



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
The State of Minnesota

State Office Building, Room G95 100 Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Mr. James B. Atkinson
Environmental and Real Estate Manager
Minnesota Power, Inc.
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

August 7, 2017

Re: Great Northern Transmission Line Right-of-way: Blandin & Meriwether easements

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), at its July 31, 2017 meeting, reviewed a request from the DNR to approve conveyance to MN Power for right-of-way regarding the Great Northern Transmission Line (GNTL). Per MN Law 97a.056, subd. 15, conveyance of any interest held by the state upon Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) purchased properties must be approved by the Council.

While the Council ultimately did vote to approve the conveyance, the Council also made two requests:

1. For DNR to provide maps for members to review that would provide additional information of the planned GNTL route with special detail of current nearby roads.
2. That a letter be sent to MN Power requesting that MN Power utilize a route that would stay to the edge of the Blandin and Meriwether easements and along roadways to minimize impact to habitat lands within the easements. (Hence this letter.)

With respect, the Council recognizes that the footprint of the GNTL will have both beneficial and detrimental effects upon wildlife habitat within the eased lands. With that in mind, if the route is to travel along current road or utility right-of-ways, the adverse impacts could be somewhat mitigated. Conversely, if the route is carved through forested acres, while opening the tree canopy could bring new growth to the forest floor benefiting some wildlife, such an opening could be detrimental to habitat for other game and nongame wildlife and forest plant life communities.

Consequently, the council respectfully requests that Minnesota Power minimize detrimental habitat effects of the GNTL right-of-way footprint through the use of current road and utility right-of-ways.

Respectfully,

Bob Anderson, Chairman
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Cc LSOHC Council Members, LSOHC staff, DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr, DNR staff