

Appendix F

Phase 1 Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey

May 13, 2024

Mary Matze
Spearmint Renewable Development Company
2916 N. Miami Avenue, Suite 830
Miami, FL 33127

Re: Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey for the Proposed
Snowshoe BESS Project, Olmsted County, Minnesota
File **R0046088.00**

Spearmint Energy (Client) contracted Westwood Professional Services, Inc., (Westwood) to conduct a Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey for the proposed Snowshoe Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Project (Project) in Kalmar Township in Olmsted County, Minnesota. The 150 MW BESS Project Area is proposed to be located in Section 35 of Township 107 N, Range 15 W. The archaeological Area of Potential Effect (APE) includes the approximate 27.2-acre Project Area (Exhibit 1; Exhibit 2). The associated facilities include battery storage containers, a Project Area substation, an overhead tap line from the Project Area Substation to an existing substation, access roads, fencing, and underground electrical connections within the storage system. The survey was conducted to comply with anticipated requirements of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission as part of the Site Permit process.

Mr. Ryan Steeves, MA, RPA, meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology as stipulated in 36 C.F.R. Part 61. He served as Principal Investigator for the Project and conducted the field investigations. Westwood Cultural Resource Manager Ryan P. Grohnke, RA, conducted the literature review and managed the cultural resources task.

The Project Area is located in Minnesota Archaeological Region 3w – Southeast Riverine West. Very few Early Prehistoric components have been recorded within the region, primarily consisting of Paleoindian projectile points from surface collection. Intensive occupation occurs in the Woodland period. Large Woodland village sites are typically located along the Mississippi River, and relatively rare in the western section of the region where the Project is located. Late Prehistoric period sites are uncommon in the interior. Orr phase Oneota village sites located along a tributary of the Root River are the exception. During contact, Orr phase villages were occupied by Oto and Santee Dakota, with historic Santee villages established in the region (Gibbon et al. 2002).

Literature Review

On March 8, 2024, Westwood Cultural Resource Manager Ryan Grohnke reviewed the Minnesota state archaeological site files available via the online Portal, maintained by the Office

of the State Archaeologist (OSA), to obtain a list of previously recorded archaeological located within the proposed Project Area or a one-mile buffer. The Minnesota Statewide Historic Inventory (MnSHIP) maintained by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was examined to ascertain if any historic structures have been previously inventoried in the Project Area or the one-mile buffer.

The OSA records review revealed no previously recorded archaeological resources have been inventoried within the Project Area or the one-mile buffer. The Minnesota Statewide Historic Inventory (MnSHIP) indicated that no historic/architectural resources have been previously inventoried in the Project Area. Three historic/architectural resources are located in the one-mile buffer. Trunk Highway 14, Byron to Rochester (SHPO Inventory # OL-ROD-00001) and Trunk Highway/U.S. Highway 14 (formerly Trunk Highway 7 (SHPO Inventory # XX-ROD-00016) are located immediately south of the Project. A farmstead at 6500 14th St (SHPO Inventory # OL-KAL-00022), was located east of the Project, but has been razed. None of the resources have been evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic places (NRHP). No NRHP properties were identified in the Project according to a review of the NRHP dataset.

Field Investigations

Ryan Steeves conducted a Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of the proposed Project APE on April 24, 2024. The APE included all locations of potential ground disturbance, in this case meaning the entire approximate 27.2-acre Project Area (Exhibit 1; Exhibit 2). Field survey methods consisted of visual pedestrian reconnaissance conducted at 10- to 15-meter transect intervals. Weather was cool and clear. The Project Area is in a cultivated field consisting entirely of a harvested corn field with an average of 85 percent ground surface visibility. The Project lies along the eastern edge of a gated access road leading to an electrical substation. The Project Area is immediately north of the Chicago and North Western Railroad and Highway 14 E, The Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway. Topography is generally rolling with a moderate slope throughout the Project Area. Cascade Creek is situated approximately 1.55 miles south of the APE. Representative photographs are provided as an attachment (Appendix A). No archaeological resources were observed during the field investigation.

Results and Recommendations

No cultural resources were identified during the archaeological survey of the APE. Westwood recommends that the Project may proceed as planned and no additional archaeological investigations are warranted within the APE.

Should the Project be deemed a Federal Undertaking (requiring a federal permit, license, or approval; being located on federally owned or managed land; or receiving federal financial assistance) additional cultural resource investigations may be required. The scope of required cultural resource investigations would then be determined by the functioning federal lead agency in cooperation with SHPO and pertinent Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) as defined in both Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended; NHPA).

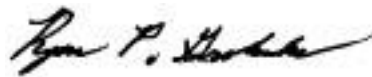
Westwood stresses that if construction plans are altered to include areas not previously surveyed, those locations must be examined for cultural resources. Although an archaeological survey was completed, the possibility of unidentified resources remains. Minnesota Statute 307.08, the Private Cemeteries Act, prohibits the intentional disturbance of human burials. If human remains are encountered during construction activities, all ground disturbing activity must cease and local law enforcement must be notified.

Sincerely,

WESTWOOD PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



Ryan Steeves, MA, RPA
Principal Investigator



Ryan P. Grohnke, RA
Cultural Resources Manager

References

Gibbon, Guy E., Craig M. Johnson, and Elizabeth Hobbs

2002 "Chapter 3: Minnesota's Environment and Native American Culture History." In *Mn/Model Final Report Phases 1-3, Minnesota Department of Transportation*. SHPO Reference #95-4098. Accessed online, <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/mnmodel/P3FinalReport/chapter3.html#ch34>, August 2020.

Appendix A: Representative Photos of Area of Potential Effect

Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey
Snowshoe BESS Project
Olmsted County, Minnesota



Photo 1: Overview of Snowshoe Project, Facing North



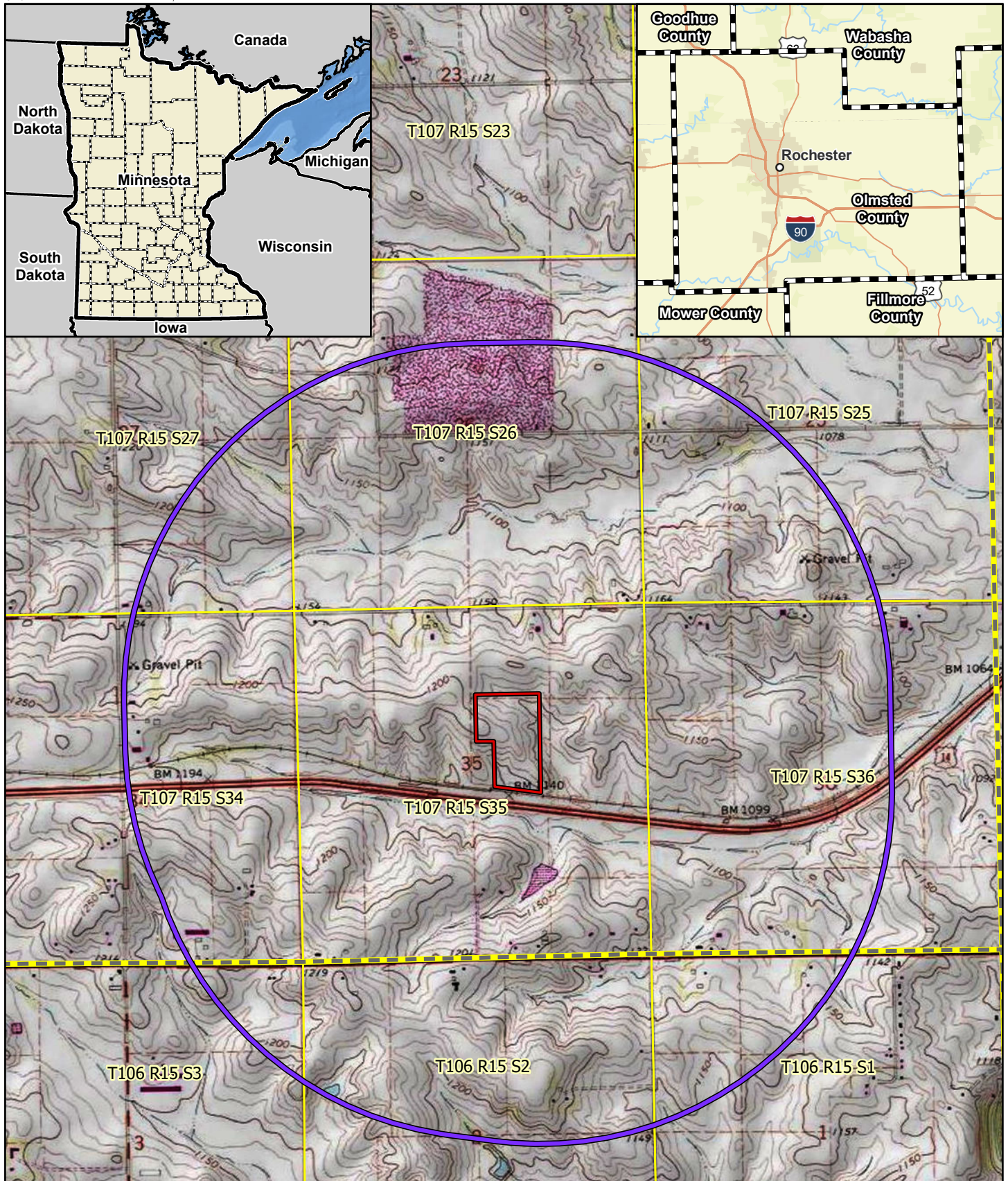
Photo 2: Overview of Snowshoe Project, Facing East



Photo 3: Overview of Snowshoe Project, Facing West



Photo 4: Ground Surface Visibility, Typical of Project



Scale: 1:24,000

Data Source(s): Westwood (2024); ESRI WMS USA
Topo & World Streets Basemaps (Accessed 2024);
PLSS (2022).

0 2,000 Feet

Westwood

Toll Free (888) 937-5150 westwoodps.com
Westwood Professional Services, Inc.

- 1-Mile Buffer
- Project Area (Area of Potential Effect)
- PLS Section
- PLS Township

Snowshoe BESS Project

Olmsted County, Minnesota

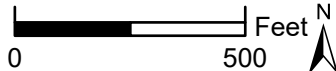
Project Location

EXHIBIT 1



Scale: 1:5,000

Data Source(s): Westwood (2024); ESRI WMS USA
Topo & World Streets Basemaps (Accessed 2024);
PLSS (2022).



Westwood

Toll Free (888) 937-5150 westwoodps.com
Westwood Professional Services, Inc.

 1-Mile Buffer

 Project Area (Area of Potential Effect)

 PLS Section

Snowshoe BESS Project

Olmsted County, Minnesota

Archaeological Survey Results

EXHIBIT 2