

From: [Sarah L. Johnson](#)
To: dustin.martinswcd@gmail.com
Cc: [Rachael A. Shetka](#); [ELIZONDO, MANUELA](#); [SETTER, JESSICA](#)
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 4:48:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dustin,

Thank you for your response and the note about both Martin and Jackson Counties being involved. The letter was also sent to the Jackson County SWCD to Sonja Koch's attention. We appreciate knowing you are also involved on the Jackson County side.

You are correct that given the retrofitting will be on existing turbines, new areas of permanent disturbance beyond the original project are not anticipated. As the project plans progress, we will certainly keep you updated if any wetland impacts are anticipated requiring LGU input.

Thank you,

Sarah

Sarah L. Johnson

Senior Environmental Scientist
Duluth, MN office: 218.529.7119
cell: 218.260.8025
SJohnson@barr.com
www.barr.com



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From: Dustin Benes <dustin.martinswcd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:54 AM
To: Sarah L. Johnson <sjohnson@barr.com>
Subject: Elm Creek II Repower Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of your organization.

Good morning Sarah,

Martin SWCD has received the letter and map for the Elm Creek Wind II project. Martin SWCD is the LGU for the Wetland Conservation Act in Martin County. Since this is a project extending across county lines, I would also be involved on the TEP for Jackson County if needed.

It appears all the upgrades will be on existing disturbed areas. It doesn't appear there will be any impacts to wetlands. If there will be any new impacts, let us know.

Thank you

Dustin Benes

District Technician
Martin Soil and Water Conservation District
923 N State St., Suite 110
Fairmont MN 56031
507-235-6680 ext. 105

November 7, 2023

Veronica Parsell
Senior Cultural Resource Specialist
Barr Engineering
325 South Lake Ave, Suite 700
Duluth, MN 55802

RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project
Upgrades to the existing wind energy generation facility
Jackson and Martin Counties
SHPO Number: 2023-3055

Dear Veronica Parsell:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced project. Information received on September 6, 2023, has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (138.665-666).

As stated in your September 6, 2023 correspondence, Elm Creek Wind II, LLC currently operates an existing 148.8 MW wind energy generation facility in Martin and Jackson Counties and is proposing to upgrade the facility in order to increase its efficiency and energy output as well as prolong its life. The proposed upgrades consist of retrofitting the facility's existing 62 wind turbines by replacing turbine equipment with new components. The proposed improvements include:

- Replacing the rotors (nose, cone, hub, and blades) and increasing the rotor diameter of all existing turbines from 95 meters up to 120 meters;
- Replacing the nacelle and its interior elements;
- Refurbishing the generators;
- Reinforcing foundations as needed; and
- Upgrading collector lines as needed.

We have reviewed the submitted report titled *Phase Ia Cultural Resources Literature Review, Elm Creek II Repowering Project, Jackson and Martin Counties, MN* (September 2023) as prepared by Barr Engineering, and based on the information provided, we agree that no additional archaeological survey is warranted for the project as it is currently proposed.

Therefore, based on information that is available to us at this time, we conclude that there are **no properties** listed in the National or State Registers of Historic Places and no significant archaeological sites that will be affected by the proposed project.

MINNESOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

50 Sherburne Avenue ■ Administration Building 203 ■ Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155 ■ 651-201-3287 mn.gov/admin/shpo ■
mnshpo@state.mn.us

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SERVICE PROVIDER

Implementation of the project in accordance with this finding, as documented, fulfills the agency's responsibilities to consult with our office pursuant to Minn. Stat. 138. If the project is not implemented as proposed, including, but not limited to, a situation where subsequent engineering/design changes to the currently proposed project diverts substantially from what was presented at the time of this review, the applicant will need to reopen consultation with our office.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36 CFR § 800. If this project is considered for federal financial assistance, or requires a federal permit or license, then review and consultation with our office will need to be initiated by the lead federal agency. Be advised that comments and recommendations provided by our office for this state-level review may differ from findings and determinations made by the federal agency as part of review and consultation under Section 106.

If you have any questions regarding our review of this project, please contact Kelly Gragg-Johnson, Environmental Review Program Specialist, at 651-201-3285 or kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Sarah J. Beimers
Environmental Review Program Manager

From: [Byron, Haley \(DNR\)](#)
To: [Rachael A. Shetka](#); [Warzecha, Cynthia \(DNR\)](#)
Cc: [Sarah L. Johnson](#); [ELITZONDO, MANUELA](#)
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota
Date: Friday, December 29, 2023 9:26:41 AM
Attachments: [image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

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Good Moring Rachael,

There are a few things to keep in mind as you move forward with the Elm Creek II Wind repower project.

Artz Wildlife Management Area – Wind turbine towers can not be placed less than five rotor diameters on the prevailing wind directions and three rotor diameters on the non-prevailing wind directions from the WMA. This setback requirement may impact retrofitting opportunities near the WMA.

Avian and Bat Protection – An Avian and Bat Protection Plan (ABPP) will be required for this project. The ABPP must address steps to be taken to identify and mitigate impacts to avian and bat species during the construction and operation phase of the project. It must also include formal and incidental post-construction fatality monitoring, training, wildlife handling, documentation (e.g. photographs), and reporting protocols for each phase of the project. Please reference the [Avian and Bat Survey Protocols for LWECS in Minnesota](#) developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Commerce when developing the ABPP. There will also likely be a permit condition that requires curtailment at sunset and sunrise between April and October and that all turbines be equipped with operational software capable of adjusting turbine cut-in speeds.

To provide substantive and helpful feedback on the ABPP, it would be beneficial for us to review past avian and bat monitoring data that was collected as part of the initial construction and operation of Elm Creek II. Please provide that data at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to working with you on this project!

Thank you,

Haley Byron

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Southern Region EWR

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

117 Rogers Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Office: 507-389-8813

Cell: 507-910-8963

Email: haley.byron@state.mn.us
mndnr.gov



From: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:02 PM
To: Byron, Haley (DNR) <Haley.Byron@state.mn.us>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>
Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

Thanks for the update Haley!

Rachael A. Shetka
Vice President
Senior Environmental Specialist
Duluth, MN office: 218.529.7155
RShetka@barr.com
www.barr.com



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From: Byron, Haley (DNR) <Haley.Byron@state.mn.us>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:00 PM
To: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>
Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

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Hello Rachael,

I am currently running behind schedule and will provide comments within the next couple of weeks.
Thank you for your patience!

Haley Byron

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Southern Region EWR

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

117 Rogers Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Office: 507-389-8813

Cell: 507-910-8963

Email: haley.byron@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



From: Byron, Haley (DNR)

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:33 AM

To: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>

Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>

Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

Hello Rachael,

Thank you for reaching out. The DNR will provide comments for the proposed upgrades and repowering within the next month.

Thank you,

Haley Byron

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Southern Region EWR

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

117 Rogers Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Office: 507-389-8813

Cell: 507-910-8963

Email: haley.byron@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



From: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 12:04 PM

To: Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>

Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <Haley.Byron@state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

Thanks for the quick reply Cynthia!

Haley, please let us know if you have any questions as you review. Thank you!

Rachael A. Shetka

Vice President
Senior Environmental Specialist
Duluth, MN office: 218.529.7155
RShetka@barr.com
www.barr.com



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From: Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 9:56 AM

To: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>

Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>; Byron, Haley (DNR) <Haley.Byron@state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

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Hi Rachel,

To my knowledge, our agency has not received the attached letter. I have copied Haley Byron, the Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist (REAE) in the DNR's South Region. Haley will be your primary contact during early coordination. After the permit application has been submitted to the Public Utilities Commission, I will be your primary contact.

Best regards,

Cynthia

Cynthia Warzecha

Energy Projects Planner

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-259-5078
Email: cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us



From: Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 8:43 AM
To: Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>
Cc: Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>
Subject: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

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Cynthia,

We are working to prepare the PUC site permit amendment application for the partial repowering of the Elm Creek II facility per the attached letter. I'm reaching out to confirm that you received the attached letter and if the DNR will be providing comments. Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you!

Rachael A. Shetka
Vice President
Senior Environmental Specialist
Duluth, MN office: 218.529.7155
RShetka@barr.com
www.barr.com



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From: [Marsh, Dawn S](#)
To: asuehring@west-inc.com
Cc: [ELIZONDO, MANUELA](#); [Sarah L. Johnson](#); jpickle@west-inc.com; [SETTER, JESSICA](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota
Date: Friday, January 5, 2024 4:14:46 PM
Attachments: [C2_signature_west_c7c9f731-6922-4dae-801c-8520ac35ad4d.png](#)

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Aaron,

Thank you for the follow-up email and for the November 14, 2023, letter describing the proposed facility upgrades at Elm Creek II.

Given the proposed increase in rotor diameter, we recommend that Elm Creek II evaluate risk factors at the project in continued coordination with the Service. These risk factors may include, but are not limited to, new habitat within or near the project area, fatality events of listed bat species or bat species proposed for listing at nearby projects, new information about bat migration patterns, and the discovery of new summer or winter colonies of listed bats within or near the project area. We also recommend that Elm Creek II conduct additional fatality monitoring to reevaluate risk.

Please review the current [northern long-eared bat wind guidance documents](#) for information on how new or existing wind facilities can operate in a manner in which incidental take of northern long-eared bat is not “reasonably certain to occur.” Tricolored bat wind guidance documents may be available later this year and will be posted on the [tricolored bat species page](#).

I’m happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,
Dawn

Dawn Marsh (she/her/hers) | Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | Minnesota-Wisconsin Field Office
3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington, MN 55425
Mobile: (612) 283-8054

From: Aaron Suehring <asuehring@west-inc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 4:55 PM
To: Marsh, Dawn S <dawn_marsh@fws.gov>
Cc: ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>; Sarah L. Johnson <SJohnson@barr.com>; Joyce Pickle <jpickle@WEST-INC.COM>; SETTER, JESSICA <jessica.setter@avangrid.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

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Hello Dawn,

We are working to prepare the PUC site permit amendment application for the partial repowering of the Elm Creek II facility per the attached letter. I'm reaching out to confirm that you received the attached letter and if the USFWS will be providing comments. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Aaron

Aaron Suehring
Associate Biologist



Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc
Environmental & Statistical Consultants
7575 Golden Valley Road, Suite 300
Golden Valley, Minnesota 55427

307-214-8834
asuehring@west-inc.com

www.west-inc.com

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From: [Leonard Wabasha \(TO\)](#)
To: [Sarah L. Johnson](#)
Cc: [SETTER, JESSICA](#); [ELIZONDO, MANUELA](#); [Veronica A. Parsell](#); [Rachael A. Shetka](#)
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 1:29:13 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

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Thank you, That works for me, Have a Great Day!!



LEONARD WABASHA

Director of Cultural Resources • Cultural Resources
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
d: 952.496.6120
shakopeedakota.org
Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. With a focus on being a good neighbor, good steward of the earth, and good employer, the SMSC is committed to charitable donations, community partnerships, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

From: Sarah L. Johnson <sjohnson@barr.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 1:27 PM
To: Leonard Wabasha (TO) <leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org>
Cc: SETTER, JESSICA <jessica.setter@avangrid.com>; ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>; Veronica A. Parsell <VParsell@barr.com>; Rachael A. Shetka <RShetka@barr.com>
Subject: RE: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

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Leonard,

Thank you for your response. This email is to follow up to your correspondence below regarding the Elm Creek II Repower Project. We would be happy to provide the archaeological survey report when it is completed. Please note the survey efforts are ongoing and the report is expected to be completed in 2024 and is confidential.

Sarah

Sarah L. Johnson
Senior Environmental Scientist
Duluth, MN office: 218.529.7119
cell: 218.260.8025
SJohnson@barr.com
www.barr.com

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From: Leonard Wabasha (TO) <leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org>

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 10:27 AM

To: Sarah L. Johnson <sjohnson@barr.com>

Subject: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of your organization.

Dear Sarah

Thank you for the opportunity to consult with you on the Elm Creek II Repower Project. When the archaeological studies are complete could you please share them?

Have a Great Day...

Respectfully,



LEONARD WABASHA

Director of Cultural Resources • Cultural Resources
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
d: 952.496.6120
shakopeedakota.org
Leonard.Wabasha@shakopeedakota.org

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. With a focus on being a good neighbor, good steward of the earth, and good employer, the SMSC is committed to charitable donations, community partnerships, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

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~~~~~

ELIZONDO, MANUELA

From: Sara Childers <sara.childers@fsst-nsn.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 9:21 AM
To: ELIZONDO, MANUELA
Subject: RE: [EXT] RE: [EXT] [REDACTED] and Elm Creek II Wind Repower Discussions

EXTERNAL SENDER: Be cautious, especially with links and attachments. Report phishing if suspicious.

Hello,
It was good to meet everyone yesterday.
Regarding the Elm Creek II Wind Repower we have no issues at this time with that proposed project.

[REDACTED]

Thank you for providing any more maps and or photos as to speed our process of reviewing numerous wind projects.
Sara Childers



Sara Childers
Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant
p. 605.997.3891 x1226
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
www.fsst-nsn.gov

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From: ELIZONDO, MANUELA <manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 9:46 AM
To: Sara Childers <sara.childers@fsst-nsn.gov>
Subject: [EXT] RE: [EXT] [REDACTED] and Elm Creek II Wind Repower Discussions

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I have sent Garrie Kills A Hundred an invitation to this meeting as well.

Have a good week,

Manuela Elizondo
Sr. Permitting Manager
She/her/Ms.

Cell 612.760.8506
manuela.elizondo@avangrid.com

Take care of the environment. Print only if necessary

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Sara Childers <sara.childers@fsst-nsn.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 9:43 AM

To: ELIZONDO, MANUELA

Subject: Accepted: [EXT] [REDACTED] and Elm Creek II Wind Repower Discussions

When: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 11:00 AM-12:00 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

EXTERNAL SENDER: Be cautious, especially with links and attachments. Report phishing if suspicious.

Please add Garrie Kills A Hundred to this teams meeting.

garrie.killsahundred@fsst-nsn.gov

Sara Childers

Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant
p. 605.997.3891 x1226

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

www.fsst-nsn.gov

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August 10, 2023

Contact
Agency
Address 1
City, State Zip Code

Re: Elm Creek II Repower Project in Jackson and Martin Counties, Minnesota

Dear Contact,

Elm Creek Wind II, LLC (Elm Creek II), a subsidiary of Avangrid Renewables, LLC, currently operates an existing 148.8-megawatt (MW) wind energy generation facility located in Martin and Jackson counties, Minnesota (Facility) (see attached figure). The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) issued Elm Creek II a Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) Site Permit (PUC Docket: IP6728/WS-09-553) on February 25, 2010 and amended it on March 14, 2011 (Site Permit).

Elm Creek II is proposing upgrades in order to increase the wind energy Facility efficiency, reliability, energy output, and prolong the useful life of the Facility. The proposed upgrades consist of retrofitting the facility's existing 62 wind turbines by replacing turbine equipment with new components. Ground-disturbing activities to complete these upgrades will mostly occur within areas previously disturbed during the original construction of the project. There will be no changes to the Facility boundary, turbine locations, turbine towers, meteorological towers, or collector substation.

Elm Creek II is proposing the following improvements at the Facility:

- replacing the rotors (nose cone, hub, and blades) and increasing the rotor diameter of all existing turbines from 95 meters (m) up to 120 m;
- replacing the nacelle and its interior elements (such as the gearbox, oil cooler, drive shaft, and pitch drive);
- refurbishing generators from 2.4 MW to 2.2 MW;
- reinforcing foundations, as needed;
- upgrading collector lines, as needed.

Elm Creek II retained Barr Engineering Co. to assist with the Minnesota PUC LWECS Site Permit amendment process. The purpose of this letter is to inform your organization of the Facility upgrades and LWECS Site Permit amendment. If you have comments regarding the project, please contact me at the address listed below or by email at sjohnson@barr.com. If you require further information or have questions regarding the project, please contact me at (218) 529-7119.

Copies of all correspondence received regarding the proposed Facility upgrades will be included with the Site Permit amendment application for the PUC's records. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate receiving your comments in writing by October 1, 2023.

Sincerely,

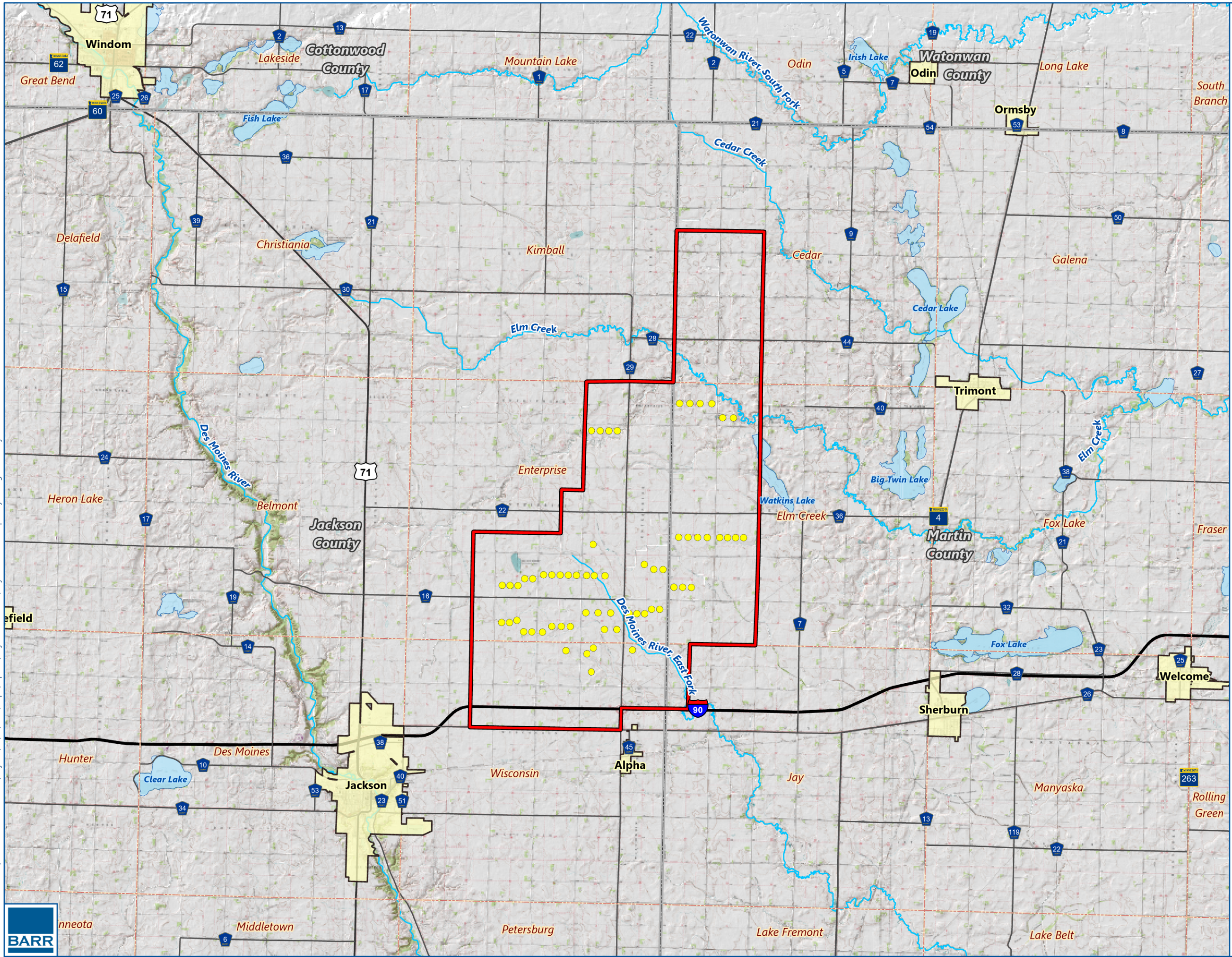
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being more prominent.

Sarah L. Johnson
Senior Environmental Specialist

cc: Manuela Elizondo, Elm Creek Wind II, LLC

Attachments: Project Location Figure

Barr Footer: ArcGISPro 3.1.1, 2023-08-09 09:13 File: I:\Projects\23\46\1050\Maps\Reports\Project Intro Letter\Project Intro Letter.aprx Layout: Figure 1 - Project Location User: kac2



-  Site Permit Boundary
-  Turbine Location
-  Watercourse
-  Waterbody
-  County Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Civil Township Boundary



PROJECT LOCATION
Elm Creek II
Martin and Jackson Counties, MN

