

Stone Lake – Couderay Project



The Hayward area of northern Wisconsin has experienced growth and development of new homes and business in the past several decades. Growth is expected to continue as the area increases in popularity as a tourist destination and for year-round and seasonal residents.

The existing 69 kV transmission line system is approximately 50 years old and is susceptible to current and future load-serving problems. Rebuilding the existing transmission line and adding the new 161 kV circuit will strengthen the reliability of the electric system that serves the area.

During peak use times, demand exceeds the capacity of the current 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission system and taxes the substation equipment by overloading it. Xcel Energy planning studies show this problem worsening over time.

Overview

The proposed Stone Lake to Couderay Project would rebuild the existing electric transmission line that connects the Stone Lake and Couderay substations. The project involves reconstructing the existing 69 kV transmission line, adding a 161 kV circuit and moving the Couderay Substation on Polish Road in Radisson Township to a more open area.

The proposed project is located entirely in Sawyer County. When finished, the total route will be approximately 20 miles depending on the final route selected. Besides the change at the Couderay Substation, no other expansions to the existing substations will occur. The existing line and preferred construction options cross the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) reservation. Xcel Energy entered into an agreement with LCO in December 2010 to maintain or upgrade the existing 69 kV transmission line on the current rights-of-way (ROW) through the reservation.

Regulatory approvals required

A Certificate of Public Necessity and Convenience (CPCN) must first be obtained from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) before the project can be built. The PSC will determine the need for the project and best location for construction. During the CPCN application process, the PSC provides several opportunities for public input. Xcel Energy encourages communities and area residents to participate in the process.

In addition to the state CPCN process, this project must also obtain approval from the LCO (obtained in December 2010) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for ROW and environmental impacts before the project can be constructed within the LCO boundaries.

PROJECTED TIMELINE

Spring 2010

Introduce project to BIA and LCO representatives

Winter 2010

Obtain LCO approval for proposed project in existing right of way

Jan/Feb 2011

Introduce project to additional communities and residents in the area at informational open houses

Spring 2011

Second round of Xcel Energy-sponsored open houses with route selections for Certificate of Public Necessity (CPN) application

Summer 2011

Submit CPCN application

Fall 2011-Summer 2012

PSC permitting & public input process

Late Summer 2012

CPCN approval

Fall 2012

Right-of-way acquisition

Winter 2012-2013

Construction



Public Involvement

Xcel Energy is committed to proactive outreach with the public to ensure citizens have opportunities to both learn about the Stone Lake – Couderay Project and share their views. Xcel Energy is currently looking for public input on possible route alignments and construction configuration options, (i.e., double circuit v. single circuit, adjacent structures or separate routes, etc.).

Two rounds of open houses will be held throughout the project area. The first round of open houses will serve to introduce the project to you and your neighbors and gather initial feedback. The second round will focus on final route configuration to be carried forward in the CPCN application and gather public input on those proposed configurations.

In addition, the PSC CPCN process provides for public involvement throughout the permitting process. The PSC will sponsor a public meeting in the project area after CPCN submittal. The PSC will likely hold a public hearing as well. Xcel Energy encourages communities and area residents to participate in the CPCN permitting process.

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