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EQB MONITOR

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEETS

EAW Comment Deadline: August 25, 2010

Project Title: North Country National Scenic Trail (Becker County Section) Project

Description: The North Country Trail Association proposes to build 25.6 miles of new trail and designate 19.3 miles of existing trail in rural road-walk as an extension of the North Country National Scenic Trail (a non-motorized footpath). This section of the trail would begin about six miles west-northwest of Ponsford, Minnesota, in east-central Becker County, and terminate at the city limits of Frazee, Minnesota. The trail connects to a previously designated section of the North Country NST at its northern end and traverses southward, mostly through forested habitat on public and private lands.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) will accept written comments on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet during the public review and comment period, which concludes Wednesday, August 25, 2010 at 4:30 p.m.

Written comments should be submitted to Ronald Wieland, EAW Project Manager, Environmental Policy and Review Unit, Division of Ecological Resources, Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55155-4025. Electronic or e-mail comments may be sent to Environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us with "North Country Trail (Becker) EAW" in the subject line. If submitting comments electronically, include name and mailing address. Written comments may also be sent by fax to 651-297-1500.

A copy of the EAW is available for public review at:

- MDNR Library, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.
- MDN Northwest – Region, 2115 Birchmont Beach Road NE, Bemidji, MN 56601-8599

The *EQB Monitor* is a biweekly publication of the Environmental Quality Board that lists descriptions and deadlines for Environmental Assessment Worksheets, Environmental Impact Statements, and other notices. The *EQB Monitor* is posted on the Environmental Quality board home page at <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/>.

Upon request, the *EQB Monitor* will be made available in an alternative format, such as Braille, large print, or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for Department of Administration. For information on the *EQB Monitor*, contact:

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
658 Cedar St., 300 Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-1388
Phone: 651-201-2480
Fax: 651-296-3698
<http://www.eqb.state.mn.us>

- Minneapolis Public Library, Government Documents, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401.
- Fergus Falls Public Library, 205 E Hampden, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.
- Detroit Lakes Library, 1000 Washington Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

The EAW is also posted on the MDNR's website at www.dnr.state.mn.us (Click on "Public Input", then select "North Country Trail (Becker) EAW" from the scroll-down list under "Environmental Review". Additional copies may be requested by calling 651-259-5157.

RGU: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Contact Person:

Ronald Wieland
EAW Project Manager
Environmental Policy and Review Unit
Division of Ecological Resources
Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Supplemental Final EIS Notice of Availability

Project Title: Trunk Highway 371 Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement

Description: The Minnesota Department of Transportation has prepared a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) for State Project 1116-22 to documents improvements to Trunk Highway (TH) 371 in Cass and Crow Wing Counties. The TH 371 project corridor extends approximately 16-miles from the intersection of Crow Wing County State Aid Highway 18 in Nisswa to the intersection of Cass County Road 2/42 in Pine River. This segment was the subject of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process that was concluded in 2005.

This Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) was prepared to address recent changes to the preferred alternative, based on a request from the City of Pequot Lakes to change from a through-City design (2005 preferred alternative), to a bypass. This SFEIS focuses on analysis of impacts and mitigation in the areas affected by the design change to a bypass of Pequot Lakes, including federal Section 106 impacts and a revised Final Section 4(f) Evaluation. The SFEIS also includes a re-evaluation of the entire project corridor to document other minor changes that have occurred since the original Record of Decision was signed in 2005.

Copies of the Highway 371 SFEIS are being distributed to those agencies on the current MEQB document review list and others. The comment period will begin on **July 26, 2010** and will extend through **August 9, 2010**. Written comments on the adequacy of the SFEIS should be submitted to the Mn/DOT contact listed below.

Copies of the Highway 371 SFEIS are available for public review on the project website at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d3/projects/hwy371/index.html> and at the following locations:

- Brainerd Public Library, 416 5th Street South, Brainerd, MN
- Mn/DOT District 3 – Baxter Office, 7694 Industrial Park Road, Baxter, MN
- Kitchigami Regional Library, 212 Park Avenue, Pine River, MN
- Pequot Lakes Public Library, 4638 County Road 11, Pequot Lakes, MN
- Pine River City Hall, 200 Front Street North, Pine River, MN
- Nisswa City Hall, PO Box 410, Nisswa, MN
- Pequot Lakes City Hall, 4638 County Road 11, Pequot Lakes, MN
- Jenkins City Hall, 33861 Cottage Avenue, Jenkins, MN

The SFEIS can be made available in alternative formats to individuals by calling the Project Manager at 218-828-5797 or to individuals who are hearing or speech impaired by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 or 651-296-9930 TTY.

Project Proposer: Minnesota Department of Transportation

RGU: Minnesota Department of Transportation

Contact Person:

James Hallgren
Mn/DOT Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Transportation – District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
Baxter, MN 56425
Phone: (218) 828-5797
Email: james.hallgren@state.mn.us

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE

Project Title: Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC. Transmission Project and Associated Substation Facilities

Regulatory Framework: Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC, (“the Applicant”) a wholly-owned subsidiary of RES America Developments Inc., (“RES Americas”), proposes to construct up to 301 megawatt (MW) Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS), referred to as (“the Project”) in portions of Dodge and Mower Counties, Minnesota. The Project will require the construction of three substations and two (2) or three (3) high voltage transmission lines (HVTLs) to transmit the energy generated from the Project to the grid.

According to the state of Minnesota’s permitting rules (Minn. Rule 7850.5300) for LWECS projects, applicants who seek a site or route permit for a transmission project that is between 100 and 200 kV in size are eligible to seek approval from the appropriate Local Unit of Government (LGU). For this Project, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) has confirmed that Pleasant Valley’s proposed project is eligible for local review by Mower County. Therefore, on May 4, 2010 the Mower County Board of Commissioners accepted local authority to permit the Pleasant Valley Wind transmission facilities, (“the Transmission Project”), in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 216E.05.

In accordance with Minnesota Rules 7850.5300 Subp. 5, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required to be prepared by the Local Unit of Government with jurisdiction to permit the project. As part of this process, the Mower County Board of Commissioners allowed the public an opportunity to participate in developing the scope of this EA during the meeting of the Mower County Board of Commissioners on June 1, 2010. A follow-up meeting of the Mower County Board of Commissioners was held on June 22, 2010 to determine the scope of this EA.

Applications for Conditional Use Permits were previously submitted by Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC to the Mower County Planning Commission to build and operate the transmission lines and substation facilities associated with the Transmission Project. The conditional use permitting process for the Transmission Project will proceed after the Environmental Assessment has been completed.

Description: Energy generated by the Project will be transmitted into the grid with the construction of two (2) or three (3) proposed transmission route facilities including substations and transmission lines that are approximately 0.7 to 8 miles long. Electricity generated by the turbines will be transmitted to two (2) 34.5/138 kilovolt (kV) proposed substations via underground 34.5 kV electric cables. Two (2) single circuited 138 kV overhead transmission lines (north and south) will transmit the energy to a third substation where it will interconnect into the grid. The point of interconnection (POI) will be via one of the following two options:

- **POI Option 1:** For this option the Applicant will construct an interconnection substation and switchyard that will be located in the SE ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 18 of Pleasant Valley Township, approximately 0.3 miles (1,730 feet) east of the 680th Avenue and 310th Street intersection and north of the Great River Energy (GRE) power plant access road, adjacent to the existing 345 kV transmission line. At the intersection of 680th Avenue and 310th Street, the two (2) overhead transmission lines (north and south) will be double circuited, or co-located on the same structures for a distance of 0.3 miles (1,726 feet) before the energy is transmitted into the Preferred East Substation (POI Option 1). Here, the voltage will be stepped up to 345 kV with a 138/345 kV autotransformer. From the high side of the 138/345 kV autotransformer, interconnection bus work within the Preferred East Substation will connect with a new tap into the existing 345 kV line, (the “Point of Interconnection Option 1”).
- **POI Option 2:** For this option energy will be transmitted to the Preferred East Substation (POI Option 2) located approximately 1,300 feet west of the existing Great River Energy Pleasant Valley Substation in the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 24 of Sargeant Township. Here, the voltage will be stepped up to 345kV with a 138/345 kV autotransformer. The energy will then be transmitted through a short proposed 345 kV East Transmission Line that extends approximately 3,600 feet where it interconnects to Xcel Energy’s 345kV bus, (the “Point of Interconnection Option 2”) within the Pleasant Valley Substation.

The Transmission Project’s route locations traverse through Sargeant, Dexter and Pleasant Valley Townships of Mower County, Minnesota. The transmission lines will be constructed using approximately 125 wood poles that are approximately 50 to 80 feet tall. The spacing between poles will be approximately 600 to 800 feet. The final number of poles will be constructed depending on the final POI (Option 1 or Option 2) selected. The Applicant does not have eminent domain authority to acquire land or wind rights; therefore the proposed route locations result from voluntary agreements with landowners. For both options, a 100-foot wide route corridor will be acquired that will encompass approximately 171 acres of land under easement.

The Draft EA for the proposed Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC Transmission Line and Associated Substation Facilities is available for review by contacting the Mower County Planning & Zoning and Environmental Services Offices, at 1105 ½ 8th Avenue NE, Austin, Minnesota.

Comments may be submitted to the Environmental Services Office at the address below, or to angiek@CO.MOWER.MN.US, or fax: 507.437.9582.

Comment Period Deadline: Wednesday, August 4, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.

Final EA Decision: Wednesday, August 10, 2010 (10 days after EQB publication). The Mower County Board meeting begins at 10 a.m. in the Lower Level of the Mower County Courthouse, 201 1st Street NE, Austin, MN 55912.

RGU: Mower County

Contact Person:

Angela M. Knish, Director
Mower County Environmental Services
1105 ½ 8th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912
Ph. 507-437-9560
Fax 507-437-9582
angiek@co.mower.mn.us

EIS NEED DECISIONS

The responsible governmental unit has determined the following projects do not require preparations of an EIS. The dates given are, respectively, the date of the determination and the date the EAW notice was published in the *EQB Monitor*.

- St. Louis County Planning Commission, ISD 2142 South School Development, July 13, 2010 (May 17, 2010)
- Fillmore County Board, Valley View Campground, July 6, 2010 (April 19, 2010)
- Scott County, Porter Creek Stream Restoration, July 13, 2010 (May 31, 2010)

NOTICES

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Energy Security

Issued: July 12, 2010

NOTICE OF PERMIT DECISION

In the Matter of the Xcel Energy and Great River Energy Application for a High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit for the Monticello to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission and Substation Project in Wright and Stearns counties (PUC Docket Number: E002, ET2/TL-09-246)

At a meeting on July 8, 2010, and in an Order issued July 12, 2010, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission determined that the Environmental Impact Statement and the record created at the public hearing had adequately addressed the issues identified in the Scoping Decision. The Commission also designated and issued a High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit to Northern States Power (dba Xcel Energy) and Great River Energy for the Monticello to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Project, authorizing the Permittee to:

- Make modifications at the existing Monticello Substation to accommodate the proposed 345 kV transmission Line;
- Build the Monticello to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line, consisting of an approximately 28-mile line that will be constructed primarily on single-pole, double-circuit capable, self-weathering or galvanized steel structures; and
- Build a new Quarry Substation 345/115 kV to be located in St. Joseph, ultimately up to 15 acres in size, to allow for the interconnection of the 345 kV transmission line, an existing 115 kV transmission line and future high voltage transmission lines.

Further information about the project and the permit details can be found at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19957>

Or contact:

David Birkholz, State Permit Manager
651-296-2878
david.birkholz@state.mn.us

Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place E., Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198

Other contact information: Toll-Free Tel: 1-800-657-3794, Fax: 651-297-7891 or TTY: Minnesota Relay Service, 800-627-3529, ask for DOC.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

RECLAMATION PROJECTS PLANNED FOR LAKES – DNR DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife is planning one lake and up to five walleye rearing pond reclamation projects this fall. The projects involve the application of rotenone or antimycin, federal and state registered pesticides, to eliminate or reduce less desirable fish species. Following treatment ponds will be stocked with walleye fry. Endangered or threatened species are not present in any of the lakes or ponds. Project goals include improved fish habitat, expanded angling opportunities, and increased walleye fingerling production. Specifics regarding the projects are as follows:

White Lake, Freeborn County (DOW 24-0024; T102 R22 S1,6,7,12). Benefits of the project will be improved water quality, re-establishment of desirable aquatic vegetation, reduction of plankton algae, and improved habitat for fish and wildlife. Rotenone distribution will be done by helicopter, boat, backpack, and drip station if necessary. Lakewide target concentration is 4.0 ppm. An electric weir has been placed at the outlet to prevent carp migration into the lake. Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Hugh Valiant, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 50317 Fish Hatchery Road, PO Box 86, Waterville, MN 56096.

Walleye rearing pond reclamations. Up to four ponds are proposed to be treated in the fall for the purpose of removing existing bullhead or other unwanted fish populations. This alteration will allow the ponds to be used for raising walleye fingerlings, which will later be stocked into local fishing lakes. Rotenone will be used with a target concentration of 4 ppm.

Warren Pond, Cottonwood County (DOW 17-0021-02 T105 R35 S19). Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Ryan Doorenbos, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 175 County Road 26, Windom, MN 56101.

Carey Lake, Cottonwood County (DOW 17-0049 T106 R38 S24,25). Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Ryan Doorenbos, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 175 County Road 26, Windom, MN 56101.

Unnamed (Brigir) Lake, Dakota County (DOW # 19-0224 T.115, R. 19, 20 S. 19). Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Gerald J. Johnson, MN DNR Fish and Wildlife, East Metro Area Fisheries Supervisor, 1200 Warner Road, St. Paul, MN 55106.

Louise Lake, Washington Co., (DOW #82-0025 T.30,31, R.21, S. 6;33). Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Gerald J. Johnson, MN DNR Fish and Wildlife, East Metro Area Fisheries Supervisor, 1200 Warner Road, St. Paul, MN 55106.

For general information about any of these projects, contact John Hiebert, Warmwater Habitat Consultant, Box. 20, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.