

From: Bump, Samantha (DNR)
To: [Parlow, Marsha GRE-MG](#)
Subject: RE: NHIS Response: Scenic 69 kV Line
Date: Thursday, January 3, 2019 3:33:15 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[20180248-1a.pdf](#)
[20180248-1amap.pdf](#)
[Identification Guide to Large Nests MN WI.pdf](#)
[Updated NHIS Request.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

Hi Marsha,

I have reviewed the NHIS regarding the above project. There are no new records in the vicinity of the project. As such, the Natural Heritage letter dated January 2, 2018 is valid until January 3, 2020.

Thank you for consulting us on this matter. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Have a great day,

Samantha Bump

NHIS Review Specialist | Ecological & Water Resources

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-259-5091

Email: Samantha.Bump@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov

cid:image001.png@01D49301.342223D0

From: Parlow, Marsha GRE-MG <mparlow@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2018 10:33 AM

To: Joyal, Lisa (DNR) <lisa.joyal@state.mn.us>

Subject: FW: NHIS Response: Scenic 69 kV Line

Hi Lisa,

Could you please put this in for an updated review?

Marsha Parlow

Direct: 763-445-5215 | Cell: 612-345-1212

** Please consider the environment before you print this e-mail.*

From: Bump, Samantha (DNR) [<mailto:samantha.bump@state.mn.us>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 12:40 PM

To: Parlow, Marsha GRE-MG <mparlow@GREnergy.com>

Cc: Coyle, Margi (Anne) (DNR) <margi.coyle@state.mn.us>

Subject: NHIS Response: Scenic 69 kV Line

EXTERNAL

Hi Marsha,

Attached is the NHIS response regarding the Scenic 69 kV Transmission Line & Substation in Itasca County. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your patience.

Happy New Year,

Samantha Bump

NHIS Review Specialist | Ecological & Water Resources

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

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

January 2, 2018

Correspondence # ERDB 20180248

Ms. Marsha Parlow
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard
Maple Grove, MN 55369

RE: Natural Heritage Review of the proposed Scenic 69 kV Transmission Line & Substation,

County	Township (N)	Range (W)	Section(s)
Itasca	61	26	33, 34
Itasca	60	26	1-4,9-12
Itasca	60	25	6-8, 16,17,21,22,24-27
Itasca	60	24	30

Dear Ms. Parlow,

As requested, the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System has been queried to determine if any rare species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the proposed project. Based on this query, rare features have been documented within the search area (for details, please visit the [Rare Species Guide Website](#) for more information on the biology, habitat use, and conservation measures of these rare species). Please note that the following rare features may be adversely affected by the proposed project:

- A portion of the proposed project is within areas the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has preliminarily identified a Site of *Outstanding* and a Site of *Moderate* Biodiversity Significance. Sites of Biodiversity Significance have varying levels of native biodiversity and are ranked based on the relative significance of this biodiversity at a statewide level. Sites ranked as *Outstanding* contain the best occurrences of the rarest species, the most outstanding examples of the rarest native plant communities, and/or the largest, most intact functional landscapes present in the state. Sites ranked as *Moderate* contain occurrences of rare species and/or moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have a strong potential for recovery. These particular Sites contain several high quality native plant communities. (Please see attached map; GIS shapefiles of MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities can be downloaded from the [MN Geospatial Commons](#).)

Given that activities in road rights-of-way can negatively affect adjacent native plant communities, especially through the introduction of invasive plant species, disturbance near these ecologically significant areas should be minimized. Actions to minimize disturbance may include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:

- Confine construction activities to the existing road rights-of-way when crossing the MBS Sites;
 - Directionally bore under Sites;
 - As much as possible, operate within already-disturbed areas;
 - Minimize vehicular disturbance in the area (allow only vehicles necessary for the proposed work);
 - Do not park equipment or stockpile supplies in the area;
 - Do not place spoil within MBS Sites or other sensitive areas;
 - Inspect and clean all equipment prior to bringing it to the site to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species;
 - If possible, conduct the work under frozen ground conditions;
 - Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures;
 - Revegetate disturbed soil with native species suitable to the local habitat as soon after construction as possible; and
 - Use only weed-free mulches, topsoils, and seed mixes. Of particular concern are birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*), two invasive species that are sold commercially and are problematic in prairies and disturbed open areas, such as roadsides.
- Multiple state-listed mussel and fish species have been documented in the Rice River. Threats from stream crossings include crushing from heavy equipment or rip rap, stranding from dewatering, and smothering from sediment loading. As these species are particularly vulnerable to deterioration in water quality, especially increased siltation, it is important that effective erosion and sediment control practices be implemented and maintained near the river. To further protect these aquatic species, we recommend spanning the river with an overhead line or directional boring with an underground line. If boring is planned, bore pits should be placed away from the water's edge and erosion control methods should be employed to prevent excavation material from entering the water. Upon completion, pits should be filled, graded to preconstruction contours, and re-vegetated with native plant species. Please contact me if there will be any disturbance to the streambed, as a mussel survey and/or relocation may be required.
 - The Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), a state listed bird species, and Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) may nest in the area. Both species are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald Eagles under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Both acts prohibit killing, selling, or otherwise harming these birds, their nests, or eggs. If there will be any tree removal associated with the proposed project, the trees should be inspected for nests prior to being cut down. See the attached fact sheet regarding large bird nest identification. The USFWS does issue permits for unintentional disturbance and for the taking of a tree. Please visit the [USFWS Eagle website](#) for more information regarding conservation measures, [management guidelines](#), and [permitting](#).

- The Environmental Assessment Worksheet should address whether the proposed project has the potential to adversely affect the above rare features and, if so, it should identify specific measures that will be taken to avoid or minimize disturbance.
- Please include a copy of this letter in any state or local license or permit application. Please note that measures to avoid or minimize disturbance to the above rare features may be included as restrictions or conditions in any required permits or licenses.


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

For environmental review purposes, the results of this Natural Heritage Review are valid for one year; the results are only valid for the project location (noted above) and the project description provided on the NHIS Data Request Form. Please contact me if project details change or for an updated review if construction has not occurred within one year.

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential effects to these rare features. If you have not done so already, please contact your [DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist](#) to determine whether there are other natural resource concerns associated with the proposed project. Please be aware that additional site assessments or review may be required.

Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources. An invoice will be mailed to you under separate cover.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Bump". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Samantha Bump
Natural Heritage Review Specialist
Samantha.Bump@state.mn.us

Enc. Map
Large Bird Nest Identification

Links: Rare Species Guide

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rsg/index.html>

MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/mcbs/biodiversity_guidelines.html

DNR Native Plant Communities

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/npc/index.html>

USFWS Eagle Information

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/>

DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist Contact Info

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/ereview/erp_regioncontacts.html

MN Geospatial Commons

<https://gisdata.mn.gov/>

Cc: Margi Coyle