

PRESS RELEASE

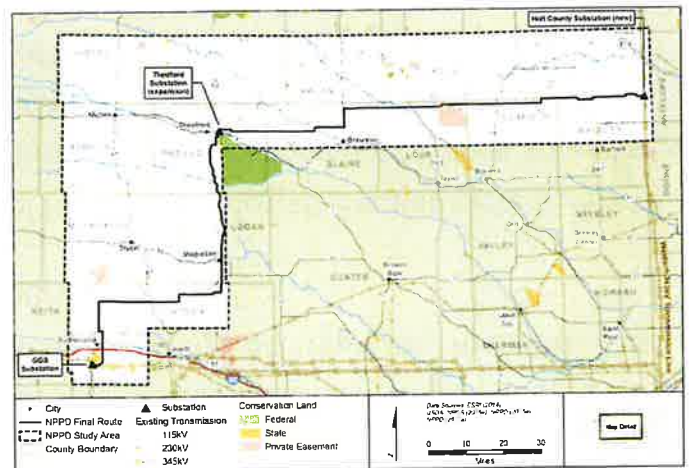
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Public Input on the Preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Nebraska Public Power District's R-Project Transmission Line Revised Habitat Conservation Plan

Nov 17, 2022

Media Contacts

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DENVER – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is publishing a [Notice of Intent \(NOI\) in the Federal Register](https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-25217) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-25217>) and opening a 30-day public scoping period to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for an incidental take permit (ITP) application associated with the R-Project transmission line. The public scoping period begins November 18, 2022 and ends December 18, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. ET.



A map of the proposed R-Project route. | [Image Details \(/media/r-project-proposed-mapping\)](/media/r-project-proposed-mapping)

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) is preparing a revised Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) in support of its anticipated application for an ITP under the Endangered Species Act to authorize the take of the federally threatened American burying beetle that may result from activities it will undertake in constructing and operating the new transmission line in central Nebraska.

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NPPD has been working with the Service on the revised HCP for the R-Project transmission line to incorporate new information obtained since the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado in its 2020 court remand of the Service's 2019 incidental take permit. The coordination also includes continued evaluation of the risk of whooping cranes colliding with the R-Project over the 50-year life of the project, as well as potential impacts on cultural and historic resources.

NPPD's proposed R-Project is a 226-mile long, 345-kilovolt transmission line that would cross portions of the Sandhills in north-central Nebraska. The proposed project starts at NPPD's Gerald Gentleman Substation near Sutherland, Nebraska; goes north to a substation located in Thomas County near Thedford; and then extends eastward to another substation sited in Holt County, where it will connect to the Western Area Power Administration's existing Fort Thompson to Grand Island line that is located on the eastern border of Holt County.

The R-Project is intended to enhance the reliability of NPPD's electric transmission system, relieve congestion from existing lines, and provide opportunities for the development of renewable energy projects in Nebraska, including wind power. Constructing and operating the R-Project will likely impact habitat for the American burying beetle and other protected wildlife.

The Service is seeking public feedback on environmental effects of the potential issuance of a permit authorizing incidental take of the American burying beetle in association with covered activities, and revised HCP implementation. Input received during the scoping period will be incorporated into the draft SEIS.

The Service will host two virtual public scoping meetings on December 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Central Standard Time. To ensure accessibility, public scoping meetings will be available online at www.fws.gov/project/r-project-transmission-line (<https://www.fws.gov/project/r-project-transmission-line>) and at the following library locations:

- North Platte Public Library, 120 W 4th St, North Platte, NE 69101;
- Thomas County Library, 501 Main St, Thedford, NE 69166; and
- Taylor Public Library, 106 William St., Taylor, NE 68879.

The public may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- Online: Follow the instructions for submitting comments on [Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2014-0048](https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-25217). (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-25217>).
- U.S. mail: Public Comments Processing; Attn: Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2014-0048; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: PRB/3W; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

The Service is committed to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats, while assisting project proponents to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

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HABITAT CONSERVATION



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[Endangered Species Act \(/news/endangered-species-act\)](/news/endangered-species-act)

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