

Mr. Paul Picha
State Historic Preservation Office
State Historical Society of North Dakota
612 East Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0830

June 29, 2009

NDSHPO Ref: 08-1277 Merjent/Whiting Petroleum Robinson Lake Pipeline Construction

Dear Mr. Picha;

In December 2008, your office provided approval for the above referenced project as it was routed at that time. At this time, I am informing you of final routing of the pipeline and the start of construction. To remind you of the project and the archaeological findings, Whiting Petroleum (Whiting) is building an 18-mile, 8-inch diameter oil pipeline parallel to an already constructed natural gas pipeline just south of Stanley in Mountrail County, North Dakota. Merjent is assisting Whiting to complete their PSC application and hired Metcalf Archaeological Consultants (MAC) to conduct a Class III Inventory Survey of the pipeline corridor during the Fall of 2008. The survey recorded 17 archaeological sites and six isolated finds, and revisited two previously recorded sites (Stine and Barth [2008], Robinson Lake: A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for a Proposed Pipeline Corridor in Mountrail County, North Dakota). In an Executive Summary dated November 4, 2008, I summarized the archaeological findings and described our plans to provide a minimum 50-foot buffer around three sites located in or very near the proposed pipeline corridor. Your office provided concurrence of our findings and recommendations in a letter dated December 15, 2008.

On May 12 and 13, 2009 Damita Heimstra of MAC traveled to the project area and worked with the Whiting construction survey crew to locate and mark any threatened archaeological sites so that the construction crew could avoid them with the minimum 50 foot buffer. At that time, Ms. Heimstra discovered that over the ensuing winter and spring months, an additional feature had been revealed at 32MN763, and an additional site was revealed near 32MN762. She submitted to your office an updated site form for the former and a new site form for the latter. Both sites were staked or flagged for avoidance with a minimum 50-foot buffer by Ms. Heimstra and later fenced off by the Whiting survey crew. The pipeline corridor was re-routed laterally in order to avoid 32MN764. Ms. Heimstra confirmed that the site would be avoided with a minimum 50-foot buffer.

The other change to the project is the minor adjustment of the pipeline route at its northern end in Section 27. The pipeline will cross the Knife River at this location and the construction engineers moved the pipeline corridor so that a more perpendicular boring was possible (see attached New Route Data map). This route change was marked during Ms. Heimstra's visit in May. A prominent prehistoric site containing stone circles, hearths, and depressions (32MN461) is located on a nearby knoll, but this is a minimum of 200 feet to the south, well outside of the threshold to require a further avoidance buffer.

To summarize our recent efforts, MAC visited the project area in May, when Damita Heimstra conducted a reconnaissance drive along the pipeline corridor with the Whiting survey crew, recorded new information she observed, and marked a buffer around sites that were close to the pipeline corridor as it is routed for construction at this time. With these protective measures, we recommend that no significant historic properties will be affected by the construction of the pipeline.

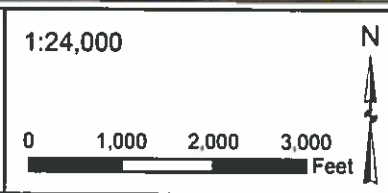
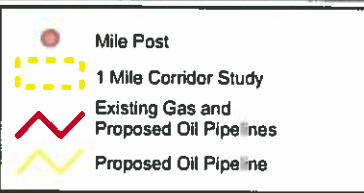
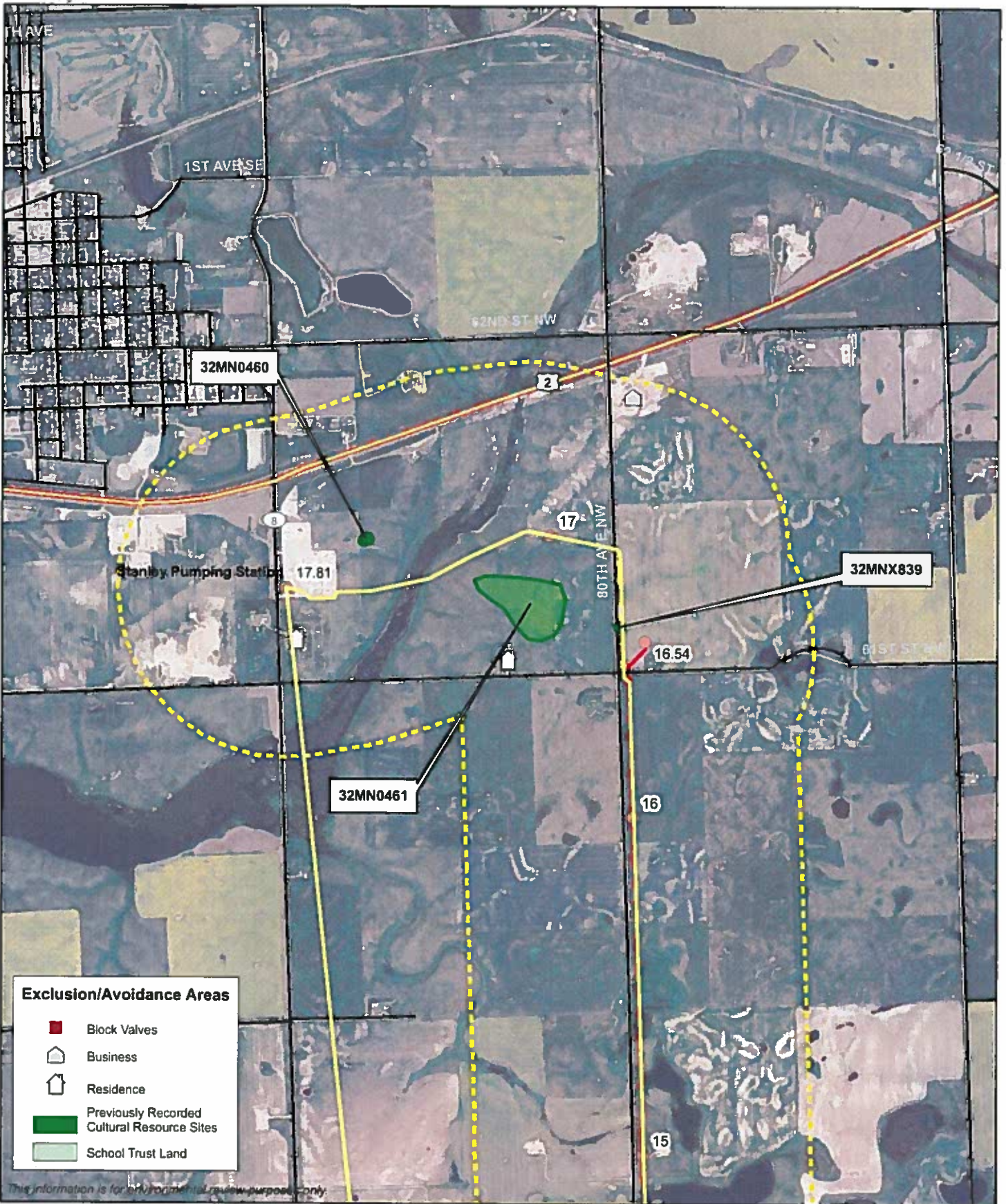
The Whiting Petroleum Company has filed its application with the North Dakota PSC and has fulfilled all of its obligations regarding environmental review. They are making final preparations to construct the pipeline and are anxious to receive concurrence with the cultural resources findings and recommendations. Anything that your office can do to expedite the SHPO review will be appreciated by all parties. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Peggy J. Boden
Cultural Resources Specialist

Attached: Robinson New Route Data Map

Map Document: I:\2009-GIS\GIS\Cheney\Whang\Stanley Pipeline\Routing Criteria - Aerial.mxd
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Robinson Lake Pipeline Project
Routing Criteria on
Aerial Photo Base
Map 6 of 6