Formal Natural Heritage Review - Cover Page

See next page for results of review. A draft watermark means the project details have not been finalized and the results are not official.

Project Name: ITC Forks-Rost : Clone Of 2023-00566

Project Proposer: ITC Midwest

Project Type: Utilities, Transmission (electric, cable, phone)

Project Type Activities: Other

TRS: T101 R37 S1, T101 R37 S2, T101 R37 S3, T101 R37 S4, T101 R37 S5, T101 R37 S6, T101 R38 S1, T101 R38 S2, T101 R38 S3, T101 R38 S4, T101 R38 S5, T101 R38 S9 +

County(s): Jackson

DNR Admin Region(s): South

Reason Requested: PUC Site or Route Application

Project Description: The Project will include the construction of the new Forks Switching Station southwest of the City of Lakefield, Minnesota, and a new approximately 6-mile-long ...

Existing Land Uses: Agricultural

Landcover / Habitat Impacted: Agricultural

Waterbodies Affected: TBD

Groundwater Resources Affected: TBD

Previous Natural Heritage Review: No

Previous Habitat Assessments / Surveys: No

SUMMARY OF AUTOMATED RESULTS

Category	Results	Response By Category
Project Details	No Comments	No Further Review Required
Ecologically Significant Area	Comments	Local Conservation Value - Comment Protected Wetlands: Calcareous Fens
State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species	No Comments	No Further Review Required
State-Listed Species of Special Concern	No Comments	No Further Review Required
Federally Listed Species	No Records	Visit IPaC For Federal Review

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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

July 3, 2024

Project ID: MCE #2023-00566-02

Mandy Bohnenblust
Merjent, Inc.
1 Main Street SE, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55414

RE: Automated Natural Heritage Review of the proposed ITC Forks-Rost : Clone Of 2023-00566
See Cover Page for location and project details.

Dear Mandy Bohnenblust,

As requested, the above project has been reviewed for potential effects to rare features. Based on this review, the following rare features may be adversely affected by the proposed project:

Ecologically Significant Area

- The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has identified one or more Sites of Biodiversity Significance within or adjacent to the project boundary. 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. Factors taken into account during the ranking process include the number of rare species documented within the site, the quality of the native plant communities in the site, the size of the site, and the context of the site within the landscape.

  Areas with Potential Local Conservation Value - The proposed project may impact one or more areas that have local conservation value. These areas are ranked as Below in the MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance layer, and are retained in the layer as negative data. These areas do not meet the minimum biodiversity threshold for statewide significance but may have conservation value at the local level as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or as areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat.

- One or more calcareous fens have been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project. A calcareous fen is a rare and distinctive peat-accumulating wetland that is legally protected in Minnesota. Many of the unique characteristics of calcareous fens result from the upwelling of groundwater through calcareous substrates. Because of this dependence on groundwater hydrology, calcareous fens can be affected by nearby activities or even those several miles away. Calcareous fens are fragile and may be impacted by activities within the fen, activities that affect surface water flows (e.g., stormwater flow/runoff, erosion), or activities that affect groundwater hydrology (e.g., groundwater pumping, contamination, or discharge). For more information regarding calcareous

fens, please see the Calcareous Fen Fact Sheet. To minimize stormwater impacts, please refer to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's General Principles for Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control in the Minnesota Stormwater Manual. Please note that calcareous fens are "Special Waters" and a buffer zone may be required.

Depending on the distance to the calcareous fen(s), additional guidance may be provided below if you indicated that potential project activities include wetland impacts or groundwater impacts. **If you did not correctly identify wetland or groundwater impacts as part of your project, this impact analysis may be incorrect.**

State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species

No state-listed endangered or threatened species have been documented in the vicinity of the project.

State-Listed Species of Special Concern

No state-listed species of special concern have been documented in the vicinity of the project.

Federally Listed Species

The Natural Heritage Information System does not contain any records for federally listed species within one mile of the proposed project. Please note, however, that not all federally listed species are tracked within the NHIS. To ensure compliance with federal law, please conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's online Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool.

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 and the project description provided on the cover page. If project details change or construction has not occurred within one year, please resubmit the project for review before initiating project activities.

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute project approval by the Department of Natural Resources. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential impacts to these rare features. For information on the environmental review process or other natural resource concerns, you may contact your DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist.

Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

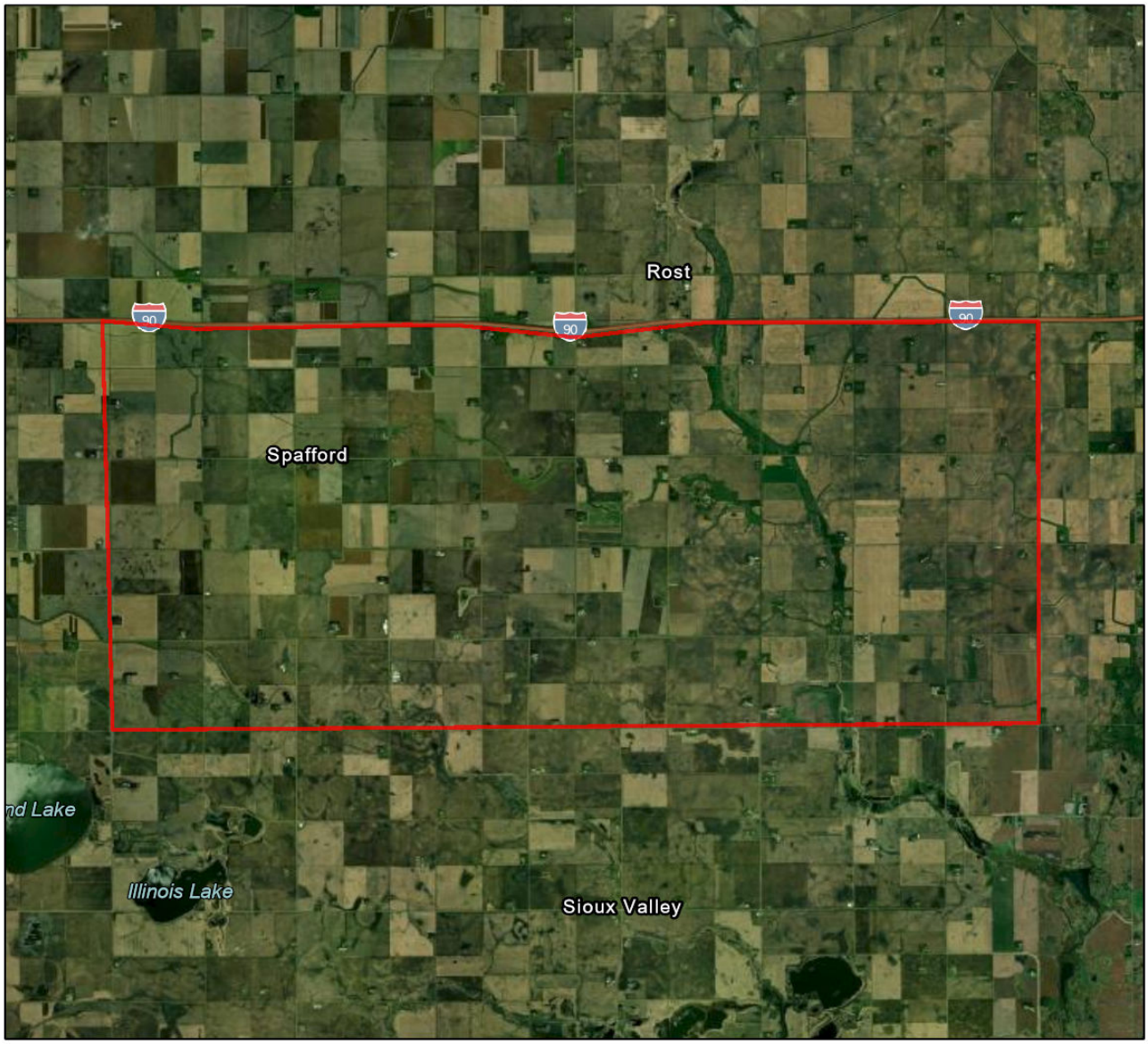
Sincerely,

Jim Drake Jim Drake
Natural Heritage Review Specialist
James.F.Drake@state.mn.us

Links: USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool
Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool
DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist Contact Info
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/ereview/erp_regioncontacts.html

ITC Forks-Rost : Clone Of 2023-00566

Aerial Imagery With Locator Map



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Miles

Project_Boundary

Project Type: Utilities, Transmission (electric, cable, phone)

Project Size (acres): 28,419.55

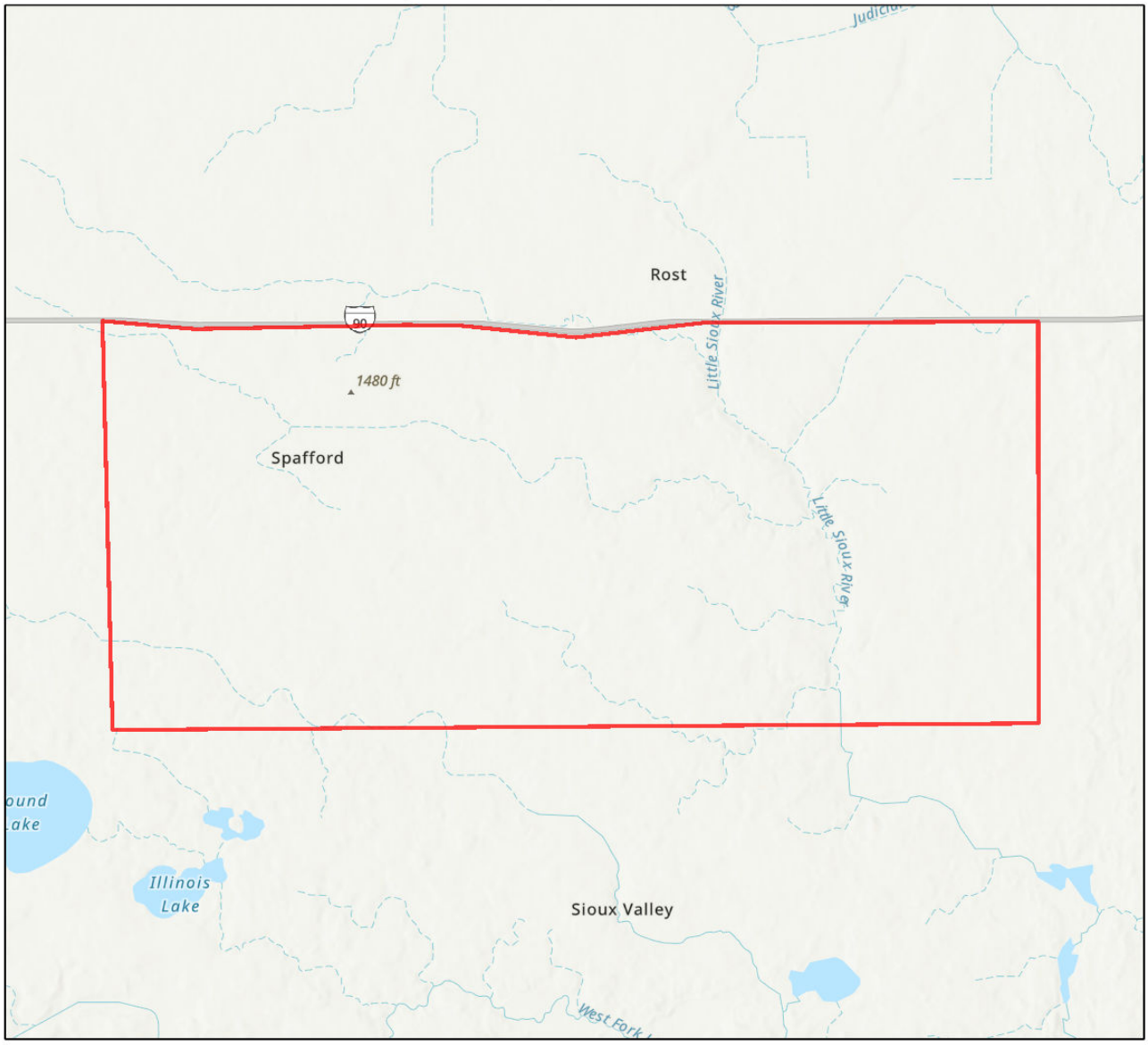
County(s): Jackson

TRS: T101 R37 S1, T101 R37 S2, T101 R37 S3, T101 R37 S4, T101 R37 S5 +

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS
Earthstar Geographics
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS,

ITC Forks-Rost : Clone Of 2023-00566

USA Topo Basemap With Locator Map



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