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EQB MONITOR

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEETS

EAW Comment Deadline: September 10, 2008

Project Title: Aitkin-Itasca 70-Mile OHV Trail Project

Description: The project connects three existing recreational trails in an extensive, quality ATV/OHV trail system in Aitkin and Itasca Counties, Minnesota. The new designated trail is designed to be environmentally sensitive, economically beneficial, and community supported. A project goal is to reduce natural resource impacts associated with unregulated cross-country travel.

RGU: Aitkin County Environmental Services

Contact Person:

Terry Neff
Aitkin County Environmental Services Director
209 2nd St. NW
Aitkin, MN 56431
Phone: 218-927-7342
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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>

Project Title: Hay Days

Description: Chisago County has submitted to the Environmental Quality Board an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Traffic Study for the Conditional Use Permit application submitted by the SnoBarons Snowmobile Club to relocate their annual Hay Days event to Sunrise Township in Chisago County, near the intersection of Highway 95 and County Road 70 (Section 22 Township 35N Range 20W). The Hay Days event is a two-day snowmobile racing competition accompanied by various other activities, and would occur at the above location the first weekend after Labor Day of each year. The EAW and Traffic Study can be reviewed on the Chisago County website, Environmental Services/Zoning Department at www.co.chisago.mn.us. A paper copy of each document is available at the Environmental Services/Zoning office, Room 243, 313 North Main Street, Center City. Written comments that address the accuracy and completeness of the materials contained in the EAW and Traffic Study, potential impacts that may warrant further investigation, and the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed project will be accepted by the County during the thirty-day period from August 11, 2008 to September 10, 2008.

The Chisago County Planning Commission will accept verbal comments that address the accuracy and completeness of the materials contained in the EAW and Traffic Study, potential impacts that may warrant further investigation, and the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed project at a special meeting on September 2, 2008 in Room 142 of the Chisago County Government Center (313 North Main Street in Center City). The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

Please note that neither the thirty-day written comment period nor the special Planning Commission meeting is intended for comments on the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for the Hay Days event. Comments on the CUP application will be accepted after the environmental review process has been completed.

RGU: Chisago County

Contact Person:

Patrick C. Hollister, Planner
Chisago County Environmental Services
313 North Main Street
Center City, MN 55012-9663
Phone: 651-213-8382
Email: pcholli@co.chisago.mn.us

SCOPING EAW/DRAFT SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT

Mesabi Nugget Phase II Project

Mesabi Nugget proposes to reactivate the former LTV Steel Mining Company taconite mine near Hoyt Lakes and construct a new crusher and concentrating plant.

Portions of the concentrate produced will be used in an existing iron nugget demonstration plant; the remainder will be shipped to the proposer's facilities in other states or sold on the open market.

The DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are going to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will satisfy both state and federal environmental review requirements for the project. The DNR and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers invite comments on the proposed EIS scope during the 30-day scoping period that concludes Wednesday, September 10, 2008, at 4:30 p.m.

A public scoping meeting will be held Wednesday, September 3, 2008, beginning at 6:00 PM, at the Aurora Community Center in Aurora, Minnesota.

Public review copies of the Scoping EAW and Draft Scoping Decision Document have been placed in the following locations: The DNR Library, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul; the DNR Regional Headquarters, 1201 East Highway 2, Grand Rapids; the Hoyt Lakes Library, 206 Memorial Drive, Hoyt Lakes; the Duluth Public Library, 520 West Superior Street, Duluth; the Aurora Public Library, 14 West 2nd Avenue No., Aurora; and the Hibbing Public Library, 2020 East 5th Avenue, Hibbing, MN.

The Scoping EAW/Draft Scoping Decision Document can also be viewed on the DNR's website at www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/mesabinugget/index.html.

Please address any comments to the contact below, or send an email to Environmental.Review@dnr.state.mn.us with "Mesabi Nugget" in the subject line. If using the email address, please include your name and mailing address.

RGU: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Contact Person:

Bill Johnson, Planning Director
Environmental Policy and Review Unit
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025
Phone: 651-259-5126
Fax: 651-297-1500

EIS NEED DECISIONS

The responsible governmental unit has determined the following projects do not require preparation 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*.

- Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Trunk Highway 23 Improvements in Lyon County, June 16, 2008 (March 24, 2008)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation, Priced Dynamic Shoulder Lane Addition, Interstate 35W, City of Minneapolis, July 24, 2008 (May 5, 2008)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation, Collector Distributor Lane Addition, Northbound Interstate 35W, July 24, 2008 (May 5, 2008)

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board, Mountain Timber Wood Products Fuel Pellet Facility, July 22, 2008 (March 10, 2008)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens' Board, Steve and Terry Athman Swine Finishing Site Expansion Project, July 22, 2008 (June 2, 2008)

EIS PREPARATION NOTICE

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Notice of EIS Preparation: Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement:

Minnesota Trunk Highway 371 North Improvement Project, Cass and Crow Wing Counties, Minnesota

AGENCY: Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT)

ACTION: Notice of EIS preparation to supplement the Environmental Impact Statement for the **Highway 371 North Improvement Project**.

SUMMARY: The Minnesota Department of Transportation hereby issues notice of its intent to prepare a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) for a project on Minnesota Trunk Highway 371 from Nisswa to Pine River, Minnesota. The Notice of Availability of the Final EIS appeared in the January 17, 2005 *EQB Monitor*. That FEIS also served as the Final EIS for the Federal Highway Administration pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and rules promulgated pursuant thereto. Mn/DOT determined the FEIS was Adequate on March 28, 2005. Notice of that Determination appeared in the April 11, 2005 *EQB Monitor*. The title of the 2005 EIS was **Highway 371 North Improvement Project**.

The FEIS completed in 2005 analyzed a project which encompasses a sixteen-mile segment of State Highway 371, including the cities of Nisswa, Pequot Lakes, Jenkins and Pine River, Minnesota. The project includes the expansion of the existing two-lane roadway to a divided four-lane facility.

The intention to supplement the 2005 FEIS resulted from a proposal by the City of Pequot Lakes (2008 Proposal) to change the TH 371 preferred alternative within their community. The 2008 Proposal is to rescind the through-town alternative as the preferred alternative in Pequot Lakes and to adopt a Pequot Lakes bypass alternative that was studied in the Draft EIS but not selected as the preferred alternative at that time principally due to high cost and lack of local government support.

The 2008 Proposal for the Pequot Lakes area is to construct approximately 3.7 miles of new rural four-lane divided expressway approximately one-half mile east of existing Highway 371. This by-pass option has been proposed and endorsed by the Pequot Lakes City Council as the new preferred alternative to address previous City concerns related to safety and congestion in the urban areas of their community. The Pequot Lakes by-pass alternative (Alternative 3) was studied in the 2005 DEIS as a freeway concept. The 2008 Proposal is a modified version of Alternative 3 that eliminated the interchanges, which were expensive and not required for traffic conditions within the forecast period. The SFEIS is being prepared to insure that environmental impacts of the bypass option (identified as Alternative 3MOD) are appropriately analyzed, and that the public and agencies are provided full knowledge of the project impacts and proposed mitigation.

SCOPE: The format of the SFEIS will be similar to that of the 2005 FEIS, but the scope of the SFEIS will include a focus on only those topic areas that have changed since the 2005 FEIS, primarily related to the 2008 Proposal in the Pequot Lakes area. Items related to the other segments of the Highway 371 corridor documented in the 2005 FEIS remain valid. A revised Section 4(f) Evaluation will also be included as an appendix to the SFEIS.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE: It is anticipated the SFEIS will be circulated to the public during the Fall of 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Project Manager**

Timothy Bray, P.E., Civil Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation,
7694 Industrial Park Road, Baxter, Minnesota, 56425,
Telephone: (218) 828-5796, Fax (218) 828-5814.

Project Website

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d3/projects/hwy371/index.html>

PETITION FILED

The following petitions have been filed with the EQB requesting preparation of an EAW. The EQB has assigned the indicated unit of government to review the petition and decide on the need for an EAW.

- City of Austin, "Robbins Block" acquisition and demolition project

NOTICES

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish & Wildlife, Section of Wildlife Management would like to announce the following project scheduled for the fall of 2008 or winter of 2008-2009.

RECLAMATION PROJECTS PLANNED
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES SECTION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife is planning potential rotenone treatments on the following water bodies:

Lake/Unit Name	DOW	County	Township-Range-Section	Lake acres
Pickereel* (Magaksica WMA)	24002500	Freeborn	102-22-24	617
Mud* (Magaksica WMA)	24006800	Freeborn	102-22-13	115
Unnamed (connected to Pickereel)	24005600	Freeborn	102-21-20	57
Unnamed (connected to Pickereel)	24007600	Freeborn	102-21-19	18
Unnamed* (Wilts WMA)	26018800	Grant	128-43-3	55
Unnamed* (Red Rock WMA)	21056700	Douglas	128-40-20	35
Hjermstad Slough* (Hjermstad WMA)	51008900	Murray	108-43-11	119
North Marsh* (Hjermstad WMA)	51008901	Murray	108-43-11	41
Unnamed* (Ellsborough WMA)	51009100	Murray	108-43-13	13
Augusta (Designated Wildlife Lake)	17003300	Cottonwood	106-37-10	499
Thompson* (Highwater WMA)	17003600	Cottonwood	107-37-10	102
Teal Lake* (Teal Lake WMA)	32005300	Jackson	104-36-30	91
Mott* (Mueller WMA)	81007600	Waseca	106-24-26	121
Unnamed (connected to Mott)	81010200	Waseca	106-24-23	43
Buffalo (Designated Wildlife Lake)	81008300	Waseca	107-24-21	1030
*Basin in or a part of a Wildlife Management Area				

These projects may include the application of 2.5% synergized liquid rotenone, a federally and state registered pesticide to control carp. Endangered or threatened species are not known to be present in any of these lakes or wetlands. Smaller wetlands, ditches or drain tile outlets connected to the above lakes and wetland maybe treated if necessary. Some species listed as "Special Concern" in M.S. 6134.0220 maybe periodically found on/near some of these lake including Franklin's Gulls, American White Pelicans and Bald Eagles. These projects are not anticipated to have any long-term negative affects on any of these species. Project goals include treating the undesirable fish species, carp, in order to improve wildlife habitat and water quality in these water bodies.

Most of these water bodies will be drawn down prior to any chemical treatment to reduce the volume of chemical needed. The chemical application would occur in sometime between September 2008 and March 2009. Rotenone distribution will be done either through the ice, by drip station, by boat and/or aurally. Target treatment concentration is 3-5 ppm of 2.5% liquid rotenone or a similar concentration of powdered rotenone, or a combination of liquid and powder. Benefits of the project will be to improved water quality and aquatic vegetation abundance creating habitat for wildlife and waterfowl.

For general information about any of these projects contact Nicole Hansel-Welch, Shallow Lakes Program, 218-833-8626.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

RECLAMATION PROJECTS PLANNED FOR LAKES

The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife is planning four lakes 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:

Snowshoe Lake, Cass County. This lake has been managed for stream trout since 1959 after being reclaimed for trout management in 1958. A recent unwanted yellow perch introduction has negatively impacted the brook trout fishery. Rotenone distribution will be done by boat during the fall. Lakewide target concentration is 3 ppm. Following treatment, the lake will again be stocked with brook trout. Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Tim Brastrup, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 1601 Minnesota Drive, Brainerd, MN 55401

Pavelgrite Lake, Cass County. This is a shallow lake immediately adjacent to Snowshoe Lake. During lake surveys in 1984 and 1987, yellow perch, golden shiner, fathead minnow, and northern redbelly dace were the only fish captured. Pavelgrite will be reclaimed at the same time as Snowshoe Lake in order to prevent reintroduction of unwanted fish species. Rotenone distribution will be done by boat during the fall. Lakewide target concentration is 3 ppm. Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Tim Brastrup, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 1601 Minnesota Drive, Brainerd, MN

Diamond Lake, Cass County. This lake has been managed for stream trout since 1967 after being reclaimed for trout management in 1966. A recent black crappie introduction has negatively impacted the rainbow trout

fishery. Rotenone distribution will be done by boat during the fall. Lakewide target concentration is 3 ppm. Following treatment, the lake will again be stocked with rainbow trout. Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Harlan Fierstine, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 7316 State Hwy 371 NW, Walker, MN 56484

Fulda Lake, Murray County. Rotenone distribution will be done by boat, 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. 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. Comments or questions on this project should be addressed to Bob Davis, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 175 County Road 26, Windom, MN 56101

Walleye rearing pond reclamations. Up to five 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 3.5 ppm. Antimycin will also be used at the outlet, inlet, and marsh areas on Tomash Lake, with a target concentration of 3.0 ppb.

Lake Name	County	Township	Range	Section
Long (DOW 82-68)	Washington	32N	20W	27
Green Acres (DOW 82-100)	Washington	29N	21W	4
Unnamed (Bohrer Pond (19-003)	Dakota	27N	27W	3
Praught (DOW 86-7)	Wright	121N	23W	33
Tomash (DOW 16-345)	Cook	62N	2;3W	6;1

For general information about any of these projects, contact Mike Halverson, Fisheries Habitat and Development Consultant, Box 20, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Notifications of Release of Genetically Engineered Organisms

Transgenic Insect Resistant Corn – Commercial Use Exemption

Monsanto Company has requested an exemption from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Genetically Engineered Organism Release Permit for insect resistant corn lines derived from transformation event MON 89034. These corn lines contain the stably integrated genes, *cry1A.105* and *cry2Ab2*, isolated from *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which codes Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 proteins, which provide protection from feeding damaged caused by a number of lepidopteran insect pests including European corn borer. The corn lines containing this gene are no longer regulated under USDA/APHIS guidelines. Under this exemption from state permit, Monsanto Company will be allowed to commercially use these insect resistant corn lines without further regulation. For additional information contact Mary Hanks, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 651/201-6277, mary.hanks@state.mn.us

Transgenic Insect Resistant and Herbicide Tolerant Corn – Commercial Use Exemption

Monsanto Company has requested an exemption from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Genetically Engineered Organism Release Permit for insect resistant and herbicide tolerant corn lines resulting from a cross plants containing transformation events MON 89034 and MON 88017. The line designated MON89034 contains the stably integrated genes, *cry1A.105* and *cry2Ab2*, isolated from *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which codes Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 proteins, that provide protection from feeding damage caused by a number of lepidopteran insect pests including European corn borer. The line designated MON 88017 contains the gene *cry3Bb1*, isolated from *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *Kumamotoensis*, which codes the Cry3Bb1 protein that provides protection from feeding damage by corn rootworm larvae and contains the gene *cp4 epsps*, isolated from *Agrobacterium* sp. Strain CP4 which codes the CP4 EPSPS protein that provides tolerance to applications of the herbicide glyphosate. This event (MON 88017) had been previously exempted individually from state permit on January 27, 2006. The corn lines containing this gene are no longer regulated under USDA/APHIS guidelines. Under this exemption from state permit, Monsanto Company will be allowed to commercially use these insect resistant and herbicide tolerant lines without further regulation. For additional information contact Mary Hanks, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 651/201-6277, mary.hanks@state.mn.us

NOTICE OF INTENT TO HOLD STATE METALLIC MINERALS LEASE SALE State Lands to be Offered for Metallic Minerals Exploration

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources announces that plans are being developed to hold the state's 30th sale of metallic minerals exploration and mining leases. The sale is tentatively scheduled for January of 2009. The lease sale plans are being announced at this time in order to give mining companies, public interest groups and all other interested parties additional time to review the areas under consideration.

The purpose of Minnesota's metallic minerals rules (Minnesota Rules, parts 6125.0100 -.0700) is to promote and regulate the exploration for, mining and removal of metallic minerals on state-owned and state-administered lands. These rules, and the leases issued under these rules, authorize exploration and development of these minerals and impose certain requirements on the lessee. The requirements include: the payment of rentals that increase with the passage of time, the payment of royalty for all ore mined and removed, the submission of data and other reports, and the addressing of environmental considerations. In addition, the state lessee must comply with all applicable regulatory laws.

The areas under consideration for the lease sale cover portions of Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Roseau and Saint Louis Counties. The lands being considered have been offered in previous metallic minerals lease sales, but based upon the interest shown by industry, new geologic data, and exploration techniques developed during the past few years, it is felt that within these lands there is potential for the discovery of mineral resources.

The exact time and place of the lease sale will be announced by legal notice at least thirty (30) days prior to the sale. Mining unit books, listing the state lands to be offered at the lease sale will be available for inspection or purchase at that time.

A map showing the general areas under consideration may be obtained from the Division of Land and Minerals, Box 45, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4045, telephone 651-259-5959, or by visiting the DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE – Landscape Committee Minnesota Forest Resources Council

The Landscape Committee of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) will meet on Thursday, August 21, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in Cloquet at the Cloquet Forestry Center.

For more information, please contact Lindberg Ekola at (320) 256-8300 or go to the MFRC website at <http://www.frc.state.mn.us>.

STATE OF MINNESOTA Office of Energy Security

NOTICE OF PERMIT DECISION PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

In the Matter of the Xcel Energy Application for a Route Permit for the Chisago County to Apple River 115/161 Kv High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) Project

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-06-1677

At a meeting on June 26, 2008, and in an Order issued June 30, 2008, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved and adopted Xcel Energy's and the city of Lindstrom's Joint Agreement on a route through downtown Lindstrom as an addendum completing the Chisago Transmission Project route permit.

At a meeting on January 24, 2008, and in an Order issued February 20, 2008, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission determined that the Environmental Assessment and the record created at the public hearing had adequately addressed the issues identified in the Scoping Decision. The Commission also designated and issued an HVTL route permit for the Chisago Transmission Project authorizing the Permittee to 1) replace the existing 69 Kv transmission line located between the Chisago County substation and the proposed Lawrence Creek Substation near Taylors Falls, Minnesota with a new 115 Kv transmission line; 2) replace the 69 Kv transmission line with a new 161 Kv transmission line between the new Lawrence Creek Substation and the St. Croix River crossing in Taylors Falls; and 3) modify the existing Chisago County, Lindstrom, and Shafer substations and construct a new Lawrence Creek Substation.

The original decision withheld a permit for the segment through downtown Lindstrom pending an agreement between the city of Lindstrom and Xcel Energy.

If you have any questions about this project or would like more information, please contact the OES project

manager: David E. Birkholz, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55155. Tel: 651.296.2878; e-mail: david.birkholz@state.mn.us.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABILITY

**In the Matter of the Northern States Power Company (Xcel Energy)
Certificate of Need Application and
Site Permit Application for a
Extended Power Uprate at the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant**

**PUC Docket Number: E002/CN-08-185 (Certificate of Need)
PUC Docket Number: E002/GS-07-1567 (Site Permit)**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Public Hearing will be held at the location listed below on Xcel Energy's Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a Certificate of Need (CON) and a Site Permit to increase the electrical generating capacity at its Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant (MNGP) in Wright County, Minnesota.

**Thursday, August 21, 2008 – 7:00 PM
North Mississippi Room
Monticello Community Center
505 Walnut Street
Monticello, MN 55362**

Administrative Law Judge Steve M. Mihalchick will preside at the hearing. Judge Mihalchick's address is Office of Administrative Hearings, 600 N. Roberts Street, P.O. Box 64620, St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620, phone (651) 361-7900.

Deadline for written public comments to the Administrative Law Judge on the CON and Site Permit application must be post marked by September 1, 2008.

Purpose of Hearing. The purpose of the public hearing is to compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the CON and the Site Permit request. The ALJ will write a report and make a recommendation to the Commission on need for the project and on site selection, including any appropriate site permit conditions. The Commission will make a final decision on the need and site permit at a subsequent Commission hearing. The Commission must issue a Certificate of Need prior to issuing a Site Permit. The Commission must issue a site permit within six months of accepting the Site Permit application.

Project Description. Xcel Energy proposes to uprate the electrical generating capacity of MNGP from 585 megawatts electric to 656 megawatts electric (Mwe). The uprate will occur in two phases – the first completed by 2009, the second by 2011. The 71 Mwe uprate will be achieved by increasing the steam output of the

nuclear reactor and capturing this additional output with improved electrical generation equipment and systems. Steam output will be increased through an increase in the number of new fuel assemblies replaced in the reactor core at each refueling. Equipment and systems modifications include:

- Replacement of the high pressure turbine
- Modification to the low pressure turbine
- Replacement of condensate demineralizers, condensate pump and motor
- Upgrades of electrical power supplies and power cooling systems

All modifications, except for limited power supply upgrades, will occur within the current physical footprint of MNGP. No new structures are proposed. The proposed extended power uprate will also require approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). An updated application will be filed in the fall of 2008. The proposed MNGP uprate is part of Xcel Energy's 2007 Resource Plan to meet projected base load energy and capacity needs.

Certificate of Need. No large energy facility can be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a Certificate of Need by the PUC. The Certificate of Need process is the only proceeding in which a no-build alternative and the size, type, timing, system configuration, and voltage of a proposed project will be considered.

The Office of Energy Security (OES) prepares an Environmental Report (ER) on proposed large energy facilities that come before the Commission for a determination of need. The ER analyzes the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and project alternatives, and addresses mitigating measures for anticipated adverse impacts. To focus the content or "scope" of the ER, the OES conducts public meetings to gather comments, questions, and alternatives to the proposed project.

The proposed MNGP extended power uprate qualifies as a large energy facility (Minn. Stat. § 216B.2421). Xcel Energy applied for a Certificate of Need for the MNGP uprate on February 14, 2008. On April 10, 2008, the PUC accepted the application as complete.

Site Permit. No large electric power generating plant can be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a Site Permit by the PUC. The site permitting process is governed by the Power Plant Siting Act and Minnesota Rules 7849.5010 – 7849.6500. Certain smaller generating plants qualify for an alternative review process by the PUC. Under the alternative review process, OES prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA contains information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and addresses mitigating measures for anticipated impacts. To focus the content or "scope" of the EA, the OES conducts public meetings to gather comments and questions on the proposed project.

The proposed MNGP power uprate qualifies for the alternative environmental review process (Minn. Rule 7849.5500). Xcel Energy applied for a Site Permit for the MNGP uprate on May 2, 2008. On May 8, 2008, the PUC accepted the application as complete.

Coordinated Review Process. Under Minnesota Rule 7849.7100, a coordinated review process and hearing for a Certificate of Need and Site Permit may be conducted if it is feasible, relatively more efficient, and in the public interest. For the proposed MNGP uprate, these conditions are met. The OES conducted a coordinated scoping and environmental review process for Xcel Energy's Certificate of Need and Site Permit applications.

The OES developed a single scoping decision and prepared a single environmental document for both applications. The Environmental Assessment (EA) will be released on July 31, 2008.

Conduct of Public Hearing The OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff will be present at the hearing and make a brief presentation about the project and introduce into the record a number of documents relating to the project, including the application, the EA, and certain procedural documents. Representatives of the applicant (Xcel Energy) will be present to offer evidence and to answer questions. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of OES EFP staff and Xcel Energy representatives, to make statements, and to offer written comments and material into the record at the public hearing.

The hearing will be conducted pursuant to Minnesota Rules Chapter 1400 and Minnesota Rules 7849.5710. The applicable statutes and rules can be found on the Revisor's webpage:

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/>

Rules and statutes may also be purchased at the State Bookstore, 660 Olive St., St. Paul, Mn. 55155; phone (651) 297-3000.

The Administrative Law Judge may elect to recess the hearing and set additional days for hearing if necessary.

Evidentiary Hearing. The evidentiary hearings for the parties on the CON application will be held in the Public Utilities Commission Large Hearing Room, 121 7th Place East, St. Paul, Minnesota on October 6, 2008, beginning at 9:30 am. Xcel Energy will prepare its direct testimony in support of the project in a written question and answer format. This testimony will be filed with the Administrative Law Judge no later than August 7, 2008. Testimony from the formal parties to the case is due no later than September 3, 2008. Only formal parties may cross-examine witnesses at the evidentiary hearing.

Identified Parties and Intervention. Persons interested in intervening in these proceedings had until May 29, 2008, (First Pre-hearing Order) to file a Petition for Intervention with the ALJ (See Minn. Rules Part 1405.0900). The only parties to this proceeding are the applicant (Xcel Energy) and the Office of Energy Security.

Eminent Domain. If issued a Site Permit by the Commission, Xcel Energy may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 216E.12. However, as the proposed extended power uprate would take place within an existing Xcel Energy facility, the use of eminent domain is not anticipated.

Project Contacts, Information and Mailing Lists

Public contacts from the OES and the Commission staff have been appointed to assist persons interested in taking part in the permitting process. For more information on this project or the regulatory process, contact one of the persons listed below:

Department of Commerce – Office of Energy Security. The OES has designated staff member Bill Storm (651-296-9535, bill.storm@state.mn.us) as project manager and Ray Kirsch (651-296-7588, raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us) as public advisor for the Site Permit proceedings. You may contact them at: Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198.

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

Public Utilities Commission. The Commission has designated staff member Michael Kaluzniak (651-201-2257, Fax: 651-297-7073, mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us) as its project manager and public advisor for the Certificate of Need proceedings. Mr. Kaluzniak may be contacted in writing at: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147.

Xcel Energy. The contact person for the applicant is Brian Zelenak (612-330-5641, brian.r.zelenak@xcelenergy.com). Mr. Zelenak may be contacted in writing at: Xcel Energy, 414 Nicollet Mall, 7th Floor, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

Project Mailing Lists. If you would like to have your name added to the OES project mailing list for this project, you may register on line at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19542> or contact OES staff at the address above.

The Commission maintains a separate service list for Certificate of Need proceedings. To be placed on the list for this project, mail, fax or email Robin Benson at: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073, robin.benson@state.mn.us.

Materials. Copies of the Certificate of Need application, Site Permit application, the Environmental Assessment, as well as other pertinent documents are available on the Commissions web page:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19542>

Both applications can also be viewed at the following libraries:

St. Paul Public Library
90 Fourth St. West
St. Paul, MN 55102

Minneapolis Public Library
300 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Monticello Branch Library
404 W. Walnut
Monticello, MN 55362-8840

St. Cloud Public Library
405 St. Germain
St. Cloud, MN 56301-3697

NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AVAILABILITY

Issued: August 11, 2008

**In the Matter of the Wapsipinicon Wind Project Application for a Certificate of Need
for the Wapsipinicon North Wind Farm Large Wind Energy Conversion System**

PUC Docket No. IP-6670/CN-08-334

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Environmental Report (ER) for the Wapsipinicon Wind Farm (Project) Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) proposed for Mower County, Minnesota has been completed and is available for review by the public. The ER addresses potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed LWECS project and alternatives. Copies of the ER and other relevant documents are accessible at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19234>

Paper copies may be requested from the Minnesota Office of Energy Security staff listed at the end of this notice.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Wapsipinicon North Wind Farm (Project) as proposed would be an LWECS of up to 105 MW and would consist of up to seventy 1.5 MW wind turbine generators. The towers would be 80 meters (262.5 feet) in height. The rotor diameter would be 77 meters (252.6 feet), resulting in a maximum overall height of 118.5 meters (388.8 feet) when one blade is in the vertical position.

The electrical collector system would consist of underground 34.5 kV collection lines and facilities providing step-up transformation. The Applicant is also proposing to build a 161/34.5 kV project substation which would consist generally of 2 161/34.5 transformers, and associated switching and protection equipment as well as metering equipment and a small control house. Power from the turbines would be collected at this substation and transmitted to the Pleasant Valley Substation located in section 19 of Pleasant Valley Township via approximately 6 miles of overhead 161 kV transmission line.

Proposed Site Location

The Project would be located in central Mower County, near the town of Dexter, in portions of Grand Meadow, Pleasant Valley, Dexter and Sargeant townships, and approximately 20 miles east of Austin, Minnesota. The Applicant has designated approximately 40 square miles as the Project area. The town of Dexter is adjacent to the Project site to the Southwest. Interstate 90 is the southern border of the Project area.

Associated Actions

The Project is part of a larger Wapsipinicon Wind Project site application. The entire project comprises up to 137 GE 1.5 MW turbines with a nameplate capacity of 205.5 MW. The remainder of the project site covers

approximately 40 square miles southeast of US HWY 90. That site has already received a CN and been permitted as the Grand Meadow Wind Farm. The current Project was issued a site permit at the same time, pending the resolution of this CN process.

PUC CERTIFICATE OF NEED REVIEW PROCESS

The Project is a “large energy facility” as defined in Minnesota Statute 216B.2421, subp. 2 and a Certificate of Need from the Public Utilities Commission is required for such a project under Minnesota Statute 216B.243. The Applicant filed its CN Application on April 1, 2008. On May 21, 2008, the PUC accepted the CN as complete, given the Applicant’s filing of supplemental materials.

A public hearing, noticed separately, will be held at the Elkton Community Center on August 14, 2008. Under state law, the PUC proceeding is the only time at which the “no-build” alternative and the size, type, and timing of a new generating facility will be considered.

Project Contacts and Information

For more information about the process, the project or to place your name on the project mailing list, contact David Birkholz (651-296-2878 or david.birkholz@state.mn.us) Minnesota Office of Energy Security, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, Saint 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, and ask for the Department of Commerce.