



Appendix H

Agency Correspondence

Boswell Solar
Project Introductory Letter Mailing List

Entity	Contact Name	Contact Title	Street Address	City State Zip	Email Address
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District	Chad Konickson	Chief, Regulatory Division	332 Minnesota Street, Suite E1500	Saint Paul, MN 55101	chad.konickson@usace.army.mil
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District	Ryan Malterud	St. Paul Branch Chief	CEMVP-RD 180 5th Street East, Suite 700	Saint Paul, MN 55101	Ryan.M.Malterud@usace.army.mil
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Dawn Marsh	Fish and Wildlife Biologist	Minnesota-Wisconsin Field Offices,	Bloomington, MN 55425	dawn_marsh@fws.gov
Federal Aviation Administration		Minnesota Flight Standards District Office	6020 28th Ave. S Ste. 201	Minneapolis, Minnesota 55450	
Minnesota Department of Agriculture	Stephan Roos	Ag Marketing & Development	625 Robert Street North	Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538	stephan.roos@state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Cynthia Warzecha	Energy Projects Reviewer	500 Lafayette Rd, PO Box 25	Saint Paul, MN 55155	cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us
Department of Administration - Minnesota State Historic	To whom it concerns	Environmental Review Program Manager	50 Sherburne Avenue, Suite 203	Saint Paul, MN 55155	sarah.beimers@state.mn.us
Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist	Amanda Gronhovd	The State Archaeologist	Office of the State Archaeologist	Saint Paul, MN 55102	Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Health	David Bell	Research Scientist	625 Robert St. N., PO Box 64975	Saint Paul, MN 55164	david.bell@state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Transportation	Stacy Kotch	Utility Transmission Route Coordinator, Database Specialist	395 John Ireland Blvd., MS 678	Saint Paul, MN 55155	Stacy.Kotch@state.mn.us
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Todd Smith	Engineer, Construction Stormwater	520 Lafayette Rd North, 4th Floor	Saint Paul, MN 55155	todd.smith@state.mn.us
Itasca County	Cory Smith	Commissioner, District 1	123 NE 4th Street	Grand Rapids, MN 55744	Cory.Smith@co.itasca.mn.us
Itasca County Environmental Services Dept	Jill Day	Environmental Services - Zoning	123 NE 4th Street	Grand Rapids, MN 55744	jill.day@co.itasca.mn.us
Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District	Andy Arens	District Manager	PO Box 990 1895 W U.S. Highway 2	Grand Rapids, MN 55744	hollyh@renvilleswcd.org
City of Cohasset	Dorie Lashomb	Senior Deputy Cler/Treasurer II	305 NW 1st Avenue	Cohasset, MN 55721	doriel@cohasset-mn.com
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council	Shannon Geschick	Executive Director	161 Saint Anthony Ave Ste 919	Saint Paul, MN 55103	shannon.geshick@state.mn.us
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Candi Fuller	Grand Rapids Service Center	1889 E Highway 2	Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3278	candi.fuller@usda.gov
Bois Forte Band (Nett Lake) of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Catherine Chavers	Chairman	5344 Lakeshore Drive	Nett Lake,MN 55772	chavers@boisforte-nsn.gov
Bois Forte Band (Nett Lake) of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Jaylen Strong	THPO	1500 Bois Forte Road	Tower,MN 55790	jaylen.strong@boisforte-nsn.gov
Leech Lake Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Faron Jackson	Chairman	190 Sailstar Drive	Cass Lake,MN 56633	faron.jackson@llojibwe.org
Leech Lake Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Gina Lemon	THPO	190 Sailstar Drive Ne	Cass Lake,MN 56633	gina.lemon@llojibwe.net
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (The Mille Lacs Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe)	Melanie Benjamin	Chief Executive	43408 Oodena Drive	Onamia,MN 56359	melanie.benjamin@millelacsband.com
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (The Mille Lacs Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe)	Mike Wilson	Tribal Preservation Officer	43408 Oodena Drive	Onamia,MN 56359	mike.wilson@millelacsband.com
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Catherine Chavers	President	15542 State 371 NW	Cass Lake,MN 56633	gfrazier@mnchippewatribe.org
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Rob Hull	THPO (Grand Portage Band)	P.O. Box 482	Grand Portage,MN 55605	thpo@grandportage.com
Upper Sioux Community, Minnesota	Kevin Jensvold	Chairman	5722 Travers Lane	Granite Falls,MN 56241	kevinj@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov
Upper Sioux Community, Minnesota	Samantha Odegard	THPO	P.O. Box 147, 5722 Travers Lane	Granite Falls,MN 56241	samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-
White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa	Jaime Arsenault	THPO and NAGPRA Representative	PO Box 418	White Earth,MN 56591	jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov
White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa	Michael Fairbanks	Chairman	5500 Eagle View Road	White Earth,MN 56591	michael.fairbanks@whiteearth-nsn.gov
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Nancy Schuldt	Water Projects Corrdinator	1720 Big Lake Road	Cloquet, MN 55720	nancyschuldt@fdlr ez.com
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Richard Gitar	Water Regulatory Specialist	1720 Big Lake Road	Cloquet, MN 55720	richardgitar@fdlrez .com
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Evan Schroeder	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	1720 Big Lake Road	Cloquet, MN 55720	evanschroeder@fdl rez.com
Lower Sioux Indian Community of Minnesota	Deb Dirlam	Director, Environmental Program	P.O. Box 308, 39527 Res. Hwy 1	Morton, MN 56270	deb.dirlam@lowersioux.com
Lower Sioux Indian Community of Minnesota	Kevin O'Keefe	Environmental Technician	P.O. Box 308, 39527 Res. Hwy 1	Morton, MN 56270	kevin.okeefe@lowersioux.com
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Ferin Davis Anderson	Environmental Sciences Supervisor	2330 Sioux Trail NW	Prior Lake, MN 55372	ferin.davis@shakope edakota.org
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Scott Walz	Director of Natural Resources	2330 Sioux Trail NW	Prior Lake, MN 55372	scott.walz@shakop eedakota.org
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	Leonard Wabasha	Director of Cultural Resources	2330 Sioux Trail NW	Prior Lake, MN 55372	leonard.wabasha @shakopeedakota .org
Paririe Island Indian Community	Noah White III	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	5636 Sturgeon Lake Road	Prior Lake, MN 55372	noah.white@piic.org
Red Lake Band of Chippewa	Shane Bowe	Director Water Resources Program	15761 High School Drive, P. O. Box 279	Red Lake, MN 56671	sbowe@redlakenat ion.org
Red Lake Band of Chippewa	Kade Ferris	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	15761 High School Drive, P. O. Box 279	Red Lake, MN 56671	kade.ferris@redlak enation.org

EXAMPLE LETTER

July 23, 2024

Kevin Jensvold
Chairman
Upper Sioux Community, Minnesota
5722 Travers Lane
Granite Falls, MN 56241

Re: Boswell Solar Project in Itasca County, Minnesota

Dear Kevin Jensvold:

Minnesota Power is proposing to build an 85-megawatt (MW) AC utility scale solar project referred to as the Boswell Solar Project (Project). The Project will be west of the town of Cohasset in Itasca County, Minnesota (refer to attached figure). This letter is to provide you with Project information and request your early input.

Project Information

- **Project Design:** The Project will involve single-axis tracking PV arrays installed on driven piles or helical screws, inverters, trenched electrical cables, a project substation, temporary laydown areas, security fencing, and gravel access roads.
- **Gen-tie Line:** The Project requires a 230-kilovolt transmission line (gen-tie line) to deliver energy to the point of interconnection at the existing Boswell Energy Center. The gen-tie line will be greater than 1,500 feet but less than 5 miles in length.
- **Project Timeline:** The Project is currently in the early design phase and field and desktop-based studies are underway with an anticipated in-service date of fall 2027.
- **Sustainable Energy Generation:** The Project's 85 MWs of renewable, solar-generated electricity will contribute to Minnesota's renewable energy goals. Investing in solar energy is a significant step towards sustainable development, domestic energy security, and preserving natural resources for future generations.

Request for early input

The Project meets the definition of a large electric generating plant and is subject to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) siting authority (Minnesota Statute 216E.03 and Minnesota Rule 7850.1200). Additionally, the gen-tie line meets the definition of a high voltage transmission line and



AN ALLETE COMPANY

requires a Route Permit from the PUC (Minnesota Statute 216E.03). Accordingly, Minnesota Power intends to submit the Site and Route Permit to the PUC as a joint proceeding under the alternative review process (Minnesota Statute 216E.04, Minnesota Rule 7850.1600, and Minnesota Rule 7850.2800). The purpose of this letter is to inform your organization of the Project and anticipated PUC application submittal in 2024. Copies of all correspondence received will be included with the application for the PUC's records. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate receiving your comments in writing by August 22, 2024.

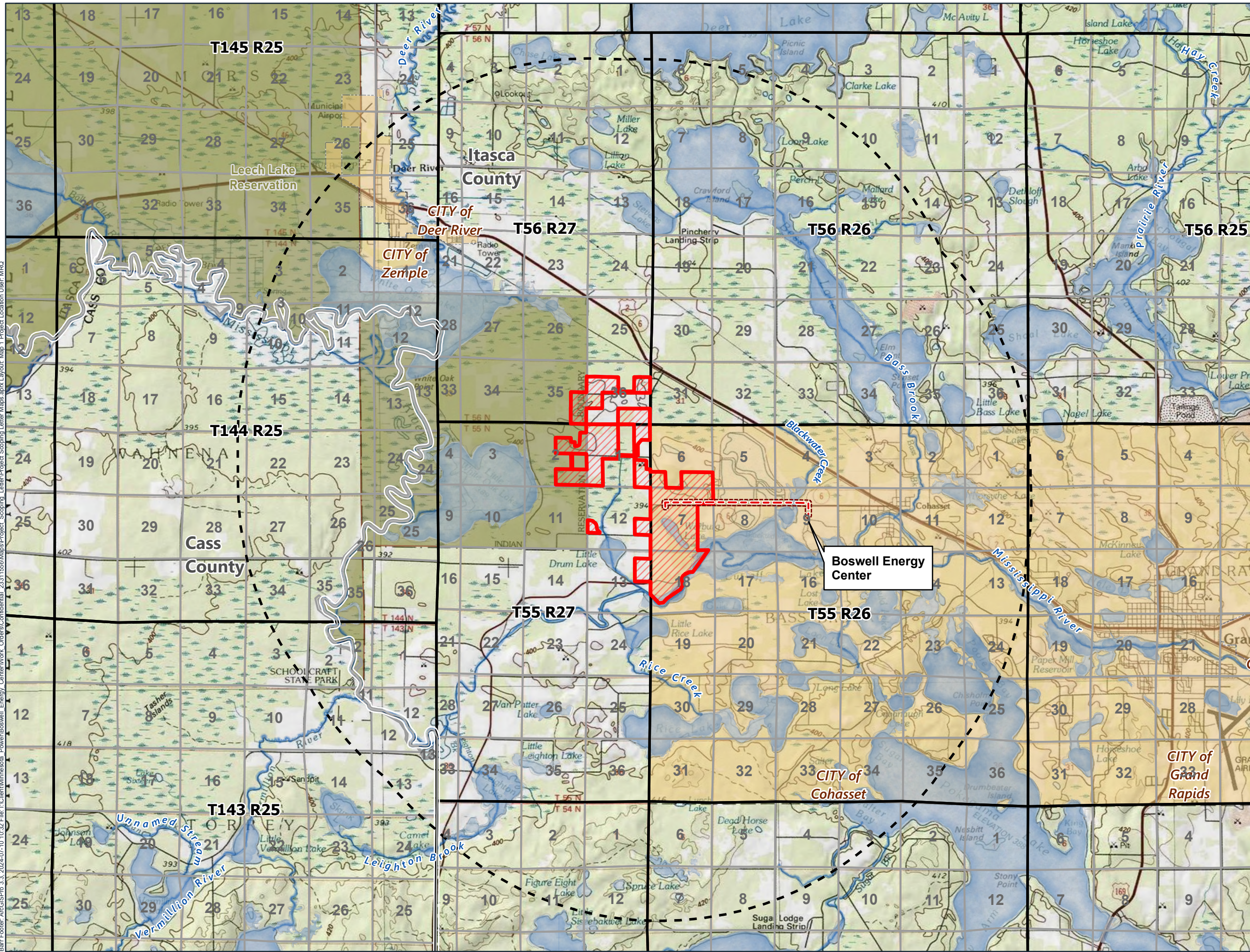
At Minnesota Power, we value your local perspective and would like to include your input as we move forward with this Project. If you have comments, please contact me at djanke@mnpower.com or 218-355-3569.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

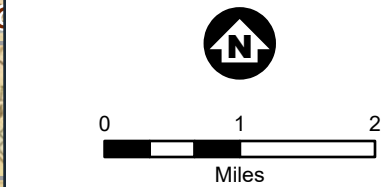
Drew Janke
Environmental Compliance Specialist II
Minnesota Power

Attachment: Project Location figure

Barr Footer ArcGIS Pro 3.3, 2024-07-10 10:32 File: I:\Client\Minnesota Power\Boswell Energy Center\Work Orders\Confidential 23011558\Map\Project Scoping Letter\Map.aprx Layout: Map 1 Project Location User: MRQ



- Potential Development Area
- Gen-Tie Line
- Route Width
- 5 Mile Project Area Radius
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Native American Reservation
- Public Land Survey Section
- Public Land Survey Townships
- Public Watercourses**
- Public Water Watercourse
- Public Waters Basins



PROJECT LOCATION
Site Permit Application
Minnesota Power

Map 1

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Docket No. E015/GS-24-425
Docket No. E015/TL-24-426



Agency Responses

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Division of Ecological & Water Resources

Region 2 (Northeast Region)

1201 Highway 2

Grand Rapids, MN 55744

August, 29 2024

Drew Janke

30 West Superior Street

Duluth, MN 55802

Subject: DNR Early Coordination Comments for the **Boswell Solar Project in Itasca County, MN.**

Mr. Janke,

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) has conducted a review of the **materials provided regarding the Boswell Solar Project**, a proposed 85-megawatt solar facility, located on approximately 1,800+ acres of agricultural, forest, and riparian lands in Itasca County. In addition to the solar facility, a 230KV transmission line is proposed to be built to tie into the Boswell Energy Center and connect to the power grid. The Boswell Solar project is proposed within the Laurentian mixed forest province, on a matrix of mixed forest types and wetlands. This is an area that hosts a diverse and rich array of natural resources, and is included in the [Northern Minnesota Drift & Lake Plains](#), and the planning area for the [Upper Mississippi- Headwaters One Watershed One Plan, planning area](#). We appreciate the opportunity to review this project and encourage project proposers to continue their coordination, especially early in the project planning process with MN DNR and other regulatory agencies and local governments. We appreciate your proactive efforts to protect natural resources. Please see MN DNR comments below.

General Solar Information and Resources

Please refer to the MN [DNR Commercial Siting Guidance](#) for a broad overview of MN DNR recommendations. The [Minnesota Geospatial Commons](#) website is a great resource for natural resource and other spatial data (shapefiles & geodatabases) that can be accessed by the public. Note that non-public shapefiles including some Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) data are not available on this website.

Water Resources

There are several important water resources within and near the project area including a stretch of sensitive shoreland along the south end of the project adjacent to and along the shorelines of the Mississippi River.

Additionally, the project lies within a complex of diverse wetland types and uplands.

Wetlands provide many benefits such as erosion control, flood control, groundwater recharge, recreation, and rare species habitat. It is estimated that Minnesota has lost about 50 percent of its original wetland acreage. The practice of surrounding natural wetlands with solar panels is not recommended as it may deter wildlife use of the wetland. For example, some species will avoid the wetlands due to the structures, glare, vehicular traffic, and human disturbance. MN DNR also advises against placing solar panels or access roads within farmed wetlands. Even when drained, hydric soils tend to become wetter after agricultural production ceases. Construction in farmed wetlands can result in soil compaction, rutting, construction delays, increased costs of pumping, stuck machinery, and complaints about mud on roads. During operations, areas with hydric soils can flood or pond, thereby limiting access to facilities and hindering maintenance.

The [Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act \(WCA\)](#) regulates wetland draining and filling and essentially covers all wetlands not listed as public waters. The definition of “fill” under the WCA generally excludes posts and pilings or structures traditionally built on pilings. However, posts and pilings are regulated as fill if they bring the wetland into a nonaquatic use or have the effect of significantly altering the wetland’s function and value. To the extent that solar panels constructed on posts or pilings in a wetland will adversely affect wetland vegetation through shading or maintenance needs or impact wildlife, particularly bird use of wetlands, solar installations may be regulated under the WCA. As a regulated activity, such projects would be required to demonstrate that wetland impacts have been avoided and minimized to the extent practicable and to compensate for any unavoidable impacts by restoring or creating other wetlands or by purchasing banked wetland mitigation credits. Be advised that the LGU must deny a replacement plan for any impacts when a rare natural community is present. There is potential for rare natural communities in this location due to the native plant communities present and may require additional review.

Additionally, Blackwater Lake is a lake of outstanding biological significance, and precautions should be taken to reduce impacts to the lake and its source features. Careful planning to avoid disruptions to surface flow and groundwater movement should be taken.

Vegetation and Soil Management

The project proposer is required to develop a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to establish and manage native vegetation within the solar facility per the [Guidance for Develop a Vegetation Establishment and Management Plan for Solar Facilities](#). MN DNR typically reviews and comments on the project's Vegetation Establishment and Management Plan, we appreciate your coordination on the development of this plan.

In some cases, subsurface drainage networks have been observed to fail over time with a change of land use, contributing to construction and operational issues. We urge you to plan carefully to avoid complications due to soil types and drainage issues. Given the complex nature of the site, this is especially important.

Seed mixes should be matched to the soil conditions. MN DNR recommends using Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BSWR) native seed mixes for revegetation of disturbed ground. See the [BSWR website for more information on seed mixes](#). In addition, invasive species introduction can be detrimental to the plant communities and ecosystems in the area. Prevention and control of invasive species is highly encouraged and required for certain species. To reduce the potential entanglement of small animals, project erosion control materials should follow the [Minnesota Department of Transportation 2020 Standard Specifications for Construction](#) for rolled erosion control materials that use only natural fibers with no plastic materials.

Wildlife Habitat and Rare Species

The project area is surrounded by a matrix of floodplain, forested ecotypes, wetlands, and open landscape. Rivers and the associated riparian corridors are important to local wildlife movements across the landscape. In addition, rivers are attractive paths for migrating birds. We recommend practices and construction timing that minimize impacts to wildlife habitat spatially and temporally, especially for nesting birds and brood rearing habitat. Flight diverters can be helpful along transmission lines to reduce injury and mortality to bird species. While we typically recommend the large swan type diverter, there are several other options on the market that could be effective. If you would like to learn more, please contact Northeast Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist Jessica Parson at (Jessica.Parson@state.mn.us).

The project falls within the globally recognized [Chippewa Plains Important Bird Area \(IBA\)](#) includes the entire Chippewa National Forest as well as Lake Pokegama to the east and portions of Blackduck State Forest to the northwest. This IBA is rich with bird diversity with 244 species documented including 22 species of breeding warblers, large concentrations of migrating waterfowl, and a variety of nesting waterbirds such as the Common Loon, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Common Tern, and

Caspian Tern. Implementing design and construction timing to avoid impacts to bird species is highly recommended.

White-tailed deer are prevalent in the immediate area and across the project site. If fencing is planned to keep deer out of the arrays, MN DNR standards for deer exclusion fences is 10 feet high. MN DNR recommends following the guidelines outlined in the [Woven Wire Deer Exclusion Fence Handbook](#). It is important to utilize an effective exclusion fence to reduce the chance of deer becoming trapped inside the fence. We would not allow shooting permits to remove deer that get inside, so there should be plans in the case a deer gets inside the fence. For example, an egress gate in a direction that would funnel the animal away from roads, ideally on an outward facing corner, which would make it easier to encourage them to follow a fence line out. Fences need regular inspections and maintenance to keep them deer proof. The fences/gates can sag, posts can heave from frost which can leave gaps on the bottom, trees fall on them, etc. We recommend a regular inspection/maintenance schedule to ensure the fence is still deer proof. MN DNR recommends at least one annual routine inspection and additional inspections after storm events that result in blown down trees. We appreciate your initiating a Natural Heritage (NH) review for your project early in the planning process. It appears that the project was submitted at two different times with different boundaries. The most recent was submitted August 6, 2024, and appears to be the most up to date project boundary. Please confirm that this is correct. Additionally, please follow the recommendations outlined in the NH letter.

State Lands and Minerals

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources serves as a trustee for the administration and management of [school trust fund lands](#) and for the underlying (or stockpiled) state-owned mineral interests, predominately for the school, university and tax forfeit trusts. Mineral revenues for these three funds benefit state K-12 public education, the state university system, and local communities. Within the project area, it appears that the state does not own the surface over the project area but does appear to own the minerals under many of the parcels, and those minerals are school trust or indemnity school trust. This may be something to be aware of as project plans are underway.

Any approved crossings of state lands or public waters will require a MN [DNR Utility Crossing License](#). Please contact Lands and Minerals Realty Specialist, Angela Means (Angela.Means@state.mn.us) if you have questions. It appears likely that access to the project areas could be achieved from the county roads, however there is a possibility that Forestry administered lands adjacent to the proposed project could of interest as far as potential access needs. Please let us know if this needs further discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the **Boswell Solar Project**. Please contact Jessica Parson with any questions, who can be reached at (218) 328-8826 or via email at: Jessica.Parson@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Parson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Parson, Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist

Email: Jessica.Parson@state.mn.us

Phone: (218) 328-8826

cc:

Shelly Patten, Regional Director

Becky Horton, Project Manager

Lisa Joyal, Endangered Species Review Coordinator

Joe Rokala, Lands and Minerals Program Director



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: Boswell Solar Project

Project Proposer: Minnesota Power

Project Type: Power, Solar

Project Type Activities: Tree Removal

TRS: T55 R26 S18, T55 R26 S5, T55 R26 S6, T55 R26 S7, T55 R26 S8, T55 R26 S9, T55 R27 S1, T55 R27 S12, T55 R27 S13, T55 R27 S2

County(s): Itasca

DNR Admin Region(s): Northeast

Reason Requested: PUC Site or Route Application

Project Description: The Project is an up to 85-megawatt alternating current (MWac) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generating facility, a 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line ...

Existing Land Uses: Based on the National Landcover Database, landcover within the Project consists predominantly of cultivated cropland/hay pastureland and forest, including ...

Landcover / Habitat Impacted: Land within the Site will convert from existing landcover types to solar energy infrastructure for the life of the Project.

Waterbodies Affected: Wetlands may experience temporary impacts during construction. The Gen-Tie Line will cross Blackwater Lake but no structures would be placed within the lake.

Groundwater Resources Affected: No impacts to groundwater are anticipated from the project.

Previous Natural Heritage Review: No

Previous Habitat Assessments / Surveys: No

SUMMARY OF AUTOMATED RESULTS

Category	Results	Response By Category
Project Details	Comments	Tree Removal - Recommendations
Ecologically Significant Area	Comments	MBS Sites - Recommendations Potential RNC - Will Require Consultation NPCs - Recommendations Lakes - Recommendations
State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species	No Comments	No Further Review Required
State-Listed Species of Special Concern	Comments	Recommendations
Federally Listed Species	No Records	Visit IPaC For Federal Review



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

August 6, 2024

Project ID: MCE #2024-00660

Jessica Butler
Barr Engineering Company
4300 MarketPointe Drive, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55435

RE: Automated Natural Heritage Review of the proposed Boswell Solar Project
See Cover Page for location and project details.

Dear Jessica Butler,

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:

Project Type and/or Project Type Activity Comments

- The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) tracks bat roost trees and hibernacula plus some acoustic data, but this information is not exhaustive. Even if there are no bat records listed below, all of Minnesota's bats, including the federally endangered northern long-eared bat ([*Myotis septentrionalis*](#)), can be found throughout Minnesota. During the active season (approximately April-November) bats roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Tree removal can negatively impact bats by destroying roosting habitat, especially during the pup rearing season when females are forming maternity roosting colonies and the pups cannot yet fly. To minimize these impacts, the DNR recommends that tree removal be avoided from June 1 through August 15.

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.

High or Moderate MBS Site - One or more MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked High or Moderate may be impacted by the proposed project. Sites ranked as High contain very good quality occurrences of the rarest species, high quality examples of the rare native plant communities, and/or important functional landscapes. 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. The DNR recommends that the project be designed to avoid impacts to these ecologically significant areas. Actions to avoid or minimize disturbance include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:

- Retain a buffer between proposed activities and the MBS Site,
 - Minimize project footprint within the MBS Site,
 - Operate within already-disturbed areas,
 - Minimize vehicular disturbance within the MBS Site,
 - Do not park equipment or stockpile supplies within the MBS Site,
 - Do not place spoil within the MBS Site,
 - Inspect and clean equipment prior to operating within the MBS Site, and follow other recommendations to [prevent the spread of invasive species](#),
 - Conduct the work under frozen ground conditions,
 - Use effective erosion prevention and sediment control measures,
 - Revegetate disturbed soil with native [seed mixes](#) suitable to the local habitat as soon after construction as possible,
 - Use only weed-free mulches, topsoils, and seed mixes.
- One or more DNR Native Plant Communities have been identified within or adjacent to the proposed project (for a list of all the native plant community types, please run a Conservation Planning Report; spatial data can be viewed on the Explore Page). DNR Native Plant Community types and subtypes are given a [Conservation Status Rank](#) that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant).

Rare Native Plant Communities - One or more rare native plant communities may be impacted by the proposed project. Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 are considered rare in the state, and the DNR recommends avoidance of these ecologically significant areas. In addition, please note that native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 may qualify as Rare Natural Communities (RNC) under the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). If the proposed project includes a wetland replacement plan under WCA, please contact your [DNR Regional Ecologist](#) for further evaluation. Please visit [WCA Program Guidance and Information](#) for additional information, including the [Rare Natural Communities Technical Guidance](#).

Not Rare - One or more native plant communities with Conservation Status Ranks of S4 to S5 may be impacted by the proposed project.

- One or more Lakes of Biological Significance may be impacted by the proposed project. [Lakes of Biological Significance](#) are high quality lakes based on the aquatic plant, fish, bird, or amphibian communities present within the lake. To be included in this layer, a lake only needs to meet the criteria for one of these four community types. The lake is assigned a biological significance of Outstanding, High, or Moderate based on the community with the highest quality. Given the ecological significance of these lakes, disturbance should be minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance activities. Actions to avoid or minimize disturbance include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:
 - Avoid the removal of shoreline vegetation,
 - Implement stringent/redundant erosion prevention and sediment control practices,
 - Prevent the spread of invasive species,

- Use only herbicides approved for application within shoreline/riparian areas,
- Minimize use of fertilizer.

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

Taxonomic Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Water Regime	Habitat	Federal Status
Vascular Plant	Small Green Wood Orchid	Platanthera clavellata	wetland	Forested Rich Peatland, Forested Acid Peatland	
Vertebrate Animal	Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		Cliff	

- The above table identifies state-listed species of special concern that have been documented in the vicinity of your project. If suitable habitat for any of these species occurs within your project footprint or activity impact area, the project may negatively impact those species. To avoid impacting state-listed species of special concern, the DNR recommends modifying the location of project activities to avoid suitable habitat or modifying the timing of project activities to avoid the presence of the species. Please visit the [DNR Rare Species Guide](#) for more information on the habitat use of these species and recommended measures to avoid or minimize impacts. Species-specific comments, if any, appear below.

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.

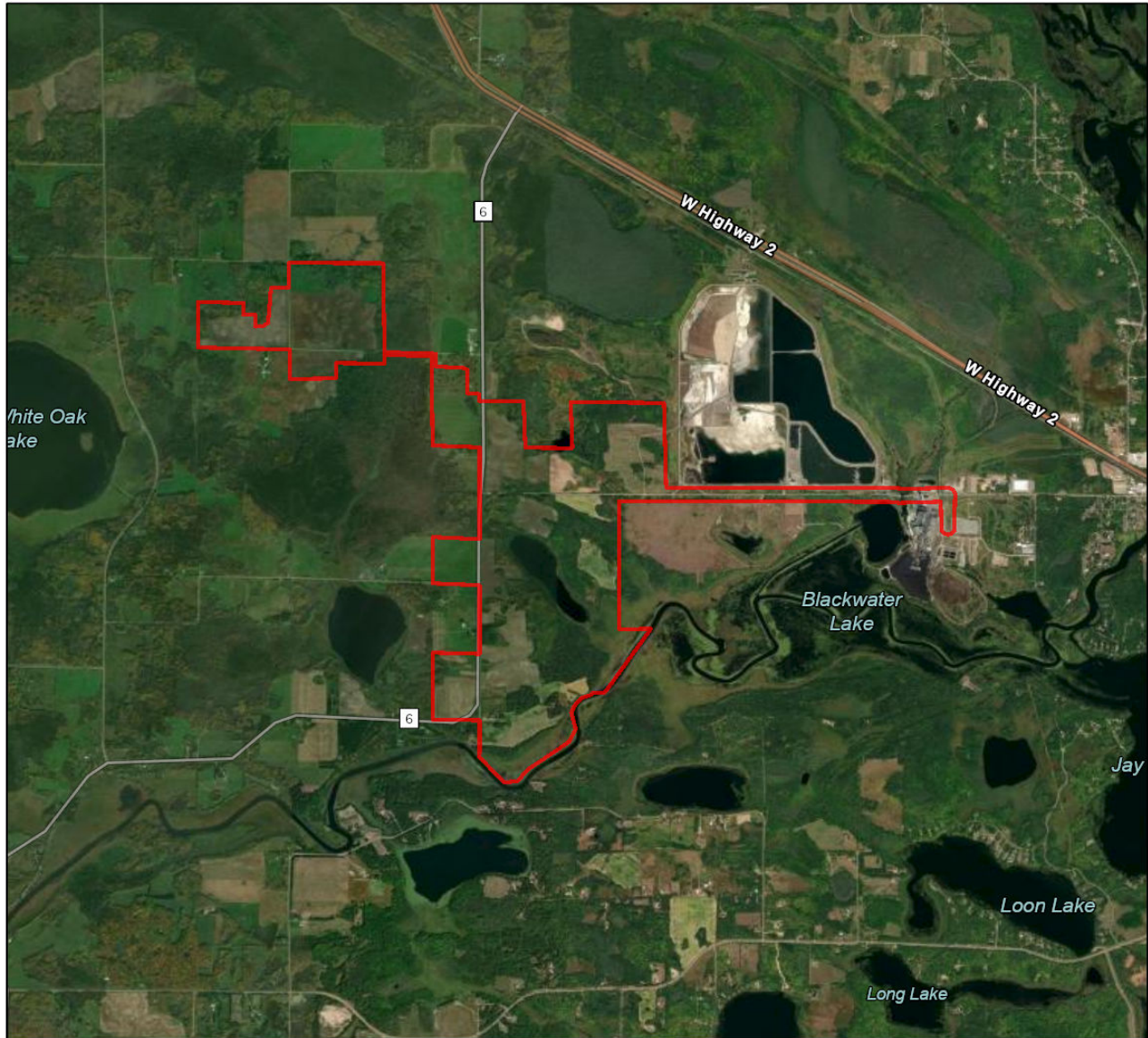
Sincerely,

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

Boswell Solar Project

Aerial Imagery With Locator Map



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 Miles

Project_Boundary

Project Type: Power, Solar

Project Size (acres): 1,430.47

County(s): Itasca

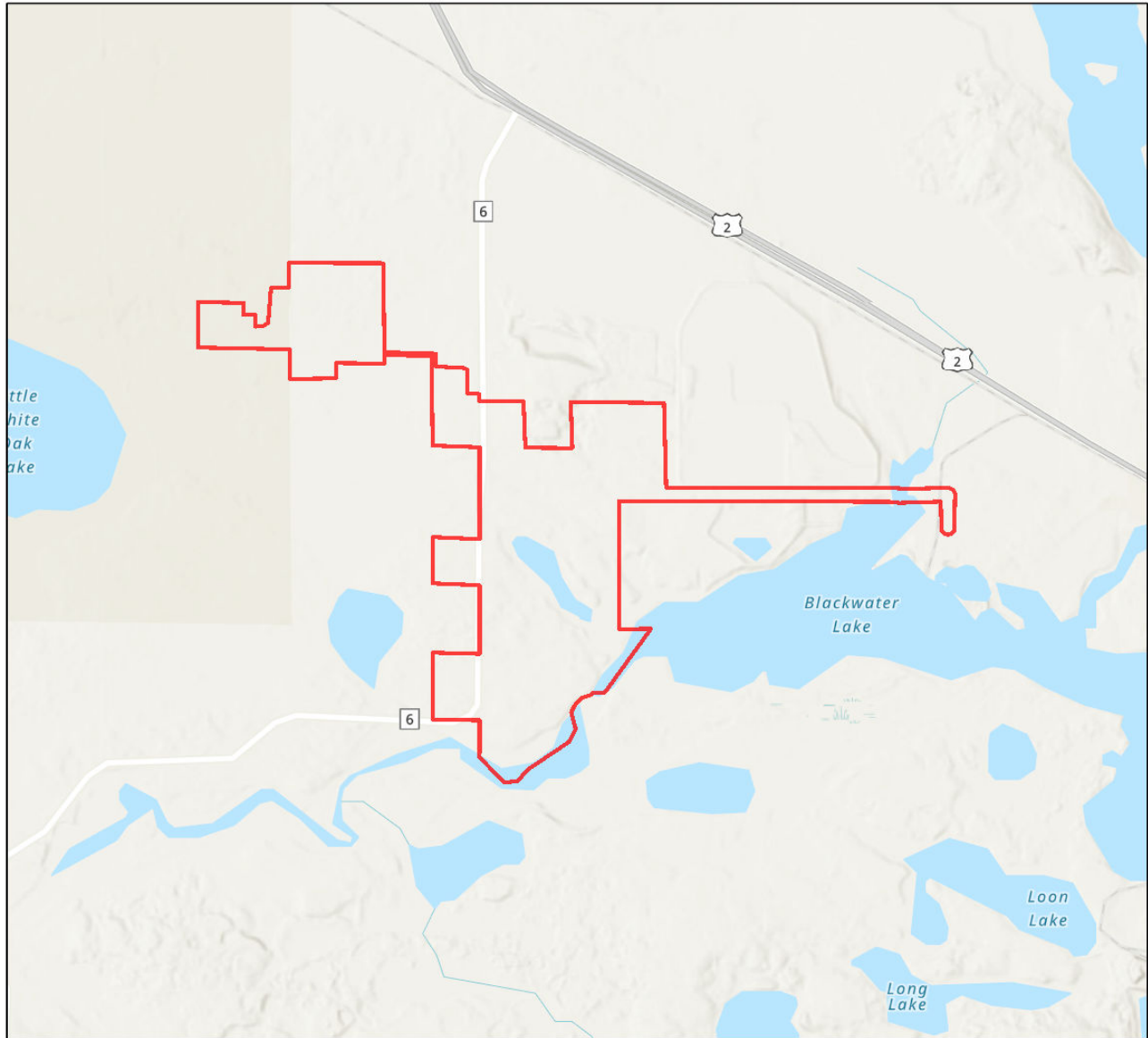
TRS: T55 R26 S18, T55 R26 S5, T55 R26 S6, T55 R26 S7, T55 R26 S8 +

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



Boswell Solar Project

USA Topo Basemap With Locator Map



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 Miles

Project_Boundary

Project Type: Power, Solar

Project Size (acres): 1,430.47

County(s): Itasca

TRS: T55 R26 S18, T55 R26 S5, T55 R26 S6, T55 R26 S7, T55 R26 S8 +

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





Agency Responses

Minnesota Department of Transportation

From: [Kotch Egstad, Stacy \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Drew Janke \(MP\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL MAIL] Boswell Solar Project
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 10:39:10 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

You don't often get email from stacy.kotch@state.mn.us. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Do not click links, download attachments, or reply with personal information unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Drew,

MnDOT is in receipt of your early review request letter, dated July 23rd, 2024, for the above-mentioned project.

The proposed project may impact State Trunk Highway (TH) 6. Specific project impacts to TH 6 are unknown. To provide useful input, MnDOT requires specific information that has not yet been made available.

MnDOT invites MN Power to host a project introduction meeting to discuss the following:

1. Scope of work
2. Project timeline
3. Available
 - a. GIS/Non-GIS mapping (shapefiles/.kmz files)
 - b. facility layout (more specific than Project Location Map)
 - c. Gen-Tie/collection line location(s)
4. Anticipated effects on the state trunk highway system
5. Other state/federal agency coordination to-date
6. An overview of MnDOT's early coordination expectations (Utility Early Notification Memo process) – by MnDOT staff

Please see the link in my signature below, specifically the MnDOT Utility Project Guidance for Large Energy Facility Project Proposals document, for insight on MnDOT's expected coordination for your project proposal.

Please view the current MnDOT construction projects website at

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/construction/index.html> and click on the district where your project is located (Central Minnesota – D3). Also, MnDOT's 10-Year Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP) may be useful for project planning purposes:

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/10yearplan/district-chip.html>

MnDOT maps ([Right of Way Mapping and Monitoring - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)) for the (perceived) affected portions of TH 6 are:

[Map # 180-7B](#) and [Map # 179-18B](#)

If the offer to host a meeting is of interest to you, please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Stacy Kotch Egstad

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

Minnesota Department of Transportation

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

651-358-0786

[Large Energy Facility Project Guidance - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](#)





Agency Responses

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe



LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Gina M. Lemon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Anita M. Cloud, Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant

September 25, 2024

VIA INTERNET

Drew Janke, Environmental Compliance Specialist II
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Re: **MN Power – Boswell Solar Project**
Section 35, T.56N., R.27W.; 5th P.M.
Section 2, T.55N., R.27W.; 5th P.M.
Leech Lake Reservation – Itasca County, Minnesota
LL-THPO Number: 2024-122

Dear Mr. Janke:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above-referenced project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer by the Leech Lake Tribal Council Resolution 96-03 Cultural Resources Protection Ordinance, 78-2 Burial Grounds and Artifacts Ordinance, and the Resolution to appoint the Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

This project has also been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992, and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

Under federal law, this project was reviewed with regard to historic properties. The project Area of Potential Effect located within Leech Lake Reservation has a high probability for the presence of previously unidentified properties; therefore, I am in concurrence with the Tribal Archaeologist that an archaeological Phase I survey is required before any activities take place at each bore location (see attached map). Survey work must be done by a qualified archaeologist(s) according to the requirements of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation.

Before any archaeological survey work begins, please contact Colleen Wells, Tribal Archaeologist/Heritage Sites Program Director at (218) 335-3737 or email at colleen.wells@llojibwe.net, to discuss the arrangements for survey; or face penalties including and not limited to the above listed tribal ordinances and federal laws.

Page 1 of 3

Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Office – Established in 1996

190 Sailstar Drive NE * Cass Lake, MN 56633

Phone: 218-335-2940

gina.lemon@llojibwe.net



LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Gina M. Lemon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Anita M. Cloud, Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant

LL-THPO Number: 2024-122

Any other archaeologist or archaeological firm will need a permit for this or any project within the exterior boundaries of the reservation before any archaeological activities occur. Archaeological permitting may be obtained from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office.

If you have any questions, please include the LL-THPO number in any correspondence, via email at gina.lemon@llojibwe.net or phone 218.335-2940.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gina M. Lemon", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Gina M. Lemon
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Diane Thompson, LLBO DRM Land Use Administrator
Kenneth Fox, LLBO DRM Division Director
Colleen Wells, MS, LLBO Heritage Sites Program Director/Tribal Archaeologist

A map follows this letter:

Page 2 of 3

Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Office – Established in 1996

190 Sailstar Drive NE * Cass Lake, MN 56633

Phone: 218-335-2940

gina.lemon@llojibwe.net

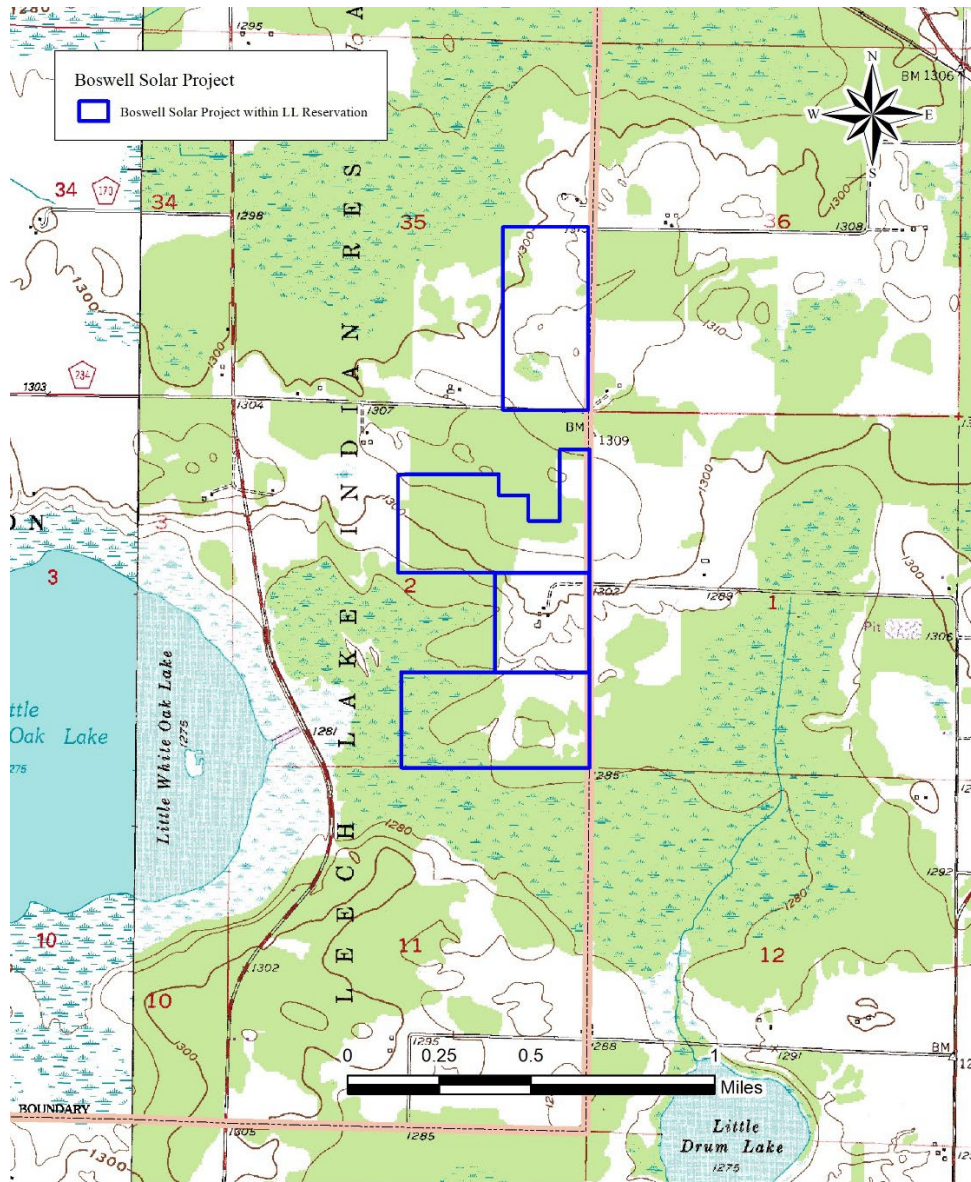


LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Gina M. Lemon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Anita M. Cloud, Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant

Map provided by C. Wells, LLHSP Director/Archaeologist - LL-THPO Number: 2024-122



Location of the portion of the Boswell Solar Project within LL Reservation boundaries. Shown on the Cohasset West, Minnesota 7.5' USGS Quadrangle. T56N R27W Section 35 and T55N R27W Section 2. Itasca County.

Survey recommended. CW



Agency Responses

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Department of Natural Resources



MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Re: Boswell Solar Project in Itasca County, Minnesota

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (38CFR800).

The Mille Lacs Band THPO department has reviewed the project. At this time the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe does wish to be in consultation on said project. Please proceed with caution.

Please note: The above determination does not exempt future projects from Section 106 review. In the event any other tribe notifying us of concerns for a specific project, we may re-enter into the consultation process.

You may contact our Office (320) 532-7450 Cell (320)364-0058 if you have questions regarding our review of these projects. Please refer to the MLB-THPO Number as stated above in all correspondence with these projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, likely belonging to the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Mille lacs Band of Ojibwe

43408 Oodena Drive

Onamia MN 56359

DISTRICT I

43408 Oodena Drive • Onamia, MN 56359
(320) 532-7439 • Fax (320) 532-7514

DISTRICT III

45749 Grace Lake Road • Sandstone, MN 55072
(218) 768-3311 • Fax (320) 384-6190

DISTRICT II

36666 State Highway 65 • McGregor, MN 55760
(320) 384-6240 • Fax (218) 768-3903

URBAN OFFICE

1404 E. Franklin Avenue • Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 872-1424 • Fax (612) 872-1424

Appendix H

Page 28 of 30

Docket No. E015/GS-24-425

Docket No. E015/TL-24-426



Agency Responses

United States Army Corps of Engineers

From: [Kelly, Sean R CIV USARMY CEMVP \(USA\)](#)
To: [Drew Janke \(MP\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL MAIL] Boswell Project
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 8:52:36 AM
Attachments: [Minnesota Power Project.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from sean.r.kelly@usace.army.mil. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi Drew,

I just wanted to reach out and see if we can have a pre-application meeting for this project. I am wondering if we can just go over the project as a whole and maybe get into a few details that may be known at this point.

Thank you,

Sean

Sean Kelly

Lead Project Manager

US Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District

Brainerd Field Office

10867 East Gull Lake Drive

Brainerd, MN 56401

Office: 651-290-5769

Cell: 651-564-5680