



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Regulatory Program: CapX 2020 345-kV High Voltage Transmission Line Brookings County, South Dakota to Hampton, Minnesota (BRTC)

Contact

David Studenski
(507) 895-2064
david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil

Location/Description

Xcel Energy and Great River Energy, as part of an initiative of regional utilities known as CapX 2020, are proposing to construct and operate a 345-kV high voltage transmission line connecting an existing substation near Brookings, South Dakota, to a new substation near Hampton, Minnesota. Hampton is located near Highway 52, approximately 25 miles south of St. Paul, Minnesota. The total project length is approximately 230 miles.

The proposed project would be constructed mostly with single-pole steel structures, ranging in height from 130 to 175 feet, with an average span of 1,000 feet between poles.

Background/Discussion

The project purpose is to provide generation outlet for existing and anticipated wind generation projects and improve regional and community reliability. In a letter to Great River Energy dated July 2, 2009, the Corps concurred with the project purpose and need.

The Corps contacted the South Dakota Regulatory Office to initiate coordination; however, no water or wetland impacts are anticipated in South Dakota. Since 2008, the Corps has been involved in several multiple-agency work group meetings to review project information and discuss permitting requirements.

The project includes two crossings of the Minnesota River. The crossings and various other locations may be culturally significant to many groups of people. In October 2008, Native American tribes that may have an interest in the area of the proposed line were invited to consult.

In September 2011, the Corps reinitiated consultation as a result of new project information.

Status

Because of independent utility and project staging, it is anticipated separate permit applications will be submitted for separate segments of the project.

A complete application for the Cedar Mountain-Helena segment was received on July 18, 2012. This segment includes a crossing of the Minnesota River at Belle Plaine, Minnesota. No cultural or historic resources were identified along this segment. The proposed permanent, temporary, and conversion impacts to wetlands and the Minnesota River crossing were authorized by Regional General Permit (RGP-003-MN) on July 27, 2012, and construction work is in progress.

A complete application for the Lyon County-Cedar Mountain segment is expected in September 2012. The applicant is in the process of completing cultural resource survey work and an avoidance statement for the Grass Lake Schoolhouse, which was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register. The St. Paul District Regulatory office is consulting with the Upper Sioux Community for a crossing of the Minnesota River near Franklin, Minnesota. A permit decision is expected under RGP-003-MN in October 2012.

An additional application for the eastern segments is expected to be received by the Corps for construction to occur from August 2013 to 2014. The western segments would be constructed starting in February 2014. The entire project is scheduled to be energized by 2015.

Authority

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act