

---

**BASIN ELECTRIC  
POWER COOPERATIVE**

1717 EAST INTERSTATE AVENUE  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA 58503-0564  
PHONE: 701-223-0441  
FAX: 701-557-5336



May 4, 2011

Darrell Nitschke, Executive Secretary  
North Dakota Public Service Commission  
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 408  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: *Submission and request for approval of Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan for ND PSC Case No. PU-07-169 (Basin Electric Power Cooperative - Belfield to Rhame 230 kV Transmission Line).*

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) constructed an electrical transmission line in southwestern North Dakota, in Stark, Slope, and Bowman counties. Basin Electric contracted with Western EcoSystems Technologies (WEST) to inventory trees and shrubs that may be potentially cleared, grubbed, cut or otherwise removed so that mitigation could occur according to the Public Service Commission's Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications (Case No. PU-07-169). WEST also conducted a post-construction inspection to verify/validate the tree and shrub inventory. While a total of 900 trees and shrubs are required for replanting, Basin Electric plans to exceed this requirement by planting approximately 1100 trees and shrubs.

**Trees**

Approximately 160 trees, representing seven known and one unknown species were removed during construction of the transmission line (Table 1). Nine landowners were affected. The temporary construction trail impacted some shrubby junipers but did not appear to have killed them. Other than these junipers, it appears that the majority of inventoried trees within the right-of-way were cleared during construction. Please refer to the attached WEST report.

**Shrubs**

Approximately 290 shrubs, represented only by sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), were destroyed during construction of the transmission line, affecting only two landowners. Summer 2010 checks of various locations along the transmission line revealed that destruction of shrubs was minimal. Physical ground disturbance along the transmission line appeared to be limited to the holes needed for tangent and angle point structures. Also, it appeared no driving routes between structures were graded or cleared of shrubs and driving on shrubs did not appear to kill them as the roots were left intact.

**Replacement Plan**

Basin Electric contacted the ND Forest Service to determine a list of tree and shrub species suitable for planting in southwestern North Dakota if existing species are not replanted. Impacted landowners were contacted by mail and given the choice of having the replacement trees or shrubs planted off the right-of-way on their property or waiving the replanting in writing and allowing those replacement trees or shrubs to be planted in an alternate location.

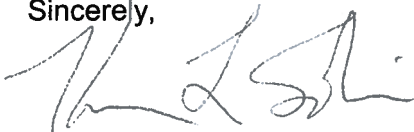
Page 2  
May 4, 2011

Item number 11 in Case No. PU-07-169 states that both trees and shrubs shall be replaced on a two for one basis. Therefore, approximately 320 trees and 580 shrubs need to be planted. Of the eleven affected landowners, seven accepted the option to replant, representing 292 trees. Three landowners signed waivers declining the replanting, representing 580 shrubs and 20 Russian olive trees. One landowner did not respond, representing a total of six elm trees; these trees were assumed to be declined by the landowner.

Species and replacement locations are documented in Table 1 and Table 2. As indicated earlier, landowners refused proposed sagebrush replanting. In lieu of sagebrush, Basin Electric proposes to plant chokecherry, since it is viewed more favorably by landowners and would also provide food and shelter for wildlife. Tree and shrub planting will occur in spring 2011, and plantings will be inspected once a year for three years with reports due to the North Dakota Public Service Commission before October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

Basin Electric requests the PSC consider and approve the Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan for Case No. PU-07-169. Please contact me if you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding this submittal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Solie', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kevin L. Solie  
Senior Environmental Analyst

/gmj  
Enclosures

**Table 1. Replanting species and locations**

Landowner	Species	Inventory	2:1 Replacement	Planting Location/Notes
Marlene L. Powell	cottonwood	1	2	Section 12, T134 R100
	willow	5	10	
George & Edward Schmidt	sagebrush	200	400	Declined (waiver)
	cottonwood	1	2	
Wagner Farms (Philip)	willow	5	10	Section 2, T138 R98
	hawthorn	20	40	
	American elm	5	10	
Bruce and Teresa Bowman	American elm	5	10	Declined (no response)
Myles and Terri Richard	juniper	1	2	Section 23, T132, R102 (assumed to be juniper)
	Unknown	10	20	
	willow	5	10	
Wayne & Rita Stebbins	cottonwood	5	10	Section 20, T132 R101
	boxelder	5	10	
Alex Stockert Ranch Trust	boxelder	5	10	Section 3, T134 R99
Glenn Wagner/Wagner Farms	cottonwood	1	2	Section 2, T138 R98
	willow	65	130	
Frank A Hurt et al.	sagebrush	90	180	Declined (waiver)
	Russian olive	10	20	
Dorothy Eldringhoff	Russian olive	10	20	Declined (waiver)
Kenneth & Roberta Volesky	box elder	20	40	Section 29, T138 R98

**Table 2. Planting Locations for Declined trees and shrubs.**

<b>Species</b>	<b>2:1 Replacement</b>	<b>Planting Location</b>	<b>Landowner</b>
Chokecherry (in lieu of sagebrush)	580	Section 23, T132, R102	Myles and Terri Richard
American elm	10	Section 23, T132, R102	Myles and Terri Richard
Russian olive	20	Section 23, T132, R102	Myles and Terri Richard