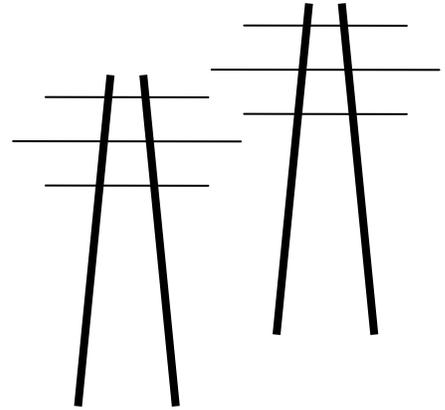


Legalelectric, Inc.

Carol Overland Attorney at Law, MN #254617
Energy Consultant—Transmission, Power Plants, Nuclear Waste
overland@legalelectric.org

1110 West Avenue
Red Wing, Minnesota 55066
612.227.8638



November 2, 2015

Judge James Mortensen
Office of Administrative Hearings
P. O. Box 64620
St. Paul, MN 55164-0620

eFiled and eServed

RE: Comments of Andersen re: Menahga Project
**In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for
a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Menahga Area 115 kV
Transmission Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota**
OAH Docket: 5-2500-32715
PUC Docket: ET-2, E-015/CN-14-787; PUC Docket: ET-2, E-015/TL-14-797

Dear Judge Mortenson:

Attached and filed via eFiling and eServed, please find Comments of Donna J. Andersen and Curtis Andersen, and the Donna J. Andersen Trust, Donna J. Andersen, Trustee. Due to instructions to mail hard copy of documents with attachments, Ms. Anderson has also sent a hard copy to you at the address above.

If you have any questions, or require further information, please let me know.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Overland".

Carol A. Overland
Attorney at Law

cc: eFiled and eServed

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

RE: **In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota**
OAH Docket: 5-2500-32715
PUC Docket: ET-2, E-015/CN-14-787 (Certificate of Need)
PUC Docket: ET-2, E-015/TL-14-797 (Route Permit)

I, Carol A. Overland, hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the attached Comments of Andersen re: Menahga Project by electronic filing and eService.

Dated: November 2, 2015



Carol A. Overland #254617
Attorney for Donna J. Andersen, Curtis Andersen,
and Donna J. Andersen Trust
LEGALECTRIC
OVERLAND LAW OFFICE
1110 West Avenue
Red Wing, MN 55066
(612) 227-8638
overland@legalelectric.org

the forest, and plan to retire here. I am leaving my land as my legacy to my children. I have highlighted this land on the enclosed map. Exhibit A. The blue corridor and darker blue line is what's proposed by the Applicants, and the darker blue line appears to be on the north side of the road on the road right of way or on my land. Rather than put on my land, it can be put on the southern part of the blue corridor, across the road. Putting it across the road would prevent destruction of my trees and the planned and intentionally cultivated forest. It would also maintain my enjoyment of my property, and would not destroy the value of property, both in financial and its worth to me, in trust, and to my children.

6. If the transmission line were routed on my property, there would be substantial impacts on my land and to my family. The primary impact would be loss of all the trees along the easement and any "danger trees" nearby, trees which could not be replaced due to restrictions of plantings under and near transmission lines, and a significant loss of use and enjoyment of this property, focused on tree growth and preservation:

- * Forestry Plan (attached-Exhibit B);

- * Impact on trees can not be mitigated -- once clear cut for easement, can't replant and regrow due to restrictions;

- * Loss of forest land is a non-compensable impact. "Value" of trees can be calculated, but value of having that many trees intentionally cultivated with the Forestry Plan and with the help of the DNR, would be a non-compensable loss.

- * Both DNR and USFWS recommend routing to avoid loss of forest land.

7. There are existing corridors that should be used, and which must be used according to Minnesota statute and case law.
8. The logical route that would better utilize existing corridor in the northern half of this project area would be to utilize the pipeline corridor. This is particularly fair given GRE and Minnesota Power's statement that the project is necessary to power the pipeline. Due to the fact that the pipeline owners will be a primary beneficiary of the project, they should also pay the lion's share of the cost and the transmission line should be on that easement.
9. Use of these existing corridors for the transmission routes would avoid the impacts to trees and forest land.

10. There has not been enough opportunity for public comment on these two dockets. This is a very difficult process for people to figure out, to learn how to make meaningful input, to understand how important it is to speak up, and how difficult it is to speak up. For me personally, I'd been involved in the Sandpiper pipeline and was focused on that project and did not recognize the urgency of the notices I did receive for this project after my address was corrected.
11. I again request that a full Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for this project. I have some specific comments on the Environmental Assessment, which is inadequate, and leaves out very important information that has an impact on route, and there is no way for me to raise these issues in a way that would result in correction of the environmental review document. This comment period is the only opportunity to raise these issues, and no additional environmental review is required beyond that report which is so glaringly erroneous.
12. Here are my specific comments on what is wrong with the environmental review and why it is not adequate and should be corrected:
13. **WETLANDS:** An area of my property is listed on the National Wetlands Inventory as a wetland of "Type 7" and "PF06C." See Exhibit B, aerial photo with type; Exhibit C NWI wetland description. I have attached an aerial map of this wetland on my property.

This wetland should be avoided in routing the transmission line.

14. **BATS:** The Northern Long-Eared Bat is a threatened species and a rare resource (See the Environmental Assessment, p. xiv) As I stated at the public hearing, a study was to be done, and I requested the study and have requested the study and have not received it. If you look at Environmental Assessment, p. xiii, similarly on p. 41, it says:

Impacts to rare and unique natural resources are anticipated to be minimal, provided that best management practices are employed. The project will impact trees that could be used as roosting habitat by the Northern Long-Eared Bat, a threatened species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service (USFWS) has noted that an incidental take permit may be necessary for the project. The Take Permit will impose conditions to mitigate potential impacts to this bat species.

The need for a "take permit" shows a significant impact, it means that bats will die. The study should be part of this docket, and considered, before any decision is made.

US Fish & Wildlife recommends routing to avoid tree removal, noted on p. 89 of the EA:

The USFWS recommends minimizing the removal of trees that could be used as roosting habitat for the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NEB). Tree removal can be minimized by prudent routing – by selecting routes, alignments, and structure locations that minimize the number of trees that must be removed to accommodate the new 115 kV transmission line ROW. The USFWS indicates that an incidental take permit may be necessary for project that result in greater than one acre of tree removal. The take permit may impose conditions to mitigate potential impacts to NLEB.

If this project were to be routed near my property, it would take many trees, and would be contrary to the recommendation of USFWS. The impact on bats would be avoided if it were sited across the road from my property, which is within the blue proposed corridor, and is an area that is not forestland or prime bat habitat. This impact would be avoided by routing on the opposite side of the road.

15. **FOREST:** I have carefully and with much effort cultivated the forest on my land. Over the years, I've developed the Forest Plan, and am grateful for the help of the DNR in developing that plan and the forest. We have been successful in our efforts, and are working on recovery from the Green Valley in 2013, particularly along the transmission easement on the north side of my property.

On EA, p. xii, see also xiii, 41, which addresses “trees” and “forests,” keeping in mind that my land is a forest:

Impacts to land-based economies are anticipated to be minimal; however, impacts to trees and forestry are anticipated to be moderate. Impacts to trees are unavoidable, as the project area includes substantial amounts of forest. Impacts to trees can be minimized by prudent placement of the transmission line alignment and poles, particularly through right-of-way sharing with existing infrastructure.

The EA discusses only “minimization” of impacts on forests, and does not address mitigation. EA, p. 41. P. 45 similarly minimizes the potential impact:

Transmission line structures between the Straight River substation and the Red Eye substation will be a visible new addition to the landscape and will create aesthetic impacts. However, because of the nature of the landscape and the distance between structures, only a few structures will likely be visible from any one location. Additionally, most residences are located greater than 150 feet from the anticipated alignment. The new structures may require tree clearing along the transmission line ROW (see Sections 5.6 and 5.10). This tree clearing would create adverse aesthetic impacts in forested areas along the route.

The project, as proposed, if routed over my land, would eliminate the buffer between my home and the road. It would also adversely affect me because the forest was already cleared and cannot be regrown on the north side of my property where Xcel Energy has an existing transmission line. Because one line is already adjacent to my property, I would be unfairly and doubly affected if this line would be routed on the south side of my property.

The forest on my land has not been adequately documented in the EA, and the impacts have not been considered. This impact to this forest land would be avoided by routing on the opposite side of the road.

16. **MITIGATION OF IMPACTS:** The EA section on “Mitigation” does not address that impacts to forests cannot be mitigated, because once a forested area is clear cut for an easement, it must remain that way, and cannot be regrown. Mitigation of impacts on forests is only discussed on p. 46, and offers nothing of substance. “New plantings” is not an option on easements. (also p. 68 Land-Based Economies).

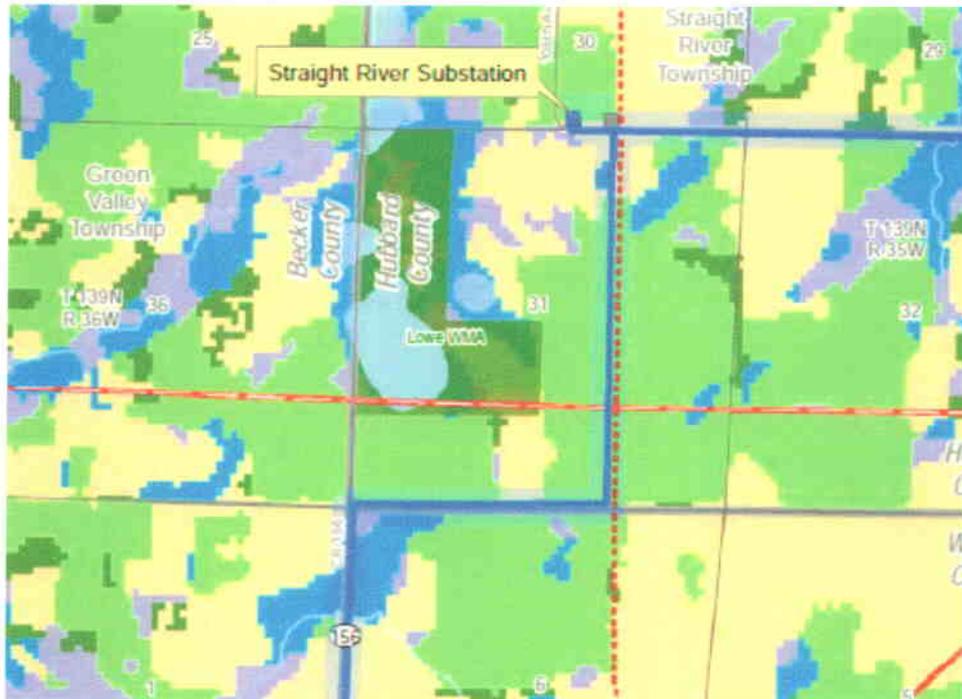
Impacts on forestry are PERMANENT. The section on forestry does clearly state that “Unlike agricultural impacts, these impacts are permanent throughout the right of way.” (p. 70). Impacts are also irreversible, and an irretrievable commitment of resources (EA p. 90). The EA does raise the issue of compensation for loss of forest resources, but it is my understanding that this is only a one-time compensation for loss of the trees based on appraised value, and not loss of the forest forever (p. 71):

Impacts to forested areas and to forestry operations can be avoided and mitigated by prudent routing and prudent placement of structures within the route – i.e., by avoiding forested areas. Where such areas cannot be avoided, impacts can be mitigated by new plantings that are compatible with the new 115 kV line. Impacts can also be mitigated by compensation to landowners for loss of forest resources.

How would such compensation be calculated?

17. **FORESTRY MAP IS INCORRECT**

The EA map representing forests is incorrect, as the land across from my forest land is not forest, and is an agricultural field, clearly visible on google earth and on the aerial photo maps in the Application and EA.



This also demonstrates that the route was not driven by the preparers of the environmental review document.

18. **DNR AND USFWS RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED**

The Comments of the DNR and USFWS are included as appendices in the project application. These comments and their recommendations should be separately included in the routing docket, as their concerns, considerations, and recommendations should have an impact on the choice of route.

The EA reports the DNR recommendations (p. 88):

For that segment of the applicants' proposed route from the Hubbard substation to the Straight River substation, which contains an area of biological significance and old growth forest remnants, the DNR has recommended several mitigation strategies, including:

- Constructing the project within already disturbed areas,
- **Minimizing vehicular disturbance,**
- **Avoiding equipment or supply stockpiles in the area,**
- Inspecting and cleaning all equipment to prevent introduction of invasive species,
- Conducting work under frozen ground conditions,
- Using effective erosion control measures,
- Revegetating with native species and weed-free seed mixes.

And again, the US Fish and Wildlife Service recommends minimizing removal of trees (p. 89).

If this project were to be routed near my property, the impacts of concern raised by the DNR and USFWS would be avoided if it were sited across the road from my property, which is within the proposed corridor shown in blue on the map.

19. **AREA OF BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE – MODERATE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Consideration should be given to the presence of an area of Moderate Biological Diversity on the southern edge of my land. The environmental review for this project is in error because it omits the entire southern edge of my property in its inventory of areas of biological significance.

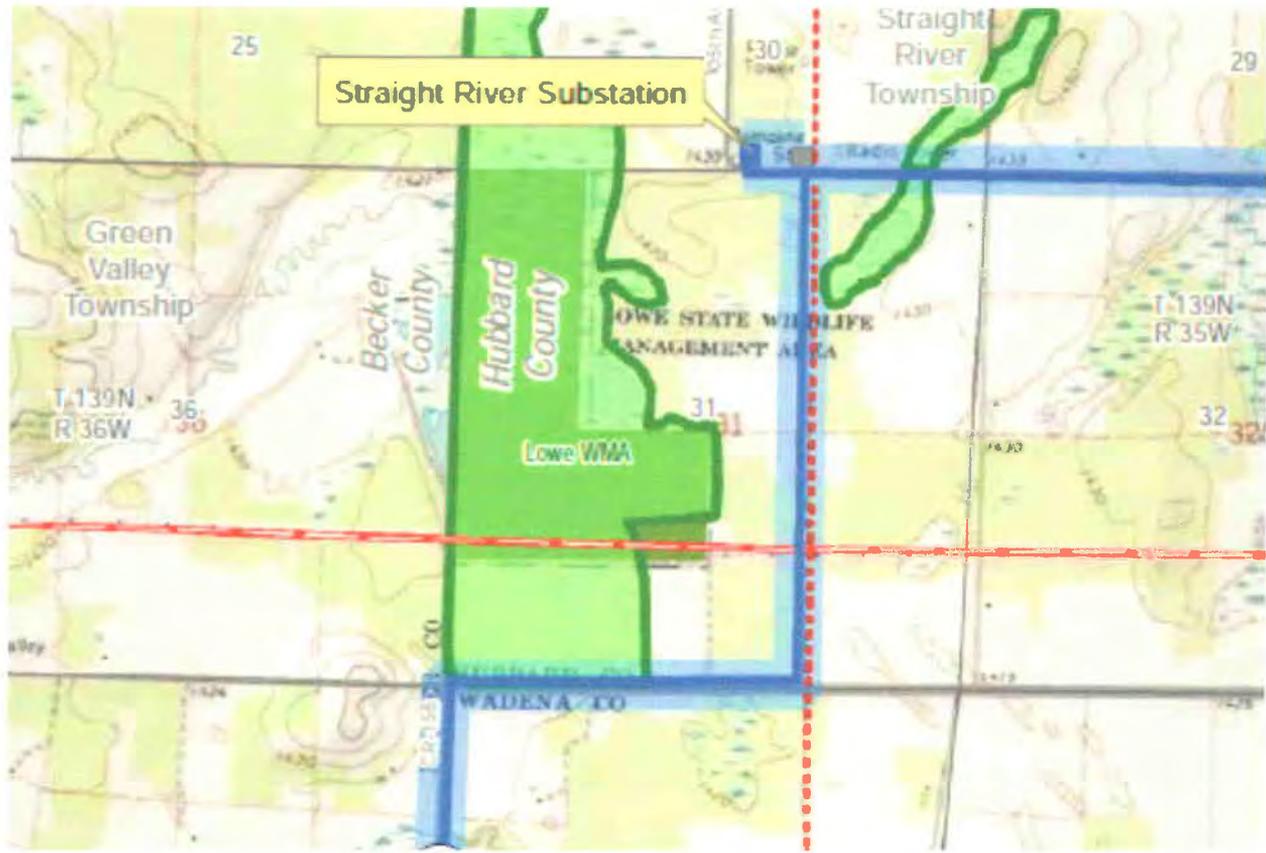
The EA addresses areas of biological significance between Hubbard and Straight River substations in the narrative (map E7-A and E7-B), and names sections in Hubbard and Straight River Townships, **but omits Section 31 of Straight River Township**, which includes the area of Moderate Biological Diversity on both sides of the Lowe Wildlife Management Area, down to Hubbard Line Road on the south.

This area of Moderate Biological Diversity is discussed in the narrative of the Environmental Assessment, where it lists these areas of Biological Significance section by section, yet it omits my section, Section 31, in that list. The narrative is as follows:

Flora

A review of natural resource databases indicates that there are rare and unique plant communities in the project area (Appendix E, Map E7).³¹¹ The Minnesota biological survey has identified an area of moderate biological significance in Section 30 of Hubbard Township and in Sections 25, 26, and 35 of Straight River Township in Hubbard County (Appendix E, Map E7).³¹² This area contains several occurrences of Jack Pine – Bush Honeysuckle woodland, a rare native plant community. The area also includes old growth forest remnants north and south of the existing 34.5 kV line in Section 30 of Hubbard Township.³¹³ Old growth forests are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbances such as fires, windstorm, or logging. There are also sites of moderate biological significance in Runeberg Township, Becker County, just west of the applicants' proposed route (Appendix E, Map E7).

This is also shown on the maps, and note that the color, the shade of green, in this map, that extends to Hubbard Line Road is the same as those listed in the narrative, with several occurrences of Jack Pine – Bush Honeysuckle woodland, a rare native plant community. EA, p. 82, and see map E7-B. From EA Map E7-B:



The impact to this area of Moderate Biological Diversity would be avoided by routing on the opposite side of the road.

The EA also minimizes the impacts stating that “Where the applicants’ proposed route crosses and/or is near such communities, it does so following existing rights-of-way.” This is not true. It further states that:

The segment of the applicants’ proposed route from the Hubbard substation to the Straight River substation passes through an area of biological significance and old growth forest remnants (Appendix E, Map E7). However, in this segment, the new 115 kV line will utilize the ROW for the existing 34.5 kV; the new 115 kV line will replace the 34.5 kV line. Thus, impacts in this area will be limited to the already disturbed 34.5 kV ROW and new impacts to rare resources in this segment are anticipated to be minimal.

EA p. 82. I strongly object to this characterization of the impacts and claim of minimization. **There is no existing 34.5 kV distribution line in this location on my property on the north side of Hubbard Line Road.** The impacts to the area of biological significance could be minimized if it were routed on the other side of the road.

If this project were to be routed near my property, the impact on the area of moderate biological diversity would be avoided if it were sited across the road from my property.

20. **CORRECT THE ERRORS AND OMISSIONS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The errors and omissions in the environmental review detailed above should be corrected, and should be considered, before any routing decision can be made. This list is not all inclusive, and it is likely that there are additional substantive errors that I've not discovered. Please review it carefully, compare the narrative with the maps and charts, and fix the problems in this environmental review document. As it is, it is inadequate because of the errors.

21. **IMPACTS CAN BE MINIMIZED BY ROUTING ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF HUBBARD LINE ROAD**

If the project were to be routed near my land, all of these impacts, impacts that cannot be minimized or mitigated, could be avoided if the project were routed on the opposite side of the road, which is within the blue proposed corridor.

I request that the Public Utilities Commission avoid the impacts, and follow the recommendations of the DNR and USFWS and, if the project must be routed along Hubbard Line Road, that it be routed on the south side of the road, and that there be **no utility easement** on the north side of Hubbard Line Road.

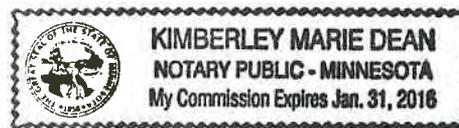
Further your affiant sayeth naught.

Dated: 10/26/15

Donna J. Andersen
Donna J. Andersen, individually and as
Trustee of the Donna J. Andersen Trust

Signed and sworn to before me this
24 day of October, 2015.

Kimberley M. Dean
Notary Public



ANDERSEN ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Close-up Map of Andersen Property and Proposed Transmission Corridor

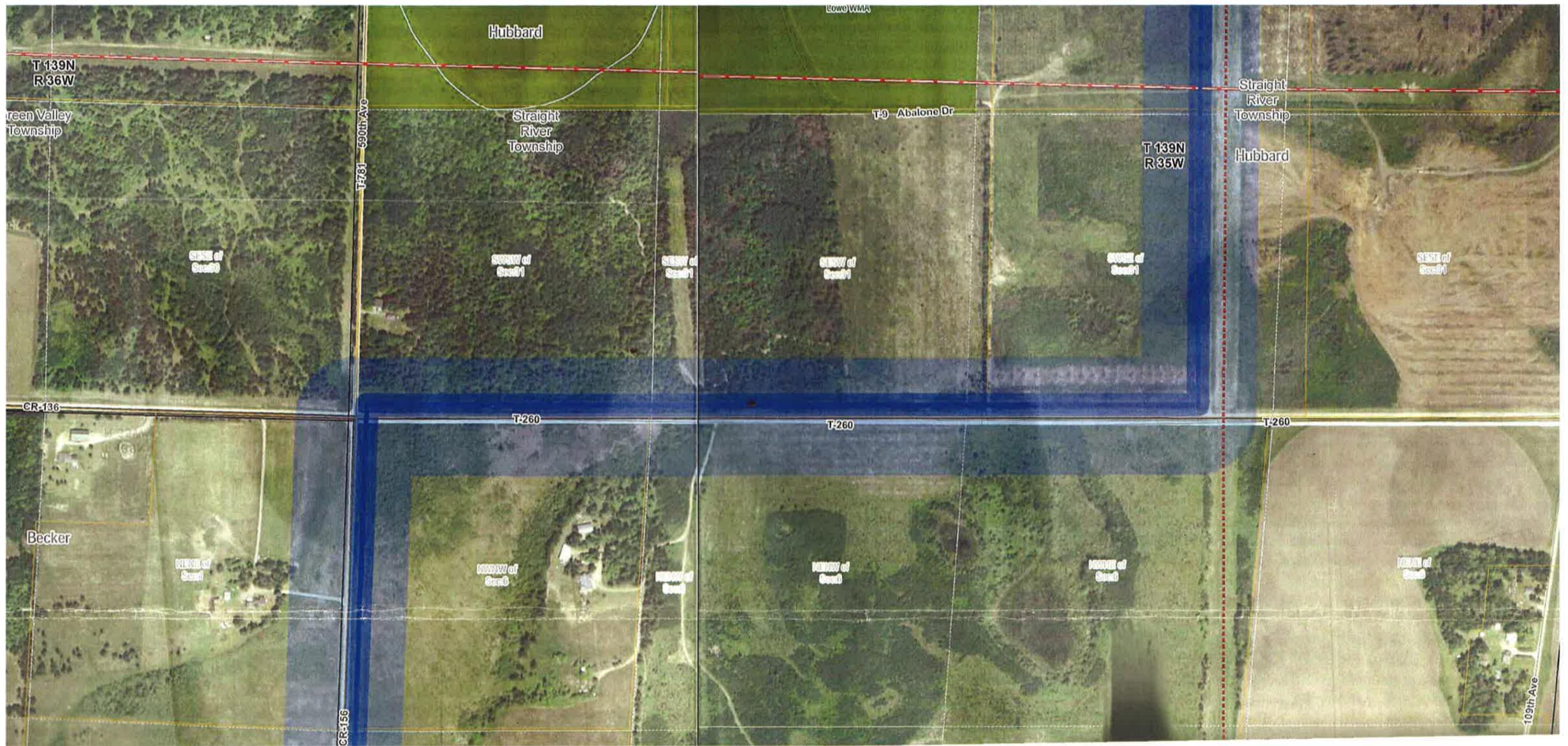
Attachment B – National Wetlands Inventory Information

Public Hearing Ex. 54 – Andersen Woodland Stewardship Plan

Public Hearing Ex. 55 – Andersen correspondence regarding Bat Study

Attachment A

Close-up Map of Andersen Property and Proposed Transmission Corridor



Attachment B

National Wetlands Inventory Information

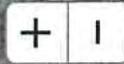
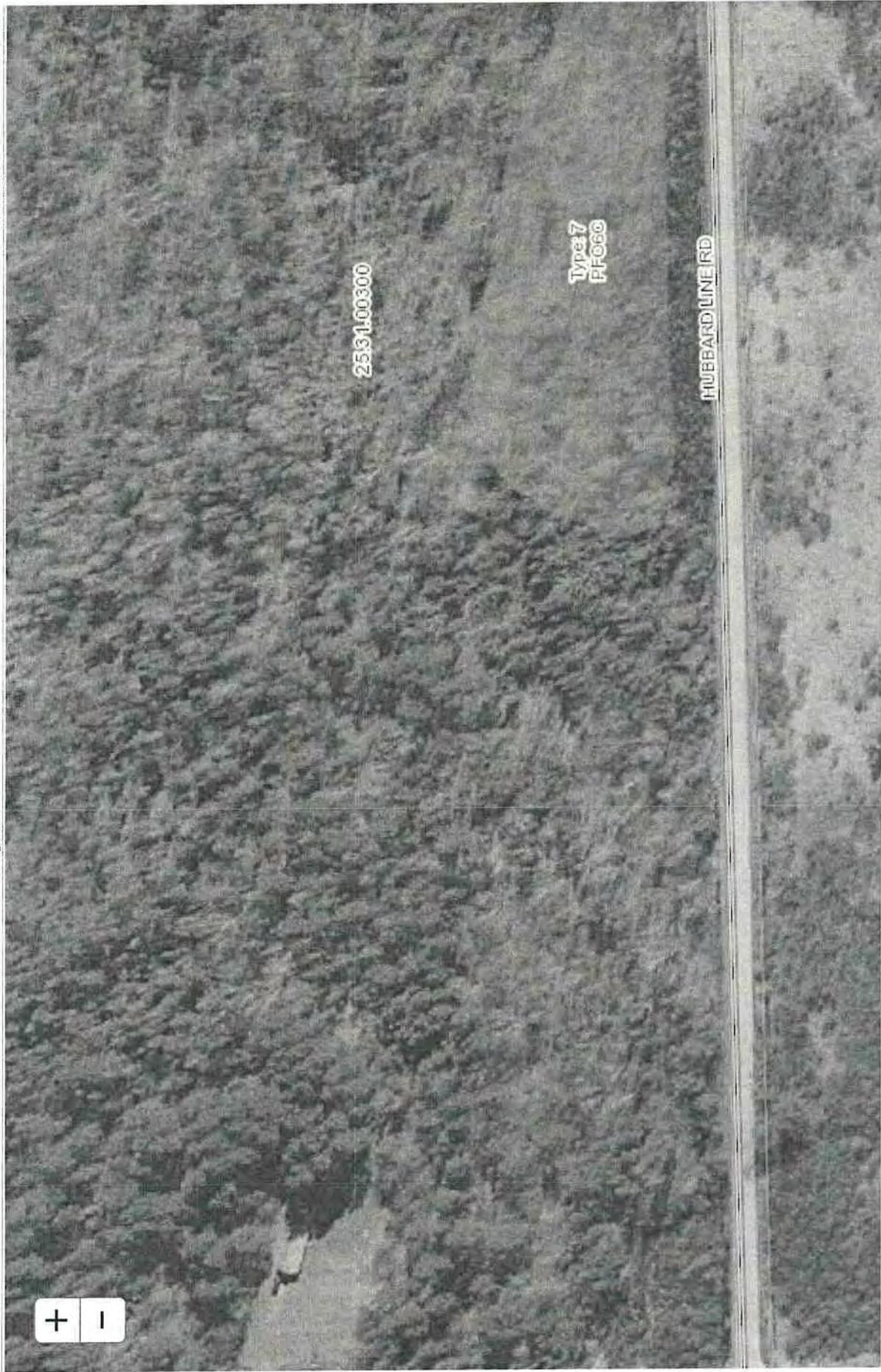
Hubbard County

Zoom In Zoom Out Pan Zoom Prev Zoom Next Zoom Select Zoom Extent

Legend Results View

Clear Search Identify Links X/

Commands



Scale 1: 2257

X: -10593468.1766

Y: 5910502.6259

This is what I found for 7PFO6C-the area marked on our hubbard county map



Donna Andersen <donnajandersen@gmail.com> 12:10 PM (2 minutes ago)

to Carol



Enter Classification code: (Example: **L1UB1Hx**)

For geographically specific information* (optional), please enter a State code: (Example: **TX** for Texas)

Description for code **PFO6C** :

P System **PALUSTRINE**: The Palustrine System includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. Wetlands lacking such vegetation are also included if they exhibit all of the following characteristics: 1. are less than 8 hectares (20 acres); 2. do not have an active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline feature; 3. have at low water a depth less than 2 meters (6.6 feet) in the deepest part of the basin; 4. have a salinity due to ocean-derived salts of less than 0.5 ppt.

Subsystem :

FO Class **FORESTED**: Characterized by woody vegetation that is 6 m tall or taller.

6 Subclass **Deciduous**: A plant community where deciduous trees or shrubs represent more than 50% of the areal coverage of trees and shrubs. The canopy is normally leafless some time during the year.

Modifier(s):

C WATER REGIME **Seasonally Flooded**: Surface water is present for

extended periods especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the growing season in most years. The water table after flooding ceases is variable, extending from saturated to the surface to a water table well below the ground surface.

MN Plant Specie(s):

Scientific Name	Common Name	Indicator	Reference Info.
Dichanthelium ovale	Egg-leaf panic grass	R3:FACU	NRCS Plants Database
Symplocarpus foetidus	Skunk-cabbage	R3:OBL	NRCS Plants Database

MN Soil(s):

Series	Subgroup	Soils Fields Ind.	Drainage Class	Flood Frequency	Flood Duration	Flood Latest Depth	HWT	HWT Latest	LRR	Soil-5 Code



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Public Hearing Ex. 54

Andersen Woodland Stewardship Plan

Woodland Stewardship Plan

Date: August, 2007

Landowner: Donna Anderson
1300 E. Co. Rd. E
Vadnais Heights, MN 55110-4775

Telephone: (651) 230-0785 cell
(651) 484-0150 home

Legal Description: T139N, R35W, Sec. 31, SW ¼ of SW ¼ & SE ¼ of SW ¼
Hubbard County, Straight River Township

Total Acres: 77.8 acres

Acres qualify for Woodland Stewardship Plan: 77

This woodland stewardship plan was designed to help guide the management activities of the natural resources on your property. The plan is based on your goals in harmony with the environment. Project recommendations are for your consideration.

THE GOALS YOU IDENTIFIED FOR MANAGING THE PROPERTY ARE:

Manage land to be forested and provide recreation setting (walking trails). Okay to thin stands or harvest with small clear-cuts with reserve trees, but do not wish to clear-cut the land. Do desire habitat for wildlife, although they do not hunt. A pond touches the property on the north boundary where beaver have cut some trees. They thought about making a more open area near the pond. Revenues are not necessary from the property. They do wish to plant trees in the 20 acre field on the east side of property. A house exists on the west side of the property.

Prepared by: Steven L. Ludwig
37384 Nighthawk Road
Lake George, MN 56458
Telephone: (218) 266-3671
Email: slud@localnet.com

For More Cost-Share Information Contact:

Brad Witkin
DNR Forestry
607 W 1st St, Box 113
Park Rapids, MN 56470
218-732-3309

Russell Johnsrud
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Park Rapids, MN 56470
218-732-9723

Ecosystem Information

The text: "Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota – The Laurentian Mixed Forest Province" identifies this land is within the Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains Subsection of the Northern Minnesota Drift and Lake Plains Section.

The Native Plant Community is most likely FDc34. Under natural disturbance regimes this ecosystem is typically dominated by red pine or white pine, or a mixture of the two, with smaller amounts of paper birch, quaking aspen, red maple, jack pine, northern red oak, and bur oak.

Natural disturbances were catastrophic fire and mild surface fires. After catastrophic fire the tree regeneration would be quaking or big-toothed aspen and red pine. Jack pine, white pine, and northern red oak would also be present.

Soils

Soils information is from the Soil Survey of Hubbard County, Minnesota, as obtained from the NRCS website at www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov. A map and soil summary legend is included in the 3 ring binder provided.

Soil map symbols include 540, 867B, 1127A, 1136, 1230, and 1444. These symbols identify the upland soils as predominately Graycalm-Menahga complex and Bootlake-Graycalm complex. These two complexes are sandy soils with some sandy loam or loamy sand.

Threatened, Rare or Sensitive Species

A check with the DNR St. Paul Office has identified there are no known locations of threatened, rare or sensitive species on this parcel of land.

Cultural Information

No cultural sites were found during the field visit on your property. The DNR Office in Grand Rapids identified no known locations of cultural sites exist in there data base. Please consult the 3 ring binder for the things to look for relating to cultural sites.

Property Lines and Survey Corners

No known property corner monuments are adjacent to your property, other than the original survey work.

Adjacent Property Owners

The adjacent property owners proceeding clockwise and starting on the north are:
State of Minnesota Wildlife Management Area
Vegetation: forested with lake, field and opening for power-line; property line is identified with signs.

Potlatch Corporation (East)

Vegetation: recent cut-over planted to trees.

Potlatch Corporation (South)

Vegetation: small saw-log size red pine plantation.

Wade Marjamaa etux

Vegetation: mostly willow, sedge grass swamp.

Renenberg Companies

Vegetation: cut-over with residual trees, appears forested.

Landscape Committee (MN Forest Resource Council)

Minnesota provided a setting whereby a citizen group could learn about the ecosystems in this area and make recommendations for future conditions of forests in this area.

The desired future forest condition for the entire Northern Minnesota Drift and Lake Plains Section includes: increase red, white and jack pine, cedar, tamarack, spruce and fir; create a range of species, patch sizes, and age classes that more closely resemble natural patterns and functions; the amount of forestland and timberland will not decrease...large blocks of contiguous forest land that have minimal inclusion of conflicting land uses will be created...

This area is identified as Dry Mesic Pine/Oak ecosystem in their report. The citizen landscape committee suggests increasing jack pine, red pine and white pine.

Their report is available at <http://www.frc.state.mn.us/Info/MFRCdocs>.

Stand Description and Potential Activities

Stand No.	Acre	Forest Type	Age	Stocking in Basal Area per Acre (more common)	Range of tree diameters (more common)	Site Index	Radial Diam. Growth Past 10 years	Volume per acre* in cords
1	0.8	Structure	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	51	Aspen-Pine	34 to 60+	30-160 (80-110)	1 to 14 (6-10)	QA 58 RP 58 JP 57	0.9 1.0 0.4	16
3	2	Grass Swamp	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	21	Field	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	3	Ash Swamp	67	60-80	5 to 14 (8-12)	46	0.5	12

* volumes are not suitable for timber sale purposes; used 3" top diameter.

Stand 1 0.8 acres Structure

This stand is not part of the Woodland Stewardship Plan.

Stand 2 51 acres Aspen-Pine

This stand comprises most of the forested portion of the property. Aspen is the most common species present, although some plots were dominated by jack pine, northern red oak, bur oak or red pine. Other species present include paper birch, elm, white spruce and balsam fir.

Most of the trees are relatively young at 34 years of age or slightly older. Diameter growth is good at around 2 inches each ten years.

Conks are present on some of the aspen. This indicates white trunk rot is causing some heart rot within these trees.

Under-story plants include hazel, snowberry, grass, meadow rue, cherry, service berry, blueberry, poison ivy, grey dogwood, big leaf aster, bedstraw, bracken fern, bellwort, raspberry and strawberry.

One inclusion along the north line is a non-forested opening adjacent to the small lake. This is sedge grass and some willow shrubs.

A second inclusion is shown on the map adjacent to the larger field. This one is young aspen sprouts approximately 12 years old. This is a well stocked area of 2 inch diameter trees.

No Treatment

If left undisturbed, this stand will continue the good diameter growth for ten years or so. Then the growth is expected to slow. Aspen is a relatively short-lived tree. Normally, aspen declines from age 60 years on.

Jack pine, paper birch and balsam fir are also relatively short-lived. These species will live longer than aspen, but usually decline in vigor and die before reaching ages of 80-90 years.

Oak on this site does not produce large saw-log quality trees. Most trees will be less than the 11 inch diameter needed for a saw-log and will have lots of limbs. Quality saw-logs are larger in diameter and have few or no limbs.

As the stand ages the aspen will decline, followed by jack pine, paper birch and balsam fir. The balsam fir will regenerate without a disturbance. Red pine and white spruce will continue to grow to older ages, some exceeding 250 years of age.

As trees in the main canopy die, the increased light will allow the hazel shrubs to become taller and denser. Some aspen, paper birch and oak will regenerate and continue to be present forming a mixed species multi-aged stand of poor stocking with a lot of under brush.

Harvest

This stand could be harvested now, however, more volume would be realized by delaying the harvest for ten or more years. Normally, the preferred rotation age for aspen stands is 40 years of age. This stand is only 34 years of age. If harvest is delayed beyond 60 years of age, some losses will occur due to normal tree mortality and the heart rot that is present.

The jack pine component will also start to die near 60 years of age and increased mortality can be expected as the stand ages. Unless the jack pine budworm returns (it was at epidemic levels 1 to 4 years ago), I do not expect large numbers of trees to die in any one year. The mortality will be a few trees here and there over a decade or more.

Harvesting the entire stand at one time would return the most revenue, but is not in line with your objectives. The stand could be divided into several smaller blocks and harvest scheduled every 10-15 years until the existing trees are regenerated.

Dividing the 51 acres into 6 separate areas ranging in size from 8 to 10 acres is likely to provide the best mix of age classes for species such as grouse and deer. This harvesting could retain the longer-lived Norway pine, but remove the shorter-lived aspen, jack pine, paper birch and balsam fir. The larger oak could also be retained to provide some acorns.

Two areas would be harvested at one time to provide 300 or more cords, sufficient to allow commercial harvesting. Most loggers are not willing to move equipment on site for only ten acres of harvesting.

This site is expected to become fully stocked with aspen after harvesting. The soils are generally sandy, which will allow harvesting any time during the year. This makes the harvest more desirable to loggers as a lot of sites require winter harvesting, thus summer wood is in more demand.

A second round of harvesting could be considered starting with 40 year old aspen that originates from the first harvesting. Increasing the age diversity by delaying the harvest cycles so 20 years occur between harvests would further benefit wildlife.

Stand 3 2 acres Grass Swamp

This stand is an open grass swamp surrounded on the south end by dense willow shrubs. It is a semi-wet site. It could be harvested for hay in dry years. A few cattails are present in one area. A few aspen are regenerating along the edge.

No Treatment

This open area will remain open for many years. The shrubs will continue to slowly encroach on the grass area and some trees will slowly encroach on both the shrub and grass areas. I expect the area will remain open for many years.

Stand 4 21 acres Field

This field is two separate areas. The main field is along the east end of the property, while the smaller area is a narrow strip running north to south near the center of the property (approx. 2 acres).

These two areas have been cut for hay in the past. A few old bales are still present near the main road. The last hay cutting was 5-6 years ago.

Small jack pine trees are present in the larger field. These seedling/sapling size trees are from 2 feet tall to 12 feet tall. The shorter trees show signs of having been browsed on by deer. A few aspen, northern red oak and bur oak seedlings are also present in both areas.

No Action

This field is already starting to become stocked with trees after only 5-6 years without hay cutting. The jack pine in the larger field are well scattered throughout the area. These trees will produce some cones at ages as young as 7-8 years of age. Young jack pine will have open cones that disperse seed. Older jack pine trees usually have closed cones (serotinous) that require heat to open the cones.

In the past I have seen areas like this regenerate to jack pine with no additional treatments. Seeds are dispersed by the young jack pine and the seedlings become established creating a fully stocked stand within twenty years. I am doubtful this will happen today due to the large deer population. The shorter jack pine seedlings are showing evidence of browse damage and may not survive.

Plant Trees

Planting tree seedlings would be the sure means of establishing trees on the site in the shortest time frame. Norway pine, white pine or jack pine would be the species most likely to do well on this site.

Trees could be planted using a tree planting machine on this old field. Additional site preparation is not necessary. Some tree planting machines have a plow attachment that removes the sod for a foot or so from the planting trench, effectively removing grass competition.

Planting at densities of 800 trees per acre would adequately stock the site. Some foresters prefer slightly higher densities. This rate allows sufficient trees to begin commercial thinning at 25-30 years of age.

Seedlings will require protection from deer browsing until they reach heights taller than deer can reach (4 feet or so). This can be accomplished by placing paper bud caps over the terminal leaders of each of the seedlings every fall (September or early October). Information on bud caps is included in the 3 ring binder.

An alternative is to use repellent sprays, like Plantskydd. Plantskydd is a dried blood formulation that can be purchased at most nursery supply stores. It is also carried by the Soil and Water Conservation Office in Park Rapids.

Stand 5 3 acres Ash Swamp

This is a wetland area near the road. Ash trees are present along with elm, aspen and balsam fir. Ash, balsam fir and some aspen are regenerating. This stand is only moderately stocked and not expected to become well-stocked due to the nature of the wetland.

Alder dominates the shrub layer with lady fern, horse tail, sedge grass and moss present.

No Action

This stand is expected to exist in the future, much as it is today. Some additional trees will regenerate to replace those that die. Stocking will remain similar to the current stocking.

Harvest

This stand could be considered for harvesting when the adjacent upland is harvested. Ash will sprout from stumps and other regeneration will be present in the under-story to add to the tree stocking. Ash, aspen and balsam fir are expected to comprise the future stand after a harvest.

Shrubs may increase growth after a harvest and occupy more of the growing space until trees slowly out-compete the shrubs.

Harvesting should be restricted to frozen soil conditions to protect the soil productivity.

Summary of Stand Recommendations

Stand No.	Acres	Description	Treatment Recommended	Year
1	0.8	Structure	NA	2007
2	51	Aspen - Pine	No Treatment	2007
			Harvest 2 areas of 8-10 acres	2013
			Harvest 2 areas of 8-10 acres	2023
			Harvest 2 areas of 8-10 acres	2033
3	2	Grass Swamp	NA	2007
4	21	Old Field	Plant Trees	2008
			Protect from deer	2008
			Protect from deer	2009
			Protect from deer	2010
			Protect from deer	2011
			Thin	2033
			Thin	2048
5	3	Ash Swamp	No Treatment	2007

The above table identifies the treatments I suggest after inventorying the stands and considering your objectives for managing the land. Other treatments are identified in the main text and may be implemented, rather than the ones shown.

Updating your Woodland Forest Stewardship Plan ten years from now, will provide an opportunity to update the inventory information and check on the success of treatments implemented.

I have attached a potential harvest map with the year of harvest identified on the map. The harvest blocks that become age classes of trees do not have to be shaped as square blocks. More edge with fingers is more beneficial to some wildlife species.

Potential Harvest Map

August, 2007



Scale:

1/2 mile



Legend:

-  Property Lines
-  Harvest Boundaries
- 2013** Year of Harvest

Public Hearing Ex. 55

Andersen correspondence regarding Bat Study

From: Michelle GRE-MG Lommel mlommel@GREnergy.com
Subject: RE: West Inc. Bat Study Hubbard County
Date: August 26, 2015 at 3:42 PM
To: Donna Andersen donnajandersen@gmail.com

Donna,

I just heard back today that yes, we can send the portion of the bat study that covers your property to you. The report has not been completed yet and I'll get it to you as soon as it is available.

We are checking on the hearing as we would like to get in on our calendars, too. It has not been scheduled and was tentatively planned for mid-October. You will receive a mailed notice with the date from the Public Utilities Commission with information on it.

I'll be in touch when the bat study is available.

Thank you,

Michelle

From: Donna Andersen [<mailto:donnajandersen@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 11:57 AM
To: Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG
Subject: Re: West Inc. Bat Study Hubbard County

I am looking for the hearing date in September when the Judge will be present.

Thank You ,

Donna

On Wed, Aug 19, 2015 at 11:53 AM, Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG <mlommel@greenergy.com> wrote:

The date hasn't been set for the State's upcoming hearing for this fall. Or were you looking for the date of Great River Energy's open house last September?

Michelle

From: Donna [<mailto:donnajandersen@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 11:45 AM
To: Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG

EXHIBIT

55

Subject: Re: West Inc. Bat Study Hubbard County

Hi Michelle,

Do you have the date for the meeting in September in Menahga

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 19, 2015, at 11:29 AM, Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG <mlommel@GREnergy.com> wrote:

Hi Donna,

No, and our environmental lead that was checking on it isn't in today. I will check again. We had asked the consultant a couple of times and they just weren't sure if they could authorize releasing it or not. Otherwise, if they can't or Great River Energy can't, I assume the US Fish & Wildlife Service will have it at some point.

Thanks for your patience and I'll let you know one way or the other as soon as I know.

Michelle

From: Donna [<mailto:donnajandersen@gmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 10:06 AM

To: Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG

Subject: Re: West Inc. Bat Study Hubbard County

Hi Michelle,

Have you received an answer regarding the results of the Bat study in Hubbard County?

Thank You,

Donna Andersen

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 30, 2015, at 10:07 AM, Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG <mlommel@GREnergy.com> wrote:

Donna,

I am checking into this and it looks like I may not have an answer for you until next week. These studies are very new for us, and our consultant and the agencies that are requesting it will have to give us guidance.

Thank you,

Michelle Lommel

Sr. Field Representative, Land Rights

Great River Energy

12300 Elm Creek Blvd.

Maple Grove MN 55369-4718

direct: [763-445-5977](tel:763-445-5977) / fax: [763-445-6777](tel:763-445-6777)

cell: [612-309-6839](tel:612-309-6839) / toll-free: [1-888-521-0130](tel:1-888-521-0130) ext. 5977

www.greatriverenergy.com

From: Donna Andersen [<mailto:donnajandersen@gmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 9:17 AM

To: Lommel, Michelle GRE-MG

Subject: West Inc. Bat Study Hubbard County

Good Morning,

I received the correspondence informing us there would be an acoustic study for the presence of bats on our Hubbard County property the week of July 27th. When you receive the results for this study, would it be possible to forward a copy of it to us? We would appreciate it.

Thank You.

Donna Andersen

1300 County Road EE

Saint Paul, MN 55110-4775

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July 20, 2015

Menahga Project
WO #202971

DONNA J ANDERSEN, TRUST
1300 COUNTY RD EE
ST PAUL, MN 55110

Subject: Great River Energy's Northern Long-eared bat Survey Notification

Dear DONNA J ANDERSEN:

Great River Energy applied to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Menahga Area 115 kV transmission line project in January 2015. The permitting process by Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is still underway.

In May 2015, the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) was listed as a threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. For this reason, Great River Energy would like to conduct an acoustic survey (to determine the presence or absence of the NLEB using sound) the week of July 27 to determine if the NLEB is present in the northern part of the proposed project area. The acoustic survey would be performed by Great River Energy's consultant, West, Inc. Your property has been chosen as a site for the survey.

During the bat surveys, a team of two people will be accessing the survey parcels, usually arriving sometime in the late afternoon. They will set up the acoustic monitoring equipment (generally one or two monitoring units per site will be in tupperware containers on ladders or other raised structures that are up to 6 ft high – see attached picture). The units will be set up near or within wooded areas, possibly at the edge of road right of way or crop fields (although not within crop fields). The units will remain at a particular site for one to two nights, depending on weather. At the end of the acoustic time period on a particular parcel, they will remove the acoustic units and move on to the next site.

Great River Energy wanted to make you aware of this survey and we value your input on this important regional project. Please contact me at any time with questions or if you have concerns about the survey. I can be reached at 763-445-5977 or by email at mlommel@greenergy.com.

Sincerely,
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Michelle Lommel
Sr. Field Representative

Enclosure

ML:jh:s:\trans\capproj\202970Menahga\202971Hubbard\FNVL\R\LR\Notifications\NLEBsurvey\noticemenahga7-20-15\NLEBsurveyltr.doc

Direct Dial (763) 445-5977

E-Mail mlommel@greenergy.com

FAX (763) 445-6777

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ANDERSEN, DONNA

From: Curtis Andersen <curtisandersen9@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 9:54 AM
To: Donna Andersen; ANDERSEN, DONNA
Subject: Fwd: RE: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Hoverson, Darrin (DNR)" <darrin.hoverson@state.mn.us>
Date: Jul 16, 2015 9:52 AM
Subject: RE: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
To: "curtisandersen9@gmail.com" <curtisandersen9@gmail.com>
Cc: "Kestner, Nathan (DNR)" <nathan.kestner@state.mn.us>

Curtis,

I did touch base with our Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist and it sounds like the DNR has been providing some comments up to this point and may do more so after the Environmental Assessment is complete in Sept of 2015 and will include several routes. There will be a public comment opportunity associated with EA issuance. Comments can recommend specific routes and permit conditions.

Nathan Kestner, our Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist said you can contact him if you have any other comments or questions for the DNR. You should continue working with the project manager to make sure your comments are incorporated into this process.

Nathan Kestner

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist - Reg I

MN DNR Division of Ecological & Water Resources, NW Region

2115 Birchmont Beach Rd NE, Bemidji, MN 56601

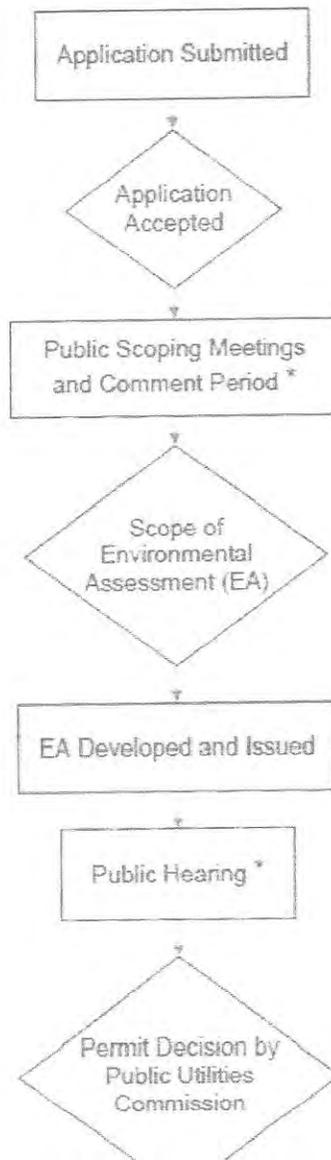
218-308-2672, 218-755-4066 (fax)

nathan.kestner@state.mn.us



HVTL Routing and Power Plant Siting Alternative Permitting Process

Minnesota Rules 7850



Timeline

Time from application acceptance to permit decision = 6 months

* Public Participation Opportunities



Donna Andersen <donnajandersen@gmail.com>

Re: FW: RE: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project

1 message

Donna Andersen <donnajandersen@gmail.com>

Fri, Jul 24, 2015 at 10:30 AM

To: darrin.hoverson@state.mn.us, nathan.kestner@state.mn.us

Good Morning,

I have a question for you in regards to the Menahga 115 kv transmission project. We have been informed by Great River Energy that they will be doing an accoustical sound study next week by West, Inc. to detect the presence of the threatened species long-eared bats on our property. They said they will set up two stands with acoustic equipment on them. I understand the bats like to make there homes near aspen trees. We have a stand of aspen on the north side of our property in Hubbard County. If they set up the equipment on the south side of the property, would they be able to detect the bats from that far away? Are you aware how far reaching this equipment would be and how accurate?

Thank You,
Donna Andersen

On Fri, Jul 24, 2015 at 10:18 AM, ANDERSEN, DONNA <DONNA.ANDERSEN@isd623.org> wrote:

From: Curtis Andersen [<mailto:curtisandersen9@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 9:54 AM
To: Donna Andersen; ANDERSEN, DONNA
Subject: Fwd: RE: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Hoverson, Darrin (DNR)" <darrin.hoverson@state.mn.us>
Date: Jul 16, 2015 9:52 AM
Subject: RE: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
To: "curtisandersen9@gmail.com" <curtisandersen9@gmail.com>
Cc: "Kestner, Nathan (DNR)" <nathan.kestner@state.mn.us>

Curtis,

I did touch base with our Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist and it sounds like the DNR has been providing some comments up to this point and may do more so after the Environmental Assessment is complete in Sept of 2015 and will include several routes. There will be a public comment opportunity associated with EA issuance. Comments can recommend specific routes and permit conditions.

Nathan Kestner, our Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist said you can contact him if you have any other comments or questions for the DNR. You should continue working with the project manager to make sure your comments are incorporated into this process.

Nathan Kestner

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist - Reg 1

MN DNR Division of Ecological & Water Resources, NW Region

2115 Birchmont Beach Rd NE, Bemidji, MN 56601

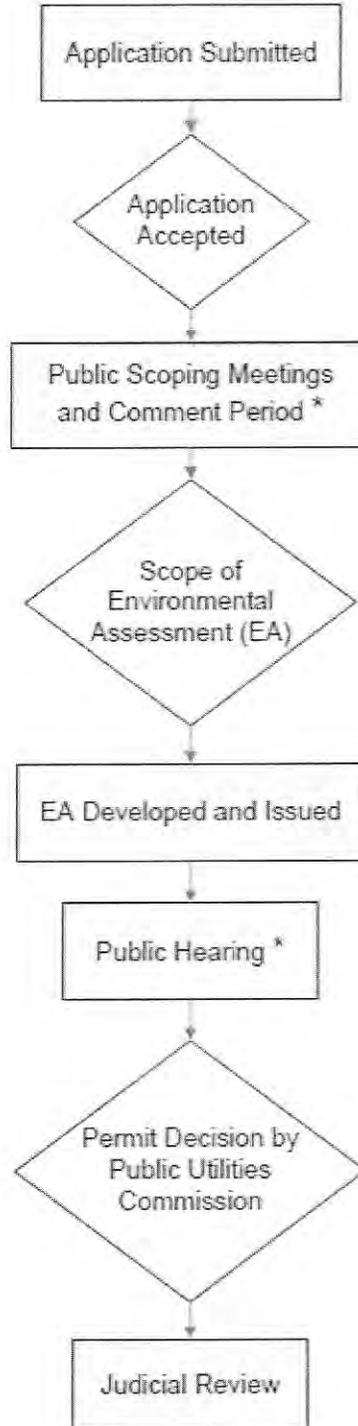
218-308-2672, 218-755-4066 (fax)

nathan.kestner@state.mn.us



HVTL Routing and Power Plant Siting Alternative Permitting Process

Minnesota Rules 7850



Timeline

Time from application acceptance to permit decision = 6 months

* Public Participation Opportunities

Darrin

From: Hoverson, Darrin (DNR)
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2015 11:59 AM
To: 'curtisandersen9@gmail.com'
Subject: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project

Curtis,

As I mentioned on the phone here is a link from the Department of Commerce Webpage with info on Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project. I has a project summary with contact information on the project manager as well as past documents and comments received on the project. See the "File Register" section as there are documents under the "energy facility" and "eDockets" tabs.

Again I will pass along our discussion to other DNR staff and they will determine if they will be commenting on project or not.

Here is the link - <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33985#edocketFiles>

I hope this helps you out. There is a lot of information on this site.

Darrin

Darrin Hoverson
Area Hydrologist
MN Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological and Water Resources
110 7th St. W. Suite 301
Park Rapids, MN 56470
(218)732-8960 Ext.225
darrin.hoverson@state.mn.us



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