



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Missouri Ecological Services Field Office
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December 5, 2014

FILED
February 04, 2016
Data Center
Missouri Public
Service Commission

Mr. Kenny Lynn
Ameren Transmission
1901 Chouteau Ave
PO Box 66149
St. Louis, Missouri 63166-6149

Dear Mr. Lynn:

This letter is in response to the revised route alternatives for the Ameren Mark Twain Transmission Project received in our office on October 6, 2014. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is providing this response under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4327), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712), and Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

Federally Listed and Proposed Bat Species

The Mark Twain Transmission Project consists of two major segments, Maywood to Zachary and Zachary to State Line. For each major segment, Ameren has reduced the potential alternatives within each segment to two alternative routes per segment. The two routes for Maywood to Zachary run through Marion, Shelby, Lewis, Knox, and Adair counties. The two routes for Zachary to State Line run through Adair and Schuyler counties. Every county intersected by the proposed alignment is known to be occupied by maternity colonies of the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). Furthermore, based on past surveys, the routes pass through five known maternity colony home ranges. Many areas along the proposed alignment have suitable habitat but likely have not been surveyed for federally listed bats. These areas of suitable habitat in the aforementioned counties have a high likelihood of occupancy by Indiana bats. The proposed endangered northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) also occurs in northeast Missouri and has been documented in Lewis County.

Removal of trees during the hibernation season of bats (November 1 to April 1) prevents the direct take of tree-roosting bats. However, there is still potential for indirect take through habitat loss and degradation. In a June 23, 2014 email, Shauna Marquardt of my staff relayed to you the

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need to conduct surveys for federally listed bats along the proposed alignment in order to determine where the species might occur and to identify roost trees or roosting areas. These data are necessary to identify areas that should be avoided and to help develop minimization measures where necessary. Guidelines for conducting summer surveys for Indiana bats are available here: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>.

Migratory Birds

Restricting woody vegetation clearing to winter months also serves to prevent injury to or mortality of most nesting migratory birds. Raptors and owls, however, breed during late winter and early spring. Because these species are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, we recommend implementing measures to avoid or minimize impacts to active nests.

While direct take may be avoided by clearing woody vegetation during the winter, the Service is concerned about the effects of permanent loss of habitat from clearing the ROW. According to the proposed alignments you provided, the project will consist of approximately 100 miles of new transmission line and associated ROW through the forest-limited landscape of northeast Missouri. ROW construction for each alternative route will require tree and woody vegetation removal. Should the final alignment require substantial removal of forested habitat, we would like to discuss with you options to replace this habitat elsewhere or to protect other areas containing comparable habitat. We have worked with other companies involving the removal of mature forested habitat associated with ROWs and would be happy to provide examples of mitigation measures which have been implemented to benefit migratory birds.

Finally, when selecting the final alignment, Ameren should minimize overall forest degradation and loss and should avoid fragmentation of existing forest patches to the extent practical to reduce impacts to federally listed bats and migratory birds. At this time, the Service cannot recommend specific routes because each of the four alternatives intersects with known Indiana bat maternity colony home ranges. The Service requests a meeting with Ameren and the Missouri Department of Conservation to coordinate efforts on the Mark Twain Transmission Project before the final alignment is selected. Should proposed route alternatives change, or if you have questions concerning this response, please contact Shauna Marquardt at (573) 234-2132, extension 174.

Sincerely,



Amy Salveter
Field Supervisor

Cc: MDC, Jefferson City, MO (Attn: Jennifer Campbell-Allison, Policy Coordination)

Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois's
Response to Neighbors United Data Request

In the Matter of the Application of Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois for Other
Relief or, in the Alternative, a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
Authorizing it to Construct, Install, Own, Operate, Maintain and Otherwise Control and
Manage a 345,000-volt Electric Transmission Line from Palmyra, Missouri, to the Iowa
Border and an Associated Substation Near Kirksville, Missouri.
Supplemental

Data Request No.: NU-6-9s1 - Jennifer Hernandez

Please provide copies of any and all communication between ATXI
employees or its agents (including but not limited to Burns and McDonnell) and the
United States Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service.

RESPONSE

Prepared By: Christopher J. Wood; Kevin Atkins, CE-PWS-CESSWI
Title: Project Manager, Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company; Environmental Scientist
Date: January 18, 2016

Subject to the Company's objection, see the attached communications between Burns &
McDonnell and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and between the Company and the US
Fish and Wildlife Service.