APPENDIX A - AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

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July 25, 2011

Ms. Kathy Boydston
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744-3291

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Kathy Boydston:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Burns & McDonnell has already requested and received the Texas Natural Diversity Database data (TXNDD) as well as the county lists of threatened and endangered species. The study area is located within the estimated occupied range of the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) which is currently a candidate for listing under the ESA. Updates to the LPC estimated occupied range shapefile as well as any maps of known Leks, species sightings, and Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) are also requested so that Burns & McDonnell can better avoid impacts to this species.

Below is a list of threatened and endangered species that could potentially occur within the study area although there are no documented occurrences of these species present in the TXNDD data currently. A review of the habitat within the study area and a review of the habitats for these species indicate that habitat may be present for the piping plover, lesser prairie chicken, and Texas horned lizard.

Name	**Scientific Name**	**Federal Status**	**State Status**	**Extirpated**
Piping Plover	*Charadrius melodus*	LT	T	
Whooping Crane	*Grus americana*	LE	E	
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*	C		
American Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus anatum*		T	
Bald Eagle*	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*		T	
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*		T	
Texas horned lizard	*Phrynosoma cornutum*		T	
Black-footed ferret	*Mustela nigripes*	LE		Y
Gray wolf	*Canis lupus*	LE	E	Y

* Although the Bald Eagle has been delisted it is still afforded protection by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (16 U.S.C. 668-668c) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712).

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

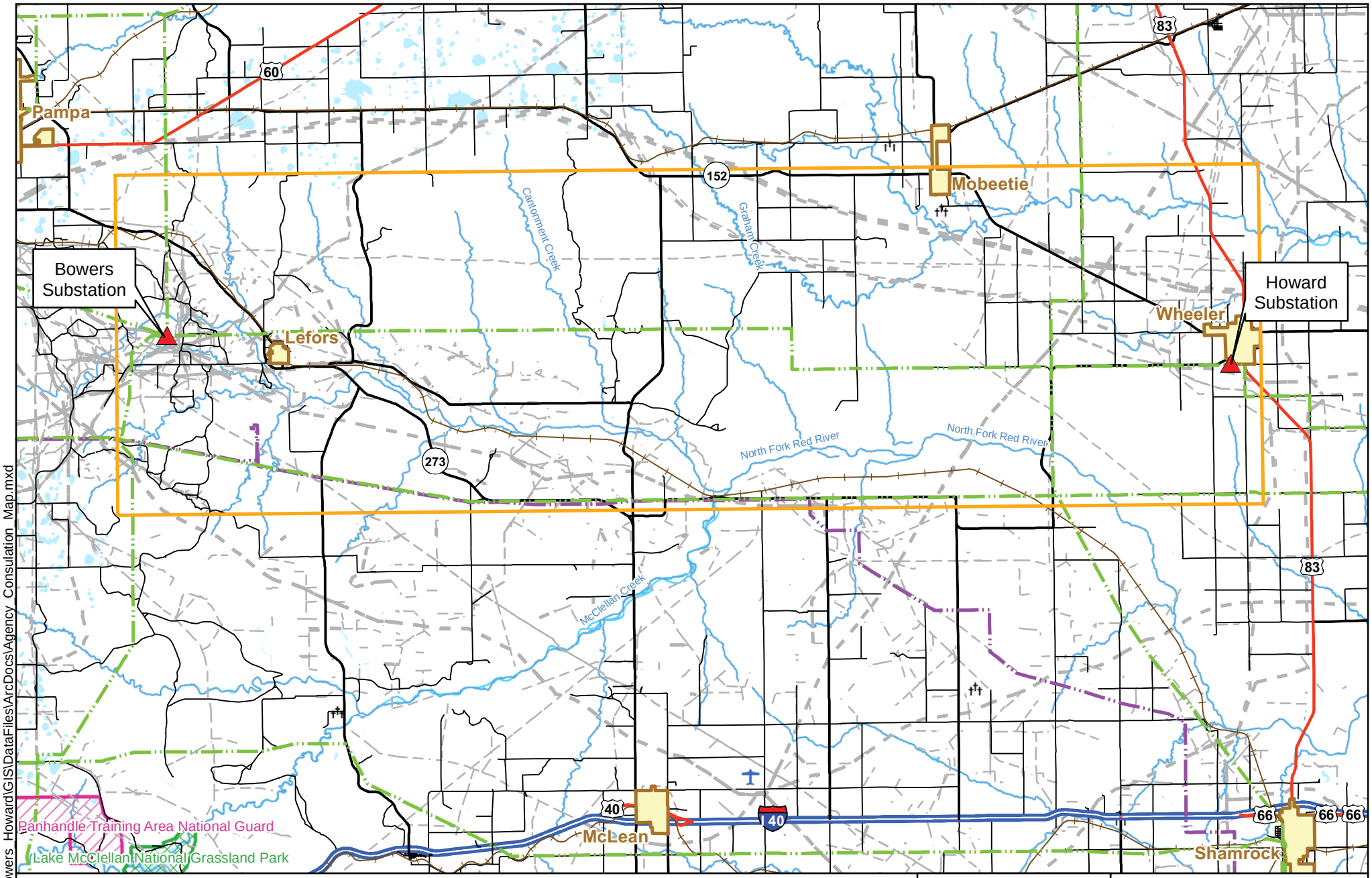
We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files



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N

0 2 4 Miles

Legend

- Existing Substation
- Existing Transmission Line
- Proposed Cross Texas Transmission Line
- Study Area
- Municipal Area

Pipelines

- 6" - 15"
- Greater than 15"
- Railroads

- Road
- State Highway
- U.S. Highway
- Interstate

Power for the Plains

Xcel Energy

Southwestern Public Service
Bowers to Howard 115kV
Transmission Line Project
Study Area Map
Date: 7/22/2011

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Carter P. Smith
Executive Director

September 16, 2011

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc.
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

RE: Southwestern Public Service Company, Bowers to Howard 115-kilovolt Transmission Line Project (BMcD Project No. 62799), Gray and Wheeler Counties

Dear Mr. Werth:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) received the preliminary information request regarding the above-referenced proposed transmission line project. TPWD staff has reviewed the information provided and offers the following comments concerning this project.

Please be aware that a written response to a TPWD recommendation or informational comment received by a state governmental agency may be required by state law. For further guidance, see the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Section 12.0011 which can be found online at http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/PW/htm/PW.12.htm#12.0011. For tracking purposes, please refer to TPWD project number 16426 in any return correspondence regarding this project.

Project Description

Southwestern Public Service Company (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, proposes to construct a new 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line connecting the existing Bowers Substation in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation in Wheeler County. The proposed line would be approximately 33 miles long. SPS has contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and Environmental

4200 SMITH SCHOOL ROAD
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78744-3291
512.389.4800
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Assessment (EA) to support an application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) from the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Burns & McDonnell is requesting information from TPWD regarding the human and natural resources in the project area as well as any permits or approval required for construction of the proposed transmission line.

Recommendation: Please see the attached *TPWD Recommendations for Electrical Transmission/Distribution Line Design and Construction.* Please review the recommendations and incorporate these measures into design and construction plans.

Federal Laws

Endangered Species Act

As stated in the request for information, the study area is located within the Estimated Occupied Range (EOR) of the federal candidate for listing Lesser Prairie-Chicken *(Tympanuchus pallidicinctus)* (LPC or LEPC). A map of the study area within the updated LPC EOR is attached for your reference.

Threats

As has previously been conveyed to Burns & McDonnell and the PUC, LPC populations are declining precipitously in Texas and across the species' five-state range (CO, KS, OK, NM, TX). This decline is attributable primarily to the loss of suitable shrub/grassland habitat. More recently, fragmentation of the remaining habitat by linear and vertical developmental projects may be causing further population declines.

Habitat disturbance for development projects such as roadways and transmission lines results in linear fragmentation of LPC habitat. In addition, recent research indicates that LPCs have demonstrated avoidance of habitat adjacent to (within 2 miles of) development and they rarely cross under vertical structures such as large power lines, so vertical development projects can also fragment LPC habitat (Hagen, 2011). Therefore, transmission lines can cause one of the most significant adverse impacts to the LPC because not only do transmission lines directly remove habitat within the footprint of the ROW, these lines also cause both linear and vertical habitat fragmentation.

Habitat fragmentation may isolate remaining populations of the LPC thereby restricting their access to other members of the species and other areas of suitable habitat. In recent years, the magnitude of the threats to the LPC has increased due to historic population declines and, more recently, to the greater number of ongoing and expected wind energy development and transmission projects, posing a threat to the long term survival of the LPC in Texas.

Listing Status

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has determined that the LPC is a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and is a very high priority for future listing actions. Candidate species are designated as such when sufficient information exists to list them under the ESA, but listing is precluded by the presence of higher priority species. Listing priority is determined by analyzing the magnitude and immediacy of threats to a species. In 1998, the LPC was assigned a candidate species listing priority number of eight. In December 2008, due in large part to the recent increases in the magnitude of imminent threats including habitat loss and fragmentation from a variety of sources including the construction of vertical structures (i.e., wind turbines and power lines) in LPC habitat, USFWS elevated the LPC listing priority number to two.

In January 2011, the USFWS began the initial stages of the listing process for the LPC under the ESA. They anticipate that over the following 18 months they will be working to develop a proposed listing rule for the LPC. Additional information regarding the proposed listing of the LPC is attached for your reference.

When reviewing the listing status and any proposed actions for candidate species, the USFWS evaluates conservation measures in balance with identified conservation threats. Given the current status of LPC populations and their habitat, TPWD would prefer avoidance and minimization over compensation (replacement of habitat) because of concerns for stabilization and maintenance of existing habitats.

If listing of this species occurs, future development and maintenance activities that have the potential to impact the LPC or its habitat may require consultation with USFWS and/or a permit from USFWS under Section 10 of ESA.

Requested Information

The request for information specifically asked for the locations of leks, species sightings, and properties with Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs). Section 12.0251 of the Parks and Wildlife Code (discussed under "State Laws" below) prohibits TPWD from releasing information collected in response to a request for technical guidance on private land. In addition, please note that avoiding only lek locations during alternative route development would not completely avoid impacts to the LPC. Although leks are generally the most observable LPC habitat and therefore the habitat that is most often recorded, nesting and brood rearing habitats are equally as important and sensitive to disturbance and fragmentation.

An effort to model important habitats for the LPC has been underway as part of a Western Governors Association (WGA) Wildlife Council project. The result of this effort is Phase 1 of a 3-Phase WGA Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (SGP CHAT). This is a Department of Energy funded effort that includes input from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas and was to develop a crucial habitat assessment tool that identifies priority habitat, including corridors, for the LPC. The tool was designed to be usable by conservation managers, industry, and the public.

Attached is a map of the project study area showing the crucial habitat index layer from the SGP CHAT and a summary of the crucial habitat categories defined by the WGA. The SGP CHAT can be accessed online at http://www.kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/. The crucial habitat layer displayed in SGP CHAT classifies land by its relative value as LPC habitat according to WGA-defined categories. As shown on the map, a large portion of the project study area consists of habitat that is categorized as Irreplaceable, and smaller portions are considered Limiting, Significant, and Unknown. Please note that

the SGP CHAT is intended to be used only during the early planning stages of project development. The finest data resolution of the SGP CHAT crucial habitat index is one square mile hexagons, and use of this data layer at a more localized scale is not appropriate.

Recommendation: Due to the additive, detrimental impact of each new linear or vertical structure that bisects LPC habitat, TPWD recommends SPS avoid the construction of new transmission lines within the LPC EOR. Although TPWD generally recommends using existing structures and transmission line rights-of-way (ROW) when possible, due to the sensitivity, decline, and potential listing status of the LPC, TPWD recommends SPS also avoid expanding the width of the existing transmission line ROW and/or constructing additional or taller vertical structures within in the LPC EOR. To avoid contributing to the further decline of the LPC and the potential listing of this species as threatened or endangered under the ESA, every effort should be made to avoid impacts to this species. **Any alternatives considered for development should avoid occupied or potential habitat for LPC.** TPWD recommends that SPS expand the study area to incorporate routing opportunities outside of the LPC EOR.

TPWD strongly recommends SPS and Burns & McDonnell thoroughly survey the study area for LPCs and LPC habitat, preferably using aerial survey methodology, during the 2012 LPC breeding season (10 March - 15 May). Results of surveys should be submitted to TPWD so that we may provide site specific recommendations.

Clean Water Act

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a federal program to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into the waters of the U.S., including wetlands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Environmental Protection Agency are responsible for regulating water resources under this act. Although the regulation of isolated wetlands has been removed from the USACE permitting process, both isolated and jurisdictional wetlands provide habitat for wildlife and help protect water quality.

As seen on the attached map, waterways including the North Fork of the Red River and several of its tributaries are located within the project study area.

> **Recommendation:** If the proposed project would impact waterways or associated wetlands, TPWD recommends consulting with the USACE for potential impacts to waters of the U.S. including jurisdictional determinations, delineations, and mitigation.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits taking, attempting to take, capturing, killing, selling/purchasing, possessing, transporting, and importing of migratory birds, their eggs, parts and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department of the Interior. This protection applies to most native bird species, including ground nesting species. The USFWS Migratory Bird Office can be contacted at (505) 248-7882 for more information on potential impacts to migratory birds.

Based on a review of records in the Texas Natural Diversity Database (TXNDD), a nesting colony of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) has been documented along Sweetwater Creek in or near the study area. The request for review states that Burns & McDonnell has already requested and received the TXNDD data for the study area. For more information on this rookery, please refer to the report for Element Occurrence Identification (EOID) number 1185 in the data provided.

Because high numbers of birds breeding in a colony or concentrated area can temporarily degrade the vegetation in their roosting habitat, colonial waterbird rookeries may move to nearby areas where habitat conditions are more favorable. Therefore, the documented breeding colony referenced above may or may not currently be located in the area represented by EOID 1185. This colony may be located in a nearby area that provides suitable habitat, and additional rookeries may be located along Sweetwater Creek and its tributaries.

Recommendation: TPWD recommends SPS and Burns & McDonnell survey the riparian vegetation in the study area for colonial waterbird rookeries. If active rookeries are discovered within or near the study area, TPWD recommends avoiding the development of routes that would impact these areas. TPWD recommends avoiding vegetation removal and other forms of disturbance near colonial waterbird rookeries.

Lines that cross or are located near creeks, drainages, reservoirs, and playa lakes should have line markers installed at the crossings or closest points to the drainages to reduce potential collisions by birds flying along or near the drainages. To prevent electrocution of perching raptors, raptor protection measures such as adequate conductor spacing, perch guards, and insulated jumper wires should also be used. For additional information, please see the guidelines published in the *Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006* and the *Avian Protection Plan Guidelines*.

If migratory bird species are found nesting on or adjacent to the project area, they must be dealt with in a manner consistent with the MBTA.

State Laws

Parks and Wildlife Code, Section 12.0251

Section 12.0251 of the Parks and Wildlife Code, discussed above, provides that information collected in response to a landowner request for technical guidance on private land relating to the specific location, species identification or quantity of any animal or plant life is confidential and may not be disclosed unless the landowner consents to the disclosure in writing.

Recommendation: During public involvement efforts for the proposed project, TPWD recommends SPS and Burns & McDonnell ask landowners within the study area to disclose whether they have a CCAA on their property.

Parks and Wildlife Code, Section 68.015

Section 68.015 of the Parks and Wildlife Code regulates state-listed species. Please note that there is no provision for take (incidental or otherwise) of state-listed species. A copy of *TPWD Guidelines for Protection of State-*

Listed Species, which includes a list of penalties for take of species, is attached for your reference. State-listed species may only be handled by persons with a scientific collection permit obtained through TPWD. For more information on this permit, please contact the Wildlife Permits Office at (512) 389-4647.

Based on a review of the project location, the state-listed threatened Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) may be present in the project study area. Texas horned lizards are generally active in this part of Texas from mid-April through September. At that time of year, they may be able to avoid slow (less than 15 miles per hour) moving equipment. The remainder of the year, this species hibernates only a few inches underground and they will be much more susceptible to earth moving equipment and compaction.

Recommendation: TPWD recommends SPS avoid disturbance of the Texas horned lizard and colonies of its primary food source, the Harvester ant (*Pogonomyrmex* sp.), during clearing and construction. TPWD recommends a biological monitor be present during construction to try to relocate Texas horned lizards if found. If the presence of a biological monitor during construction is not feasible, state-listed threatened species observed during construction should be allowed to safely leave the site or be relocated by a permitted individual to a nearby area with similar habitat that would not be disturbed during construction.

A mixture of cover, food sources, and open ground is important to the Texas horned lizard and Harvester ant. Disturbed areas within suitable habitat for the Texas horned lizard should be revegetated with site-specific native, patchy vegetation rather than sod-forming grasses.

Texas Administrative Code Title 31 §357.8

Waterways in the study area including McClellan Creek, Graham Creek, and Sweetwater Creek have been designated by TPWD as Ecologically Significant Stream Segment (ESSSs). A map of water resources including ESSSs in the study area is attached for your reference. TPWD has identified ESSSs throughout the state to assist regional water planning groups in identifying

ecologically unique stream segments under Texas Administrative Code Title 31 §357.8. Until approved by the legislature, this is not a legal designation. The stream segments are identified through extensive review by TPWD staff and are determined to be ecologically important for the following reasons:

Name	Reason for Designation
Sweetwater Creek	High water quality, exceptional aquatic life, high aesthetic value - ecoregion stream, Threatened or endangered species/unique communities - unique wetlands community
Graham Creek	Threatened or endangered species/unique communities: unique habitat-wetlands
McClellan Creek	High water quality, exceptional aquatic life, high aesthetic value - ecoregion stream, diverse benthic macroinvertebrate and fish communities

Recommendation: Measures should be taken to ensure that activities that could adversely impact these ecologically significant streams are avoided and/or minimized. Water quality, aesthetic value, and unique habitats should be preserved during project planning and construction.

All waterways and associated floodplains, riparian corridors, playa lakes, and wetlands provide valuable wildlife habitat and should be protected to the maximum extent possible. Natural buffers contiguous to any wetlands or aquatic systems should remain undisturbed to preserve wildlife cover, food sources, and travel corridors. During construction, trucks and equipment should use existing bridge or culvert structures to cross creeks. Destruction of inert microhabitats in waterways such as snags, brush piles, fallen logs, creek banks, pools, and gravel stream bottoms should be avoided, as these provide habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species and their food sources. Erosion controls and sediment runoff control measures should be installed prior to construction and maintained until disturbed areas are permanently revegetated using site specific native vegetation. Measures should be properly installed in order to effectively minimize the amount of sediment and other debris entering the waterway.

Vegetation

Based on a review of the TPWD Vegetation Types of Texas (1984) map, the following vegetation types are found in the study area:

- Crops
- Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) Shrub
- Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) - Hackberry (*Celtis* sp.) - Saltcedar (*Tamarix* sp.) Brush / Woods
- Sandsage (*Artemisia filifolia*) - Havard Shin Oak (*Quercus havardii*) Brush
- Sandsage - Mesquite Brush

A map of vegetation types in the study area is attached for your reference.

Recommendation: TPWD recommends minimizing impacts to native vegetation to the extent feasible during project design and construction. Unavoidable loss of native vegetation should be mitigated by revegetating areas disturbed by project activities with site-specific native species. A list of native plant species suitable for use in the project area can be developed to fit your specific site needs using the Texas Plant Information Database at http://tpid.tpwd.state.tx.us/.

In addition to state- and federally-protected species, TPWD tracks special features, natural communities, and rare species that are not listed as threatened or endangered. These species and communities are tracked in the TXNDD, and TPWD actively promotes their conservation. TPWD considers it important to evaluate and, if necessary, minimize impacts to rare species and their habitat to reduce the likelihood of endangerment. Based on a review of TXNDD data, several records of the Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*)-Tallgrass Series have been documented in the study area along Sweetwater Creek. This native vegetation community has been given the conservation rank of S2 in Texas, which indicates that it is imperiled throughout this portion of its range.

Recommendation: TPWD recommends SPS and Burns & McDonnell survey the study area for rare native vegetation communities, such as the Cottonwood-Tallgrass series, and avoid developing routes that would require disturbance or vegetation removal in these areas.

TXNDD Data

The absence of TXNDD information in an area does not imply that a species is absent from that area. Given the small proportion of public versus private land in Texas, the TXNDD does not include a representative inventory of rare resources in the state. Although it is based on the best data available to TPWD regarding rare species, the data from the TXNDD do not provide a definitive statement as to the presence, absence or condition of special species, natural communities, or other significant features within your project area. These data are not inclusive and **cannot be used as presence/absence data.** They represent species that could potentially be in your project area. This information cannot be substituted for on-the-ground surveys. The TXNDD is updated continuously. As the project progresses and for future projects, please request the most current and accurate information at txndd@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Recommendation: The request for information states that Burns and McDonnell has already requested and received the county lists of threatened and endangered species. Please review the TPWD county lists for Gray and Wheeler counties, as rare species in addition to those discussed above could be present depending upon habitat availability. These lists are available online at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/maps/gis/ris/endangered_species/. If during construction, the project area is found to contain rare species, natural plant communities, or special features, TPWD recommends that precautions be taken to avoid impacts to them. The USFWS should be contacted for species occurrence data, guidance, permitting, survey protocols, and mitigation for federally listed species. For the USFWS rare species lists by county please visit http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/EndangeredSpecies/lists/.

Determining the actual presence of a species in a given area depends on many variables including daily and seasonal activity cycles, environmental activity cues, preferred habitat, transiency and population density (both wildlife and human). The absence of a species can be demonstrated only with great difficulty and then only with repeated negative observations, taking into account all the variable factors contributing to the lack of detectable presence. If encountered during construction, measures should be taken to avoid impacting wildlife.

Mitigation Plan

Lesser Prairie-Chicken

When developing project alternatives, TPWD recommends (in order of preference) avoidance, minimization, and as a last resort, compensatory mitigation for adverse impacts to the LPC. As stated above, TPWD strongly recommends SPS avoid the construction or expansion of transmission lines within the LPC EOR. If adverse impacts to the LPC or its habitat are unavoidable, TPWD recommends SPS minimize those impacts during project design and construction and compensate for direct and cumulative impacts to this species. Compensation for project impacts should only be considered if all possible measures to avoid impacts to the LPC have been exhausted.

A copy of the *TPWD Recommendations for Lesser Prairie-Chicken Voluntary Conservation and Mitigation* is attached for your reference. If adverse impacts to the LPC are unavoidable, compensation efforts should be coordinated with TPWD and USFWS and reflect acreage of impact calculated based on the amount of direct impact and the degree of fragmentation caused by the project. Please note that the attached guidelines would only apply as long as the LPC is not listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. If the species becomes listed, any recommended or required mitigation for the proposed project and any future projects in LPC habitat will require consultation with the USFWS.

Regulated and Unregulated Resources

TPWD recommends SPS and Burns & McDonnell prepare a comprehensive mitigation plan to provide compensatory mitigation for those habitats where impacts from the transmission line cannot be avoided or minimized. This would include impacts to species and habitats covered under federal law (wetlands and associated habitats, threatened or endangered species) and state resource habitat types not covered by state or federal law (riparian areas, native prairies). At a minimum, TPWD recommends a replacement ratio of 1:1 for state resource habitat types. For more detailed suggestions or information regarding a mitigation plan, please contact this office.

Please provide a copy of the EA to TPWD for review and comment prior to application to the PUC for a CCN. I appreciate the opportunity to provide preliminary input on potential impacts related to this project, and I look forward to reviewing the EA. Please contact me at (512) 389-4579 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie C. Wicker

Julie C. Wicker
Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program
Wildlife Division

JCW:gg.16426

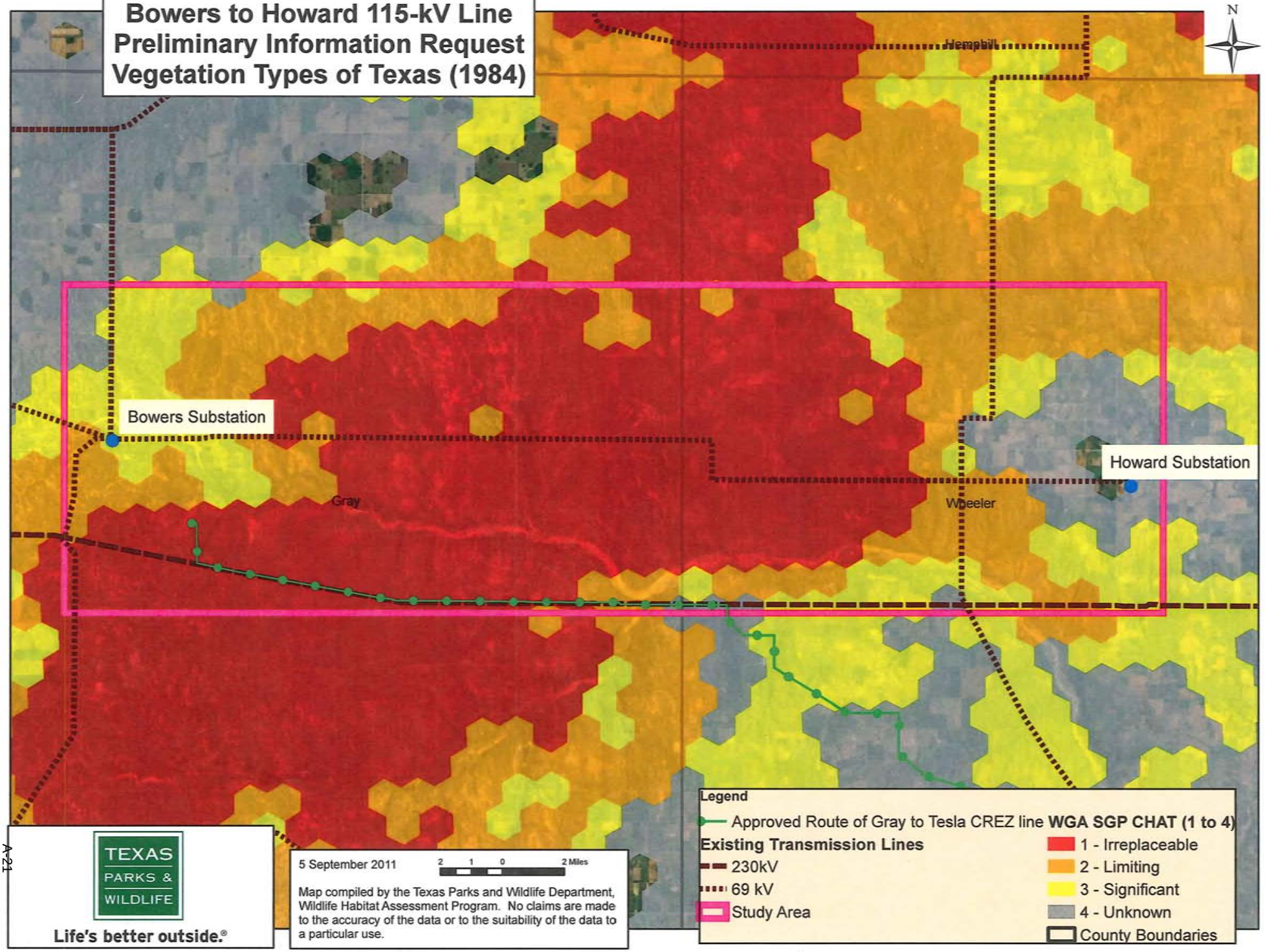
Attachments (8)

cc: Mr. Brian Almon, PUC (w/out attachments)
Ms. Heather Whitlaw, USFWS (w/attachments)

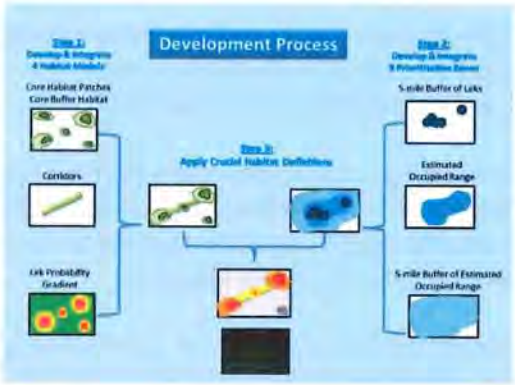
References:

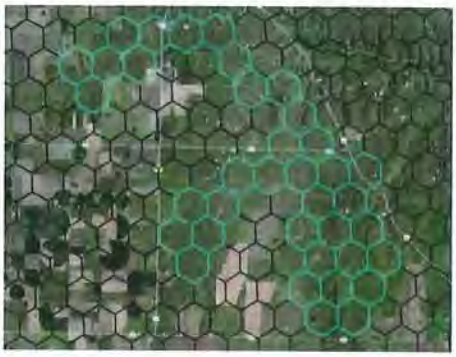
Hagen, C. A., et al. 2011. Impacts of anthropogenic features on habitat use by Lesser Prairie-Chickens. Pp. 63–75 *in* B. K.Sandercock, K. Martin, and G. Segelbacher (editors). Ecology, conservation, and management of grouse. Studies in Avian Biology (vol. 39), University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

Bowers to Howard 115-kV Line
Preliminary Information Request
Vegetation Types of Texas (1984)



Western Governors Association
Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool





Introduction

The Western Governors Association Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (WGA SGP CHAT) is the result of phase one of a WGA Wildlife Council project, led by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, to model crucial habitat for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LEPC) throughout its historical range.

The purpose of the project is to create a crucial habitat assessment tool usable by conservation managers, industry, and the public that identifies priority habitat, including corridors, for the LEPC. The crucial habitat layer displayed in SGP CHAT classifies land by its relative value as LEPC habitat, according to WGA-defined categories as described below.

Future phases of this project will include additional species of greatest conservation need. The resulting multi-species CHAT will be useful to inform energy and other development project siting throughout the historic range of the lesser prairie-chicken.

Crucial Habitat Definitions

The SGP CHAT identifies crucial habitats and corridors for the LEPC based on definitions developed by the WGA Wildlife Council Science Subgroup. Crucial habitat definitions are stated in the Wildlife Corridors Initiative Report and were later refined as follows:

> *Crucial habitats* are places containing the resources, including food, water, cover, shelter and "important wildlife corridors," that are necessary for the survival and reproduction of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and to prevent unacceptable declines, or facilitate future recovery of wildlife populations, or are important ecological systems with high biological diversity value.
>
> *Important Wildlife Corridors* are crucial habitats that provide connectivity over different time scales (including seasonal or longer) among areas used by animal and plant species. Wildlife corridors can exist within unfragmented landscapes or join naturally or artificially fragmented habitats, and serve to maintain or increase essential genetic and demographic connection of aquatic and terrestrial populations.

The SGP CHAT further classifies crucial habitats and important wildlife corridors into five 'actionable' categories, following guidelines of the WGA:

Category 1 (Irreplaceable): Habitat that is rare or fragile and is essential to achieving and/or maintaining LEPC population viability. This habitat contains a unique combination of location or composition or complexity of the habitat which cannot be duplicated, and is therefore considered irreplaceable.

Category 2 (Limiting): Habitat which is limiting to LEPC populations or metapopulations. Loss of any of this habitat could result in a significant local or population-level decline in species distribution, abundance, or productivity. This habitat is essential to achieving and maintaining LEPC target population or management objectives. Restoration or replacement is difficult, or may be possible only in the very long term.

Category 3 (Significant): Habitat, including wildlife corridors, that contributes significantly to the maintenance of LEPC populations or metapopulations. Loss of a significant portion of the habitat or corridor could result in local or population-level declines in species distribution, abundance, or productivity. Impacts can be minimized or reduced, and habitat or corridors restored or replaced by utilizing appropriate best management practices.

Category 4 (Unknown): Lands likely to have significant value to the LEPC, but for which there is insufficient data or a lack of information about the importance of the habitat in meeting conservation objectives.

Category 5 (Common): Habitat which is relatively common, generally less limiting to LEPC populations or metapopulations, and generally better suited for land use conversion. Large-scale or cumulative impacts to the LEPC or this habitat could result in declines in species distribution or abundance; however, the loss may be difficult to measure. Impacts from individual projects or land use actions can be minimized, and habitat restored or replaced, so that effective habitat function or species distribution or abundance is maintained.

Appropriate Use

The SGP CHAT is intended to be used in the early stages of development or conservation planning. The crucial habitat data layer can provide general guidance as to where the most important habitats for LEPC occur throughout its historic range; however, delineations of crucial habitat boundaries should not be considered discrete or permanent. Crucial habitat boundaries are estimates and will change as new data and information become available and represented in future versions of the tool.

It is imperative that planners contact the appropriate state wildlife agency when considering actions that may impact the LEPC. The SGP CHAT is a non-regulatory tool and is not a surrogate for consultation with state wildlife agencies.

The crucial habitat layer was developed at 30-meter spatial resolution and aggregated to a 1-mile spatial resolution in accordance with the WGA project standards. Data were generalized to avoid categorizing distinct land parcels (such as the public land survey sections) and to protect sensitive data. The crucial habitat data layer should not be used at a spatial scale finer than a legal Section and is most appropriate at regional, state, or county scales.

The crucial habitat data layer was developed using multiple geospatial datasets representing features such as landcover, topography, and anthropogenic features such as roads, oil and gas wells and tall vertical structures. Each data set has inherent assumptions. Users are encouraged to review the metadata of individual data layers in SGP CHAT for information on data accuracy of each data set. The overall accuracy of the crucial habitat data layer is currently unknown, but review by local wildlife experts indicates that it is consistent with their knowledge of the project area.

Development & Data

Development of Crucial Habitats and Corridors Data Layer

The crucial habitats data layer was developed through the integration of four distinct but complementary spatial habitat models designed to identify areas important for the LEPC. Each model and the integration process are described in detail in the metadata associated with the crucial habitat data layer. Briefly, the four models can be described as: 1) a Maximum Entropy habitat model that estimates the probability of LEPC lek occurrence using the latest lek observation data, 2) a model that identifies areas that meet habitat composition and configuration requirements of the LEPC, 3) a model that identifies areas that meet habitat composition requirement of LEPC, and 4) a model that identifies corridors connecting LEPC habitat. The data layers resulting from these four models, along with LEPC lek location data, were integrated and classified according to the five crucial habitat categories listed above to create the crucial habitats layer displayed in the SGP CHAT.

Data Inputs

Spatial models analyzed multiple spatial data sets to assess LEPC habitat for the development of the crucial habitats data layer, including those listed below. Attributes of each data set (such source, temporal and spatial resolution, spatial extent, etc) can be found in the metadata associated with the crucial habitats data layer.

- LEPC lek locations
- Landcover (National GAP)
- Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI, annual average)
- Roads (major and minor)
- Transmission lines
- Vertical structures over 99 feet tall
- Oil and gas well locations
- Topography

Spatial Extent

The spatial extent of the SGP CHAT includes all counties that intersect with the historic range of the LEPC. Additional counties were included to match the area covered by the LEPC Habitat Conservation Plan being developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This extent covers portions of five states including Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Spatial Resolution

The crucial habitats data layer displayed in SGP CHAT is the result of spatial analysis conducted on 30-meter data and aggregated to 1-mile hexagons per requirements of the WGA (all WGA projects are displayed at this resolution). Ancillary data layers provided in SGP CHAT are displayed at their native spatial resolution (see metadata for each data layer's spatial attributes).

Data Distribution & Updates

The SGP CHAT will be updated annually beginning in January 2012. Users should consult the website to ensure that the most recent crucial habitat layer is being employed.

Contacts & Contributors

The SGP CHAT project was lead by the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks, and Tourism and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and was developed cooperatively among the five state wildlife agencies within the species range, also including the Colorado Division of Wildlife, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Other contributors include the Playas Lakes Joint Venture and US Geological Survey.

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Playa Lakes Joint Venture

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Recommendations for Lesser Prairie-Chicken Voluntary Conservation and Mitigation

(CEQ - 40 CFR 1508.20)

Objective: To develop strategies, partnerships, and programs aimed at stabilizing declining lesser prairie-chicken populations and at mitigating impacts of habitat loss and degradation from development projects, such as wind energy and transmission lines.

1. Background

- Lesser prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) (LPC) populations are declining in Texas and across the species' 5-state range (CO, KS, OK, NM, TX). The current estimated occupied annual range of LPCs in Texas is presented in Figure 1.
- This decline is primarily in response to direct and indirect habitat loss. Direct habitat loss occurs when otherwise suitable habitat (such as grasslands and prairie) is converted to other land uses (such as crops, roads, and pads). Indirect habitat loss is more subtle and occurs when otherwise suitable habitat becomes "unavailable" or "not usable" by the birds because it is fragmented from other habitat (perhaps by transmission lines or roads) or something is present (i.e., has been developed) that precludes the birds from occupying it (such as wind farm development, high density oil-gas development, transmission infrastructure).
- The LPC is found in large, contiguous blocks of native rangeland, and in Texas is most common in shinnery oak and sand sagebrush habitat types. The range of the LPC has contracted significantly over the past century due to threats such as cultivation of native rangeland, improper range management, and habitat fragmentation due to oil and gas development, and other types of development.
- Since 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has classified the LPC as a candidate for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and has reviewed its status on an annual basis since that time. Candidate species are designated as such when sufficient information exists to list them under the ESA, but listing is precluded by the presence of higher priority species. Listing priority is determined by analyzing the magnitude and immediacy of threats to a species.
- In 1998 the LPC was assigned a candidate species listing priority number of **8**. In December 2008, the USFWS changed the listing priority number to **2**, since the magnitude of imminent threats to the LPC had increased to high. This change in classification was due in large part to increased magnitude of threats to the species from wind energy development and conversion of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands to croplands, both which have

increased recently in terms of ongoing activity and potential activity expected in the next few years. Based on the USFWS 2008 assessment, they found that ongoing threats to the lesser prairie-chicken have increased in terms of the amount of habitat involved and that the overall magnitude of threats to the lesser prairie-chicken throughout its range is high because the threats put the viability of the lesser prairie chicken at substantial risk. The threats are ongoing and thus, imminent. Consequently, the priority for listing the LPC was raised from 8 to 2.

- Developers whose projects may impact LPC habitat can work with TPWD to try and preclude the need to list the LPC under the ESA by voluntarily consulting with TPWD and/or the USFWS to identify avoidance, minimization, and compensation practices. Through voluntary, collaborative efforts the LPC can be conserved for future generations without resorting to formal protection under the ESA, which could result in land use restrictions in some instances.

2. Need and Purpose

- The LPC is a species of special conservation concern for state and federal resource agencies as well as non-governmental organizations.
- There is a need for quick response time to current and future events affecting LPC conservation among industry and resource partners.
- TPWD and industry partners can assist each other with decision-making and prioritization tools.
- One such tool is the mitigation process (Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) - 40 CFR 1508.20). The purpose of these recommendations is to develop a habitat-based programmatic mitigation plan that integrates existing and innovative conservation tools.
- This document is a mitigation plan and not a management plan for LPC. More information on management of LPC and their habitat can be found in the literature cited section under Davis et al. 2008, Hagen et al 2004, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Lesser Prairie Chicken Management Plan.

3. Process

According to the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.20), mitigation entails efforts to avoid or minimize impacts to a species of conservation concern or the habitats upon which it depends. When impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, compensation takes place. Compensation includes efforts to repair or restore habitat, as well as purchase, preservation, or maintenance of habitat. Using the CEQ regulations as a guide, the following recommended best management practices have been developed by mitigation category for the LPC in those areas where projects are proposed. This is not an exhaustive list of mitigation opportunities and partners will continue to explore unique voluntary mitigation

and conservation activities that contribute to mutual goals and project considerations.

Recommended Best Management Practices for Development in LPC Habitat

The extent of the impact of development on LPC leking activitiy (e.g. social structure, mating success, persistence, etc.) and the associated impacts on productivity (e.g. nesting, nest success, chick survival, etc.) is poorly understood (Arnett, et al. 2007, National Research Council 2007, Manville 2004). However, recent research documents that anthropogenic features (e.g. tall structures, buildings, roads, transmission lines, etc.) can adversely impact vital rates (e.g. nesting, nest success, leking behavior, etc) of prairie grouse, including LPC (Pruett et al. 2009, Pitman et al. 2005, Hagen et. al 2009) and greater prairie-chickens (Robel, Pers. Comm.) over long distances. High quality nesting and brood rearing habitats surrounding leks are critical to sustaining viable prairie grouse and sage grouse populations (Giesen and Connelly 1993, Hagen et al. 2004, Connelly et al. 2000). A population assessment study area should include nesting and brood rearing habitats that may extend several miles from leks. For example, greater and lesser prairie-chickens generally nest in suitable habitat within 1 to 2 miles of active leks (Hagen et al. 2004).

The following recommended best management practices are to assist in minimizing impacts of development in LPC habitat.

Avoid

- Coordinate and communicate with TPWD to avoid transmission-related development in estimated occupied annual range of LPC habitat.

- Avoid any grassland corridors between existing large tracts of LPC habitat; these corridors are important for genetic exchange and dispersal.

Minimize or limit

- <u>Minimize impacts to lek sites</u>

  Development within 1 to 2 miles of active leks of LPC is discouraged as it may have significant adverse impacts on the affected population. The magnitudes and proximal causes (e.g., noise, height of structures, movement, human activity, etc.) of those impacts on vital rates in LPC populations are areas of much needed research (Becker et al. 2009). Data accumulated through such research may improve the understanding of

the buffer distances necessary to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to LPC populations.

- Minimize impacts to broods

  Schedule timing of activities to avoid LPC breeding, nesting, and brood rearing activities (March 01 thru July 31).

  Install raptor deterrents on poles as indicated by Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006.

- Minimize impacts to general cover/foraging habitat

  Place new structures in previously disturbed areas or in areas that are low quality habitat for LPC (extensive fragmentation of habitat (e.g., row-cropped agricultural lands)).

  Use existing rights-of-way (ROW) where available, preferably those that do not fragment existing LPC habitat. Locating adjacent to highway or pipeline ROWs is least desirable as there are no existing vertical structures in these ROWs.

  Use existing roads where available. New access roads should be designed so as not to further fragment remaining habitat.

  Where livestock grazing is allowed, grazing practices should support a mixed grassland mosaic with various successional stages of vegetation. This should include the appropriate shrub components with shinnery oak, wild plum and sand sage. The LPC have different vegetation height requirements for different life stages: breeding or leking sites require low vegetation heights while nesting and wintering sites require taller, mature vegetation; brood sites require mid-succession stage vegetation.

  Many species of woody vegetation are inappropriate for LPC habitat; tree species and other woody vegetation (with the exception of shinnery oak, wild plum and sand sage) should be removed or maintained at the appropriate height (see above).

  Grassland corridors between existing tracts of LPC habitat should be undisturbed and maintained to allow genetic exchange and dispersal.

- Restoration of degraded habitat

  Conversion or reseeding of cropland into native grasslands is encouraged. Use of non-native grasses or exotic grasses is strongly discouraged. The seed mix should also incorporate forbs and legumes to provide cover and food sources.

Compensation

If avoidance is not possible and all measures for minimization have been taken, and there is still a need to compensate for LPC habitat, mitigation practices should be used. For compensatory mitigation the quality and amount of the habitat impacts should be determined by the developer and verified by TPWD and USFWS. Habitat for LPC is classified below as:

a. High quality: little or no apparent fragmentation of intact habitat

b. Medium quality: intact habitat exhibiting some recent disturbance activity (e.g., existing roadways)

c. Low quality: extensive fragmentation of habitat (e.g., row-cropped agricultural lands)

The developer should determine the potential for occupancy of the proposed development site based on the guidance provided for the LPC. The developer should analyze current habitat quality and spatial configuration of area impacted by the development utilizing the following:

a. Use recent aerial or remote imagery to determine distinct habitat patches, or boundaries, within the proposed development site.

b. Determine the area of intact habitat lost to the project footprint or by alteration due to the edge effect.

c. Determine edge and interior habitat metrics of the LPC habitat. Buffer non-habitat cover and fragmenting features appropriate for the LPC, in order to estimate existing edge.
   - Calculate area and acres of edge
   - Calculate area of intact patches of habitat and compare to needs of LPC

- Assess the expected future size and quality of habitat patches for the LPC and the additional fragmenting features, and categorize into high, medium and low quality as described above.
- Determine expected future acreages of edge and interior habitats.
- Calculate the area of the remaining patches of intact habitat.

d. Identify habitat patches that are expected to be moved to a lower habitat quality classification as a result of the proposed development.

e. Determine potential changes in quality and spatial configuration of the LPC habitat in the proposed development sites using existing site information and the best available spatial data regarding placement of wind turbines, ancillary infrastructure or electrical transmission lines.

f. Identify, delineate, and classify all additional features added by the proposed development that potentially fragment habitat for the LPC (e.g., roads, transmission lines, maintenance structures, etc.).

Utilizing this process should help determine the total acreage of LPC habitat impacted by the proposed project, and quality of that habitat. TPWD and USFWS will assess the likelihood of a significant reduction in the demographic and genetic viability of the local population of the LPC using the information provided by the developer. Based on this assessment, if TPWD and USFWS find that the analysis shows the likelihood of a significant reduction, the developer should consider items 1-6 below:

1) Consider alternative locations and development configurations to minimize fragmentation of habitat in consultation with TPWD and USFWS personnel.

2) Protect high quality habitat parcels identified by TPWD and USFWS that may be included as part of a plan to limit future loss of habitat for the LPC.

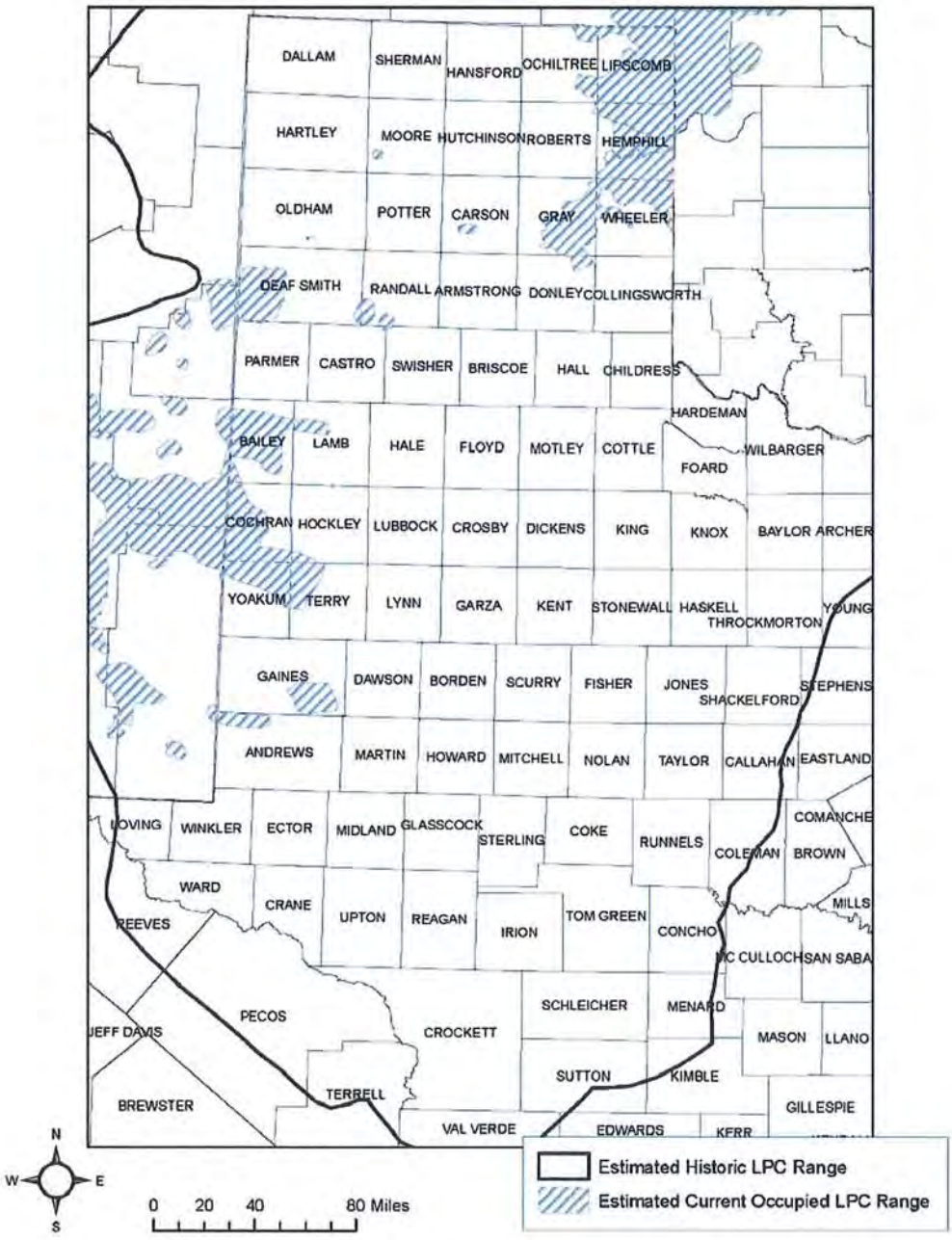
3) Identify areas for restoration of LPC habitat such as historic LPC habitat adjacent to or could be connected to existing LPC habitat through restoration practices.

4) Fund/perform monitoring, habitat maintenance, aerial surveys with data sharing among partners, habitat mapping, and/or research efforts such as spatial population viability analyses, pre and post development monitoring, trans-locations to sites that have habitat acquisition/easement/restoration component.

5) Replace or provide substitutes such as habitat acquisition, conservation easements, restoration of historic habitat, enrollment of suitable acres in Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), mitigation banking.

6) Payment per acre to pre-determined non-profit entity based on agreed-upon LPC to-be-determined habitat value(s). These funds can and should be used by a suitable non-profit entity for LPC conservation in Texas through agreement with TPWD. May include, but is not limited to use of funds for match in grant applications, direct payments to landowners for restoration and improvement activities, or surveys for unique resources on private lands.

Figure 1: Estimated lesser prairie-chicken annual occupied range (current as of July 20, 2009) and historic range in Texas.



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TPWD Recommendations for Electrical Transmission/Distribution Line Design and Construction

Construction of the line should be performed to avoid adverse impacts not only to the environment but the local bird populations and to restore or enhance environmental quality to the greatest extent practical. In order to minimize the possible project effects upon wildlife, the following measures are recommended.

TPWD recommends that each electrical company develop an Avian Protection Plan to minimize the risks to avian species that are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Avian Electrocution Risks

Birds can be electrocuted by simultaneously contacting energized and/or grounded structures, conductors, hardware, or equipment. Electrocutions may occur because of a combination of biological and electrical design. Biological factors are those that influence avian use of poles, such as habitat, prey and avian species. The electrical design factor is most crucial to avian electrocutions is the physical separation between energized and/or grounded structures, conductors, hardware, or equipment that can be bridges by birds to complete a circuit. As a general rule, electrocution can occur on structures with the following:

- Phase conductors separated by less than the wrist-to-wrist or head-to-foot (flesh-to-flesh) distance of a bird;
- Distance between grounded hardware (e.g. grounded wires, metal braces) and any energized phase conductor that is less than the wrist-to-wrist or head-to-foot (flesh-to-flesh) distance of a bird (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 2006).

To protect raptors and eagles, procedures should be followed as outlined in:

Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006. by Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). 2006. Distributed by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC).

Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: the State of the Art in 1994.
Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). 1994. Edison Electric Institute. Washington D.C.

Line alterations to prevent bird electrocutions should not necessarily be implemented after such events occur, as all electrocutions may not be known or documented. Incorporation of preventative measures along portions of the routes that are most attractive to birds (as indicated by frequent sightings) prior to any electrocutions is much preferred.

Preventative measures include: phase covers, bushing cover, arrester covers, cutout covers, jumper wire hoses, and covered conductors. In addition, perch discouragers may be used to deter birds from landing on hazardous (to birds) pole locations where isolate, covers, or other insulating techniques cannot be used (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 2006).

Use wood or non-conducting cross arms, for distribution lines, to minimize the possibility of electrical contact with perching birds.

When possible, for distribution lines, install electrical equipment on the bottom cross arm to allow top cross arm for perching.

TPWD recommends using nest management strategies which include installing nesting platforms on or near power structures to provide nesting sites for several protected species while minimizing the risks of electrocution, equipment damage, or outages (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 2006).

Avian Collision Risks

Birds typically establish flight corridors along and within river and creek drainages. Transmission lines that cross or are located very near these drainages should have line markers installed at the crossings or closest points to the drainages to reduce the potential of collisions by birds flying along or near the drainage corridors.

If transmission lines are located in an area with tall trees, the height of the transmission line should not be taller than the trees to reduce collision risks.

Transmission lines should be located to avoid separating feeding and nesting areas. If this cannot be avoided lines should be clearly marked to minimize avian collisions with the lines (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 1994).

Transmission lines should be buried, when practical, to reduce the risks of avian collisions.

Habitat Impacts

Construction should avoid identified wetland areas. Coordination with appropriate agencies should be accomplished to ensure regulatory compliance. Construction should occur during dry periods.

Construction should attempt to minimize the amount of flora and fauna disturbed. Reclamation of construction sites should emphasize replanting with native grasses and leguminous forbs.

Existing rights-of-way should be used to upgrade facilities, where possible, in order to avoid additional clearing and prevent adverse impacts associated with habitat loss and fragmentation of existing blocks of wooded habitat.

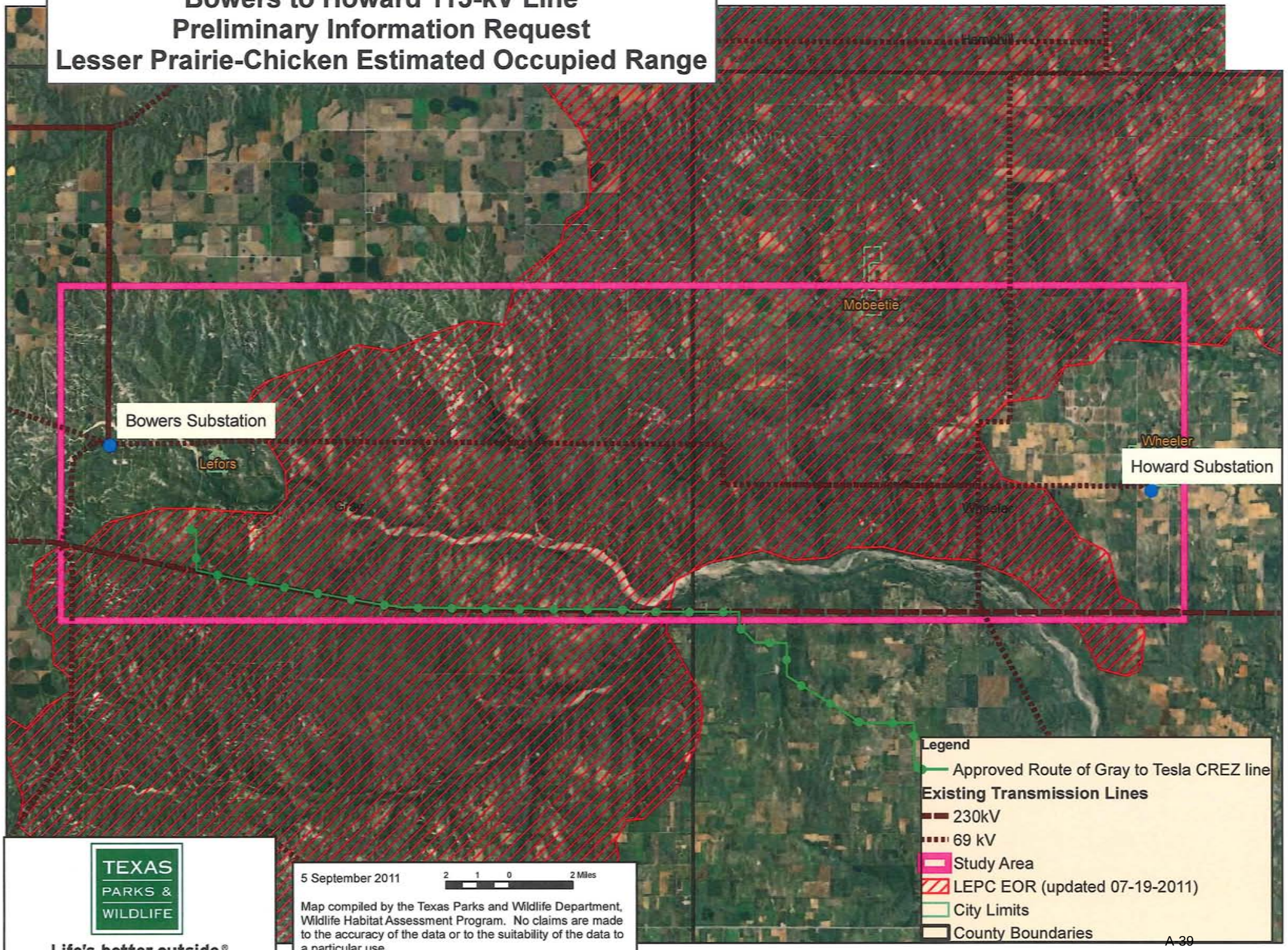
Forest and woody areas provide food and cover for wildlife, these cover types should be preserved. Mature trees, particularly those which produce nuts or acorns, should be retained. Shrubs and trees should be trimmed rather than cleared.

Transmission lines should be designed to cross streams at right angles, at points of narrowest width, and/or at the lowest banks whenever feasible to provide the least disturbance to stream corridor habitat.

Implementation of wildlife management plans along rights-of-way should be considered whenever feasible.

All pole design should be single phase (without arms), where possible, to preserve the aesthetics of the area.

Bowers to Howard 115-kV Line
Preliminary Information Request
Lesser Prairie-Chicken Estimated Occupied Range



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Map compiled by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program. No claims are made to the accuracy of the data or to the suitability of the data to a particular use.

FWS Regions 2 and 6

January 2011

Lesser Prairie-Chicken Endangered Species Act Listing Process Information

The lesser prairie-chicken is a high priority species for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), state wildlife agencies and many of our partners. The lesser prairie-chicken currently occupies a five-state range that includes Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado. The species faces a number of threats including habitat loss, modification, degradation, and fragmentation within its range. Lesser prairie-chickens need large tracts of relatively intact native grasslands and prairies to thrive. The FWS – in cooperation with state wildlife agencies, private landowners and other partners – is working to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken and the native grasslands and prairies that support the species.

Lesser prairie-chicken in early light. Photo credit: Kathy Granillo, USFWS.

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken and the Endangered Species Act Listing Process

The FWS is now in the initial stages of the listing process for the lesser prairie-chicken under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We anticipate that over the next 18 months, beginning in January 2011, we will be working to develop a proposed listing rule for the lesser prairie-chicken. The determination of whether to list the species as threatened or endangered will depend on the full assessment of the status of the lesser prairie-chicken in light of the five ESA listing factors:

- the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat or range;
- overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or education purposes;
- disease or predation;
- the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and
- other natural or manmade factors

If we find critical habitat to be prudent and determinable, we intend to propose critical habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken concurrent with the publication of the proposed listing.

The FWS will use the best available science to develop a proposed rule for the lesser prairie-chicken. We are committed to open communications and cooperation with our partners and the public as we move through this process. We will ask our partners to gather and provide scientific information that will help us develop the proposed rule. All information provided by our partners will be considered during the listing process.

Once the listing proposal is complete, we will publish the proposed rule in the Federal Register and a minimum 60-day public comment period will begin. During the comment period, the FWS will conduct one or more public hearings where interested parties can provide feedback on the proposed rule. Public informational meetings will also be held throughout the species' range to explain the proposed rule and answer any questions.

Ultimately, if the lesser prairie-chicken is proposed for listing, federal agencies will be required to confer with the FWS on any actions that are likely to jeopardize lesser prairie-chickens. There will be no restrictions against take unless the lesser prairie-chicken is listed. Take is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, collecting, planning or taking part in any conduct that could harm the lesser prairie-chicken or the habitat it needs to survive.

After the FWS reviews all of the public comments and any new scientific information received

during the comment period, we will make a final determination. A final determination may result in our decision to list the lesser prairie-chicken as threatened or endangered, or in the withdrawal of the proposed rule. If the species is listed and we propose to establish areas of critical habitat, we will finalize the critical habitat designation at the time of listing after taking into consideration the public and peer review comments. Under the ESA, we have one year from the date of publication of a proposed rule to make a final determination.

If the lesser prairie-chicken is listed as threatened, we may prepare a special rule known as a 4(d) rule. Section 4(d) of the ESA allows the FWS to prepare a unique definition of prohibited acts for threatened species that may not necessarily include every restriction included in section 9 of the ESA. For example, the FWS has prepared 4(d) rules for other threatened species that have allowed certain routine farming and ranching operations to continue.

Section 7 of the ESA directs federal agencies to use their legal authorities to carry out conservation programs for listed species. Section 7 also requires these agencies to ensure that any actions they fund, authorize, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the survival of any endangered or threatened species, or to adversely modify the species' designated critical habitat (if any). When a federal agency finds that one of its current or planned activities is likely to adversely affect a listed species or its designated critical habitat, the agency begins formal consultation by providing information to us with regard to the nature of the anticipated effects. If necessary, we will suggest reasonable and prudent measures, such as project modifications or rescheduling, to allow completion of the proposed activity.

Lesser Prairie-Chicken Conservation Efforts

The FWS, state wildlife agencies and private landowners are currently involved in a number of efforts to conserve the lesser prairie-chicken. We will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders as we move forward with the listing process and other lesser prairie-chicken conservation efforts.

State wildlife agencies, private landowners and energy companies (including some members of the oil and gas industry and other alternative energy development enterprises) are committed to lesser prairie-chicken conservation through Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) and Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCAs). CCAAs provide landowners and energy developers the opportunity to implement conservation practices along with assurances that, if the species is listed, they can continue to manage as outlined in their agreements with no additional requirements. Continuing to enroll landowners and energy companies in the CCAAs and CCAs already established in Texas and New Mexico – and developing similar voluntary agreements with Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado – is extremely important. The FWS remains committed to developing and implementing these CCAs and CCAAs for the lesser prairie-chicken. We recognize that lesser prairie-chicken conservation efforts rely on continued cooperation and coordination with our partners.

For more information on the listing process, please contact Sarah Quamme, Listing Coordinator for Region 2, at 505-248-6419 or Justin Shoemaker in Region 6 at 303-236-4214.

Connect with Us in the Southwest Region

Regional Website:
www.fws.gov/southwest/

Regional Facebook site:
http://www.facebook.com/USFWSSouthwest

Regional Twitter page:
http://twitter.com/USFWS_Southwest

Regional Flikr page:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_southwest/

News releases can be found at:
http://onlinepressroom.net/fws/

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
http://www.fws.gov **January 2011**

Protection of State-Listed Species
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Guidelines

Protection of State-Listed Species

State law prohibits any take (incidental or otherwise) of state-listed species. State-listed species may only be handled by persons possessing a **Scientific Collecting Permit** or a **Letter of Authorization** issued to relocate a species.

- **Section 68.002 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) Code** states that species of fish or wildlife indigenous to Texas are endangered if listed on the United States List of Endangered Native Fish and Wildlife or the list of fish or wildlife threatened with statewide extinction as filed by the director of Texas Park and Wildlife Department. Species listed as Endangered or Threatened by the Endangered Species Act are protected by both Federal and State Law. The State of Texas also lists and protects additional species considered to be threatened with extinction within Texas.

- **Animals** - Laws and regulations pertaining to state-listed endangered or threatened animal species are contained in **Chapters 67 and 68 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) Code** and **Sections 65.171 - 65.176 of Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).** State-listed animals may be found at **31 TAC §65.175 & 176.**

- **Plants** - Laws and regulations pertaining to endangered or threatened plant species are contained in **Chapter 88 of the TPW Code and Sections 69.01 - 69.9 of the TAC.** State-listed plants may be found at **31 TAC §69.8(a) & (b).**

Prohibitions on Take of State Listed Species

Section 68.015 of the TPW Code states that no person may capture, trap, take, or kill, or attempt to capture, trap, take, or kill, endangered fish or wildlife.

Section 65.171 of the Texas Administrative Code states that except as otherwise provided in this subchapter or **Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapters 67 or 68**, no person may take, possess, propagate, transport, export, sell or offer for sale, or ship any species of fish or wildlife listed by the department as endangered or threatened.

"Take" is defined in **Section 1.101(5) of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code** as:

> *"Take," except as otherwise provided by this code, means collect, hook, hunt, net, shoot, or snare, by any means or device, and includes an attempt to take or to pursue in order to take.*

Penalties

The penalties for take of state-listed species (**TPW Code, Chapter 67 or 68**) are:

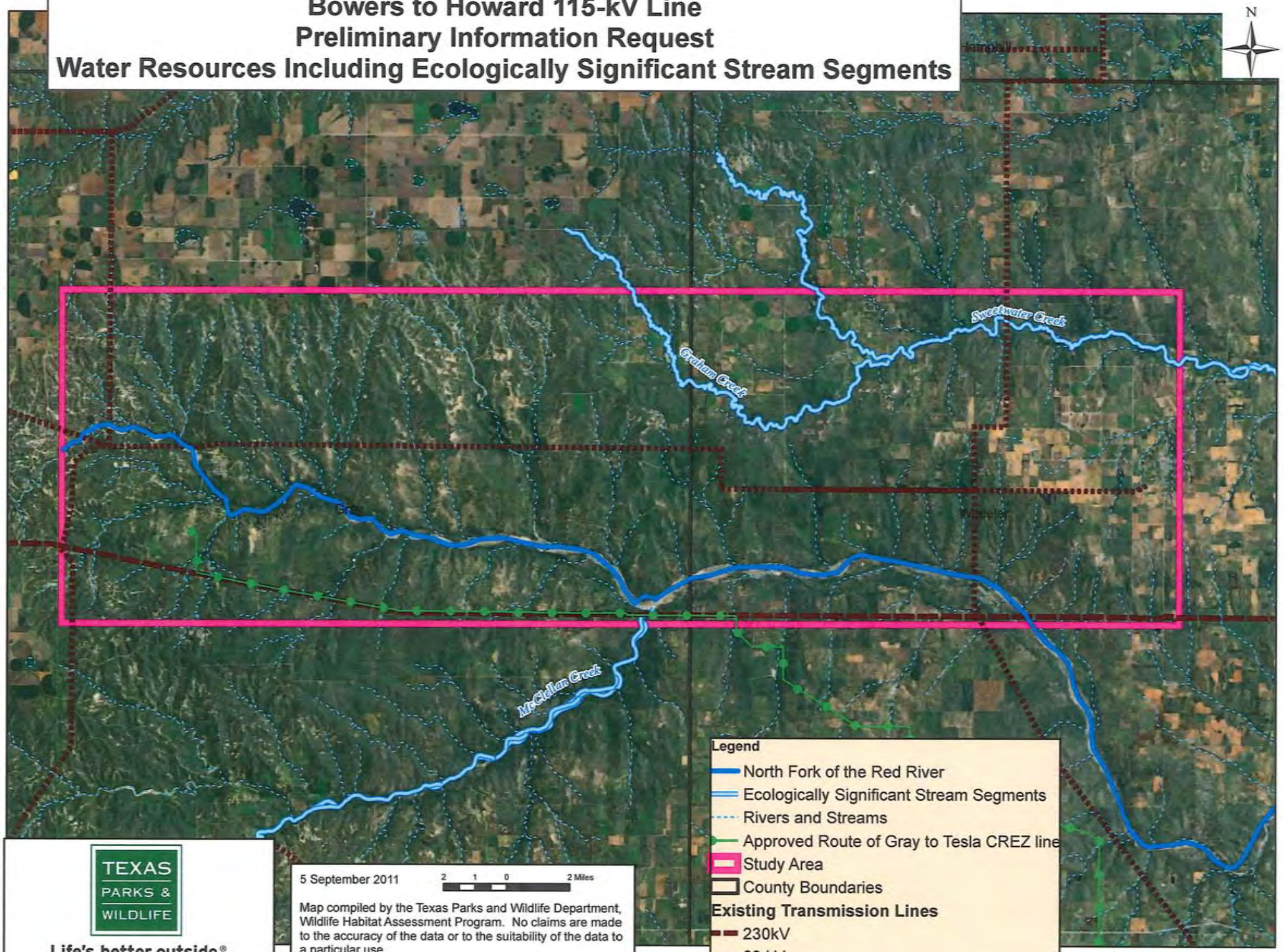
- 1ST Offense = Class C Misdemeanor:
  $25-$500 fine

- One or more prior convictions = Class B Misdemeanor
  $200-$2,000 fine and/or up to 180 days in jail.

- Two or more prior convictions = Class A Misdemeanor
  $500-$4,000 fine and/or up to 1 year in jail.

Restitution values apply and vary by species. Specific values and a list of species may be obtained from the TPWD Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program.

Bowers to Howard 115-kV Line
Preliminary Information Request
Water Resources Including Ecologically Significant Stream Segments



TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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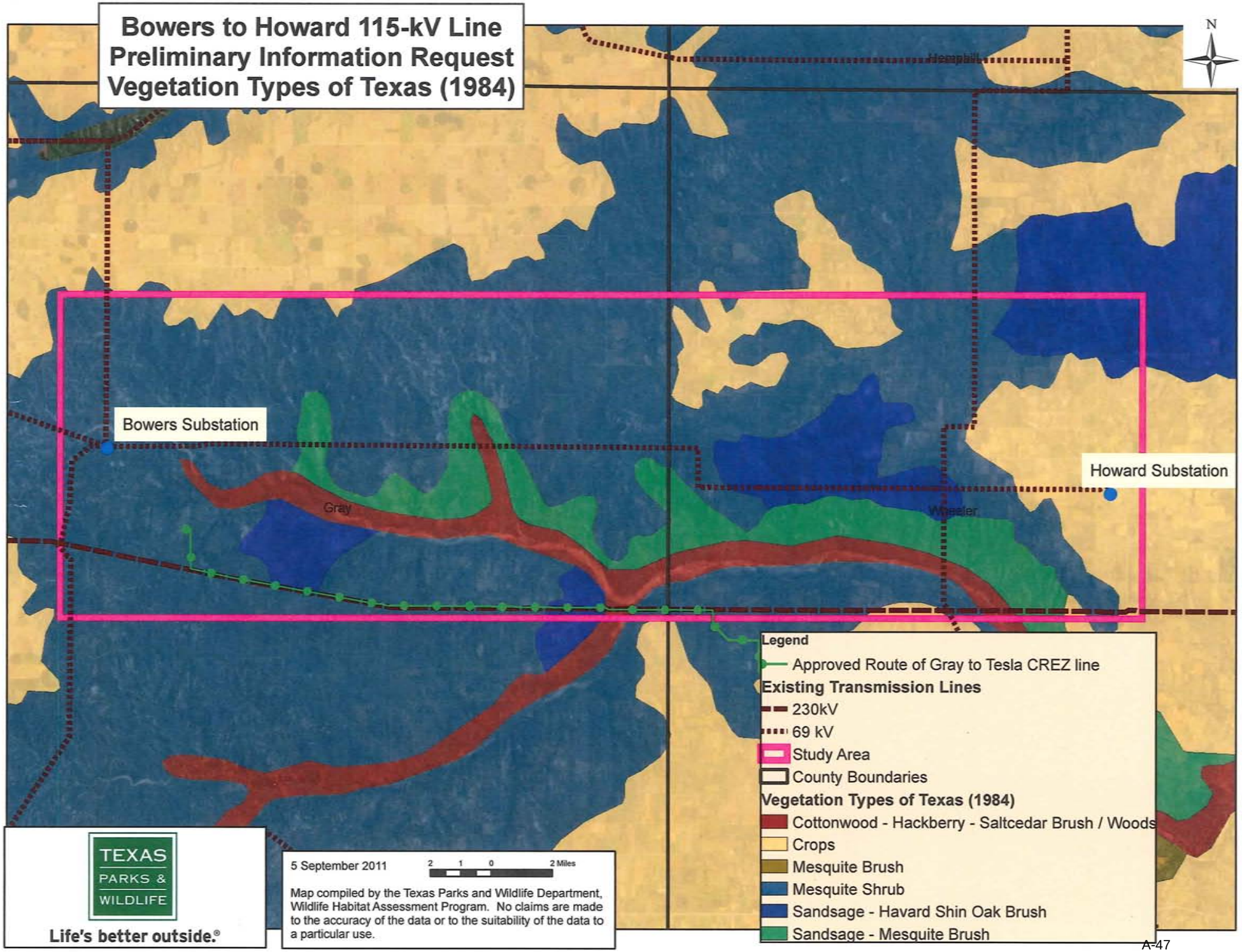
5 September 2011

2 1 0 2 Miles

Map compiled by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program. No claims are made to the accuracy of the data or to the suitability of the data to a particular use.


Bowers to Howard 115-kV Line
Preliminary Information Request
Vegetation Types of Texas (1984)
N
Hemphill
Bowers Substation
Howard Substation
Gray
Wheeler
Legend
Approved Route of Gray to Tesla CREZ line
Existing Transmission Lines
230kV
69 kV
Study Area
County Boundaries
Vegetation Types of Texas (1984)
Cottonwood - Hackberry - Saltcedar Brush / Woods
Crops
Mesquite Brush
Mesquite Shrub
Sandsage - Havard Shin Oak Brush
Sandsage - Mesquite Brush
TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE
Life's better outside.®
5 September 2011
2 1 0 2 Miles
Map compiled by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program. No claims are made to the accuracy of the data or to the suitability of the data to a particular use.

July 25, 2011

Mr. David Fulton
Director of Aviation
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11Th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. David Fulton:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Dianna F. Noble, P.E.
Director, Environmental Affairs
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11Th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Dianna F. Noble, P.E.:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Terry L. Keener, P.E.
Childress District Engineer
Texas Department of Transportation
7599 US 287
Childress, TX 79201-9705

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Terry L. Keener, P.E.:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Howard Holland, P.E.
Amarillo District Engineer
Texas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 7368
Amarillo, TX 79114

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Howard Holland, P.E.:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

Texas Department of Transportation

AVIATION DIVISION
125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • 512/416-4500 • FAX 512/416-4510

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonald
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

August 25, 2011

Dear Mr. Werth,

I received your letter dated July 25, 2011 concerning BMcD project # 62799.

Title 14, US Code, Part 77 of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) requires notice to the FAA if the facility to be constructed fits either of the below listed conditions:

77.13(1) Any construction or alteration of more than 200' above the surface of the ground at its location.

77.13 A 2 (i) Any vertical obstruction, temporary or permanent, that penetrates a 100 to 1 slope for a horizontal distance of 20,000 feet from the nearest point of the nearest runway, starting at the surface at the edge of that runway, for each airport with at least one runway more than 3,200 feet in actual length, excluding heliports. (ii) 50 to 1 for a horizontal distance of 10,000 feet from the nearest point of the nearest runway of each airport specified in paragraph (a)(5) of this section with its longest runway no more than 3,200 feet in actual length, excluding heliports. (iii) 25 to 1 for a horizontal distance of 5,000 feet from the nearest point of the nearest landing and takeoff area of each heliport specified in paragraph (a)(5) of this section.

There are no public use airports or heliports in the study area.

If the criteria of FAR 77.13(1) or 77.13 A 2 (i) are met, the FAA must be notified either by e-filing or by mail using FAA Form 7460-1, "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration". This form and supporting documents are available at www.faa.gov – Airports & Air Traffic – Airport Information – Programs – Obstruction Evaluations (Part 77).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (512) 416-4507 or <wgunn@dot.state.tx.us>

Sincerely,

William B. Gunn
Planning and Compliance

July 25, 2011

B6

Mr. David Fulton
Director of Aviation
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11Th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. David Fulton:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

Burns & McDonnell Consultants, Inc.
9400 Ward Parkway • Kansas City, MO 64114-3319
Tel: 816 333-9400 • Fax: 816 333-3690 • www.burnsmcd.com

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

Path: V:\SPS\62799_Bowers_Howard\GIS\Data\Files\ArcDocs\Agency Consultation Map.mxd

A-61

N

0 2 4 Miles

Legend

- Existing Substation
- Existing Transmission Line
- Proposed Cross Texas Transmission Line
- Study Area
- Municipal Area

Pipelines

- 6" - 15"
- Greater than 15"
- Railroads
- Road
- State Highway
- U.S. Highway
- Interstate

Power for the Plains

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Southwestern Public Service
Bowers to Howard 115kV
Transmission Line Project
Study Area Map
Date: 7/22/2011

Telephone Memorandum

Called:	William Gunn
Organization:	TxDOT Aviation Division
Caller:	Dusty Werth
Organization:	Burns & McDonnell
Subject of Call:	Heliport West of Mobeetie, Tx
Call Date:	January 2, 2011
Call Time:	8:41 AM
Phone No. Called:	512-416-4507
Project Name:	Bowers - Howard
Project No.:	62799
Memo Prepared By:	Dusty Werth
Date Memo Issued:	1/2/2011

Summary:

Mr. Gunn was called to obtain information on the potential heliport noted from review of aerials and field reconnaissance. The potential heliport is located approximately .8 miles west of Mobeetie on State Route 152 at the scenic pull off for the historic Ft. Elliot. Mr. Gunn checked all of his resources and found no information on this heliport in any of the TxDOT Aviation records. He did note that the heliport is likely for a private nature as it does not conform to any type of marking standard.

Mr. Gunn suggested that I contact the local TxDOT office as it appears to be located within the TxDOT right-of-way to see if they know any more specifics about the heliport.

Attachment

cc: files

Telephone Memorandum

Called:	Chris Reed
Organization:	TxDOT Childress Office
Caller:	Dusty Werth
Organization:	Burns & McDonnell
Subject of Call:	Heliport West of Mobeetie, Tx
Call Date:	January 2, 2011
Call Time:	8:45 AM
Phone No. Called:	(940) 937-7249
Project Name:	Bowers - Howard
Project No.:	62799
Memo Prepared By:	Dusty Werth
Date Memo Issued:	1/2/2011

Summary:

Mr. Reed was called upon recommendation from Mr. Gunn at the TxDOT Aviation Division to inquire about the heliport located west of Mobeetie, Tx. Mr. Reed knew of the heliport but was unclear as to the owner of the heliport. He thought that it was put in within the last 10 years at the request of the local EMS. He had no records in his office of the heliport and said he would try to find some records and return my call.

Mr. Reed returned my call at 10:15 and confirmed that the heliport was built in the 90's at the request of the local EMS. The EMS had received a grant to fund the project and TxDOT built the heliport in their ROW and TxDOT is the official owner of the heliport but it is not used by TxDOT and Mr. Reed was uncertain if it was actively used by anyone or who was responsible for maintaining the heliport.

Attachment

cc: files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Bill O'Hara
Director of Surveying
Texas General Land Office
1700 North Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Bill O'Hara:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Soils and geology
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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Hal Croft
Asset Management
Texas General Land Office
1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 840
Austin, TX 78701

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Hal Croft:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

August 2, 2011

Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonnell Consultants, Inc.
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

RE: Request for information; proposed Bowers to Howard 115-kV transmission line

Dear Mr. Werth:

There appears to be no conflict with Permanent School Fund properties as regards your proposed line from the Bowers to Howard substation.

However, in evaluating the depiction provided, the legend indicates that the proposed line is to run from four miles southeast of the Bowers substation to an unknown location south of Shamrock, TX. In either case, there appears to be no conflict with our properties in so far as the map depicts.

Please feel free to contact me at (512) 463-6432 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Siddall
Director, Inventory and Disposition

Stephen F. Austin Building • 1700 North Congress Avenue • Austin, Texas 78701-1495
Post Office Box 12873 • Austin, Texas 78711-2873
512-463-5001 • 800-998-4GLO
www.glo.state.tx.us

July 25, 2011

Ms. Melanie Callahan
Interim Executive Administrator
Texas Water Development Board
P.O. Box 13231
Austin, TX 78711-3231

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Melanie Callahan:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. F. Lawrence Oaks
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. F. Lawrence Oaks:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

August 16, 2011

Dusty Werth
Environmental Scientist
Burns & McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

Re: Project review under the Antiquities Code of Texas, Request for Information for Southwestern Public Service Company's newly proposed New Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line in Wheeler and Gray Counties, Texas (PUC)

Dear Mr. Werth

Thank you for your correspondence describing the above referenced project. This letter presents the comments of the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency responsible for administering the Antiquities Code of Texas.

The review staff, led by Tiffany Osburn, has completed its review. Important prehistoric and historic sites have been documented in this part of Texas. However, without the precise project area plotted on USGS 7.5' topographic maps, we cannot determine whether portions of the project area have been previously surveyed or which areas would be considered high probability for containing significant cultural resources.

We understand that SPS has retained your company to prepare the environmental documentation. Your archeological staff or consultants should identify the high probability areas (HPAs) for further investigation and submit their scope of work for our concurrence. You can obtain lists of most professional archeologists in Texas on-line at www.rpanet.org or http://www.council oftexasarcheologists.org. Please note that other professional archeologists meeting the qualifying standards may be used; see these standards at http://www.cr.nps.gov /local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm. Please check the THC's web page for survey procedures at http://www.thc/rulesregs/rrother.shtml

We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your assistance in this state review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Tiffany Osburn at 512/463-8883.

Sincerely,

William A. Martin

for
Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer

MW/to

July 25, 2011

Mr. Gary Pitner
Executive Director
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
P.O. Box 9257
Amarillo, TX 79105-9257

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Gary Pitner:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Region VI Environment & Historic Preservation
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Frc 800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209-3698

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear :

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209-3698

FEMA

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
REGION VI
MITIGATION DIVISION

PUBLIC NOTICE REVIEW/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTATION

☐ We have no comments to offer. ☒ We offer the following comments:

WE WOULD REQUEST THAT THE LOCAL FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR BE CONTACTED FOR THE REVIEW AND POSSIBLE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS PROJECT. WE WOULD REQUEST PROJECT TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH EO11988 & EO 11990

Ben Buchanan
Community Development Coord./
Floodplain Administrator
City of Livingston
200 W Church St.
Livingston, TX 77351
(936) 328-5168

REVIEWER:

Mayra G. Diaz
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch
Mitigation Division
(940) 898-5541

DATE: August 5, 2011

No Action for EHP
K Jaynes
7/28/11

July 25, 2011

Region VI Environment & Historic Preservation
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Frc 800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209-3698

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project
BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Sir or Madam:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

August 12, 2011

Mr. Ben Buchanan
Community Development Coord./
Floodplain Administrator
City of Livingston
200 W Church St
Livingston, TX 77351

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project
BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Ben Buchanan:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

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In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Heather Whitlaw
West Texas Sub-Office, Field Biologist
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 713
Canadian, TX 79014

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Heather Whitlaw:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Burns & McDonnell has already requested and received the Texas Natural Diversity Database data (TXNDD) as well as the county lists of threatened and endangered species. The study area is located within the estimated occupied range of the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) which is currently a candidate for listing under the ESA. Updates to the LPC estimated occupied range shapefile as well as any maps of known Leks, species sightings, and Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) are also requested so that Burns & McDonnell can better avoid impacts to this species.

Below is a list of threatened and endangered species that could potentially occur within the study area although there are no documented occurrences of these species present in the TXNDD data currently. A review of the habitat within the study area and a review of the habitats for these species indicate that habitat may be present for the piping plover, lesser prairie chicken, and Texas horned lizard.

Name	**Scientific Name**	**Federal Status**	**State Status**	**Extirpated**
Piping Plover	*Charadrius melodus*	LT	T	
Whooping Crane	*Grus americana*	LE	E	
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*	C		
American Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus anatum*		T	
Bald Eagle*	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*		T	
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*		T	
Texas horned lizard	*Phrynosoma cornutum*		T	
Black-footed ferret	*Mustela nigripes*	LE		Y
Gray wolf	*Canis lupus*	LE	E	Y

* Although the Bald Eagle has been delisted it is still afforded protection by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (16 U.S.C. 668-668c) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712).

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
WinSystems Center Building
711 Stadium Drive, Suite 252
Arlington, Texas 76011

In Reply Refer to:
21420-2011-TA-0361

August 17, 2011

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns and McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, Missouri 64114

Dear Mr. Werth:

This responds to your August 5, 2011, letter requesting information on threatened and endangered species and other sensitive fish and wildlife resources regarding the proposed Xcel Energy, Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard Project in Gray and Wheeler Counties, Texas. We are providing this information to assist you in assessing and avoiding impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species, wetlands, and other fish and wildlife resources. It is our understanding that the proposed project would involve the installation of approximately 33 miles of 115 kV transmission line between the existing Bowers Substation and the existing Howard Substation.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Our records indicate that the following federally listed endangered (E) and candidate (C) species are known to occur in both Gray and Wheeler Counties, Texas:

interior least tern (*Sternula antillarum*) – E
lesser prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) – C
whooping crane (*Grus americana*) – E

For information on the general biology of these species, as well as updated county by county species lists, visit our website at: http://fws.gov/southwest/es.

The bald eagle was removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list on August 8, 2007. However, bald eagles are still afforded safeguards under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. We recommend all construction activities be conducted in accordance with the Service's National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines which may be accessed at the following address: http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/baldeagle.htm.

The interior least tern may occur along portions of the North Fork of the Red River in Gray and Wheeler Counties. Interior least terns nest on bare to sparsely vegetated sandbars in Texas rivers, from late April through mid-September. Nesting areas are ephemeral, changing as sandbars form, move and become vegetated. Prior to fall migration, least terns gather in staging areas in late July and August at water bodies (rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, and ponds) with concentrations of small fish. Transmission line

construction should be avoided in nesting and staging areas from May through August, and power lines near the Red River should be marked with bird flight diverters.

It appears that neither of the two existing substations lie within the 200-mile wide corridor extending from Canada to the Texas Coast in which 94% of whooping crane sightings have occurred during their annual migration; however, whooping cranes may occur transiently in Gray and Wheeler Counties while searching for stop-over habitat. Although whooping crane migratory flights are generally at altitudes of between 1,000 and 6,000 feet, they fly at lower altitudes when seeking stop-over habitats such as reservoirs, large ponds, rivers and wetlands. They will often make low flights up to two miles from a stop-over site to forage late in the day or in early morning. They may also interrupt migration flights to drink and/or forage in agricultural fields or wetlands for brief periods and may be at low altitudes during mid-day. For these reasons, the Service is concerned with the possibility of whooping crane collisions with transmission lines, which are known to be the highest cause of mortality of fledged whooping cranes. The Service recommends marking power lines with red aviation balls or similar bird diverters near wetlands and riparian corridors, which has been shown to reduce the incidence of collision by 60 to 70%.

Candidate species, such as the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC), are not afforded federal protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); however, we recommend that potential impacts to these species be considered during project planning. Research has shown that the LPC demonstrates avoidance of tall, vertical structures. Therefore, fragmentation of LPC habitat by tall vertical structures could negatively affect this species and impact their future status under the ESA. As you have indicated in your letter, a substantial portion of the project area overlaps the LPC's estimated occupied range. Therefore, we recommend that the project site be surveyed for the presence of the LPC and its preferred habitat. Enclosed is an example of a road survey protocol for the LPC that you may find useful. For further LPC survey information please contact Heather Whitlaw, Southern Plains Coordinator, at 806-742-4968.

Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat

The map included with your letter indicates that the transmission line may cross several riparian corridors. The clearing of vegetation from riparian areas associated with the construction of transmission line right-of-way (ROW) can result in significant impacts to fish and wildlife habitat. These impacts can include direct habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, soil erosion, and alteration of the hydrology of the impacted area. Numerous species of resident and migratory wildlife depend on riparian corridors for food, water, nesting habitat, and often as dispersal and/or travel corridors. Riparian corridors often furnish some of the best wildlife habitat in an area and may provide the only suitable habitat for certain wildlife species. Therefore, we recommend avoiding riparian areas to the greatest extent possible. The appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office should be contacted to determine if a permit is required by that Agency prior to commencement of proposed activities within these sensitive areas.

The Service is concerned with the construction of new power line ROWs that extend for miles creating large acreage of linear corridors. These ROWs frequently fragment valuable habitats which may have adverse effects on migratory birds and resident wildlife species. For this reason, it is important to consider all possible route alignments in the planning phase of new power line ROWs. In addition to considering cost, feasibility, regulations, and aesthetics in the planning of ROWs, other factors such as land use, topography, habitat type, and method of ROW clearing should be explored if all impacts to fish and wildlife resources are to be avoided and/or minimized to the maximum extent possible. We recommend that Southwestern Public Service consider ROW routes which parallel existing ROWs in order to minimize overall environmental impacts which might result from the acquisition of new ROW.

Management techniques have been developed for the construction of power lines that mitigate the potential environmental impacts commonly associated with these projects. These techniques involve the alignment of power lines with regard to the terrain, vegetation, and wildlife species present within the general study area and are designed to lessen the fragmenting of forested areas by maintaining natural migratory corridors across ROWs. We recommend the most current and innovative methods of minimizing environmental impacts from ROW clearing be investigated and implemented where practical to reduce the permanent loss of wildlife habitat associated with the proposed actions.

We recommend the environmental assessment for the proposed project include an analysis of route alternatives, an assessment of each route alternative's anticipated impacts to fish and wildlife resources, and a selection of a preferred route alternative which would result in the least amount of overall impacts. We have enclosed some general guidelines for linear utility construction to assist you in designing the proposed action to minimize effects to fish and wildlife resources.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the transmission line projects and look forward to working together in the future for the benefit of our fish and wildlife resources. If we can further assist you or answer any questions, please contact John Morse of my staff at (817) 277-1100. Please refer to the Service Consultation number (21420-2011-TA-0361) in any future correspondence regarding these projects.

Sincerely,

Tom Cloud

Thomas J. Cloud, Jr.
Field Supervisor

Enclosures

LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN ROAD SURVEY

COUNTY: _____ **DATE OF SURVEY:** _____

OBSERVER: _____ **SURVEY ROUTE:** _____

START: **TIME** _____ **WIND mph** _____ **Direction** _____ **TEMP** _____

END: **TIME** _____ **WIND mph** _____ **Direction** _____ **TEMP** _____

STOP NUMBER	TIME AT STOP	CHICKENS HEARD		CHICKENS SEEN	Location	WAY PT #	Comments
		PRESENT	DIRECTION				
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							

Lesser Prairie Chicken Road Survey Protocol

Dates of Survey – Routes should be surveyed from April 1st till the end of April.

Starting Time – Routes should be started approximately 20 minutes before sunrise and completed around 9:00 – 9:30 AM. Do not survey after 9:30 AM.

Survey Routes – Survey routes should be arranged in an east to west fashion as much as possible. Routes should be driven from east to west.

Top of Survey Form - Please fill in the top of the survey form to the best of your ability.

Survey Methodology – It is assumed for these surveys that when Lesser Prairie Chickens (LPC's) are booming you can hear the birds for approximately one mile. Please try and follow this methodology as best as possible.

1. Once the route has been started, drive one mile, stop shut off vehicle, get out of vehicle and listen for three minutes.
2. If chicken booming is detected, mark the "Chicken Present" box on the Field Survey Form and record the location, direction the booming was coming from, time and location in UTM using GPS information. If the observer marks the positive locations with waypoints (preferred) then the observer will record the waypoint number.
3. After three minutes, drive another mile stop and turn off the vehicle and listen for three minutes until the survey route is completed.
4. If you observe LPC's between stops record the number in the "Comments" section of the Field Survey Form. If you observe chickens booming at a stop also record the number of birds. Or if there is any other information such as heavy background noise such as traffic, oil field activity, irrigation motors or tractors, record that information in the "Comments" section.

Surveys should be completed or no longer run after 9:30 AM. If the route is not finished it should be finished the next day before new routes are assigned and started.

Data Collection –Data collection should be done in UTM (either zone 13 or 14; see attached map), NAD 83 and the units are meters. This will allow the data to be projected onto DRG's or DOQ's without doing conversions.

Weather – Do not conduct surveys when winds exceed 20 mph or if raining. Light drizzle is acceptable.

General Recommendations for Avoiding and/or Minimizing Environmental Impacts from Utility Construction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service places a high priority on the conservation of wetlands and riparian corridors due to the inherent value and significant level of benefits these areas provide to a multitude of fish and wildlife species. In addition to the food, shelter, and habitat they provide to fish and wildlife, these areas also furnish invaluable ecological services to the watershed and the community. They act as a buffer zone for pollutants and sediment entering the stream via storm water runoff. They also prevent erosion, and provide a pervious surface to facilitate the percolation of storm water to prevent flooding.

The best method of avoiding and/or minimizing environmental impacts caused by linear utility construction is to utilize existing right-of-way (transmission line, highway, pipeline, etc.) for the new route. This often eliminates or greatly reduces the need to clear wildlife habitat for construction. The following additional recommendations for avoiding and/or minimizing construction related impacts commonly associated with utility projects should also be considered, especially when using existing right-of-way is not possible. These are only general recommendations; details for avoiding and minimizing all potential impacts should take into account specific project and site descriptions at each sensitive area. The development of specific mitigating measures for anticipated environmental impacts should focus on protecting the integrity of stream banks, riparian zones, and wetlands.

- **Route alignment should be adjusted where necessary to avoid wetland impacts and to avoid losses of moderate-aged to mature-aged trees.** Utilizing existing right-of-ways reduces environmental impacts usually associated with utility construction. However, where proposed routes would require new right-of-way, minor adjustments in route alignment could minimize impacts to fish and wildlife habitat. Route modification should include avoiding wetlands and crossing creeks and streams where the riparian corridor is at its minimum width.

- **Installing visible markers on overhead power lines should be considered for unavoidable crossings of high bird use areas.** Avian collisions with overhead power lines may be a problem if lines are located close to high bird use areas, such as lakes, rivers, wetlands, and playas. If it is determined that power lines may cross or be placed adjacent to high bird use areas, installing bird flight diverters may reduce the chance of avian collisions. Information on marking power lines is described in "*Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: the State of the Art in 1994, Avian Power Line Interaction Committee 1994, Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.*"

- **Temporary workspaces at stream crossings should be placed outside of the riparian zone of the respective stream.** Temporary workspaces are often needed where routes cross creeks, streams, roads, railways, or other linear obstacles. Should temporary workspaces be necessary they should not be located within the riparian zone of creeks, streams, or other water bodies. They should also not be located within wetlands.

- **Temporary right-of-ways within or adjacent to riparian areas should be hand cleared.** Clearing of permanent right-of-way and the construction and installation of utilities require the use of heavy machinery. In riparian and other wooded areas, the use of heavy machinery and other equipment is often detrimental to the underground root

system of adjacent trees not intended for removal. Oaks are particularly sensitive to ground disturbance caused by heavy equipment and often die when their roots are damaged. Temporary areas cleared by machinery may also reduce subsequent revegetation by native hardwoods due to the damaged root mat from which new saplings originate. Therefore, we recommend temporary workspaces and right-of-ways within or adjacent to riparian corridors be cleared with chainsaws to avoid additional tree loss and encourage new hardwood growth following construction.

- **All temporary right-of-ways and workspaces should be revegetated immediately following construction with native vegetation appropriate to habitat type.** It is important that disturbed areas be revegetated following construction activities to prevent erosion, reduce sedimentation, and decrease the chance of non-native, invasive plant species from becoming established. Species commonly used for soil stabilization are listed in the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) Native Tree and Plant Directory, available from TDA at P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas, 78711.

- **Right-of-way width should be reduced to the minimum amount necessary.** New right-of-way projects usually include a temporary right-of-way for allowing access for equipment and workspace for construction. The environmental consequences of using temporary right-of-ways may be minimal, especially when they are located adjacent to roads or occur in pastures and agricultural areas. However, at stream crossings, temporary right-of-ways may remove valuable wildlife habitat. For these areas, additional workspace should be placed outside of the riparian corridor and every effort be made to avoid clearing more vegetation than is necessary to install the utility.

- **Unavoidable wetland impacts should be mitigated through in-kind creation or restoration of wetland areas that establish similar functions and values of the affected wetlands.** Federal policy provides that wetland losses be mitigated to restore lost habitat values of equal or greater value to fish and wildlife resources. This includes restoring or creating areas that retain the primary hydrological characteristics of the affected wetlands and revegetating the disturbed land with native plant species appropriate to habitat type.

We also recommend all areas that would be avoided using these or other measures (e.g., mature trees, riparian areas) be marked with orange guard fence or flagged prior to construction to prevent accidental clearing by work crews. All mitigation measure developed for a specific project should be incorporated into the Environmental Assessment for the proposed project as well the project plans to ensure implementation by the contractor. Additionally, if impacts to wetlands, creeks, streams, or other water bodies are anticipated, you should contact the appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office to determine if a permit is required by that Agency prior to commencement of construction activities.

July 25, 2011

Mr. David Manning
Tulsa District - Regulatory Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1645 S 101 E Ave
Tulsa, OK 74128-4609

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. David Manning:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, TULSA DISTRICT
1645 SOUTH 101ST EAST AVENUE
TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74128-4609

August 25, 2011

Regulatory Office

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

Dear Mr. Werth:

Thank you for your letter dated July 25, 2011, concerning a proposal by Southwest Public Service to construct a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. As proposed the line will connect existing substations from Bowers to Howard, located within Gray and Wheeler Counties, Texas.

We have reviewed this project in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Under Section 404, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Our responsibility under Section 10 is to regulate any work in, or affecting, navigable waters of the United States. Any such discharge or work requires Department of the Army authorization in the form of a permit.

We are unable to determine from the information that you provided in your letter whether Department of the Army authorization will be required, and if so, in what form. The proposed construction activities may be authorized by a general permit, such as Nationwide permit 12 for Utility Line Activities or Nationwide permit 18 for Minor Discharges. We have enclosed a copy of these Nationwide permits for your reference. If the project does not meet the terms and conditions of a Nationwide permit, an individual permit would be required for authorization.

So that we may continue our evaluation of your proposed project, we request that you provide us with the following information:

1. A detailed project description.

2. A map (or maps) showing the entire route of the project.

3. The proposed route of the project on 8 ½ by 11-inch copies of 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps, national wetland inventory maps, published soil survey maps, scaled aerial photographs, and/or other suitable maps. Identify all base maps, (e.g. "Wheeler, Texas" 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle, Natural Resources Conservation Service Gray County Soil Survey Sheet 10). Clearly mark (such as by circling) and number the location of each proposed utility line crossing of a water of the United States and any appurtenant structure(s) in waters of the United States on the map. Waters of the United States include streams and rivers and most lakes, ponds, mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, wet meadows, abandoned sand and gravel mining and construction pits, and similar areas.

4. For each potential utility line crossing or appurtenant structure in a water of the United States, provide the following site specific information when applicable:

   a. 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle map name, universal transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates, county, waterway name;

   b. A brief characterization of the crossing area (stream, forested wetland, non-forested wetlands, etc.) including the National Wetland Inventory Classification and soil series;

   c. Distance between ordinary high water marks (OHWM);

   d. Proposed method of crossing;

   e. Length of proposed crossing;

   f. Width of temporary and permanent rights-of-way;

   g. Type and amount of dredged or fill material proposed to be discharged below the OHWM;

   h. Acreage of proposed temporary and permanent adverse impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands; and

   i. A typical cross-section.

We encourage you to consult with a qualified specialist (biologist, ecologist or other specialist qualified in jurisdictional determinations) who is familiar with the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual, the Great Plains Regional Supplement and the USACE Regulatory Program (33 CFR Parts 320-331).

Please consider the avoidance and minimization of adverse impacts to streams, wetlands, and other waters of the United States in planning this project. Forward your response to us as soon as possible so that we may continue our evaluation of your request. Please note that it is unlawful to start work without a Department of the Army permit when one is required.

This project has been assigned Identification Number SWT-2011-449. Please include this number during any future correspondence related to this project. Failure to reference the project number may result in a delay. If you have any questions regarding this review or our regulatory program, please contact Mr. Jamie Hyslop at the address above or telephone (918)669-7618.

For more information on the USACE Regulatory Program, please reference the Tulsa District Regulatory Branch homepage at www.swt.usace.army.mil/permits/permits.cfm. If you desire to complete a "Customer Service Survey" on your experience with the Corps Regulatory Program, you are invited to visit http://per2.nwp.usace.army.mil/survey.html on the internet at your convenience and submit your comments.

Sincerely,

for Vicki G. Dixon
Acting Chief, Regulatory Office

Enclosures

Nationwide Permit 18
Minor Discharges

Minor discharges of dredged or fill material into all waters of the United States, provided the activity meets all of the following criteria:
(a) The quantity of discharged material and the volume of area excavated do not exceed 25 cubic yards below the plane of the ordinary high water mark or the high tide line;
(b) The discharge will not cause the loss of more than 1/10 acre of waters of the United States; and
(c) The discharge is not placed for the purpose of a stream diversion.
Notification: The permittee must submit a pre-construction notification (PCN) to the District Engineer (DE) prior to commencing the activity if:
(1) The discharge or the volume of area excavated exceeds 10 cubic yards below the plane of the ordinary high water mark or the high tide line, or
(2) the discharge is in a special aquatic site, including wetlands. (See General Condition (GC) 27.)

This Nationwide Permit (NWP) is authorized pursuant to Section 404(e) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 401 et seq). The effective date for this NWP (33 CFR 330), GCs, and definitions is March 19, 2007, as published in the Federal Register. The NWP, GCs, and definitions expire on March 18, 2012.

General Conditions
1. Navigation.
a. No activity may cause more than a minimal adverse effect on navigation.
b. Any safety lights and signals prescribed by the U.S. Coast Guard, through regulations or otherwise, must be installed and maintained at the permittee's expense on authorized facilities in navigable waters of the United States.
c. The permittee understands and agrees that, if future operations by the United States require the removal, relocation, or other alteration, of the structure or work herein authorized, or if, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Army or his authorized representative, said structure or work shall cause unreasonable obstruction to the free navigation of the navigable waters, the permittee will be required, upon due notice from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), to remove, relocate, or alter the structural work or obstructions caused thereby, without expense to the United States. No claim shall be made against the United States on account of any such removal or alteration.
2. Aquatic Life Movements. No activity may substantially disrupt the necessary life cycle movements of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the waterbody, including those species that normally migrate through the area, unless the activity's primary purpose is to impound water. Culverts placed in streams must be installed to maintain low flow conditions.
3. Spawning Areas. Activities in spawning areas during spawning seasons must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Activities that result in the physical destruction (e.g., through excavation, fill, or downstream smothering by substantial turbidity) of an important spawning area are not authorized.
4. Migratory Bird Breeding Areas. Activities in waters of the United States that serve as breeding areas for migratory birds must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable.
5. Shellfish Beds. No activity may occur in areas of concentrated shellfish populations, unless the activity is directly related to a shellfish harvesting activity authorized by NWPs 4 and 48.
6. Suitable Material. No activity may use unsuitable material (e.g., trash, debris, car bodies, asphalt, etc.). Material used for construction or discharged must be free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts (see Section 307 of the CWA).
7. Water Supply Intakes. No activity may occur in the proximity of a public water supply intake, except where the activity is for the repair or improvement of public water supply intake structures or adjacent bank stabilization.
8. Adverse Effects From Impoundments. If the activity creates an impoundment of water, adverse effects to the aquatic system due to accelerating the passage of water, and/or restricting its flow must be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.
9. Management of Water Flows. To the maximum extent practicable, the pre-construction course, condition, capacity, and location of open waters must be maintained for each activity, including stream channelization and stormwater management activities, except as provided below. The activity must be constructed to withstand expected high flows. The activity must not restrict or impede the passage of normal or high flows, unless the primary purpose of the activity is to impound water or manage high flows. The activity may alter the pre-construction course, condition, capacity, and location of open waters if it benefits the aquatic environment (e.g., stream restoration or relocation activities).
10. Fills Within 100-Year Flood Plains. The activity must comply with applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved State or local flood plain management requirements.
11. Equipment. Heavy equipment working in wetlands or mudflats must be placed on mats, or other measures must be taken to minimize soil disturbance.

historic resources can be sought from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), as appropriate, and the National Register of Historic Places (see 33 CFR 330.4(g)). The DE shall make a reasonable and good faith effort to carry out appropriate identification efforts, which may include background research, consultation, oral history interviews, sample field investigation, and field survey. Based on the information submitted and these efforts, the DE shall determine whether the proposed activity has the potential to cause an effect on the historic properties. Where the non-Federal applicant has identified historic properties which the activity may have the potential to cause effects and so notified
the Corps, the non-Federal applicant shall not begin the activity until notified by the DE either that the activity has no potential to cause effects or that consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA has been completed.
d. The DE will notify the prospective permittee within 45 days of receipt of a complete PCN whether NHPA Section 106 consultation is required. Section 106 consultation is not required when the Corps determines that the activity does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties (see 36 CFR §800.3(a)). If NHPA Section 106 consultation is required and will occur, the DE will notify the non-Federal applicant that he or she cannot begin work until Section 106 consultation is completed.
e. Prospective permittees should be aware that Section 110k of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. 470h-2(k)) prevents the Corps from granting a permit or other assistance to an applicant who, with intent to avoid the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, has intentionally, significantly, or adversely affected a historic property to which the permit would relate, or having legal power to prevent it, allowed such significant adverse effect to occur, unless the Corps, after consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), determines that circumstances justify granting such assistance despite the adverse effect created or permitted by the applicant. If circumstances justify granting the assistance, the Corps is required to notify the ACHP and provide documentation specifying the circumstances, explaining the degree of damage to the integrity of any historic properties affected, and proposed mitigation. This documentation must include any views obtained from the applicant, SHPO/THPO, appropriate Indian tribes if the undertaking occurs on or affects historic properties on Tribal lands or affects properties of interest to those tribes, and other parties known to have a legitimate interest in the impacts to the permitted activity on historic properties.
19. Designated CRW. The CRW include State natural heritage sites, and outstanding National resource waters or other waters officially designated by a State as having particular environmental or ecological significance and identified by the DE after notice and opportunity for public comment. The DE may also designate additional CRW after notice and opportunity for comment.
a. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States are not authorized by NWPs 7, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 29, 31, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 49, and 50 for any activity within, or directly affecting, CRW, including wetlands adjacent to such waters.
b. For NWPs 3, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 38, notification is required in accordance with GC 27, for any activity proposed in the designated CRW including wetlands adjacent to those waters. The DE may authorize activities under these NWPs only after it is determined that the impacts to the GC will be no more than minimal.
20. Mitigation. The DE will consider the following factors when determining appropriate and practicable mitigation necessary to ensure that adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal:
a. The activity must be designed and constructed to avoid and minimize adverse effects, both temporary and permanent, to waters of the United States to the maximum extent practicable at the project site (i.e., on site).
b. Mitigation in all its forms (avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing, or compensating) will be required to the extent necessary to ensure that the adverse effects to the aquatic environment are minimal.
c. Compensatory mitigation at a minimum one-for-one ratio will be required for all wetland losses that exceed 1/10 acre and require PCN, unless the DE determines in writing that some other form of mitigation would be more environmentally appropriate and provides a project-specific waiver of this requirement. For wetland losses of 1/10 acre or less that require PCN, the DE may determine on a case-by-case basis that compensatory mitigation is required to ensure that the activity results in minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment. Since the likelihood of success is greater and the impacts to potentially valuable uplands are reduced, wetland restoration should be the first compensatory mitigation option considered.
d. For losses of streams or other open waters that require PCN, the DE may require compensatory mitigation, such as stream restoration, to ensure that the activity results in minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment.
e. Compensatory mitigation will not be used to increase the acreage losses allowed by the acreage limits of the NWPs. For example, if an NWP has an acreage limit of 1/2 acre, it cannot be used to authorize any project resulting in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the United States, even if compensatory mitigation is provided that replaces or restores some of the lost waters. However, compensatory mitigation can and should be used, as necessary, to ensure that a project already meeting the established acreage limits also satisfies the minimal impact requirement associated with the NWPs.
f. Compensatory mitigation plans for projects in or near streams or other open waters will normally include a requirement for the establishment, maintenance, and legal protection (e.g., conservation easements) of riparian areas next to open waters. In

(1) Until notified in writing by the DE that the activity may proceed under the NWP with any special conditions imposed by the district or division engineer; or
(2) If 45 calendar days have passed from the DE's receipt of the complete PCN and the prospective permittee has not received written notice from the district or division engineer. However, if the permittee was required to notify the Corps pursuant to GC 17 that listed species or critical habitat might affected or in the vicinity of the project, or to notify the Corps pursuant to GC 18 that the activity may have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, the permittee cannot begin the activity until receiving written notification from the Corps that is "no effect" on listed species or "no potential to cause effects" on historic properties, or that any consultation required under Section 7 of the ESA (see 33 CFR 330.4(f)) and/or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation (see 33 CFR 330.4(g)) is completed. Also, work cannot begin under NWPs 21, 49, or 50 until the permittee has received written approval from the Corps. If the proposed activity requires a written waiver to exceed specified limits of an NWP, the permittee cannot begin the activity until the DE issues the waiver. If the district or division engineer notifies the permittee in writing that an individual permit is required within 45 calendar days of receipt of a complete PCN, the permittee cannot begin the activity until an individual permit has been obtained. Subsequently, the permittee's right to proceed under the NWP may be modified, suspended, or revoked only in accordance with the procedure set forth in 33 CFR 330.5(d)(2).
b. Contents of PCN: The PCN must be in writing and include the following information:
(1) Name, address and telephone numbers of the prospective permittee;
(2) Location of the proposed project;
(3) A description of the proposed project; the project's purpose; direct and indirect adverse environmental effects the project would cause; any other NWP(s), regional general permit(s), or individual permit(s) used or intended to be used to authorize any part of the proposed project or any related activity. The description should be sufficiently detailed to allow the DE to determine that the adverse effects of the project will be minimal and to determine the need for compensatory mitigation. Sketches should be provided when necessary to show that the activity complies with the terms of the NWP. (Sketches usually clarify the project and when provided, results in a quicker decision.);
(4) The PCN must include a delineation of special aquatic sites and other waters of the United States on the project site. Wetland delineations must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps. The permittee may ask the Corps to delineate the special aquatic sites and other waters of the United States, but there may be a delay if the Corps does the delineation, especially if the project site is large or contains many waters of the United States. Furthermore, the 45-day period will not start until the delineation has been submitted to or completed by the Corps, where appropriate;
(5) If the proposed activity will result in the loss of greater than 1/10 acre of wetlands and a PCN is required, the prospective permittee must submit a statement describing how the mitigation requirement will be satisfied. As an alternative, the prospective permittee may submit a conceptual or detailed mitigation plan.
(6) If any listed species or designated critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, or if the project is located in designated critical habitat, for non-Federal applicants the PCN must include the name(s) of those endangered or threatened species that might be affected by the proposed work or utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work. Federal applicants must provide documentation demonstrating compliance with the ESA; and
(7) For an activity that may affect a historic property listed on, determined to be eligible for listing on, or potentially eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places, for non-Federal applicants the PCN must state which historic property may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic property. Federal applicants must provide documentation demonstrating compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.
c. Form of PCN: The standard individual permit application form (Form ENG 4345) may be used, but the completed application form must clearly indicate that it is a PCN and must include all of the information required in paragraphs (b)(1) through (7) of this GC. A letter containing the required information may also be used.
d. Agency Coordination:
(1) The DE will consider any comments from Federal and State agencies concerning the proposed activity's compliance with the terms and conditions of the NWPs and the need for mitigation to reduce the project's adverse environmental effects to a minimal level.
(2) For all NWP 48 activities requiring PCN and for other NWP activities requiring PCN to the DE that result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the United States, the DE will immediately provide (e.g., via facsimile transmission, overnight mail, or other expeditious manner) a copy of the PCN to the appropriate Federal or State offices (USFWS, State natural resource or water quality agency, EPA, SHPO, THPO, and, if appropriate, the NMFS). With the exception of NWP 37, these agencies will then have 10 calendar days from the date the material is transmitted to telephone or fax the DE notice that they intend to provide substantive, site-specific comments. If so contacted by an agency, the DE will wait an additional 15 calendar days before making a decision on the PCN. The DE will fully consider agency comments received within the specified time frame, but will provide no response to the resource agency, except as provided below. The DE will indicate in the

Nationwide Permit 12
Utility Line Activities

Activities required for the construction, maintenance, repair, and removal of utility lines and associated facilities in waters of the United States, provided the activity does not result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the United States.
Utility Lines: This Nationwide Permit (NWP) authorizes the construction, maintenance, or repair of utility lines, including outfall and intake structures, and the associated excavation, backfill, or bedding for the utility lines, in all waters of the United States, provided there is no change in pre-construction contours. A "utility line" is defined as any pipe or pipeline for the transportation of any gaseous, liquid, liquescent, or slurry substance, for any purpose, and any cable, line, or wire for the transmission for any purpose of electrical energy, telephone, and telegraph messages, and radio and television communication. The term "utility line" does not include activities that drain a water of the United States, such as drainage tile or french drains, but it does apply to pipes conveying drainage from another area. Material resulting from trench excavation may be temporarily sidecast into waters of the United States for no more than 3 months, provided the material is not placed in such a manner that it is dispersed by currents or other forces. The District Engineer (DE) may extend the period of temporary side casting for no more than a total of 180 days, where appropriate. In wetlands, the top 6 to 12 inches of the trench should normally be backfilled with topsoil from the trench. The trench cannot be constructed or backfilled in such a manner as to drain waters of the United States (e.g., backfilling with extensive gravel layers, creating a french drain effect). Any exposed slopes and stream banks must be stabilized immediately upon completion of the utility line crossing of each waterbody.
Utility Line Substations: This NWP authorizes the construction, maintenance, or expansion of substation facilities associated with a power line or utility line in non-tidal waters of the United States, provided the activity, in combination with all other activities included in one single and complete project, does not result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the United States. This NWP does not authorize discharges into non-tidal wetlands adjacent to tidal waters of the United States to construct, maintain, or expand substation facilities.
Foundations for Overhead Utility Line Towers, Poles, and Anchors: This NWP authorizes the construction or maintenance of foundations for overhead utility line towers, poles, and anchors in all waters of the United States, provided the foundations are the minimum size necessary and separate footings for each tower leg (rather than a larger single pad) are used where feasible.
Access Roads: This NWP authorizes the construction of access roads for the construction and maintenance of utility lines, including overhead power lines and utility line substations, in non-tidal waters of the United States, provided the total discharge from a single and complete project does not cause the loss of greater than 1/2-acre of non-tidal waters of the United States. This NWP does not authorize discharges into non-tidal wetlands adjacent to tidal waters for access roads. Access roads must be the minimum width necessary (see Note 2, below). Access roads must be constructed so that the length of the road minimizes any adverse effects on waters of the United States and must be as near as possible to pre-construction contours and elevations (e.g., at grade corduroy roads or geotextile/gravel roads). Access roads constructed above pre-construction contours and elevations in waters of the United States must be properly bridged or culverted to maintain surface flows. This NWP may authorize utility lines in or affecting navigable waters of the United States even if there is no associated discharge of dredged or fill material (See 33 CFR Part 322). Overhead utility lines constructed over Section 10 waters and utility lines that are routed in or under Section 10 waters without a discharge of dredged or fill material require a Section 10 permit. This NWP also authorizes temporary structures, fills, and work necessary to conduct the utility line activity. Appropriate measures must be taken to maintain normal downstream flows and minimize flooding to the maximum extent practicable, when temporary structures, work, and discharges, including cofferdams, are necessary for construction activities, access fills, or dewatering of construction sites. Temporary fills must consist of materials, and be placed in a manner, that will not be eroded by expected high flows. Temporary fills must be removed in their entirety, and the affected areas returned to pre-construction elevations. The areas affected by temporary fills must be revegetated, as appropriate.
Notification: The permittee must submit a pre-construction notification (PCN) to the DE prior to commencing the activity if any of the following criteria are met:
(1) The activity involves mechanized land clearing in a forested wetland for the utility line right-of-way;
(2) a Section 10 permit is required;
(3) the utility line in waters of the United States, excluding overhead lines, exceeds 500 feet;
(4) the utility line is placed within a jurisdictional area (i.e., water of the United States), and it runs parallel to a stream bed that is within that jurisdictional area;
(5) discharges that result in the loss of greater than 1/10 acre of waters of the United States;
(6) permanent access roads are constructed above grade in waters of the United States for a distance of more than 500 feet; or
(7) permanent access roads are constructed in waters of the United States with impervious materials. (See General Condition (GC) 27.)
Note 1: Where the proposed utility line is constructed or installed in navigable waters of the United States (i.e., Section 10 waters), copies of the PCN and NWP verification will be sent by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service, for charting the utility line to protect navigation.

13. Removal of Temporary Fills. Temporary fills must be removed in their entirety, and the affected areas returned to pre-construction elevations. The affected areas must be revegetated, as appropriate.
14. Proper Maintenance. Any authorized structure or fill shall be properly maintained, including maintenance to ensure public safety.
15. Wild and Scenic Rivers. No activity may occur in a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System, or in a river officially designated by Congress as a "study river" for possible inclusion in the system while the river is in an official study status, unless the appropriate Federal agency with direct management responsibility for such river, has determined in writing that the proposed activity will not adversely affect the Wild and Scenic River designation or study status. Information on Wild and Scenic Rivers may be obtained from the appropriate Federal land management agency in the area (e.g., National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)).
16. Tribal Rights. No activity or its operation may impair reserved Tribal rights, including, but not limited to, reserved water rights and treaty fishing and hunting rights.
17. Endangered Species.
a. No activity is authorized under any NWP which is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species or a species proposed for such designation, as identified under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), or which will destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of such species. No activity is authorized under any NWP which "may affect" a listed species or critical habitat, unless Section 7 consultation addressing the effects of the proposed activity has been completed.
b. Federal agencies should follow their own procedures for complying with the requirements of the ESA. Federal permittees must provide the DE with the appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with those requirements.
c. Non-Federal permittees shall notify the DE if any listed species or designated critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, or if the project is located in designated critical habitat, and shall not begin work on the activity until notified by the DE that the requirements of the ESA have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. For activities that might affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or designated critical habitat, the PCN must include the name(s) of the endangered or threatened species that may be affected by the proposed work or that utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work. The DE will determine whether the proposed activity "may affect" or will have "no effect" to listed species and designated critical habitat and will notify the non-Federal applicant of the Corps determination within 45 days of receipt of a complete PCN. In cases where the non-Federal applicant has identified listed species or critical habitat that might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, and has so notified the Corps, the applicant shall not begin work until the Corps has provided notification the proposed activities will have "no effect" on listed species or critical habitat, or until Section 7 consultation has been completed.
d. As a result of formal or informal consultation with the USFWS, the DE may add species-specific regional endangered species conditions to the NWPs.
e. Authorization of an activity by a NWP does not authorize the "take" of a threatened or endangered species as defined under the ESA. In the absence of separate authorization (e.g., an ESA Section 10 Permit, a Biological Opinion with "incidental take" provisions, etc.) from the USFWS or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), both lethal and non-lethal "takes" of protected species are in violation of the ESA. Information on the location of threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat can be obtained directly from the offices of the USFWS or their world wide Web pages at http://www.fws.gov/ and http://www.noaa.gov/fisheries.html respectively.
18. Historic Properties.
a. In cases where the DE determines that the activity may affect properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, the activity is not authorized, until the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) have been satisfied.
b. Federal permittees should follow their own procedures for complying with the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA. Federal permittees must provide the DE with the appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with those requirements.
c. Non-Federal permittees must submit a PCN to the DE if the authorized activity may have the potential to cause effects to any historic properties listed, determined to be eligible for listing on, or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including previously unidentified properties. For such activities, the PCN must state which historic properties may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic properties or the potential for the presence of historic properties. Assistance regarding information on the location of or potential for the presence of historic resources can be sought from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), as appropriate, and the National Register of Historic Places (see 33 CFR 330.4(g)). The DE shall make a reasonable and good faith effort to carry out appropriate identification efforts, which may include background research, consultation, oral

riparian area will be 25 to 50 feet wide on each side of the stream, but the DE may require slightly wider riparian areas to address documented water quality or habitat loss concerns. Where both wetlands and open waters exist on the project site, the DE will determine the appropriate compensatory mitigation (e.g., riparian areas and/or wetlands compensation) based on what is best for the aquatic environment on a watershed basis. In cases where riparian areas are determined to be the most appropriate form of compensatory mitigation, the DE may waive or reduce the requirement to provide wetland compensatory mitigation for wetland losses.

g. Permittees may propose the use of mitigation banks, in-lieu fee arrangements, or separate activity-specific compensatory mitigation. In all cases, the mitigation provisions will specify the party responsible for accomplishing and/or complying with the mitigation plan.

h. Where certain functions and services of waters of the United States are permanently adversely affected, such as the conversion of a forested or scrub-shrub wetland to a herbaceous wetland in a permanently maintained utility line right-of-way, mitigation may be required to reduce the adverse effects of the project to the minimal level.

21. Water Quality. Where States and authorized Tribes, or EPA where applicable, have not previously certified compliance of an NWP with CWA Section 401, individual 401 WQC must be obtained or waived (see 33 CFR 330.4(c)). The DE or State or Tribe may require additional water quality management measures to ensure that the authorized activity does not result in more than minimal degradation of water quality. Any issued 401 WQC is attached.

22. Coastal Zone Management. In coastal States where an NWP has not previously received a State coastal zone management consistency concurrence, an individual State coastal zone management consistency concurrence must be obtained, or a presumption of concurrence must occur (see 33 CFR 330.4(d)). The DE or a State may require additional measures to ensure that the authorized activity is consistent with State coastal zone management requirements.

23. Regional and Case-By-Case Conditions. The activity must comply with any regional conditions that may have been added by the Division Engineer (see 33 CFR 330.4(e)) and with any case specific conditions added by the Corps or by the State, Indian Tribe, or EPA in its Section 401 WQC, or by the State in its Coastal Zone Management Act consistency determination.

24. Use of Multiple NWPs. The use of more than one NWP for a single and complete project is prohibited, except when the acreage loss of waters of the United States authorized by the NWPs does not exceed the acreage limit of the NWP with the highest specified acreage limit. For example, if a road crossing over tidal waters is constructed under NWP 14, with associated bank stabilization authorized by NWP 13, the maximum acreage loss of waters of the United States for the total project cannot exceed 1/3 acre.

25. Transfer of NWP Verifications. If the permittee sells the property associated with a NWP verification, the permittee may transfer the NWP verification to the new owner by submitting a letter to the appropriate Corps district office to validate the transfer. A copy of the NWP verification must be attached to the letter, and the letter must contain the following statement and signature: "When the structures or work authorized by this NWP are still in existence at the time the property is transferred, the terms and conditions of this NWP, including any special conditions, will continue to be binding on the new owner(s) of the property. To validate the transfer of this NWP and the associated liabilities associated with compliance with its terms and conditions, have the transferee sign and date below."

_____ _____

(Transferee) (Date)

26. Compliance Certification. Each permittee who received NWP verification from the Corps must submit a signed certification regarding the completed work and any required mitigation. The certification form must be forwarded to the Corps with the NWP verification letter and will include:

a. A statement that the authorized work was done in accordance with the NWP authorization, including any general or specific conditions;

b. A statement that any required mitigation was completed in accordance with the permit conditions; and

c. The signature of the permittee certifying the completion of the work and mitigation.

27. PCN.

a. Timing. Where required by the terms of the NWP, the prospective permittee must notify the DE by submitting a PCN as early as possible. The DE must determine if the PCN is complete within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt and, as a general rule, will request additional information necessary to make the PCN complete only once. However, if the prospective permittee does not provide all of the requested information, then the DE will notify the prospective permittee that the PCN is still incomplete and the PCN review process will not commence until all of the requested information has been received by the DE. The prospective permittee shall not begin the activity:

(1) Until notified in writing by the DE that the activity may proceed under the NWP with any special conditions imposed by the district or division engineer; or

emergency watershed protection and rehabilitation activity may proceed immediately in cases where there is an unacceptable hazard to life or a significant loss of property or economic hardship will occur. The DE will consider any comments received to decide whether the NWP 37 authorization should be modified, suspended, or revoked in accordance with the procedures at 33 CFR 330.5.

(3) In cases of where the prospective permittee is not a Federal agency, the DE will provide a response to NMFS within 30 calendar days of receipt of any Essential Fish Habitat conservation recommendations, as required by Section 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

(4) Applicants are encouraged to provide the Corps multiple copies of PCNs to expedite agency coordination.

(5) For NWP 48 activities that require reporting, the DE will provide a copy of each report within 10 calendar days of receipt to the appropriate regional office of the NMFS.

e. DE's Decision: In reviewing the PCN for the proposed activity, the DE will determine whether the activity authorized by the NWP will result in more than minimal individual or cumulative adverse environmental effects or may be contrary to the public interest. If the proposed activity requires a PCN and will result in a loss of greater than 1/10 acre of wetlands, the prospective permittee should submit a mitigation proposal with the PCN. Applicants may also propose compensatory mitigation for projects with smaller impacts. The DE will consider any proposed compensatory mitigation the applicant has included in the proposal in determining whether the net adverse environmental effects to the aquatic environment of the proposed work are minimal. The compensatory mitigation proposal may be either conceptual or detailed. If the DE determines that the activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP and that the adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal, after considering mitigation, the DE will notify the permittee and include any conditions the DE deems necessary. The DE must approve any compensatory mitigation proposal before the permittee commences work. If the prospective permittee elects to submit a compensatory mitigation plan with the PCN, the DE will expeditiously review the proposed compensatory mitigation plan. The DE must review the plan within 45 calendar days of receiving a complete PCN and determine whether the proposed mitigation would ensure no more than minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment. If the net adverse effects of the project on the aquatic environment (after consideration of the compensatory mitigation proposal) are determined by the DE to be minimal, the DE will provide a timely written response to the applicant. The response will state that the project can proceed under the terms and conditions of the NWP.

If the DE determines that the adverse effects of the proposed work are more than minimal, then the DE will notify the applicant either: (1) That the project does not qualify for authorization under the NWP and instruct the applicant on the procedures to seek authorization under an individual permit; (2) that the project is authorized under the NWP subject to the applicant's submission of a mitigation plan that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level; or (3) that the project is authorized under the NWP with specific modifications or conditions. Where the DE determines that mitigation is required to ensure no more than minimal adverse effects occur to the aquatic environment, the activity will be authorized within the 45-day PCN period. The authorization will include the necessary conceptual or specific mitigation or a requirement that the applicant submit a mitigation plan that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level. When mitigation is required, no work in waters of the United States may occur until the DE has approved a specific mitigation plan.

28. Single and Complete Project. The activity must be a single and complete project. The same NWP cannot be used more than once for the same single and complete project.

Further Information

1. The DEs have authority to determine if an activity complies with the terms and conditions of a NWP.
2. The NWPs do not obviate the need to obtain other Federal, State, or local permits, approvals, or authorizations required by law.
3. The NWPs do not grant any property rights or exclusive privileges.
4. The NWPs do not authorize any injury to the property or rights of others.
5. The NWPs do not authorize interference with any existing or proposed Federal project.

Telephone Memorandum

Called:	Jamie Hyslop
Organization:	US Army Corps of Engineers
Caller:	Dusty Werth
Organization:	BMcD
Subject of Call:	Return call concerning SPS Bowers-Howard 115-kV Transmission Line
Call Date:	October 7, 2011
Call Time:	9:47 AM
Phone No. Called:	918-669-7618
Project Name:	SPS Bowers - Howard
Project No.:	62799
Memo Prepared By:	Dusty Werth
Date Memo Issued:	October 7, 2011

Summary:

Returned call and left message asking Jamie to return a call.

Attachment

cc: Enter Name

July 25, 2011

Mr. Mike Nicely
Airports- Southwest Region
U.S. Dept of Transpoprtation, Federal Aviation Administration
2601 Meacham Boulevard
Fort Worth, TX 76137-4298

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Mike Nicely:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Salvador Salinas
Texas State Conservationist
Natural Resource Conservation Service
101 South Main St.
Temple, TX 76501

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Salvador Salinas:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 South Main
Temple, TX 76501-7602

August 3, 2011

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

Dear Mr. Werth:

We have reviewed the information and map pertaining to Southwest Public Service (SPS) proposal to build a new 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County, Texas.

This project should have no significant adverse impact on the environment or natural resources in the area. We do not require any permits, easements, or approvals for activities such as this.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposed project.

Sincerely,

For SALVADOR SALINAS
State Conservationist

July 25, 2011

Judge Richard Peet
County Judge
Gray County
205 N. Russell
Pampa, TX 79065-6441

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Judge Richard Peet:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Joe Wheeley
Commissioner
Gray County
205 N. Russell
Pampa, TX 79065-6441

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Joe Wheeley:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Gary Willoughby
Commissioner
Gray County
205 N. Russell
Pampa, TX 79065-6441

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Gary Willoughby:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. John Mark Baggerman
Commissioner
Gray County
205 N. Russell
Pampa, TX 79065-6441

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. John Mark Baggerman:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Jeff Haley
Commissioner
Gray County
205 N. Russell
Pampa, TX 79065-6441

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Jeff Haley:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

Jeff Haley
Gray County Commissioner Pct. 4
205 N. Russell
Pampa, Texas 79065

August 23, 2011

Mr. Dusty E. Werth
Burns & McDonnell Consultants, Inc.
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

Re: BMcD Project Number 62799

Dear Mr. Werth,

I am in receipt of your letter of July 25, 2011 seeking assistance and information in regard to locating a new 115 kV electrical line for Southwest Public Service through a portion of Gray County Texas. I also reviewed the map enclosed with the letter and the study area highlighted on the map.

I do have concerns with the construction of any new overhead structures within the study area presented on the map. My concerns relate to a threatened species known as the Lesser Prairie Chicken. The area in which the new line is proposed to be located is on and across occupied range of the species. Scientists and wildlife biologist know the species avoid tall vertical structures such as transmission lines. New structures would continue to fragment the species habitat and hasten its decline. Many landowners in Gray County are cooperating with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to protect and preserve the Lesser Prairie Chicken and its habitat, with the hope of avoiding an endangered species listing.

Gray County is doing what it can to avoid an endangered species listing. If a listing were to occur, then Gray County's tax base would be affected and devaluation of the county's tax base would likely occur. Such an occurrence would negatively impact the entire county and its citizens.

Southwestern Public Service owns existing lines within the route study area. Why not use the existing rights of way and upgrade and modify to accommodate higher voltage? Or string new lines on existing right of way? These options may be less expensive than avoiding the species occupied range altogether.

The Lesser Prairie Chicken will not tolerate further fragmentation of its habitat and remain a viable species. New transmission lines are one such cause of fragmentation. Please urge your client to avoid building new structures in the occupied range of the Lesser Prairie Chicken in order to help Gray County and its landowners avoid an endangered species listing.

Sincerely,

Jeff Haley
Gray County Commissioner Pct. 4

Cc Richard Peet, Gray County Judge

July 25, 2011

Ms. Susan Winborne
County Clerk
Gray County
P.O. Box 1902
Pampa, TX 79066

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Susan Winborne:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

County of Gray State of Texas

SUSAN WINBORNE
COUNTY CLERK
P. O. BOX 1902
PAMPA, TEXAS 79066-1902
PHONE 806-669-8004
FAX 806-669-8054

August 1, 2011

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist
Burns & McDonnell Consultants, Inc.
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114-3319

Dear Mr. Werth:

I have received your request for information dated July 25, 2011. I do not have access to the information that you have requested.

Sincerely,

Susan Winborne

Susan Winborne
Gray County Clerk

July 25, 2011

Mr. Brandon McGinty
President
Gray County Farm Bureau
500 W. Kingsmill Ave
Pampa, TX 79065-6333

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Brandon McGinty:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Darlene Birkes
Chair
Gray County Historical Commission
2356 Aspen Street
Pampa, TX 79065

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Darlene Birkes:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Water quality and wetlands
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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Jerry Dan Hefley
County Judge
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 486
Wheeler, TX 79096

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Jerry Dan Hefley:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Daryl Snelgrooes
Commissioner
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 69
Wheeler, TX 79096

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Daryl Snelgrooes:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Robert Hink
Commissioner
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 69
Wheeler, TX 79096

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Robert Hink:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Hubert Moore
Commissioner
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 69
Shamrock, TX 79079

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Hubert Moore:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. John Walker
Commissioner
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 69
Shamrock, TX 79079

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. John Walker:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Margaret Dorman
County Clerk
Wheeler County
P.O. Box 465
Wheeler, TX 79096

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Margaret Dorman:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

WHEELER COUNTY

Margaret Dorman
COUNTY CLERK
P.O. Box 465
WHEELER, TEXAS 79096

July 27, 2011

Burns & McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, Missouri 64114-3319

Re: BMcD Project No. 62799

Dear Sir,

This letter is in response to your letter requesting information for the above project. The County Clerks office does not have access to the information you are requesting. I have however, enclosed a copy of your map and have placed red circles indicating where three known cemeteries are.

The town of Mobeetie has numerous designated historic sites including the Old Mobeetie Jail, which was the first jail in the Panhandle of Texas. Power lines through that area would not be welcomed. The towns of Mobeetie and Wheeler are the only towns in Wheeler County that are in your project area.

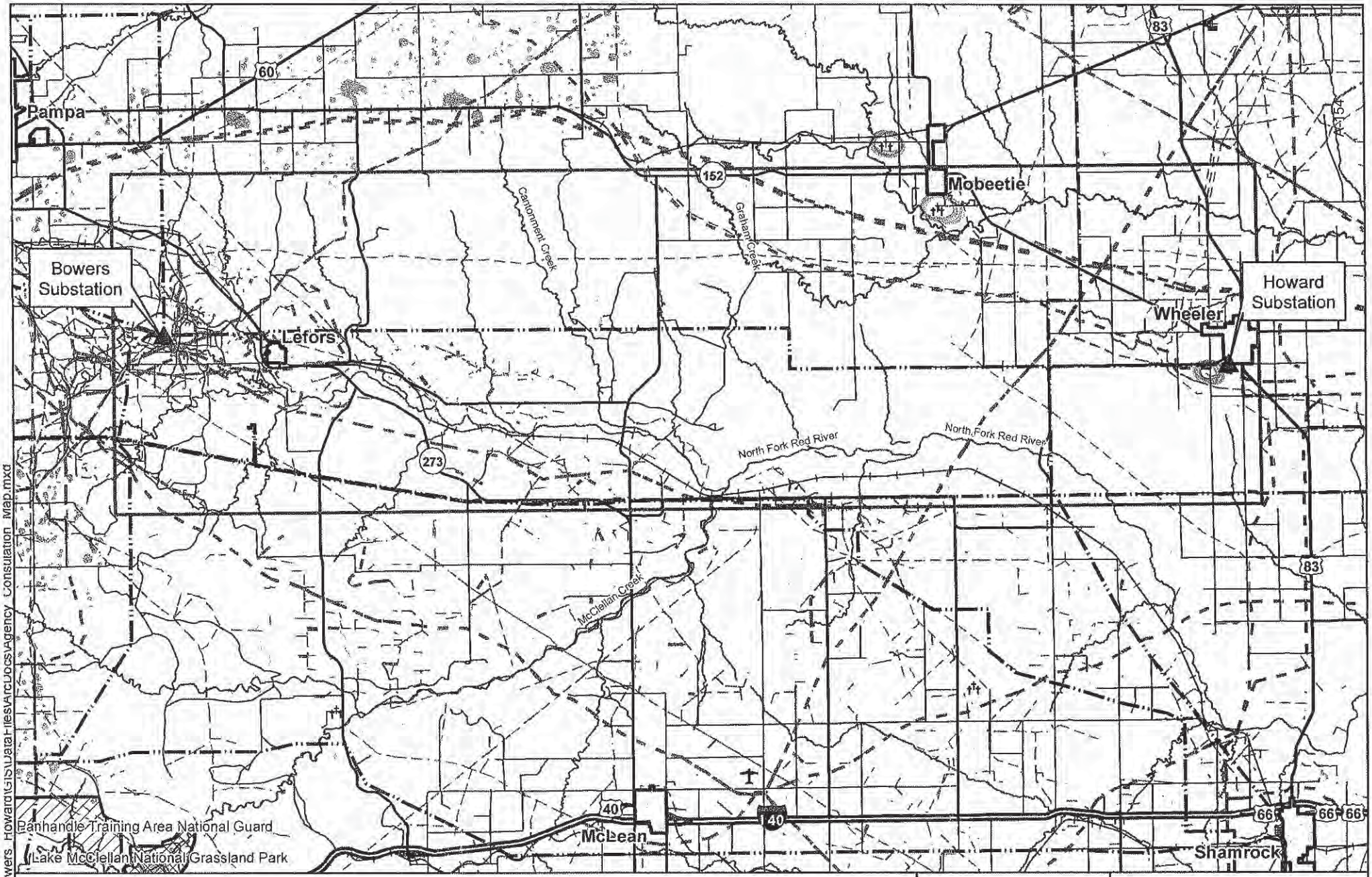
The Wheeler Airport is east of town and is not in your project area.

Should you need to bore under or cut a county road, you will be required to get prior permission from the Wheeler County Commissioners Court. They meet the second and fourth Monday of each month. Your request to be placed on the agenda will need to be 72 hours prior to the requested meeting.

Sincerely,

Margaret Dorman

Wheeler County Clerk


Pampa
60
83
152
Mobeetie
Cantonment Creek
Graham Creek
Bowers Substation
Howard Substation
Wheeler
Lefors
273
North Fork Red River
North Fork Red River
McClellan Creek
83
Panhandle Training Area National Guard
Lake McClellan National Grassland Park
40
McLean
40
66
66
66
Shamrock
N
0
2
4
Miles
Legend
Existing Substation
Existing Transmission Line
Proposed Cross Texas Transmission Line
Study Area
Municipal Area
Pipelines
6" - 15"
Greater than 15"
Railroads
Road
State Highway
U.S. Highway
Interstate
Power for the Plains
Xcel Energy
Southwestern Public Service
Bowers to Howard 115kV
Transmission Line Project
Study Area Map
Date: 7/22/2011
Path: V:\SPS\62799_Bowers_Howard\GIS\DataFiles\ArcDocs\Agency Consultation Map.mxd

July 25, 2011

Mr. Mark Elmore
President
Wheeler County Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 160
Wheeler, TX 79096-0160

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Mark Elmore:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Ada Lou Lester
Chair
Wheelter County Historical Commission
P.O. Box 156
Mobeetie, TX 79061

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Ada Lou Lester:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Brad Pingel
Mayor
City of Pampa
P.O. Box 2499
Pampa, TX 79066-2499

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Brad Pingel:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
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- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Richard Morris
Interim City Manager
City of Pampa
P.O. Box 2499
Pampa, TX 79066-2499

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Richard Morris:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Water quality and wetlands
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- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Rebecca Holmes
Council Member
City of Pampa
P.O. Box 2499
Pampa, TX 79066-2499

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Rebecca Holmes:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Robert Dixon
Council Member
City of Pampa
P.O. Box 2499
Pampa, TX 79066-2499

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Robert Dixon:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Neil Fulton
Council Member
City of Pampa
P.O. Box 2499
Pampa, TX 79066-2499

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Neil Fulton:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Joe Weaver
Executive Director
Greater Pampa Area Chamber of Commerce
200 North Ballard
Pampa, TX 79065

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Joe Weaver:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Soils and geology
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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Susan Oldham
Mayor
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Susan Oldham:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Lindy Forsyth
City Secretary
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Lindy Forsyth:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

Telephone Memorandum

Called:	Lindy Forsyth
Organization:	City of Lefors Tx
Caller:	Dusty Werth
Organization:	Burns & McDonnell
Subject of Call:	Return call in regards to request for information letter
Call Date:	July 28, 2011
Call Time:	2:50 PM
Phone No. Called:	806-835-2200
Project Name:	Bowers – Howard 115-kV Transmission Line
Project No.:	62799
Memo Prepared By:	Dusty Werth
Date Memo Issued:	July 28, 2011

Summary:

Lindy Forsyth called and left a message stating she had questions about the request for information letter she had received. I returned the call and she stated that the line would not impact the town so they did not have any concerns. I clarified that the City of Lefors is located within the study area and that the letter referenced a new line and not the existing line north of the town. She stated that it would be unlikely that the new line would go through the town so the town still did not have any concerns and would not have any permitting authority.

Attachment

July 25, 2011

Mr. Billy McBee
Council Member
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Billy McBee:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Bill McMinn
Council Member
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Bill McMinn:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. David Boyd
Council Member
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. David Boyd:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

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In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Karen Noble
Council Member
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Karen Noble:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Ray Carter
Council Member
City of Lefors
P.O. Box 383
Lefors, TX 79054-0383

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Ray Carter:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Gordon Estes
Mayor
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Gordon Estes:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Patricia Kephart
Council Member
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Patricia Kephart:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Pam Jones
Council Member
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Pam Jones:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Louise Shorter
Council Member
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Louise Shorter:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Emma Swigart
Council Member
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Emma Swigart:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Gaylord Tompson
Council Member
City of Mobeetie
P.O. Box 56
Mobeetie, TX 79061-0056

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Gaylord Tompson:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Bob McCain
Mayor Pro-Tem
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Bob McCain:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Kristi Petit
City Secretary
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Kristi Petit:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Kendall Hefley
Council Member
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Kendall Hefley:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Barbra Koelzer
Council Member
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Barbra Koelzer:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Don Rose
Council Member
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Don Rose:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Stacy McCasland
Council Member
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Stacy McCasland:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Walter Simmons
Council Member
City of Wheeler
P.O. Box 98
Wheeler, TX 79096-0098

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Walter Simmons:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Ms. Frankie Jackson
Wheeler Chamber of Commerce
1203 S. Mobeetie St
Wheeler, TX 79096

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Frankie Jackson:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr Roy L Baker
Superintendent
Fort Elliott Cons Isd
P.O. Box 138
Briscoe, TX 79011-0138

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr Roy L Baker:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr Bryan Dennis Hanna
Superintendent
Grandview-Hopkins Isd
11676 FM 293
Groom, TX 79039-9801

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr Bryan Dennis Hanna:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr William Clay Montgomery
Superintendent
Lefors Isd
P.O. Box 390
Lefors, TX 79054-0390

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr William Clay Montgomery:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr Harald Hill
Superintendent
Mclean Isd
P.O. Box 90
Mclean, TX 79057-0090

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr Harald Hill:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
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- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

Telephone Memorandum

Called:	Jennifer Sergeant
Organization:	McLean ISD
Caller:	Dusty Werth
Organization:	BMcD
Subject of Call:	Return call about request for information letters
Call Date:	July 27, 2011
Call Time:	2:40 PM
Phone No. Called:	806-779-2301 x 0
Project Name:	Bowers – Howard 115-kV Transmission Line
Project No.:	62799
Memo Prepared By:	Dusty Werth
Date Memo Issued:	July 27, 2011

Summary:

I returned Ms. Sergeant's call referencing the request for information letters that were sent out. She inquired as to what information we were after from the ISD and I explained that we are looking for any information the school district may have about new developments, especially new schools, within the study area. She stated that the district is not looking to build any new buildings in the future and certainly not in the portion of the ISD that is located within the study area. I thanked her for her response and that if she could think of anything else that might be of concern for the ISD within the study area or if she had any additional questions to please give me call.

Attachment

July 25, 2011

Ms. Donna Leslie Gill
Superintendent
Miami Isd
P.O. Box 368
Miami, TX 79059-0368

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Ms. Donna Leslie Gill:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

- Land Use (current or proposed land development projects, park/recreation areas, etc.)
- Aesthetics
- Water quality and wetlands
- Soils and geology
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries (including threatened and endangered species)
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, growth, current/future development)
- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr Barry Haenisch
Superintendent
Pampa Isd
Pampa, TX 79065-7801

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr Barry Haenisch:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

Burns & McDonnell is requesting your assistance inventorying the human and natural resources in the project area to identify any routing constraints or opportunities within the area that should be considered as part of a new transmission line project. Routing constraints include those areas or resources which may not be compatible with transmission line construction, such as airports, protected species habitat, or dense residential areas. Route opportunities include such things as previously disturbed areas, industrial corridors, and existing utility rights-of-way. Your input on any of the following resources will assist the project team in developing preliminary alternative routes that take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential environmental and land use impacts, including the following:

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- Cultural resources (historic and archaeological)
- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr Hibbert Wes Beck
Superintendent
Shamrock Isd
100 S Illinois St
Shamrock, TX 79079-2434

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr Hibbert Wes Beck:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files

July 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Clay Mahler
Superintendent
Wheeler Isd
P.O. Box 1010
Wheeler, TX 79096-1010

Request for Information
Southwest Public Service Bowers to Howard 115-kV Transmission Line Project

BMcD Project number: 62799

Dear Mr. Paul Clay Mahler:

Southwest Public Service (SPS), a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, has identified a need for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) electric line to solve overload and low voltage conditions in the Howard area upon the loss of the existing Howard 115/69-kV autotransformer or the Wheeler-Howard 115-kV transmission line. SPS contracted with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to conduct a routing study and environmental assessment for the proposed Bowers to Howard 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric transmission line from the existing Bowers Substation located in Gray County to the existing Howard Substation located in Wheeler County. The proposed overhead electric transmission line project will be approximately 33 miles in length. The enclosed map shows the project area in which preliminary routes will be developed.

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- Transportation and roads (airport and roadway expansions, construction, operations, and maintenance)

In addition to the above requested items, we are also requesting information regarding any permits or any type of approval for construction of the proposed transmission line within your jurisdiction.

Your input is important. The information we collect will be used to help SPS develop its application seeking a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for this project from the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

We appreciate your assistance. Please contact me at (816) 822-3446 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dusty E. Werth
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

cc: Lance Kennedy, SPS
Files