



October 20, 2020

Steve Kahl, Executive Director
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 East Boulevard; Dept 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Re: Case No. PU-11-696
Basin Electric Power Cooperative
AVS-Neset 345-kV Transmission Project
Tree/Shrub Mitigation Plan 2020 Update

Dear Mr. Kahl:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update regarding Basin Electric Power Cooperative's **(Basin Electric's)** tree and shrub replacement efforts for the Antelope Valley Station to Neset 345-kV Transmission Line Project **(Project)**.

The Project was constructed in two segments; the first segment is approximately 133 miles in length and second segment is approximately 62 miles in length. Construction occurred from 2014 into late-2017, with right-of-way reclamation activities continuing into 2019. A total of 17,410 trees and shrubs were removed during construction of the project; on a 2:1 basis, 34,820 trees and shrubs were required as replacements.

The initial tree and shrub replacement plan for the project was approved by the North Dakota Public Service Commission **(PSC)** in 2017 and included planting plans for an estimated 4,192 trees and shrubs at Hoffland Bay in Williams County and the City of Stanley in Mountrail County. An update to the plan was approved by the PSC in 2018, amounting to an estimated 17,463 trees and shrubs, including a Pheasants Forever planting in Williams County, North Dakota Game and Fish Department **(NDGF)** plantings at Beulah Mine and Harmony Lake in Mercer County, and several North Dakota Department of Transportation **(NDDoT)** plantings in Stark County. The approved plan also included an estimated 11,224 trees and shrubs to be replaced on individual landowner parcels.

The Williams and Mercer County plantings occurred in 2018, while the Stark County plantings occurred during 2019. The Stark County planting included an additional NDGF planting of approximately 3,250 trees and shrubs at the Raab Wildlife Management Area. Landowner plantings were also ongoing.

Table 1 provides details on the number, year, and type (public or landowner) of plantings completed to date. It should be noted that plantings are typically adjusted for field conditions, i.e., there are either a few more or few less plantings than the estimates included in the tree and shrub planting plan updates previously approved by the PSC.

344 PU-11-696 Filed 10/20/2020 Pages: 2
Tree & Shrub Mitigation Plan update
Basin Electric Power Cooperative
Kevin Solie, P.E.

Table 1. Tree and shrub summary.

County	Public Plantings	Landowner Plantings	Planting Dates (Year)	Notes
McKenzie	0	7,117	2017, 2018, 2019	1,606 replants 2018/2019
Mercer	4,529	2,129	2016, 2018	
Mountrail	622	0	2018	
Stark	16,540	0	2019	1,000 replants 2020
Williams	5,097	1,513	2017, 2018, 2019	1,750 replants planned for 2021
Totals	26,788	10,759		

As shown in Table 1 above, a total of approximately 37,547 trees and shrubs have been planted on behalf of the Project, while a minimum of 34,820 are required. County Soil Conservation Districts (**SCDs**) have conducted limited survivability monitoring and replanting efforts since the initial plantings. As noted above, approximately 1,606 replants were completed in McKenzie County during 2018 and 2019 and 1,000 replants were completed in Stark County in 2020; Basin Electric has ordered approximately 1,750 replants for spring 2021 in Williams County. One additional landowner planting project in Mercer County is scheduled for 2021 as well.

As illustrated above, planting efforts have been ongoing over a period of several years. Basin Electric has planted approximately 8% more trees and shrubs than the minimum required. We will continue to work with the county SCDs for any remaining landowner plantings and plan to include detailed tree and shrub survivability information in our 2021 report.

Please contact me at ksolie@bepc.com or 701.202.5096, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Solie

Kevin L. Solie, P.E.
Senior Environmental Compliance Administrator

kl/gmj

cc: Casey Jacobson
Amanda Wangler