
- 2) An amount equal to all state funds dispersed as reimbursement for costs incurred to establish cover on the land being released.

Private landowner requests

All alteration requests that come to the BWSR must contain all the information items requested in Section 8400.3610 of RIM Reserve Rule (items A – D as listed above), plus the \$500 per easement processing fee in the form of a check made payable to the BWSR.

All requests must also meet the following conditions for BWSR approval:

- 1) The resource protection, conservation and habitat benefits for which the easement was originally acquired will remain the same or be enhanced by the proposed alteration. For example;
  - restored wetland acres will not be drained or filled by the proposal
  - riparian buffers will be preserved or enhanced
  - easement configuration will preserve or enhance wildlife benefits (larger blocks of habitat, not fractured puzzle-like boundaries).
- 2) Replacement acres will increase by a minimum factor as follows:  
Released cropland acres replaced with cropland acres: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released cropland acres replaced with non-cropland acres: A minimum of 4:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released non-cropland acres to non-cropland acre: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released non-cropland acres to cropland acre: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)
- 3) Replacement cropland acres proposed as replacement acres must meet crop history requirements, cropped 2 of last 5 years.
- 4) Replacement acres should be adjacent to or as near as possible to the existing easement.
- 5) The ratios above may, in rare circumstances, be altered based upon a best professional judgement recommendation by easement staff that the conservation benefits of the replacement acres significantly outweigh the conservation benefits being impacted.
- 6) Landowners will be required to pay necessary title insurance and recording fees, and all costs associated with establishment of conservation cover practices on replacement acres according to an approved conservation plan.

Meeting the criteria outlined above for private requests does not guarantee that the Board will approve of the request for release and alteration of a conservation easement.

**From:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [karli.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:karli.swenson@state.mn.us)  
**Cc:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Raine, Katie](#); [Phinney, Samantha](#)  
**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 3:47:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [BSSA\\_routes\\_sent\\_20240611.zip](#)

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Karli,

Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services are working on the development of a 345-kV Transmission Project referred to as Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) that will run from Big Stone, SD to Alexandria, MN. This is a greenfield project and there will be many challenges in developing the route. We do a great deal of outreach to local, state and federal agencies to solicit information on property that is either owned by the agency or the agency has an interest in it via an easement or contract. Would BSWR be able to review the routes and let us know if there was any land owned or under easement that would be of interest to your agency? We will be working on acquiring a 150-foot easement for our route corridor would like feedback and information pertaining to the attached proposed routes.

Attached you will find shapefiles of our proposed routes. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with BWSR to discuss the routes and any pertinent information you may have. We will be introducing these routes to the public in open houses June 24-27 and are planning to submit a route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Thanks,  
Jen

**Jennifer Hanley**, PE\*  
*Senior Environmental Project Manager*

**HDR**  
51 North Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
701.353.6139  
[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

**From:** [Swenson, Karli \(BWSR\)](#)  
**To:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Cc:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Raine, Katie](#); [Phinney, Samantha](#)  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 12, 2024 11:02:32 AM

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jennifer,

Thank you for reaching out. Once I have had a chance to review the shapefile, I will be in contact to set up a time to meet over Teams for a discussion. In short, if it is determined that any permanent impacts will occur to RIM easements (tree removal, permanent structures or access roads) we will need to go through our easement alteration process to release those areas from the easement and be compensated for the affected acres.

I'll be in touch in the coming weeks.

Thanks!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
**NEW 651-539-2571**

---

**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 2:47 PM  
**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Raine, Katie <Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com>; Phinney, Samantha <Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com>  
**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611

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Karli,

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*Senior Environmental Project Manager*

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D 701.353.6139  
[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

**From:** [Swenson, Karli \(BWSR\)](#)  
**To:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Cc:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Raine, Katie](#); [Phinney, Samantha](#); [Polzin, Brittany N \(BWSR\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 9:47:37 AM

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jennifer,

We have reviewed the shapefiles you provided and there are currently no RIM Conservation Easements that overlap the proposed lines or 150ft right-of-way. We did identify a few easements that are partially within the "Project Area" shapefile you sent, but they are all outside of the 150 ft corridor. Let me know if you feel further discussion is needed.

Thanks!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

**NEW 651-539-2571**

---

**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 2:47 PM  
**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Raine, Katie <Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com>; Phinney, Samantha <Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com>  
**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611

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Karli,

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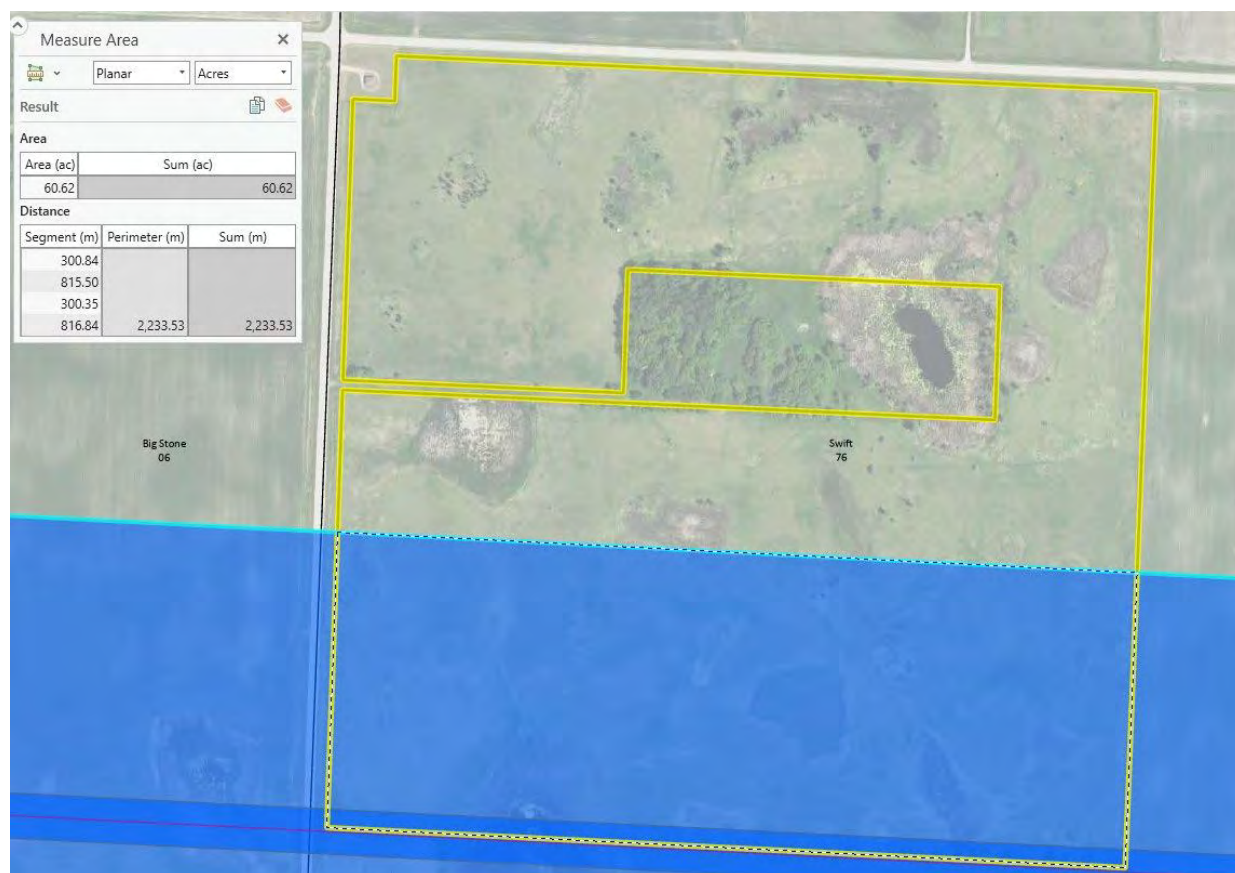
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**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 5:30:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Jennifer,

On second look, we missed one! There is one RIM easement that overlaps one half of the right-of-way. The overlap would be approximately 3.75 acres of RIM easement 76-02-22-03 in Swift County recorded on 3/1/24.



**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
**NEW 651-539-2571**

---

**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 9:32 AM  
**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Raine, Katie <Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com>; Phinney, Samantha <Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com>; Polzin, Brittany N (BWSR)

<Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us>

**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611

Thank you for your review Karli!

**Jennifer Hanley, PE\***  
D 701.353.6139

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

---

**From:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <[karli.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:karli.swenson@state.mn.us)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 8:47 AM

**To:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>

**Cc:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Malkin, Devin <[devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com)>; Peterson, Monica <[monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com)>; Raine, Katie <[Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com](mailto:Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com)>; Phinney, Samantha <[Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com](mailto:Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com)>; Polzin, Brittany N (BWSR) <[Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us](mailto:Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us)>

**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Hi Jennifer,

We have reviewed the shapefiles you provided and there are currently no RIM Conservation Easements that overlap the proposed lines or 150ft right-of-way. We did identify a few easements that are partially within the "Project Area" shapefile you sent, but they are all outside of the 150 ft corridor. Let me know if you feel further discussion is needed.

Thanks!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

**NEW 651-539-2571**

---

**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 2:47 PM

**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <[karli.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:karli.swenson@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Malkin, Devin <[devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com)>; Peterson, Monica <[monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com)>; Raine, Katie <[Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com](mailto:Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com)>; Phinney, Samantha <[Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com](mailto:Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com)>

**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240611

You don't often get email from [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Karli,

Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services are working on the development of a 345-kV Transmission Project referred to as Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) that will run from Big Stone, SD to Alexandria, MN. This is a greenfield project and there will be many challenges in developing the route. We do a great deal of outreach to local, state and federal agencies to solicit information on property that is either owned by the agency or the agency has an

interest in it via an easement or contract. Would BSWR be able to review the routes and let us know if there was any land owned or under easement that would be of interest to your agency? We will be working on acquiring a 150-foot easement for our route corridor would like feedback and information pertaining to the attached proposed routes.

Attached you will find shapefiles of our proposed routes. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with BWSR to discuss the routes and any pertinent information you may have. We will be introducing these routes to the public in open houses June 24-27 and are planning to submit a route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Thanks,

Jen

**Jennifer Hanley, PE\***

*Senior Environmental Project Manager*

**HDR**

51 North Broadway, Suite 550

Fargo, ND 58102

**D** 701.353.6139

[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

Big Stone, SD to Alexandria, MN. This is a greenfield project and there will be many challenges in developing the route. We do a great deal of outreach to local, state and federal agencies to solicit information on property that is either owned by the agency or the agency has an interest in it via an easement or contract. Would BSWR be able to review the routes and let us know if there was any land owned or under easement that would be of interest to your agency? We will be working on acquiring a 150-foot easement for our route corridor would like feedback and information pertaining to the attached proposed routes.

Attached you will find shapefiles of our proposed routes. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with BWSR to discuss the routes and any pertinent information you may have. We will be introducing these routes to the public in open houses June 24-27 and are planning to submit a route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Thanks,  
Jen

**Jennifer Hanley**, PE\*  
*Senior Environmental Project Manager*

**HDR**  
51 North Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
D 701.353.6139  
[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

**From:** [Swenson, Karli \(BWSR\)](#)  
**To:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
**Cc:** [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Polzin, Brittany N \(BWSR\)](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Brian Zavesky](#); [Jordet, Peter \(BWSR\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 9:22:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Good morning Kevin,

Thank you for providing the shapefiles of the potential routes. We will identify any RIM easements intersected and verify that our easement boundary shapefiles are up to date and get back to you when that review is complete. It may be a couple weeks to complete this process but I will reach out with a summary and we can set up Teams meeting tat that time.

Thank you!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
**651-440-2456**

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 8:05 AM  
**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; monica.peterson@hdrinc.com; Polzin, Brittany N (BWSR) <Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us>; Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>  
**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles

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---

Dear Karli,

The Project Team for our BSSA Transmission Project has finalized the two routes for our route permit application and I have attached the shapefiles. We have submitted our

application to the MN Department of Commerce-Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (MN DOC-EERA) for their initial review and we will be submitting the final draft of our application to the MN Public Utilities Commission sometime at the end of October. The MN DOC-EERA will be conducting the environmental review for the project. Our routes have been submitted with a 1000' route corridor to allow for slight route adjustments within the corridor after the PUC has selected a route.

After a review of our final routes, it does appear that the corridors intersect with some BWSR Easements. We would also like to make sure we have the latest information on any new BWSR Easements as our data is somewhat dated. Once you've had a chance to review the shapefiles, we can set up a Teams call to have an initial discussion on the process we would go through to cross a RIM or CREP Easement. Our priority would be to avoid them but if we are unable to do that we can talk further about your processes.

Thanks again for your help and we look forward to working with you.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

From: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
To: [karli.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:karli.swenson@state.mn.us)  
Cc: [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us](mailto:brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us); [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Brian Zavesky](#)  
Subject: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles  
Date: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 8:05:05 AM  
Attachments: [Outlook-r444si5f.png](#)  
[10\\_2\\_24 BSSA Shapefiles.zip](#)

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear Karli,

The Project Team for our BSSA Transmission Project has finalized the two routes for our route permit application and I have attached the shapefiles. We have submitted our application to the MN Department of Commerce-Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (MN DOC-EERA) for their initial review and we will be submitting the final draft of our application to the MN Public Utilities Commission sometime at the end of October. The MN DOC-EERA will be conducting the environmental review for the project. Our routes have been submitted with a 1000' route corridor to allow for slight route adjustments within the corridor after the PUC has selected a route.

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Thanks again for your help and we look forward to working with you.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

**From:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [Raine, Katie](#); [Koeckeritz, Emma](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles  
**Date:** Friday, October 18, 2024 11:13:53 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[BSSA\\_RIM-EasementOverlap.zip](#)  
[Recorded Easements.zip](#)  
[OTP BSSA\\_Notes.docx](#)

---

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---

**From:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <karli.swenson@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 18, 2024 10:01:20 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>; Jordet, Peter (BWSR) <peter.jordet@state.mn.us>; Doucette, Sharon (BWSR) <Sharon.Doucette@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles

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Kevin,

BWSR has identified 9 RIM easements that overlap the BSSA 1000ft route width. Information about those easements are attached, including easement boundary shapefiles, recorded easement documents, and notes containing how many acres of overlap we identified for each easement.

I've also attached BWSR's Easement Alteration Policy. Once a final route is identified, we will need to determine any permanent impacts to the RIM easement (permanent structures, tree removal, access routes, or anything else that would permanently impact the ability for the land to be maintained according to the RIM Conservation plan. Any areas where permanent impacts to RIM easements cannot be avoided, we would need to work through our Easement Alteration process (see the section on Public Benefitted Projects) whereby BWSR would need to be compensated at 2x the current RIM rate for that township for any lands released from our easements.

If you would like to propose some dates/times for a Teams discussion, I can respond with my availability.

Thanks!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155



651-440-2456

---

**From:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR)

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 9:22 AM

**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Malkin, Devin <[devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com)>; monica.peterson@hdrinc.com; Polzin, Brittany N (BWSR) <[Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us](mailto:Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us)>; Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Brian Zavesky <[brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com](mailto:brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com)>; Jordet, Peter (BWSR) <[peter.jordet@state.mn.us](mailto:peter.jordet@state.mn.us)>

**Subject:** RE: BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles

Good morning Kevin,

Thank you for providing the shapefiles of the potential routes. We will identify any RIM easements intersected and verify that our easement boundary shapefiles are up to date and get back to you when that review is complete. It may be a couple weeks to complete this process but I will reach out with a summary and we can set up Teams meeting tat that time.

Thank you!

**Karli Swenson | Conservation Easement Specialist**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

520 Lafayette Road North

St. Paul, MN 55155

651-440-2456

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 8:05 AM

**To:** Swenson, Karli (BWSR) <[karli.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:karli.swenson@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Malkin, Devin <[devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com)>; [monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com); Polzin, Brittany N (BWSR) <[Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us](mailto:Brittany.Polzin@state.mn.us)>; Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Brian Zavesky <[brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com](mailto:brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com)>

**Subject:** BSSA MN BWSR Coordination-Route Shapefiles

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---

Dear Karli,

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the MN Department of Commerce-Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (MN DOC-EERA) for their initial review and we will be submitting the final draft of our application to the MN Public Utilities Commission sometime at the end of October. The MN DOC-EERA will be conducting the environmental review for the project. Our routes have been submitted with a 1000' route corridor to allow for slight route adjustments within the corridor after the PUC has selected a route.

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Thanks again for your help and we look forward to working with you.



Kevin Scheidecker

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpco.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpco.com)

Information below is RIM Easement # - approximate # of acres of overlap with BSSA 1000ft Route Width

06-02-91-01 – 10.8 Acres

06-04-01-01 – 14.3 Acres

21-09-91-01-A – 5.9 Acres

61-11-00-01 – 9.6 Acres

61-09-00-01 – 5.7 Acres

61-35-86-01 – 5.4 Acres

75-15-01-01 – 9.4 Acres

76-02-22-03 – 29.9 Acres

76-04-02-01 – 5.3 Acres

# ***Conservation Easement Alteration Requests and Board Policy***

December 20, 2017

## **RIM Reserve Rule Affecting Alteration Requests**

*MN Rule 8400.3610 - Alteration, Release or Termination of Conservation Easements*

The Board may alter, release, or terminate a conservation easement after consultation with the commissioners of agriculture and natural resources. The Board may alter, release, or terminate an easement only if the Board determines that the public interests and general welfare are better served by the alteration, release, or termination.

The Board must be provided the following information at least 30 days prior to a Board meeting, before the Board will consider a request to alter, release, or terminate a conservation easement:

- A. a copy of the letter from the landowner to the district Board justifying the change and identifying how the public interest and general welfare will be better served;
- B. a letter from the district Board recommending either approval or disapproval of the proposed change;
- C. a letter from the Department of Natural Resources area wildlife manager recommending either approval or disapproval of the proposed change; and
- D. other supporting documents, including:
  - 1) an aerial photo identifying the requested change;
  - 2) a soil survey map of the area;
  - 3) cropping history information; and
  - 4) other pertinent documentation that will support the request.

The Board reserves the right to require special provisions to ensure at least equal resource value as a condition of approving the request. The Board must be compensated by the landowner for all damages and loss of benefits to the conservation easement and the Board may also require reimbursement for administrative expenses and costs incurred in the alteration, release, or termination of a conservation easement.

## **Policy Developed by RIM Committee and adopted by the BWSR on 12/20/2017**

This policy applies to all state RIM, PWP and CREP easements currently in place and all future state conservation easement acquisitions. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the BWSR Board and staff on how to implement MN Rule 8400.3610 to ensure consistent and fair treatment of easement alteration requests, conservation benefits are not diminished, and ensure that rule requirements are met.

All easement alteration requests that come to BWSR will be accompanied by a \$500 processing fee per easement. Checks should be made payable to the BWSR. For alterations where actual costs to amend the easement exceed \$500 the Board reserves the right to charge the applicant the actual cost.

### **Public benefitted projects -**

Easement staff has the authority to tentatively approve of releases for public infrastructure projects. However, releases are not considered final until after the release request is presented to and approved by the Board and all fees have been paid.

In addition to the fee as outlined above, public entities must pay:

- 1) Two times the current RIM payment rate for acres released, and
- 2) An amount equal to all state funds dispersed as reimbursement for costs incurred to establish cover on the land being released.

Private landowner requests

All alteration requests that come to the BWSR must contain all the information items requested in Section 8400.3610 of RIM Reserve Rule (items A – D as listed above), plus the \$500 per easement processing fee in the form of a check made payable to the BWSR.

All requests must also meet the following conditions for BWSR approval:

- 1) The resource protection, conservation and habitat benefits for which the easement was originally acquired will remain the same or be enhanced by the proposed alteration. For example;
  - restored wetland acres will not be drained or filled by the proposal
  - riparian buffers will be preserved or enhanced
  - easement configuration will preserve or enhance wildlife benefits (larger blocks of habitat, not fractured puzzle-like boundaries).
- 2) Replacement acres will increase by a minimum factor as follows:  
Released cropland acres replaced with cropland acres: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released cropland acres replaced with non-cropland acres: A minimum of 4:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released non-cropland acres to non-cropland acre: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)  
  
Released non-cropland acres to cropland acre: A minimum of 2:1 (replacement acres to released acres)
- 3) Replacement cropland acres proposed as replacement acres must meet crop history requirements, cropped 2 of last 5 years.
- 4) Replacement acres should be adjacent to or as near as possible to the existing easement.
- 5) The ratios above may, in rare circumstances, be altered based upon a best professional judgement recommendation by easement staff that the conservation benefits of the replacement acres significantly outweigh the conservation benefits being impacted.
- 6) Landowners will be required to pay necessary title insurance and recording fees, and all costs associated with establishment of conservation cover practices on replacement acres according to an approved conservation plan.

Meeting the criteria outlined above for private requests does not guarantee that the Board will approve of the request for release and alteration of a conservation easement.

## Minnesota Department of Agriculture

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
September 4, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	MDA	Consultation on agricultural impact mitigation plan (AIMP)
September 4, 2024	Email	MDA	Applicants	Response to consult on AIMP
September 11, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	MDA	Draft AIMP for review
September 20, 2024	Email	Applicants	MDA	Status of MDA review of draft AIMP
September 20, 2024	Email	MDA	Applicants	Response to status of MDA review of draft AIMP
September 25, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	MDA	MDA review of AIMP concurrent with EERA review
September 25, 2024	Email	MDA	Applicants	MDA finished review of draft AIMP
September 25, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	MDA	Sent revised AIMP for MDA second review
October 11, 2024	Email	Applicants	MDA	Request status of revised AIMP review
October 14, 2024	Email	MDA	Applicants	Confirmation AIMP is final

November 10, 2023

Stephen Roos, Environmental Planner  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert St. N.  
St Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. Roos,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).



HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

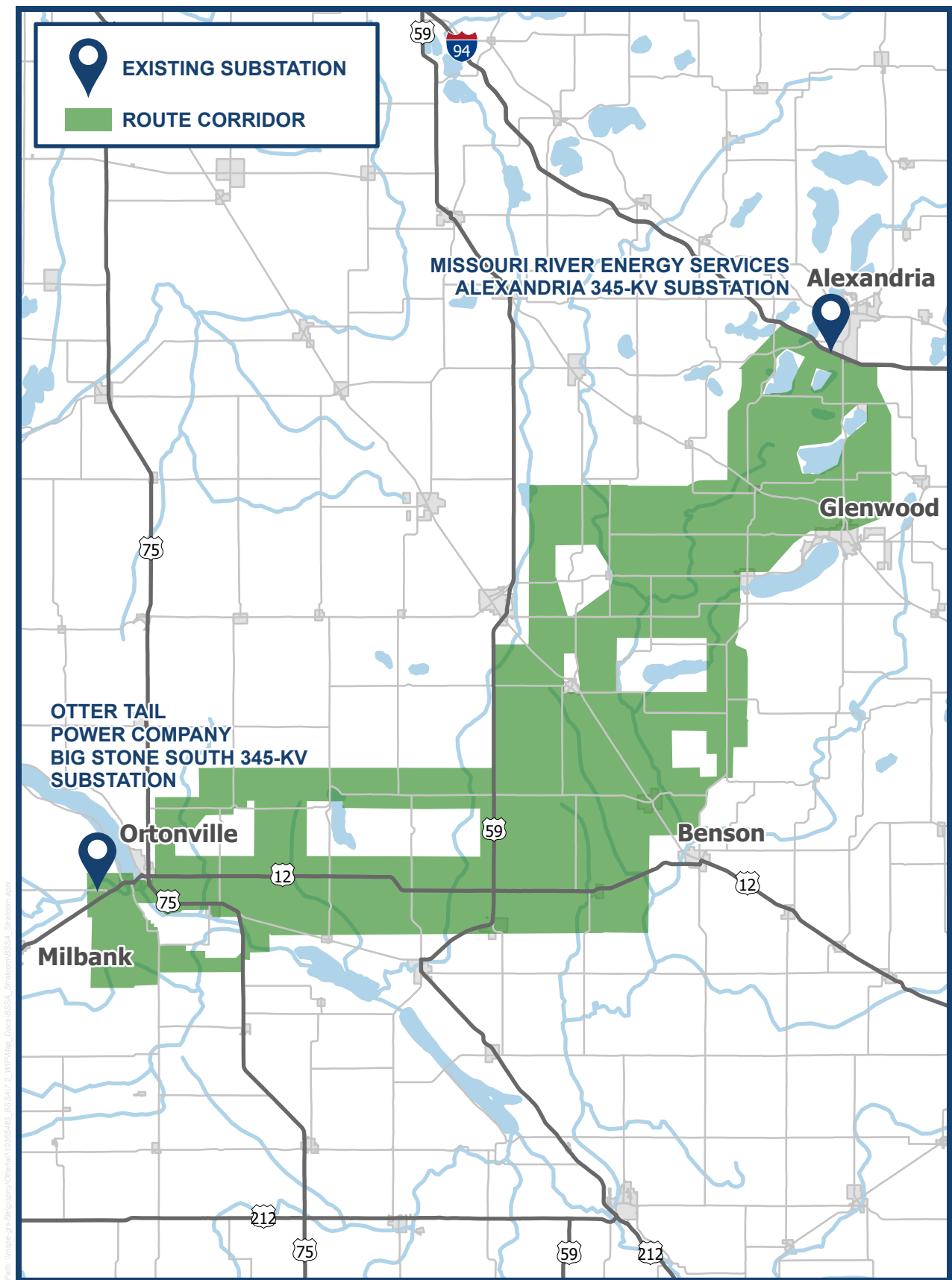
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

From: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
To: [stephan.roos](#)  
Cc: [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Brian Zavesky](#); [Thoma, Mark](#)  
Subject: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP  
Date: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:14:26 AM  
Attachments: [Outlook-01kxzuca.png](#)  
[OTP BSSA Phase4 Mtg Handout DRAFT 20240611.pdf](#)

---

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Dear Stephan,

During our early agency outreach efforts, you should have received correspondence from our project team for the Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Project (Project). The BSSA Project is a 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the existing Big Stone South Substation located west of Big Stone City, South Dakota, east and north to the existing Alexandria Substation near the City of Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project will be jointly owned by Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services. The Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project is needed to provide additional transmission capacity, to mitigate current capacity issues, and to improve electric system reliability throughout the region as more renewable energy resources are added to the electric system in and around the region.

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We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. You will find attached the most recent handout for the project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

**Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** (representing *Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency*) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) will connect Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, to the Alexandria Substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services near Alexandria, Minnesota.

**This project is needed to ensure electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather events, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to low-cost energy in the region.**

## MONOPOLE

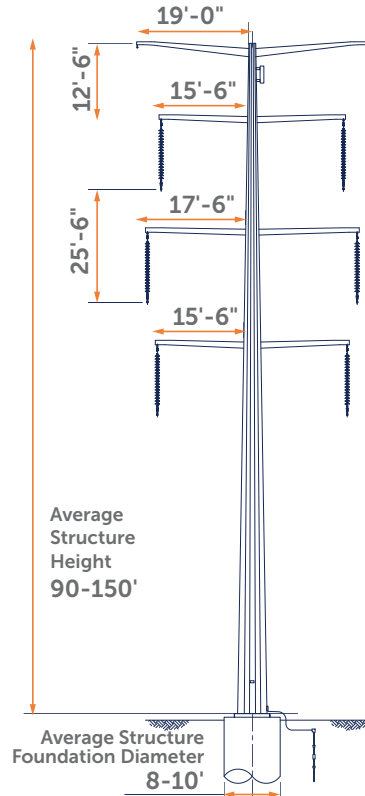
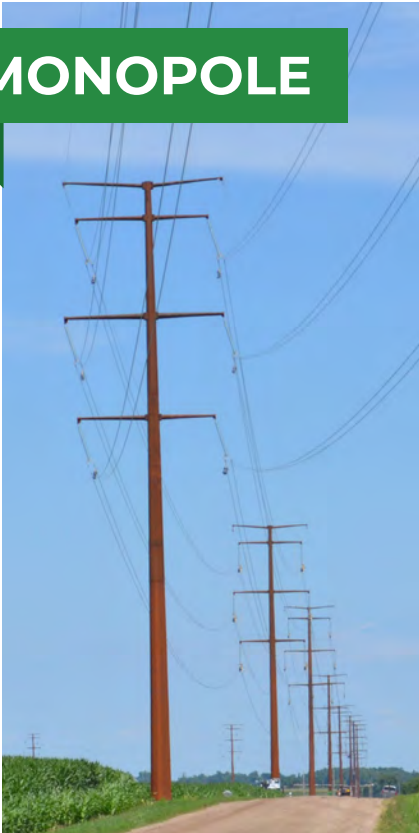


Image shown is an example of a similar double-circuit structure.

## ROUTING PROCESS



**DEFINE STUDY AREA**



**BEGIN AGENCY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**IDENTIFY PROJECT CORRIDORS**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**DEVELOP ROUTE CORRIDORS**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**DEVELOP PROPOSED ROUTE SEGMENTS**



**WE ARE HERE  
HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**FILE PROPOSED ROUTES IN MN**

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Developing and constructing a transmission line is a multi-year effort. We are gathering public feedback on the route corridors to help us develop a proposed route. We'll continue coordinating with landowners, local governments, agencies, and other stakeholders throughout the development process. The new line is tentatively scheduled to be complete in 2030 or 2031.



Engagement Opportunities

### STEP 1

▶ Data Gathering

### STEP 2

▶ Public Engagement  
▶ Routing  
▶ Preliminary Surveys  
▶ Preliminary Right of Way  
▶ Preliminary Engineering  
▶ MN Certificate of Need Filed

### STEP 3

▶ Right of Way  
▶ Surveys  
▶ Filed SD Facility Permit Application  
**WE ARE HERE**  
▶ File MN Route Permit Application  
▶ Environmental Permits

### STEP 4

### STEP 5

▶ Permit Decisions  
▶ Right of Way  
▶ Final Engineering

### STEP 6

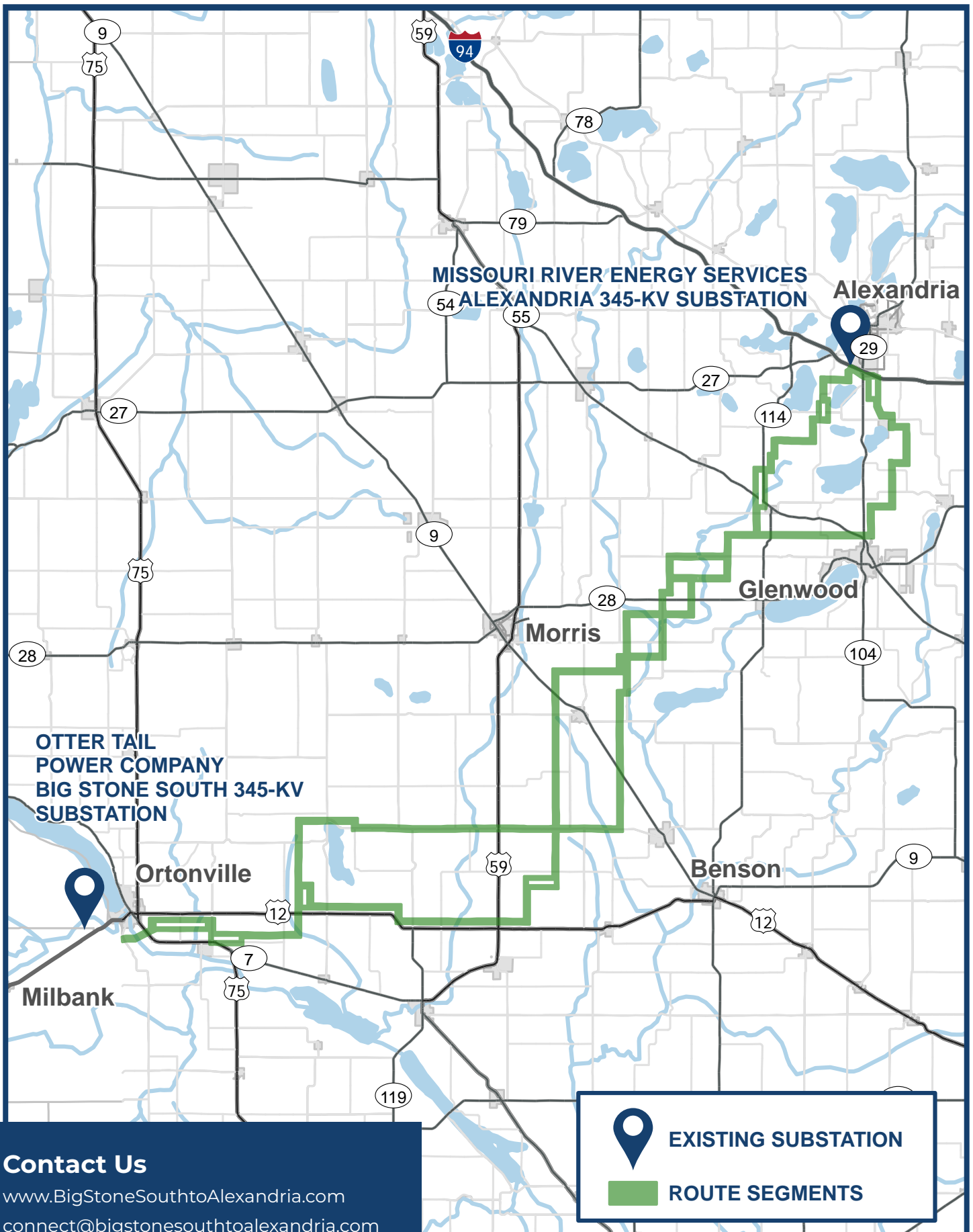
▶ Construction  
▶ In Service in 2030-2031  
▶ Restoration



Communicate Project Updates Throughout Construction


Scan the QR code to visit the project website.





## Contact Us

[www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)  
[connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com](mailto:connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com)  
 (800) 598-5587

 Route segments are marked in green on the map above and are subject to change.

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:59 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

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---

Hi Kevin,  
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Steve

**Steve Roos**

**Environmental Planner**

Energy and Environment Section  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Division  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
Ph: 651-201-6631 office



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**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>; Thoma, Mark <mthoma@otpc.com>  
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We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. You will find attached the most recent handout for the project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



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Environmental Services  
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To: [stephan.roos](#)  
Cc: [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Vinson, George H.](#); [Brian Zavesky](#)  
Subject: Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP  
Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 8:26:24 AM  
Attachments: [image001.png](#)  
[Outlook-4ej0o2ha.png](#)  
[BSSA DRAFT Appendix K Draft Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan.pdf](#)

---

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Dear Stephan,

Attached is the draft of our BSSA Ag Impact Mitigation Plan. I wanted to check with you to see if you have some time next week to review it with us. We can go beyond next week if it works better for you.

Here is my schedule for next week:

Monday-open after 11:00 am

Tuesday-open from 11:00 to 2:00

Wednesday-open 10:00 to 2:00

Thursday-open 9:00 to 1:00

Looking forward to chatting with you.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

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**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:59 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

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Steve

**Steve Roos**

**Environmental Planner**

Energy and Environment Section  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Division  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
Ph: 651-201-6631 office



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---

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**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:12 AM

**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>

**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>; Thoma, Mark <mthoma@otpc.com>

**Subject:** BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

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We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. You will find attached the most recent handout for the project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

## **Appendix K**

### **Draft – Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan**

## Raine, Katie

---

**From:** Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 10:14 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Hi Kevin,  
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I have to admit that this larger project has been a little difficult to track in that there are the east and west components each of which have separate dockets (23-159 & 23-160) but under the same project name and certificate of need docket (22-538). I had received and reviewed an AIMP from Xcel late last year that I originally thought was for the overall project but was apparently for the eastern portion (23-159). I'm pretty sure I've got it straightened out now and will get the AIMP back to you next week with any comments I may have.

Thanks for reaching out to me,  
Steve

**Steve Roos**  
**Environmental Planner**  
Energy and Environment Section  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Division  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
Ph: 651-201-6631 office



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---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 9:12 AM  
**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

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Hi Stephan,

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Thank you.



**Kevin Scheidecker**

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

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**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:59 AM

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**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Brian Zavesky <[brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com](mailto:brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com)>; Thoma, Mark <[mthoma@otpc.com](mailto:mthoma@otpc.com)>  
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**Kevin Scheidecker**

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

## Raine, Katie

---

**From:** Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 12:00 PM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Hi Kevin,  
I just was preparing to send you an email about your draft AIMP when I noticed this message from you. I've finished reviewing it and have no comments or corrections to offer. It actually reads very well, among the best I've reviewed. I've attached a copy with a new name. Once you've submitted it to the PUC let me know and I will submit a comment letter into the docket that acknowledges MDA's review and approval.  
Thanks,  
Steve

**Steve Roos**  
**Environmental Planner**  
**Agricultural Marketing and Development Division**  
625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
O: 651-201-6631  
C: 612-968-7208



---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 9:33 AM  
**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

Steve,

I can understand the difficulty with keeping straight what is going on with this complex project.

We will be submitting a draft of our application and all the appendices (including the AIMP) to EERA today so they can have a few weeks to review it. We will be able to make edits prior to submitting the final version to the PUC at the end of October. We will make edits to the AIMP based on your feedback as well

but I'm wondering if you'd like to have the version we submitted to the EERA? There are some changes to it. I don't want to complicate things for you so we can also take your comments on the document you are reviewing now. Let me know your preference.

Thanks for all your help.



**Kevin Scheidecker**

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>

**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 10:14 AM

**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

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Minnesota Department of Agriculture

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Ph: 651-201-6631 office





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Thank you.



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Agricultural Marketing and Development Division



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We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. You will find attached the most recent handout for the project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



**Kevin Scheidecker**

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

## Raine, Katie

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 2:34 PM  
**To:** stephan.roos  
**Cc:** Weiers, Jason; Hanley, Jennifer; Brusven, Christina; Humburg, Joshua; Brian Zavesky; Duffus, Bridget; Raine, Katie  
**Subject:** Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP  
**Attachments:** Appendix K Draft Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan.pdf

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Steve,

We appreciate your review of the AIMP and your kind words on our initial draft. I've attached the latest version of the AIMP that we will be sending to the EERA today so you have it. Most of our changes were intended to further clarify the roles of the Monitor and Inspector so folks reading the document have a better sense of the duties of each role.

We look forward to working with you as we move into the official PUC process.



**Kevin Scheidecker**  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 12:00 PM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Hi Kevin,

I just was preparing to send you an email about your draft AIMP when I noticed this message from you. I've finished reviewing it and have no comments or corrections to offer. It actually reads very well, among the best I've reviewed. I've attached a copy with a new name. Once you've submitted it to the PUC let me know and I will submit a comment letter into the docket that acknowledges MDA's review and approval.

Thanks,  
Steve

**Steve Roos**  
Environmental Planner  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Division

625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
O: 651-201-6631  
C: 612-968-7208



---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 9:33 AM  
**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

Steve,

I can understand the difficulty with keeping straight what is going on with this complex project.

We will be submitting a draft of our application and all the appendices (including the AIMP) to EERA today so they can have a few weeks to review it. We will be able to make edits prior to submitting the final version to the PUC at the end of October. We will make edits to the AIMP based on your feedback as well but I'm wondering if you'd like to have the version we submitted to the EERA? There are some changes to it. I don't want to complicate things for you so we can also take your comments on the document you are reviewing now. Let me know your preference.

Thanks for all your help.



**Kevin Scheidecker**  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 10:14 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Hi Kevin,

I'm sorry that I didn't let you know that I received your draft AIMP. I did receive it last week and have begun reviewing it but got sidetracked on other PUC related projects.

I have to admit that this larger project has been a little difficult to track in that there are the east and west components each of which have separate dockets (23-159 & 23-160) but under the same project name and certificate of need docket (22-538). I had received and reviewed an AIMP from Xcel late last year that I originally thought was for the overall

project but was apparently for the eastern portion (23-159). I'm pretty sure I've got it straightened out now and will get the AIMP back to you next week with any comments I may have.

Thanks for reaching out to me,  
Steve

**Steve Roos**

**Environmental Planner**

Energy and Environment Section  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Division  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
Ph: 651-201-6631 office



[www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us)

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 9:12 AM  
**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

You don't often get email from [kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Stephan,

Just checking in with you to make sure you received our AIMP for our BSSA Transmission Project. I'd be happy to discuss it with you if you have any comments or questions.

Thank you.



**Kevin Scheidecker**  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:59 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Hi Kevin,  
I'm happy to hear from you. Energy project proposers don't always reach out early in the process but I'm always happy when they do. I'm perfectly willing to offer whatever assistance and feedback I can to make the process easier for you.

Feel free to reach out to me and I'll gladly meet with you and/or HDR staff to go through the draft AIMP they're developing.

Steve

**Steve Roos**

**Environmental Planner**

Energy and Environment Section

Agricultural Marketing and Development Division

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

625 Robert Street North

Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538

Ph: 651-201-6631 office



[www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us)

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:12 AM

**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Brian Zavesky <[brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com](mailto:brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com)>; Thoma, Mark <[mthoma@otpc.com](mailto:mthoma@otpc.com)>

**Subject:** BSSA Transmission Project AIMP

You don't often get email from [kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Stephan,

During our early agency outreach efforts, you should have received correspondence from our project team for the Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Project (Project). The BSSA Project is a 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the existing Big Stone South Substation located west of Big Stone City, South Dakota, east and north to the existing Alexandria Substation near the City of Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project will be jointly owned by Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services. The Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project is needed to provide additional transmission capacity, to mitigate current capacity issues, and to improve electric system reliability throughout the region as more renewable energy resources are added to the electric system in and around the region.

The route permit application along with two route alternatives are currently under development with the intention of submitting the application to the MN PUC sometime in early Q3 of this year. The Project's consultant, HDR, has begun the preparation of an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan (AIMP) per MN Statute 216E.10, Subd. 3(b). We would like to arrange a short meeting with you at some point to discuss the project and associated AIMP to make sure we understand the expectations of the MN Department of Agriculture. I will reach out to you again in the near future to find times that work for you.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. You will find attached the most recent handout for the project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



**Kevin Scheidecker**  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpco.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpco.com)



From: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
To: [stephan.roos](#)  
Cc: [Brusven, Christina](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
Subject: Updated AIMP  
Date: Friday, October 11, 2024 12:09:53 PM  
Attachments: [Outlook-x4dnc3pn.png](#)

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Dear Steve,

The MN Department of Commerce-EERA has completed their initial review of our route permit application for the BSSA Project. We are addressing their comments and are on track to submit the final version of the route permit application to the PUC the week of October 21st. There are a number of references to the AIMP in the application and we would like to be able to state that the MN Department of Ag has reviewed our latest draft of the AIMP. Would you mind just replying that you have received our latest draft and that it meets with your approval understanding that you will review it after we submit it to the PUC and will submit a comment letter into the docket?

Thanks so much for all your assistance.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

From: [stephan.roos](#)  
To: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
Cc: [Brusven, Christina](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Lennon, Megan \(MDA\)](#)  
Subject: RE: Updated AIMP  
Date: Monday, October 14, 2024 4:02:26 PM  
Attachments: [image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)

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Hi Kevin,

I actually had time to finish a comparative review of your latest version of the draft AIMP for the BSSA project with the previous draft you submitted to me. It is well done and fine to submit as a final version. I will submit a comment letter to the docket acknowledging our review and approval of this AIMP.

Thanks,  
Steve

**Steve Roos**  
**Environmental Planner**  
**Agricultural Marketing and Development Division**

625 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538  
O: 651-201-6631  
C: 612-968-7208



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**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 11, 2024 12:10 PM  
**To:** Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Brusven, Christina <[CBrusven@fredlaw.com](mailto:CBrusven@fredlaw.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>  
**Subject:** Updated AIMP

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Dear Steve,

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Kevin Scheidecker  
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Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

## Minnesota Department of Health

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Minnesota Department of Health	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments

November 10, 2023

Kristin Raab, Director  
Minnesota Department of Health  
625 Robert Street N  
St. Paul, MN 55101

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Director Raab,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

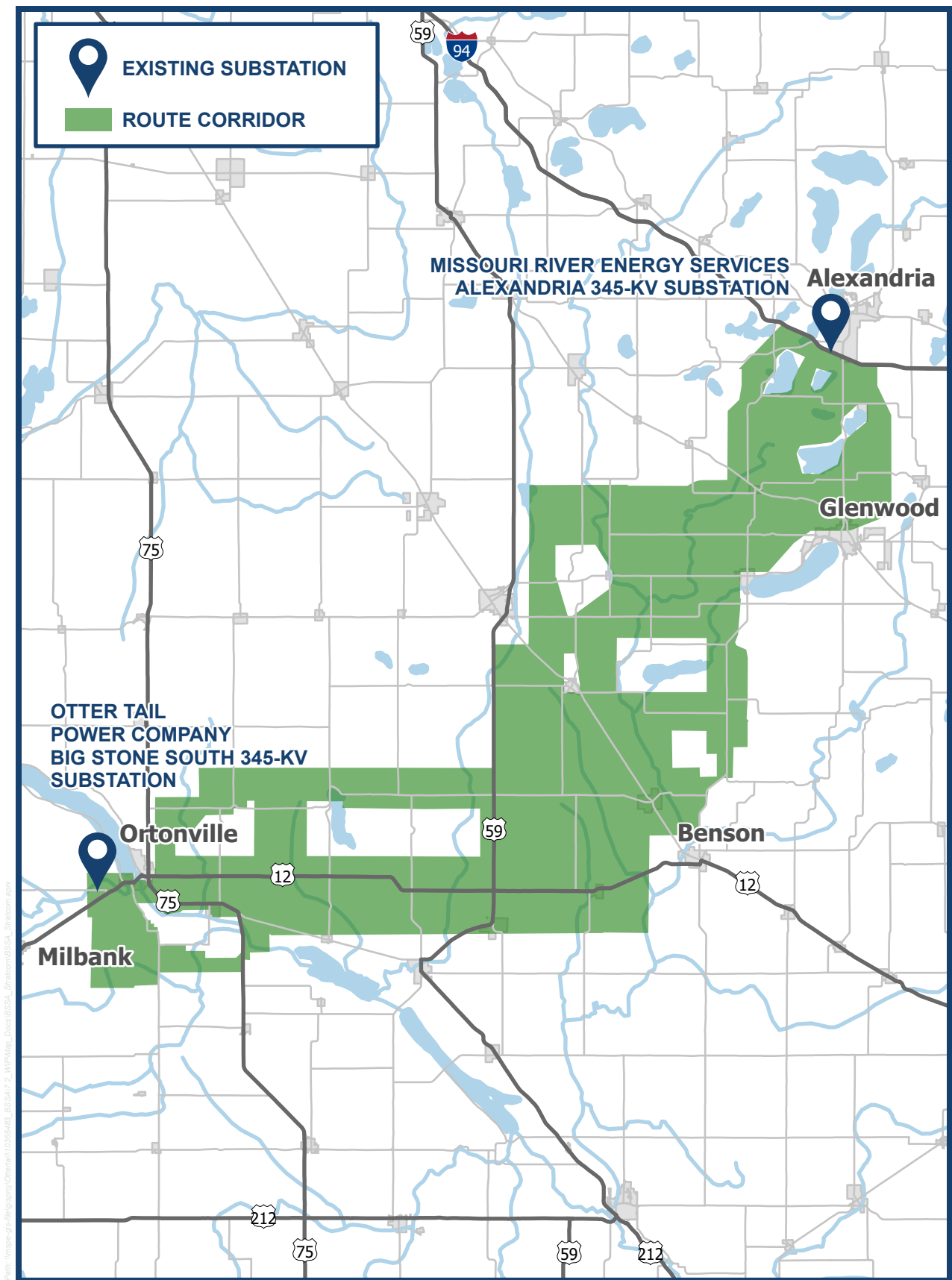
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.



## Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
October 17, 2023	Report	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)	Applicants	Conservation Planning Report: BSSA Project
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	MDNR	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
January 26, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MDNR
March 21, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	BSSA Project early coordination
June 3, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	Natural heritage review of OTP/MRES BSSA
July 12, 2024	Email/Letter	MDNR	Applicants	Early Coordination Comments
July 23, 2024	Email	Applicants	MDNR	BSSA Project early coordination letter consultation
July 23, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	Response to BSSA Project early coordination letter consultation
July 24, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	Response to BSSA Project early coordination letter consultation
July 30, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MDNR
July 31, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	Summary of July 30, 2024 meeting
August 20, 2024	Email	Applicants	MDNR	BSSA transmission project shapefiles
August 22, 2024	Report	MDNR	Applicants	Response to NHIS Request
September 13, 2024	Email	MDNR	Applicants	Comments on updated Application Alignments
September 24, 2024	Email/Attachment	MDNR	Applicants	Natural heritage review of OTP/MRES BSSA Supplemental Area
September 24, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MDNR

# Conservation Planning Report: Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Line Project

**This document is intended for planning purposes only** for the area of interest defined by the user. The report identifies ecologically significant areas documented within the defined area of interest plus any additional search distance indicated below. These ecologically significant areas can be viewed in the Explore Tab of the Minnesota Conservation Explorer. Please visit [MN Geospatial Commons](#) for downloadable GIS data.

**This document does not meet the criteria for a Natural Heritage Review.** If a Natural Heritage Review is needed, please define an Area of Interest in the Explore Tab and click on the Natural Heritage Review option.

**This document does not include known occurrences of state-listed or federally listed species.**

## MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

*Search distance = 330 feet*

Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) Sites of Biodiversity Significance are areas with varying levels of native biodiversity that may contain high quality native plant communities, rare plants, rare animals, and/or animal aggregations. A [Biodiversity Significance Rank](#) is assigned on the basis of the number of rare species, the quality of the native plant communities, size of the site, and context within the landscape. MBS Sites are ranked Outstanding, High, or Moderate. Areas ranked as Below were found to be disturbed and are retained in the layer as negative data. These areas do not meet the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance but may have conservation value at the local level as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or as areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat. The DNR recommends avoidance of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked High or Outstanding.

Wetlands within MBS Sites of Outstanding or High Biodiversity Significance may be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

For more information please visit [MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance](#).

The following MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
AGASSIZ 10	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 11	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 15	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 16	Moderate	final
AGASSIZ 16	Outstanding	final
Akron 3	Moderate	final
AKRON 13	Below	final
Akron 14	Moderate	final
Akron 21	Below	final
AKRON 23 NORTHEAST	Below	final
AKRON 23 NORTHWEST	Below	final
AKRON 23	Moderate	final
Akron 25	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Akron 25	Moderate	final
Akron 26	Moderate	final
AKRON 27	Below	final
AKRON 28	Moderate	final
AKRON 31	High	final
AKRON 32	Moderate	final
AKRON 36	Below	final
AKRON WPA	Below	final
Artichoke 7	Below	final
Artichoke 20	Below	final
Artichoke 29	Moderate	final
ARTICHOKE 31	Moderate	final
ARTICHOKE WPA	Below	final
Avok Slough WPA	Moderate	final
Barsness Woods	Moderate	final
Barsness WPA	Moderate	final
Benson 4	Moderate	final
Benson 7	Below	final
Benson 18	Moderate	final
Benson Lake WPA	Moderate	final
BENSON WMA	Moderate	final
BENTSON LAKE WPA	Below	final
Ben Wade 10	Below	final
Ben Wade 15	High	final
Ben Wade 24	Below	final
Berg WPA	Below	final
Big Stone 22	Moderate	final
BIG STONE 35 NORTH	Below	final
BIG STONE 35	Moderate	final
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 28)	High	final
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 34)	Moderate	final
BIG STONE NWR, AGASSIZ 8	High	final
BIG STONE NWR	High	final
BIG STONE NWR ORTONVILLE 27 OUTCROPS	High	final
Blue Mounds 3	Below	final
Blue Mounds 4 North	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 4	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 9	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 10,11,26	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 10	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 15	High	final
Blue Mounds 16	Moderate	final
BlueMounds 17	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 22	Below	final
BLUE MOUNDS 22	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 26	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 27	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 28	Moderate	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
BUCHOLZ WPA	Moderate	final
BYRE WPA	Below	final
CLONTARF RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
CLONTARF S. RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
COMBINED WITH LQP COUNTY SITE #13	Below	final
CORRELL PRAIRIE, SOUTH AKRON 3,4	Moderate	final
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	Moderate	final
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	Moderate	final
Danvers prairie	Below	final
DANVERS RAILROAD PRAIRIE SW	Below	final
DARNEN 4	Moderate	final
DRY WOOD HILL PRAIRIE	Below	final
EDWARDS WPA	Moderate	final
FAIRFIELD 9	Moderate	final
FAIRFIELD 15	Below	final
FAIRFIELD 22	Moderate	final
Feigum Meadow	Moderate	final
Forada WMA	Below	final
FRAMNAS 1	Below	final
FRAMNAS 2	Moderate	final
Framnass 19	Moderate	final
Glacial Lakes WPA	Moderate	final
Greiner WPA	Moderate	final
HAMANN WPA	High	final
HANSEN ESTATE WPA	Below	final
Haseman	Moderate	final
HEBERT 1	Below	final
HEGBERT 2	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 13	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 19	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 21	Below	final
HELGESON WPA	Moderate	final
HENRY WPA	Below	final
HENRY X WMA	Moderate	final
HILLMAN WPA	High	final
Hoff 8	Below	final
Hoff11	Moderate	final
Hoff 14	Below	final
Hoff 16	Moderate	final
Hoff 34	Below	final
HOLLOWAY RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Below	final
Holmes City 12	Below	final
Holmes City 23	Below	final
Horse Lake WPA	Moderate	final
HORTON 1	Below	final
HORTON 2	Below	final
HORTON 3	Below	final
Hudson 19	Below	final

<b>MBS Site Name</b>	<b>Biodiversity Significance</b>	<b>Status</b>
Hudson 31	Below	final
Hudson WPA	Below	final
HWY 12 PARK PRAIRIE	Below	final
JOHNSON WPA	Below	final
JORGENSEN WPA	Below	final
Jorgenson WPA	Moderate	final
KLAGES WMA	Below	final
Klevenberg WPA	Moderate	final
KROGSRUD WPA	Below	final
KROSCH WPA	Below	final
La Grand 33	Below	final
Lake Mary 15	Below	final
Lake Mary 20	Below	final
Lake Mary 26	Moderate	final
Lake Mary Woods	Moderate	final
Langhei 2	Moderate	final
Langhei 4	Below	final
Langhei 7	High	final
Langhei 13	Below	final
Langhei 20	Below	final
Langhei 30	High	final
Langhei 34	Moderate	final
LARSON SLOUGH WPA	Below	final
Leven 3	Moderate	final
Leven 8	Below	final
Leven 15	Below	final
Leven 18	Below	final
Leven 20/30	Below	final
Leven 27	Moderate	final
Leven 31	Below	final
Little Chippewa River	Moderate	final
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	Moderate	final
Lowry WMA	Below	final
Lynch Lake WPA	Below	final
MAKI WPA	Moderate	final
MARYSLAND 3	Below	final
MARYSLAND 12	Moderate	final
Mclver WPA	Moderate	final
MENZEL WPA	Below	final
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	Moderate	final
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	Moderate	final
Mikkelson Prairie	High	final
Minnewaska 1	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 4	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 7	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 8	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 19 South	Below	final
Minnewaska 19	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
MOYER 4	Moderate	final
MOYER 5	Below	final
MOYER 7	Moderate	final
MOYER 9	Moderate	final
NELSON WPA	Below	final
New Prairie 6	Moderate	final
New Prairie 7	Below	final
New Prairie 10	Moderate	final
New Prairie 20	Moderate	final
New Prairie 27	Below	final
New Prairie 35	Below	final
New Prairie WPA	Moderate	final
Nora 7	Moderate	final
Nora 29	High	final
Nora 31	Below	final
Nora 32	Moderate	final
Nora WMA	Below	final
ODESSA 4	Moderate	final
ODESSA 8 NE	Below	final
ODESSA 8 SE	Below	final
ODESSA 9	Moderate	final
ODESSA 10	Moderate	final
ODESSA 13	Below	final
Odessa 14	Below	final
ODESSA 15 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 16	Moderate	final
ODESSA 21	Moderate	final
ODESSA 22 SE	Below	final
ODESSA 22	High	final
Odessa 23 NW	Moderate	final
ODESSA 25	Below	final
ODESSA 26	Moderate	final
ODESSA 28	Moderate	final
Odessa 29	Moderate	final
ODESSA 33	Moderate	final
ODESSA 35 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 35 NW	Below	final
ODESSA 36 NORTHEAST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 36 SE	Moderate	final
ODESSA 36 SOUTH	Below	final
ODESSA 36 WEST	Moderate	final
OLSON WPA	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 1 WEST	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 11	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 12 SE	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 13	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 14	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Ortonville 21	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 22	High	final
ORTONVILLE 25	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE STONE CO	High	final
OTREY 10	Below	final
OTREY 12	Below	final
OTREY 19	Below	final
OTREY 24	Moderate	final
OTREY 35	Moderate	final
OTREY WMA	Below	final
Ottery 9, 16	Below	final
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	Moderate	final
Pope WPA	Below	final
PRAIRIE WMA	Outstanding	final
PRAIRIE WPA	Outstanding	final
REDHEAD MARSH WPA	Moderate	final
REISDORPH WMA	Below	final
Reno 3	Below	final
Reno 5	Moderate	final
Reno 6	Moderate	final
Reno 18	Below	final
Reno 31	Moderate	final
Reno 36	Moderate	final
ROTHI WPA	Moderate	final
S. Akron 5	Moderate	final
SCHELLBERG PRAIRIE	Outstanding	final
SCHLIEP PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
Schmidgal Prairie	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 9	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 16	Below	final
SHIBLE 18	Moderate	final
SHIBLE LAKE WMA	Below	final
SIX MILE GROVE 21	Below	final
SIX MILE GROVE RAILROAD	Below	final
Snetting WPA	Below	final
SOUTH AKRON 2 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 3	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 6	Moderate	final
SOUTH ODESSA 3	Moderate	final
Stammer WPA	Below	final
Starbuck WPA	Moderate	final
Starbuck WPA	Moderate	final
Stewart WPA	Moderate	final
STONY RUN	Moderate	final
Strandness Prairie	High	final
Swan Lake	Moderate	final
SWAN LAKE 3	Below	final



<b>MBS Site Name</b>	<b>Biodiversity Significance</b>	<b>Status</b>
Swift Co. WPA	Moderate	final
TANGEN WPA	Moderate	final
TARA 1	Below	final
TARA 19	High	final
TARA 31	Moderate	final
THOMPSON WPA	Below	final
TWIN LAKES WPA	Moderate	final
UPPER STONY RUN VALLEY	Moderate	final
Walden 3	Moderate	final
Walden 4	Moderate	final
Walden 11	Below	final
Walden 29	Below	final
Walden WPA	Below	final
WELKER WPA	High	final
WESTHAUSEN WPA	Moderate	final
WEST SOUTH AKRON 10	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 1	Below	final
White Bear Lake 13	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 17	Below	final
White Bear Lake 21	Below	final
White Bear Lake 22	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 23	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 24	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	High	final
White Bear Lake 27	Moderate	final
White bear lake hall	Moderate	final
WILEY WPA	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 5	Below	final
Yellow Bank 9	Moderate	final
YELLOW BANK 10	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 11	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 12	Below	final

## DNR Native Plant Communities

Search distance = 330 feet

A native plant community is a group of native plants that interact with each other and with their environment in ways not greatly altered by modern human activity or by introduced organisms. These groups of native plant species form recognizable units, such as oak savannas, pine forests, or marshes, that tend to repeat over space and time. Native plant communities are classified and described by considering vegetation, hydrology, landforms, soils, and natural disturbance regimes.

DNR Native Plant Community types and subtypes are given a [Conservation Status Rank](#) that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant). Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 are considered rare in the state. The DNR recommends avoidance of rare native plant communities.

Wetland native plant communities with a conservation status rank of S1 through S3 may also be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

DNR Native Plant Communities may be given a Condition Rank that reflects the degree of ecological integrity of a specific occurrence of a native plant community. The Condition Rank is based on species composition, vegetation structure, ecological processes and functions, level of human disturbance, presence of exotic species, and other factors. Condition Ranks range from A-rank (excellent ecological integrity) to D-rank (poor ecological integrity). A Condition Rank of NR means Not Ranked and a Condition Rank of MULTI mean multiple ranks are present because the record is a native plant community complex.

For more information please visit [Minnesota's Native Plant Communities](#).

The following DNR Native Plant Communities are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
AGASSIZ 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 11	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 15	MRp	Marsh System, Prairie Floristic Region	(S1)	1
AGASSIZ 15	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
AGASSIZ 15	ROs12a2	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Sioux Quartzite Subtype</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 15	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
AGASSIZ 15	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
AGASSIZ 15	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	1
AGASSIZ 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 3	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 14	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 14	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 14	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 23	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 25	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 25	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 26	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Akron 26	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Akron 26	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Akron 26	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr, Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Akron 26	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 28	WMp73	<a href="#">Prairie Wet Meadow/Carr</a>	(S3)	3
AKRON 28	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
AKRON 31	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 32	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Artichoke 29	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Artichoke 29	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	1
Artichoke 29	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ARTICHOKE 31	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Avok Slough WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Avok Slough WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Barsness Woods	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Barsness Woods	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	3
Barsness Woods	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Barsness WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Barsness WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Benson 4	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Benson 18	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	1
Benson Lake WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Benson Lake WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BENSON WMA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ben Wade 15	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Berg WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Big Stone 22	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Big Stone 22	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
BIG STONE 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 28)	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 34)	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR, AGASSIZ 8	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR ORTONVILLE 27 OUTCROPS	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
Blue Mounds 4 North	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Blue Mounds 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Blue Mounds 9	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Blue Mounds 10,11,26	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 10	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 15	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Blue Mounds 15	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 15	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Blue Mounds 16	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Blue Mounds 16	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	7
BlueMounds 17	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
BLUE MOUNDS 22	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BLUE MOUNDS 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 26	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Blue Mounds 27	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Blue Mounds 28	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
BUCHOLZ WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
BUCHOLZ WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BYRE WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CLONTARF RAILROAD PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CLONTARF S. RAILROAD PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE, SOUTH AKRON 3,4	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	2
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Danvers prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
DARNEN 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
EDWARDS WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
EDWARDS WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
FAIRFIELD 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
FAIRFIELD 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	7
Feigum Meadow	WMn82b	<a href="#">Sedge Meadow</a>	S4 or S5	1
Forada WMA	FDs36	<a href="#">Southern Dry-Mesic Oak-Aspen Forest</a>	(S3S4)	2
Forada WMA	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	2
FRAMNAS 2	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Framnass 19	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Glacial Lakes WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	7
Greiner WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Greiner WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HAMANN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HEGBERT 2	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HEGBERT 13	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HEGBERT 19	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HELGESON WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HELGESON WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
HENRY X WMA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
HILLMAN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Hoff11	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr, Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Hoff11	WPn53c	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Northern)</a>	S3	1
Horse Lake WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HWY 12 PARK PRAIRIE	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Jorgenson WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Klevenberg WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Lake Mary 26	MHc36b	<a href="#">Red Oak - Basswood Forest (Calcareous Till)</a>	S4	1
Lake Mary Woods	MHc36b	<a href="#">Red Oak - Basswood Forest (Calcareous Till)</a>	S4	2
Lake Mary Woods	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	3
Langhei 2	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Langhei 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Langhei 34	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Leven 3	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Leven 3	WMn82b	<a href="#">Sedge Meadow</a>	S4 or S5	2
Leven 18	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Leven 20/30	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Leven 27	MRp93a	<a href="#">Bulrush Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Leven 27	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Leven 27	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Little Chippewa River	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	6
Little Chippewa River	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	4
Little Chippewa River	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Little Chippewa River	WPs	Wetland Prairie System, Southern Floristic Region	Not available at this level	2
Little Chippewa River	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Lynch Lake WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MAKI WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
MARYSLAND 12	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Mclver WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Mclver WPA	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Mclver WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Mikkelson Prairie	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Minnewaska 1	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Minnewaska 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Minnewaska 7	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Minnewaska 8	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
MOYER 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
MOYER 4	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MOYER 5	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MOYER 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
MOYER 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
New Prairie 6	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
New Prairie 10	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
New Prairie 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
New Prairie 20	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
New Prairie WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Nora 7	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Nora 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Nora 7	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Nora 29	OPp91c	<a href="#">Rich Fen (Prairie Seepage)</a>	S3	3
Nora 29	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	2
Nora 32	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
ODESSA 4	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 9	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
ODESSA 15 NORTHWEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 21	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 22	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 23 NW	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 26	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 28	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 29	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Odessa 29	UPs23	<a href="#">Southern Mesic Prairie</a>	(S2)	1
Odessa 29	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	2
Odessa 29	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Odessa 29	WMs92a	<a href="#">Basin Meadow/Carr</a>	S2	1
Odessa 29	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Odessa 29	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	2
ODESSA 35 NORTHWEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 NORTHEAST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 SE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 1 WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 11	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	OPp93b	<a href="#">Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Ortonville 21	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Ortonville 21	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	12
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a2	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Sioux Quartzite Subtype</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 25	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 25	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE STONE CO	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	6
OTREY 24	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
OTREY 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
PRAIRIE WMA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
REDHEAD MARSH WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Reno 5	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Reno 6	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	4
Reno 31	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Reno 36	MRp93c	<a href="#">Arrowhead Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Reno 36	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Reno 36	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ROTHI WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
S. Akron 5	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
S. Akron 5	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	1
SCHELLBERG PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SCHLIEP PRAIRIE	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Schmidgal Prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE 18	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE LAKE WMA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 2 NORTHWEST	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 3	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SOUTH AKRON 6	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH ODESSA 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Starbuck WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	5
Starbuck WPA	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	4
Starbuck WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Starbuck WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Starbuck WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
Starbuck WPA	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Starbuck WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Stewart WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
STONY RUN	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Strandness Prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Swan Lake	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Swan Lake	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Swan Lake	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Swift Co. WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Swift Co. WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Swift Co. WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
TANGEN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
TARA 19	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
TARA 31	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
TWIN LAKES WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
UPPER STONY RUN VALLEY	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Walden 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Walden 4	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
WELKER WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
WESTHAUSEN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
WESTHAUSEN WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
WEST SOUTH AKRON 10	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 13	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	3
White Bear Lake 22	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
White Bear Lake 23	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 24	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
White Bear Lake 27	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
White bear lake hall	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White bear lake hall	WPs54	<a href="#">Southern Wet Prairie</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Yellow Bank 9	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Yellow Bank 9	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
YELLOW BANK 12	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Not Within MBS Site	FDs36	<a href="#">Southern Dry-Mesic Oak-Aspen Forest</a>	(S3S4)	2
Not Within MBS Site	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	3
Not Within MBS Site	OPp93b	<a href="#">Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)</a>	S2	2
Not Within MBS Site	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
Not Within MBS Site	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Not Within MBS Site	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Not Within MBS Site	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
Not Within MBS Site	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	4

## Calcareous Fens

Search distance = 5 miles

A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota under the Wetland Conservation Act. Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. For more information regarding calcareous fens, please see the [Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet](#) or review the [List of Known Calcareous Fens](#).

The following Calcareous Fens are within the search area:

Fen Site Name	Fen ID	TRS
Big Stone Lake State Park Fen	87849	122N047W - 13
Blue Mounds 15 - a	13755	124N039W - 15; 124N039W - 22
Blue Mounds 15 - b	28918	124N039W - 15; 124N039W - 14
Nora 29	30132	126N040W - 29
Stony Run	19784	121N045W - 19; 121N045W - 20

## DNR Old Growth Stands

Search distance = 330 feet

[Old-growth forests](#) are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time, generally at least 120 years, without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbances such as fires, windstorms, or logging. Old-growth forests are a unique, nearly vanished piece of Minnesota's history and ecology; less than 4% of Minnesota's old-growth forests remain. The DNR recommends avoidance of all DNR Old Growth Stands. The following DNR Old Growth Stands have been documented within the search area.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.



## MN Prairie Conservation Plan

Search distance = 330 feet

The [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#), a twenty-five year strategy for accelerating prairie conservation in the state, identifies Core Areas, Corridors, and Corridor Complexes as areas to focus conservation efforts. The Plan's strategies include protection, enhancement, and restoration of grassland and wetland habitat. To meet the Plan's goals, approaches within Core Areas will need to include restoration and approaches within Corridors will need to include conservation of grassland habitat which can provide stepping stones between larger Core Areas.

The following MN Prairie Conservation Plan Designations are within the search area:

- Core Area: Big Stone Moraine
- Core Area: Glacial Lakes
- Core Area: Lac Qui Parle Prairie
- Core Area: Reisdorah Prairie
- Corridor: Agassiz Beach Ridges
- Corridor: Alexandria Moraine
- Corridor: Altamont Moraine
- Corridor: Minnesota River Valley
- Corridor Complex: Jorgenson WPA
- Corridor Complex: McIver WPA

## Important Bird Areas

Search distance = 1 mile

[Important Bird Areas](#), identified by Audubon Minnesota in partnership with the DNR, are part of an international conservation effort aimed at conserving globally important bird habitats. They are voluntary and non-regulatory, but the designation demonstrates the significant ecological value of the area.

The following Important Birds Areas are within the search area:

- [Lac Qui Parle - Big Stone IBA](#)

## Lakes of Biological Significance

Search distance = 330 feet

[Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes as determined by the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. To be included in this layer, a lake only needs to meet the criteria for one of these four community types. The lake is assigned a biological significance of Outstanding, High, or Moderate based on the community with the highest quality.

The following Lakes of Biological Significance are within the search area:

Public Water Basin Name	Biological Significance	Plant Rank	Fish Rank	Amphibian Rank	Bird Rank
Artichoke	Moderate	3			
Bentsen	High				2
Big Stone	Outstanding		1		
Grill	Moderate		3		
Horse	High				2
Latoka	Outstanding		1	2	
Maple	Moderate		3		
Mary	Outstanding		1		
Otre	Moderate				3
Pelican	Moderate				3

Public Water Basin Name	Biological Significance	Plant Rank	Fish Rank	Amphibian Rank	Bird Rank
Rachel	Outstanding		1		
Reno	Outstanding		1		2
Shible	High	2			2
Thielke	High				2
Union	High		2		
Unnamed	Moderate				3

## USFWS Habitat Conservation Plans

A [Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#) is a mechanism for compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act for a given set of activities and protected species. An HCP is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of an application for an [incidental take permit \(ITP\)](#). The ITP allows the permit holder to proceed with activities covered in the HCP that could result in the unintentional take of federally listed species.

[Lakes States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan \(Bat HCP\)](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) This HCP was created to provide flexibility to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage forests while addressing federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations related to federally threatened and endangered bat species. The Bat HCP covers three bat species within Minnesota: northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and tricolored bat. This report is intended to help non-federal, non-DNR landowners evaluate their potential eligibility for the Landowner Enrollment Program of the Bat HCP (For DNR-administered land, DNR staff should refer to the Bat HCP Implementation Policy).

[Landowner Enrollment Program](#) – DNR's incidental take permit may be extended through the Landowner Enrollment Program (LEP) to eligible non-federal landowners who conduct forest management activities. Landowners may be eligible to enroll in the LEP if they are a county land administrator, own more than 10,000 acres, or own land that overlaps a Bat HCP feature. The results below indicate if the defined area of interest overlaps a Bat HCP feature. For more information on how to enroll in the LEP, please visit the [Landowner Enrollment Program \(LEP\)](#).

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No Bat HCP features were found within the area of interest. Landowners are only eligible to apply for the Landowner Enrollment Program if they are a county land administrator or they own more than 10,000 acres.

## USFWS Regulatory Layers

To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#). This report is not a substitution for a Section 7 review.

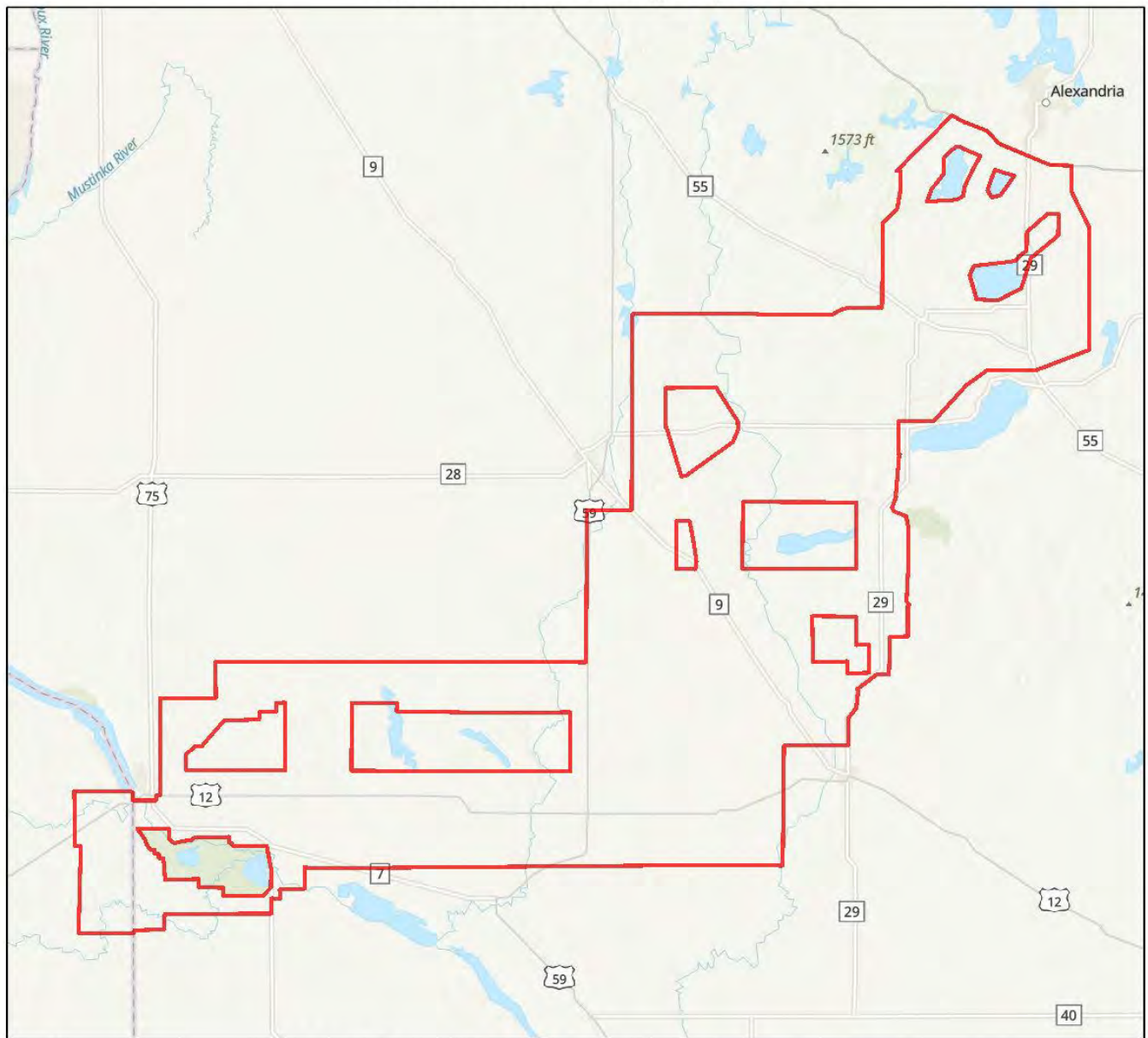
For informational purposes only, this tool currently checks the following USFWS Regulatory Layers:

[Rusty Patched Bumblebee High Potential Zones](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), federally listed as endangered, is likely to be present in suitable habitat within the high potential zones. From April through October this species uses underground nests in upland grasslands, shrublands, and forest edges, and forages where nectar and pollen are available. From October through April the species overwinters under tree litter in upland forests and woodlands. The rusty patched bumble bee may be impacted by a variety of land management activities including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, tree-removal, haying, grazing, herbicide use, pesticide use, land-clearing, soil disturbance or compaction, or use of non-native bees. The [USFWS RPBB guidance](#) provides guidance on avoiding impacts to rusty patched bumble bee and a key for determining if actions are likely to affect the species; the determination key can be found in the appendix. Please visit the [USFWS Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Map](#) for the most current locations of High Potential Zones.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

# Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Line Project

## Conservation Planning Map



0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Miles

Area of Interest

Size (acres): 552,107.78

County(s): Big Stone, Douglas, Lac qui Parle, Pope +

Esri, CGIAR, USGS  
Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA  
Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS



November 10, 2023

Cynthia Warzecha  
Energy Projects Reviewer  
Minnesota DNR  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Cheryl Kelley-Dobie  
Region 1 Supervisor  
Minnesota DNR  
2115 Birchmont Beach Rd NE  
Bemidji, MN 56601

Benjamin Schaefer  
Region 4 Supervisor  
Minnesota DNR  
21371 State Hwy 15  
New Ulm, MN 56073

Karla Ihns  
Realty Specialist  
Minnesota DNR  
21371 State Hwy 15  
New Ulm, MN 56073

Pam Arndt  
Senior Realty Specialist  
Minnesota DNR  
2115 Birchmont Beach Rd. NE  
Bemidji, MN 56601

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Ms. Warzecha and Ms. Fairman:

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

Otter Tail Power Company has incorporated several Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) mapping layers in our project development map, including, but not limited to: NHIS data, MBS sites, native plant communities, state parks and other state lands, and calcareous fens. The corridor was uploaded into the MnDNR Minnesota Conservation Explorer on October 16, 2023, to identify ecologically

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

significant areas within the corridor. A copy of the Conservation Planning Report associated with the corridor is enclosed and is summarized below:

- MBS Sites within the corridor are designated with Biodiversity Significance Ratings ranging from “Below” to “Outstanding”.
- MnDNR Native Plant Community Classification types with mapped communities were identified within the corridors.
- Five Calcareous Fens were identified within the corridor.
- No MnDNR Old Growth Stands were identified within the corridor.
- Ten MN Prairie Conservation Plan areas were identified within the corridor.
- One Important Bird Area (IBA), Lac qui Parle Big Stone IBA, identified by Audubon Minnesota in partnership with the MnDNR, is mapped within the corridor. These areas are non-regulatory, but the designation of these sites demonstrates the significant ecological value of the area.
- Sixteen Lakes of Biological Significance are mapped within the corridor, with their biological significance ranking from “Moderate” to “Outstanding”.

As we continue to develop the Project, this information will be used to help refine route alternatives. A formal Natural Heritage Review Request for formal NHIS consultation and additional coordination with MnDNR staff will be completed as soon as routes become more defined.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com).

In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com). We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

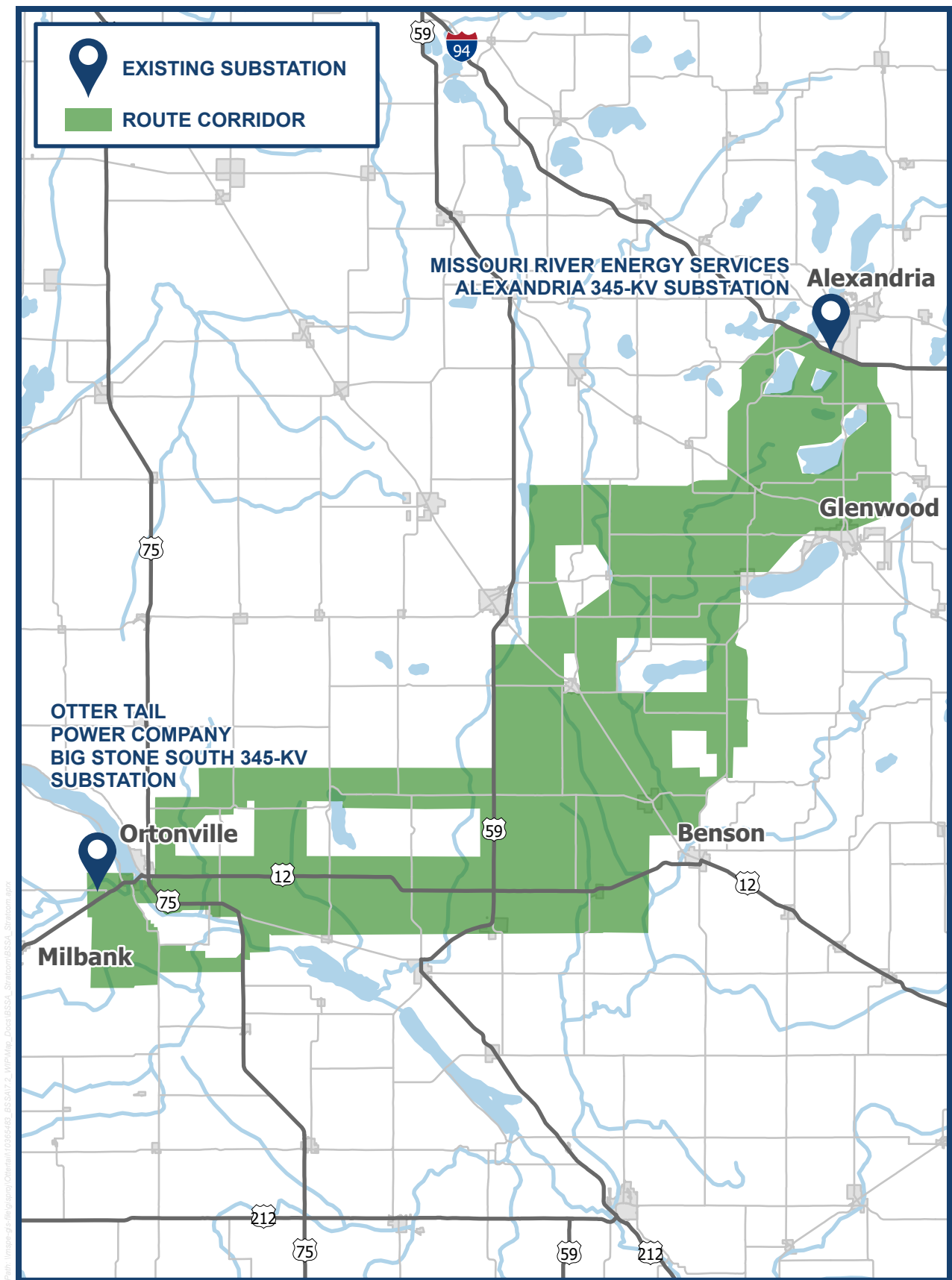
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason J. Weiers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above it.

Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map





▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

# Conservation Planning Report: Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Line Project

**This document is intended for planning purposes only** for the area of interest defined by the user. The report identifies ecologically significant areas documented within the defined area of interest plus any additional search distance indicated below. These ecologically significant areas can be viewed in the Explore Tab of the Minnesota Conservation Explorer. Please visit [MN Geospatial Commons](#) for downloadable GIS data.

**This document does not meet the criteria for a Natural Heritage Review.** If a Natural Heritage Review is needed, please define an Area of Interest in the Explore Tab and click on the Natural Heritage Review option.

**This document does not include known occurrences of state-listed or federally listed species.**

## MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

*Search distance = 330 feet*

Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) Sites of Biodiversity Significance are areas with varying levels of native biodiversity that may contain high quality native plant communities, rare plants, rare animals, and/or animal aggregations. A [Biodiversity Significance Rank](#) is assigned on the basis of the number of rare species, the quality of the native plant communities, size of the site, and context within the landscape. MBS Sites are ranked Outstanding, High, or Moderate. Areas ranked as Below were found to be disturbed and are retained in the layer as negative data. These areas do not meet the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance but may have conservation value at the local level as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or as areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat. The DNR recommends avoidance of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked High or Outstanding.

Wetlands within MBS Sites of Outstanding or High Biodiversity Significance may be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

For more information please visit [MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance](#).

The following MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
AGASSIZ 10	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 11	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 15	Outstanding	final
AGASSIZ 16	Moderate	final
AGASSIZ 16	Outstanding	final
Akron 3	Moderate	final
AKRON 13	Below	final
Akron 14	Moderate	final
Akron 21	Below	final
AKRON 23 NORTHEAST	Below	final
AKRON 23 NORTHWEST	Below	final
AKRON 23	Moderate	final
Akron 25	Below	final



<b>MBS Site Name</b>	<b>Biodiversity Significance</b>	<b>Status</b>
Akron 25	Moderate	final
Akron 26	Moderate	final
AKRON 27	Below	final
AKRON 28	Moderate	final
AKRON 31	High	final
AKRON 32	Moderate	final
AKRON 36	Below	final
AKRON WPA	Below	final
Artichoke 7	Below	final
Artichoke 20	Below	final
Artichoke 29	Moderate	final
ARTICHOKE 31	Moderate	final
ARTICHOKE WPA	Below	final
Avok Slough WPA	Moderate	final
Barsness Woods	Moderate	final
Barsness WPA	Moderate	final
Benson 4	Moderate	final
Benson 7	Below	final
Benson 18	Moderate	final
Benson Lake WPA	Moderate	final
BENSON WMA	Moderate	final
BENTSON LAKE WPA	Below	final
Ben Wade 10	Below	final
Ben Wade 15	High	final
Ben Wade 24	Below	final
Berg WPA	Below	final
Big Stone 22	Moderate	final
BIG STONE 35 NORTH	Below	final
BIG STONE 35	Moderate	final
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 28)	High	final
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 34)	Moderate	final
BIG STONE NWR, AGASSIZ 8	High	final
BIG STONE NWR	High	final
BIG STONE NWR ORTONVILLE 27 OUTCROPS	High	final
Blue Mounds 3	Below	final
Blue Mounds 4 North	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 4	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 9	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 10,11,26	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 10	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 15	High	final
Blue Mounds 16	Moderate	final
BlueMounds 17	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 22	Below	final
BLUE MOUNDS 22	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 26	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 27	Moderate	final
Blue Mounds 28	Moderate	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
BUCHOLZ WPA	Moderate	final
BYRE WPA	Below	final
CLONTARF RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
CLONTARF S. RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
COMBINED WITH LQP COUNTY SITE #13	Below	final
CORRELL PRAIRIE, SOUTH AKRON 3,4	Moderate	final
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	Moderate	final
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	Moderate	final
Danvers prairie	Below	final
DANVERS RAILROAD PRAIRIE SW	Below	final
DARNEN 4	Moderate	final
DRY WOOD HILL PRAIRIE	Below	final
EDWARDS WPA	Moderate	final
FAIRFIELD 9	Moderate	final
FAIRFIELD 15	Below	final
FAIRFIELD 22	Moderate	final
Feigum Meadow	Moderate	final
Forada WMA	Below	final
FRAMNAS 1	Below	final
FRAMNAS 2	Moderate	final
Framnass 19	Moderate	final
Glacial Lakes WPA	Moderate	final
Greiner WPA	Moderate	final
HAMANN WPA	High	final
HANSEN ESTATE WPA	Below	final
Haseman	Moderate	final
HEBERT 1	Below	final
HEGBERT 2	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 13	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 19	Moderate	final
HEGBERT 21	Below	final
HELGESON WPA	Moderate	final
HENRY WPA	Below	final
HENRY X WMA	Moderate	final
HILLMAN WPA	High	final
Hoff 8	Below	final
Hoff11	Moderate	final
Hoff 14	Below	final
Hoff 16	Moderate	final
Hoff 34	Below	final
HOLLOWAY RAILROAD PRAIRIE	Below	final
Holmes City 12	Below	final
Holmes City 23	Below	final
Horse Lake WPA	Moderate	final
HORTON 1	Below	final
HORTON 2	Below	final
HORTON 3	Below	final
Hudson 19	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Hudson 31	Below	final
Hudson WPA	Below	final
HWY 12 PARK PRAIRIE	Below	final
JOHNSON WPA	Below	final
JORGENSEN WPA	Below	final
Jorgenson WPA	Moderate	final
KLAGES WMA	Below	final
Klevenberg WPA	Moderate	final
KROGSRUD WPA	Below	final
KROSCH WPA	Below	final
La Grand 33	Below	final
Lake Mary 15	Below	final
Lake Mary 20	Below	final
Lake Mary 26	Moderate	final
Lake Mary Woods	Moderate	final
Langhei 2	Moderate	final
Langhei 4	Below	final
Langhei 7	High	final
Langhei 13	Below	final
Langhei 20	Below	final
Langhei 30	High	final
Langhei 34	Moderate	final
LARSON SLOUGH WPA	Below	final
Leven 3	Moderate	final
Leven 8	Below	final
Leven 15	Below	final
Leven 18	Below	final
Leven 20/30	Below	final
Leven 27	Moderate	final
Leven 31	Below	final
Little Chippewa River	Moderate	final
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	Moderate	final
Lowry WMA	Below	final
Lynch Lake WPA	Below	final
MAKI WPA	Moderate	final
MARYSLAND 3	Below	final
MARYSLAND 12	Moderate	final
Mclver WPA	Moderate	final
MENZEL WPA	Below	final
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	Moderate	final
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	Moderate	final
Mikkelson Prairie	High	final
Minnewaska 1	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 4	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 7	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 8	Moderate	final
Minnewaska 19 South	Below	final
Minnewaska 19	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
MOYER 4	Moderate	final
MOYER 5	Below	final
MOYER 7	Moderate	final
MOYER 9	Moderate	final
NELSON WPA	Below	final
New Prairie 6	Moderate	final
New Prairie 7	Below	final
New Prairie 10	Moderate	final
New Prairie 20	Moderate	final
New Prairie 27	Below	final
New Prairie 35	Below	final
New Prairie WPA	Moderate	final
Nora 7	Moderate	final
Nora 29	High	final
Nora 31	Below	final
Nora 32	Moderate	final
Nora WMA	Below	final
ODESSA 4	Moderate	final
ODESSA 8 NE	Below	final
ODESSA 8 SE	Below	final
ODESSA 9	Moderate	final
ODESSA 10	Moderate	final
ODESSA 13	Below	final
Odessa 14	Below	final
ODESSA 15 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 16	Moderate	final
ODESSA 21	Moderate	final
ODESSA 22 SE	Below	final
ODESSA 22	High	final
Odessa 23 NW	Moderate	final
ODESSA 25	Below	final
ODESSA 26	Moderate	final
ODESSA 28	Moderate	final
Odessa 29	Moderate	final
ODESSA 33	Moderate	final
ODESSA 35 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 35 NW	Below	final
ODESSA 36 NORTHEAST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 36 SE	Moderate	final
ODESSA 36 SOUTH	Below	final
ODESSA 36 WEST	Moderate	final
OLSON WPA	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 1 WEST	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 11	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 12 SE	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 13	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 14	Below	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Ortonville 21	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 22	High	final
ORTONVILLE 25	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE STONE CO	High	final
OTREY 10	Below	final
OTREY 12	Below	final
OTREY 19	Below	final
OTREY 24	Moderate	final
OTREY 35	Moderate	final
OTREY WMA	Below	final
Ottery 9, 16	Below	final
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	Moderate	final
Pope WPA	Below	final
PRAIRIE WMA	Outstanding	final
PRAIRIE WPA	Outstanding	final
REDHEAD MARSH WPA	Moderate	final
REISDORPH WMA	Below	final
Reno 3	Below	final
Reno 5	Moderate	final
Reno 6	Moderate	final
Reno 18	Below	final
Reno 31	Moderate	final
Reno 36	Moderate	final
ROTHI WPA	Moderate	final
S. Akron 5	Moderate	final
SHELLBERG PRAIRIE	Outstanding	final
SCHLIEP PRAIRIE	Moderate	final
Schmidgal Prairie	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 9	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 16	Below	final
SHIBLE 18	Moderate	final
SHIBLE LAKE WMA	Below	final
SIX MILE GROVE 21	Below	final
SIX MILE GROVE RAILROAD	Below	final
Snetting WPA	Below	final
SOUTH AKRON 2 NORTHWEST	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 3	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	Moderate	final
SOUTH AKRON 6	Moderate	final
SOUTH ODESSA 3	Moderate	final
Stammer WPA	Below	final
Starbuck WPA	Moderate	final
Starbuck WPA	Moderate	final
Stewart WPA	Moderate	final
STONY RUN	Moderate	final
Strandness Prairie	High	final
Swan Lake	Moderate	final
SWAN LAKE 3	Below	final

<b>MBS Site Name</b>	<b>Biodiversity Significance</b>	<b>Status</b>
Swift Co. WPA	Moderate	final
TANGEN WPA	Moderate	final
TARA 1	Below	final
TARA 19	High	final
TARA 31	Moderate	final
THOMPSON WPA	Below	final
TWIN LAKES WPA	Moderate	final
UPPER STONY RUN VALLEY	Moderate	final
Walden 3	Moderate	final
Walden 4	Moderate	final
Walden 11	Below	final
Walden 29	Below	final
Walden WPA	Below	final
WELKER WPA	High	final
WESTHAUSEN WPA	Moderate	final
WEST SOUTH AKRON 10	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 1	Below	final
White Bear Lake 13	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 17	Below	final
White Bear Lake 21	Below	final
White Bear Lake 22	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 23	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 24	Moderate	final
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	High	final
White Bear Lake 27	Moderate	final
White bear lake hall	Moderate	final
WILEY WPA	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 5	Below	final
Yellow Bank 9	Moderate	final
YELLOW BANK 10	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 11	Below	final
YELLOW BANK 12	Below	final

# DNR Native Plant Communities

Search distance = 330 feet

A native plant community is a group of native plants that interact with each other and with their environment in ways not greatly altered by modern human activity or by introduced organisms. These groups of native plant species form recognizable units, such as oak savannas, pine forests, or marshes, that tend to repeat over space and time. Native plant communities are classified and described by considering vegetation, hydrology, landforms, soils, and natural disturbance regimes.

DNR Native Plant Community types and subtypes are given a [Conservation Status Rank](#) that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant). Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 are considered rare in the state. The DNR recommends avoidance of rare native plant communities.

Wetland native plant communities with a conservation status rank of S1 through S3 may also be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

DNR Native Plant Communities may be given a Condition Rank that reflects the degree of ecological integrity of a specific occurrence of a native plant community. The Condition Rank is based on species composition, vegetation structure, ecological processes and functions, level of human disturbance, presence of exotic species, and other factors. Condition Ranks range from A-rank (excellent ecological integrity) to D-rank (poor ecological integrity). A Condition Rank of NR means Not Ranked and a Condition Rank of MULTI mean multiple ranks are present because the record is a native plant community complex.

For more information please visit [Minnesota's Native Plant Communities](#).

The following DNR Native Plant Communities are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
AGASSIZ 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 11	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 15	MRp	Marsh System, Prairie Floristic Region	(S1)	1
AGASSIZ 15	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
AGASSIZ 15	ROs12a2	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Sioux Quartzite Subtype</a>	S2	1
AGASSIZ 15	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
AGASSIZ 15	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
AGASSIZ 15	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	1
AGASSIZ 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 3	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 14	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 14	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Akron 14	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 23	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 25	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 25	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Akron 26	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Akron 26	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Akron 26	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Akron 26	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr, Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Akron 26	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 28	WMp73	<a href="#">Prairie Wet Meadow/Carr</a>	(S3)	3
AKRON 28	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
AKRON 31	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
AKRON 32	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Artichoke 29	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Artichoke 29	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	1
Artichoke 29	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ARTICHOKE 31	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Avok Slough WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Avok Slough WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Barsness Woods	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Barsness Woods	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	3
Barsness Woods	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Barsness WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Barsness WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Benson 4	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Benson 18	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	1
Benson Lake WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Benson Lake WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BENSON WMA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ben Wade 15	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Berg WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Big Stone 22	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Big Stone 22	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
BIG STONE 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 28)	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR (NORTH YELLOW BANK 34)	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR, AGASSIZ 8	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BIG STONE NWR ORTONVILLE 27 OUTCROPS	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
Blue Mounds 4 North	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Blue Mounds 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Blue Mounds 9	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Blue Mounds 10,11,26	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 10	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 15	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Blue Mounds 15	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 15	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Blue Mounds 16	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Blue Mounds 16	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	7
BlueMounds 17	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
BLUE MOUNDS 22	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BLUE MOUNDS 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Blue Mounds 26	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Blue Mounds 27	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1



MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Blue Mounds 28	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
BUCHOLZ WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
BUCHOLZ WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
BYRE WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CLONTARF RAILROAD PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CLONTARF S. RAILROAD PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE, SOUTH AKRON 3,4	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
CORRELL PRAIRIE WEST	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	2
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Crow River 24/BLUE MOUNDS 28	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Danvers prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
DARNEN 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
EDWARDS WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
EDWARDS WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
FAIRFIELD 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
FAIRFIELD 22	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	7
Feigum Meadow	WMn82b	<a href="#">Sedge Meadow</a>	S4 or S5	1
Forada WMA	FDs36	<a href="#">Southern Dry-Mesic Oak-Aspen Forest</a>	(S3S4)	2
Forada WMA	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	2
FRAMNAS 2	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Framnass 19	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Glacial Lakes WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	7
Greiner WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Greiner WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HAMANN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HEGBERT 2	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HEGBERT 13	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HEGBERT 19	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HELGESON WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
HELGESON WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
HENRY X WMA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
HILLMAN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Hoff11	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Hoff11	WPn53c	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Northern)</a>	S3	1
Horse Lake WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HWY 12 PARK PRAIRIE	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Jorgenson WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Klevenberg WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Lake Mary 26	MHc36b	<a href="#">Red Oak - Basswood Forest (Calcareous Till)</a>	S4	1
Lake Mary Woods	MHc36b	<a href="#">Red Oak - Basswood Forest (Calcareous Till)</a>	S4	2
Lake Mary Woods	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	3
Langhei 2	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Langhei 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Langhei 34	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Leven 3	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Leven 3	WMn82b	<a href="#">Sedge Meadow</a>	S4 or S5	2
Leven 18	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Leven 20/30	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Leven 27	MRp93a	<a href="#">Bulrush Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Leven 27	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Leven 27	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Little Chippewa River	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	6
Little Chippewa River	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	4
Little Chippewa River	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Little Chippewa River	WPs	Wetland Prairie System, Southern Floristic Region	Not available at this level	2
Little Chippewa River	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
LONG TOM LAKE WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Lynch Lake WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MAKI WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
MARYSLAND 12	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Mclver WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Mclver WPA	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Mclver WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
MIDDLE STONY RUN NORTH	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Mikkelson Prairie	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Minnewaska 1	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Minnewaska 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Minnewaska 7	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Minnewaska 8	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
MOYER 4	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
MOYER 4	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MOYER 5	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
MOYER 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
MOYER 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
New Prairie 6	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
New Prairie 10	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
New Prairie 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
New Prairie 20	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
New Prairie WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Nora 7	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Nora 7	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Nora 7	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Nora 29	OPp91c	<a href="#">Rich Fen (Prairie Seepage)</a>	S3	3
Nora 29	OPp93	<a href="#">Prairie Extremely Rich Fen</a>	(S1, S2)	2
Nora 32	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
ODESSA 4	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 9	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 10	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
ODESSA 15 NORTHWEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 21	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 22	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 23 NW	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 26	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 28	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 29	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Odessa 29	UPs23	<a href="#">Southern Mesic Prairie</a>	(S2)	1
Odessa 29	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	2
Odessa 29	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Odessa 29	WMs92a	<a href="#">Basin Meadow/Carr</a>	S2	1
Odessa 29	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Odessa 29	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	2
ODESSA 35 NORTHWEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 NORTHEAST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 SE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 36 WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 1 WEST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 11	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	OPp93b	<a href="#">Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Ortonville 21	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Ortonville 21	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	12
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a2	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Sioux Quartzite Subtype</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 25	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 25	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE STONE CO	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	6
OTREY 24	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
OTREY 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
POMME DE TERRE RIVER WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
PRAIRIE WMA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
REDHEAD MARSH WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Reno 5	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	1
Reno 6	WMs83a	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	4
Reno 31	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Reno 36	MRp93c	<a href="#">Arrowhead Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Reno 36	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
Reno 36	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ROTHI WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
S. Akron 5	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
S. Akron 5	WPs54c	<a href="#">Wet Saline Prairie (Southern)</a>	S1	1
SCHELLBERG PRAIRIE	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SCHLIEP PRAIRIE	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Schmidgal Prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE 18	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SHIBLE LAKE WMA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 2 NORTHWEST	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 3	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SOUTH AKRON 4 NORTH	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SOUTH AKRON 6	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
SOUTH ODESSA 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Starbuck WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	5
Starbuck WPA	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	4
Starbuck WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Starbuck WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Starbuck WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
Starbuck WPA	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Starbuck WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Stewart WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
STONY RUN	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Strandness Prairie	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Swan Lake	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Swan Lake	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Swan Lake	WMs83a1	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Tussock Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Swift Co. WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	2
Swift Co. WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Swift Co. WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
TANGEN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
TARA 19	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
TARA 31	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
TWIN LAKES WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
UPPER STONY RUN VALLEY	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Walden 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Walden 4	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
WELKER WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
WESTHAUSEN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
WESTHAUSEN WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
WEST SOUTH AKRON 10	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 13	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	3
White Bear Lake 22	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	4
White Bear Lake 23	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 24	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White Bear Lake 27, 34, 35	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
White Bear Lake 27	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
White bear lake hall	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
White bear lake hall	WPs54	<a href="#">Southern Wet Prairie</a>	(S1, S2)	1
Yellow Bank 9	WMp73a	<a href="#">Prairie Meadow/Carr</a>	S3	1
Yellow Bank 9	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
YELLOW BANK 12	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Not Within MBS Site	FDs36	<a href="#">Southern Dry-Mesic Oak-Aspen Forest</a>	(S3S4)	2
Not Within MBS Site	MHs38b	<a href="#">Basswood - Bur Oak - (Green Ash) Forest</a>	S3	3
Not Within MBS Site	OPp93b	<a href="#">Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)</a>	S2	2
Not Within MBS Site	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	3
Not Within MBS Site	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Not Within MBS Site	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	6
Not Within MBS Site	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	5
Not Within MBS Site	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	4

## Calcareous Fens

Search distance = 5 miles

A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota under the Wetland Conservation Act. Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. For more information regarding calcareous fens, please see the [Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet](#) or review the [List of Known Calcareous Fens](#).

The following Calcareous Fens are within the search area:

Fen Site Name	Fen ID	TRS
Big Stone Lake State Park Fen	87849	122N047W - 13
Blue Mounds 15 - a	13755	124N039W - 15; 124N039W - 22
Blue Mounds 15 - b	28918	124N039W - 15; 124N039W - 14
Nora 29	30132	126N040W - 29
Stony Run	19784	121N045W - 19; 121N045W - 20

## DNR Old Growth Stands

Search distance = 330 feet

[Old-growth forests](#) are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time, generally at least 120 years, without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbances such as fires, windstorms, or logging. Old-growth forests are a unique, nearly vanished piece of Minnesota's history and ecology; less than 4% of Minnesota's old-growth forests remain. The DNR recommends avoidance of all DNR Old Growth Stands. The following DNR Old Growth Stands have been documented within the search area.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

## MN Prairie Conservation Plan

Search distance = 330 feet

The [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#), a twenty-five year strategy for accelerating prairie conservation in the state, identifies Core Areas, Corridors, and Corridor Complexes as areas to focus conservation efforts. The Plan's strategies include protection, enhancement, and restoration of grassland and wetland habitat. To meet the Plan's goals, approaches within Core Areas will need to include restoration and approaches within Corridors will need to include conservation of grassland habitat which can provide stepping stones between larger Core Areas.

The following MN Prairie Conservation Plan Designations are within the search area:

- Core Area: Big Stone Moraine
- Core Area: Glacial Lakes
- Core Area: Lac Qui Parle Prairie
- Core Area: Reisdorah Prairie
- Corridor: Agassiz Beach Ridges
- Corridor: Alexandria Moraine
- Corridor: Altamont Moraine
- Corridor: Minnesota River Valley
- Corridor Complex: Jorgenson WPA
- Corridor Complex: McIver WPA

## Important Bird Areas

Search distance = 1 mile

[Important Bird Areas](#), identified by Audubon Minnesota in partnership with the DNR, are part of an international conservation effort aimed at conserving globally important bird habitats. They are voluntary and non-regulatory, but the designation demonstrates the significant ecological value of the area.

The following Important Birds Areas are within the search area:

- [Lac Qui Parle - Big Stone IBA](#)

## Lakes of Biological Significance

Search distance = 330 feet

[Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes as determined by the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. To be included in this layer, a lake only needs to meet the criteria for one of these four community types. The lake is assigned a biological significance of Outstanding, High, or Moderate based on the community with the highest quality.

The following Lakes of Biological Significance are within the search area:

Public Water Basin Name	Biological Significance	Plant Rank	Fish Rank	Amphibian Rank	Bird Rank
Artichoke	Moderate	3			
Bentsen	High				2
Big Stone	Outstanding		1		
Grill	Moderate		3		
Horse	High				2
Latoka	Outstanding		1	2	
Maple	Moderate		3		
Mary	Outstanding		1		
Otrey	Moderate				3
Pelican	Moderate				3

Public Water Basin Name	Biological Significance	Plant Rank	Fish Rank	Amphibian Rank	Bird Rank
Rachel	Outstanding		1		
Reno	Outstanding		1		2
Shible	High	2			2
Thielke	High				2
Union	High		2		
Unnamed	Moderate				3

## USFWS Habitat Conservation Plans

A [Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#) is a mechanism for compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act for a given set of activities and protected species. An HCP is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of an application for an [incidental take permit \(ITP\)](#). The ITP allows the permit holder to proceed with activities covered in the HCP that could result in the unintentional take of federally listed species.

[Lakes States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan \(Bat HCP\)](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) This HCP was created to provide flexibility to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage forests while addressing federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations related to federally threatened and endangered bat species. The Bat HCP covers three bat species within Minnesota: northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and tricolored bat. This report is intended to help non-federal, non-DNR landowners evaluate their potential eligibility for the Landowner Enrollment Program of the Bat HCP (For DNR-administered land, DNR staff should refer to the Bat HCP Implementation Policy).

[Landowner Enrollment Program](#) – DNR's incidental take permit may be extended through the Landowner Enrollment Program (LEP) to eligible non-federal landowners who conduct forest management activities. Landowners may be eligible to enroll in the LEP if they are a county land administrator, own more than 10,000 acres, or own land that overlaps a Bat HCP feature. The results below indicate if the defined area of interest overlaps a Bat HCP feature. For more information on how to enroll in the LEP, please visit the [Landowner Enrollment Program \(LEP\)](#).

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No Bat HCP features were found within the area of interest. Landowners are only eligible to apply for the Landowner Enrollment Program if they are a county land administrator or they own more than 10,000 acres.

## USFWS Regulatory Layers

To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#). This report is not a substitution for a Section 7 review.

For informational purposes only, this tool currently checks the following USFWS Regulatory Layers:

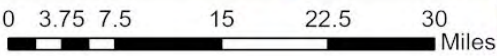
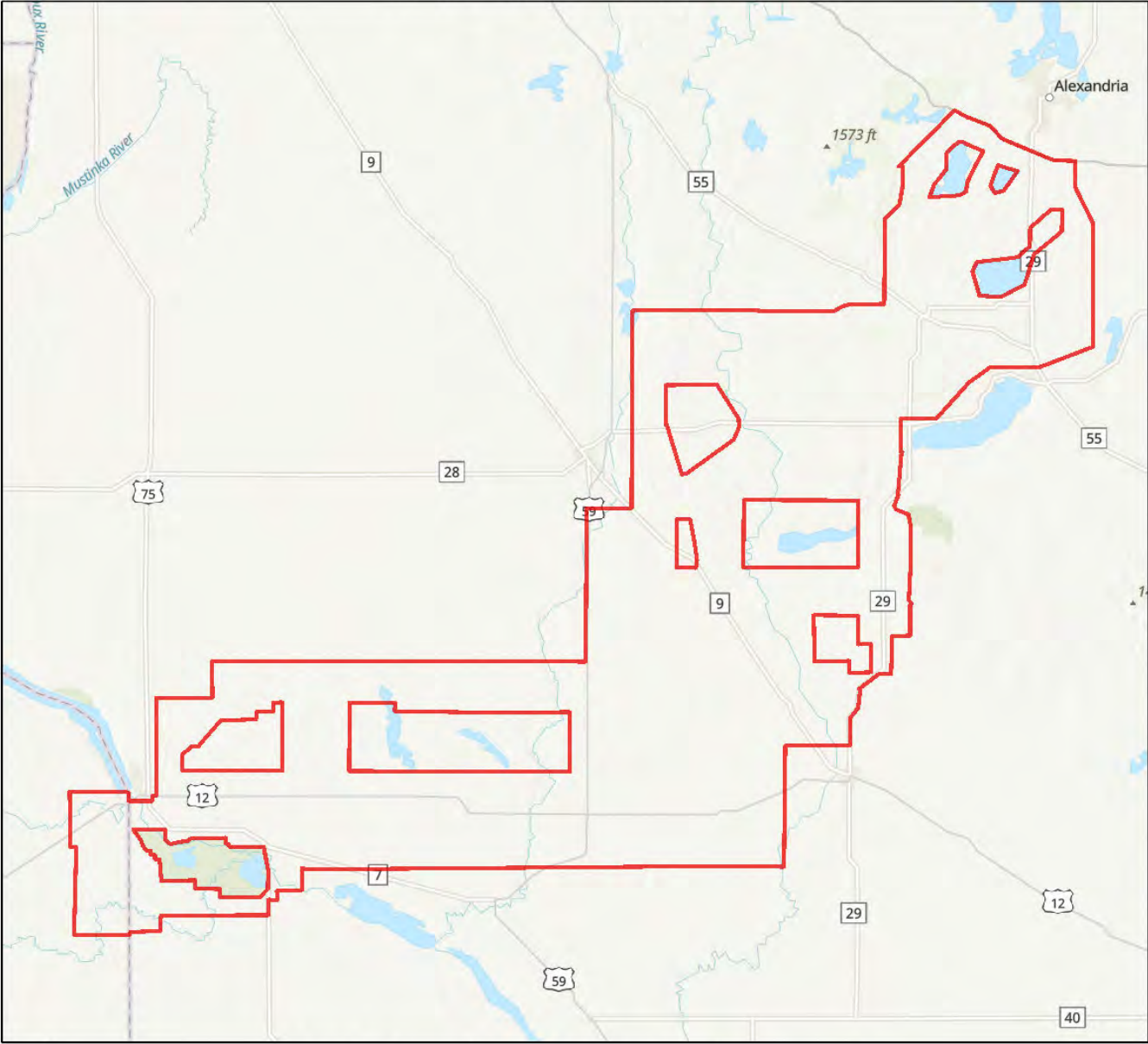
[Rusty Patched Bumblebee High Potential Zones](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), federally listed as endangered, is likely to be present in suitable habitat within the high potential zones. From April through October this species uses underground nests in upland grasslands, shrublands, and forest edges, and forages where nectar and pollen are available. From October through April the species overwinters under tree litter in upland forests and woodlands. The rusty patched bumble bee may be impacted by a variety of land management activities including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, tree-removal, haying, grazing, herbicide use, pesticide use, land-clearing, soil disturbance or compaction, or use of non-native bees. The [USFWS RPBB guidance](#) provides guidance on avoiding impacts to rusty patched bumble bee and a key for determining if actions are likely to affect the species; the determination key can be found in the appendix. Please visit the [USFWS Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Map](#) for the most current locations of High Potential Zones.


**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.



# Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Line Project

## Conservation Planning Map



 Area of Interest

Size (acres): 552,107.78

County(s): Big Stone, Douglas, Lac qui Parle, Pope +

Esri, CGIAR, USGS  
Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA  
Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS







Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
Region 4 (Southern Region)  
21371 Highway 15 South  
New Ulm, MN 56073

March 21, 2024

Jen Hanley, HDR  
Environmental Project Manager  
51 North Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102

**Subject: Big Stone South to Alexandria High Voltage Transmission Line**

Greetings Jen,

Thank you for engaging with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in early coordination during the development of the Big Stone South to Alexandria High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL). We appreciate your commitment to identifying a route that minimizes impacts on natural resources. We submit the following comments for your consideration as you prepare to submit a route permit application to the Public Utilities Commission.

**AVOIDANCE AREAS**

Habitat fragmentation is one of the largest threats to wildlife. We encourage prioritizing the avoidance of natural areas that would require vegetation and tree removal or ground disturbance in shoreland, prairies, and wetlands. If recommended avoidance areas cannot feasibly be avoided, please consult with the Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologists on methods to minimize and mitigate impacts.

**Wildlife Management Areas**

There are 13 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) within or adjacent to the BSSA corridors. WMAs should be avoided to preserve the site's ecological integrity and ensure the continuation of management activities, such as prescribed fire and procuring grazing leasers.

**Minnesota Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance**

A site's biodiversity significance rank is based on the presence of rare species populations, the size and condition of native plant communities, and the site's landscape context. If a site of biodiversity significance cannot be avoided, the ranking system should be used to guide route selection.

- *Outstanding* – sites contain the best occurrence of the rarest species, the most outstanding examples of the rarest native plant communities, and/or the largest, most ecologically intact or functional landscapes.
- *High* – sites contain very good quality occurrences of the rarest species, high-quality examples of rare native plant communities, and/or important functional landscapes
- *Moderate* – sites contain occurrences of rare species, moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have strong potential for recovery of native plant communities and characteristic ecological processes.
- *Below* – sites lack occurrences of rare species and natural features or do not meet MBS standards for outstanding, high, or moderate rank. These sites may include areas of conservation value at the local level, such as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movement, buffers surrounding higher-quality natural areas, areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat, or open space.

### DNR Native Plant Communities

There is some overlap between Sites of Biodiversity Significance and native plant communities. However, both datasets should be referenced when evaluating route options.

WMA , MBS sites, and DNR native plant community locations can be viewed through the [Minnesota Conservation Explorer](#) or downloaded via the [MN Geospatial Commons](#). If avoidance of these areas is not feasible, please work with DNR staff on measures to minimize and mitigate impacts. Habitat preservation should be prioritized near public lands, wildlife management areas, state parks, and county parks.

### Flight Corridors

Staff are currently evaluating potential impacts on birds in the corridor, and further guidance will be provided in the future. This includes whether it's preferential to follow an existing transmission line north in a high-use area or create a new route to the south where bird/transmission line interactions are anticipated to be less frequent.

- Avoid routing on MNTH 29 between Reno and Maple Lakes, and between Mary and Andrew Lakes.



- Avoid routing near White Bear Public Waters Wetland.



## PUBLIC WATERCOURSES

- **Minnesota River** - Utilizing existing transmission line crossings and corridors is strongly encouraged to help preserve the ecological integrity and recreational value of the Minnesota River and Minnesota River State Trail.
- **Pomme de Terre River** – The stretch of river in the corridor is a State Water Trail, and where the route crosses the river requires thoughtful consideration.
- **Chippewa River** – Avoid routing along the Chippewa River. Routing to the west of the Stevens-Pope county line is preferred.

### DNR Public Waters Related Permits:

A [Water Appropriations Permit](#) is required if the water pumped exceeds 10,000 gallons in a day, or one million gallons in one year. The DNR General Permit for Temporary Appropriation, with its lower permit application fee and reduced time for review, may be used for the dewatering if the dewatering volume is less than 50 million gallons and the time of the appropriation is less than one year.

Where the utility line crosses public waters (or DNR-owned land), a [Utility Crossing License](#) is required.

If, in order to access a site, a public water crossing needs to be constructed or work is performed below the ordinary high water level, a [Public Waters Work Permit](#) is required.

## CALCAREOUS FENS

To ensure compliance with [Minnesota Statutes 103G.223](#), a no-effect concurrence is needed from the DNR for known fens near the project before construction begins. Please contact the Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator and Regional Ecologist regarding the information required to evaluate potential impacts on Stony Run Fen.

*Regional Ecologist*  
Megan Benage  
[Megan.Benage@state.mn.us](mailto:Megan.Benage@state.mn.us)  
507-910-8708

*Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator*  
Keylor Andrews  
[Keylor.Andrews@state.mn.us](mailto:Keylor.Andrews@state.mn.us)  
651-259-5259

## RARE FEATURES

A Natural Heritage Review Request must be submitted for the project through the Minnesota Conservation Explorer to ensure compliance with state law and receive formal guidance on endangered, threatened, and species of special concern. The presence of [Species in Greatest Conservation Need](#) that are not state-protected or federally listed will also inform route placement recommendations and should be incorporated into route evaluation and selection.

- *South Dakota Border to Big Stone County Road 77*: Numerous rare features exist in this stretch, including federally listed and state-protected threatened and endangered species. Finding routes through this area that avoid and minimize impacts will be challenging. If the project is not ready to be submitted for Natural Heritage Review, Haley Byron (Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist) is available to discuss this section in finer detail.



## NEXT STEPS

DNR will provide further guidance on flight pathways.

Once route options are identified and provided to the DNR, the Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologists will work with local staff to evaluate route options and alternatives. The DNR will also evaluate the potential impacts of temporary and permanent access roads and construction staging areas.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed BSSA corridors. We look forward to working with you on this project.

Regards,

Haley Byron & Owen Baird

**Haley Byron**

Southern Region

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist

[haley.byron@state.mn.us](mailto:haley.byron@state.mn.us)

507-389-8813

**Owen Baird**

Northwest Region

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist

[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)

218-580-0381

CC:

Cynthia Warzecha, Energy Projects Planner

*Equal Opportunity Employer*



**Project:** OTP/MRES BSSA  
**Project ID:** [2024-00481](#)  
**Date Submitted:** 06/03/2024 - 11:49  
**Organization:**

Dear Katie Lueth,

Thank you for submitting the request for a Natural Heritage Review of OTP/MRES BSSA. The automated results of the review can be found at <https://mce.dnr.state.mn.us/project/otp-mres-bssa-9335> by clicking on the most recent Project Report listed in the Automated Review Results table. You will need to log in to see the results.

If no further review is needed, the report will include a cover letter and map summarizing your project and a Natural Heritage Review letter.

If further review is needed, the report will include a cover letter and map summarizing your project and a notice that your project needs further review by the Natural Heritage Review Team. If your project needs further review, you will receive a separate notification email when the review process is complete and the Natural Heritage Review letter has been posted.

The Project Report can be printed for your files, and may be included in any public environmental review document and may be submitted to permitting, licensing, or other government authorities.

If you have questions about the contents of the report or need further assistance, please see the contact information contained within the report. Please send status inquiries to [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us).

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Natural Heritage Review Team  
Minnesota DNR  
  
Minnesota Conservation Explorer  
<https://mce.dnr.state.mn.us/>

**From:** [Baird, Owen \(DNR\)](#)  
**To:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Byron, Haley \(DNR\)](#); [Fairman, Kate \(DNR\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Phinney, Samantha](#); [Raine, Katie](#)  
**Subject:** BSSA Minnesota MN DNR Coordination  
**Date:** Friday, July 12, 2024 12:55:17 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[2024-07-12 BSSA DNR Early Coordination.pdf](#)

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Jen,

Please see the attached MN DNR early coordination comments on the BSSA proposed routes. Please contact Haley and me if you have any questions or want to discuss our recommendations.

Owen

**Owen Baird**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Phone: 218-580-0381

[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)

[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)



---

**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <[Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 9:13 AM  
**To:** Byron, Haley (DNR) <[Haley.Byron@state.mn.us](mailto:Haley.Byron@state.mn.us)>; Baird, Owen (DNR) <[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <[cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us](mailto:cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>; Malkin, Devin <[devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com)>; Peterson, Monica <[monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com)>; Phinney, Samantha <[Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com](mailto:Samantha.Phinney@hdrinc.com)>; Raine, Katie <[Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com](mailto:Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com)>  
**Subject:** BSSA Minnesota MN DNR Coordination\_Route Shapefiles\_20240523

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Cynthia/Haley/Owen,

Please find our attached our routes and buffers that we plan to present in June open houses. Once you've had the chance to review this information, we'd like to meet and discuss our routes and any comments you may have.

We have multiple public meeting coming up in June. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will be hosting public hearings for the Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) and Alexandria to Big Oaks (ABO) Certificate of Need and the ABO Route Permit Application June 13, 17 and 18. Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services will also be hosting public open houses to discuss routes for BSSA June 24-27.

Once you have had the chance to review the routes attached, we would like to continue our conversation with you to discuss any questions or concerns prior to our route permit application filing later this year.

Thanks,

Jen

**Jennifer Hanley, PE\***  
D 701.353.6139

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\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX





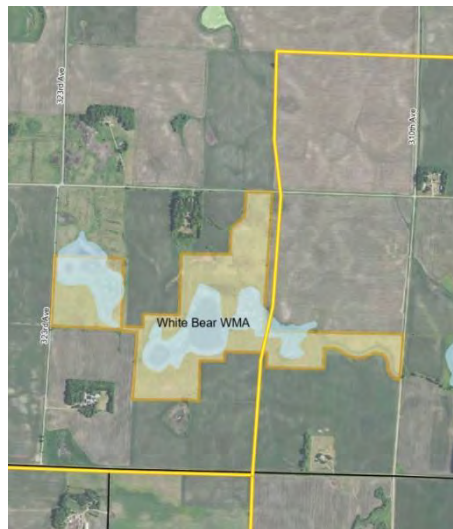
## Artichoke Lake Area – Big Stone County – Segment B South 2 (FID 16)

Utilizing the existing HVTL route adjacent to CSAH 10, County Road 81, and CSAH 8 (white dashed line below) to reduce impacts on wildlife moving between water bodies is strongly encouraged. Constructing a new route in this area will increase the risk to birds and require a new crossing of Unnamed Public Water Basin 06043400. **Unless this proposed route follows the existing HVTL ROW, the route to the south (South 1) is preferred.**



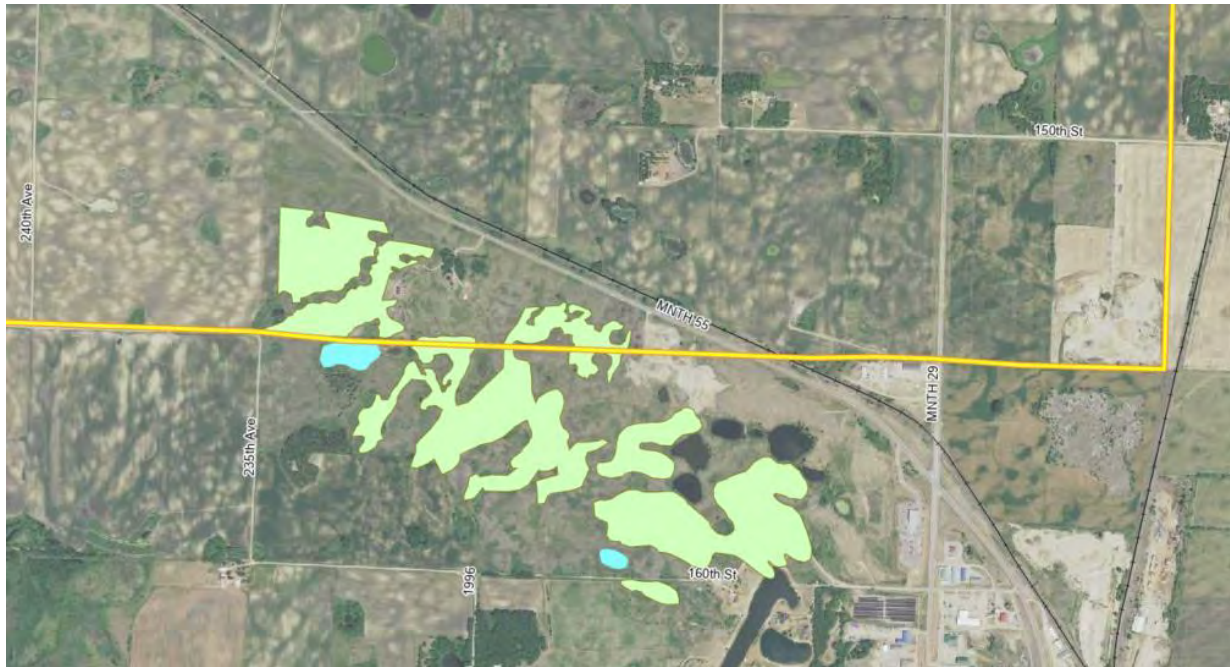
## White Bear Wildlife Management Area – Pope County – Segment F Central 3 (FID 26)

This route segment intersects the White Bear Wildlife Management Area. Avoiding the WMA is strongly recommended, and we encourage investigating the feasibility of shifting the route to the East along 310th Ave to avoid impacts to the WMA.



## Native Plant Communities – Pope County - Segment F North 2 (FID 31)

This route segment bisects native marsh (BLUE) and prairie (GREEN) plant communities that support State Species of Special Concern. An alternative route is strongly encouraged to reduce impacts on these plant communities associated with construction and ROW maintenance.



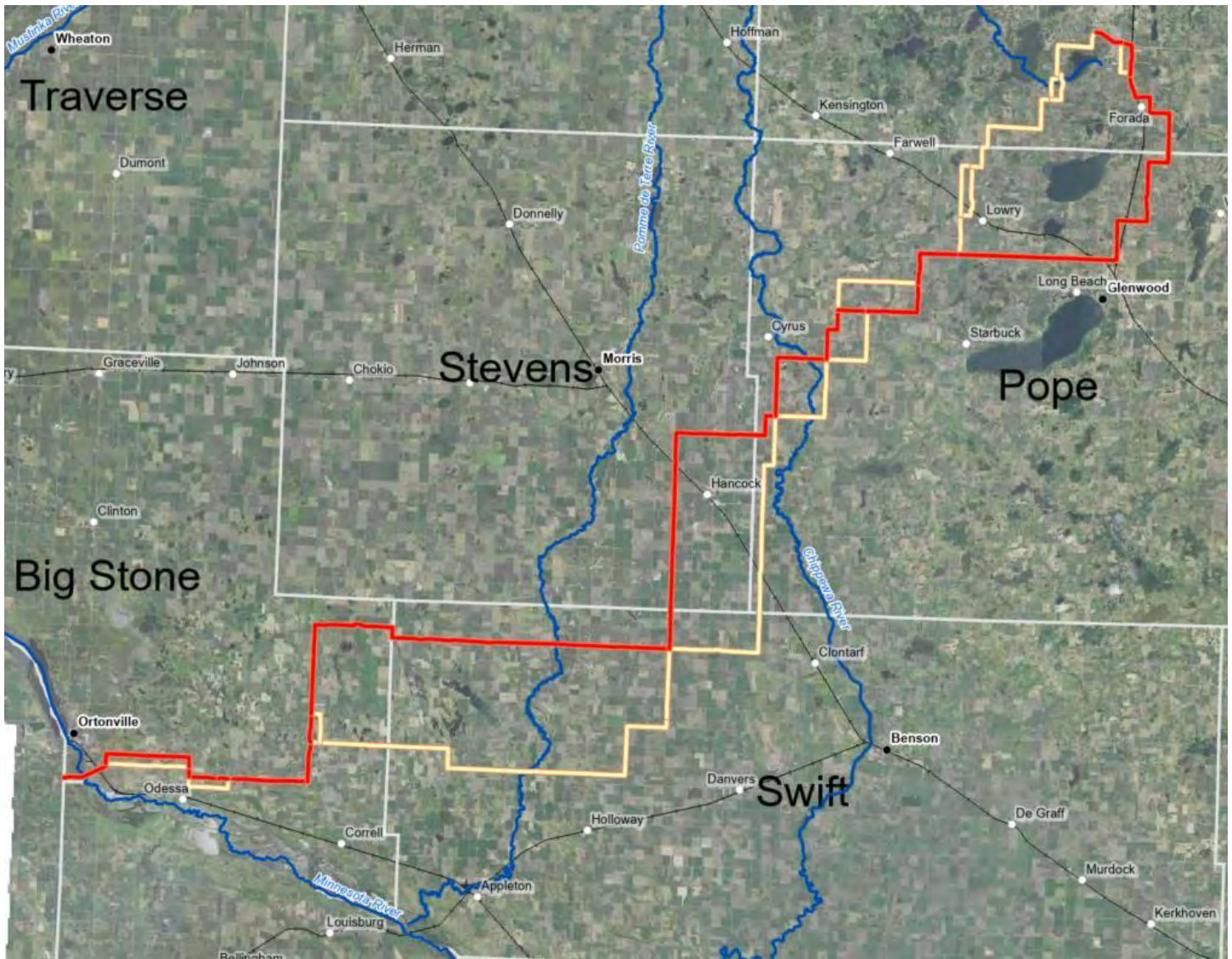
### PREFERRED ROUTE

The DNR preferred route is indicated in RED on the map below. This alternative contains the fewest stream and lake crossings, is the furthest from the Chippewa River corridor, and provides the greatest avoidance of sites of Biodiversity Significance, Native Plant Communities, and Wildlife Management Areas. However, as noted above, significant concerns are still associated with this route and necessitate further coordination with the DNR on measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts.

Areas of concern with the DNR preferred route include:

- The Minnesota River crossing.
- Artichoke Lake area on Route South 2 - FID 16 Segment B (South 1 preferred if Artichoke Lake is not avoided).
- Impacts on White Bear WMA from proposed crossing.
- Native Plant Communities on North 2, Segment F
- Impacts on Noordmans (Pope Co) and Forada (Douglas Co) WMAs from the adjacent route.





## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

All routes include crossings of [Grant-in-Aid](#) snowmobile trails. Please coordinate with local snowmobile clubs to minimize disruption of trail routes and winter use. In addition to the Minnesota River, the Pomme de Terre River is a [State Water Trail](#) where crossed by Segment B South 1.

## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Please continue to consider maximizing routes within areas of previously disturbed habitat, such as existing ROWs for other transmission lines, existing roads, and other areas with utility co-locating opportunities.

### Line-marking devices

The DNR supports permit conditions similar to those included in recent route permits: *The Permittee, in cooperation with the DNR, shall identify areas of the project where bird flight diverters will be incorporated into the transmission line design to prevent large avian collisions attributed to visibility issues. Standard transmission design shall incorporate adequate spacing of conductors and grounding devices in accordance with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee*

*standards to eliminate the risk of electrocution to raptors with larger wingspans that may simultaneously come in contact with a conductor and grounding devices.*

### **Vegetation Management Plan**

Transmission line ROWs can provide habitat areas for a variety of wildlife. We recommend the project develop a Vegetation Management Plan to manage invasive species and provide habitat where feasible, particularly for pollinators.

Route clearing should avoid mechanical chipping and shredding of trees that results in excessive accumulation of mulch or wood chips greater than one inch in thickness which suppresses the growth of native vegetation. Furthermore, an excess accumulation of wood debris in wetland areas can be difficult to remove and may result in additional damage. The DNR license to cross public lands and/or waters may prohibit this type of clearing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed BSSA routes. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this project. Please contact us if you have further questions or need more information.

Thank you,

Haley Byron

**Haley Byron**  
South Region  
Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist  
[haley.byron@state.mn.us](mailto:haley.byron@state.mn.us)  
507-389-8813



**Owen Baird**  
Northwest Region  
Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist  
[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)  
218-580-0381

CC: Kate Fairman, DNR Planning Director State

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024 2:57 PM

**To:** Baird, Owen (DNR) <[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <[Haley.Byron@state.mn.us](mailto:Haley.Byron@state.mn.us)>

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**Subject:** BSSA Early Coordination Letter Consultation

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Hello Owen and Haley,

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Thank you in advance for your time.



Kevin Scheidecker

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

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**Sent:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024 3:33 PM

**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <[Haley.Byron@state.mn.us](mailto:Haley.Byron@state.mn.us)>

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**Subject:** RE: BSSA Early Coordination Letter Consultation

Kevin,

I am available anytime on July 29 and 30, and August 7 (not 9:30-10), 8, and 9 (not 1:30-2:30).

**Owen Baird**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Phone: 218-580-0381

[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)

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Kevin Scheidecker

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773



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**Sent:** Wednesday, July 24, 2024 9:29 AM

**To:** Baird, Owen (DNR) <owen.baird@state.mn.us>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>

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Aug 7: 10:30am – 4:30pm

Aug 8: All Day

Aug 9: All Day

Thank you!

**Haley Byron**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Southern Region EWR

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

117 Rogers Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Office: 507-389-8813

Cell: 507-910-8963

Email: [haley.byron@state.mn.us](mailto:haley.byron@state.mn.us)

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Thank you in advance for your time.



Kevin Scheidecker

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

**From:** Byron, Haley (DNR) <Haley.Byron@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 31, 2024 9:29 AM

**To:** Baird, Owen (DNR) <owen.baird@state.mn.us>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>

**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>; Fairman, Kate (DNR) <kate.fairman@state.mn.us>

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Hello All,

Thank you again for meeting with us yesterday. Please let me know if I didn't include an item we discussed yesterday.

[DNR Administrative Regions Map](#) with county list.

### **State-listed Threatened and Endangered Species**

The proposed Minnesota River crossing will impact state-listed species. The Natural Heritage Review Letter will provide further guidance, and we encourage reviewing the letter before contacting the staff below as the letter may contain specific next steps regarding listed species.

- Megan Benage, Regional Ecologist, South Region – [megan.benage@mn.state.us](mailto:megan.benage@mn.state.us)
- Bridget Hennin-Randa, MN Endangered Species Consultant – [bridget.henning-randa@state.mn.us](mailto:bridget.henning-randa@state.mn.us)

### **Rare Natural Communities**

The proposed route may impact rare natural communities in several areas. You will work with the local government unit (LGU) that administers the MN Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) on this component of the project. The DNR Regional Ecologists will also be heavily involved.

- [Minnesota Administrative Rules 8420.0515](#) Special Considerations. Subp. 3. Rare natural communities. A replacement plan for activities that involve the modification of a rare natural community as determined by the Department of Natural Resources' natural heritage program must be denied if the local government unit determines that the proposed activities will permanently adversely affect the natural community.
- [Rare Natural Communities Spatial Data](#)
- [Rare Natural Communities Technical Guidance](#)
- [WCA LGU Directory](#)
- Becky Marty, Regional Ecologist, Northwest Region – [becky.marty@state.mn.us](mailto:becky.marty@state.mn.us)

### **Calcareous Fens**

Evaluating potential calcareous fen impacts is done on a case-by-case basis, and a no-effect concurrence or management plan is needed before project construction begins within 5 miles of known fens. Once we receive updated shapefiles, I'll share them with the Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator, regional ecologists, and groundwater hydrologists and get him up to speed on the project.

- Keylor Andrews, Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator – [Keylor.andrews@state.mn.us](mailto:Keylor.andrews@state.mn.us)

### **Utility Crossing License & Access Agreements**

If infrastructure crosses over, under, or across DNR-managed lands, a [Utility Crossing License](#) from the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals (LAM) will be required. DNR-managed land cannot be used to access project sites without a formal agreement, as well. A license from LAM cannot be issued until Public Utilities Commission proceedings are complete and a route permit has been issued. Please review the material found on the website before contacting staff.

- Northwest Region: Pam Arndt, Sr. Realty Specialist – [pamela.arndt@state.mn.us](mailto:pamela.arndt@state.mn.us)
- South Region: Karla Ihns, Sr. Realty Specialist - [karla.ihns@state.mn.us](mailto:karla.ihns@state.mn.us)

Please reach out to Owen and me if you have any questions. Thank you!

**Haley Byron**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | South Region EWR

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

117 Rogers Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Office: 507-389-8813

Cell: 507-910-8963

Email: [haley.byron@state.mn.us](mailto:haley.byron@state.mn.us)  
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Thank you!

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**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024 2:57 PM  
**To:** Baird, Owen (DNR) <[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <[Haley.Byron@state.mn.us](mailto:Haley.Byron@state.mn.us)> **Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; [monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com); Brian Zavesky <[brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com](mailto:brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com)>; Fairman, Kate (DNR) <[kate.fairman@state.mn.us](mailto:kate.fairman@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** BSSA Early Coordination Letter Consultation

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Hello Owen and Haley,

Thank you for your comments on our BSSA Transmission Project that were part of the DNR Early Coordination Letter that we received on July 12, 2024. Our project team has been working to revise our two routes based on agency and landowner comments received over the past month or so. These two routes will be submitted to the MN Public Utilities Commission as part of our route permit application sometime this fall. Our plan is to have updated shapefiles of the revised routes ready to send out by the end of this week. We'd like to schedule a consultation meeting with DNR staff in the next couple of weeks, if possible. Could you send us your availability for the week of July 29<sup>th</sup> and August 5<sup>th</sup> and we will coordinate a meeting?

Thank you in advance for your time.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)



**From:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
**To:** [Baird, Owen \(DNR\)](#); [Byron, Haley \(DNR\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Brusven, Christina](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Subject:** BSSA Transmission Project Shapefiles  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:52:59 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-mb2pg51y.png](#)  
[BSSA Route Segments MN 20240815.zip](#)

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Owen and Haley,

As you are aware, Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services are proposing to construct a new transmission line, the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line, between Big Stone, South Dakota and Alexandria, Minnesota in order to provide additional transmission capacity, to mitigate current capacity issues, and to improve electric system reliability throughout the region as more renewable energy resources are added to the electric system in and around the region. We have initiated the planning and permitting processes with relevant state and federal agencies, and plan to submit our route permit application to the MN Public Utilities Commission and MN Department of Commerce sometime in Q4 of this year. Attached to this email are shapefiles of the currently proposed route options.

We appreciate the opportunity to consult with the DNR ahead of our permit application submission. We did adjust our routing after taking into consideration comments by the public and various federal, state and local agencies.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

August 22, 2024

Katie Lueth  
HDR Inc

RE: Natural Heritage Review of the proposed **OTP/MRES BSSA**,  
Big Stone, Douglas, Pope, Stevens, Swift Counties

Dear Katie Lueth,

For all correspondence regarding the Natural Heritage Review of this project please include the project ID **MCE-2024-00481** in the email subject line.

As requested, the [Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System](#) has been reviewed to determine if the proposed project has the potential to impact any rare species or other significant natural features. Based on the project details provided with the request, the following rare features may be impacted by the proposed project:

*Ecologically Significant Areas*

- Multiple calcareous fens have been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project. A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota. The Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), authorized by Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.223, states that calcareous fens may not be filled, drained, or otherwise degraded, wholly or partially, by any activity, except as provided for in a management plan approved by the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources. Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. For more information regarding calcareous fens, please see the [Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet](#). To minimize stormwater impacts, please refer to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's [General Principles for Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control](#) in the Minnesota Stormwater Manual. Please note that calcareous fens are "Special Waters" and a [buffer zone](#) may be required.

Calcareous fens may be impacted by activities within the fen, activities that affect surface water flows (e.g., stormwater flow, erosion), or activities that affect groundwater hydrology (e.g., groundwater pumping, contamination, discharge, or excavation). **To ensure compliance under WCA, please contact the Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator, Keylor Andrews ([Keylor.Andrews@state.mn.us](mailto:Keylor.Andrews@state.mn.us))**

- **Artichoke Lake**, a Lake of *Moderate* Biological Significance, may be impacted by the proposed project. [Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes based on the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. The lake is assigned a biological significance of *Outstanding*, *High*, or *Moderate* based on the community with the highest quality. Given the ecological significance of this lake, disturbance should be minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance activities. Actions to avoid or minimize disturbance include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:
  - Avoid lakebed disturbance / span waterbodies.
  - Avoid the removal of shoreline vegetation.
  - Implement stringent/redundant erosion prevention and sediment control practices.
  - Prevent the spread of invasive species.
  - Use only herbicides approved for application within shoreline/riparian areas.
  - Minimize use of fertilizer.
- The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has identified **25** Sites of Biodiversity Significance within the vicinity of the proposed project ranked as *High* or *Moderate*. MBS Sites have varying levels of native biodiversity and are ranked based on the relative significance of this biodiversity at a statewide level. Factors taken into account during the ranking process include the number of rare species documented within the site, the quality of the native plant communities in the site, the size of the site, and the context of the site within the landscape. Additionally, there are **21** areas within the vicinity of the proposed project ranked as *Below*; these areas do not meet the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance but may have conservation value at the local level as habitat. **The DNR recommends avoidance of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked *High* or *Outstanding*.** Please see your MCE-generated Conservation Planning Report for a comprehensive list of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance.

There are **58** mapped DNR Native Plant Communities (NPC) that have been documented within the vicinity of the proposed project. DNR NPC types are given a Conservation Status Rank that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant). *Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 (critically imperiled), S2 (imperiled), or S3 (vulnerable to extirpation) are considered rare in the state.* **The DNR recommends avoidance of rare NPCs (ranked S1, S2, or S3).** Please see your MCE-generated Conservation Planning Report for a comprehensive list of native plant communities in your

proposed project area. Of particular concern are project impacts to prairie communities and rock outcrop communities.

- *Prairie Communities*: More than 99% of the prairie that was present in the state before settlement has been destroyed, and more than one-third of Minnesota's endangered, threatened, and special concern species are now dependent on the remaining small fragments of Minnesota's prairie ecosystem. **To avoid incidental take, all native prairie remnants should be avoided.** If avoidance is not feasible, further consultation will be needed to ensure compliance with state law. **If any native prairie remnants are crossed by the final project design, a native prairie protection plan may be needed.** You may contact the Regional Ecologist for details on developing a native prairie protection plan.
- *Rock Outcrop Communities*: Rock Outcrops contain dry, rather sparsely vegetated communities on exposures of granitic bedrock. Vegetation on these outcrops typically occurs as a complex growing on bare rock surfaces, in rock crevices, and in shallow soils less than a couple of feet deep between and around exposures. Plant species in rock outcrop communities are adapted to greater environmental extremes than species in surrounding terrestrial communities. Several threatened and endangered species rely on this rare habitat.
  - We are especially concerned about impacts to Ortonville 22 *High* MBS Site in Big Stone County (T121N R46W Section 22) and recommend avoiding the site entirely to avoid incidental take and to comply with the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA, see more information below). Ortonville 22 *High* MBS Site contains Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype (ROs12a1), an imperiled (S2) NPC which provides habitat for state-protected plant species such as [ball cactus](#) (*Coryphantha vivipara*), [larger water starwort](#) (*Callitriche heterophylla*), and [waterhyssop](#) (*Bacopa rotundifolia*). For ball cactus, one of the rarest species in Minnesota, impacts to Ortonville 22 *High* MBS Site would likely result in a deleterious effect on its population as thousands of plants have been documented at the site. **To prevent degradation of this ecologically significant area, we strongly recommend that another route is chosen.** Please consider the Alternative Route Requests proposed by Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologists Haley Byron and Owen Baird during project coordination.

The DNR recommends that the project be designed to avoid impacts to these ecologically significant areas. Actions to avoid or minimize disturbance include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:

- As much as possible, operate within already-disturbed areas.
- Avoid MBS Sites and native plant communities ranked S1, S2, or S3.
- Retain a buffer between proposed activities and the MBS Site.

- Confine construction activities to the opposite side of the road from MBS Sites. If this is not feasible, confine construction activities to the existing road rights-of-way.
- Minimize vehicular disturbance in the MBS Site (allow only vehicles/equipment necessary for construction activities).
- Do not park equipment or stockpile supplies in the MBS Site.
- Do not place spoil in the MBS Site or other sensitive areas.
- If possible, conduct the work under frozen ground conditions.
- Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures.
- Inspect and clean equipment prior to operation and follow recommendations to [prevent the spread of invasive species](#).
- Revegetate disturbed soil with [native species suitable to the local habitat](#) as soon after construction as possible.
- Use only weed-free mulches, topsoils, and seed mixes. Of particular concern are birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*), two invasive species that are sold commercially and are problematic in prairies and disturbed open areas.

MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities can be viewed using the Explore page in [Minnesota Conservation Explorer](#) or their GIS shapefiles can be downloaded from the [MN Geospatial Commons](#). Please contact the [NH Review Team](#) if you need assistance accessing the data. Reference the [MBS Site Biodiversity Significance](#) and [Native Plant Community](#) websites for information on interpreting the data. To receive a list of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities in the vicinity of your project, create a [Conservation Planning Report](#) using the Explore Tab in [Minnesota Conservation Explorer](#). **I have uploaded the MCE-generated Conservation Planning Report to the MCE project page.**

- If the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is applicable to this project, please note that native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 or wetlands within *High* or *Outstanding* MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance may qualify as Rare Natural Communities (RNC) under WCA. Minnesota Rules, part 8420.0515, subpart 3 states that a wetland replacement plan for activities that modify a RNC must be denied if the local government unit determines the proposed activities will permanently adversely affect the RNC. If the proposed project includes a wetland replacement plan under WCA, please contact your [DNR Regional Ecologist](#) for further evaluation. Please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#) for additional information, including the [Rare Natural Communities Technical Guidance](#).
  - There are several designated Rare Natural Communities in Ortonville 22 *High* MBS Site in Big Stone Co. (T121N R46W Sect. 22).
  - There are several potential Rare Natural Communities in:
    - Ortonville 21 *Moderate* MBS Site in Big Stone Co. (T121N R46W Sect. 21)
    - Odessa 29 *Moderate* MBS Site in Big Stone Co. (T121N R45W Sect. 29)

- Odessa 28 *Moderate* MBS Site in Big Stone Co. (T121N R45W Sect. 27 & 28)
- Tara 31 *Moderate* MBS Site in Swift Co. (T122N R41W Sect. 31)
- Swift Co. WPA *Moderate* MBS Site in Swift Co. (T122N R41W Sect. 17 & 20)
- Little Chippewa River *Moderate* MBS Site in Pope Co. (T125N R39W Sect. 30 & 31)
- Starbuck WPA *Moderate* MBS Site in Pope Co. (T125N R39W Sect. 30)
- Reno 36 *Moderate* MBS Site in Pope Co. (T126N R38W Sect. 35)
- Cattail Marsh (Prairie) (MRp83b) critically imperiled (S1) NPC in Pope Co. (T126N R37W Sect. 30)
- Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr (WMs83) imperiled (S2) NPC in Douglas Co. (T127N R37W Sect. 22)

### *State-listed Species*

- Many state-listed threatened and endangered plant species have been found within the vicinity of the proposed project and within the project area. This project may impact potential habitat and result in take of threatened or endangered species. Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (*Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (*Minnesota Rules*, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of threatened or endangered species without a permit.

The table below lists state-listed plant species within the project vicinity; species found within the proposed project area are marked with an asterisk (\*). **All known occurrences of state protected plant species and all potential habitats must be avoided.** If this is not feasible, a qualified surveyor will need to (1) resurvey known occurrences and (2) conduct a habitat assessment to determine if suitable habitat exists within the activity impact area and, if so, conduct a rare plant survey prior to any project activities. The goal of the habitat assessment is to identify potential locations where endangered (END) and threatened (THR) species may occur to help formulate an avoidance plan. Species of special concern (SPC) are also rare and an important component of Minnesota's natural heritage; we strongly encourage project alternatives that avoid or minimize impacts to known occurrences of these species as well.

Surveys must be conducted by a qualified surveyor and follow the standards contained in the [Rare Species Survey Process](#) and [Rare Plant Guidance](#). Visit the [Natural Heritage Review](#) page for a list of certified surveyors and more information on this process. Project planning should take into account that any botanical survey needs to be conducted during the appropriate time of the year, which may be limited. Please consult with the NH Review Team at [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us) if you have any questions regarding this process.



MN	Status	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat	Water Regime
	END	Ball Cactus *	<i>Coryphantha vivipara</i>	Rock Outcrop	terrestrial
	END	Eared False Foxglove	<i>Agalinis auriculata</i>	Upland Prairie, Lowland Prairie	terrestrial
	END	Hairy Waterclover	<i>Marsilea vestita</i>	Rock Outcrop	wetland
	END	Prairie Quillwort	<i>Isoetes melanopoda</i>	Rock Outcrop	wetland
	END	Wolf's Spikerush	<i>Eleocharis wolfii</i>	Rock Outcrop, Upland Prairie, Savanna, Wet Meadow/Carr	wetland
	THR	Hair-like Beak Rush	<i>Rhynchospora capillacea</i>	Non-forested Rich Peatland	wetland
	THR	Larger Water Starwort *	<i>Callitriche heterophylla</i>	Marsh, Rock Outcrop, Littoral Zone of Lake	aquatic
	THR	Short-pointed Umbrella Sedge	<i>Cyperus acuminatus</i>	Rock Outcrop	wetland
	THR	Stream Parsnip	<i>Berula erecta</i>	Wet Meadow/Carr, Small Rivers and Streams, Non-forested Rich Peatland	aquatic, wetland
	THR	Waterhyssop *	<i>Bacopa rotundifolia</i>	Marsh, Rock Outcrop	aquatic, wetland
	SPC	Cutleaf Ironplant	<i>Xanthisma spinulosum</i> var. <i>spinulosum</i>	Upland Prairie	terrestrial
	SPC	Dwarf Spikerush	<i>Eleocharis coloradoensis</i>	Lake Shore	wetland
	SPC	Few-flowered Spikerush *	<i>Eleocharis quinqueflora</i>	Lake Shore, Lowland Prairie, Non-forested Acid Peatland, Non-forested Rich Peatland	wetland
	SPC	Hill's Thistle *	<i>Cirsium pumilum</i> var. <i>hillii</i>	Savanna, Upland Prairie	terrestrial
	SPC	Missouri Milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus missouriensis</i> var. <i>missouriensis</i>	Upland Prairie	terrestrial
	SPC	Mudwort *	<i>Limosella aquatica</i>	Lowland Prairie, Rock Outcrop	aquatic, wetland
	SPC	Oregon cliff fern	<i>Woodsia oregana</i> ssp. <i>cathcartiana</i>	Rock Outcrop, Talus, Cliff	terrestrial
	SPC	Prairie Mimosa *	<i>Desmanthus illinoensis</i>	Lake Shore, Upland Prairie	terrestrial
	SPC	Sea Naiad	<i>Najas marina</i>	Littoral Zone of Lake	aquatic
	SPC	Slender Milk-vetch *	<i>Astragalus flexuosus</i> var. <i>flexuosus</i>	Upland Prairie	terrestrial
	SPC	Small White Lady's-slipper *	<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>	Lowland Prairie, Upland Prairie, Wet Meadow/Carr	terrestrial, wetland
	SPC	Spiral Ditchgrass	<i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i>	Littoral Zone of Lake	aquatic
	SPC	Three-stamened Waterwort *	<i>Elatine triandra</i>	Littoral Zone of Lake, Rock Outcrop	aquatic
	SPC	Tumble Grass	<i>Schedonnardus paniculatus</i>	Rock Outcrop	terrestrial

\* = Known to occur within the project area. Please see your license agreement (2022-034) for specific locations.

- [Loggerhead shrikes](#) (*Lanius ludovicianus*), a state-listed endangered bird, have been documented in the vicinity of the project site. Loggerhead shrikes use grasslands that contain short grass and scattered perching sites such as hedgerows, shrubs, or small trees. They can be found in native prairie, pastures, shelterbelts, old fields or orchards, cemeteries, grassy roadsides, and farmyards. Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (Minnesota Rules, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of endangered or threatened plants or animals, including their parts or seeds, without a permit. Given the potential for this species to be found in the vicinity of the project, **tree and shrub removal is required to be avoided during the breeding season, April through July.**

Please contact [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us) to confirm that the above avoidance measure will be implemented or to inform us that avoidance is not feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, a qualified surveyor needs to conduct a survey for active nests before any trees or shrubs will be removed. Requirements for surveys and lists of DNR certified lists of surveyors can be found at the [Natural Heritage Review website](#).

- [Henslow's sparrow](#) (*Centronyx henslowii*), a state-listed endangered bird species, has been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project. Suitable nesting habitat for this species includes uncultivated and unmowed grasslands and old fields with standing, dead vegetation, and a substantial litter layer. This species nests on the ground, at the base of grass clumps. As such, initial disturbance in these areas should not occur during their breeding season, between May 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>. **If avoidance during breeding season is not feasible, areas that will be disturbed that contain suitable nesting habitat will need to be surveyed for active nests prior to any project disturbance.**

Please contact [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us) to confirm that the above avoidance measure will be implemented or to inform us that avoidance is not feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the project area will need to be surveyed for active nests prior to any project disturbance. Requirements for surveys and lists of DNR certified lists of surveyors can be found at the [Natural Heritage Review website](#).

- [Burrowing owl](#) (*Athene cunicularia*), a state-listed endangered species, was documented in the vicinity of the proposed project in Stevens County. Burrowing owls use open, grazed pastures or native prairies populated by burrowing mammals. Areas of intensive agricultural use are usually, but not always, avoided. Burrowing owls are now extremely rare in Minnesota, and we don't know of any regularly occurring breeding populations in the state. However, burrowing owls are most likely to use prairie habitats occupied by [Richardson's ground squirrel](#) (*Spermophilus richardsonii*), a state-listed species of special concern, which has been documented in Ortonville 22 High MBS Site in Big Stone County (T121N R46W Sect. 22) and in Pope County (T124N R40W Sect. 29 & 30) within the footprint of the proposed project. **Please report any sightings using the [Quick Species Observation Form](#).**



- [Dakota skipper](#) (*Hesperia dacotae*), a federally listed threatened and state-listed endangered species, has been documented within the vicinity of the proposed project. The Dakota skipper is a small butterfly found exclusively on remnant native prairie habitats. This rare butterfly is sensitive to several types of artificial and natural disturbances and are almost always absent from remnant prairies that are overgrazed or otherwise degraded. Dakota skipper populations have declined historically due to widespread conversion of native prairie for agriculture and other uses and are now threatened, in part, due to the isolation of remaining populations. Remaining Dakota skipper populations are generally so small and isolated that they are subject to genetic drift, which is likely to further reduce their genetic viability. Additionally, [regal fritillary](#) (*Argynnis idalia*) and [Pawnee skipper](#) (*Hesperia leonardus pawnee*), both butterfly species of special concern, have been documented in the footprint of the proposed project in Shible 9 Moderate MBS Site in Swift County (T121N R43W Sect. 9) and several MBS sites in Big Stone County (T121N R46W Sect. 21 & 22). To protect the Dakota skipper and other prairie obligate butterfly species, **it is imperative that the destruction and disturbance of native prairie be avoided.**
- [Elktoe](#) (*Alasmodonta marginata*), a state-listed threatened mussel species has been documented in the Pomme de Terre River. [Black sandshell](#) (*Ligumia recta*) and [creek heelsplitter](#) (*Lasmigona compressa*), both state-listed species of special concern, have been documented in the Chippewa River. As such, effective erosion prevention and sediment control practices must be implemented and maintained near these rivers throughout the duration of the project and incorporated into any stormwater management plan. If project details change and these rivers are expected to be impacted in any way, contact [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us) as further action may be needed.
- [Big brown bat](#) (*Eptesicus fuscus*), a state-listed species of special concern, has been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project. During the active season (approximately April-November) bats roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Tree removal can negatively impact bats by destroying roosting habitat, especially during the pup rearing season when females are forming maternity roosting colonies and the pups cannot yet fly. To minimize these impacts, **the DNR recommends that tree removal be avoided from June 1 through August 15.**
- [American white pelican](#) (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), a state-listed species of special concern, has been documented at Marsh Lake, Artichoke Lake, and several lakes in Pope County within the vicinity of the proposed project. This migratory species typically nests in colonies on bare islands, isolated from predators and humans. Marsh Lake, which is located on the borders of Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, and Swift counties approximately 3.5 miles from the proposed project, is the largest known colony in North America. **The DNR recommends installing avian flight diverters on power cables near waterbodies to reduce bird collisions with power cables.**

- [Trumpeter swan](#) (*Cygnus buccinator*), a state-listed species of special concern, have been documented nesting in the vicinity of the proposed project. During the breeding season, trumpeter swans select small ponds and lakes with extensive beds of cattails, bulrush, sedges, and/or horsetail. Ideal habitat includes about 100 m of open water for take-off, stable levels of unpolluted water, emergent vegetation, low levels of human disturbance, and the presence of muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) houses and American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) lodges for use as nesting platforms. If any of the wetlands on site provide suitable habitat, swans may choose to nest in these wetlands. **The DNR recommends avoiding construction activities late April through early June near suitable nesting habitat and installing avian flight diverters on power cables near waterbodies to reduce bird collisions with power cables.**
- [Short-eared owl](#) (*Asio flammeus*), a species of special concern, has been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project in Swift County (T121N R42W Sect. 14, 15, 22, 23). This species nests on the ground in open areas such as grasslands, marshes, and peatlands. **Minimize disturbance as much as feasible to nesting habitat during nesting season, May through June.**
- [Great Plains toad](#) (*Anaxyrus cognatus*), a state-listed species of special concern, was documented in the vicinity of the proposed project along U.S. Highway 75 in Big Stone County. This species is found in remnant prairies and grasslands in Western Minnesota. They breed from May to July in highly ephemeral water-filled prairie depressions and have adapted to breed in flooded agricultural fields. **Given the presence of these rare toads, the DNR recommends that the use of erosion control mesh, if any, be limited to [wildlife-friendly materials](#).**
- Please visit the [DNR Rare Species Guide](#) for more information on the habitat use of the species mentioned above and recommended measures to avoid or minimize impacts. For further assistance with these species, please contact the appropriate [Regional Ecologist](#).

#### *Federally Protected Species*

- Dakota skipper is a federally threatened species. **To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#).** For additional information on this species, see the [USFWS Dakota Skipper Information Page](#). For information on conservation measures for this species, including habitat preservation and restoration, see the [USFWS Dakota Skipper Conservation Guidelines](#).

#### *Environmental Review and Permitting*

- We understand that the planning for this project was not finalized when this Natural Heritage Review was conducted. Given the presence of rare ecologically significant areas and state-protected species with the current route, further Natural Heritage Review will be needed for alternate routes and/or the finalized route. Resubmission will ensure compliance with state

statute and rules. Please reference this project (2024-00481) when submitting alternate routes and/or the finalized route for future Natural Heritage Review.

- Please include (1) a copy of this review letter, (2) the MCE-generated Conservation Planning Report, and (3) the MCE-generated Final Project Report in any state or local license or permit application. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Route Permit Application should address potential impacts to the above rare features and identify avoidance or mitigation measures that will be implemented. Please note that measures to avoid or minimize disturbance to the above rare features may be included as restrictions or conditions in any required permits or licenses.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Division of Ecological and Water Resources, Department of Natural Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area. If additional information becomes available regarding rare features in the vicinity of the project, further review may be necessary.

For environmental review purposes, the results of this Natural Heritage Review are valid for one year; the results are only valid for the project location and project description provided with the request. **If project details change or the project has not occurred within one year, please resubmit the project for review within one year of initiating project activities.**

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute project approval by the Department of Natural Resources. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential impacts to these rare features. Visit the [Natural Heritage Review website](#) for additional information regarding this process, survey guidance, and other related information. For information on the environmental review process or other natural resource concerns, you may contact your [DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist](#).

Thank you for consulting us on this matter and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely,

*Molly Barrett*

Digitally signed by Molly Barrett  
Date: 2024.08.22 16:58:15 -05'00'

Natural Heritage Review Specialist

[Molly.Barrett@state.mn.us](mailto:Molly.Barrett@state.mn.us)

Cc: [Owen Baird](#), Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Northwest (Region 1)

Cc: [Becky Marty](#), Regional Ecologist, Northwest (Region 1)

Cc: [Haley Byron](#), Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, South (Region 4)  
Cc: [Megan Benage](#), Regional Ecologist, South (Region 4)  
Cc: [Jennie Skancke](#), Wetlands Program Coordinator  
Cc: [Keylor Andrews](#), Calcareous Fen Program Coordinator

# Conservation Planning Report: 2024-00481

**This document is intended for planning purposes only** for the area of interest defined by the user. The report identifies ecologically significant areas documented within the defined area of interest plus any additional search distance indicated below. These ecologically significant areas can be viewed in the Explore Tab of the Minnesota Conservation Explorer. Please visit [MN Geospatial Commons](#) for downloadable GIS data.

**This document does not meet the criteria for a Natural Heritage Review.** If a Natural Heritage Review is needed, please define an Area of Interest in the Explore Tab and click on the Natural Heritage Review option.

**This document does not include known occurrences of state-listed or federally listed species.**

## MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

*Search distance = 330 feet*

Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) Sites of Biodiversity Significance are areas with varying levels of native biodiversity that may contain high quality native plant communities, rare plants, rare animals, and/or animal aggregations. A [Biodiversity Significance Rank](#) is assigned on the basis of the number of rare species, the quality of the native plant communities, size of the site, and context within the landscape. MBS Sites are ranked Outstanding, High, or Moderate. Areas ranked as Below were found to be disturbed and are retained in the layer as negative data. These areas do not meet the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance but may have conservation value at the local level as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or as areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat. The DNR recommends avoidance of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked High or Outstanding.

Wetlands within MBS Sites of Outstanding or High Biodiversity Significance may be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

For more information please visit [MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance](#).

The following MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Akron 21	Below	final
AKRON WPA	Below	final
ARTICHOKE WPA	Below	final
Barsness WPA	Moderate	final
Ben Wade 24	Below	final
FAIRFIELD 15	Below	final
Forada WMA	Below	final
HAMANN WPA	High	final
HILLMAN WPA	High	final
HWY 12 PARK PRAIRIE	Below	final
Jorgenson WPA	Moderate	final
Lake Mary 15	Below	final
Lake Mary 20	Below	final
Lake Mary Woods	Moderate	final
Leven 3	Moderate	final

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Leven 20/30	Below	final
Leven 31	Below	final
Little Chippewa River	Moderate	final
MAKI WPA	Moderate	final
MENZEL WPA	Below	final
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	Moderate	final
MOYER 9	Moderate	final
New Prairie 27	Below	final
New Prairie 35	Below	final
ODESSA 16	Moderate	final
ODESSA 21	Moderate	final
ODESSA 22 SE	Below	final
ODESSA 22	High	final
ODESSA 28	Moderate	final
Odessa 29	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 13	Below	final
ORTONVILLE 14	Below	final
Ortonville 21	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 22	High	final
Reno 31	Moderate	final
Reno 36	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 9	Moderate	final
SHIBLE 16	Below	final
Starbuck WPA	Moderate	final
STONY RUN	Moderate	final
Swift Co. WPA	Moderate	final
TARA 31	Moderate	final
Walden 3	Moderate	final
Walden 29	Below	final
Walden WPA	Below	final
White Bear Lake 17	Below	final

# DNR Native Plant Communities

Search distance = 330 feet

A native plant community is a group of native plants that interact with each other and with their environment in ways not greatly altered by modern human activity or by introduced organisms. These groups of native plant species form recognizable units, such as oak savannas, pine forests, or marshes, that tend to repeat over space and time. Native plant communities are classified and described by considering vegetation, hydrology, landforms, soils, and natural disturbance regimes.

DNR Native Plant Community types and subtypes are given a [Conservation Status Rank](#) that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant). Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 are considered rare in the state. The DNR recommends avoidance of rare native plant communities.

Wetland native plant communities with a conservation status rank of S1 through S3 may also be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

DNR Native Plant Communities may be given a Condition Rank that reflects the degree of ecological integrity of a specific occurrence of a native plant community. The Condition Rank is based on species composition, vegetation structure, ecological processes and functions, level of human disturbance, presence of exotic species, and other factors. Condition Ranks range from A-rank (excellent ecological integrity) to D-rank (poor ecological integrity). A Condition Rank of NR means Not Ranked and a Condition Rank of MULTI mean multiple ranks are present because the record is a native plant community complex.

For more information please visit [Minnesota's Native Plant Communities](#).

The following DNR Native Plant Communities are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Barsness WPA	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Barsness WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HAMANN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Jorgenson WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Lake Mary Woods	MHc36b	<a href="#">Red Oak - Basswood Forest (Calcareous Till)</a>	S4	2
Leven 3	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Leven 3	WMn82b	<a href="#">Sedge Meadow</a>	S4 or S5	2
Leven 20/30	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Little Chippewa River	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Little Chippewa River	PWL_CX	Prairie Wetland Complex	(S1, S2, S3)	2
MAKI WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
MIDDLE STONY RUN SOUTH	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
ODESSA 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 21	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 22	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 28	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 29	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	2
Odessa 29	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	OPp93b	<a href="#">Calcareous Fen (Southwestern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
Ortonville 21	WMs83a2	<a href="#">Seepage Meadow/Carr. Aquatic Sedge Subtype</a>	S3	1
Ortonville 21	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a1	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Minnesota River Subtype</a>	S2	7
ORTONVILLE 22	ROs12a2	<a href="#">Crystalline Bedrock Outcrop (Prairie), Sioux Quartzite Subtype</a>	S2	1



MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Reno 31	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Reno 36	MRp93c	<a href="#">Arrowhead Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Reno 36	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	3
Reno 36	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
SHIBLE 9	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Starbuck WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
STONY RUN	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Swift Co. WPA	MRp83b	<a href="#">Cattail Marsh (Prairie)</a>	S1	1
Swift Co. WPA	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
TARA 31	WPs54b	<a href="#">Wet Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Walden 3	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Not Within MBS Site	FDs36	<a href="#">Southern Dry-Mesic Oak-Aspen Forest</a>	(S3S4)	1
Not Within MBS Site	WMs83	<a href="#">Southern Seepage Meadow/Carr</a>	(S2, S3)	1

## Calcareous Fens

Search distance = 5 miles

A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota under the Wetland Conservation Act (*Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.223*). Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. For more information regarding calcareous fens, please see the [Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet](#) or review the [List of Known Calcareous Fens](#).

The following Calcareous Fens are within the search area:

Fen Site Name	Fen ID	TRS
Nora 29	30146	126N040W - 29
Stony Run	19784	121N045W - 19; 121N045W - 20

## DNR Old Growth Stands

Search distance = 330 feet

[Old-growth forests](#) are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time, generally at least 120 years, without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbances such as fires, windstorms, or logging. Old-growth forests are a unique, nearly vanished piece of Minnesota's history and ecology; less than 4% of Minnesota's old-growth forests remain. The DNR recommends avoidance of all DNR Old Growth Stands. The following DNR Old Growth Stands have been documented within the search area.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

## MN Prairie Conservation Plan

Search distance = 330 feet

The [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#), a twenty-five year strategy for accelerating prairie conservation in the state, identifies Core Areas, Corridors, and Corridor Complexes as areas to focus conservation efforts. The Plan's strategies include protection, enhancement, and restoration of grassland and wetland habitat. To meet the Plan's goals, approaches within Core Areas will need to include restoration and approaches within Corridors will need to include conservation of grassland habitat which can provide stepping stones between larger Core Areas.

The following MN Prairie Conservation Plan Designations are within the search area:



- Core Area: Lac qui Parle
- Corridor: Alexandria Moraine
- Corridor Complex: McIver WPA

## Important Bird Areas

Search distance = 1 mile

[Important Bird Areas](#), identified by Audubon Minnesota in partnership with the DNR, are part of an international conservation effort aimed at conserving globally important bird habitats. They are voluntary and non-regulatory, but the designation demonstrates the significant ecological value of the area.

The following Important Birds Areas are within the search area:

- [Lac Qui Parle - Big Stone IBA](#)

## Lakes of Biological Significance

Search distance = 330 feet

[Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes as determined by the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. To be included in this layer, a lake only needs to meet the criteria for one of these four community types. The lake is assigned a biological significance of Outstanding, High, or Moderate based on the community with the highest quality.

The following Lakes of Biological Significance are within the search area:

Public Water Basin Name	Biological Significance	Plant Rank	Fish Rank	Amphibian Rank	Bird Rank
Artichoke	Moderate	3			

## USFWS Habitat Conservation Plans

A [Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#) is a mechanism for compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act for a given set of activities and protected species. An HCP is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of an application for an [incidental take permit \(ITP\)](#). The ITP allows the permit holder to proceed with activities covered in the HCP that could result in the unintentional take of federally listed species.

[Lakes States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan \(Bat HCP\)](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) This HCP was created to provide flexibility to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage forests while addressing federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations related to federally threatened and endangered bat species. The Bat HCP covers three bat species within Minnesota: northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and tricolored bat. This report is intended to help non-federal, non-DNR landowners evaluate their potential eligibility for the Landowner Enrollment Program of the Bat HCP (For DNR-administered land, DNR staff should refer to the Bat HCP Implementation Policy).

[Landowner Enrollment Program](#) – DNR’s incidental take permit may be extended through the Landowner Enrollment Program (LEP) to eligible non-federal landowners who conduct forest management activities. Landowners may be eligible to enroll in the LEP if they are a county land administrator, own more than 10,000 acres, or own land that overlaps a Bat HCP feature. The results below indicate if the defined area of interest overlaps a Bat HCP feature. For more information on how to enroll in the LEP, please visit the [Landowner Enrollment Program \(LEP\)](#).

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No Bat HCP features were found within the area of interest. Landowners are only eligible to apply for the Landowner Enrollment Program if they are a county land administrator or they own more than 10,000 acres.

## USFWS Regulatory Layers

To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#). This report is not a substitution for a Section 7 review.

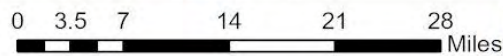
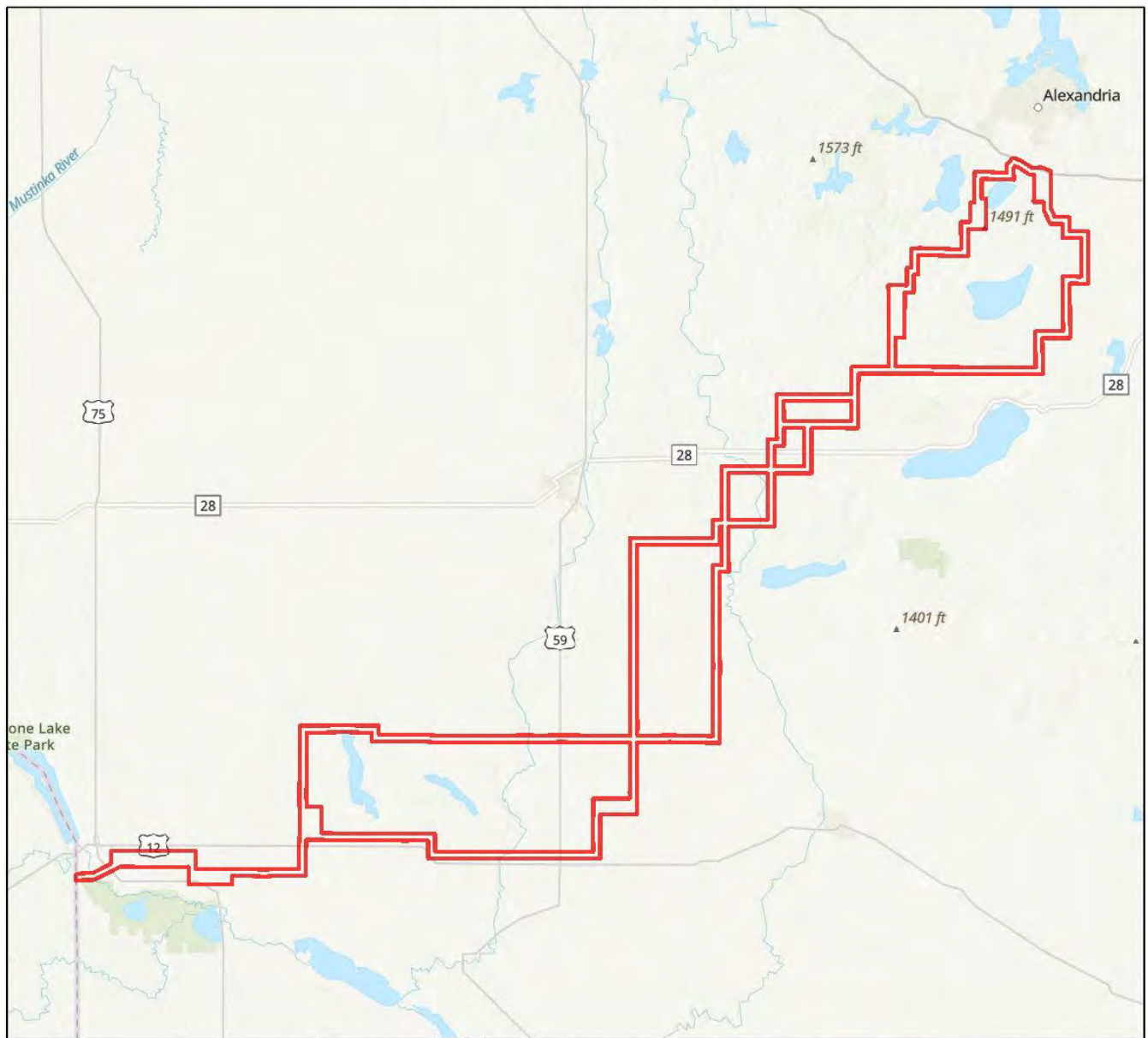
For informational purposes only, this tool currently checks the following USFWS Regulatory Layers:

Rusty Patched Bumblebee High Potential Zones: (*search distance = 0; within area of interest only*) The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), federally listed as endangered, is likely to be present in suitable habitat within the high potential zones. From April through October this species uses underground nests in upland grasslands, shrublands, and forest edges, and forages where nectar and pollen are available. From October through April the species overwinters under tree litter in upland forests and woodlands. The rusty patched bumble bee may be impacted by a variety of land management activities including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, tree-removal, haying, grazing, herbicide use, pesticide use, land-clearing, soil disturbance or compaction, or use of non-native bees. The [USFWS RPBB guidance](#) provides guidance on avoiding impacts to rusty patched bumble bee and a key for determining if actions are likely to affect the species; the determination key can be found in the appendix. Please visit the [USFWS Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Map](#) for the most current locations of High Potential Zones.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

# 2024-00481

## Conservation Planning Map



Area of Interest

Size (acres): 47,402.36

County(s): Big Stone, Douglas, Pope, Stevens +

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS  
 Esri, CGIAR, USGS  
 Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS



From: [Baird, Owen \(DNR\)](#)  
To: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Byron, Haley \(DNR\)](#)  
Cc: [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Brusven, Christina](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Musiak, Sophia \(DNR\)](#)  
Subject: RE: BSSA Transmission Project Shapefiles  
Date: Friday, September 13, 2024 12:48:50 PM  
Attachments: [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Kevin,

DNR staff have reviewed the updated route alignments provided on 8/20 and have the following comments for your consideration. We look forward to meeting with you on September 24th to discuss this project further.

BSSA - DNR Preferred Route Segments by Unique\_ID - 9/13/2024

S2 – Minnesota River Crossing

Follows existing transmission line crossings over the Minnesota River, which is part of the Minnesota State Water Trail in this location and Minnesota River State Trail. It also significantly reduces impacts on state-protected species and avoids an area of high biodiversity significance, designated rare natural communities, native rock outcrop plant communities, and a waterfowl production area. This route is also further from Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge.

S3 – Further from Ortonville 25 and Stoney Run fens.

S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9 - Overall, this grouping, to a larger extent, borders and directly intersects less with sites of biodiversity significance, state-listed species, public watercourses and basins, and areas that are important for waterfowl production.

C1 – Farther from Chippewa R. and avoids some rare species records.

C2 – No option, but acceptable.

C8 – Avoids WMA.

C4-C11 – Avoids White Bear Lake wetland area.

C10 – Avoids WMA.

C6 – No options. Is adjacent to WMA, but more limited options here. We appreciate removing the WMA crossing.

N6 – Avoids route between lakes.

N11 – Avoids public water wetland crossing.

N8

Within the DNR preferred routes, we still have specific areas of concern including calcareous fens near S3-S4, the route adjacent to White Bear WMA, and NPCs including upland prairie and wetlands in the Reno 36 Moderate MBS site in Pope Co on N6 near Hwy 55 north of Glenwood.

**Owen Baird**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Phone: 218-580-0381

[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)

[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)



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**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:49 PM

**To:** Baird, Owen (DNR) <[owen.baird@state.mn.us](mailto:owen.baird@state.mn.us)>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <[Haley.Byron@state.mn.us](mailto:Haley.Byron@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Humburg, Joshua <[jhumburg@otpc.com](mailto:jhumburg@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>; Brusven, Christina <[CBrusven@fredlaw.com](mailto:CBrusven@fredlaw.com)>; Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>

**Subject:** BSSA Transmission Project Shapefiles

**This message may be from an external email source.**

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Dear Owen and Haley,

As you are aware, Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services are proposing to construct a new transmission line, the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line, between Big Stone, South Dakota and Alexandria, Minnesota in order to provide additional transmission capacity, to mitigate current capacity issues, and to improve electric system reliability throughout the region as more renewable energy resources are added to the electric system in and around the region. We have initiated the planning and permitting processes with relevant state and federal agencies, and plan to submit our route permit application to the MN Public Utilities Commission and MN Department of Commerce sometime in Q4 of this year. Attached to this email are shapefiles of the currently proposed route options.

We appreciate the opportunity to consult with the DNR ahead of our permit application submission. We did adjust our routing after taking into consideration comments by the public and various federal, state and local agencies.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions.



Kevin Scheidecker

Senior Environmental Specialist

Environmental Services

Direct: 218-739-8773

[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

**From:** Minnesota Conservation Explorer <mce-auto.dnr@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2024 2:04 PM  
**To:** Lueth, Katie  
**Subject:** Natural Heritage Review: Automated Results Posted

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**Project:** OTP/MRES BSSA Supplemental Areas

**Project ID:** [2024-00815](#)

**Date Submitted:** 09/24/2024 - 14:00

**Organization:**

Dear Katie Lueth,

Thank you for submitting the request for a Natural Heritage Review of OTP/MRES BSSA Supplemental Areas. The automated results of the review can be found at <https://mce.dnr.state.mn.us/project/otp-mres-bssa-supplemental-areas-10621> by clicking on the most recent Project Report listed in the Automated Review Results table. You will need to log in to see the results.

If no further review is needed, the report will include a cover letter and map summarizing your project and a Natural Heritage Review letter.

If further review is needed, the report will include a cover letter and map summarizing your project and a notice that your project needs further review by the Natural Heritage Review Team. If your project needs further review, you will receive a separate notification email when the review process is complete and the Natural Heritage Review letter has been posted.

The Project Report can be printed for your files, and may be included in any public environmental review document and may be submitted to permitting, licensing, or other government authorities.

If you have questions about the contents of the report or need further assistance, please see the contact information contained within the report. Please send status inquiries to [Review.NHIS@state.mn.us](mailto:Review.NHIS@state.mn.us).

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY to this email, as it has been generated automatically and you will not receive a response.

*Natural Heritage Review Team  
Minnesota DNR  
Minnesota Conservation Explorer  
<https://mce.dnr.state.mn.us/>*



# Conservation Planning Report: OTP/MRES BSSA Supplemental Areas

**This document is intended for planning purposes only** for the area of interest defined by the user. The report identifies ecologically significant areas documented within the defined area of interest plus any additional search distance indicated below. These ecologically significant areas can be viewed in the Explore Tab of the Minnesota Conservation Explorer. Please visit [MN Geospatial Commons](#) for downloadable GIS data.

**This document does not meet the criteria for a Natural Heritage Review.** If a Natural Heritage Review is needed, please define an Area of Interest in the Explore Tab and click on the Natural Heritage Review option.

**This document does not include known occurrences of state-listed or federally listed species.**

## MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

*Search distance = 330 feet*

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Wetlands within MBS Sites of Outstanding or High Biodiversity Significance may be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

For more information please visit [MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance](#).

The following MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	Biodiversity Significance	Status
Barsness WPA	Moderate	final
HILLMAN WPA	High	final
ODESSA 13	Below	final
Odessa 14	Below	final
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	Moderate	final
ODESSA 16	Moderate	final
Odessa 23 NW	Moderate	final
Odessa 29	Moderate	final
Ortonville 21	Moderate	final
ORTONVILLE 22	High	final
TARA 1	Below	final
Walden 4	Moderate	final



## DNR Native Plant Communities

Search distance = 330 feet

A native plant community is a group of native plants that interact with each other and with their environment in ways not greatly altered by modern human activity or by introduced organisms. These groups of native plant species form recognizable units, such as oak savannas, pine forests, or marshes, that tend to repeat over space and time. Native plant communities are classified and described by considering vegetation, hydrology, landforms, soils, and natural disturbance regimes.

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Wetland native plant communities with a conservation status rank of S1 through S3 may also be considered Rare Natural Communities under the Wetland Conservation Act. For technical guidance on Rare Natural Communities, please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#).

DNR Native Plant Communities may be given a Condition Rank that reflects the degree of ecological integrity of a specific occurrence of a native plant community. The Condition Rank is based on species composition, vegetation structure, ecological processes and functions, level of human disturbance, presence of exotic species, and other factors. Condition Ranks range from A-rank (excellent ecological integrity) to D-rank (poor ecological integrity). A Condition Rank of NR means Not Ranked and a Condition Rank of MULTI mean multiple ranks are present because the record is a native plant community complex.

For more information please visit [Minnesota's Native Plant Communities](#).

The following DNR Native Plant Communities are within the search area:

MBS Site Name	NPC Code	Native Plant Community Classification	Conservation Status Rank	Number of Communities
Barsness WPA	UPs13d	<a href="#">Dry Hill Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
HILLMAN WPA	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	2
ODESSA 15 SOUTHEAST	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
ODESSA 16	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Odessa 23 NW	UPs23a	<a href="#">Mesic Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1
Ortonville 21	UPs13b	<a href="#">Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)</a>	S2	1

## Calcareous Fens

Search distance = 5 miles

A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota under the Wetland Conservation Act (*Minnesota Statutes*, [section 103G.223](#)). Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. For more information regarding calcareous fens, please see the [Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet](#) or review the [List of Known Calcareous Fens](#).

The following Calcareous Fens are within the search area:

Fen Site Name	Fen ID	TRS
Stony Run	19784	121N045W - 19; 121N045W - 20

## DNR Old Growth Stands

*Search distance = 330 feet*

[Old-growth forests](#) are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time, generally at least 120 years, without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbances such as fires, windstorms, or logging. Old-growth forests are a unique, nearly vanished piece of Minnesota's history and ecology; less than 4% of Minnesota's old-growth forests remain. The DNR recommends avoidance of all DNR Old Growth Stands. The following DNR Old Growth Stands have been documented within the search area.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

## MN Prairie Conservation Plan

*Search distance = 330 feet*

The [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#), a twenty-five year strategy for accelerating prairie conservation in the state, identifies Core Areas, Corridors, and Corridor Complexes as areas to focus conservation efforts. The Plan's strategies include protection, enhancement, and restoration of grassland and wetland habitat. To meet the Plan's goals, approaches within Core Areas will need to include restoration and approaches within Corridors will need to include conservation of grassland habitat which can provide stepping stones between larger Core Areas.

The following MN Prairie Conservation Plan Designations are within the search area:

- Core Area: Lac qui Parle
- Corridor: Alexandria Moraine

## Important Bird Areas

*Search distance = 1 mile*

[Important Bird Areas](#), identified by Audubon Minnesota in partnership with the DNR, are part of an international conservation effort aimed at conserving globally important bird habitats. They are voluntary and non-regulatory, but the designation demonstrates the significant ecological value of the area.

The following Important Birds Areas are within the search area:

- [Lac Qui Parle - Big Stone IBA](#)

## Lakes of Biological Significance

*Search distance = 330 feet*

[Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes as determined by the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. To be included in this layer, a lake only needs to meet the criteria for one of these four community types. The lake is assigned a biological significance of Outstanding, High, or Moderate based on the community with the highest quality.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

## USFWS Habitat Conservation Plans

A [Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#) is a mechanism for compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act for a given set of activities and protected species. An HCP is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of an application for an [incidental take permit \(ITP\)](#). The ITP allows the permit holder to proceed with activities covered in the HCP that could result in the unintentional take of federally listed species.

[Lakes States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan \(Bat HCP\)](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) This HCP was created to provide flexibility to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage forests while addressing federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations related to federally threatened and endangered bat species. The Bat HCP covers three bat species within Minnesota: northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and tricolored bat. This report is intended to help non-federal, non-DNR landowners evaluate their potential eligibility for the Landowner Enrollment Program of the Bat HCP (For DNR-administered land, DNR staff should refer to the Bat HCP Implementation Policy).

[Landowner Enrollment Program](#) – DNR's incidental take permit may be extended through the Landowner Enrollment Program (LEP) to eligible non-federal landowners who conduct forest management activities. Landowners may be eligible to enroll in the LEP if they are a county land administrator, own more than 10,000 acres, or own land that overlaps a Bat HCP feature. The results below indicate if the defined area of interest overlaps a Bat HCP feature. For more information on how to enroll in the LEP, please visit the [Landowner Enrollment Program \(LEP\)](#).

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No Bat HCP features were found within the area of interest. Landowners are only eligible to apply for the Landowner Enrollment Program if they are a county land administrator or they own more than 10,000 acres.

## USFWS Regulatory Layers

To ensure compliance with federal law, conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\) tool](#). This report is not a substitution for a Section 7 review.

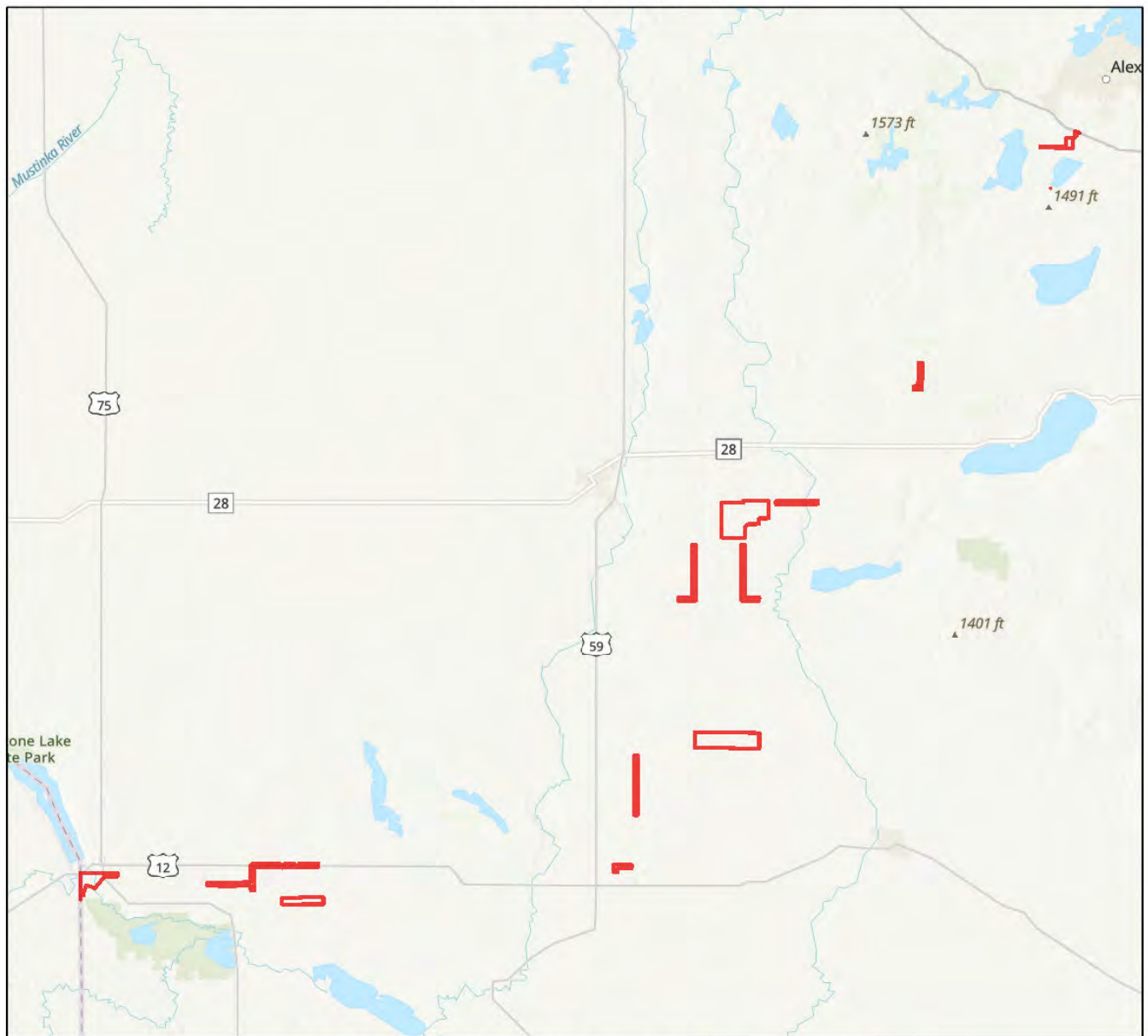
For informational purposes only, this tool currently checks the following USFWS Regulatory Layers:

[Rusty Patched Bumblebee High Potential Zones](#): (search distance = 0; within area of interest only) The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), federally listed as endangered, is likely to be present in suitable habitat within the high potential zones. From April through October this species uses underground nests in upland grasslands, shrublands, and forest edges, and forages where nectar and pollen are available. From October through April the species overwinters under tree litter in upland forests and woodlands. The rusty patched bumble bee may be impacted by a variety of land management activities including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, tree-removal, haying, grazing, herbicide use, pesticide use, land-clearing, soil disturbance or compaction, or use of non-native bees. The [USFWS RPBB guidance](#) provides guidance on avoiding impacts to rusty patched bumble bee and a key for determining if actions are likely to affect the species; the determination key can be found in the appendix. Please visit the [USFWS Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Map](#) for the most current locations of High Potential Zones.

**SEARCH RESULTS:** No features were found within the search area.

# OTP/MRES BSSA Supplemental Areas

## Conservation Planning Map



0 3.25 6.5 13 19.5 26 Miles

Area of Interest

Size (acres): 7,895.20

County(s): Big Stone, Douglas, Pope, Stevens +

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS  
 Esri, CGIAR, USGS  
 Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS



## Minnesota Department of Transportation

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
October 27, 2023	Email	Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT)	Applicants	MNDOT requests shapefiles regarding the BSSA Project
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	MNDOT	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
November 13, 2023	Email	Applicants	MNDOT	Response to MNDOT providing shapefile of BSSA Project
November 22, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MNDOT regarding the BSSA Project
November 27, 2023	Email	Applicants	MNDOT	Meeting summary from November 22, 2023 meeting with MNDOT regarding the BSSA Project
November 27, 2023	Email	MNDOT	Applicants	MNDOT resource links
November 29, 2023	Email/Attachments	MNDOT	Applicants	Applicant checklist and utilities BSSA Project review ENM
December 15, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MNDOT regarding the BSSA Project
December 15, 2023	Email	MNDOT	Applicants	Sending MNDOT CHIP and STIP information
February 29, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MNDOT on BSSA Project routing
April 8, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MNDOT
June 3, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and MNDOT
June 6, 2024	Email	MNDOT	Applicants	April 8, 2024, meeting note clarification
August 23, 2024	Email	Applicants	MNDOT	BSSA Project early notification memo (ENM)
September 23, 2024	Letter	MNDOT	Applicants	MNDOT early review of Project information

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us> **Sent:**  
Friday, October 27, 2023 9:57 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com> **Subject:** RE: Big  
Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

EXTERNAL

Good Morning Kevin,

MnDOT welcomes extensive early coordination for projects seeking MPUC approvals. We have developed a process known as Utility Early Notification Memo (ENM) that we've begun utilizing in pre and post MPUC filing scenarios. The intent is to provide you with valuable MnDOT input that will aid in corridor/route development as well as notification of anticipated impacts to the state trunk highway system within a timeline that allows you to add the provided review information to your Agency Correspondence Appendix of the RPA. A certain level of route development is required for the ENM to be useful to both parties.

Once we can participate in a project introduction meeting where I'll explain the process and expectations further, a tailored ENM request will be sent to you/your team. We do ask for a 30-day review period as this information will be sent out to our Office of Environmental Stewardship and other MnDOT functional groups for their review.

|

I will be your point of contact throughout the MPUC permitting process and will engage other MnDOT offices as needed.

In the meantime, if there are shapefiles or .kmz files available, please forward. The earlier we can get an idea of the areas of impact, the better prepared we will be for our initial meeting. Your early outreach is much appreciated.

Thank you,

Stacy Kotch Egstad

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678  
St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635  
(Thur)  
[mndot.gov/](https://mndot.gov/)





November 10, 2023

Stacy Kotch-Egstad, Utility Routing and Siting Coord.  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
St Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Utility Routing and Siting Coordinator Kotch-Egstad,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).



HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

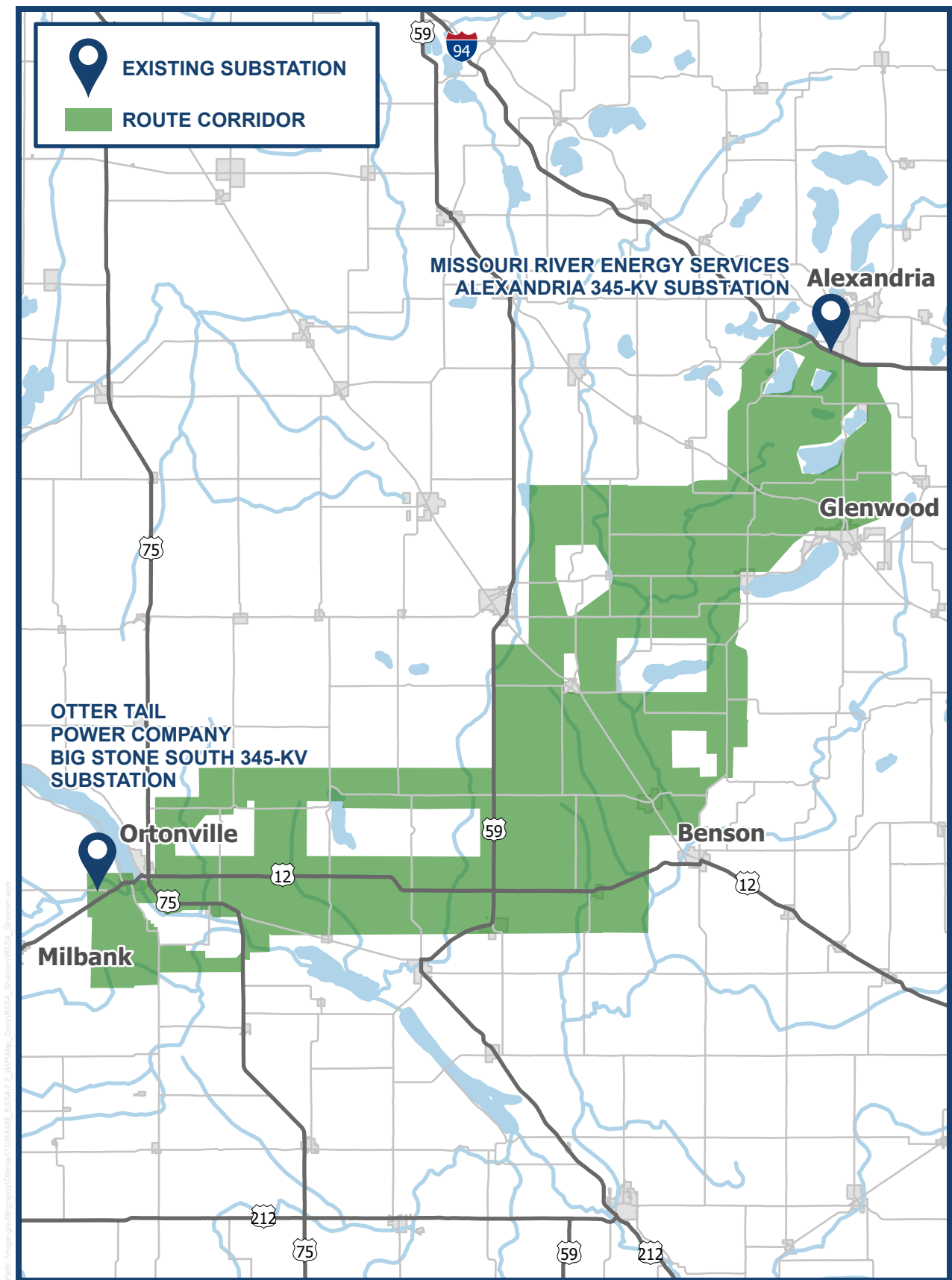
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)  
**Cc:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Langston, Todd](#); [Weiers, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project  
**Date:** Monday, November 13, 2023 5:36:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[BSSA Corridors\\_20231109.zip](#)

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\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

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Stacy,

Attached you will find shapefiles of the corridors we are evaluating for the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line route that was requested in the email below. We look forward to working with you and your team!

Jen

**Jennifer Hanley**, PE\*  
*Environmental Project Manager*

**HDR**  
51 North Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
D 701.353.6139  
[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 3, 2023 12:44 PM  
**To:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>  
**Cc:** Langston, Todd <[TLangston@otpc.com](mailto:TLangston@otpc.com)>; Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Subject:** FW: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jen,

We received a request from the MN DOT utility routing and siting coordinator for the shapefiles or .kmz files that we have for the BSSA Project. Could you have someone send them to Stacy at the email address below? Thanks!

| Kevin Scheidecker



Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpco.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpco.com)

---

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 27, 2023 9:57 AM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Good Morning Kevin,

MnDOT welcomes extensive early coordination for projects seeking MPUC approvals. We have developed a process known as Utility Early Notification Memo (ENM) that we've begun utilizing in pre and post MPUC filing scenarios. The intent is to provide you with valuable MnDOT input that will aid in corridor/route development as well as notification of anticipated impacts to the state trunk highway system within a timeline that allows you to add the provided review information to your Agency Correspondence Appendix of the RPA. A certain level of route development is required for the ENM to be useful to both parties.

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I will be your point of contact throughout the MPUC permitting process and will engage other MnDOT offices as needed.

In the meantime, if there are shapefiles or .kmz files available, please forward. The earlier we can get an idea of the areas of impact, the better prepared we will be for our initial meeting.

Your early outreach is much appreciated.

Thank you,

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635 (Thur)

[mndot.gov/](http://mndot.gov/)



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**From:** Hanley, Jennifer  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 6:37 PM  
**To:** Oh, Jessica (DOT); stacy.kotch@state.mn.us  
**Cc:** Shearer, Melissa S.; Langston, Todd; Weiers, Jason; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Laber, Shauna I.; Vinson, George H.; Malkin, Devin; Peterson, Monica; Richard Dahl; Brian Zavesky  
**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT Meeting Summary\_20231122  
**Attachments:** 20231122\_MnDOT\_Meeting Summary.pdf

Jessica/Stacy,

Thank you for taking the time to meet and discuss the future Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV transmission line. Please find attached the summary of our meeting held on November 22, 2023.

We want to reiterate that our intention is to avoid placing structures within the MnDOT right of way.

We would be interested in having further discussion concerning right of way encroachment with the transmission pole arms and wire (aerial encroachment) and US Highway 12 and MN Highway 29 as potential routing corridors.

We look forward to our next meeting and working with you and your team as we route this line.

Thanks,  
Jen

**Jennifer Hanley, PE\***  
D 701.353.6139

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

---

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 4:51 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason  
**Cc:** Oh, Jessica (DOT)  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Thank you, Jason.

While I'm crafting your Utility ENM for delivery this week, below are some additional links that you/your team may find helpful (apologies if any are duplicates).

**Policy and Guidance** (bottom of this page houses links to our governing Statutes and Rules): [Policy and Guidance - Utility Agreements & Permits - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)

**Utility Permit Guidance:** [Permit Information and Forms - Utility Agreements & Permits - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)

**Online Utility Permit Applications Page:** [Home Page - MnDOT Online Permit Application \(state.mn.us\)](#)

**Freeway Design and Special Condition Road Sections** (Lists MnDOT road sections that are built to a freeway design standard [as well as proposed future freeway segments] with full control of access and that require special permitting procedures): [MnDOT Freeway Design Road Sections](#)

**Transmission Line Guidelines:** [MnDOT Transmission Line Guidelines](#)

**MnDOT Utility Permit Environmental Requirements** (update expected soon): [MnDOT Utility Environmental Requirements](#)

Regards,

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635 (Thur)

[mndot.gov/](https://mndot.gov/)



---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpco.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <jessica.oh@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

You don't often get email from [jweiers@otpco.com](mailto:jweiers@otpco.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Thanks Jessica!

I'll have our administrative assistant see if any of these times work for our team and send out an updated meeting invite.

Thanks,  
Jason

On Nov 27, 2023, at 9:44 AM, Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)> wrote:

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Good morning Jason,

It was good to connect with your team last week, MnDOT appreciates the early coordination and opportunity to consult with OTP. I hope you had a nice and restful thanksgiving holiday!

Stacy and I are not available on 12-20-23. A few open timeslots for our team are below. Stacy is sending the ENM form this week, and is available to walk your folks through that process and highlights of MnDOT's constraints during the meeting. They are available through the [Utility Accommodation manual](#) and guidance as well. Our right of way mapping portal is [here](#).

Wed. 12/6/23 2:00 pm

Thurs. 12/7/23 2:00 pm

Thurs. 12/14/2023 2:00 pm

Friday 12/15/23 11:30 am- 12:30 pm

We look forward to connecting further.

Kindest regards,

Jessica Oh

**Jessica Oh** (she/her)

Strategic Partnerships Director

Strategic Programs & Initiatives Unit | Office of Sustainability and Public Health (OSPH)

Sustainability, Planning and Program Management Division (SPPM)

*\*\*Want to know what MnDOT's Sustainability team is up to? We have lunch at Central Office on Thursdays at 11:30 am – join us! I'm at MnDOT's Central Office in St. Paul on Mondays and Thursdays, please consider meeting with me in person on these days – First Floor, Suite*

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd.

St. Paul, MN 55155

Mail Stop 245

Phone: 612:430-4762

[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)

<image006.png>

<image007.png>

<image008.png>

<image009.png>



<image010.png>

<image011.png>

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**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 6:55 PM  
**To:** Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <[stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

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Jessica,

First of all, thank you and your team for the great conversation today!

Secondly, wow...this invite came out quicker than I expected today! I am not sure if our administrative assistant verified availability with you for December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM, so I wanted to reach out to determine if this proposed time slot works for you and your team? I know this meeting is close to the holiday, but hoping that we can get together sometime before the Christmas break? If December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM does not work, are there other times that might work for you and your team? I think December 7<sup>th</sup> or the week of December 18<sup>th</sup> are going to be the best times for our project team.

For this second meeting, I think we talked about Stacy and others from MN DOT providing us some general guidance on what we should be assuming if we are considering to locate the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV line next to highway rights-of-way. (most likely US Hwy 12 or MN State Hwy 29). By the time of this second meeting, I assume Stacy will have delivered the ENM (Early Notification Memo?) form, which could be another discussion point during our upcoming meeting.

Please let me know the availability of you and your team for the December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM (or any other alternative times that may work for your team in December).

Thank You and Happy Thanksgiving!

Jason

-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** OTP Project Management Area <[OTP\\_ProjecManagementArea@otpc.com](mailto:OTP_ProjecManagementArea@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 2:02 PM  
**To:** OTP Project Management Area; Langston, Todd; Weiers, Jason; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Laber, Shauna I.; Vinson, George H.; Hanley, Jennifer; [devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com); [monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com); Richard Dahl; Brian Zavesky; [jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us); [stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us); [john.gildersleeve@state.mn.us](mailto:john.gildersleeve@state.mn.us); [jeff.illies@state.mn.us](mailto:jeff.illies@state.mn.us); [corey.kack@state.mn.us](mailto:corey.kack@state.mn.us); [jeremy.flatau@state.mn.us](mailto:jeremy.flatau@state.mn.us); [shane.bakken@state.mn.us](mailto:shane.bakken@state.mn.us); [daryn.minske@state.mn.us](mailto:daryn.minske@state.mn.us); [thomas.lundberg@state.mn.us](mailto:thomas.lundberg@state.mn.us); [paul.hartzheim@state.mn.us](mailto:paul.hartzheim@state.mn.us); [tara.carson@state.mn.us](mailto:tara.carson@state.mn.us)

**Cc:** Maanum, Riley K.; [jerilyn.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:jerilyn.swenson@state.mn.us); [darel.tracy@powereng.com](mailto:darel.tracy@powereng.com); Britz, Jordan  
**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT  
**When:** Wednesday, December 20, 2023 11:00 AM-11:50 AM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).  
**Where:** CONF\_Project\_Management\_Room\_(Teams Hardware\_Enabled)

Continued discussion with MN DOT to give an update on preliminary routing efforts for the Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV line and begin a discussion on potential routing opportunities for the new 345 kV line through the project area along existing state and federal highways. The most current project map showing the current routing corridors can be found on our website at: [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

As part of our upcoming discussion, we want to also learn more about the setback requirements that may apply to federal and state highways.

---

## Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 213 717 486 967

Passcode: R4CAtP

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

---

Meeting set up on behalf of Jason Weiers

**Alisha Haugen**

Administrative Assistant  
Transmission Project Management

218-739-8737

[ahaugen@otpc.com](mailto:ahaugen@otpc.com)

<image012.png>

<image013.jpg>

<image014.jpg>

<image015.jpg>

<image016.png>

*Confidentiality Notice: The information included in this e-mail and any attachment is intended only for the personal and confidential use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. This message, including attachments, may be or may contain privileged and confidential customer information. If you as the reader are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error and that any retention, review, use or distribution of this communication or the information contained in it is strictly prohibited. If you received this e-mail in error, destroy it immediately and please notify the sender of this message.*

---

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023 10:35 AM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason  
**Cc:** Oh, Jessica (DOT)  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT  
**Attachments:** OTP and MRES\_Big Stone South - Alex 345kV\_Utility ENM\_Applicant Checklist\_Rev 0\_2023-11-17.docx; OTP and MRES\_Big Stone South - Alex 345kV\_Utility Project Review ENM\_Rev 0\_2023-11-17\_Applicant\_.docx

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Jason,

Attached you will find MnDOT's Utility Early Notification Memo (ENM) and a Supplemental Checklist mean to be used/delivered together.

As briefly discussed in our meeting, it is understood that these are not expected back until a more defined route has been developed as much of the information requested has likely not been researched. If the intention is to have MnDOT ENM review comments back for inclusion in your RPA or before any environmental scoping comments (in the docket) are due, we ask for at least a 30-day review period of the information you provide.

Please reach out with any questions,

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635 (Thur)

[mndot.gov/](http://mndot.gov/)



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**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT)  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 3:51 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>  
**Cc:** Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <jessica.oh@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

Thank you, Jason.

While I'm crafting your Utility ENM for delivery this week, below are some additional links that you/your team may find helpful (apologies if any are duplicates).

**Policy and Guidance** (bottom of this page houses links to our governing Statutes and Rules): [Policy and Guidance - Utility Agreements & Permits - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)

**Utility Permit Guidance:** [Permit Information and Forms - Utility Agreements & Permits - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)

**Online Utility Permit Applications Page:** [Home Page - MnDOT Online Permit Application \(state.mn.us\)](#)  
**Freeway Design and Special Condition Road Sections** (Lists MnDOT road sections that are built to a freeway design standard [as well as proposed future freeway segments] with full control of access and that require special permitting procedures): [MnDOT Freeway Design Road Sections](#)  
**Transmission Line Guidelines:** [MnDOT Transmission Line Guidelines](#)  
**MnDOT Utility Permit Environmental Requirements** (update expected soon): [MnDOT Utility Environmental Requirements](#)

Regards,

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635 (Thur)

[mndot.gov/](#)



---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <[stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

You don't often get email from [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Thanks Jessica!

I'll have our administrative assistant see if any of these times work for our team and send out an updated meeting invite.

Thanks,  
Jason

On Nov 27, 2023, at 9:44 AM, Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)> wrote:

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Good morning Jason,

It was good to connect with your team last week, MnDOT appreciates the early coordination and opportunity to consult with OTP. I hope you had a nice and restful thanksgiving holiday!

Stacy and I are not available on 12-20-23. A few open timeslots for our team are below. Stacy is sending the ENM form this week, and is available to walk your folks through that process and highlights of MnDOT's constraints during the meeting. They are available through the [Utility Accommodation manual](#) and guidance as well. Our right of way mapping portal is [here](#).

Wed. 12/6/23 2:00 pm

Thurs. 12/7/23 2:00 pm  
Thurs. 12/14/2023 2:00 pm  
Friday 12/15/23 11:30 am- 12:30 pm

We look forward to connecting further.

Kindest regards,

Jessica Oh

**Jessica Oh** (she/her)

Strategic Partnerships Director

Strategic Programs & Initiatives Unit | Office of Sustainability and Public Health (OSPH)

Sustainability, Planning and Program Management Division (SPPM)

*\*\*Want to know what MnDOT's Sustainability team is up to? We have lunch at Central Office on Thursdays at 11:30 am – join us! I'm at MnDOT's Central Office in St. Paul on Mondays and Thursdays, please consider meeting with me in person on these days – First Floor, Suite*

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd.

St. Paul, MN 55155

Mail Stop 245

Phone: 612:430-4762

[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)

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<image010.png>

<image011.png>

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**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 6:55 PM

**To:** Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <[jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <[stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)>

**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

**This message may be from an external email source.**

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Jessica,

First of all, thank you and your team for the great conversation today!

Secondly, wow...this invite came out quicker than I expected today! I am not sure if our administrative assistant verified availability with you for December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM, so I wanted to reach out to determine if this proposed time slot works for you and your team? I know this meeting is close to the holiday, but hoping that we can get together sometime before the Christmas break? If December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM does not work, are there other times that might work for you and your team? I think December 7<sup>th</sup> or the week of December 18<sup>th</sup> are going to be the best times for our project team.

For this second meeting, I think we talked about Stacy and others from MN DOT providing us some general guidance on what we should be assuming if we are considering to locate the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV line next to highway rights-of-way. (most likely US Hwy 12 or MN State Hwy 29). By the time of this second meeting, I assume Stacy will have delivered the ENM (Early Notification Memo?) form, which could be another discussion point during our upcoming meeting.

Please let me know the availability of you and your team for the December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM (or any other alternative times that may work for your team in December).

Thank You and Happy Thanksgiving!

Jason

-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** OTP Project Management Area <[OTP\\_ProjecManagementArea@otpc.com](mailto:OTP_ProjecManagementArea@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 2:02 PM

**To:** OTP Project Management Area; Langston, Todd; Weiers, Jason; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Laber, Shauna I.; Vinson, George H.; Hanley, Jennifer; [devin.malkin@hdrinc.com](mailto:devin.malkin@hdrinc.com); [monica.peterson@hdrinc.com](mailto:monica.peterson@hdrinc.com); Richard Dahl; Brian Zavesky; [jessica.oh@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.oh@state.mn.us); [stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us); [john.gildersleeve@state.mn.us](mailto:john.gildersleeve@state.mn.us); [jeff.illies@state.mn.us](mailto:jeff.illies@state.mn.us); [corey.kack@state.mn.us](mailto:corey.kack@state.mn.us); [jeremy.flatau@state.mn.us](mailto:jeremy.flatau@state.mn.us); [shane.bakken@state.mn.us](mailto:shane.bakken@state.mn.us); [daryn.minske@state.mn.us](mailto:daryn.minske@state.mn.us); [thomas.lundberg@state.mn.us](mailto:thomas.lundberg@state.mn.us); [paul.hartzheim@state.mn.us](mailto:paul.hartzheim@state.mn.us); [tara.carson@state.mn.us](mailto:tara.carson@state.mn.us)

**Cc:** Maanum, Riley K.; [jerilyn.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:jerilyn.swenson@state.mn.us); [darel.tracy@powereng.com](mailto:darel.tracy@powereng.com); Britz, Jordan

**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

**When:** Wednesday, December 20, 2023 11:00 AM-11:50 AM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

**Where:** CONF\_Project\_Management\_Room\_(Teams Hardware\_Enabled)

Continued discussion with MN DOT to give an update on preliminary routing efforts for the Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV line and begin a discussion on potential routing opportunities for the new 345 kV line through the project area along existing state and federal highways. The most current project map showing the current routing corridors can be found on our website at: [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

As part of our upcoming discussion, we want to also learn more about the setback requirements that may apply to federal and state highways.

---

## Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 213 717 486 967

Passcode: R4CAtP

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

---

Meeting set up on behalf of Jason Weiers

**Alisha Haugen**

Administrative Assistant  
Transmission Project Management

218-739-8737

[ahaugen@otpc.com](mailto:ahaugen@otpc.com)

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## Utility ENM – Supplemental Information Checklist

**Applicant(s):** **Otter Tail Power & Missouri River Energy Services**

**Type of Project:** **High Voltage Transmission Line**

**Number of Miles (total project):** **95-105**

**Number of Miles (collocated with MnDOT ROW):** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**MnDOT Trunk Highways Potentially Impacted** **US 12, Th 29, ?**

*\*\*NOTE to Project Proposers: Please provide the following supplemental information, which is required for MnDOT staff to initiate review of utility projects. \*\**

### GIS Details

- ☐ Shapefiles and .kml/.kmz's displaying the following Project features (include associated metadata and date of last project/route revision):
  - ☐ Project Centerline<sup>1</sup>
  - ☐ Alternative Route(s)<sup>1</sup>
  - ☐ Route/Corridor Width (Construction), if known<sup>2</sup>
  - ☐ Study Area, if applicable<sup>2</sup>
  - ☐ Additional non-corridor Project details (e.g., substations, compressor stations, valves, staging areas, pipeyards, proposed and/or existing access roads, etc. (if known at time of submittal))
- ☐ Overview map (.pdf format) displaying Project centerline and alternatives (if applicable) with MnDOT Trunk Highways and major features identified. Display full project on one page. Locations of MnDOT Trunk Highways can be accessed [here](#).
  - ☐ Identify locations of detailed maps (see below) on the overview map, and label sequentially for easy identification (e.g., 1, 2, 3 / A, B, C, etc.)
  - ☐ Base layers to include:
    - ☐ Cities
    - ☐ Counties
    - ☐ MnDOT Trunk Highways
    - ☐ [Scenic Byways](#) (within 7-mile buffer)<sup>3</sup>
    - ☐ Major rivers and waterbodies

<sup>1</sup> Include as a polyline.

<sup>2</sup> Includes as polygon. May be a buffered corridor based off the project centerline.

<sup>3</sup> Note that not all scenic byways are MnDOT Trunk Highways. Some are county highways.



- ☐ National and state-owned or managed lands
- ☐ Detailed (zoomed in maps, aerial background, .pdf format) displaying Project details with MnDOT's Trunk Highways identified. Provide a separate map for each Trunk Highway crossing location /collocated segment. Display proposed and existing access locations on state Trunk Highways, if applicable. Indicate if proposed access locations are intended to be permanent or temporary.

*NOTE: Detailed maps are only needed for portions of Project that intersect and/or are collocated with MnDOT Trunk Highways. Map extents should show a minimum of 0.5 mile surrounding the MnDOT Trunk Highway.*

Please provide a **separate** map for each detailed map area for each of the following six major topics:

- ☐ Public Land Ownership (federal/state/county/tribal)
- ☐ Protected Biological Resources
  - ☐ Designated Critical Habitat
  - ☐ Rusty Patch Bumble Bee High Potential Zones
  - ☐ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Native Plant Communities
  - ☐ Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) Railroad Rights-of-Way Prairies
  - ☐ MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance
- ☐ Water Resources and Hydrology
  - ☐ National Wetland Inventory (or field-delineated) wetlands
  - ☐ National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) waterbodies
  - ☐ Floodplains
  - ☐ Drinking Water Supply Management Areas
  - ☐ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)-designated [special waters and impaired waters](#) (with a construction related impairment, e.g., turbidity)
- ☐ Potential Contaminated Sites: What's In My Neighborhood (WIMN) sites within 500-feet of MnDOT Trunk Highway at crossings or collocated areas.
  - MPCA WIMN sites: Multiple Programs, Investigation and Cleanup, and Tanks.
  - Minnesota Department of Agriculture WIMN sites: Small Spills and Investigations, Old Emergencies, Contingency Areas, and Incident Investigations.
- ☐ SSURGO Soils Data (display all soils on map; highlight the following)
  - ☐ Highly erodible soils (water/wind)
  - ☐ Steep slopes (water/wind)
- ☐ Scenic Byways
- ☐ Corresponding data tables for desktop GIS data.
  - ☐ Summary table(s) (Excel format) of publicly available GIS data displayed on the detailed maps

(see above). Include easy-to-interpret geographic data (e.g., label IDs, latitudinal/longitudinal coordinates [DD]) and metadata for each feature so MnDOT staff can easily cross-reference to the feature on the map.

- ☐ Reference list of sources of desktop GIS data displayed on maps. Include URL and date of last download.

### **Non-GIS Information**

- ☐ Temporary workspace and permanent easement typical drawings (greenfield and collocated segments, as applicable). Include typical workspace configurations for road crossings, as applicable.
- ☐ Known occurrences of state- or county-listed noxious weeds (see [EDDMapS](#)) in the vicinity of the project. A current state list is available [here](#) and county lists are [here](#). We recommend consulting with the counties directly to verify their list is current.
- ☐ Narrative summary of environmental field surveys done to date. Provide an anticipated schedule for completion, if applicable.
  - ☐ Cultural Resources
  - ☐ Tribal Resources
  - ☐ Wetlands and Waterbodies
  - ☐ Protected Species / Habitat Assessments
  - ☐ Contaminated Materials (Phase I Environmental Site Assessments/Phase II)
  - ☐ Noxious/Invasive Weeds
  - ☐ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Summary of agency consultations/communications/public engagement done to date. If none, provide an anticipated schedule.
- ☐ Is permanent infrastructure expected to be installed within MnDOT's ROW? If so, provide details.
- ☐ Is travel across/along MnDOT's ROW anticipated? If so, provide details and anticipated Best Management Practices to be used (e.g., timber matting, erosion/sediment controls, etc.). Describe if any proposed access locations will be permanent or temporary.
- ☐ Project Schedule/Major Milestones (Minnesota Public Utilities Commission filing, construction/restoration, in-service date, etc.)
- ☐ Vegetation Management Plans
  - ☐ Provide existing vegetation management plans, or anticipated vegetation management strategies associated with the long-term maintenance of the corridor. Plans should describe methods, seasonality, frequency of maintenance activities (e.g., annual growing season broadcast herbicide treatments, brushing every five years during dormant season).

### **Other**

- ☐ *Powerlines:* Utility pole typical drawings (if collocated, include drawings of proposed poles in relation to existing)
  - ☐ Typical pole spacing lengths, typical pole type (e.g., H-frame, T-frame, etc.) and material
  - ☐ Typical pole footprint and depth
- ☐ *Pipelines:*
  - ☐ Plan and profile typical drawings of workspace configurations showing depth of cover, width of workspaces, topsoil stripping, etc.
  - ☐ Pipe diameter and material

Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services  
Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project  
Early Notification Memo



## Minnesota Department of Transportation

### Early Notification Memo (Utility Projects)

**APPLICANTS: PLEASE RETURN A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS FORM, APPLICANT CHECKLIST, AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION TO THE MnDOT OFFICE OF LAND MANAGEMENT (OLM) MANAGER.**

Click the checkboxes in left column if your project meets thresholds (click heading link for thresholds). By default, MnDOT's Cultural Resources Unit, Environmental Assessment Unit, Protected Species Review Team, Blowing Snow Control, and District staff will be notified of all Utility ENMs.

	Resource/Area of Concern
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Contaminated Materials Management</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Regulated Waste and Storage Tanks</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Vegetation Review and Survey</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Wetlands Coordination</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Water Permits—Federal Agencies, Floodplains</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Historic Roadside Properties Program</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Construction Stormwater and Erosion/Sediment Control</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Safety Rest Area Program</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Scenic Byways</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Railroad</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Airport Influence Area</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Operations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Design Support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety and Operations Management
X	Blowing Snow Control / Snow Fencing
X	<a href="#">Cultural Resources</a> <a href="mailto:CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us">CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us</a>
X	OES Environmental Assessment Unit / Environmental Review
X	<a href="#">Protected Species</a> Program
X	District Planners Staff to be identified by MnDOT

**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

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**Request for information and early coordination from MnDOT functional groups**

The OLM is providing early notification of the proposed utility project described in the subject line of this ENM and is requesting your review of the project. Project information available at this time may be limited, therefore, we recognize that responses are preliminary and may change after reviewing other documents and/or if project details change. However, your early input will help assure that all environmental concerns and interests considered in the development of this project.

**Project Description**

New 95-105-mile 345-kV transmission line from OTP's existing Big Stone South Substation in South Dakota to MRES's existing Alexandria Substation in Minnesota.

**Utility Applicants/ENM Writer:** Provide a plain language narrative description of the utility project location and the nature of the proposed work. Include the following project information below, if known:

- Type of utility
  - High voltage transmission lines
    - pole height – 150ft
    - spacing – 4-6 structures per mile (max span in feet?)
    - voltage – 345kV
- Mileage (total and collocated with MnDOT trunk highways):
- Number and locations of state Trunk Highways crossed and/or miles of proposed collocation:
  - Identify any Scenic Byways within 7 miles of the project
- Typical temporary workspace dimensions and depth of excavations:
- Typical permanent easement dimensions:
- General project schedule (if known):
- *Powerlines* – is there a potential to locate poles/infrastructure within MnDOT ROW?

Provide shapefiles, corresponding maps/datasets, and all other information identified in the enclosed *Utility ENM – Supplemental Information Checklist* form. Please return this completed checklist along with this Utility ENM form. Note that you may need to provide some of the supplemental information in a stand-alone document.

**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

**General Project Information:**

District(s): D4, D8
County(ies):
City(ies):
Planned Construction Dates:
Location and Reference Points: Refer to enclosed maps/shapefiles for location of MnDOT Trunk Highway crossings.
Project Phase:  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Filing (PUC) <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Filing (PUC) <input type="checkbox"/> MnDOT Permitting Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Construction Monitoring and Maintenance</div> Additional Comments (PUC docket number, public comment/notice number/date, etc.): _____
Tribal Lands: Is any part of project within a reservation or tribal trust land outside of reservation boundaries? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, list name of reservation(s): _____ Has the tribe(s) been made aware of the proposed project? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown _____

Current Land Use(s): _____
Recreational Resources: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> There are parks, trails, wildlife refuges, state water trails, and/or recreation areas in the project vicinity. If checked above, will this project have impacts on these parks, trails, refuges, and/or recreation area? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If yes, provide additional details: _____
Environmental Justice
<input type="checkbox"/> There are manufactured home parks, apartment buildings, or other identifiable minority or low-income populations in the project vicinity. If checked above, will this project have any impacts [direct or indirect (e.g., noise)] on any manufactured home parks, apartment buildings, and/or other identifiable minority or low-income populations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If checked, please describe what measures are proposed to mitigate impacts to environmental justice communities: _____

**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

**Additional information, by subject area:**

<b>Contaminated Material</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project includes grading, excavation within MnDOT ROW. Details: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Project includes access and/or travel across MnDOT ROW. Details: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Project is in or near commercial and/or industrial areas.
<input type="checkbox"/> Project may require groundwater dewatering. Details: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has information that indicates potentially contaminated sites are located along the corridor (e.g., filling stations, dumps, manufacturing, scrap yards, dry cleaners, etc.)
Other pertinent information regarding contaminated material: _____

<b>Regulated Waste and Storage Tanks</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project will include building demolition or relocation.
<input type="checkbox"/> Project will include acquisition of property with above ground discarded regulated materials or waste.
<input type="checkbox"/> Project will produce waste that cannot be turned over to construction contractor as excess material (examples: hazardous waste, sandblasting waste, asbestos containing material).
Other pertinent information regarding regulated waste and storage tanks: _____

<b>Vegetation (<a href="#">Map</a><sup>1</sup> vegetation of interest along roadsides)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project may occur along Trunk Highways in the specific locations below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highway 2 (Reference post 35-37 and 42-48)</li><li>• Highway 32 (Reference post 35-37, 49-52, 55-58, and 70-74)</li><li>• Highway 71 (Reference post 81-83)</li><li>• Highway 56 (Reference post 8-16)</li><li>• Highway 102 (Reference post 2-6)</li><li>• Highway 218 (Reference post 20-44)</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project may include soil disturbance within MnDOT right-of-way.
<input type="checkbox"/> Project may include soil disturbance under canopy of existing woody vegetation within or near MnDOT right-of-way.
<input type="checkbox"/> Project is located within an area of known sensitive or protected vegetation identified through the <a href="#">Minnesota Conservation Explorer Planning Tool</a> (within one or more of the following data sets): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Native Plant Community</li><li>• Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) Railroad Rights-of-Way Prairies</li><li>• MBS Site of Biodiversity Significance</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project is located within an area of known high priority weed infestation (data available through <a href="#">EDDMapS.org</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/> Project may require staging or access within MnDOT right-of-way.
Other pertinent information regarding vegetation: _____

<sup>1</sup> Google Earth .kmz; only available to MnDOT staff.

**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

**Wetlands and Waterbodies**

☐ A level 1 wetland/aquatic resource delineation (i.e., mapping exercise using National Wetlands Inventory data, aerial photography and other off-site methods) has been conducted within the project limits.

☐ Based on the level 1 wetland delineation, there are wetlands within the project limits.

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the project have the potential to temporarily impact wetlands?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Does the project have the potential to permanently impact wetlands (e.g., fill or type conversion)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information regarding wetlands and waterbodies: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wetland and Waterbody Permits—Federal Agencies**

☐ An US Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit may be needed.

If checked, the project may qualify for: ☐ Regional General Permit ☐ Individual Permit ☐ Unknown

☐ An US Army Corps of Engineers Section 10 (navigable waters) permit may be needed.

☐ US Coast Guard coordination and/or permit may be needed (navigable waters).

Other pertinent information regarding wetland and waterbody permitting: \_\_\_\_\_

**Floodplains**

☐ The project may impact 100-year floodplains. (see [FEMA Maps](#))

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ If yes, will the project involve any work below or immediately adjacent to the 100-year floodplain elevation?

☐ If yes, will any aboveground structures or impervious surfaces be located within the floodplain?

Other pertinent information regarding floodplains: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Roadside Properties Program**

☐ Project is near or adjacent to known historic roadside properties on MnDOT right of way. Known properties are listed by District, Trunk Highway, Reference Point and Historic Name (of property) in the [Historic Roadside Properties on Minnesota Trunk Highways](#).

☐ Project is near or adjacent to structures/elements in the MnDOT right of way older than fifty years but is not included on list above. Structures/elements include historic walls, historic markers, objects, overlooks, buildings, etc.

Other pertinent information regarding Historic Roadside Properties Program: \_\_\_\_\_

**Construction Stormwater and Erosion/Sediment Control**

☐ Will the project disturb greater than 1 acre of land and require coverage under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) General Permit MNR100001?

☐ Will the project disturb (excavation, grading, stockpiling, equipment traffic, compaction) at least 5 acres of MnDOT ROW?

☐ Will the project result in discharges to special or impaired waters (refer to [MNR100001](#) for examples)?

☐ Will the project disturb slopes steeper than 2.5:1 and ditch gradients greater than 5%?

Other pertinent information regarding Construction Stormwater and Erosion/Sediment Control: \_\_\_\_\_



**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

**Safety Rest Area Program**

- ☐ Project may directly or indirectly impact an existing rest area ([rest area locations](#)), travel information center, wayside, or scenic overlook. This includes temporary closures and disruptions in access to rest area of more than 48 hours.

Other pertinent information regarding Safety Rest Areas:

**Scenic Byways**

- ☐ Project is within 7 miles of a Scenic Byway (maps: Enterprise MnDOT Mapping Application [\[EMMA\]](#), Right of Way Mapping and Monitoring [\[ROWMM\]](#)).

If yes, list the Scenic Byway(s) and provide the nearest distance: \_\_\_\_\_

Height of tallest project structure: \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information regarding Scenic Byways:

**Railroad Coordination and Railroad Agreement** (See [map](#) for Rail Safety and Coordination Project Managers)

- ☐ Construction activity is expected within 50 feet of the centerline of an individual pair of railroad (RR) tracks
- ☐ Project limits are estimated to be within 600 feet of any RR tracks
- ☐ Project involves a detour that directs traffic across a RR grade crossing

Other pertinent information regarding Railroads:

**Airport Influence Area**

- ☐ Project is within five (5) miles of an airport. (For Airport locations see Airport Influence Maps: use the 5-mile criterion, not the influence area).

If yes, provide name of airport, and distance/direction from project: \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information regarding Airports:

**Cultural Resources (Historic Properties and Tribal Consultation) Review**

Provide narrative summary of relevant information regarding cultural resources, surveys, and agency consultation (*e.g., summary of archaeology, architecture/historic properties surveys to date, status of consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), Tribal partners, etc.*):

**Utility Company: Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy Services**  
**Project Name: Big Stone South to Alexandria 345kV Transmission Line Project**  
**Early Notification Memo**

---

**Protected Species Program Review**

☐ Project has a federal nexus (e.g., federal permitting, funding, or crosses federal property).

If so, list federal agencies and associated permitting/funding: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ The project bisects or borders federally-designated critical habitat for threatened and/or endangered species. For more information, see: <https://gt.fws.gov/hq/es/critical-habitat/> | [US Fish and Wildlife Service Open Data \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.fishbase.org/USFWS/OpenData)

☐ Project occurs within or adjacent (within 0.5 miles) to a bumble bee High Potential Zone. See: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=2716d871f88042a2a56b8001a1f1acae>

The project may involve tree clearing on or near MnDOT ROW.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Estimated quantity of tree clearing: \_\_\_\_\_ acres

For tree clearing timing requirements, please see [Technical Memorandum No. 22-05-ENV-01 May 11, 2022](#).<sup>2</sup>

Please provide other pertinent information regarding protected species (e.g., summary of agency consultations with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service/DNR, natural resource site assessments, endangered species survey reports, DNR Natural Heritage Information System [NHIS] or USFW Information for Planning and Consultation [IPaC] reviews, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE TO MnDOT REVIEWERS: SEE SUPPLEMENTAL MAPS AND  
INFORMATION REFERENCED IN THESE RESPONSES**

---

<sup>2</sup> Technical Memo is in the process of being amended and link to be updated.

**From:** [Kotch Egstad, Stacy \(DOT\)](#)  
**To:** [OTP Project Management Area](#); [Langston, Todd](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#); [Laber, Shauna I.](#); [Vinson, George H.](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Malkin, Devin](#); [Peterson, Monica](#); [Richard Dahl](#); [Brian Zavesky](#); [Oh, Jessica \(DOT\)](#); [Gildersleeve, John \(DOT\)](#); [Illies, Jeff \(DOT\)](#); [Kack, Corey \(DOT\)](#); [Flatau, Jeremy \(DOT\)](#); [Bakken, Shane \(DOT\)](#); [Minske, Daryn \(DOT\)](#); [Lundberg, Thomas \(DOT\)](#); [Hartzheim, Paul \(DOT\)](#); [Carson, Tara \(DOT\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Maanum, Riley K.](#); [Swenson, Jerilyn \(DOT\)](#); [Tracy, Darel](#); [Britz, Jordan](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT  
**Date:** Friday, December 15, 2023 1:50:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[image003.jpg](#)  
[image004.jpg](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[MnDOT D4 STIP CHIP.zip](#)

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As promised, see attached CHIP and STIP information.

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635 (Thur)

[mndot.gov/](http://mndot.gov/)



-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** OTP Project Management Area <OTP\_ProjecManagementArea@otpc.com>

**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 3:27 PM

**To:** OTP Project Management Area; Langston, Todd; Weiers, Jason; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Laber, Shauna I.; Vinson, George H.; Hanley, Jennifer; devin.malkin@hdrinc.com; monica.peterson@hdrinc.com; Richard Dahl; Brian Zavesky; Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT); Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT); Gildersleeve, John (DOT); Illies, Jeff (DOT); Kack, Corey (DOT); Flatau, Jeremy (DOT); Bakken, Shane (DOT); Minske, Daryn (DOT); Lundberg, Thomas (DOT); Hartzheim, Paul (DOT); Carson, Tara (DOT)

**Cc:** Maanum, Riley K.; Swenson, Jerilyn (DOT); Tracy, Darel; Britz, Jordan

**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV Line Discussion with MNDOT

**When:** Friday, December 15, 2023 11:30 AM-12:20 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

**Where:** CONF\_Project\_Management\_Room\_(Teams Hardware\_Enabled)

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Continued discussion with MN DOT to give an update on preliminary routing efforts for the Big Stone South - Alexandria 345 kV line and begin a discussion on potential routing opportunities for the new 345 kV line through the project area along existing state and federal highways. The most current project map showing the current routing corridors can be found on our website at:  
[www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

As part of our upcoming discussion, we want to also learn more about the setback requirements that may apply to federal and state highways.

---

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Passcode: R4CAtP

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---

Meeting set up on behalf of Jason Weiers



**Alisha Haugen**

Administrative Assistant  
Transmission Project Management

218-739-8737

[ahaugen@otpc.com](mailto:ahaugen@otpc.com)



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---

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 6, 2024 8:27 AM

**To:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Langston, Todd <tlangston@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>; Laber, Shauna I. <slaber@otpc.com>; Vinson, George H. <gvinson@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Richard Dahl <richard.dahl@mrenergy.com>  
**Cc:** Maanum, Riley K. <rmaanum@otpc.com>; Tracy, Darel <darel.tracy@powereng.com>; Britz, Jordan <jordan.britz@powereng.com>; Shearer, Melissa S. <mshearer@otpc.com>; Sedarski, Joe <Joe.Sedarski@hdrinc.com>; Raine, Katie <Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria (BSSA) 345 kV Line MNDOT Meeting Summary\_20240408

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Thank you for the quick delivery of notes, much appreciated.

I wanted to clarify/correct something that John G. stated in the meeting regarding pole placement allowance within the US 75 ROW. Poles and foundations **are** allowed within the ROW in that area. However, per standard practices, they would be required to be pushed as far back to the road ROW line as possible.

If discoveries are made during the ENM process that prohibit or alter that allowance, I assume we'd all want to discuss that as soon as possible.

Thanks again for your continued early coordination,

**Stacy Kotch Egstad**

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

651-358-0786

[mndot.gov/](http://mndot.gov/)



**From:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 8:23 AM

**To:** Langston, Todd <tlangston@otpc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Humburg, Joshua <jhumburg@otpc.com>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>; Laber, Shauna I. <slaber@otpc.com>; Vinson, George H. <gvinson@otpc.com>; Malkin, Devin <devin.malkin@hdrinc.com>; Peterson, Monica <monica.peterson@hdrinc.com>; Richard Dahl <richard.dahl@mrenergy.com>; Brian Zavesky <brian.zavesky@mrenergy.com>; Oh, Jessica (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <jessica.oh@state.mn.us>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; Gildersleeve, John (DOT) <john.gildersleeve@state.mn.us>; Illies, Jeff (DOT) <jeff.illies@state.mn.us>; Kack, Corey (DOT) <corey.kack@state.mn.us>; Flatau, Jeremy (DOT) <jeremy.flatau@state.mn.us>; Bakken, Shane (DOT) <Shane.Bakken@state.mn.us>; Minske, Daryn (DOT) <daryn.minske@state.mn.us>; Lundberg, Thomas (DOT) <thomas.lundberg@state.mn.us>; Hartzheim, Paul (DOT) <Paul.Hartzheim@state.mn.us>; Carson, Tara (DOT) <tara.carson@state.mn.us>

**Cc:** Maanum, Riley K. <rmaanum@otpc.com>; Swenson, Jerilyn (DOT) <Jerilyn.Swenson@state.mn.us>; Tracy, Darel <darel.tracy@powereng.com>; Britz, Jordan <jordan.britz@powereng.com>; Shearer, Melissa S. <mshearer@otpc.com>; Sedarski, Joe <Joe.Sedarski@hdrinc.com>; Raine, Katie <Katie.Raine@hdrinc.com>

**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria (BSSA) 345 kV Line MNDOT Meeting Summary\_20240408

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All,

Thanks again for taking the time to discuss the BSSA project with us, we look forward to the continued collaboration with MnDOT as we work through the routing process. The meeting summary is attached. If you have any comments or edits, please let me know.

Jen

**Jennifer Hanley, PE\***  
D 701.353.6139

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

\*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

**From:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
**To:** [Kotch Egstad, Stacy \(DOT\)](#); [Hartzheim, Paul \(DOT\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Weiers, Jason](#); [Humburg, Joshua](#); [Brian Zavesky](#); [Brusven, Christina](#); [Sedarski, Joe](#)  
**Subject:** BSSA Project ENM  
**Date:** Friday, August 23, 2024 4:25:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[Outlook-bedh2yo4.png](#)

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Stacy and Paul,

As follow up to earlier meetings with you concerning the Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) high voltage transmission line project, we have completed the two MnDOT Early Notification Memo forms and prepared other required data and information to supplement this request.

Please use the link below to access a file sharing site where you will find the following (please note some of the shapefiles are quite large):

Utility Project Review ENM (Word document);  
Utility ENM Applicant Checklist (Word document);  
ENM Resources Table (Excel spreadsheet – table required in the ENM forms);  
PDF maps of the ENM areas crossed by the proposed Project (within a labeled folder);  
Shapefiles of the ENM areas (areas the Project crosses MnDOT roadways); and,  
A series of three shapefiles – Part 1 includes Project Component, Part 2 includes Base Data, and Part 3 includes Resource Data.

Should you have any issues accessing these files, please let us know. We've given you access to these files via your email address as well as the other MNDOT staff that have been in our meetings if you choose to forward the information. If you have any questions about the information being provided or need other information, we are available to discuss and provide as needed.

We anticipate submitting a draft Route Permit Application (RPA) to the MN Department of Commerce for their review in September and will include MnDOT responses in the RPA document.

We appreciate your assistance with the BSSA Project.

 [FINAL MnDOT ENM Submittal Docs Aug 23, 2024](#)



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

---




Office of Land Management  
395 John Ireland Blvd MS 678  
St. Paul, MN 55155

September 23, 2024

Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development  
Otter Tail Power Company

Re: MnDOT Early Coordination for the 345kV Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project (Project)

Mr. Weiers,

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has performed a cursory review of the Project information available, including information exchanged during multiple Project meetings and via MnDOT's requested Utility Early Notification Memo process. Multiple MnDOT offices and resource groups reviewed the information available to-date and offer the following comments and recommendations for consideration.

Project review information notes that while the overall design currently avoids transmission pole placement within MnDOT trunk highway right-of-way (TH ROW), there may be aerial encroachment of the TH ROW. MnDOT understands the instruction and occasional necessity of Project collocation within existing trunk highway rights-of-way. It is also understood that changes may occur during the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) permitting process that could alter the current, proposed route. A permit from MnDOT is required for any utility affecting TH ROW and easements do not apply (pole placement and aerial encroachment of arms, line, or blowout). This in mind, the opportunity to review any Project route changes that affect MnDOT TH ROW is requested.

MnDOT has previously provided the Project team with both the Statewide Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP) and the affected District 4 CHIP. Please keep this information in mind, as well as any updates, as you plan and construct this Project. Additionally, MnDOT's District 4 Projects page is found here: [MnDOT Projects - West Central Minnesota District 4](#).

#### General Transmission Line Routing Considerations

- To avoid sight distance impairment, poles may not be placed within site corners of at-grade road crossings
- Poles are to be placed at a 50-foot minimum from any bridge structure and may require review and approval from MnDOT's District 4 Bridge Office
- Poles must be placed outside of clear zones<sup>1</sup> and should be expected to exist within the outer 5 feet of the TH ROW (for pole collocation, if applicable)

<sup>1</sup> [Clear Zones | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#) A Clear Zone is an unobstructed, traversable roadside area that allows a driver to stop safely, or regain control of a vehicle that has left the roadway.

- The Project should make every effort to collocate with or otherwise ensure that MnDOT trunk highways are not “boxed in” by existing above ground utility infrastructure for the length of any line that may parallel within road right-of-way<sup>2</sup>
- Additional location considerations include:
  - Minimizing the need for later adjustments to accommodate future highway improvements
  - Minimizing risk to environmentally sensitive TH ROW areas
  - Permit access for line service or maintenance that minimizes interference to highway traffic

Additional MnDOT district and functional group comments and recommendations can be found in *Attachment 1* of this letter. Special attention should be paid to comments in **bold** as they refer to specific guidance, requested deliverables, or action items that may need to be resolved prior to issuance of any MnDOT downstream permits.

For any new construction associated with this project, including new pole placement, staging, access, and transmission line stringing in areas over/within the state trunk highway system, additional consultation would be required. MnDOT requires adherence to the following statute, rule, policy, and other permitting requirements:

- [MnDOT Utility Accommodation Policy](#)
- [MnDOT Utility Accommodation and Coordination Manual](#)
- [MnDOT Transmission Line Guidelines](#)
- [MnDOT Environmental Requirements](#)

MnDOT appreciates the Project team’s significant early coordination efforts. We recommend continued, close coordination throughout Project planning, permitting and construction as it pertains to Project areas that may affect the state trunk highway system.

Sincerely,

*Stacy Kotch Eggstad*

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management  
**Minnesota Department of Transportation**  
[stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)

Attachment 1: MnDOT OES & Functional Group Comments

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

<sup>2</sup> [MN Rules 8810.3500](#) There shall be only a single pole line on the trunk highway right-of-way on either side of the center line thereof, unless otherwise authorized in the special provisions of the permit for construction.



# ATTACHMENT 1

**BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA 345KV PROJECT**

**MNDOT OES & FUNCTIONAL GROUP COMMENTS**

Resource	Comments
Federal and State-listed Protected Species	<p><b><i>The Applicant should consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with respect to listed species which may occur within the project area, and limit ground disturbances to the extent practical in areas of semi-natural or natural vegetation. State-listed threatened and endangered species may be located along portions of the route along MnDOT right-of-way (ROW). We recommend the Applicant consult with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to identify recorded locations and conduct species-specific surveys prior to construction to confirm locations prior to identifying pole placement and temporary workspaces. MnDOT requests copies of all biological field survey data/reports within its ROW be submitted to MnDOT.</i></b></p>
Federal and State-listed Protected Species	<p><b><i>Herbicide use must be minimized during construction and future maintenance occurring on MnDOT ROW. If used, herbicide must be applied via hand-held spot treatments applied to individual plants. Avoid broadcast applications of herbicides without further consultation to MnDOT Office of Environmental Stewardship. Restrict all activities to avoid the application of insecticides and fungicides on MnDOT ROW.</i></b></p>
Federal and State-listed Protected Species	<p><b><i>The Applicant must establish native vegetation in areas that are not proposed to be mowed more than once per year, and must include mowing and spot treatment control to establish seeded vegetation, as shown in the MnDOT Seeding Manual (see <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/vegetation.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/vegetation.html</a>)</i></b></p>
Avian Protection	<p><b><i>The Applicant should minimize tree clearing/trimming within MnDOT ROW to extent possible. Tree clearing may be restricted to winter months (November 1 - April 14). On MnDOT ROW, additional tree clearing restrictions will typically be included in MnDOT's utility permit. If construction activities occur within the nesting season for migratory birds, conduct pre-construction nest surveys. If active nests are discovered, implement a Migratory Bird Plan to avoid and minimize impacts.</i></b></p>

<p>Contaminated Materials Management</p>	<p><b><i>It is the responsibility of the Applicant to identify the potential to encounter contaminated materials (soil/groundwater/vapor) on or within 500-feet of MnDOT ROW. The Applicant should provide to MnDOT all environmental due diligence documents (e.g., desktop review, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, Phase II), as applicable/available. If access or sampling is proposed in MnDOT's ROW, a permit will be required (see <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/forms.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/forms.html</a>).</i></b></p> <p><i>Contaminated materials encountered during any work within MnDOT ROW is required to be managed in accordance with applicable federal/state and location regulations and/or guidance documents.</i></p> <p><b><i>Additional regulatory file review is recommended at the following locations:</i></b>  <b><i>Pope County: TH 29 south of I-94/TH 29, multiple regulatory sites identified.</i></b>  <b><i>Swift County: TH 59 at 60th St NW, multiple environmental monitoring wells identified.</i></b></p>
<p>Regulated Waste and Storage Tanks</p>	<p><i>It is the responsibility of the Applicant to report the presence of aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) within project limits. If ASTs are identified, contact Regulated Materials Staff. Asbestos, solid waste, regulated and/or hazardous waste encountered during construction activities are required to be managed in accordance with applicable federal/state and local regulations and/or guidance documents.</i></p>
<p>Roadside Vegetation Management</p>	<p><b><i>1. Applicant to develop a Vegetation Management/Pesticide/Revegetation Plan and submit for MnDOT review/approval. Any proposed pesticides and application rates should be submitted to MnDOT for approval (NOTE: Use of herbicides or similar chemistries may be limited to spot treatments via hand tools only [i.e., no equipment mounted broadcast applications]).</i></b></p> <p><i>a. Herbicide used on MnDOT ROW must be labeled for use on rights-of-way.</i></p> <p><i>b. Pesticide applicators must be state- certified in Categories A and J (see: <a href="https://www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/pesticide-applicator-license-types">https://www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/pesticide-applicator-license-types</a>).</i></p> <p><i>c. Herbicide records for work on MnDOT's ROW must be provided to the local MnDOT District Offices.</i></p> <p><b><i>2. Prior to construction, the Applicant should conduct a field survey for noxious weeds in all project workspaces within MnDOT ROW. If any state prohibited or county designated noxious weeds (<a href="https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list">https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list</a>) are identified within construction workspaces on MnDOT's ROW, the contractor must clean equipment before leaving and/or entering MnDOT ROW to prevent the spread of listed weeds. All efforts must be made to prevent transportation of propagative parts to new areas. Movement of propagative parts of these plants is prohibited by Minnesota Statutes, Section</i></b></p>

	<p>18.82.</p> <p><b>3. If transportation of soil or plant parts from the site is necessary, a transportation permit will be required.</b> Questions regarding noxious weed law or noxious weed transportation permits can be directed to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at <a href="mailto:emilie.justen@state.mn.us">emilie.justen@state.mn.us</a>.</p> <p><b>4. If ground disturbance occurs on MnDOT's ROW, the area must be restored to a similar vegetation cover, except when that vegetation will endanger safe operation or maintenance of the utility/facility.</b> Seeding should match existing surrounding vegetation, and native seed must have a yellow tag through the Source Identified Native Seed Program. Any seed that is to be planted on MnDOT's ROW must be a mix approved in MnDOT's seeding manual:  <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/pdf/seedingmanual.pdf">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/pdf/seedingmanual.pdf</a>.</p> <p>5. MnDOT reserves the right to conduct its own post-construction inspection on MnDOT ROW to verify restoration status prior to the permittee filing their Notification of Restoration Completion with the Commission.</p> <p><b>6. If trees need to be removed, prior to any work being completed under this permit, a MnDOT Roadside Vegetation Management Unit person should conduct a valuation of the potential impacted vegetation, and the permit requestor will be required to pay MnDOT for the value of any lost resources due to their work.</b></p>
Wetlands Coordination	<p>Any ground disturbance (e.g., fill, excavation, direct or indirect drainage) of regulated aquatic resources must comply with all applicable federal Clean Water Act Section 404, Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), and MNDNR Public Waters Work requirements. <b>If ground-disturbing activities are proposed within MnDOT ROW, MnDOT may require an aquatic resource delineation to be performed throughout the areas of proposed disturbance. The delineation would require approval by MnDOT OES, as the Local Government Unit (LGU) responsible for administering the WCA within state TH ROW.</b></p> <p><b>The project must restore any temporary impacts and avoid, minimize, and mitigate any permanent impacts to delineated aquatic resources to the extent required by state and federal law.</b> This includes implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction to minimize aquatic resource disturbance, including compaction, erosion, and sedimentation.</p> <p>MnDOT reserves the right to conduct field inspections within its ROW.</p>

<p>Water Permits - Federal Agencies, Floodplains</p>	<p><i>*If floodplains are crossed by the project:</i>  <b>The Applicant should make efforts to avoid placement of structures or fill in floodplain areas to minimize adverse impacts and increased risk of flooding.</b> The Applicant should engage with local floodplain permitting authorities to determine permitting and other requirements. The project may also involve work affecting waters of the US in which case a Section 404 authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be needed.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>	<p>As documented in the Early Notification Memo (ENM) for Utility Projects dated August 23, 2024, the Section titled “Cultural Resources (Historic Properties and Tribal Consultation) Review” notes that “A cultural resource desktop literature review was conducted between December 2023 and May 2024 using inventory files from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) online portals. The research identified previously recorded precontact archaeological sites, architecture/historical properties, and unrecorded historic cemeteries within the Proposed Routes. A stand-alone cultural resource literature review report was not completed.” <b>The MnDOT CRU does not know why a report was not completed documenting the results of the referenced literature review.</b></p> <p><b>For the area termed “ENM-1” along I-94 in Douglas County: one unconfirmed (alpha) site lead intersects or is adjacent to MnDOT R/W (21DLf – Section 36, T128N, R38W). This site lead is currently unevaluated for the NRHP. An unrecorded cemetery intersects or is adjacent to MnDOT R/W (Sunset Memorial Cemetery – T128N, R38W) and is recorded at the Township-level.</b></p> <p><b>For the area termed “ENM-19” along Highway 12 in Big Stone County: An unrecorded cemetery intersects or is adjacent to MnDOT R/W (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Odessa Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery – Sec. 11, T121N, R45W) and is recorded at the PLS forty level.</b></p> <p><b>For the area termed “ENM-21” along US Highway (I) 75/Trunk Highway (TH) 7 in Big Stone County: two recorded archaeological/mortuary sites are intersected or adjacent to MnDOT R/W (21BS0008 – Sec. 15, T121N, R46W &amp; 21BS0009 – Sec. 15, T121N, R46W). Should ground disturbing activities be proposed in this location additional coordination with the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) should be anticipated to be required pursuant to Minn. Stat. 307.08. Per MnDOT policy, additional coordination with interested Tribal Nations should be anticipated to be required. These sites are currently unevaluated for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).</b></p>

***The Applicant should provide summary of cultural field surveys and coordination with SHPO and other agencies and parties, as applicable, to date when submitting permit requests. If surveys have not been completed, provide an anticipated schedule for completion. If the Applicant is aware of or becomes aware of significant cultural resources findings in or adjacent to MnDOT R/W, please contact our office at [CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us). In addition, the Applicant shall prepare a Post Review Discovery Plan (PRDP1) and submit to MnDOT for review; contact information for CRU staff must be included in the PRDP. This plan should outline the steps to be followed in the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological materials, human remains, or burials, and include language specific to the coordination with MnDOT when a discovery is on MnDOT ROW. MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit (CRU) staff should be notified ([CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:CulturalResources.dot@state.mn.us)) within 24 hours in the event of an unanticipated find on or adjacent to MnDOT property during construction.***

*Additional archaeological investigations (e.g., literature reviews, reconnaissance surveys [if warranted]) may be required where ground disturbing activities and/or temporary easements may be located within MnDOT ROW. Investigations should include in-field inspections to document areas of soil disturbance and to identify potentially unknown archaeological sites within areas of moderate to high archaeological potential. A PRDP should be developed for the project in advance of construction and be provided to MnDOT CRU.*



<p>FHWA National Scenic Byway Program</p>	<p><i>Under Title 23, USC, Section 162, National Scenic Byways Program; Scenic byways are designated as State, National or All-American because they possess one or more of six intrinsic qualities: scenic, cultural, recreational, natural, historic, and archaeological qualities. An analysis of the physical and visual impact on each of these six intrinsic qualities should be conducted at each proposed crossing locations and/or collocated segments and where the proposed utility is within 7 miles of a byway to determine the route with the least adverse impact on the byway routes and corridors. At a minimum, this analysis should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Streetview Imagery or on-the-ground photographs</i></li> <li>• <i>Photo / Visual Simulations (existing conditions and post-construction). During early planning phases of project, this may consist of typical drawings/photos of similar projects that have already been constructed. Later in Project design, this should include site-specific assessments depicting photo and visual simulations for users of the byway.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Each scenic byway has a leaders' group and/or stakeholder group; these groups should be contacted as part of the environmental review process. Scenic easements and areas should be investigated to identify any prohibitions or limitations that apply to land uses in the vicinity of the scenic byway. Relevant state and federal regulations governing scenic byways can be found in the MnDOT Utility Accommodation on Highway Right of Way Policy and Coordination Manual (both of which can be accessed here: <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/policy/operations/oe002.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/policy/operations/oe002.html</a>), 23 U.S.C. s. 162, and 23 CFR s. 645.209 (h).</i></p> <p><i>Mitigation measures should be recommended for unavoidable impacts on intrinsic qualities within the scenic byway corridors.</i></p>
<p>Environmental Assessment Unit / Environmental Review</p>	<p><i>If the Project will involve any construction activities within MnDOT ROW, the Applicant (and/or their Contractor) must comply with the following, relating to the conduct of work on the Project or to individuals engaged in work for the Project or employed on the Project:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>(1) All applicable State and Federal laws and regulations</i></b></li> <li><b><i>(2) Orders and decrees of bodies and tribunals with lawful jurisdiction over the work</i></b></li> <li><b><i>(3) Such local ordinances as are applicable to the work</i></b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>MnDOT's Environmental Assessment Unit reserves the right to request copies of the Applicant's environmental permits for work within its ROW as well as any inspection reports completed by the Applicant and/or its contractor.</i></b></p>

<p>Soil Erosion and Sediment Control / Stormwater</p>	<p><i>Given the size of the Project, we assume the Applicant will be required to obtain coverage under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Construction Stormwater General Permit (MNR100001). <b>If a portion of the final alignment is located within MnDOT ROW, we request that the Applicant submit a copy of its Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)/erosion and sediment control details to MnDOT OES for review prior to filing its Notice of Intent for coverage under MPCA's MNR100001.</b> In addition, MnDOT reserves the right to conduct inspections of the project for portions that are within MnDOT ROW during and/or after construction. The Applicant (and/or its contractor) will be the Owner on this permit for any work on MnDOT ROW - MnDOT will not be a co-Applicant.</i></p> <p><i>Soil compaction caused by equipment traffic and haul roads on MnDOT ROW must be mitigated using techniques described in the MnDOT Facility Design Guide Chapter 13 (<a href="https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx">https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx</a>).</i></p> <p><i>Temporary and permanent erosion and sediment control measures on MnDOT ROW must follow standards in the MnDOT Facility Design Guide Chapter 13 (<a href="https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx">https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx</a>).</i></p> <p><i>Seeding on MnDOT ROW must follow standards in MnDOT Seeding Manual (<a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/vegetation.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/vegetation.html</a>).</i></p> <p><i>Any erosion control blanket must be free of plastic netting and on the MnDOT Approved Products List for Rolled Erosion Prevention products. In addition, any hydraulic mulch used up-slope of Public Waters must be free of plastic fiber additives.</i></p>
<p>Env Modelling and Testing (Noise)</p>	<p><i>The Applicant needs to take all precautions to avoid impacts to existing noise mitigation devices (e.g., noise walls) and/or applications within MnDOT's ROW. <b>If the Project has the potential to impact noise mitigation infrastructure, please notify MnDOT's Environmental Modelling and Testing Unit group for further guidance.</b></i></p>
<p>District Permitting Staff</p>	<p><i><b>Direct coordination with applicable District Permitting Staff will be required for all downstream MnDOT utility permits.</b> MnDOT permitting policies and information can be found at: <a href="http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/index">http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/index</a>. The utility owner will be required to apply for a utility accommodation on trunk highway right of way (form 2525) <a href="https://olpa.dot.state.mn.us/OLPA/">https://olpa.dot.state.mn.us/OLPA/</a>.</i></p> <p><i><b>No work can be performed on the highway right of way without an issued permit from the District 4 permits office.</b></i></p>

<p>District Planning Staff</p>	<p><u>State Highway current construction projects:</u> Please note that MnDOT projects on state highways may affect travel routes to the project site, and/or may alter access points. To learn which projects might be in the area please review the current MnDOT construction projects website at <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d4">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d4</a>.</p> <p><u>State Highway planned and future projects:</u> MnDOT plans projects along state highways up to 10 years in advance. Please check with District 4's projected ten-year state project list at <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d4">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d4</a> to see which projects might coincide with your project. Note that project timing can change, particularly for projects that are identified as being planned for 5 to 10 years in the future. You may also reach out to the District Planning contact or District Project Manager for more information.</p> <p><u>Access:</u> Because there is a direct connection between crash rates and access density on state trunk highways, project proposers should plan to utilize access points on local roads whenever possible. Access from MnDOT ROW whether at an existing driveway or new driveway is not guaranteed, and new highway access permits will be required in either case. Please contact District Permitting staff for more information about permit applications, processes, and requirements. <b>A permanent access would not be allowed, but we may allow a temporary access to the right of way after a District review of the proposed entry point.</b></p>
<p>Design Support / Safety and Operations Management</p>	<p><u>Powerlines:</u> Lateral placement of utility poles or non-crashworthy must be placed outside the roadway's clear zone and should avoid the need for traffic barrier shielding. Any side slope grading within the roadway clear zone must not result in a hazardous geometry for run-off vehicles. Place poles as far out of the clear zone as possible. Additional distance from the roadway is encouraged, for roadway and driver safety. Added poles must not be placed closer to the trunk highway than existing poles. Utility poles/devices must not obstruct intersection sight lines. Appurtenances protruding more than four inches above the ground line shall be located outside the clear zone and as close to the edge of the ROW as practical, and must not obstruct intersection sight lines. Appurtenances within the roadway clear zone must be crashworthy. See MnDOT's Facility Design Guide - Chapter 10 (<a href="https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx">https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx</a>) for a definition of "crashworthy" and other pertinent information.</p> <p><u>Route Selection:</u> Note that locating non-crashworthy items along a roadway does not guarantee that they won't be struck by errant vehicles. The clear zone distances are targeted towards allowing approximately 80 to 85 percent of all run-off-the-road vehicles to recover or come to a safe stop. If the routes being considered are otherwise equal, it would be preferable to select the route that places the fewest utility poles within MnDOT right of way.</p>

	<p><u>Access Roads</u>: Additional access points from the trunk highway are discouraged and should be avoided. For proposed access roads, the transverse slope design for permanent access roads connected to the trunk highway must be 1V:6H or flatter on the roadside and 1V:10 or flatter if in the median. See Transverse Slopes in the MnDOT's Facility Design Guide - Chapter 10.</p> <p>For other technical components and requirements for utility owners regarding the location, design, and methods for installing, adjusting, accommodating, and maintaining utility facilities on such rights of way, please refer to MnDOT Utility Accommodation and Coordination Manual, found here: <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/projectdelivery.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/projectdelivery.html</a>.</p> <p>To understand why these rules and comments exist, intersection related and roadway departure crashes are two of the leading types of fatal and serious injury crashes on Minnesota Roadways. These comments reflect measures needed to continue to prevent these types of crashes. To find out more about Minnesota safety efforts, please see our Strategic Highway Safety Plan: <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/shsp/">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/shsp/</a>.</p>
Blowing Snow Control / Snow Fences	<p>Based on our review, we have identified living and/or structural snow fences in the vicinity of your project - <b>ENM_ID_No. ENM-19</b>. Snow fences have been established in a collaborative effort with landowners to trap snow from blowing across and accumulating on state highways. <b>If the utility project adversely impacts a snow fence causing the loss of blowing snow control functionality, the utility will must work with MnDOT to find a blowing snow control solution.</b> Please refer to <a href="http://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/livingsnowfence/">http://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/livingsnowfence/</a> and Chapter 15D - Design for Blowing Snow Control found in MnDOT Facility Design Guide (<a href="https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx">https://roaddesign.dot.state.mn.us/facilitydesign.aspx</a>) for more information.</p>
Railroad	<p>Railroads are private entities that conduct their own permitting process for utility impacts. MnDOT does not have jurisdiction in these areas. It is recommended that project coordination occurs directly with the affected railroad: <a href="#">Minnesota Rail Viewer Application (MnRail)</a>.</p>
Airport Influence Area	<p>No response to-date.</p>

## Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
April 21, 2023	Email/Attachment	Applicants	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)	Proposed BSSA Project request for comments
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	MIAC	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
December 4, 2023	Email	MIAC	Applicants	Response to proposed BSSA Project request for comments/request to be a consulting party
June 19, 2024	Email	Applicants	MIAC	Consultation with tribes Attachment: Additional information on the BSSA Project route

From: [Weiers, Jason](#)  
To: [shannon.geshick@state.mn.us](mailto:shannon.geshick@state.mn.us)  
Cc: [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
Subject: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project  
Date: Friday, April 21, 2023 2:25:45 PM  
Attachments: [OtterTailPower\\_BSSA\\_Open\\_House\\_Invite.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings Executive Director Geshick,

Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria project is part of a larger Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project, with the Alexandria – Big Oaks project being led by Xcel Energy.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project is one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest that is needed to increase transmission system capability, mitigate current capacity issues, and improve electric system reliability throughout the region. Otter Tail Power and MRES plan to submit a Route Permit Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in Q4 2024 and a Facility Permit Application to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at a future point in time yet to be determined. At this early stage of the project, it is unknown if Section 106 compliance may be needed.

Currently, Otter Tail Power and MRES are in the preliminary planning stages, which include high-level planning, initial public involvement, and data collection. As these preliminary planning stages progress, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss the project with you. There will be communication soon to provide additional project detail and discuss opportunities to meet. However, we wanted to make you aware that we're hosting public open houses next week in Alexandria, Ortonville, and Benson, Minnesota and would like to invite you and your members to attend if you have the availability (see attached invitation). We are planning additional open houses in late 2023 and again in 2024 once corridors and routes are developed.

We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

Thanks,

Jason

Jason Weiers

Manager, Transmission Project Development

Otter Tail Power Company

215 South Cascade Street

Fergus Falls, MN 56537

(218)739-8311

[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)



# Big Stone South to Alexandria

**Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** are proposing a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Otter Tail Power's Big Stone South Substation in South Dakota and a substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services in Alexandria, Minnesota.

This project will **improve electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather conditions, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy** in the region.

A lot has to happen before the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line can be placed in service.

**We are developing route options for the proposed line and look forward to your input.**



▲ Study area is subject to change.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STEPS



Engagement Opportunities

### STEP 1

▶ Data Gathering

### STEP 2

- ▶ Public Engagement
- ▶ Routing
- ▶ Preliminary Surveys
- ▶ Preliminary Right of Way
- ▶ Preliminary Engineering

### STEP 3

- ▶ File Route Applications
- ▶ Environmental Permits

### STEP 4

- ▶ Right of Way
- ▶ Surveys

### STEP 5

- ▶ Route Application Decision
- ▶ Final Engineering

### STEP 6

- ▶ Construction
- ▶ In Service by 2030
- ▶ Restoration



Communication Through Construction



## HDR

1601 Utica Avenue South, Suite 600  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416-3400

Join us at an open house to learn about the Big Stone to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line proposed by Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services.

LEARN MORE ON THE INSIDE






SCAN ME!




## HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT?

[www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)  
[connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com](mailto:connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com)  
(800) 598-5587




### ALEXANDRIA

 Holiday Inn  
5637 MN-29  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
 April 25, 2023  
 4:00-7:00 p.m.

### ORTONVILLE

 Ortonville Community Center  
200 Monroe Ave  
Ortonville, MN 56278  
 April 26, 2023  
 4:00-7:00 p.m.

### BENSON

 McKinney's on Southside  
300 14th Street South  
Benson, MN 56215  
 April 27, 2023  
 4:00-7:00 p.m.

JOIN US!

You're invited to an open house for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line project. This project will improve electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather conditions, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to renewable energy, and improve long-term electric reliability in the region.

November 10, 2023

Shannon Geshick, Executive Director  
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council  
161 St. Anthony Avenue, Suite 919  
St. Paul, MN 55103

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Executive Director Geshick,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

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<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

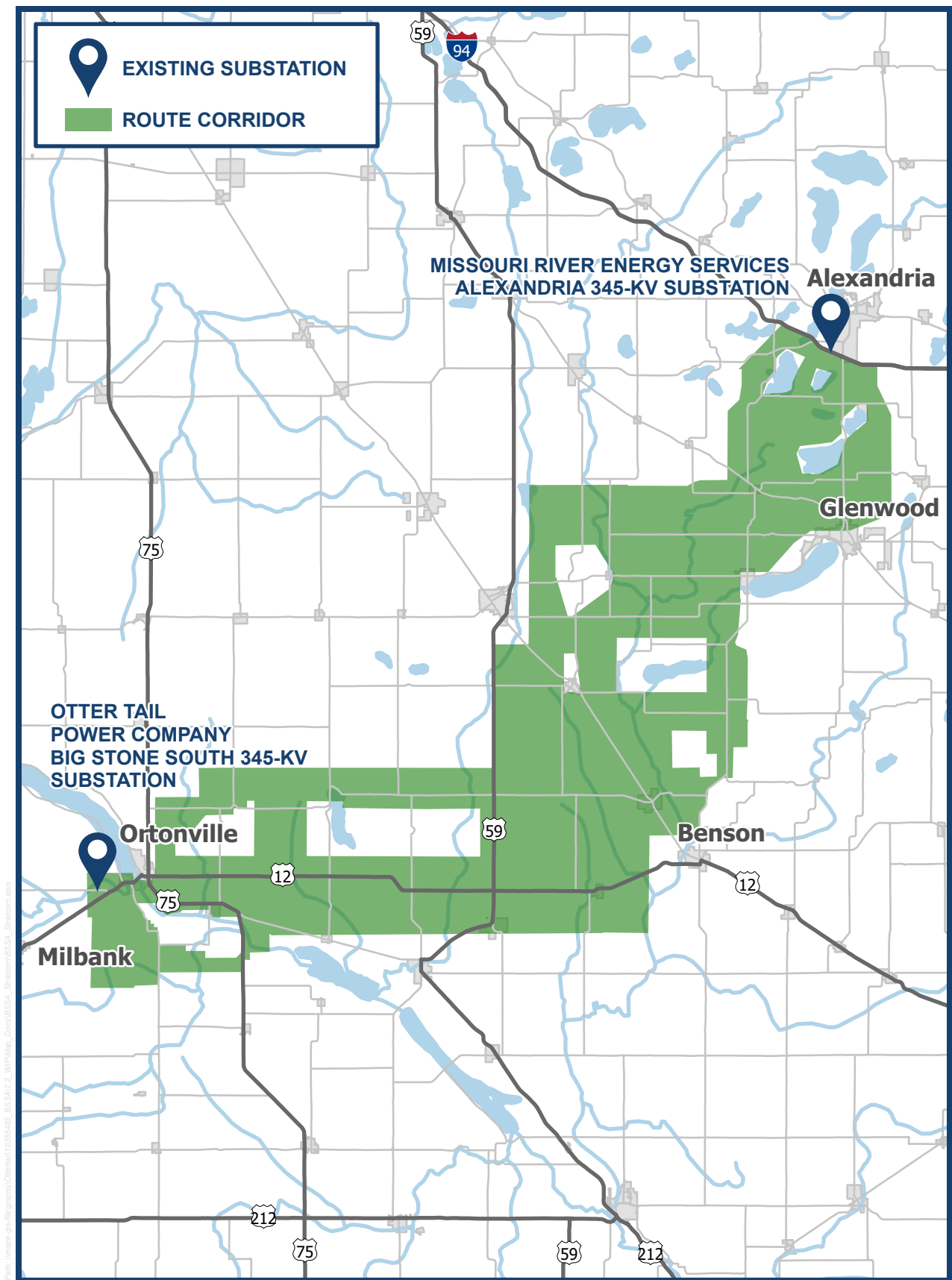
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** [Reynolds, John \(MIAC\)](#)  
**To:** [Weiers, Jason](#); [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Cc:** [Cerde, Melissa \(MIAC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Request for Information, Inclusion as Consulting Party, 12/04/23  
**Date:** Monday, December 4, 2023 2:03:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

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Hello,

I am a Cultural Resource Manager with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC). Our office recently received a Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project. The provided materials do not offer a specific route, list potential damages/ground disturbances, and offer information on planned cultural resource management consultation and fieldwork. MIAC requests to remain a consulting party, and that materials continue to be provided to our office for sufficient review. Once sufficient information has been received, a formal review can be provided. Please reply for any questions.

Thank you.

John Reynolds  
Cultural Resources Manager  
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council  
161 St. Anthony Avenue, Ste. 940  
Saint Paul, MN 55103

C: 651-724-3325  
O: 651-724-3325  
E: [John.Reynolds@state.mn.us](mailto:John.Reynolds@state.mn.us)  
[mn.gov/indianaffairs](http://mn.gov/indianaffairs)



From: [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
To: [shannon.geshick](#)  
Cc: [Hanley, Jennifer](#); [Weiers, Jason](#)  
Subject: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project  
Date: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 12:48:15 PM  
Attachments: [image.png](#)  
[Outlook-tasyrip.png](#)  
[BSSA\\_routes\\_sent\\_20240614.zip](#)  
[OTP\\_BSSA\\_Phase4\\_Mtg\\_Handout\\_DRAFT\\_20240611.pdf](#)

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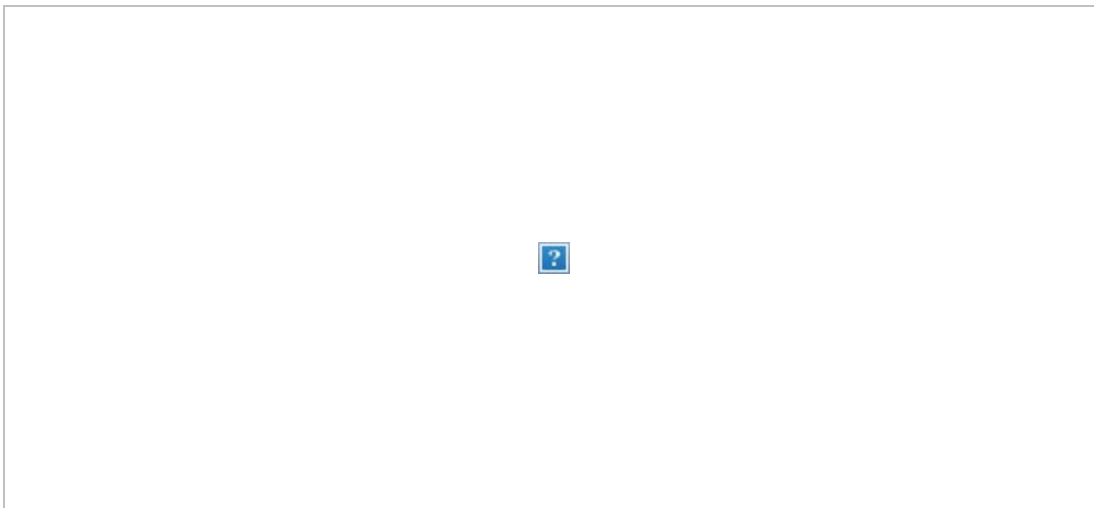
**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear Executive Director Geshick,

Thank you for your interest to partner with us as we develop the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV routes that will be presented in our Route Permit Application that will be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the fourth quarter of this year.

Attached is a GIS shapefile of the proposed route segments that will be presented at the open houses the last week of June (see schedule below) as well as a handout that provides some additional project information. We will be accepting comments on these proposed route segments through July 15, 2024 to identify the proposed routes that we will include in the Route Permit Application.

Please let us know if and how you would like to participate in the development of our project. We can be available to discuss the project, it's current status and our schedule at your convenience.



Thank you,

Jason



Jason Weiers, P.E.  
Manager, Trans. Project Development  
Direct: 218-739-8311  
[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

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## Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
August 22, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

## Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
October 26, 2023	Email	Applicants	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	Initial consultation for the BSSA Project
October 26, 2023	Email	MPCA	Applicants	Response to initial consultation for the BSSA Project
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	MPCA	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
December 4, 2023	Email	MPCA	Applicants	Updated MPCA contact information for the BSSA Project

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 26, 2023 2:54 PM  
**To:** King, Matthew (MPCA) <[Matthew.King@state.mn.us](mailto:Matthew.King@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

You don't often get email from [kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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---

Good Afternoon,

If you haven't already received something you will soon be receiving correspondence regarding the Otter Tail Power/Missouri River Energy Services new transmission line project. This project proposes to connect Otter Tail Power's Big Stone South Substation in northeast South Dakota and Missouri River Energy Services Substation in Alexandria. I am reaching out to you to introduce myself as the environmental specialist with Otter Tail Power that will be working on routing and the environmental aspects of the project along with our other partners and consultants. It is our intention to engage all the agencies and stakeholders early on in the process in order to develop this project in the most effective way possible. We will be reaching out on a more personal level at some point and trying to arrange meetings to allow us to elicit comments, discuss permitting and allow for feedback opportunities.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention. Please let us know if there are others we should be contacting or feel free to forward this email on to other that should receive it. I look forward to working with you in the near future.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

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**From:** [King, Matthew \(MPCA\)](#)  
**To:** [Scheidecker, Kevin J.](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project  
**Date:** Thursday, October 26, 2023 5:12:40 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

---

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Dear Kevin Scheidecker,

Thanks for reaching out to me. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, concerns etc. related to stormwater compliance. Please add Todd Smith [todd.smith@state.mn.us](mailto:todd.smith@state.mn.us) and Mike Findorff [michael.findorff@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.findorff@state.mn.us) whom are the MPCA Senior Stormwater Engineers to your contact list.

Thanks,

**Matt King** | Environmental Specialist  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)  
Municipal Stormwater | Construction Stormwater  
714 Lake Ave # 220 | Detroit Lakes, MN | 56501  
[218-846-8103](tel:218-846-8103) | [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us)



---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 26, 2023 2:54 PM  
**To:** King, Matthew (MPCA) <[Matthew.King@state.mn.us](mailto:Matthew.King@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

You don't often get email from [kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good Afternoon,

If you haven't already received something you will soon be receiving correspondence regarding the Otter Tail Power/Missouri River Energy Services new transmission line project. This project

proposes to connect Otter Tail Power's Big Stone South Substation in northeast South Dakota and Missouri River Energy Services Substation in Alexandria. I am reaching out to you to introduce myself as the environmental specialist with Otter Tail Power that will be working on routing and the environmental aspects of the project along with our other partners and consultants. It is our intention to engage all the agencies and stakeholders early on in the process in order to develop this project in the most effective way possible. We will be reaching out on a more personal level at some point and trying to arrange meetings to allow us to elicit comments, discuss permitting and allow for feedback opportunities.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention. Please let us know if there are others we should be contacting or feel free to forward this email on to other that should receive it. I look forward to working with you in the near future.



Kevin Scheidecker  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
Environmental Services  
Direct: 218-739-8773  
[kscheidecker@otpc.com](mailto:kscheidecker@otpc.com)

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November 10, 2023

Matthew King, NPDES Coordinator  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
714 Lake Ave., Suite 220  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. King,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).



HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

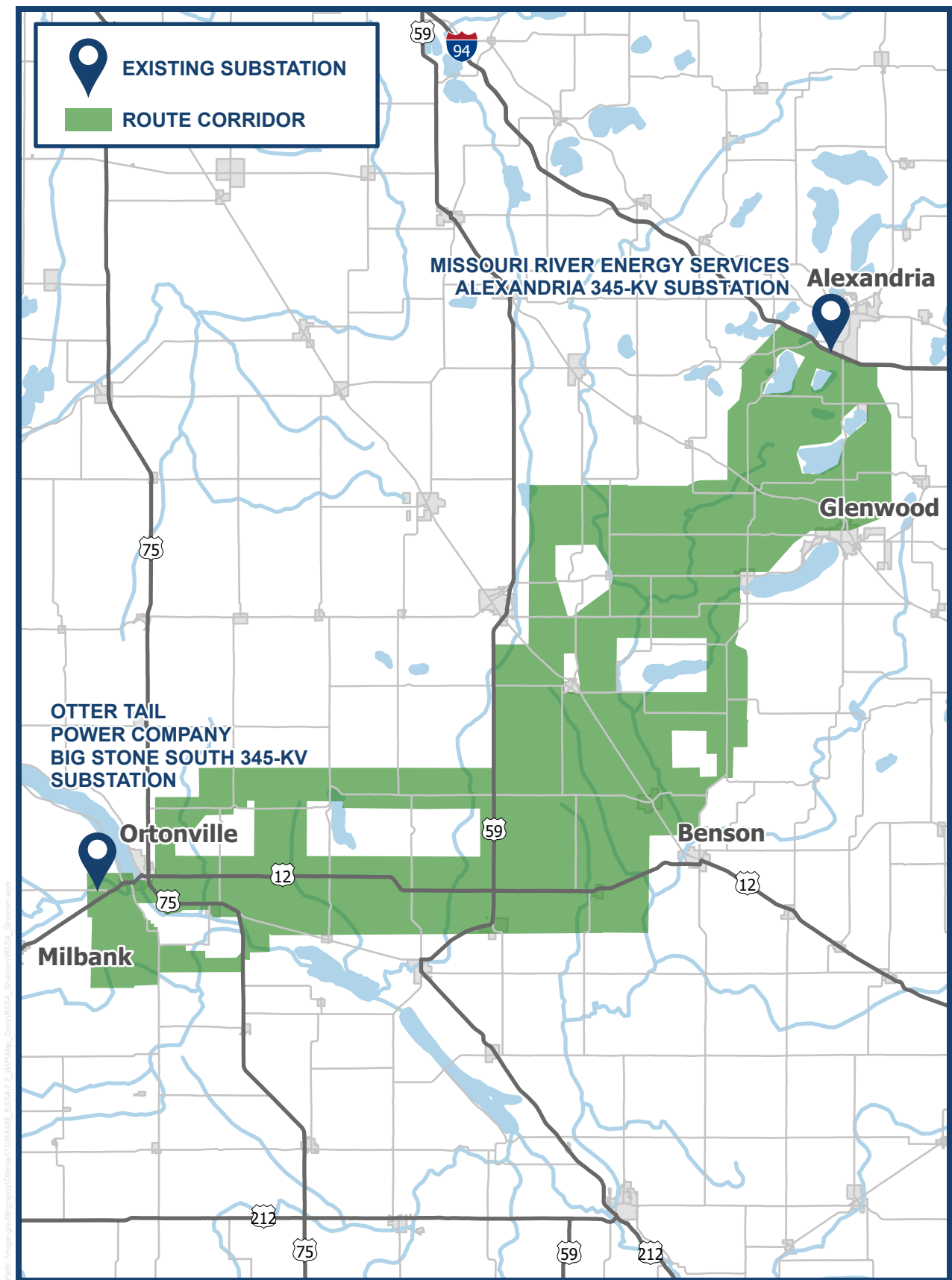
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** [Green, Chris \(MPCA\)](#)  
**To:** [Weiers, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Mail: Image\_022  
**Date:** Monday, December 4, 2023 1:02:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Image\\_022.pdf](#)

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Hey Jason,

I'm the new Triage Coordinator for MPCA ER. Please send any EAWs/EISs to me so that I can route them to agency experts for comment.

Chris Green  
*Project Manager*  
Environmental Review  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
504 Fairgrounds Rd Suite 200  
Marshall MN 56258-1688  
Office: 507-476-4258  
Cell: 507-696-9718  
[Chris.Green@state.mn.us](mailto:Chris.Green@state.mn.us)

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**From:** Card, Dan (MPCA) <dan.card@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 11:38 AM  
**To:** Findorff, Michael (MPCA) <michael.findorff@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Green, Chris (MPCA) <chris.green@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** FW: Mail: Image\_022

Thanks Mike,

This looks like an early engagement request for comment; not a triage EAW review yet.

FYI – Chris Green is now coordinating our triage EAW reviews, so I am forwarding this for future reference.

Chris can reach out to Jason Weiers to send the EAW when ready for Chris to coordinate review.

Dan

---

**From:** Findorff, Michael (MPCA) <[michael.findorff@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.findorff@state.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 10:38 AM  
**To:** Card, Dan (MPCA) <[dan.card@state.mn.us](mailto:dan.card@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Mail: Image\_022

Hi Dan – not sure who is the Agency should get this, but my supervisor suggested I send it your way.

Mike

---

**From:** Findorff, Michael (MPCA)  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 9:51 AM  
**To:** Smith, Brandon E (MPCA) <[brandon.e.smith@state.mn.us](mailto:brandon.e.smith@state.mn.us)>; Anderson, Ryan (MPCA) <[ryan.anderson@state.mn.us](mailto:ryan.anderson@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Mail: Image\_022

Hi Brandon and Ryan – do either of you know who I should forward this letter to?

Mike

---

**From:** Findorff, Michael (MPCA)  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 16, 2023 1:54 PM  
**To:** Smith, Brandon E (MPCA) <[brandon.e.smith@state.mn.us](mailto:brandon.e.smith@state.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** Anderson, Ryan (MPCA) <[ryan.anderson@state.mn.us](mailto:ryan.anderson@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Mail: Image\_022

Hey Brandon – do you know who I should forward this letter to? I'm definitely not the one to answer their request.

Mike

---

**From:** Hood, Olivia (MPCA) <[Olivia.Hood@state.mn.us](mailto:Olivia.Hood@state.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 16, 2023 10:25 AM  
**To:** Findorff, Michael (MPCA) <[michael.findorff@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.findorff@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Mail: Image\_022

Dear MPCA Employee,

Attached is the image(s) of your paper mail that is in your Fifth Floor mailbox/hanging folder in the

filing cabinet to the left of the mailboxes (currently labeled MAIL). After the mail is scanned, it is returned to your Fifth Floor mailbox/hanging folder.

If there is a question regarding the image(s), please give me the image number when you contact me.

Thank you!

**Olivia Hood** *(she/her)*

Office & Administrative Specialist | Industrial/Municipal BSU 2

Email: [Olivia.Hood@state.mn.us](mailto:Olivia.Hood@state.mn.us)



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## Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
December 28, 2023	Email/Letter	SHPO	Applicants	Recommendations on the BSSA Project

November 10, 2023

Sarah Beimers, Environmental Review Manager  
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office  
Administration Bldg #203, 50 Sherburne, Ave.  
St Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Ms. Beimers,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

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<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).



HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

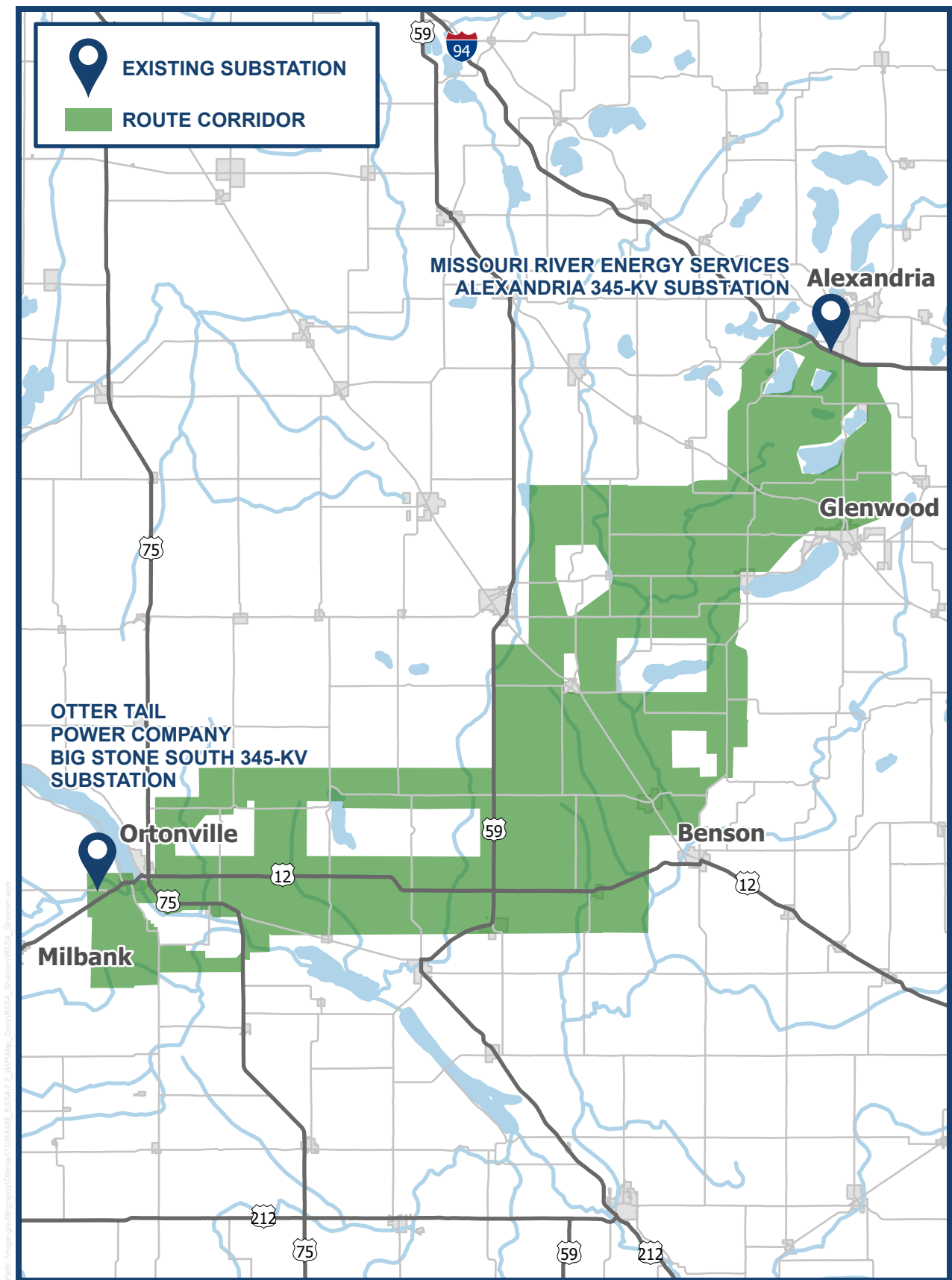
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** [Beimers, Sarah \(ADM\)](#)  
**To:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Subject:** SHPO Comment Letter: 2024-0166 BSSA Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project, Multiple Counties, Minnesota  
**Date:** Thursday, December 28, 2023 4:04:20 PM  
**Attachments:** [2024-0166.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jennifer,  
Thank you for the opportunity to review the above-referenced project.  
Attached is our December 28, 2023 comment letter.  
Please contact me if you'd like to discuss further.  
Sarah

**Sarah Beimers** (she/her) | **Environmental Review Program Manager**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
*Minnesota Department of Administration*

December 28, 2023

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Jennifer Hanley  
HDR Inc.  
51 North Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo ND 58102

RE: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)  
Construction of a 345-kV Transmission Line from Big Stone South Substation in South Dakota to  
Western Minnesota's Existing Alexandria Substation in Douglas County  
Multiple Counties, Minnesota  
SHPO Number: 2024-0166

Dear Ms. Hanley,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. Information received in our office on November 13, 2023 from Jason Weiers, BSSA, has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (Minn. Stat. 138.665-666) and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (Minn. Stat. 138.40).

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36 CFR Part 800. If the project will be utilizing any federal assistance, then the lead federal agency will need to initiate consultation with our office. Be advised that comments and recommendations provided by our office for this state-level review may differ from findings and determinations made by the federal agency as part of review and consultation under Section 106.

According to BSSA's November 10<sup>th</sup> letter, we understand that Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, are proposing to construct a new, approximately 100-mile, 345 kV high voltage transmission line from Big Stone City in South Dakota to Alexandria, Minnesota. A map of the possible route corridor for this transmission line was provide with BSSA's November 10<sup>th</sup> letter and we have been requested to provide information regarding any property our agency "may have an interest in" in order to assist with the transmission line siting analysis.

Because the geographic area for this project is very large, as a first step, utilizing data available through data request and also our office's newly launched MnSHIP application, as well as site data from the Office of the State Archaeologist, we recommend completion of a background literature review to identify currently inventoried historic/architectural properties, including those currently designated in the National or State Register of Historic Places and recorded archaeological sites within the route corridor area.

As part of this initial study, we also recommend that a Phase Ia archaeological assessment be completed. If as a result of this assessment, a Phase I reconnaissance archaeological survey is

---

**MINNESOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

50 Sherburne Avenue ■ Administration Building 203 ■ Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155 ■ 651-201-3287

[mn.gov/admin/shpo](http://mn.gov/admin/shpo) ■ [mnshpo@state.mn.us](mailto:mnshpo@state.mn.us)

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recommended, then this survey should be conducted. Any Phase I survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified. For a list of consultants who have expressed an interest in undertaking this type of research and archaeological surveys, please visit the website <http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/preservation-directory>, and select "Archaeologists, Contract" in the "Specialties" box.

The Project should consider not only direct impacts to designated historic properties and archaeological sites, but also any potential indirect impacts as well. The analysis completed for what are commonly referred to as "indirect impacts" should take into account any introduction of visual, atmospheric, or audible elements that may have an effect on characteristics that qualify the property for listing in the National or State Registers of Historic Places. Indirect effects can also include changes to a historic property's use or access to a historic property.

Any resulting cultural resources reports should include maps with clearly defined project areas including the location of the transmission line, tower size and style, laydown yards, collector lines, access roads, and any other above-ground equipment structures in relation to any identified historic/architectural properties and archaeological sites. The report should discuss ways in which the project will avoid impacting, both directly and indirectly, any historic properties and archaeological sites that are identified.

We look forward to future consultation regarding this project. If you have any questions regarding our review of this project, please contact me at [sarah.beimers@state.mn.us](mailto:sarah.beimers@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,



Sarah J. Beimers

Environmental Review Program Manager

## State Representatives

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	State Senator-District 9	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
			State Senator-District 12	
			State Senator-District 15	
			State Representative-District 9A	
			State Representative-District 9B	
			State Representative-District 12A	
			State Representative-District 12B	
			State Representative-District 15A	

November 10, 2023

Jordan Rasmussen  
State Senator- District 9  
State Senate  
2409 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St Paul, MN 5515555155

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. Rasmussen,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

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---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).



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Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
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Fargo, ND 58102  
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701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

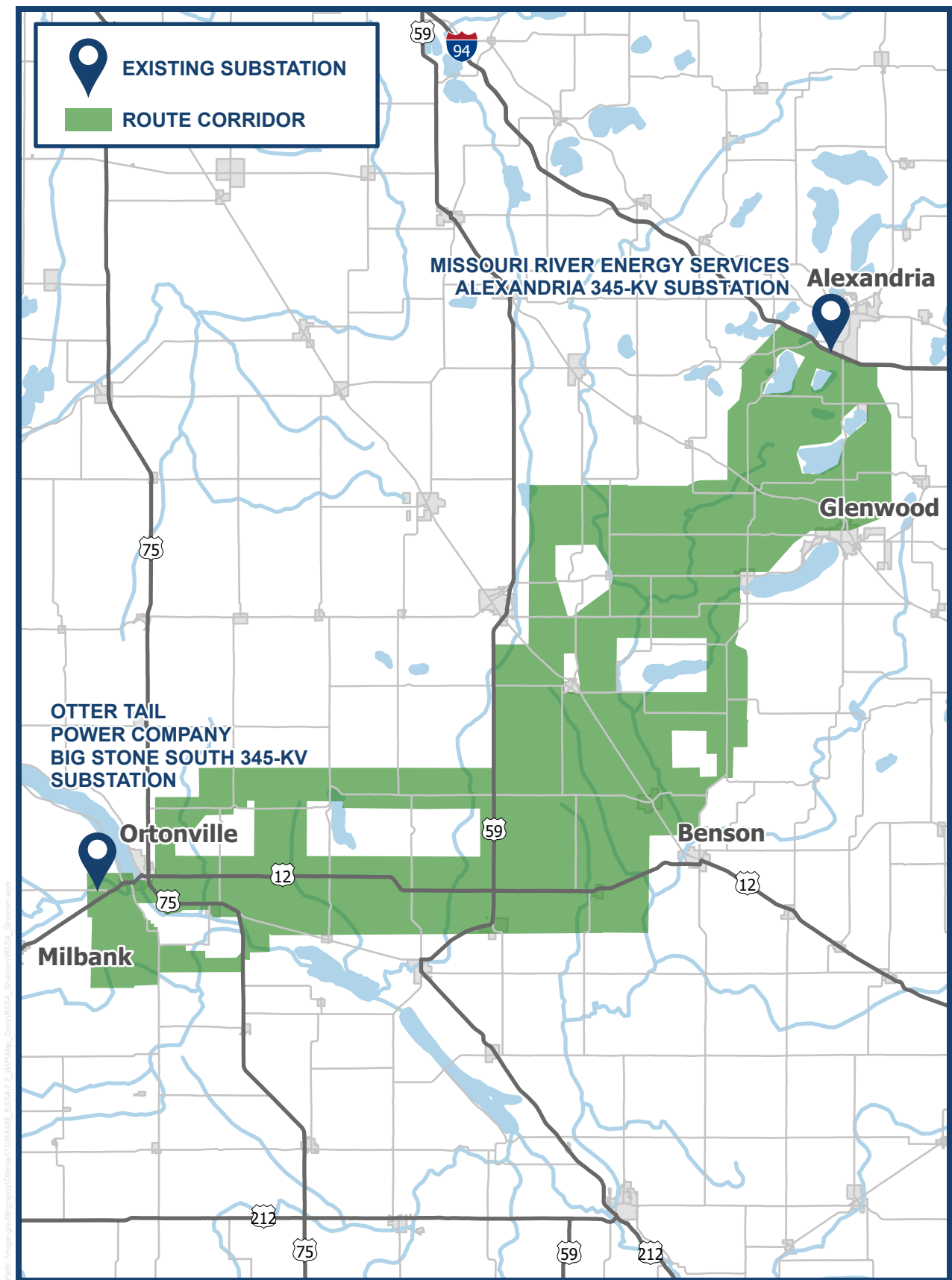
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

## **Tribal Governments**

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
April 21, 2023	Email/Attachment	Applicants	Tribes	Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria (BSSA) Project request for comments
April 21, 2023	Email	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Applicants	Response to initial outreach for BSSA Project
April 21, 2023	Email	Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	Applicants	Response to initial outreach for BSSA Project
April 22-27, 2023	Email	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (The Mille Lacs Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe)	Applicants	Response to proposed BSSA Project request for comments
June 27, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation
February 5, 2024	Email	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (The Mille Lacs Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe)	Applicants	Response to initial outreach for the BSSA Project
February 16, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation
June 19, 2024	Email/Attachment	Applicants	Tribes	Consultation with tribes Attachment: Additional information on the BSSA Project route
June 24, 2024	Letter	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe THPO	Applicants	Response to Additional Information on the BSSA Project
July 2, 2024	Email	Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Minnesota	Applicants	Response to BSSA Project Route and Continued Coordination

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**From:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 21, 2023 1:43 PM  
**To:** deputythpo@badriver-nsn.gov  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

**CAUTION:** [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Plucinski,

Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria project is part of a larger Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project, with the Alexandria – Big Oaks project being led by Xcel Energy.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project is one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest that is needed to increase transmission system capability, mitigate current capacity issues, and improve electric system reliability throughout the region. Otter Tail Power and MRES plan to submit a Route Permit Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in Q4 2024 and a Facility Permit Application to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at a future point in time yet to be determined. At this early stage of the project, it is unknown if Section 106 compliance may be needed.

Currently, Otter Tail Power and MRES are in the preliminary planning stages, which include high-level planning, initial public involvement, and data collection. As these preliminary planning stages progress, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss the project with you. There will be communication soon to provide additional project detail and discuss opportunities to meet. However, we wanted to make you aware that we're hosting public open houses next week in Alexandria, Ortonville, and Benson, Minnesota and would like to invite you and your members to attend if you have the availability (see attached invitation). We are planning additional open houses in late 2023 and again in 2024 once corridors and routes are developed.

We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

Thanks,

Jason  
Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development  
Otter Tail Power Company  
215 South Cascade Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
(218)739-8311  
[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

# Big Stone South to Alexandria

**Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** are proposing a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Otter Tail Power's Big Stone South Substation in South Dakota and a substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services in Alexandria, Minnesota.

This project will **improve electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather conditions, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy** in the region.

A lot has to happen before the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line can be placed in service.

**We are developing route options for the proposed line and look forward to your input.**



▲ Study area is subject to change.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STEPS



Engagement Opportunities

### STEP 1

▶ Data Gathering

### STEP 2

- ▶ Public Engagement
- ▶ Routing
- ▶ Preliminary Surveys
- ▶ Preliminary Right of Way
- ▶ Preliminary Engineering

### STEP 3

- ▶ File Route Applications
- ▶ Environmental Permits

### STEP 4

- ▶ Right of Way
- ▶ Surveys

### STEP 5

- ▶ Route Application Decision
- ▶ Final Engineering

### STEP 6

- ▶ Construction
- ▶ In Service by 2030
- ▶ Restoration



Communication Through Construction



## HDR

1601 Utica Avenue South, Suite 600  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416-3400

Join us at an open house to learn about the Big Stone to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line proposed by Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services.

LEARN MORE ON THE INSIDE



www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com  
connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com  
(800) 598-5587

## HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT?

**ALEXANDRIA**  
📅 April 25, 2023  
🕒 4:00-7:00 p.m.  
📍 Holiday Inn  
5637 MN-29  
Alexandria, MN 56308

**ORTONVILLE**  
📅 April 26, 2023  
🕒 4:00-7:00 p.m.  
📍 Ortonville Community Center  
200 Monroe Ave  
Ortonville, MN 56278

**BENSON**  
📅 April 27, 2023  
🕒 4:00-7:00 p.m.  
📍 McKinney's on Southside  
300 14th Street South  
Benson, MN 56215

JOIN US!

You're invited to an open house for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV transmission line project. This project will improve electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather conditions, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to renewable energy, and improve long-term electric reliability in the region.

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

From: Alan Kelley <akelley@iowas.org>

Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 3:18 PM

To: Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>

Subject: Re: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

\*\*\*This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

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Jason send me the Information and I will see what I can do to help you out.

Thanks Alan

On Fri, Apr 21, 2023 at 2:56 PM Lance Foster <lfoster@iowas.org> wrote:

>

>

>

> ----- Forwarded message -----

> From: Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>

> Date: Fri, Apr 21, 2023 at 12:52 PM

> Subject: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

> To: lfoster@iowas.org <lfoster@iowas.org>

> CC: Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>

>

>

> Greetings Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Foster,

>

>

>

> Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

>

> Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

>

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>

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>

> Currently, Otter Tail Power and MRES are in the preliminary planning stages, which include high-level planning, initial public involvement, and data collection. As these preliminary planning stages progress, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss the project with you. There will be communication soon to provide additional project detail and discuss opportunities to meet. However, we wanted to make you aware that we're hosting public open houses next week in Alexandria, Ortonville, and Benson, Minnesota and would like to invite you and your members to attend if you have the availability (see attached invitation). We are planning additional open houses in



late 2023 and again in 2024 once corridors and routes are developed.

>

> We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

>

> Thanks,

>

> Jason

>

>

>

> Jason Weiers

>

> Manager, Transmission Project Development

>

> Otter Tail Power Company

>

> 215 South Cascade Street

>

> Fergus Falls, MN 56537

>

> (218)739-8311

>

> jweiers@otpc.com

>

>

>

> --

> Lance M. Foster

> Vice Chairman / THPO / Director of Ioway Tribal National Park Iowa

> Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska

> 3345 B Thrasher Rd

> White Cloud, KS 6609

> email: lfoster@iowas.org

> phone: 1-785-595-3258

--

Alan Kelley

Deputy THPO

Iowa Tribe of KS & NE

3345 Thrasher Rd

White Cloud KS 66094

785-351-0080

---

**From:** Leonard Wabasha (TO) <leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 21, 2023 1:31 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Dear Jason Weiers

Thank you the opportunity to consult with your project at such an early stage. Please keep us informed.

Have a Great day, respectfully,



**LEONARD WABASHA**

Director of Cultural Resources • Cultural Resources  
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
d: 952.496.6120  
[shakopeedakota.org](http://shakopeedakota.org)  
[Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org)

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. With a focus on being a good neighbor, good steward of the earth, and good employer, the SMSC is committed to charitable donations, community partnerships, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 21, 2023 1:23 PM  
**To:** Leonard Wabasha (TO) <[leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

This message came from **outside the organization**. Do Not click on links, open attachments or respond unless you know the content is safe.

Greetings Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Wabasha,

Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

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We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

Thanks,

Jason

Jason Weiers

Manager, Transmission Project Development

Otter Tail Power Company

215 South Cascade Street

Fergus Falls, MN 56537

(218)739-8311

[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

~~~~~  
The information contained in this message is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, dissemination or copying of this information is prohibited.  
If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender and delete the message from your system. Thank you!  
~~~~~

## Raine, Katie

---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 27, 2023 8:01 AM  
**To:** Charlie Lippert  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer; Susan Klapel  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Charlie,

I wanted to let you know that we are also reaching out to all of the federally recognized Tribes in MN, as well as other Tribes outside of MN with historical ties to the defined project area that have been identified for the Big Stone South – Alexandria Transmission Line Project.

I thought I would also pass along a bit more information on the location of the Alexandria Substation given the challenges with locating it. Another way of identifying it might be to use the following coordinates:

- 45°50'51.39" North
- 95°25'21.12" West

The Google Earth snapshot below has the Alexandria Substation circled in red (near the middle of the picture).

Hopefully this helps clear up any confusion on the endpoint substation for both the Big Stone South – Alexandria section and the Alexandria – Big Oaks section of the project!

Thanks again for your engagement during the early stages of this project!

Jason



**From:** Charlie Lippert <Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:10 PM

**To:** Weiers, Jason <JWeiers@otpc.com>

**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Susan Klapel <Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com>

**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

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Miigwech (thank you) Jason.

Going to the coordinates given, I see a shopping center there, with substations about 1 mile to the east and to the west. But it doesn't matter because with either substation, the Big Stone South to Alexandria segment project area within the Band's Usual and Accustomed places is roughly 70 square miles, with possibly less than 10 miles of actual transmission. We will ask our new Tribal Historic Preservation Officer who starts later this week on the level of involvement for this segment.

And, as said previously, we are interested in the Alexandria to Big Oaks section of the project, but due to where it is, our scope most likely will be limited to impacts on our cultural resources unless our Commissioner directs us otherwise to

address other issues beyond that, such as bird migration, fish spawning grounds impact, etc. where impacts to fish and wildlife in the project area may impact their availability within our 1837 Treaty of St. Peters (7 Stat. 536) ceded territory (Royce Area 242) where our Tribal citizens hunt, fish, and gather.

Niin sa  
Charlie L.



---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** April 25, 2023 10:05 AM  
**To:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Susan Klapel <[Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com](mailto:Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Charlie,

I appreciate the information that you shared below.

I am following up with the coordinates of the Alexandria Substation.

- Latitude: 45.842320
- Longitude: -95.385847

Please let us know if you have any additional questions!

Best Regards,

Jason

Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development  
Otter Tail Power Company  
215 South Cascade Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
(218)739-8311  
[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 24, 2023 8:07 AM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>; Susan Klapel <[Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com](mailto:Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project



Mino-gigizheb (good morning) Jason.

Miigwech (thank you) for the phone message. If you are able to send me the latitude and longitude of the Alexandria substation, that would be helpful.

From a technical aspect, I have to examine the project and substation location compared to the approximate line formed from the headwaters of Grove Lake in Pope County to the headwaters of Leven Lake to the headwaters of Chippewa Lake in Douglas County as a screening exercise, since no traditional boundaries are ever absolute. And then it would be our THPO who then makes the determination if we act or not. Speaking of our THPO, Terry Kemper is no longer with us. Currently our Executive Director Susan Klapel is serving as our interim Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, with our THPO Assistants Adrian Bugg and Luther Sam assisting her assess situations. Ms. Klapel may be reached by phone at 322-532-7442. She has been included as a cc in this e-mail, so you may also contact her that way.

On paper, all this area I have described are part of Royce Area 289, which as far as the United States are concerned, is part of Dakota Land Cession area, and in the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien (7 Stat. 272), Ojibwe had resolved the area is Dakota territory. The Line in that area runs from the headwaters of Sauk River to the headwaters of Long Prairie River to the head of Otter Tail Lake, which puts the Alexandria substation clearly in Dakota territory. However, the Line serves as an approximate mid-line between the southern-most boundaries of Ojibwe Usual and Accustomed Places and the northern-most boundaries of the Dakota Usual and Accustomed Places, basically, splitting the differences as evenly as possible. Consequently, as an Ojibwe Tribe, politically and from treaty rights aspects, we need to defer issues south of that Line to our Dakota friends. But, as said, since there are areas south of the Prairie du Chien Line are part of our Usual and Accustomed Places, we still hold interest for Cultural Resources protection. And it would be our THPO that determines how aggressively we protect the area or not, based on cultural and historical information they have.

Niin sa  
Charlie L.



---

**From:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Sent:** April 21, 2023 2:15 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Miigwech (thank you) Jason.

Since this project does not cross into the 1837 Treaty of St. Peters (7 Stat. 536) ceded territory (Royce Area 242), the only interest the Mille Lacs Band would have for this project would be for protection of our Cultural Resources for our Usual and Accustomed Places which the project segment from Big Stone to Alexandria may or may not cross, as I'm not entirely sure where exactly the Alexandria substation is. Can you provide me with its coordinates of the substation? And, on Monday, I can check it against our records to verify if this segment in the vicinity of Alexandria is within our area of interest.

The project segment from Alexandria to the new Big Oaks substation, too, is outside of 1837 ceded territory, but the area the segment passes through is within our Usual and Accustomed Places for Cultural Resources protection. So for this segment, I will be assisting our Tribal Historic Preservation Office with the technical review and assessment.

Miigwech miinawaa (thank you again).

Niin sa  
Charlie L.

---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <[JWeiers@otpc.com](mailto:JWeiers@otpc.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, April 21, 2023 1:27:37 PM

**To:** [charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com) <[charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com)>

**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)>

**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Greetings Air Quality Specialist Lippert,

Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

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We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

Thanks,

Jason



Jason Weiers

Manager, Transmission Project Development

Otter Tail Power Company

215 South Cascade Street

Fergus Falls, MN 56537

(218)739-8311

[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

**From:** Charlie Lippert <Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2024 3:53 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Susan Klapel <Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com>; Mike Wilson <Mike.Wilson@millelacsband.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

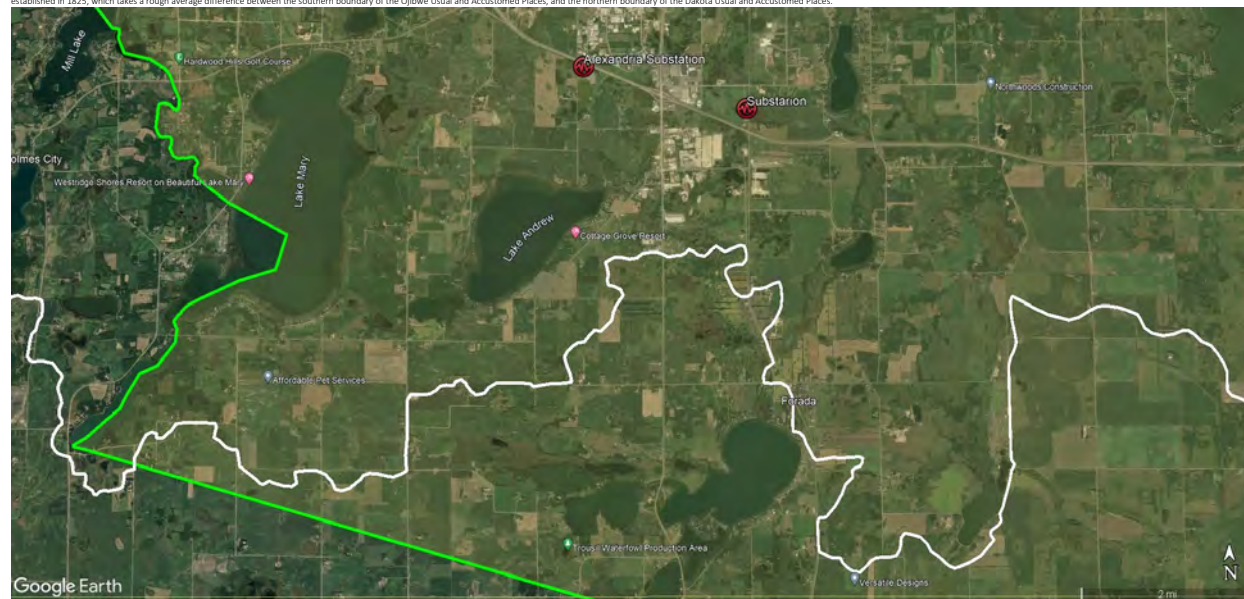
\*\*\*This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email\*\*\*

Boozhoo Jason,  
Migwech for keeping us in the loop regarding the project development.  
I see that there is a series of open houses scheduled for this month.  
I doubt that the I or others here at the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe DNR will be attending any of them.  
However, once the route has been selected, I strongly encourage you to communicate with our Mike Wilson, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and together with other THPOs in the area, plan for a Tribal Monitor be present on site during construction. The Dakota Bands would be interested for the 1851CT and for their 1837CT, while the Ojibwe Bands for the 1847CT, but for the Mille Lacs Band, due to our historical ties and anticipating fuzzy boundaries, I would encourage you to coordinate with Mike for the Cyrus-Starbuck to Alexandria stretch, and for the Alexandria to Big Oaks stretch.  
Migwech minawaa, and good luck on your project.  
Nin  
Charlie L.



**From:** Charlie Lippert  
**Sent:** April 27, 2023 10:33 AM  
**To:** 'Weiers, Jason' <jweiers@otpc.com>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Susan Klapel <Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Boozhoo Jason,  
Attached below is a GoogleEarth image of our 1847 Treaty of Fond du Lac (9 Stat. 904) ceded territory (Royce Area 268) in green, and the southern-most boundaries of our Usual and Accustomed Places in White. As you can see the two don't quite match as land cession was based on the Prairie du Chien Line established in 1825, which takes a rough average difference between the southern boundary of the Ojibwe Usual and Accustomed Places, and the northern boundary of the Dakota Usual and Accustomed Places.



As you can see, only a small segment of the Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line is within our area of interest. Possibly under 10-miles.  
Our new Tribal Historic Preservation Officer starts tomorrow. He will review this and will provide the rest of us with guidance.  
And as said, from a technical standpoint, we use these boundaries for screening purposes only, but actual Tribal presence will vary greatly.

Nin  
Charlie L.



**From:** Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** April 27, 2023 7:01 AM  
**To:** Charlie Lippert <Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Susan Klapel <Susan.Klapel@millelacsband.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Good Morning Charlie,  
  
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Hopefully this helps clear up any confusion on the endpoint substation for both the Big Stone South – Alexandria section and the Alexandria – Big Oaks section of the project!

Thanks again for your engagement during the early stages of this project!

Jason



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**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:10 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com)>; Susan Klapel <[susan.klapel@millelacsband.com](mailto:susan.klapel@millelacsband.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Migwech (thank you) Jason.

Going to the coordinates given, I see a shopping center there, with substations about 1 mile to the east and to the west. But it doesn't matter because with either substation, the Big Stone South to Alexandria segment project area within the Band's Usual and Accustomed places is roughly 70 square miles, with possibly less than 10 miles of actual transmission. We will ask our new Tribal Historic Preservation Officer who starts later this week on the level of involvement for this segment.

And, as said previously, we are interested in the Alexandria to Big Oaks section of the project, but due to where it is, our scope most likely will be limited to impacts on our cultural resources unless our Commissioner directs us otherwise to address other issues beyond that, such as bird migration, fish spawning grounds impact, etc. where impacts to fish and wildlife in the project area may impact their availability within our 1837 Treaty of St. Peters (7 Stat. 536) ceded territory (Royce Area 242) where our Tribal citizens hunt, fish, and gather.

Nin sa  
Charlie L.



**From:** Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** April 25, 2023 10:05 AM  
**To:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com)>; Susan Klapel <[susan.klapel@millelacsband.com](mailto:susan.klapel@millelacsband.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Charlie,

I appreciate the information that you shared below.

I am following up with the coordinates of the Alexandria Substation.

- Latitude: 45.842320
- Longitude: -95.385847

Please let us know if you have any additional questions!

Best Regards,

Jason

Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development  
Otter Tail Power Company  
215 South Cascade Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
(218) 739-8311  
[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

**From:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 24, 2023 8:07 AM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com)>; Susan Klapel <[susan.klapel@millelacsband.com](mailto:susan.klapel@millelacsband.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

\*\*\*This is an **EXTERNAL** email. DO NOT open attachments or click links in suspicious email.\*\*\*

Mino-gigzheb (good morning) Jason.

Migwech (than you) for the phone message. If you are able to send me the latitude and longitude of the Alexandria substation, that would be helpful.

From a technical aspect, I have to examine the project and substation location compared to the approximate line formed from the headwaters of Grove Lake in Pope County to the headwaters of Leven Lake to the headwaters of Chippewa Lake in Douglas County as a screening exercise, since no traditional boundaries are ever absolute. And then it would be our THPO who then makes the determination if we act or not. Speaking of our THPO, Terry Kemper is no longer with us. Currently our Executive Director Susan Klapel is serving as our interim Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, with our THPO Assistants Adrian Bugg and Luther Sam assisting her assess situations. Ms. Klapel may be reached by phone at 322-532-7442. She has been included as a cc in this e-mail, so you may also contact her that way.

On paper, if this area I have described are part of Royce Area 289, which as far as the United States are concerned, is part of Dakota Land Cession area, and in the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien (7 Stat. 272), Ojibwe had resolved the area is Dakota territory. The Line in that area runs from the headwaters of Sauk River to the headwaters of Long Prairie River to the head of Otter Tail Lake, which puts the Alexandria substation clearly in Dakota territory. However, the Line serves as an approximate mid-line between the southern-most boundaries of Ojibwe Usual and Accustomed Places and the northern-most boundaries of the Dakota Usual and Accustomed Places, basically, splitting the differences as evenly as possible. Consequently, as an Ojibwe Tribe, politically and from treaty rights aspects, we need to defer issues south of that Line to our Dakota friends. But, as said, since there are areas south of the Prairie du Chien Line are part of our Usual and Accustomed Places, we still hold interest for Cultural Resources protection. And it would be our THPO that determines how aggressively we protect the area or not, based on cultural and historical information they have.

Nin sa  
Charlie L.



**From:** Charlie Lippert <[Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:Charlie.Lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Sent:** April 21, 2023 2:15 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrc.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Migwech (thank you) Jason.

Since this project does not cross into the 1837 Treaty of St. Peters (7 Stat. 536) ceded territory (Royce Area 242), the only interest the Mille Lacs Band would have for this project would be for protection of our Cultural Resources for our Usual and Accustomed Places which the project segment from Big Stone to Alexandria may or may not cross, as I'm not entirely sure where exactly the Alexandria substation is. Can you provide me with its coordinates of the substation? And, on Monday, I can check it against our records to verify if this segment in the vicinity of Alexandria is within our area of interest.

The project segment from Alexandria to the new Big Oaks substation, too, is outside of 1837 ceded territory, but the area the segment passes through is within our Usual and Accustomed Places for Cultural Resources protection. So for this segment, I will be assisting our Tribal Historic Preservation Office with the technical review and assessment.

Migwech minawaa (thank you again).  
Niin sa  
Charlie L.

---

**From:** Weiers, Jason <[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 21, 2023 1:27:37 PM  
**To:** [charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com) <[charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com](mailto:charlie.lippert@millelacsband.com)>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <[jennifer.hanley@hdtrc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdtrc.com)>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South - Alexandria Transmission Line Project

Greetings Air Quality Specialist Lippert,

Several Minnesota energy companies are proposing to build new transmission projects in the Upper Midwest to improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region.

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line (the Project) from Big Stone South to Alexandria. The Big Stone South – Alexandria project will involve a new transmission line between the Big Stone South substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. The Project Area being studied for the new 345 kV line is located in Big Stone County, South Dakota, and Swift, Stevens, Grant, Pope, and Douglas Counties in Minnesota.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria project is part of a larger Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project, with the Alexandria – Big Oaks project being led by Xcel Energy.

The Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks project is one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest that is needed to increase transmission system capability, mitigate current capacity issues, and improve electric system reliability throughout the region. Otter Tail Power and MRES plan to submit a Route Permit Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in Q4 2024 and a Facility Permit Application to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at a future point in time yet to be determined. At this early stage of the project, it is unknown if Section 106 compliance may be needed.

Currently, Otter Tail Power and MRES are in the preliminary planning stages, which include high-level planning, initial public involvement, and data collection. As these preliminary planning stages progress, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss the project with you. There will be communication soon to provide additional project detail and discuss opportunities to meet. However, we wanted to make you aware that we're hosting public open houses next week in Alexandria, Ortonville, and Benson, Minnesota and would like to invite you and your members to attend if you have the availability (see attached invitation). We are planning additional open houses in late 2023 and again in 2024 once corridors and routes are developed.

We look forward to partnering with you on this important project.

Thanks,  
Jason

Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development  
Otter Tail Power Company  
215 South Cascade Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
(218)739-8311  
[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

---

**From:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 19, 2024 12:02 PM  
**To:** Dianne Desrosiers <dianned@swo-nsn.gov>  
**Cc:** Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Weiers, Jason <jweiers@otpc.com>; Wayne Cloud <waynec@swo-nsn.gov>  
**Subject:** Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

Dear THPO Desrosiers,

Thank you for your interest to partner with us as we develop the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV routes that will be presented in our Route Permit Application that will be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the fourth quarter of this year.

Attached is a GIS shapefile of the proposed route segments that will be presented at the open houses the last week of June (see schedule below) as well as a handout that provides some additional project information. We will be accepting comments on these proposed route segments through July 15, 2024 to identify the proposed routes that we will include in the Route Permit Application.

Please let us know if and how you would like to participate in the development of our project. We can be available to discuss the project, it's current status and our schedule at your convenience.

#### Dates and Locations

##### | Alexandria | June 24, 2024

- 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Broadway Ballroom  
115 30th Ave E  
Alexandria, MN 56308

##### | Glenwood | June 25, 2024

- 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Central Square  
105 2nd Ave NE, Suite 111  
Glenwood, MN 56334

##### | Benson | June 26, 2024

- 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Benson High School  
1400 Montana Ave  
Benson, MN 56215

##### | Ortonville | June 27, 2024

- 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Sioux Historic Pavilion  
1079 Lakeshore Drive  
Ortonville, MN 56278

Thank you,

Jason



Jason Weiers, P.E.

Manager, Trans. Project Development

Direct: 218-739-8311

[jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com)

*Confidentiality Notice: The information included in this e-mail and any attachment is intended only for the personal and confidential use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. This message, including attachments, may be or may contain privileged and confidential customer information. If you as the reader are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error and that any retention, review, use or distribution of this communication or the information contained in it is strictly prohibited. If you received this e-mail in error, destroy it immediately and please notify the sender of this message.*

**Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** (representing *Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency*) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) will connect Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, to the Alexandria Substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services near Alexandria, Minnesota.

**This project is needed to ensure electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather events, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to low-cost energy in the region.**

## MONOPOLE

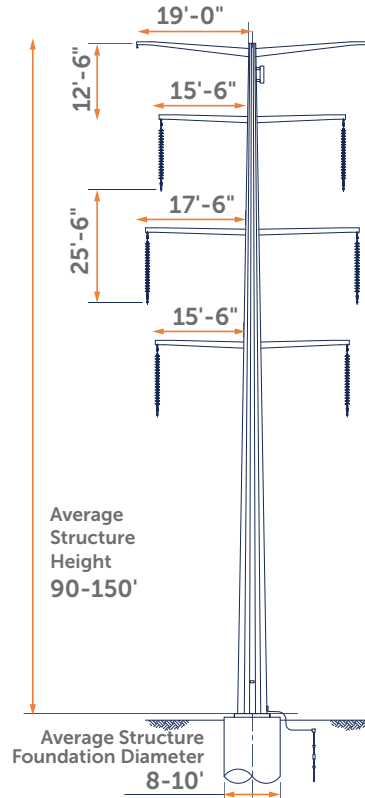
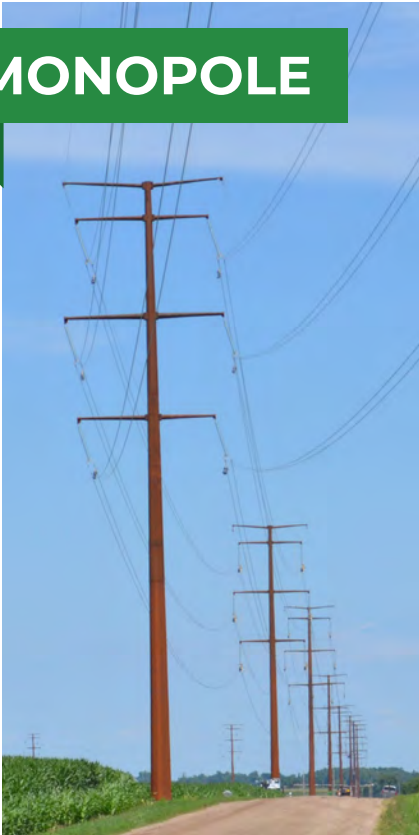


Image shown is an example of a similar double-circuit structure.

## ROUTING PROCESS



**DEFINE STUDY AREA**



**BEGIN AGENCY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**IDENTIFY PROJECT CORRIDORS**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**DEVELOP ROUTE CORRIDORS**



**HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**DEVELOP PROPOSED ROUTE SEGMENTS**



**WE ARE HERE  
HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**



**FILE PROPOSED ROUTES IN MN**

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Developing and constructing a transmission line is a multi-year effort. We are gathering public feedback on the route corridors to help us develop a proposed route. We'll continue coordinating with landowners, local governments, agencies, and other stakeholders throughout the development process. The new line is tentatively scheduled to be complete in 2030 or 2031.



**Engagement Opportunities**

### STEP 1

▶ Data Gathering

### STEP 2

- ▶ Public Engagement
- ▶ Routing
- ▶ Preliminary Surveys
- ▶ Preliminary Right of Way
- ▶ Preliminary Engineering
- ▶ MN Certificate of Need Filed

### STEP 3

- ▶ Right of Way
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ Filed SD Facility Permit Application
- WE ARE HERE**
- ▶ File MN Route Permit Application
- ▶ Environmental Permits

### STEP 4

### STEP 5

- ▶ Permit Decisions
- ▶ Right of Way
- ▶ Final Engineering

### STEP 6

- ▶ Construction
- ▶ In Service in 2030-2031
- ▶ Restoration

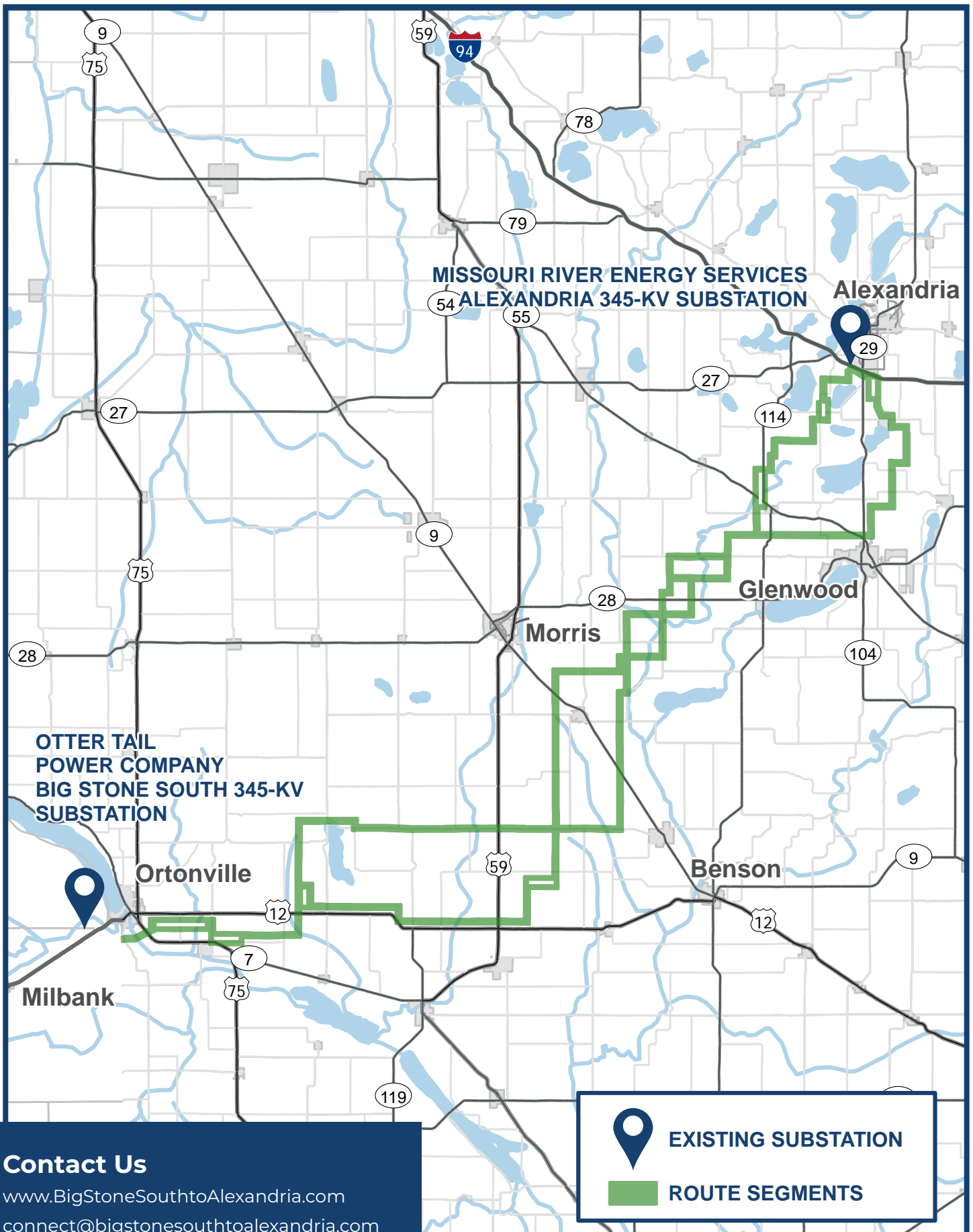


**Communicate Project Updates Throughout Construction**

**Scan the QR code to visit the project website.**








## Contact Us

[www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)  
[connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com](mailto:connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com)  
 (800) 598-5587

 Route segments are marked in green on the map above and are subject to change.





# LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

## *Tribal Historic Preservation Office*

*Gina M Lemon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer*

*Anita M Cloud, Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant*

June 24, 2024

Via Internet

Otter Tail Power Company &  
Missouri River Energy Services  
Attn: Kevin J. Scheidecker, Senior Environmental Specialist  
215 S Cascade St.  
Fergus Falls, MN 56587

**RE: Project #; BBS▶ A, Big Stone to Alexandria Transmission Line Project**

Develop, construct, and co-own a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) will connect Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, to the Alexandria Substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services near Alexandria, MN.

Various Co.'s, MN & SD.

**LL THPO No. 24-308-NCRI**

Dear Kevin J. Scheidecker,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. This has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given to the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992, and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (38CFR800).

**I have reviewed the documentation. After careful consideration of our records, I have determined that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe does not have any recorded historic properties, within this area. \*\* This does not mean there are not any cultural resources present, at this time. \*\***

Should any human remains or suspected human remains be encountered, all work shall cease and the following personnel should be notified immediately: County Sheriff's Office, Office of the State Archaeologist, and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe along with other interested parties.

Please note the above determination does not "exempt" future projects from Section 106 review. In the event of any other tribe notifying you of an issue or us (LLBO) of concerns for this specific project, we may reenter into the consultation process.

You may contact me at (218) 335-2940 if you have questions regarding our review of this project. Please refer to the **LL-THPO Number** as stated above in all correspondence with this project.

Respectfully submitted,

*Gina M Lemon*

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

CC; Jason Weiers, Manager, Project Development.

Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Office - Established in 1996

190 Sailstar Drive NE \* Cass Lake, MN 56633

[Gina.lemon@llojibwe.net](mailto:Gina.lemon@llojibwe.net)

**From:** Leonard Wabasha (TO) <leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 2, 2024 3:10 PM  
**To:** Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Project

EXTERNAL

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Good Afternoon Kevin, Yes, message received and we will be leaving direct consultation to those Tribes closer to the project area... Thanks and Have a Great Day!!



**LEONARD WABASHA**

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer • Cultural Resources  
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
d: 952.496.6120  
[shakopeedakota.org](mailto:leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org)  
[Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org)

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. With a focus on being a good neighbor, good steward of the earth, and good employer, the SMSC is committed to charitable donations, community partnerships, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.



## **Local Government Units**

## Minnesota Counties

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
April 7, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Douglas County Board of Commissioners
April 7, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Grant County Board of Commissioners
May 16, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Lac qui Parle County Board of Commissioners
June 13, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Pope County Board of Commissioners
June 20, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Stevens County Board of Commissioners
June 20, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners
July 5, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Swift County Board of Commissioners
August 8, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Pope County Board of Commissioners
October 10, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Pope County Board of Commissioners
October 17, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Douglas County Board of Commissioners
October 17, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Lac qui Parle County Board of Commissioners
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Big Stone County	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
			Douglas County	
			Pope County	
			Stevens County	
			Swift County	
			Lac qui Parle County	

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 21, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners
November 21, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Stevens County Board of Commissioners
December 19, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Grant County Board of Commissioners
March 19, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Swift County Board of Commissioners
March 19, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Stevens County Board of Commissioners
April 9, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Pope County Board of Commissioners
April 9, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Douglas County Board of Commissioners
April 16, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Big Stone County Board of Commissioners
May 7, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners
May 14, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Pope County Board of Commissioners
May 21, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Swift County Board of Commissioners
June 5, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Douglas County Board of Commissioners
June 18, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Stevens County Board of Commissioners

November 10, 2023

Darren Wilke  
Director  
Big Stone County  
20 SE 2nd St.  
Ortonville, MN 5627856278

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. Wilke,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

---

<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

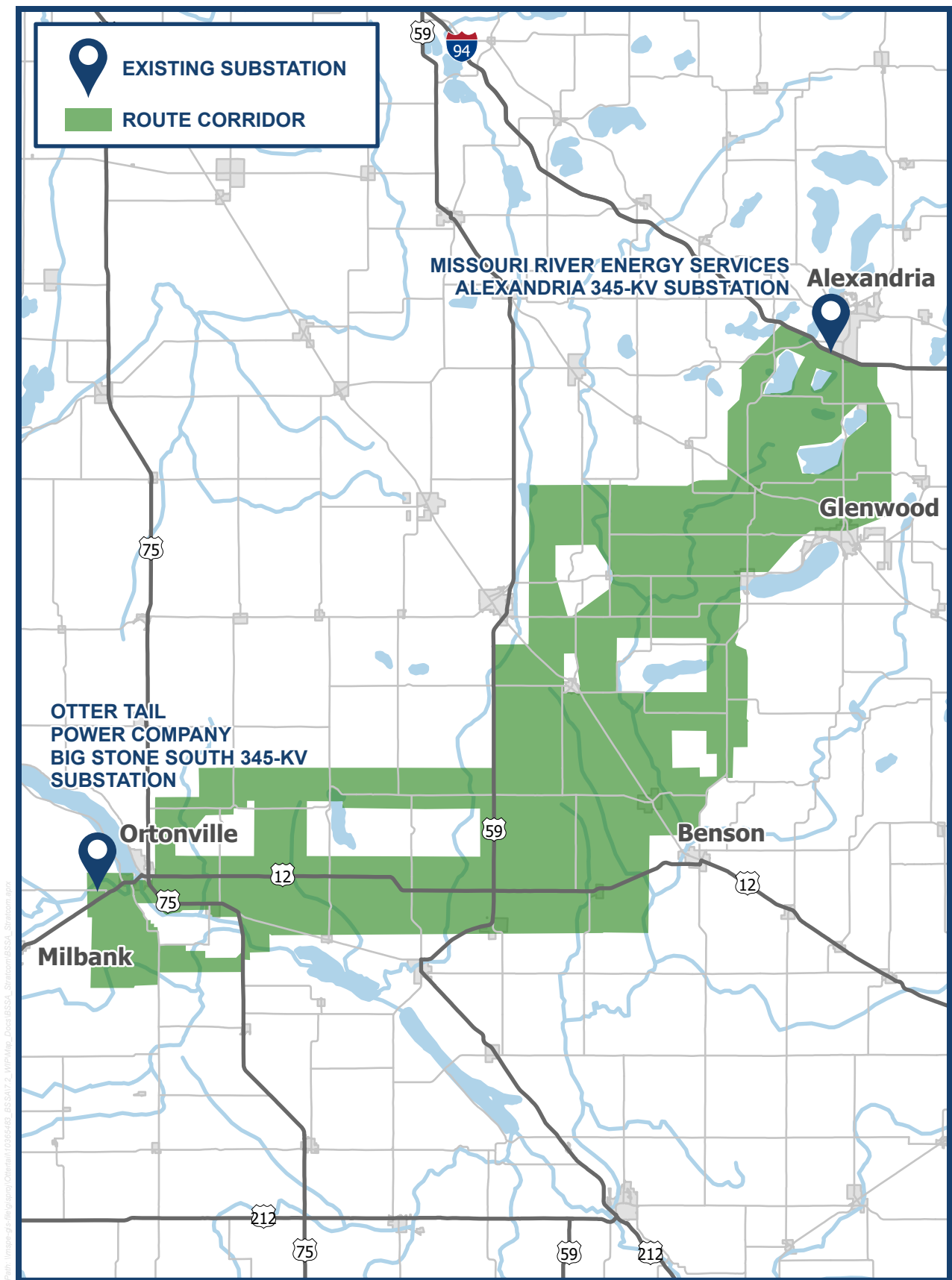
Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map





▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

## Minnesota Cities and Townships

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	City of Ortonville	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
			City of Odessa	
			City of Holloway	
			City of Danvers	
			City of Clontarf	
			City of Hancock	
			City of Starbuck	
			City of Lowry	
			City of Glenwood	
			City of Forada	
			City of Alexandria	
			Holmes City Township	
			Moe Township	
			La Grand Township	
			Lake Mary Township	
			Hudson Township	
			Hoff Township	
			Langhei Township	
			Walden Township	
			Blue Mounds Township	
			New Prairie Township	
			White Bear Lake Township	
			Minnewaska Township	
			Nora Township	
			Ben Wade Township	
			Reno Township	
			Leven Township	
			Swan Lake Township	
			Framnas Township	

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
			Hodges Township	
			Morris Township	
			Damen Township	
			Horton Township	
			Moore Township	
			Hegbert Township	
			Shible Township	
			Fairfield Township	
			Tara Township	
			Moyer Township	
			Clontarf Township	
			Six Mile Grove Township	
			Marysland Township	
			Benson Township	
November 14, 2023	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Lake Mary Township
December 11, 2023	Email	Fairfield Township	Applicants	Comments on proposed corridor for the BSSA Project
February 20, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Lake Mary Township
March 26, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Big Stone Township
July 17, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and Lake Mary Township, MN

November 10, 2023

Gene Hausauer  
Mayor  
City of Ortonville  
751 Highland Hwy  
Ortonville, MN 5627956279

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Mr. Hausauer,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Missouri River Energy Services, on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new, approximately 100-mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line that will connect Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South 345-kV substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to Western Minnesota's existing Alexandria 345-kV substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (referred to as the Project or BSSA). The Project is a segment of one of eighteen new transmission projects identified in the Upper Midwest by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)<sup>1</sup> that is needed to ensure electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, increase access to low-cost energy, and increase system resiliency to extreme weather events. The Project will be in Grant County, South Dakota and potentially in Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas Counties, Minnesota depending on the final route identified through the state permitting processes in Minnesota and South Dakota. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota were applicants to a Certificate of Need application that was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on September 29, 2023, and plan to submit a Route Permit application with the MN PUC in the fourth quarter of 2024 as well as a Facility Permit application with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission in the second quarter of 2024. Depending on a variety of factors, construction of the Project is anticipated to start in 2027 and end in either 2030 or 2031. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota started public engagement efforts in the second quarter of 2023 through a series of public meetings and has continued routing efforts since that time with a second round of public meetings recently occurring throughout the Project area over the past month. Otter Tail and Western Minnesota, with our consultants' help, have identified potential corridors as shown on the enclosed map. These corridors were based on: (1) an analysis of publicly available data; (2) stakeholder feedback and comments; (3) engineering and constructability best practices; (4) environmental considerations; and (5) regulatory rules and guidelines. These corridors are planning to be refined into a preferred route in which Otter Tail and Western Minnesota will seek to obtain a 150-foot-wide easement from landowners for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 345-kV transmission line.

We request your review of the corridors identified for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a preferred route. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies. To help us identify potential concerns or opportunities in our on-going routing analysis, we request that you please provide us with any information pertaining to the Project by December 11, 2023. Verbal, written or email responses should be sent to:

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<sup>1</sup> See more information at [www.misoenergy.org](http://www.misoenergy.org).

HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
701-353-6139

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.

If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

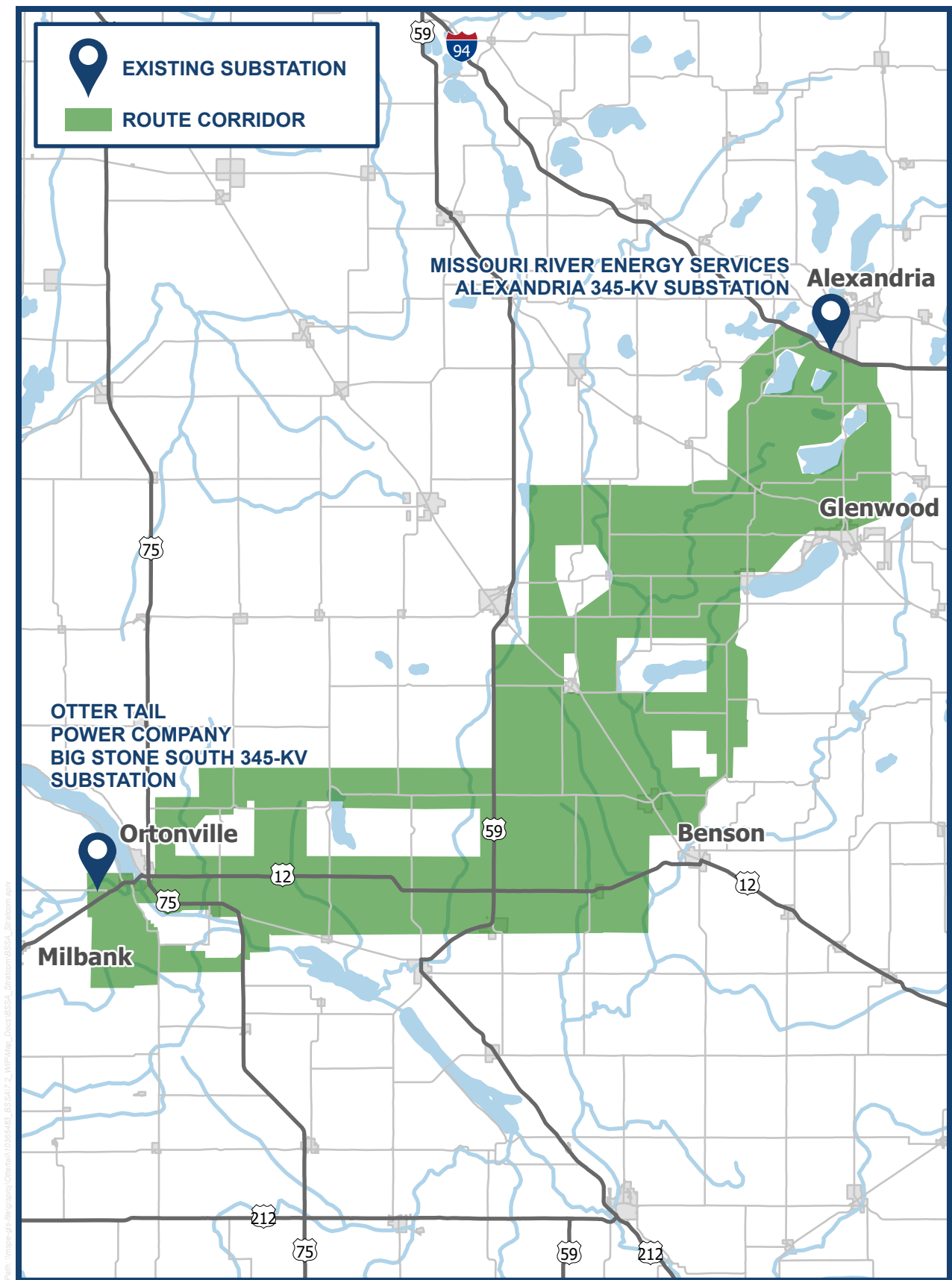
We appreciate and value your input in our on-going efforts to minimize effects to socioeconomics, avoid known culturally significant sites, protect natural resources, and utilize opportunities to parallel existing infrastructure corridors where feasible and look forward to your feedback and continued coordination.

Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

**From:** [Douglas and Alicia Schliep](#)  
**To:** [Hanley, Jennifer](#)  
**Subject:** Corridor Concerns  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 10:24:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [CCF12112023\\_00000.jpg](#)

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You don't often get email from [daschliep@fedtel.net](mailto:daschliep@fedtel.net). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Jennifer,

In response to the notification sent to Fairfield Township, Swift County, MN, a map has been attached to this email regarding the proposed corridor. There are multiple parcels within the township that have center irrigation pivots on them, indicated on the attached map. We are also concerned buried power lines for these irrigators, and the large amount of existing drain tile that is also buried within parcels in the township. Please consider these factors when establishing a power line route.

Thank you,

Doug Schliep

Fairfield Township-Chair





irrigators

## SECTION 29

1. Schlieman, Harold etux 20  
2. Wersinger Properties LLC 20  
**SECTION 32**  
1. Hennen, James etux 10  
**SECTION 34**  
1. Farmco Supply LLP 11

Other LGUs

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
November 10, 2023	Letter	Applicants	Big Stone Area Growth (BSAG)	Initial outreach for BSSA Project and request for comments
			Ortonville Economic Development Authority (EDA)	
			Big Stone City Development Corporation	
			Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District (Big Stone SWCD))	
			Douglas County SWCD	
			Pope County SWCD	
			Stevens County SWCD	
			Swift County SWCD	
			Lac qui Parle County SWCD	
			Yellow Bank Watershed District	
			Bois De Sioux Watershed District	
			Board of Managers-Upper Minnesota River Watershed District	
November 16, 2023	Email	Pope County SWCD	Applicants	Response to proposed BSSA Project request for comments
July 17, 2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting between the Applicants and the Audubon Society



November 10, 2023

Vicki Oakes  
Ortonville EDA  
987 US Highway 12  
Ortonville, MN 56278

**Re: Request for Input for the Proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA)**

Dear Ms. Oakes,

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HDR, Inc.  
Attn: Jennifer Hanley  
51 N Broadway, Suite 550  
Fargo, ND 58102  
[Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:Jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com)  
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If you desire further information regarding the proposed Project, please contact me at 218-739-8311 or [jweiers@otpc.com](mailto:jweiers@otpc.com) or our lead environmental consultant, Jennifer Hanley of HDR, Inc., at 701-353-6139 or [jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com](mailto:jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com). In addition, further information about the Project can also be found on our website at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com).

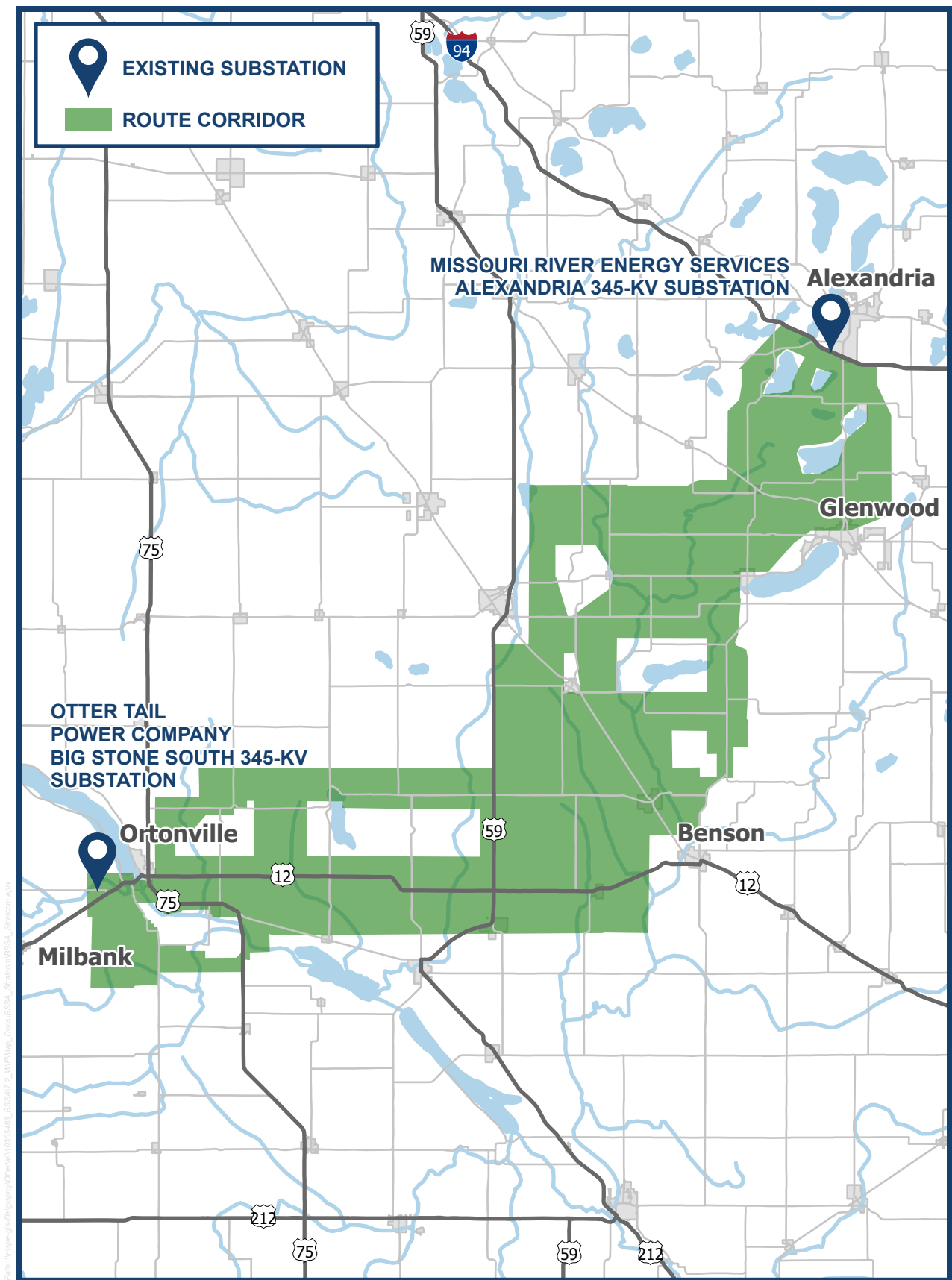
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Sincerely,



Jason Weiers  
Manager, Transmission Project Development

Enclosure: BSSA Corridor Map



▲ Route corridor is marked in green on the map above and subject to change.

## Hanley, Jennifer

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**From:** Kovarik, Holly - FPAC-NRCS, MN <Holly.Kovarik@mn.nacdnet.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 16, 2023 3:20 PM  
**To:** Weiers, Jason; Hanley, Jennifer  
**Cc:** Kovarik, Holly - FPAC-NRCS, MN; Hofstad, Steve (BWSR)  
**Subject:** Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project

**Importance:** High

You don't often get email from holly.kovarik@mn.nacdnet.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon,

I am responding to your letter dated 11-10-2023. Any proposed construction activity will need to comply within the corridor of the project with the Wetland Conservation Act. Project design plans that identify areas of work in Pope County will be needed for our office to review.

Sincerely,

Holly Kovarik  
District Manager  
Pope SWCD  
1680 Franklin Street North  
Glenwood, MN 56334  
(320) 634-5327 Phone  
[www.popeswcd.org](http://www.popeswcd.org)

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