

June 3, 2005

Mr. Dan P. Stinnett
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 Federal Drive
BHW Federal Building
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA UNDER
EVALUATION FOR THE MONTICELLO NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT
LICENSE RENEWAL (TAC NO. MC6441)

Dear Mr. Stinnett:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Nuclear Management Company, LLC (NMC) for the renewal of the operating license for Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant (Monticello). Monticello, a single nuclear unit plant, is located in the City of Monticello in Wright County, Minnesota, on the south bank of the Mississippi River. As part of its review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, which includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

If the license is renewed, the unit that would operate under the renewed license would use existing plant facilities and transmission lines and would not require additional construction or disturbance of new areas. Any maintenance activities would be limited to previously disturbed areas. The site consists of approximately 2,150 acres with roughly two miles of frontage on both banks of the Mississippi River in Wright and Sherburne Counties. The majority of the acreage is located on the southern side of the river with approximately 450 acres on the northern side of the River. Approximately 50 acres are occupied by the plant and its supporting facilities. The remaining acres are undeveloped with approximately 174 acres leased by local farmers and 144 acres are under lease for recreational use.

The circulating water system utilizes both open and closed cycle operating modes, as well as a combination of the two. Cooling water is drawn and discharged to the Mississippi River through an approach channel and discharge canal. Monticello is also equipped with two mechanical draft cooling towers enabling complete or partial recirculation of cooling water when required by special permit (NPDES) conditions. The circulating water system components include the intake structure, circulating water pumps, main condenser, discharge structure, cooling tower pumps, two induced-draft cooling towers, and discharge canal.

Currently, there are seven transmission lines emanating from the Monticello Substation. The transmission lines in the scope of the environmental review for license renewal are those that were constructed for the specific purpose of connecting the plant to the transmission system. Transmission lines installed as a result of the construction and operation of Monticello are the

D. Stinnett

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Monticello-Coon Creek 345kV line and the Monticello-Parkers Lake 345kV line totaling about 60 miles of rights-of way. Xcel Energy controls these corridors through permanent easements purchased from land owners at the time of construction. These easements prohibit the use of property that could adversely affect the safe and reliable operation of the transmission lines. These transmission line corridors traverse Sherburne, Anoka, Wright, and Hennepin Counties. The transmission lines and site boundary are identified in Enclosures 1 and 2.

To support the environmental impact statement preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the NRC requests a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of Monticello and its associated transmission line rights-of-way. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

On June 28 through 29, 2005, we plan to conduct an environmental site audit at the Monticello site. We will hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on June 30, 2005, at the Monticello Community Center in Monticello, Minnesota. You and your staff are invited to attend both the site audit and the public meetings. Your office will receive a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft SEIS is February 2006. If you have any questions concerning Monticello, the license renewal application, or other aspects of this project, please contact Jennifer A. Davis, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-3835 or by e-mail at JXD10@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,
/RA/
Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 50-263

Enclosures: As stated

cc w/encl.: See next page

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Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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- 2. Maps, Encl. 1, 2: **ML051450339**
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Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant

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Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant

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