

## Appendix J: Public & NGO Scoping Comments

Subject: Public Scoping Meeting		
Client: Minnkota Power Cooperative	Project No: 110900	
Project: Center to Grand Forks	Meeting Location:	Various
Meeting Date: November 16 - 19, 2009	Notes by:	Brian Hunker, HDR

#### MEETING LOCATIONS AND DATES

Monday, November 16 – Grand Forks, ND  
 Tuesday, November 17 – Cooperstown and Carrington, ND  
 Wednesday, November 18 – McClusky and Wilton, ND  
 Thursday, November 19 – Center, ND

#### TOPICS DISCUSSED

1. Line location
2. Compensation - annual or one-time lease payments
3. Value of lease payments
4. Land appraisal before and after the project
5. Tower height and area
6. Center pivot irrigation
7. Wind energy facilities
8. Two-way radio interference on communications between combine, harvesters, and, grain trucks
9. Interference with GPS systems used in farming operations
10. County tax base
11. Will the project cause Cap and Trade?
12. Avoid subdivision north and west of Wilton – Wilton is spreading north and west.
13. Follow highway 41
14. Why avoid federal lands?
15. Affects on a pacemaker
16. Environmental process and schedule
17. Cost of farming around poles

# Center to Grand Forks Project



## Public and NGO Scoping Comments

### Agricultural Impacts

We would prefer that you do not come across our land. We are located right north of the Bald Hill Creek and in the Spring the roads can flood over. Also, the lines should be placed at no closer than a mile from the farm structure. We have a water drain and gate on our land that we have spent thousands of dollars on and wouldn't want anything to interfere with that. Also, you need to take into consideration how the lines not only effect people but also livestock and other animals. Have you considered putting the lines underground instead of on top of the land?

Also under: Routing

We are very concerned about the proposed Center to Grand Forks 345KV Transmission Line. Long-term health issues from farming under power lines are a concern to us and to our employees. Since the state of North Dakota will not allow residences within 500 feet of these lines, there must be some issues of safety. We are also concerned about how this powerline could impact farming operations in the proposed corridor. We now experience interference on our 800 mghz business band radios under the existing Western Power Administration Line (which Minnkota acknowledges in their information packet) and which we use extensively on our farm for communication. Safety could be a factor in our operation in situations where an emergency could arise if we do not have reliable communication. We have also experienced interference with our GPS system when we are near these power lines. We rely on this signal to steer our tractors in planting and tillage operations. We have no row markers on our planters, so the GPS signal is the only way to plant straight and not have skips or overlaps. Also, as we plant, we map all fields for the amount of seed applied and what variety crop is planted in that particular field. Without GPS, we could not do that. Using GPS for all these uses has been shown to save 5%-10% in costs of production. Costs are higher in farming fields with power lines, The overlap of spraying and fertilizing because of these poles when we have to go around them increases our costs. It also has a negative effect on the environment because of over application around these poles. We would request that any proposed power line not be located on farmland that is in production, but located on pastureland, non-crop land or other right-of-ways that would not interfere with farming operations- It is imperative that all aspects of this line be considered especially for future agriculture implications as technology is always advancing for farming practices. Modern farm tractors and combines have computers, software, and electronics that may not be compatible with farming under these power lines. It is not fair that the farming community bear additional costs for the operation of this proposed power line.

Also under: ROW

Safety

Earlier this week I contacted Senators Dorgan and Conrad to address serious concerns that I have with regard to the proposed power line corridors that could pass through my lands in Sheridan County, North Dakota. I have 3,000 acres in Harris Township and my brother and I have 480 acres in Lamont Township. The 3,000 contiguous acres in Harris Township consist of agricultural land and grasslands. As a native of North Dakota and Sheridan County in particular, I decided to establish my retirement home there to enjoy the peace and quiet of the remote countryside. Now I find Minnkota Power is seeking to disrupt my plans with the proposed installation of power lines in that area. As projected on the map, the proposed corridors run parallel along Highway 200 and it appears as though they could bisect both of my properties north and south of the highway. My most important concern is of the towers and lines running through my property in Harris Township. That property consists of a contiguous area running 4-1/2 miles from east to west right off the paved road 8-1/2 miles north of McClusky. In the last decade, I have made diligent efforts to preserve the grasslands, including 1,000 acres of original short grass prairie. Countless hours and significant personal funds have been expended on this property in the restoration of grasslands, planting trees and employing no-till farming methods. These conservation measures have also enhanced wildlife habitat. I am told by informed sources that my grasslands have among the highest density of potholes for breeding ducks in the United States. The disruption with the installation of power lines could be hazardous to the nesting cycles of wild birds, including song birds, pheasants, sharp tail grouse, partridges and all of the duck species native to the Central Flyway in the Missouri Coteau region of North Dakota. As you may know, the Whooping Cranes, an endangered species, migrate right through this corridor as well. Additionally, I am concerned about the disruption of agricultural operations. Of the land in Harris Township, 1600 acres are under cultivation. We use very large equipment from self propelled sprayers to giant air seeders for planting. We also employ outsized combines and semi-trailer trucks to conduct harvesting operations. It is difficult to maneuver this large equipment around towers. Has there been any consideration given to the use of an existing power corridor for the installation in this new proposal? Are there existing easements already in place in other areas to accommodate this new project? Will North Dakotans wake up someday and find a saturated grid work of power lines and windmills to disfigure its natural landscape and beauty, all in the name of progress? Are there other sources of power, namely nuclear power, which would be clean and less disruptive to our countryside? Lastly, I would respectfully ask you to consider a plan for moving the proposed corridor entirely out of Sheridan County. May I hear from you.

Also under: Routing

Environmental Impacts

Endangered Species

## Cost

Annual payments - nuisance factor. Line down Y4 lines. Payment higher than market value. GPS interference. Written agreement it will not. Payment to land operator

Enclosed please find a copy of the letter I sent to Mr. Dennis Rankin, UDA Rural Utilities Service this week. The letter lists several concerns Minnkota may be able to address in addition to information from the USDA. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response. On November 16, Minnkota Power held an open house in Grand Forks, North Dakota. We attended and, as landowners within your corridor consideration, have compensation questions which were not addressed at this event. Nuisance fees: In addition to direct compensation for the easement, there are annual losses due to pole placement. A 2007 study, using Montana farming operations, reported yearly costs to farm around a large monopole at \$107.98. This includes lost time and productivity, and "overlap" excesses. Farming rotations in the Red River Valley include higher value crops than those grown in Montana. Severance: Grand Forks chooses to invoke a 2 mile extraterritorial zoning authority and in their 2035 Land Use Plan have designated quarters of our land which fall in your corridors of consideration for residential, industrial and mixed use. The open house had no information about severance pay for the reduction in development value due to overhead transmission lines. Direct damage: Large farm equipment, found in the Red River Valley, can be difficult to maneuver and the potential for machinery damage by contact with a monopole is constant. The presence of pole increases risk to machinery and operators. GPS-based agriculture: Damage from transmission line interference to GPS-based equipment is compensable under many state laws. However, the power companies have greater financial resources to negate farmer attempts at remuneration. Reduced Resale Value: The land value within the corridors will be severely reduced, due to the permanent, restrictive nature of powerline easements. This land has been targeted for development in the 2035 Land Use Plan by the city of Grand Forks. Please indicate, at your earliest convenience, how these concerns will be resolved. Thank you for your consideration of this inquiry.

## Cultural Resources

[1910 map of Addie Township]

## Endangered Species

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Also under: Routing

Environmental Impacts

Agricultural Impacts

## Environmental Impacts

In regards to Minnkota's Center to Grand Forks Transmission line - My wife and I own 400 acres on Section 9-14281, of which 70 acres is cropland with 46 acres of irrigated land. Most of this land is irrigated with gated pipe. The southeast area is irrigated using a Heinzman-Traveler Big Gun that puts out 800 gallons per minute. Basin Electric has a line across the southern part of section 9. A Minnkota line would put most of our irrigated fields between the two lines. Static electricity would make working our fields a hazardous job. The rest of the land is mostly cottonwood forest, which includes some of the oldest cottonwood trees in North Dakota. It also includes a mile of Missouri River frontage. The forest and the river frontage have a unique value that is irreplaceable. If you put a power line through this land it will decrease our livelihood and our security in our declining years, as well as the cottonwood trees that we cherish. At 76, I'm too old to start over.

Also under: Routing

Safety

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Also under: Routing

Agricultural Impacts

Endangered Species

From Jim Quirk ROW Agent: Helen is a senior who owns land adjacent to & in vicinity of Crystal Lake. Her family has owned land in this twp for generations; her sister Neva Bodin of Casper, WY owns parcels adjacent to hers. The family homestead is in Section 27. Helen's holdings in 27 are cropland, in 35 part cropland & part pastureland. Helen wonders about CGF's impact from & to the hydrology of the area. A lake exists near the center of Sect. 15, accessible from a road along section's eastern boundar. Underground springs exist w/in 1.5's NE 1/4; sweet clover has thrived on the moisture up in Sect. 10 as well as many tall trees. Helen also reports that a tributary of the James R. passes along her southerly parcels: through SE1/4 of Sect. 27 & NE part of Sect. 35. Helen has witnessed frost heave in winter affecting the soils in the area. She asked if we have or are considering these factors in planning for CGF implementation. Helen asked me to verify if any of her holdings might be within the southern corridor. She also asked that I obtain a hard copy of HDR's Macro Corridor Study (10/09) and send this to her for her reference.

## General Public Involvement

Name correction. "Albers" not "Weber"

## Mailing List Request

Add to Mailing list. Save Shelterbelts.

Also under: Routing

Add to mailing list

## Management Areas

T 147. R 69. Section #33. Please research the wildlife status of entire section rather than just SW 1/2 and SE 40 being designated as Robert Morgan Wildlife MA.

At a public meeting at Carrington, North Dakota, on May 12, 2009 after reviewing a map which our township was part of, we noticed and brought to attention of representatives there the fact that their map was incorrect in documenting a wildlife area located as follows: Wells County Township 147 N Range 69W (Cathay) section #33. This entire section is a designated wildlife area and the map they had included only a few acres of the 640 involved. Another meeting on November 17, 2009 still showed that the map was incorrect. No change had been made. Attached is written verification that the entire 640 of Section 33 is, indeed, all a wildlife area owned by ND State Game and Fish. Please make sure this information gets where it needs to go so that these maps convey valid information

## Routing

Add to Mailing list. Save Shelterbelts.

Also under: Mailing List Request

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Also under: Agricultural Impacts

We do not feel the line should go through our land because of the wetlands and inaccessability to the line and the closeness of the line to occupied residences.

Obviously, the placement of towers in fields is a concern for farmers - on the edge is better of course. If towers must be in egg fields, the size of modern farming equipment must be considered. The distance between towers and roads, trails or other objects must be enough for machinery passage.

Also under: ROW

Follow section lines. Try not to cross diagonally. Go through pastures is necessary before cropland if you go through land.

We own land in 143-81. There was irrigation in the S 1/2 17 143-81 - S 1/2 21 143-81. I sold the pivots because the river levels being low and a sandbar interfered that past few years. There is a pretty good chance we may buy new equipment if the river comes around.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed siting of the "Center to Grand Forks" transmission line. As I'm sure you are aware, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has properties and priority conservation areas wither within or near the proposed corridors. We very much appreciate Minnkota's consideration of unique ecological areas, public wildlife areas, scenic viewsheds and privately-owned natural areas, like those owned and managed by TNC. Since large, unfragmented natural areas are important to our mission of supporting biodiversity, as the transmission corridor is refined we would ask that the power lines avoid TNC properties and public natural lands to the furthest extent possible. We would also ask that the scenic values of the Missouri River are considered when picking a river crossing site by avoiding areas near The Nature Conservancy's Cross Ranch, Cross Ranch State Park, Smith Grove Wildlife Management Area and other protected areas. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this project and welcome any questions you may have. Please do keep me apprised of future developments on this project. Thank you very much for your consideration.

In regards to Minnkota's Center to Grand Forks Transmission line - My wife and I own 400 acres on Section 9-14281, of which 70 acres is cropland with 46 acres of irrigated land. Most of this land is irrigated with gated pipe. The southeast area is irrigated using a Heinzman-Traveler Big Gun that puts out 800 gallons per minute. Basin Electric has a line across the southern part of section 9. A Minnkota line would put most of our irrigated fields between the two lines. Static electricity would make working our fields a hazardous job. The rest of the land is mostly cottonwood forest, which includes some of the oldest cottonwood trees in North Dakota. It also includes a mile of Missouri River frontage. The forest and the river frontage have a unique value that is irreplaceable. If you put a power line through this land it will decrease our livelihood and our security in our declining years, as well as the cottonwood trees that we cherish. At 76, I'm too old to start over.

Also under: Safety Environmental

Impacts

Dear Mr. Hennes: I am writing to express my concern about your consideration of crossing the Sheyenne River with a 345kV structure on our property: SW ¼, Section 34, Township 146, Range 58; S1/2 NW1/4, Section 35, Township 146, Range 58; and SW ¼ NE1/4, Section 35, Township 146, Range 58. I was not able to attend the public meeting held in Cooperstown, ND and Carrington, ND on November 17, 2009 due to having surgery on that day. I am submitting my request for excluding our farm as a potential Sheyenne River crossing site in written form. Our farm is a small, working farm of approximately 340 acres with land on both sides of the Sheyenne River and has been in our family for four generations. Recently, our family converted ownership of the farm to the E. Myron Erickson Family Trust to assure the farm would continue to be a working farm by renting to four local tenants and also provide a place of enjoyment, hunting opportunities and residence to family members. We paid to have rural water brought to the farm several years ago with the opportunity to build our retirement home on the farm within the next few years. There are three reasons for my request to remove our farm from consideration in placement of 345kV structures on our land. - The beautiful view and serenity of the setting will be disturbed with a large power line passing through our small farm. - Our fields and pastures are small and the need to work around line structures will make the parcels of land less desirable to rent by the local farmers. - The proximity of the line to our intended home building project, and the location of the rural water placement, is an electromagnetic field concern for us. I understand this line needs to follow the ND Highway 200 corridor; however, I believe you can find a more desirable site for crossing the Sheyenne River than the Erickson farm. Thank you for your consideration.

June Weeks stopped at our home in rural Grand Forks county in July 2009. She informed us of the power line project. 7/25/09 -After meeting with June Weeks, I called Kadsmas, Lee and Jackson with a couple questions. Somebody called me back late in the day. 11/16/09 - I went to the Public Meeting in Grand Forks, ND. I had three items that were of interest to me and discussed them with Kadsmas, Lee and Jackson. I still have the same three concerns: 1) reduction in land values - nobody wants a power line on their property 2) Minnkota Power is not easy to work with 3) MOST IMPORTANT. Although the power line can be no closer than 500 feet to a house, and according to June Weeks, Minnkota Power tries to be at least 1500 feet away, put the lines in the middle of the sections to impact the least number of homes in Grand Forks County.

As a Wilton resident I am very concerned with your Center to Grand Forks transmission project. We have nine families living within two miles of Wilton's west side and more to be built in 2010. There are two developments in this area with the potential of 20 new family dwelling that would substantially help the City of Wilton and a struggling school system. No one at the public meeting could or would explain why the project corridor was so close to Wilton. The transmission line if built should be no closer than three miles of Wilton's city limits, This project should not be completed at the sacrifice of a small town's growth.

We are steadfast against any new power lines on any of our properties. We have paid the local coops to bury all their transmission lines. One of the main reasons is safety. We have had employees have accidents with obstacles in the fields. We will do whatever is necessary to avoid towers on our land.

Also under: Safety

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Also under: Environmental Impacts

Agricultural Impacts

Endangered Species

I am a private land owner in central Sheridan County. Our family farm is being approached by Minnkota Power for a power line, also by Otter Tail Services Power Association for a wind farm and a power line for its wind farms. Where we live there is also large tracts of land under control of a government entity like US Fish & Wildlife or garrison division like McClusky Canal. Land paid for by all American citizens and land owned by all of us. But whenever you see a map of a proposed project all public owned land is off limits. Which is a bunch of B.S. All we hear is this is needed for the development of the betterment of our country and its future. Well, I think land owned by us all should be the first places to start and finish. But no one has the guts to stand up.

## ROW

Just thought that through common courtesy that someone would visit our place when doing some testing on our property. All we have had is someone visiting earlier letting us know that surveying is going to be done and just visited with a few guys on our property drilling for soil testing. No one let us know and it sure would have been nice to be told! Like I said all we ask is for "common courtesy" on your part. Thank you!

Obviously, the placement of towers in fields is a concern for farmers - on the edge is better of course. If towers must be in ag fields, the size of modern farming equipment must be considered. The distance between towers and roads, trails or other objects must be enough for machinery passage.

Also under: Routing

Three years ago we spent several thousand dollars to have the power poles removed and lines buried on our property. This property is in one of the proposed corridors. We do not want to see any more poles put on our property. The one time payment paid to preproperty owners for this inconvenience is a joke and very unfair! If it must go on our property, an annual payment would be the only option, the end user of this electricity can pay a little more so the preproperty owner doesn't bare the burden with little or no compensation.

We are very concerned about the proposed Center to Grand Forks 345KV Transmission Line. Long-term health issues from farming under power lines are a concern to us and to our employees. Since the state of North Dakota will not allow residences within 500 feet of these lines, there must be some issues of safety. We are also concerned about how this powerline could impact farming operations in the proposed corridor. We now experience interference on our 800 mghz business band radios under the existing Western Power Administration Line (which Minnkota acknowledges in their information packet) and which we use extensively on our farm for communication. Safety could be a factor in our operation in situations where an emergency could arise if we do not have reliable communication. We have also experienced interference with our GPS system when we are near these power lines. We rely on this signal to steer our tractors in planting and tillage operations. We have no row markers on our planters, so the GPS signal is the only way to plant straight and not have skips or overlaps. Also, as we plant, we map all fields for the amount of seed applied and what variety crop is planted in that particular field. Without GPS, we could not do that. Using GPS for all these uses has been shown to save 5%-10% in costs of production. Costs are higher in farming fields with power lines, The overlap of spraying and fertilizing because of these poles when we have to go around them increases our costs. It also has a negative effect on the environment because of over application around these poles. We would request that any proposed power line not be located on farmland that is in production, but located on pastureland, non-crop land or other right-of-ways that would not interfere with farming operations- It is imperative that all aspects of this line be considered especially for future agriculture implications as technology is always advancing for farming practices. Modern farm tractors and combines have computers, software, and electronics that may not be compatible with farming under these power lines. It is not fair that the farming community bear additional costs for the operation of this proposed power line.

Also under: Safety

Agricultural Impacts

I own approx 49.2 acres directly south of 32nd Ave in Grand Forks (E 1/2 of W 100 Acres Ex .80 RD of NE 1/4 24-151-51 in Brenna Township). I did attend your open meeting in Grand Forks and had a nice visit with a Mr. Phillips. While I realize there is no established route to the Prairie Substation at this time, it appears that my land could easily be affected. I put this land up for sale last year and have declines several offers in regards to selling the land in parcels. Although the offers far exceeded my asking price per/square foot, I declined them for the following reasons: This land served as a "safety net" for my husband, in particular, in the event that he may need additional care. He has since passed away and I am now approaching my retirement years. This is the only 49 acres I have (unlike my surrounding property owners). I'm 60 years old and have no desire in developing the land myself. The land is presently being farmed and asking anyone to "spot" farm the land is very unfair. At my age, it would be devastating to see you take just a portion of my land, more-than-likely reducing the value of the remainder, thereby ending any type of security for my retirement. Ideally, it would be wonderful if YOU purchased all my acres, put the line wherever you want, and make money on the rest! I don't envy the task ahead of you and wish you success in this endeavor. Thank you for putting my concerns into consideration. [map attached]

## Safety

In regards to Minnkota's Center to Grand Forks Transmission line - My wife and I own 400 acres on Section 9-14281, of which 70 acres is cropland with 46 acres of irrigated land. Most of this land is irrigated with gated pipe. The southeast area is irrigated using a Heinzman-Traveler Big Gun that puts out 800 gallons per minute. Basin Electric has a line across the southern part of section 9. A Minnkota line would put most of our irrigated fields between the two lines. Static electricity would make working our fields a hazardous job. The rest of the land is mostly cottonwood forest, which includes some of the oldest cottonwood trees in North Dakota. It also includes a mile of Missouri River frontage. The forest and the river frontage have a unique value that is irreplaceable. If you put a power line through this land it will decrease our livelihood and our security in our declining years, as well as the cottonwood trees that we cherish. At 76, I'm too old to start over.

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