



**STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
OF NORTH DAKOTA**

Jack Dalrymple
Governor of North Dakota

December 14, 2011

North Dakota
State Historical Board

Mr. Dennis Rankin
Environmental Protection Specialist
USDA Rural Utilities Service
1400 Independence Ave SW, Stop 1571
Washington, D.C. 20250-1571

Gereld Gerntholz
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Jamestown - Secretary

**ND SHPO Ref.: 10-0173 RUS/Minnkota's proposed Center to Grand Forks
Transmission Line Project, Proposed Treatment Plan for Historic Property
32NE0080, Nelson County, North Dakota**

Albert I. Berger
Grand Forks

Diane K. Larson
Bismarck

Dear Mr. Rankin,

Chester E. Nelson, Jr.
Bismarck

We reviewed ND SHPO Ref.: 10-0173 RUS/Minnkota's proposed Center to Grand Forks Transmission Line Project, Proposed Treatment Plan for Historic Property 32NE0080, Nelson County, North Dakota. We concur with your "No Adverse Effect" determination for the treatment plan as outlined in the HDR report "Center to Grand Forks 345 kV Transmission Line Proposed Treatment Plan for Historic Property 32NE80," provided the treatment plan is carried out as specified.

Margaret Puetz
Bismarck

Sara Otte Coleman
Director
Tourism Division

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. We look forward to further consultation. Please include the ND SHPO Reference number listed above in further correspondence for this specific project. If you have any questions please contact Susan Quinnell, Review and Compliance Coordinator at (701) 328-3576 or squinnell@nd.gov

Kelly Schmidt
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Secretary of State

Mark Zimmerman
Director
Parks and Recreation
Department

Sincerely,

Francis Ziegler
Director
Department of Transportation

Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer
(North Dakota) and
Director, State Historical Society of North Dakota

Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr.
Director

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Center to Grand Forks 345 kV Transmission Line

Proposed Treatment Plan for Historic Property 32NE80

Introduction

This document presents a Treatment Plan to address a historic farmstead located near Aneta within Nelson County in North Dakota (refer to Figure 1 below). It provides an explanation of the Center to Grand Forks 345kV Transmission Line project, a description of the historic property 32NE80, and then outlines a proposed Treatment Plan.

Center to Grand Forks 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Property 32NE80 was documented as part of the Class III Architectural Reconnaissance for the proposed Minnkota Center to Grand Forks 345 kV Transmission Line Project (CGF). Minnkota is a wholesale electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Minnkota provides, on a nonprofit basis, wholesale electric service to eleven retail/member-owner distribution cooperatives. The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency which administers the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Utilities Programs, may provide financing assistance for the construction of these Minnkota facilities. RUS is following its Federal policies and procedures, 7 CFR Part 1794 environmental Policy and Procedures for implementing the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), in order to assure compliance with NEPA and related laws, regulations, and executive orders for this project undertaking.

HDR, an architecture and engineering firm based in Omaha, Nebraska, conducted an evaluation of historic architectural resources (buildings and structures) within the project Area of Potential Effects (APE) on behalf of Minnkota and RUS. The proposed transmission line travels east through the following eleven North Dakota counties: Oliver, Burleigh, McLean, Sheridan, Wells, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Nelson, Steele, and Grand Forks. The goals of this historic building survey were to:

- Identify and make recommendations regarding buildings and structures within the APE,
- Make recommendations regarding their NRHP eligibility,
- Assess effects of the project on the historic properties, and
- Make recommendations regarding effects of the proposed project and possible mitigation measures.

An adverse effect to a historic property could occur due to direct effects such as demolition, or due to indirect effects such as visual intrusion to the significant setting of a historic property.

The HDR survey results were incorporated into a report titled *Historic Building Inventory and Evaluation of the Proposed Route of a 345 kV Electrical Transmission Line from Center to Grand*

Forks in North Dakota. The survey recommended that a historic farmstead located in Nelson County, Property 32NE80, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The report further identifies that the proposed transmission line, if built, would have an indirect visual effect on Property 32NE80's setting and feeling such that it would adversely affect the integrity of the property. These elements of integrity are what impart the sense of history to the viewer or someone passing by the property. Under the RUS and Minnkota project regulatory framework, this finding calls for a Treatment Plan to be developed when an adverse effect to a historic property cannot be avoided. A description of the site is provided below to frame the Treatment Plan and how it could be implemented to reduce the level of adverse effects to the site.

Description of Property 32NE80

Property 32NE80 is a Nelson County farm complex bound on the north by a tree shelterbelt and 19th Street NE, and by agricultural fields to the east and south. A wetland area is located to the west. A south/southeast trending dirt driveway accesses the residence. A second north-south trending dirt road is located on the east side of the site and may have been used to haul grain to the granary, and flour out for shipment. A second L-shaped mature tree shelter is located to the east of the building complex. Buildings on the site consists of early twentieth century buildings, with a granary, a Victorian Queen Anne residence, a hipped roof pump house, garage, and two outbuildings.

Sites by County
Center to Grand Forks Project
Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.

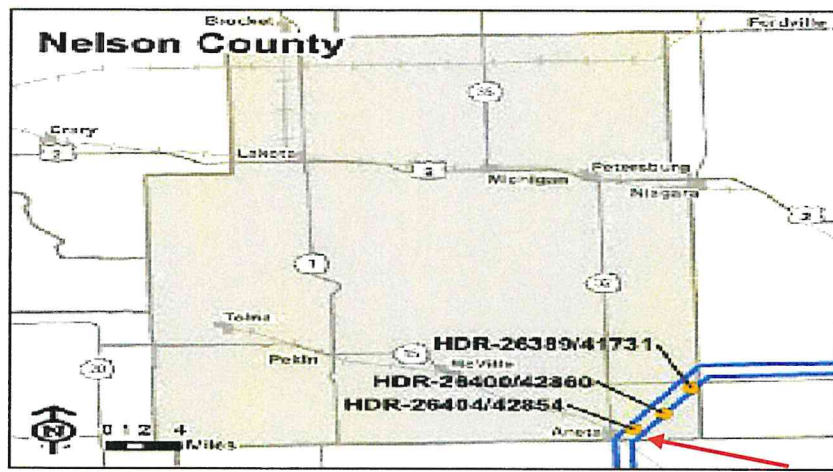


Figure 1 Red arrow depicts location of Property 32NE80 in Nelson County.



Figures 2-3 Queen Anne style residence and granary at the subject property



Figure 4 View to north of subject property. Red arrow depicts location of proposed Minnkota transmission lines. Black arrows show location of proposed single-pole structures.

In order to build the transmission line, a 150-foot right of way is needed (Refer to Figure 4 above). As the line passes Property 32NE80, construction will necessitate removal of trees in a grove that is southeast of the historic property. Additional trees will need to be planted to replace those taken by the line. Also, a new transmission line structure will be placed very near to where the trees will be removed. This single-pole structure will be 150 feet high and may be visible from the main residence. A second single-pole structure, located south of the historic property, will also be visible in the distance. This Treatment Plan acknowledges that the historic period viewshed from the property is integral to its eligibility for listing on the NRHP. Discussions with project engineers, the landowner, and an architectural historian recommend vegetative screening as an option to mitigate the adverse visual effect. This Treatment Plan requires review and concurrence by the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office and RUS prior to implementation.

Vegetative Screening Option

This option incorporates vegetative buffers to maintain the historic character of the surrounding landscape. The buffer will incorporate opaque vegetation to minimize visibility of single-pole structures from the historic farmstead. In general, an opaque vegetative buffer is intended to avoid diminishing the aesthetic qualities of and scenic views to or from historic

sites; minimize adverse visual impacts to historic sites; and preserve the historical or cultural values for which the property is listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The vegetative buffers shall be adequate for this stated purpose and shall block the view from the historic property to the new construction, if at all possible, while maintaining a sense of historical integrity. Agreed to by the landowner, this treatment would have a negligible effect on the unity and overall visual quality of the main farmstead. The vegetation plan will incorporate elements of the existing view (i.e. mature trees), will not change the view dramatically, and yet, for the most part, will obscure both the south and southeastern single-pole structures. The purpose of the vegetative screen is to hide the single-pole structures from view. This plan acknowledges that the southeast single-pole structure is planned to be taller than the surrounding vegetation. It is anticipated, however, that existing outbuildings and vegetation would assist in diminishing the view of the single-pole structure from the residence.

To achieve maximum year-round vegetative buffers, the plantings should be evergreen, and similar species to those currently on the property. Full establishment of the vegetative buffers shall be accomplished within four (4) growing seasons. Existing growth may be considered an opaque visual buffer when it meets the criteria set forth above; if not, then existing growth must be supplemented to achieve the desired result. Every year for four years, the screen shall be checked for adequate shielding of the power transmission line.

In summary, this plan:

- Acknowledges the historic viewshed,
- Proposes that vegetative screening will work in part, but must be sensitive to the historical planting design,
- Acknowledges that species selection must be compatible in scale and variety to blend with existing vegetation, and
- Includes a schedule for maintenance and management.