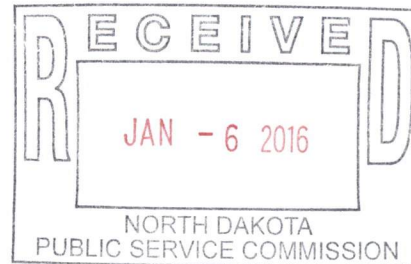




January 6, 2016

Darrell Nitschke
Director of Administration/Executive Secretary
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 East Boulevard, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480



RE: In the Matter of Otter Tail Power Company's and Montana Dakota Utilities Co's Big Stone South to Ellendale 345KV Transmission Line Project in Dickey County, North Dakota Case No. PU-13-840 Notice of Intent for Tree Clearing

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

Enclosed herewith for filing in connection with the above-referenced matter are copies of the following notices related to Order provisions 2 and 5:

1. A preconstruction conference call for tree clearing was held at 9:00 AM CST on Wednesday, January 6, 2016 as per Order provision number 2. Minutes of this conference call are attached to this notice.
2. Otter Tail Power Company and Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (jointly, the Applicants) are informing the Commission of their intent to begin tree clearing on January 7, 2016 as per Order provision number 5. Weekly updates will be filed for tree clearing.
3. Tree clearing key contacts

If you have any questions regarding this filing, please contact me at 218-739-8607 or pbeithon@otpc.com.

Sincerely,

Pete Beithon
Manager, Regulatory Recovery

Enclosures
By electronic filing and U.S. mail

60 **PU-13-840** Filed: 1/6/2016 Pages: 4
Notices of preconstruction conference call and intent to begin tree clearing, contact info

Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. / Otter Tail Power Company
Pete Beithon, Mgr. Regulatory Recovery



Meeting Notes and Attendees

Owner:	Otter Tail Power Company and Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.		
Project:	Big Stone South to Ellendale 345kV	Project No:	HDR 164-186675 ND PSC Case No. PU-13-840
Meeting Subject:	Big Stone South to Ellendale Project (Case No. PU-13-840) - Pre- Construction Tree Clearing Conference Call	Meeting Location:	Conference Call and Go-To- Meeting
Meeting Date:	January 6, 2016	Notes by:	Monica Peterson

ATTENDEES:



- North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC): Jerry Lein
- Otter Tail Power Company: Al Koeckeritz, Gerry Bermel
- Jacobsen Tree: Bill Jacobsen
- Ulteig Engineering: Bob Youness, AJ Delzer
- HDR: Brian Hunker, Monica Peterson

NOTE:

▼ Indicates Action Item or Decision Made

MINUTES:

- Introductions
 - Ulteig Engineering (Ulteig) will be the Public Service Commission's (PSC) third-party monitor for construction. Ulteig is scheduled for 4 total visits to the Project area during construction. The Project is developing the construction schedule and will inform the PSC and Ulteig of construction start. The current thought is that construction will start in North Dakota in late 2017, but this is subject to change.
 - Ulteig will not monitor tree clearing.
 - ▼ Ulteig to send HDR contact information
 - This conference call focuses on tree clearing and a second pre-construction call will be needed once the transmission line contractor is hired.
- Tree removal
 - Tree removal is anticipated to start on Thursday, January 7, 2016 and will take about 1 week.
 - Trees will be cut about 3 inches above grade.
 - No ground disturbance is anticipated.
 - Reminder from Jerry Lien - top soil and subsoil segregation – if ground disturbance occurs make sure to review the Order for stipulations regarding top soil and sub soil segregation. Top soil up to about 12 inches should be segregated.
 - The Order states that the Project can clear the right-of-way width and does not follow the 50 foot maximum clearing requirement through wind breaks.
- Process
 - The Tree Inventory is complete and the Tree Inventory Plan was filed with the PSC in September 2015 as an attachment to the Consolidated Application for an Amended Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit

- The inventory documents the trees within the right-of-way that are anticipated to be removed.
 - Jacobsen Trees will document each tree removed and the Replacement Plan will be based upon what was actually removed.
 - Replacement will be on a 2:1 ratio based upon the Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications attached to the Order.
 - The Replacement Plan is not complete as discussions are underway with landowners inquiring if they are interested in trees.
 - The Project anticipates utilizing the local Soil and Water Conservation Service for tree replacement planting and subsequent 3 year monitoring.
- **Process Next Steps**
 - The PSC needs documentation to verify notice of tree clearing – meeting notes of this discussion will need to be filed with the Notice of Intent
 - In addition, if there's an incident during tree clearing such as an injury or eagle take, will need to notify Jerry Lein via phone call and separate incident report
 - Once tree clearing starts, weekly updates must be emailed to the PSC and Ulteig according to the Order
 - It is anticipated that the Project will file 1-2 weekly updates during tree clearing. Then no additional updates will be filed until construction starts in 2017. The second tree clearing weekly update will note that that "No subsequent reports are anticipated until construction resumes in 2017."
 - No inspections will be needed during tree removal because soil is not expected to be disturbed (although the term is subjective, mild soil disturbance from equipment is not expected as trees stumps are anticipated to remain in the ground)
 - Project will reach out the Soil and Water Conservation Service on replacement
 - File the Tree Replacement Plan with the PSC
- **Construction**
 - Foundation work will not begin in ND until mid to late 2017
 -  Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (MDU) will need to reach out to PSC to have a pre-construction call on the substation component of the Project. Otter Tail will inform MDU.
- **Filing**
 -  Otter Tail will file the pre-construction meeting minutes and Notice of Intent today (January 6, 2016) in order to start tree clearing tomorrow.



Tree Clearing Key Contacts

Big Stone South to Ellendale 345 kV, Case No. PU-13-840
 January 6, 2016

Role	Name	Firm	E-Mail	Phone
Public Service Commission	Jerry Lein	Public Service Commission	jlein@nd.gov	701-328-1035
Construction Management	Gerry Bermel	Otter Tail Power	gbermel@otpc.com	218-739-8915
Project Manager	Al Koeckeritz	Otter Tail Power	akoeckeritz@otpc.com	218-739-8416
Tree Removal Contractor	Bill Jacobsen	Jacobsen Tree	bill@jacobsentree.com	605-323-8177
Third-Party Monitor for Public Service Commission	Bob Youness	Ulteig Engineering	Bob.Youness@Ulteig.com	701-355-2343
Third-Party Monitor for Public Service Commission	AJ Delzer	Ulteig Engineering	AJ.Delzer@ulteig.com	701-355-2332
Environmental Consultant Project Manager	Brian Hunker	HDR Engineering	Brian.hunker@hdrinc.com	763-278-5927
Environmental Consultant	Monica Peterson	HDR Engineering	Monica.peterson@hdrinc.com	763-591-5432