



GREAT RIVER
ENERGY

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4 August 2005

Mr. Jon Mielke, Executive Secretary
North Dakota Public Service Commission
State of North Dakota
600 E. Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480



Re: Case # PU 2149-00-605, Woodlands Mitigation

Dear Mr. Mielke:

Please find attached the 2005 status report for the woodlands mitigation project resulting from the reroute of a portion of Great River Energy's (GRE) Ramsey to McHenry 230 kV transmission line around Devils Lake in North Dakota.

Approximately 500 trees in shelterbelts were removed during construction of the transmission line, therefore requiring 1000 trees to be planted and 750 surviving at the end of the three-year liability period (June 2005). GRE planted over 1500 trees in May 2002 to meet these requirements. GRE coordinated the 2002 plantings with Mr. Randy Ystaas of the Ramsey County Soil Conservation District (RCSCD).

Fieldwork to assess the status of the plantings was conducted on July 25, 2005 by Diane Stockdill and Carole Schmidt of Great River Energy. The final count shows that approximately 764 trees/shrubs have survived. Although the overall survival rate of the plantings is only 51%, because GRE had planted over twice the number of trees required at the end of the liability period, the 764 meets the requirements of 750 surviving in June 2005.

GRE would like to point out that approximately 2/3 of the trees removed to accomplish this reroute were located in a shelterbelt in front of a property along Highway 2. Our original route for the line in this area was across Highway 2 from this property, precisely to avoid having to cut down the large shelterbelt. Because the line would be within 500 feet of his house, we were required to obtain the landowner's signature to route the line there. The landowner refused to sign the waiver unless we routed the line in front of his house, paid to remove the shelterbelt, and compensated him for the trees. We were essentially forced to route a line where we did not want to, which resulted in a large part of this mitigation project.

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This report is the final status report for this mitigation project, and it certainly reflects the fact that GRE had mixed results both with the plantings and the maintenance provided them by the landowners.

If you have any questions regarding this status report or the mitigation project in general, please give me a call at (763) 241-2272. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist

c: Diane Stockdill, GRE
Dean Hendrickson

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**Woodlands Mitigation
Case # PU 2149-00-605**

2005 Status Report

Location	Number of Plantings	Planting done by	Tree Types	Estimated Plantings Surviving as of 7/25/05	Percent Survival	Liability Period Ending
Braunagel Property	105	RCSCD	73 Blue Spruce 16 Apricot 16 Amur Maple	43 11 13	64	June 2005
Ziegler Property	300	RCSCD	100 Green Ash 200 Spruce	0 157	52	June 2005
Mertens Property	175	Mertens	100 B. H. Spruce 75 Green Ash	40 15	31	June 2005
Riser Property	826	RCSCD	234 Spruce 43 NW Poplar 307 Lilac 16 Ch. cherry 112 Dogwood 27 Rosewood 16 Juneberry 71 Juniper	41 39 256 3 65 37 10 0	52	June 2005
Bingaman Property	102	Bingaman	52 Flower. Crab 40 R. Almond 10 Lilac	26 8 0	33	June 2005
TOTAL	1508			764	51	

Braunagel Property

The plantings on Mr. Braunagel's property are very well maintained. He had lost some spruce, and chose to replant some spruce in 2003 to replace those he lost. We estimate he planted approximately 50 new spruce, which are indistinguishable from those planted for him by the RCSCD in 2002. His tree count in 2005 is approximately 108, which is not reflected in the table above. GRE offered to compensate him for the replacement trees, but he declined.

Ziegler Property

The spruce were well maintained and flagged. Mr. Ziegler had also replaced a few lost spruce with some pines. His tree count is actually 168, which is not reflected in the table above. The green ash, which were planted quite close to the edge of the crops along the southern edge of Mr. Ziegler's field, were a total loss. Those plantings are no longer considered part of this mitigation project.

Mertens Property

A few of the green ash planted along Highway 2 are still alive, but overall green ash seedlings have done very poorly in Devils Lake, possibly due to the cool and wet weather or disease. The spruce trees planted at the farm did not survive, but those planted at Tom Mertens house are healthy.

Mr. Mertens had indicated previously that they did not have room for the maples (and perhaps some of the ash) so they were given away to friends, and friends of friends, etc. GRE believes those trees were planted somewhere in Devils Lake but did not feel it worth it to track them down, therefore they are not part of this mitigation project.

Riser Property

The main Riser property was sold in 2004 after the death of Keary Riser. Although maintenance of some of the plantings on this property is good, the spruce/juniper rows had been mowed at the main property and are basically a total loss there. The plantings at Mr. Riser's daughter-in-law's property to the east are doing relatively well.

Bingaman Property

Mr. Bingaman provided a count of his trees to GRE. The survival rate for his plantings is poor, due to a combination of rabbit damage, winter kill, and poor spring weather. GRE paid for another 50 trees/shrubs that Mr. Bingaman planted this spring, but they were not counted as part of this mitigation project.