

From: [Melissa Schmit](#)
To: [Roos, Stephan \(MDA\)](#)
Subject: Elk Creek Solar AIMP
Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2019 12:02:00 PM
Attachments: [Elk Creek Solar AIMP Final track changes 09102019.docx](#)
[ElkCreekSolar AIMP 09102019 FINAL.pdf](#)

Hi Steve,

Thank you for your review and comments on the Elk Creek Solar AIMP. Your suggested edits have been incorporated and I have attached a redline version of the document. Also attached is the final PDF that includes appendices which will be included in our application to the MN PUC.

Thank you,

From: [Kotch Egstad, Stacy \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Melissa Schmit](#)
Subject: RE: Geronimo Energy - Regal, Royal and Elk Creek Solar
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2019 11:45:36 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Melissa,

Early review of the above-mentioned solar projects shows the following comments/concerns:

1. Access will need to be from county and township roads – no direct access will be allowed from US 10
2. Screens (tree plantings) are requested by District staff to block potential glare from traveling motorists
3. Roadside Vegetation Management will need to review permit applications due to the presence of mesic prairie along SW portions of US 10 within the project area(s)
4. Permit applications and instructions are located here:
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/index.html> - keeping in mind that you may need more than one type of permit from MnDOT
5. MnDOT views solar generating projects as it would any other private commercial venture and does not consider a solar generating project to be a public utility for transportation purposes and therefore, any MnDOT land that these projects may wish to occupy would need to be leased (in the areas where a lease is feasible)
6. Any associated electric cable/feeder lines that run **along** a trunk highway right of way would need to be permitted through a municipal, cooperative or investor-owned electric service provider

Elk Creek Solar looks to not have proximity to a state trunk highway. Only concerns about OSOW permitting apply to this project. Please advise if I am incorrect about this information.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide early feedback on these projects. Please contact me with any questions.

Stacy Kotch Egstad

Utility Routing and Siting Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Office of Land Management
651-366-4635



From: Melissa Schmit [mailto:melissa@geronimoenergy.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 11:13 AM

To: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Subject: Geronimo Energy - Regal, Royal and Elk Creek Solar

Hi Stacy,

Thank you for the call today. As we discussed, I have attached project notification letters and associated maps for Regal Solar, Royal Solar, and Elk Creek Solar for you to provide to the district office(s) for review and comment.

As I mentioned I will be the point of contact for these projects – please feel free to reach out with any questions. I look forward to our continued coordination!

Thank you,

Melissa Schmit

Permitting Manager

7650 Edinborough Way, Suite 725

Edina, MN 55435

Main: 952.988.9000

Direct: 612.259.3095

[Geronimo Energy](#)



From: [Eric Hartman](#)
To: [Melissa Schmit](#)
Subject: Elk Creek Solar Project
Date: Wednesday, May 22, 2019 3:24:13 PM

Hello, Melissa:

Our office is in receipt of your firms letter requesting comments on the Elk Creek Solar farm in Rock County, Minnesota, which was received on May 8th, 2019.

This is the first solar array our County is involved with, so I will attempt to address some key points and questions regarding this project.

1. Will there be some type of “development agreement” utilized between Geronimo Energy and Rock County? This type of agreement was utilized in the Prairie Rose Wind Project.
2. E-911 addresses will be required for this project, particularly for permanent structures such as O & M building, transformer substations, etc.
3. Conditional Use Permits and hearings be required for staging areas/laydown yards.
4. Land Use Permits will be required for permanent structures such as O & M building, substations, possibly the weather stations, etc.
5. Access approaches for access roads coming off the County roads are subject to the authority of the Rock County Highway Department. Those access approaches off township roads are subject to the applicable township boards in Vienna and Magnolia townships.
6. Underground field drainage tile lines on those tracts of land **NOT** within the development footprint may be/will be impacted by the site development.
7. As per our conversation, a road use agreement may need to be considered in this project.

Thank you for the time to talk this afternoon on the phone.

Eric Hartman
Rock County

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gary Overgaard, District 1
Stan Williamson, District 2
Greg Burger, District 3
Sherri Thompson, District 4
Jody Reisch, District 5



June 19, 2019

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th PI E #350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Letter of Support for the Elk Creek Solar Projects in Rock County

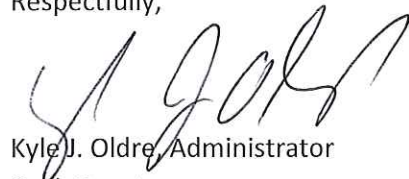
Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Rock County Board of Commissioners, we are writing to express our support for the 80 megawatt (MW) Elk Creek and 120 MW Elk Creek 2 Solar Projects, which are currently being developed by Geronimo Energy in Rock County, Minnesota. We believe the Elk Creek Solar Projects represent cost effective renewable energy generation, and we look forward to the project adding economic development to our region.

We believe these projects will bring significant economic development and will have a long-term financial benefit to the area. Once constructed, the Elk Creek Solar Projects will provide a boost in the local economy through production tax payments to Rock County and the local Township, to the local school districts through the Education Fund, and full-time jobs.

Overall, we are excited about the economic benefits of the Elk Creek Solar Projects, as well as the beneficial community impact the projects will have while providing clean renewable energy.

Respectfully,



Kyle J. Oldre, Administrator
Rock County

From: [Melissa Schmit](#)
To: [Eric Hartman](#)
Subject: RE: Elk Creek Solar Project
Date: Wednesday, July 24, 2019 3:26:15 PM
Attachments: [Geronimo_NGcompany_portrait_RGB_siglogo_6f818f61-5440-44a1-b0d4-4d220a25f043.png](#)
[linkedin_5f69119f-6c68-4b62-b53a-6c0b5186cb75.png](#)
[twitter_10d858e7-b6a8-4c63-b833-79368052be9b.png](#)
[web_ff569476-cf6a-48ee-92fc-a6bd9ed5d068.png](#)

Hi Eric,

Thank you again for your time today to discuss ongoing coordination with Rock County and Elk Creek Solar. As we discussed, land use/conditional use permits would not be required for the project through Rock County as a Site Permit is required from the Public Utilities Commission and all project facilities will be located within the project boundary that will be reviewed by the PUC (Minnesota Power Plant Siting Act, MN Statute 216E outlines electric power facility permits under the PUC (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/216E>)).

I was able to review the development agreement that was executed for the Prairie Rose Wind Farm and we are open to working with Rock County on an agreement for Elk Creek as development of the project continues.

Thank you,



Melissa Schmit

Permitting Manager

E: melissa@geronimoenergy.com

P: 612-259-3095

7650 Edinborough Way, Ste. 725,
Edina, MN 55435
952-988-9000

From: Eric Hartman <eric.hartman@co.rock.mn.us>

Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2019 3:24 PM

To: Melissa Schmit <melissa@geronimoenergy.com>

Subject: Elk Creek Solar Project

Hello, Melissa:

Our office is in receipt of your firms letter requesting comments on the Elk Creek Solar farm in Rock County, Minnesota, which was received on May 8th, 2019.

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and questions regarding this project.

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Thank you for the time to talk this afternoon on the phone.

Eric Hartman
Rock County

Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act

Notice of Decision

Local Government Unit (LGU) Rock County SWCD/Land Mgt	Address 311 W Gabrielson, Luvene, MN 56156
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1. PROJECT INFORMATION

Applicant Name Elk Creek Solar LLC	Project Name Elk Creek Solar	Date of Application 6/10/19	Application Number 2019-26/27/35
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attach site locator map.			

Type of Decision:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetland Boundary or Type	<input type="checkbox"/> No-Loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing
<input type="checkbox"/> Replacement Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Banking Plan		

Technical Evaluation Panel Findings and Recommendation (if any):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve with conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Deny
Summary (or attach):		

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT DECISION

Date of Decision: 7/9/19		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved with conditions (include below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied

LGU Findings and Conclusions (attach additional sheets as necessary):

<p>Findings: Elk Creek Solar LLC is proposing to develop a new solar energy production facility in Rock County, Minnesota. The 970 acre Project Area is located in Section 27, 26, and 35 of Township 103 Range 44 (Vienna) in Rock County, Minnesota. One wetland was identified and delineated within the Project area.</p> <p>Conclusion: The TEP panel has reviewed the delineation report completed by HDR and concurs with the findings. No comments were submitted during the public comment period.</p>

For Replacement Plans using credits from the State Wetland Bank:

Bank Account #	Bank Service Area	County	Credits Approved for Withdrawal (sq. ft. or nearest .01 acre)
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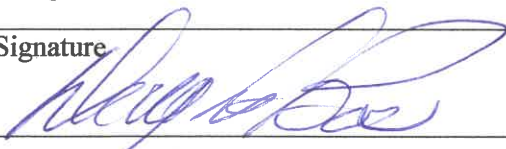
Replacement Plan Approval Conditions. In addition to any conditions specified by the LGU, the approval of a Wetland Replacement Plan is conditional upon the following:

- ☐ **Financial Assurance:** For project-specific replacement that is not in-advance, a financial assurance specified by the LGU must be submitted to the LGU in accordance with MN Rule 8420.0522, Subp. 9 (List amount and type in LGU Findings).
- ☐ **Deed Recording:** For project-specific replacement, evidence must be provided to the LGU that the BWSR "Declaration of Restrictions and Covenants" and "Consent to Replacement Wetland" forms have been filed with the county recorder's office in which the replacement wetland is located.
- ☐ **Credit Withdrawal:** For replacement consisting of wetland bank credits, confirmation that BWSR has withdrawn the credits from the state wetland bank as specified in the approved replacement plan.

Wetlands may not be impacted until all applicable conditions have been met!

LGU Authorized Signature:

Signing and mailing of this completed form to the appropriate recipients in accordance with 8420.0255, Subp. 5 provides notice that a decision was made by the LGU under the Wetland Conservation Act as specified above. If additional details on the decision exist, they have been provided to the landowner and are available from the LGU upon request.

Name Douglas Bos	Title Asst Director	
Signature 	Date 7/9/19	Phone Number and E-mail 507-283-8862 doug.bos@co.rock.mn.us

THIS DECISION ONLY APPLIES TO THE MINNESOTA WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT. Additional approvals or permits from local, state, and federal agencies may be required. Check with all appropriate authorities before commencing work in or near wetlands.

Applicants proceed at their own risk if work authorized by this decision is started before the time period for appeal (30 days) has expired. If this decision is reversed or revised under appeal, the applicant may be responsible for restoring or replacing all wetland impacts.

This decision is valid for three years from the date of decision unless a longer period is advised by the TEP and specified in this notice of decision.

3. APPEAL OF THIS DECISION

Pursuant to MN Rule 8420.0905, any appeal of this decision can only be commenced by mailing a petition for appeal, including applicable fee, within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the mailing of this Notice to the following as indicated:

Check one:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal of an LGU staff decision. Send petition and \$_____ fee (if applicable) to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal of LGU governing body decision. Send petition and \$500 filing fee to: Executive Director Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources 520 Lafayette Road North St. Paul, MN 55155
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4. LIST OF ADDRESSEES

- ☒ SWCD TEP member: **Mike Walgrave**
 - ☒ BWSR TEP member: **John Hansel**
 - ☐ LGU TEP member (if different than LGU Contact):
 - ☒ DNR TEP member: **Ryan Doornbos**
 - ☐ DNR Regional Office (if different than DNR TEP member)
 - ☐ WD or WMO (if applicable):
 - ☐ Applicant and Landowner (if different)
 - ☐ Members of the public who requested notice:
-
- ☐ Corps of Engineers Project Manager
 - ☐ BWSR Wetland Bank Coordinator (wetland bank plan decisions only)

5. MAILING INFORMATION

- For a list of BWSR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/aboutbwsr/workareas/WCA_areas.pdf
- For a list of DNR TEP representatives: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wca/DNR_TEP_contacts.pdf
- Department of Natural Resources Regional Offices:

<u>NW Region:</u>	<u>NE Region:</u>	<u>Central Region:</u>	<u>Southern Region:</u>
Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol. Div. Ecol. Resources 2115 Birchmont Beach Rd. NE Bemidji, MN 56601	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol. Div. Ecol. Resources 1201 E. Hwy. 2 Grand Rapids, MN 55744	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol. Div. Ecol. Resources 1200 Warner Road St. Paul, MN 55106	Reg. Env. Assess. Ecol. Div. Ecol. Resources 261 Hwy. 15 South New Ulm, MN 56073

For a map of DNR Administrative Regions, see: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/about_dnr/dnr_regions.pdf

- For a list of Corps of Project Managers: www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory/default.asp?pageid=687
or send to:

US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District, ATTN: OP-R
180 Fifth St. East, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

- For Wetland Bank Plan applications, also send a copy of the application to:
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Wetland Bank Coordinator
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

6. ATTACHMENTS

In addition to the site locator map, list any other attachments:

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>



305 East Luverne Street, PO Box 659 • Luverne, MN 56156 • P 507.449.2388 • F 507.449.5034 • www.CityOfLuverne.org

June 3, 2019

Elk Creek Solar
Geronimo Wind Energy
7650 Edinborough Way, Ste 7825
Edina, MN 55435

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Luverne would like to express our support for the Elk Creek Solar Project that is proposed to be developed in Rock County, MN. Developing renewable energy and boosting local economies are important factors that contribute to the overall economic well-being in our region.

Creating jobs and improving the tax base in the county are critical components of economic development, and we are pleased to learn about the opportunities that Geronimo Energy is bringing to Rock County.

We look forward to this project moving forward and are excited about its many possibilities. If I may be of any other assistance, please contact me at 507-449-2388.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Call".

John Call
City Administrator