



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

DEC 07 2009

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Mr. Ezriel Roach  
4796 Cottage Grove Drive  
Woodbury, Minnesota 55129

Dear Mr. Roach:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant to President Barack Obama. It was recently forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a response. In your letter, you raised a number of concerns with the plant and its potential impacts to the neighboring Prairie Island Indian Community.

The principal Federal agency responsible for regulating nuclear power plants is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). I am forwarding your letter and this response to NRC, with a request that NRC reply to the issues you raise that are under their jurisdiction. Let me offer EPA's perspective on some of the issues you cited.

#### Dry Cask Storage

Because no national repository has been established for the long-term disposal of spent nuclear fuel, nuclear power plants commonly use dry cask storage to increase their storage capacity beyond the in-plant spent fuel pools. NRC regulates and inspects the use of dry casks at individual locations and has approved the cask designs currently in use across the country. Fuel assemblies must be cooled in the plant's pool for 5 years to dissipate heat prior to placement in dry casks. The heat generated by the cooling fuel assemblies may cause gas pressures to build temporarily inside of the casks. Eventually, as the content of the casks continues to cool, these pressures diminish. Gas pressure is one of many considerations factored into the design and construction of the casks as specified in NRC's Certification of Compliance. Over the past 20 years, there have been no releases from dry casks that have affected the public and no radioactive contamination. The dry casks may also be used as shipping casks for permanent disposal, once a national long-term disposal facility is approved and constructed.

#### Emergency Response

As you point out, only two roads serve Prairie Island, its tribal and non-tribal residents, its business patrons (including the Treasure Island Casino complex), and the nuclear power plant. Those two roads are crossed by the Canadian Pacific Railroad's

main line between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul, with frequent long freight trains and Amtrak passenger service. The Prairie Island Tribe has long expressed a desire for a rail overpass to be constructed to provide emergency and non-emergency access to and from the island. The Tribal government should continue to pursue this matter with the railroad, NRC, Xcel Energy, and transportation agency officials.

In response to a request by the Tribal government, EPA sponsored a tabletop emergency response drill at Prairie Island in October 2008, using a scenario of a train derailment and chemical leak. The Tribe, the railroad, and various Federal, State, and local emergency responders participated in this exercise, which successfully practiced and evaluated the Tribe's emergency operating plans, including response capabilities, procedures, coordination, resources, and training.

### Monitoring

EPA has a national network of radiation monitoring sites, many in communities near nuclear facilities. Both Welch, Minnesota on the Prairie Island Indian Reservation, and Red Wing, Minnesota have monitoring sites. Current and historic radiation data for precipitation, air, surface water, and drinking water is available to the public on-line through EPA's website at [http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/erams\\_query](http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/erams_query). For example, air monitoring results for the Welch site are consistently within normal background levels. Actual monitoring within the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant facility and site is the responsibility of Xcel Energy, subject to oversight and periodic inspection by NRC and the Minnesota Department of Health. All nuclear power plants are required to meet NRC emission regulations and EPA dose limits for radioactive effluents and direct radiation.

### Health Effects

In your letter, you allege that members of the Tribe are suffering adverse health effects as a result of living near the plant. Specifically, you raise concerns about low birth weight and size for babies born to mothers in the Prairie Island Indian Community, and a higher incidence of cancer and cancer-related deaths. I am forwarding your letter and this response to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for their consideration. ATSDR is a Federal agency with authorities to investigate health issues associated with exposures to toxic substances.

### Environmental Impact Statement for proposed License Renewal

NRC recently issued a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as part of NRC's pending decision on Xcel Energy's application to renew the operating license for the two reactors at the plant for another 20 years. EPA is required by law to review and comment on all EISs. We are in the midst of our review, which will look at a variety of environmental issues raised by the proposed NRC license renewal. EPA's comments are advisory. The public comment period for the Draft Supplemental EIS ends on January 29, 2010. The Tribe is a cooperating agency with NRC on the EIS related to the topics of historic resources,

Detail



AX-09-001-7639-WH

Citizen Information

Generate Control Slip

Citizen/Originator: 1). Roach, Ezriel - 4796 Cottage Grove Drive, Woodbury, MN 55129

Constituent:

Committee:

Sub-Committee:

Control Information

View Correspondence

Control Number: AX-09-001-7639-WH      Alternate Number: 1902009110942

Status: Pending      Closed Date: N/A

Due Date: Dec 07 2009      # of Extensions: 0

Letter Date: Mar 02 2009      Received Date: Nov 20 2009

Addressee: POTUS-President of the United States      Addressee Org: White House

Contact Type: LTR (Letter)      Priority Code: Normal

File Code: 404-141-02-01 141b Controlled and Major Correspondence Record copy of controlled and major correspondence of the offices of Division Directors and other personnel

Signature: DX-Direct Reply

CC: [Search CC](#) (+)

Signature Date: Date

Primary Subject: Resources on Minnesota Issues Nuclear Waste Storage in Minnesota

Secondary Subject:

Instructions: DX-WH-Respond directly to this citizen's questions, statements, or concerns. Do not send a copy of the response to the White House directly. No extensions will be granted for this control.

Instruction Notes:

General Notes: USPS Signature Confirmation 23050270000021066545 (jl)

Lead Information

Lead Author: N/A

Lead Assignments:

Assigner	Assignee	Office	Assigned	Due Date	Completed	Instructions
Jacqueline Leavy	R5	R5	11/20/2009	12/07/2009	N/A	DX-WH-Respond directly to this citizen's questions, statements, or concerns. Do not send a copy of the response to the White House directly. No extensions will be granted for this control.
Gayvonne Gary	Antoinette Hall	R5-OSEC-EPAB	11/23/2009	12/07/2009	N/A	

Supporting Information

Supporting Author: N/A

Supporting Assignments:

Assigner	Assignee	Office	Assigned Date
Gayvonne Gary	Marlene Bronson	R5-WPTD-PTB	11/23/2009
Gayvonne Gary	R5-IEO	R5-IEO	11/23/2009

History

Action By	Office	Date	Action
Jacqueline Leavy	OEX	11/20/2009	Assign R5 as lead office
Gayvonne Gary	R5	11/23/2009	Accepted the group assignment
Gayvonne Gary	R5	11/23/2009	Assign Antoinette Hall as lead
Gayvonne Gary	R5	11/23/2009	Assign Marlene Bronson to support the control
Gayvonne Gary	R5	11/23/2009	Assign R5-IEO to support the control
Antoinette Hall	R5-OSEC-EPAB	11/23/2009	Sent to Gayvonne Gary for Reassignment Request

Comments

Commentator	Date	Comments
Antoinette Hall	11/23/2009	Please reassign this control to the NEPA Section w/in OECA. NEPA should consult LCD for input if necessary. Thanks

\*: Required field  
 (+): Lookup field, press space bar for complete list

OK Cancel

**THE WHITE HOUSE**

**REFERRAL**

November 13, 2009

**TO:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Direct Reply w/Copy

**DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:**

**ID:** 1902009110942

**MEDIA:** LETTER

**TO:** PRESIDENT OBAMA

**FROM:** Ezriel Roach  
4796 Cottage Grove Drive  
Woodbury, MN 55129

**FAX COPY OF RESPONSE AND REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET TO THE DOCUMENT  
TRACKING UNIT AT (202) 456-5881**

MARCH 7, 2009

Dear Mr. President Obama,

You have been an inspiration to me. I'm thankful for you and having you as our president gives me hope. My mission in life is to save the world. I know that you're busy but this issue is literally a ticking time bomb. The Xcel Energy nuclear power plant located on Prairie Island Indian Reservation in Welch Minnesota is storing twenty three casks of spent nuclear fuel. The waste is producing a gas in the casks and it's turning the casks in to twenty three nuclear bombs. They say that these things don't explode but what really happens when something in a container has no place else to go. The waste was brought down by Xcel's Monticello Nuclear Power Plant and was waiting for a National Repository to open so the waste could be moved there. This turned out to be nothing more than a story, because there was never going to be one opened the waste would end up being stored on the reservation. Nobody wants this volatile crap in their yard. We understand that. Now the casks can not be moved for the risk of jostling them could make the casks leak spilling the nuclear waste. They can't be transported, they're on the reservation forever.

We have two Nuclear power plants in Minnesota. One is in Monticello. When the people of Monticello were told that they were building a Nuclear Power Plant, the land around the plant was bought up by (at the time N.S.P) Northern States Power co. for the safety of the people so they could build a nuclear plant because it would make more energy. The other Nuclear Power Plant in Minnesota is on the Prairie Island Indian Reservation. Back in the Sixties the Government took back Reservation land by what they called "right of eminent domain", and gave it to the private power company N.S.P. in order to build a Coal burning power plant. After N.S.P. got the ok to build the Coal burning power plant, they changed their plans and decided that they were going to build a nuclear plant instead. The Tribe didn't want either. Where in the case of Monticello, N.S.P. bought up all the surrounding land they couldn't because the land was an Indian Reservation.

All power plants are required to do an Environmental Impact Survey. That survey stated that there were no humans to consider in their study and therefore they could build this nuclear plant on the Reservation land. As a result of these "findings" in the survey it made getting the license for the nuclear power plant, that much easier. When in reality the Prairie Island Community center was less than a mile away. At that time there were about 35-40 Indian families residing in homes on the reservation within the same proximity. The Governments mind was made up. The Federal Gov. Ok'd the plans; N.S.P. was given their operating license for the nuclear power plant. They gave the Tribe no options; they pretty much just crammed it down the Tribes throat.

That was how it began, now we move forward to this day and age. Today the Prairie Island Indians have a new Community center, Clinic, Administrative building, Police and Fire, Water Treatment Plant, Resort, Hotel, Gas Station, Casino, R.V. Park, and 120 residents all living in a flood plane, all within less than a mile of the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. The surrounding cities Hastings (about 12 miles to the north of) and Red Wing (about 12 miles south of) are compensated with tax money for the danger the plant poses for those communities, and the cost of relocating these communities should an accident happen. Yet the Prairie Island Indians safety is consistently overlooked and the plant is on their land.

In the nineties they did an Emergency Evacuation study. It was determined that if an accident were to occur at the plant, that the tribes evacuation would be cut off due to the train tracks that run across the only exit routes to leave the Reservation. In the summer the train

goes through the Reservation up to 45 times per day, stopping traffic for sometimes up to 15 minutes. Yet it was decided that because the Tribe now had a casino that they should fund the building of their own evacuation route. Even though the danger came from N.S.P., and two other communities are receiving tax money for this very sinario. It is left to the Prairie Island Indian Community to come up with the funds to build the evacuation overpass. They simply seek the right to be compensated in the same manner that the surrounding communities are for the purpose of being able to purchase enough land to relocate the reservation and their people away from the danger that Xcel's Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant poses in such close proximity.

The damage from the power plant is already being felt by the people of the Tribe. Their wells are turning up positive for Rubidium, a cancer causing agent that is only produced in nuclear power plants where the fuel rods are stored in water. The children born to Tribal members that live on the Reservation have low birth weights and the babies are smaller in size than the children born to Tribal members who live off the Reservation. The death rate from cancer has increased in tribal members who live on the Reservation. The power plant has changed the environment around it. The water in the Mississippi river never freezes around the plant because, the water is being used to cycle through the plant for the cooling of the rods. When the water is released back in to the Mississippi river it comes out heated up and full of whatever came out of the plant, and it washes down the river all through the middle of the United States, on down to Louisiana, and in to the Ocean.

All of these things are being monitored and tracked by Government agencies and so far Prairie Island Indian Community are the only people who have a problem with all of this. The agencies have set up what they call "acceptable limits" on how much poison is being released. Xcel's Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plants license is up for approval again really soon. Please look in to this; we need to come up with a more responsible agreement with the State, Federal, Excel Energy, and the Prairie Island Indian Community. This is a must in order to preserve the environment and the people who are still fighting for equal treatment. As it stands these people are victims of environmental terrorism from a government who does not want them.

I am extremely worried about this matter because, these people are my family members, and even though this information is public knowledge no one else in this state seems to care. I am sending you a map I made to give you an idea of the lay out. Please help us to slow or stop this relicensing in order to further investigate the dangers this plant is posing on the environment, the heritage, and quality of life on these historically persecuted people. Please respond as soon as possible because I know that Xcel wants to get their licensing with as little responsibility to them as possible. Thank you for your time on this matter. I am committed to this cause so I will be sending multiple copies of this letter so as to hopefully get a response from your office.

Thank You Mr. President Obama

Love & Hope

From

Ezriel Roach

And those effected by this

*Ezriel Roach*

Last reviewed April 2008

## Resources on Minnesota Issues Nuclear Waste Storage in Minnesota

[Legislative History](#) • [Books and Reports](#) • [Articles](#) • [Internet Resources](#) • [Additional Library Resources](#) • [Groups](#)

This guide is compiled by staff at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library on a topic of interest to Minnesota legislators. It is designed to provide an introduction to the topic, directing the user to a variety of sources, and is not intended to be exhaustive. In particular, it is focused on items available in the Legislative Reference Library.

Xcel Energy operates two nuclear generating plants in Minnesota: Prairie Island and Monticello. These facilities have been in operation since the early 1970s. The issues of how and where to store the nuclear waste generated by these facilities came to the forefront in the late 1980s when the Prairie Island facility faced the prospect of closing if additional storage space wasn't found.

Prairie Island's high-level spent radioactive waste was stored in stainless steel-lined concrete vaults that were surrounded by cooling water. Under provisions of the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the U.S. Government was to develop a site that would accept radioactive waste from the country's nuclear power plants beginning on January 31, 1998. By the late 1980s, with the repository years from completion, the Prairie Island facility began to run out of storage space. Northern States Power (NSP) (now known as Xcel Energy) asked the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for permission to store additional waste in dry casks at the Prairie Island site. In May 1990, the board called for an environmental impact study of the proposed dry cask storage. In the spring of 1991 the EQB approved and released the *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Prairie Island Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation*.

In April 1991, NSP approached the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), seeking permission to build the facility. (Application for Certificate of Need for Prairie Island Spent Fuel Storage, Docket No. E002/CN-91-19.) Evidentiary and public hearings were held in front of Administrative Law Judge Allan Klein in November and December 1991. In April 1992, Judge Klein recommended that the PUC deny the certificate of need. He stated, "The likelihood that the dry cask storage would become permanent is so great that it is appropriate to require legislative authorization if the project must go forward immediately." (*In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Company for a Certificate of Need for the Construction of an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Facility. Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendation*, 6-2500-5462-2, Docket No. E-002/CN-91-19.)

Despite the recommendation of the Administrative Law Judge, the Public Utilities Commission ruled that NSP could store the radioactive waste, though the number of casks allowed was reduced from 48 to 17. The Mdeakanton Dakota Prairie Island Tribe and environmental groups opposed to the storage facility appealed the PUC decision to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. The groups argued that the additional storage should be classified as permanent and that under the 1977 *Minnesota Radioactive Waste Management Act*, NSP needed authorization from the Legislature before the PUC could rule on the matter. On May 28, 1993, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that NSP needed legislative approval to construct the facility. In July 1993, the Minnesota Supreme Court refused to hear an NSP appeal, leaving the decision to the Minnesota Legislature. After extensive debate, the 1994 legislature passed a law that permitted NSP to use 17 casks for nuclear waste storage (*Laws of Minnesota 1994, chapter 641*). Those casks were placed at the Prairie Island nuclear power plant.

In 1998, after the U.S. Department of Energy failed to meet a January 31, 1998 deadline to accept waste from the country's nuclear power plants, NSP filed a lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims against the U.S. Department of Energy, seeking reimbursement for the costs of storing the waste at its Minnesota facilities. (The suit was settled in September 2007, with Xcel Energy/NSP being awarded \$116 million for costs accrued through 2004.)

As Prairie Island continued operating, the 17 storage casks were gradually filled, raising the possibility that the reactors might have to cease operations due to the lack of storage space. Prairie Island's two reactors, licensed by the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, were licensed to operate through the end of 2013 and 2014, and the single reactor at the Monticello plant was licensed until 2010. Without additional storage capacity, it was estimated that the Prairie Island facility would shut down in 2007 with Monticello following in 2010.

By 2003 the issue was once again before the Minnesota Legislature. Bills were introduced during the 2003 legislative session to authorize additional storage space at Prairie Island (*House File 775; Senate File 794*). The legislation was debated but did not pass during the regular session. However, a law was enacted during the following 2003 Special Session (*Laws of Minnesota 2003, 1st Special Session, chapter 11*). The new law, effective May 30, 2003, authorized the use of additional dry cask storage on the Prairie Island site. The waste storage capacity was subject to the limits set by the federal license that allowed up to 48 casks. The law also included provisions for renewable energy development and required Xcel Energy to give the Prairie Island Indian Community up to \$2.5 million per year for, among other purposes, the acquisition of land away from the Prairie Island facility. Finally, the law required that any future requests for additional nuclear waste storage capacity would be subject to the approval of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The next request for additional waste storage came on January 18, 2005 when Xcel Energy filed an application for a *Certificate of Need* with the Minnesota PUC to build a nuclear waste storage facility at the site of its Monticello plant. The next step in the process was to complete a required environmental impact study (EIS). In June 2005, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board approved an *EIS Scoping Decision* that outlined the issues and the alternatives to be studied. A *Draft EIS* was issued in November 2005 and a *Final EIS* followed in March 2006. An *Adequacy Determination*, issued on July 26, 2006 by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, found the final EIS to be adequate. (A complete project docket of the EIS process is maintained by the PUC.)

In addition to these state regulatory activities, on March 24, 2005, Xcel Energy filed a license renewal application with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), seeking a 20-year license renewal for its Monticello facility. On November 8, 2006, the NRC granted the renewal, extending Monticello's operating license until September 8, 2030.

In August 2006, Administrative Law Judge Steve M. Mihalchick issued a ruling on Xcel Energy's *Certificate of Need* concluding, "It is respectfully recommended that the Public Utilities Commission issue a Certificate of Need to Xcel Energy for the construction and operation of a dry spent fuel storage facility at the Monticello generating plant with up to 30 spent fuel containers, vaults, and associated equipment necessary to allow the Monticello generating plant to continue in operation through 2030." On September 28, 2006, the PUC approved Xcel Energy's request for nuclear waste storage in up to 30 above-ground containers next to the Monticello facility. The decision was effective in June 2007. Construction on the storage facility began in the summer of 2007 and is expected to be completed during the summer of 2008.

With the U.S. Government still unable to meet the waste storage requirements of the 1982 *Nuclear Waste Policy Act*, in August 2007 Xcel Energy filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Energy, seeking money to cover waste storage costs from 2005 through June 2007.

On April 15, 2008, Xcel Energy submitted an application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission seeking 20 year license extensions for Prairie Island's two reactors. The current licenses expire in 2013 and 2014. Xcel Energy will also seek permission from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to add 35 additional above-ground waste storage containers at the Prairie Island site; permission will also be sought to expand the generating capacity of each reactor by approximately 80 megawatts, bringing the generating capacity of the of the Prairie Island facility to nearly 1,240 megawatts. (*Filing documents*). A separate application was filed in 2008 to increase the generating capacity of the Monticello plant. (*Filing documents*).

### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

2/27/09 1:10 A

- 1994 Regular Session: Senate File 1706/House File 2140, (Laws of Minnesota 1994, chapter 641). (Approval of dry cask storage at Prairie Island.)
- 2003 Regular Session: House File 775 and Senate File 794. (Debate on additional dry cask storage at Prairie Island. Neither of the bills passed.)
- 2003 Special Session: House File 9, (Laws of Minnesota 2003, 1st Special Session, chapter 11). (Additional dry cask storage at Prairie Island approved.)

### SIGNIFICANT BOOKS AND REPORTS:

- Amicus Curiae Brief of Certain Individual Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate*. 1993. (A supplemental friend-of-the-court brief filed with the Court of Appeals.) (Vertical File: A43P)
- Background on Nuclear Power in Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Commerce, 2002. (TD899.A8 B33 2002)
- Before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission: Northern States Power Company, Docket No. E002/CN-91-19*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Public Service, 1991. (TD899.A8 B44 1991)
- Bull, Mike. Nuclear Energy and Xcel Energy's 2002 Resource Plan. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, House Research Department, 2003. (TD999.A8 B85 2003)
- Bull, Mike. *Nuclear Waste Management and the Prairie Island Legislation*. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, House Research Department, 1997. (KFM5780.A8 B85 1997)
- Energy Planning Report, 2002 Update*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Commerce, 2003. (HD9502.U63 M561 2003)
- Final Environmental Impact Statement: Prairie Island Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation*. St. Paul: Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, 1991. (TD899.A8 F58 1991)
- Helland, John. Nuclear Waste Transportation. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, House Research Department, 2002. (HN79.M6 S56 2002)
- Helland, John and Linda Taylor. *The Prairie Island Nuclear Waste Storage Issue: Questions and Answers*. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, House Research Department, 1994. (TD899.A8 H45 1994)
- Helland, John and Mike Bull. Nuclear Waste Dry Cask Storage. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, House Research Department, 2001. (TD899.A8 H452 2001)
- In the Matter of an Application for a Certificate of Need for Construction of an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation*. State of Minnesota, Court of Appeals. May 28, 1993. (C1-92-2314, C3-92-2315, C9-92-2321) (Vertical File: A43P)
- In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Company for a Certificate of Need for the Construction of an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Facility, Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendation*. State of Minnesota, Office of Administrative Hearings. April 10, 1992. (S-2500-5462-2, E-002/CN-91-19) (Vertical File: A43P)
- Lehman, Linda. *Report to the Minnesota Legislature Regarding the Prairie Island Dry Fuel Storage Project*. Minneapolis: L. Lehman & Associates, 1994. (TD899.A8 L44 1994)
- Minnesota Energy Planning Report 2001. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Commerce, 2002. (HD9502.U63 M561 2002)
- Monticello Spent Fuel Storage Installation: Draft Environmental Impact Statement. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Dept. of Commerce, 2005. (TD899.A8 M65 2005)
- Monticello Spent Fuel Storage Installation: Final Environmental Impact Statement. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Dept. of Commerce, 2006. (TD899.A8 M66 2006)
- Morris, David and John Bailey. *The Costs and Benefits of Closing Prairie Island*. Minneapolis: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1993. (TD899.A8 M67 1993)
- Northern States Power Company Before the MN Public Utilities Commission: Application for Certificate of Need for Prairie Island Spent Fuel Storage, Docket No. E002/CN-91-19*. Minneapolis: Northern States Power Company, Law Department, 1991. (TD899.A8 N68 1991)
- Northern States Power Company's Prairie Island Nuclear Facilities: An Analysis of Options*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Public Service, 1994. (TD899.A8 N69 1994)
- Prairie Island Spent Fuel Storage: Fact Book*. 1993. (TD899.A8 C66 1993)
- Procedures, Considerations and Rules for Siting a Dry Cask Storage Facility*. St. Paul: Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, 1994. (TD899.A8 P76 1994)

### SIGNIFICANT ARTICLES:

- "Additional Nuclear Storage Approved." New Laws 2003. St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives, Public Information Office, 2003. p. 28-29.
- Egerstrom, Lee. "NSP Files Suit Against Energy Department: \$1 Billion Claim Centers on Dispute Over Site for Nuclear Waste Disposal." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 9, 1998.
- Gordon, Greg. "Broken Promise - Missing a Deadline: Government Isn't Set to Accept Nuclear Waste. The Energy Department is Expected to Draw Lawsuits. In Minnesota NSP Officials Say the Delay is Costly and Hinders Planning." *Star Tribune*, January 21, 1998.
- Huber, Tim. "Generating Debate: Monticello Nuclear Plant Faces Long License Review - With Approval Nearly Certain." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, October 17, 2004, p. D1.
- Huber, Tim. "Xcel Seeks More Waste Storage." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, January 27, 2006, p. 3B.
- Huber, Tim. "Xcel Ups Waste Plan: Greater Storage Sought for Spent Nuclear Fuel." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 2, 2004, p. C1.
- Laszewski, Charles. "Legislature Confronts Energy Future: Effects of Decision on Storing Spent Fuel Will be Felt for Years." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, February 6, 1994, p. 1A.
- Laszewski, Charles. "Session Draws to Close: Legislature Approves NSP Storage Casks." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 7, 1994, p. 1A.
- Len, Dennis. "Judge OKs Nuclear Waste Storage." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 22, 2006.
- Len, Dennis. "Plant's Nuclear Waste Plan Challenged." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 15, 2005, p. 6B.
- Len, Dennis. "Pawlenty Signs Nuclear Waste Storage Bill. It Allows Storage at Nuclear Plant Until 2014." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 30, 2003, p. B3.
- Len, Dennis. "Prairie Island Power Struggle: A Local Indian Tribe Could Decide Whether Xcel's Plant Keeps Operating." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, January 24, 2003, p. A1.
- Len, Dennis. "Quiet Hearing OKs Nuke Storage: Decision Final in June Unless Legislators Act." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 29, 2006, p. 3B.
- Meersman, Tom. "Fate of Prairie Island Plant is in Legislature's Hands: Nuclear Storage Plan Heats Up All Sides." *Star Tribune*, February 15, 1994, p. 1A.
- Meersman, Tom. "A Sustained Reaction: Xcel Last Week Was Granted License Renewal for its Monticello Nuclear Power Plant. But Stretching the Life of a Reactor to 60 Years Raises Questions..." *Star Tribune*, November 12, 2006, p. D1.

Meersman, Tom. "Xcel's Effort to Store Wastes in Utah is Halted." *Star Tribune*, September 13, 2006, p. B2.

Meyers, Mike. "Xcel's Monticello Nuclear Plant License is Extended to 2030." *Star Tribune*, November 9, 2006, p. D1.

Meyers, Mike. "Xcel Wins Suit Over Spent-Fuel Storage: Its NSP Subsidiary Won a Big Judgment Against the U.S. Government on Nuclear Waste Disposal That's Still in Limbo." *Star Tribune*, September 29, 2007.

"Prairie Island Nuclear Storage." *Session Weekly*, May 13, 1994, p. 18-19.

Whereatt, Robert. "Full Senate, House Approve NSP Plan for Nuclear Waste. Bill Allows 17 Casks, Pushes Alternative Energy." *Star Tribune*, May 7, 1994, p. 1B.

### SIGNIFICANT INTERNET RESOURCES:

Nuclear Power – Provided by Fresh Energy (formerly ME3), a nonprofit organization leading the transition to a clean, efficient and fair energy system.

Nuclear Waste Cleanup – The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) provides a selection of publications and articles on states' recent nuclear waste activities.

### ADDITIONAL LIBRARY RESOURCES:

Check the following codes in the Newspaper Clipping File and the Vertical File:

A43M (Atomic Power Plants - Monticello), A43P (Atomic Power Plants - Prairie Island), A435 (Atomic Power Plants - Wastes), C113- Xcel Energy. (For clips prior to 2001, see C113- Northern States Power)

For additional reports at the Legislative Reference Library, use these Library catalog searches:

Radioactive Wastes (Minnesota): Spent Reactor Fuels; Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant; Monticello Nuclear Power Plant.

### GROUPS INVOLVED WITH THIS ISSUE:

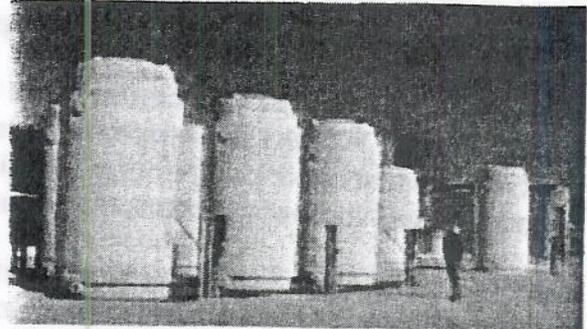
- Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy Division
- Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, Nuclear Waste
- Prairie Island Indian Community
- Xcel Energy

[skip to content](#)

## Public Utilities Commission

### Nuclear waste

Minnesota has three operating commercial nuclear power reactors. Two reactors are located near Red Wing, Minnesota, at the Prairie Island facility and one reactor is located near Monticello, Minnesota. All are owned by Xcel Energy. Prairie Island generates about 1060 MW of electricity, and Monticello generates about 553 MW. Spent nuclear fuel is stored in pools at both reactor sites, and in addition, the Prairie Island facility stores spent nuclear waste in casks maintained above ground at the reactor site.



- [Background](#)
- [Documents](#)
- [Projects](#)

### Background

#### Federal Repository

The Environmental Quality Board reports each year to the Legislature on federal activities to construct and operate a national repository for management of high-level radioactive wastes ([Minn. Stat. § 116C.712](#)).

#### Dry Cask Storage of High-Level Radioactive Waste

The Public Utilities Commission has siting authority over offsite dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste from the Prairie Island Nuclear Plant located in Goodhue County ([Minnesota Statutes 116C.80](#)).

In 1991 Northern States Power Company (now Xcel Energy) sought state approval to remove radioactive wastes from the spent nuclear fuel pool at the Prairie Island generating plant and store it in dry casks on a site next to the plant. After a number of administrative proceedings, including an Environmental Impact Statement by the EQB, and a court appeal, *In re Application for a Certificate of Need for an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation*, 501 N.W.2d 638 (Minn. Ct. App.), review denied by Supreme Court (1993), the Minnesota Legislature in 1994 allowed Northern States Power Company to store a limited amount of spent nuclear fuel in dry casks at its Prairie Island power plant in Goodhue County, as long as the power company met several obligations. One obligation was to make a good-faith effort to find an alternative storage site in Goodhue County ([Minn. Stat. § 116C.771](#)). The legislature

also required NSP to obtain a certificate of site comparability for the alternative storage site from the Environmental Quality Board

In July 1995, Northern States Power Company proposed two possible locations for a second site, both in Florence Township near the town of Frontenac in Goodhue County, Minnesota. The Environmental Quality Board accepted this application in August 1995, beginning the site evaluation process.

The Environmental Quality Board appointed a citizen task force to help review the proposal. The task force held several public meetings between September 1995 and January 1996.

In January 1996, the task force presented its report. Based on expected environmental and human impact, the task force recommended that both sites proposed by NSP be rejected. The task force also looked for other possible sites. It evaluated 16 sites using the same criteria and recommended that none be considered further.

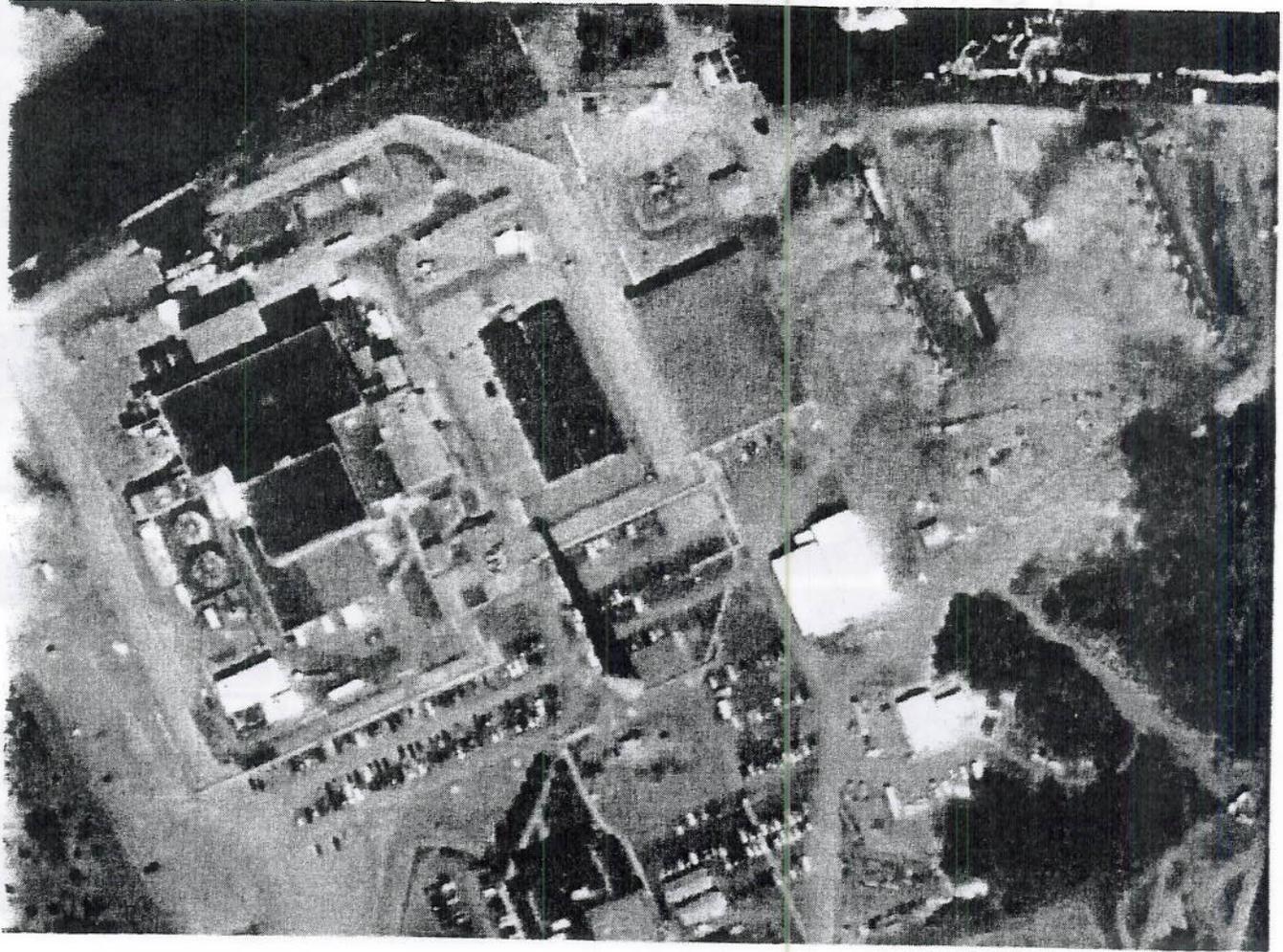
In October 1996, the Environmental Quality Board denied NSP's application for alternate sites. The Prairie Island Mdewakanton Sioux Community appealed this decision. In May 1997, the Minnesota Court of Appeals upheld the Environmental Quality Board decision. In the Matter of the Northern States Power Company Application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for the Goodhue County Independent Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Facility, 563 N.W.2d. 302 (Minn. Ct. App.), review denied by Supreme Court (1997).

As of July 30, 2002, Northern States Power Company had filled all of the 17 authorized casks with spent nuclear fuel.

Public Utilities Commission • 121 7th Place E., Suite 350 • Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147  
Toll Free: 1-(800) 657-3782 • General Information: (651) 296-7124 • Fax: (651) 297-7073 •  
CONTACT US

Google

Monticello

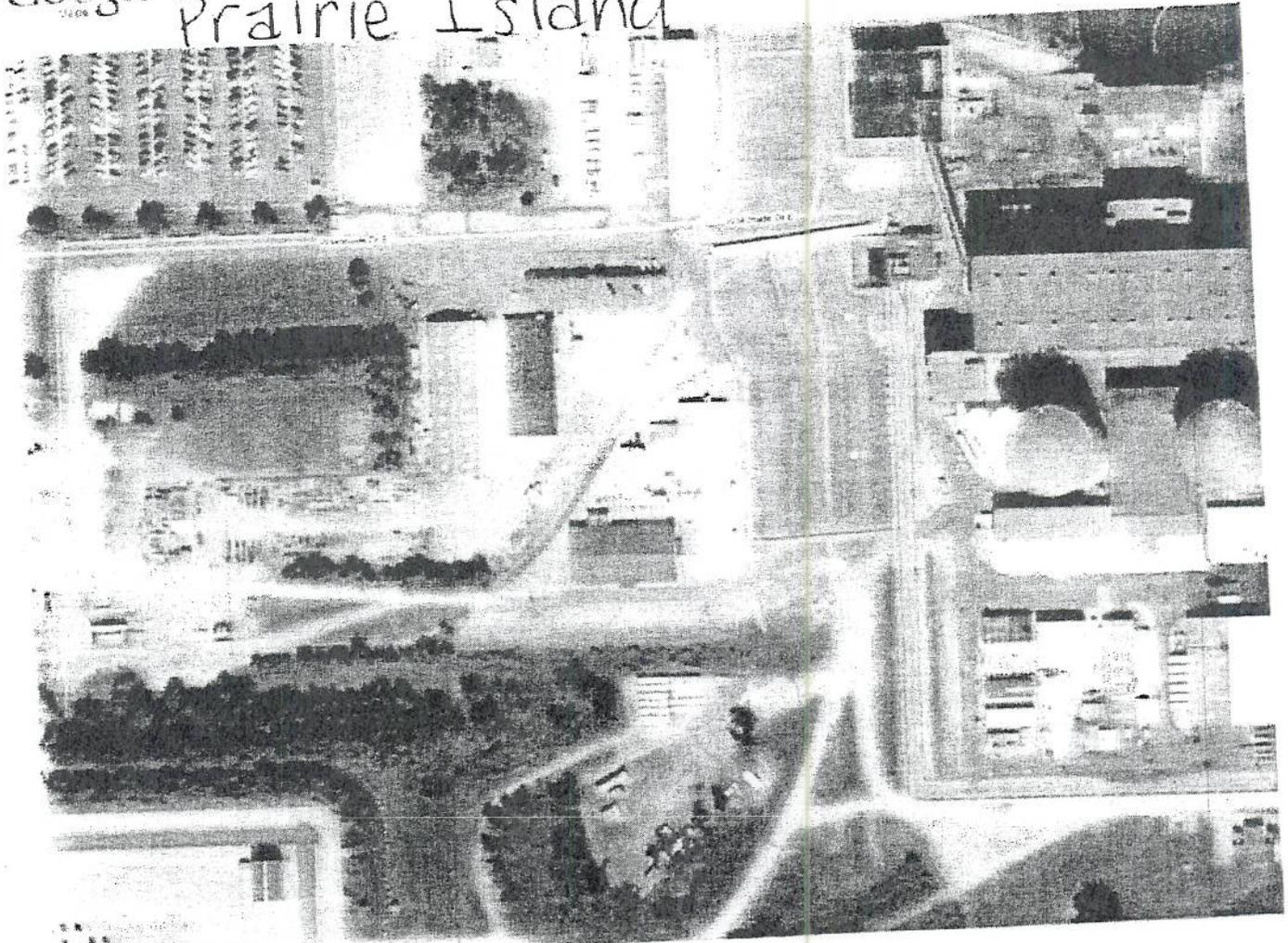
 $3/4" = 100 \text{ ft.}$ 

We made these maps to show you the size of the Monticello plant in comparison to the Prairie Island Plant. The whole Monticello plant fits in to this picture.

Also to show proximity of people who live around the plants.

3/4" = 100ft.

Google  
 Prairie Island



→ cask storage ↑

The Prairie Island plant is much larger and Xcel is storing 23 casks of spent nuclear rods. Only 10 feet of earth are between the concrete storage slab and the water table. This land (Prairie Island) is all in a flood plain.

1

Google

Monticello

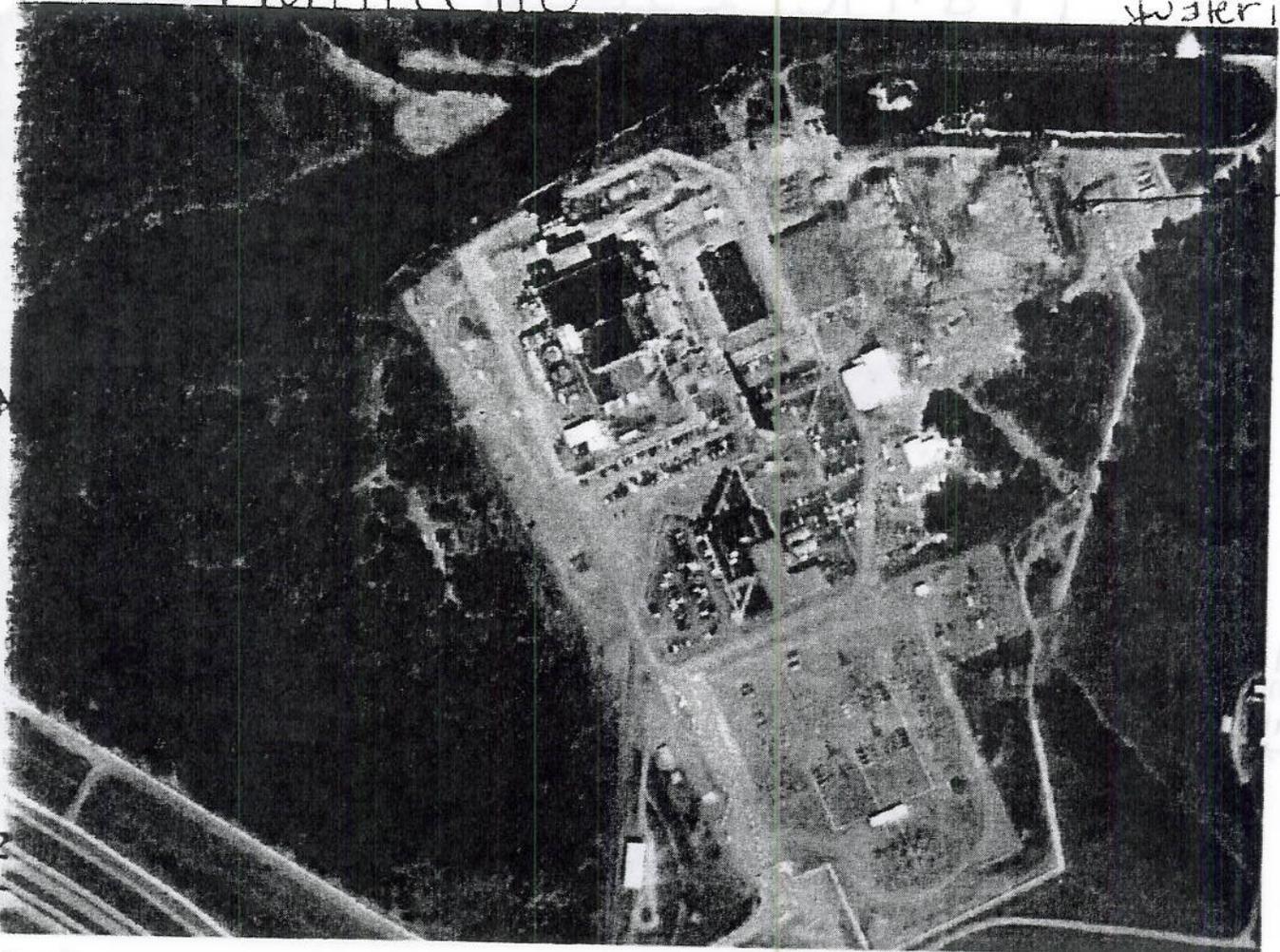
3/4" = 200 ft.

Water intake

Steam  
Stacks

Miss.  
River →

Hwy 52  
Interstak  
94 →



At this scale you can see the entire Monticello plant.

3/4" = 200ft

# Google Prairie Island

xcel  
training  
facility  
→



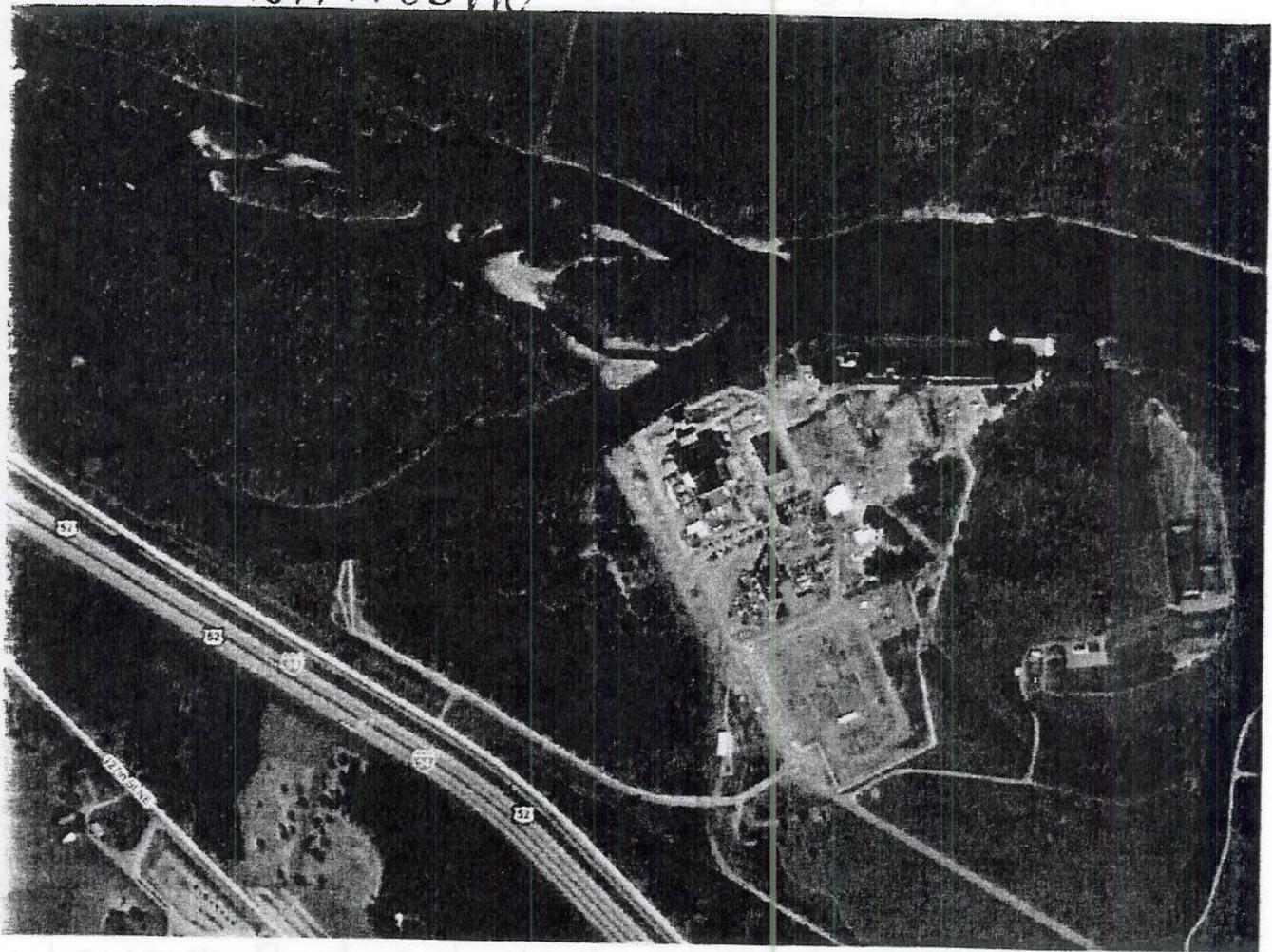
At the same scale you can't even see the whole Prairie Island plant. Look at the size of the slab holding all those waste casks. Notice how close they are to the road.

2

Google

Monticello

1" = 500ft.

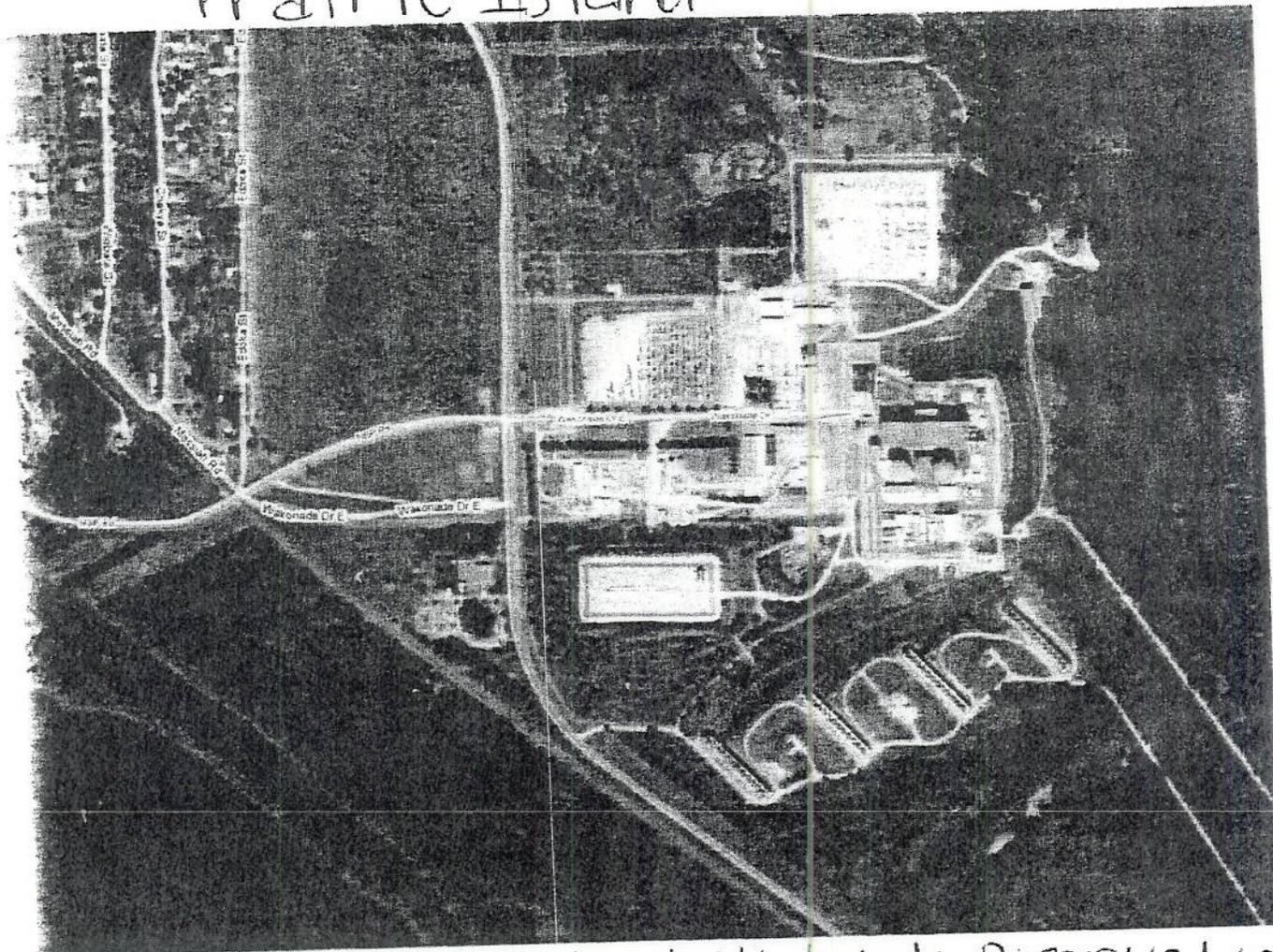


The original power company owners N.S.P. (Northern States Power) made sure to ~~buy~~ buy up all the land around their Monticello plant.

3

1" = 500ft

# Google Prairie Island



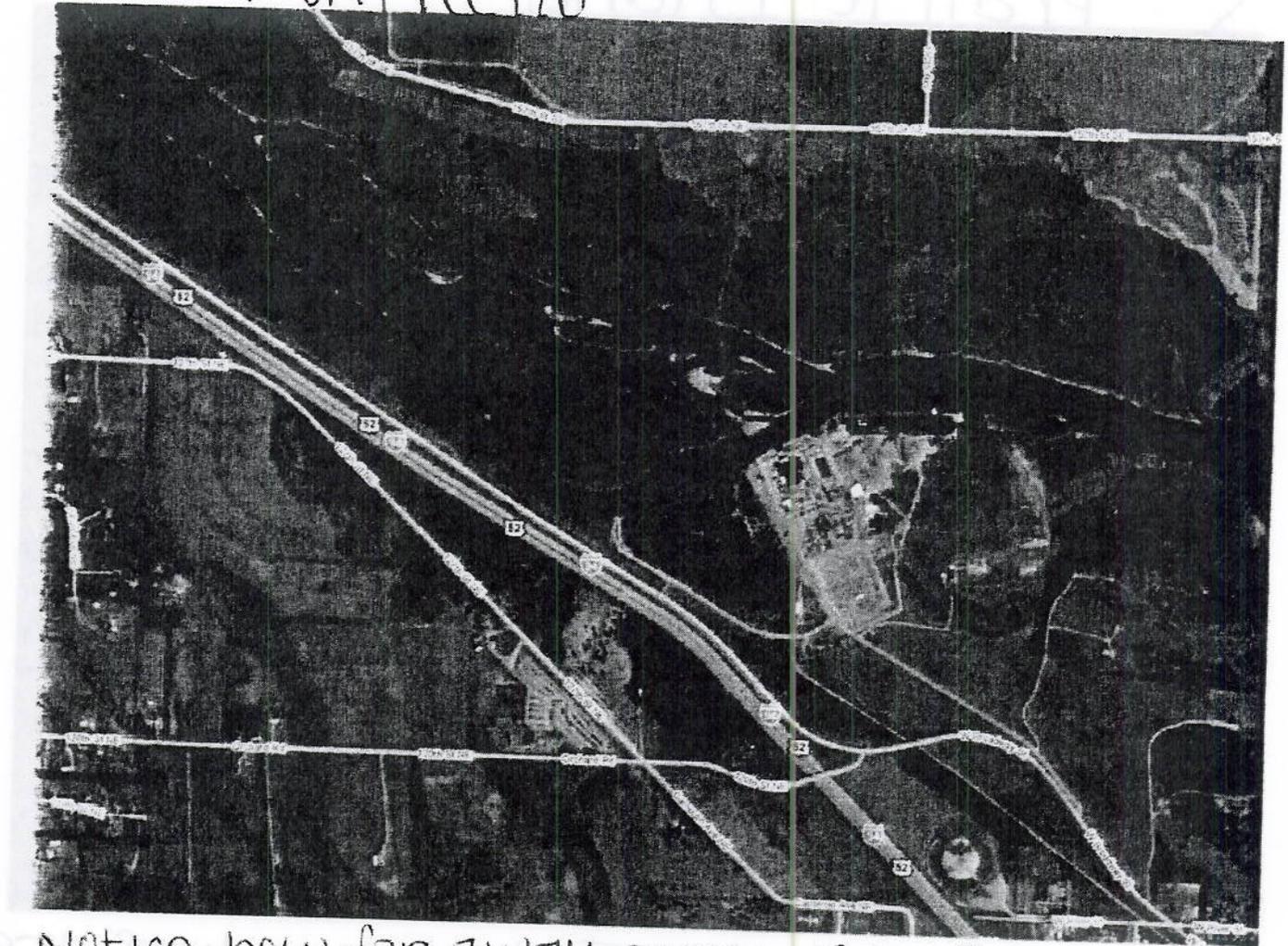
The State of Minnesota took back Reservation Land by what they called Eminent Domain and gave Reservation Land to the utility company N.S.P. to build a coal burning Plant. What happened here? A Coal burning Plant would have been a lot easier to decommission.

Eminent Domain: a right of a government to take Private property for the Public use by virtue of the Sovereign power over all lands within its jurisdiction.

Google

Monticello

1" = 1,000ft.



Notice how far away people are from the Monticello Plant. Notice the access to Interstate 94 and no obstacles in their escape route.

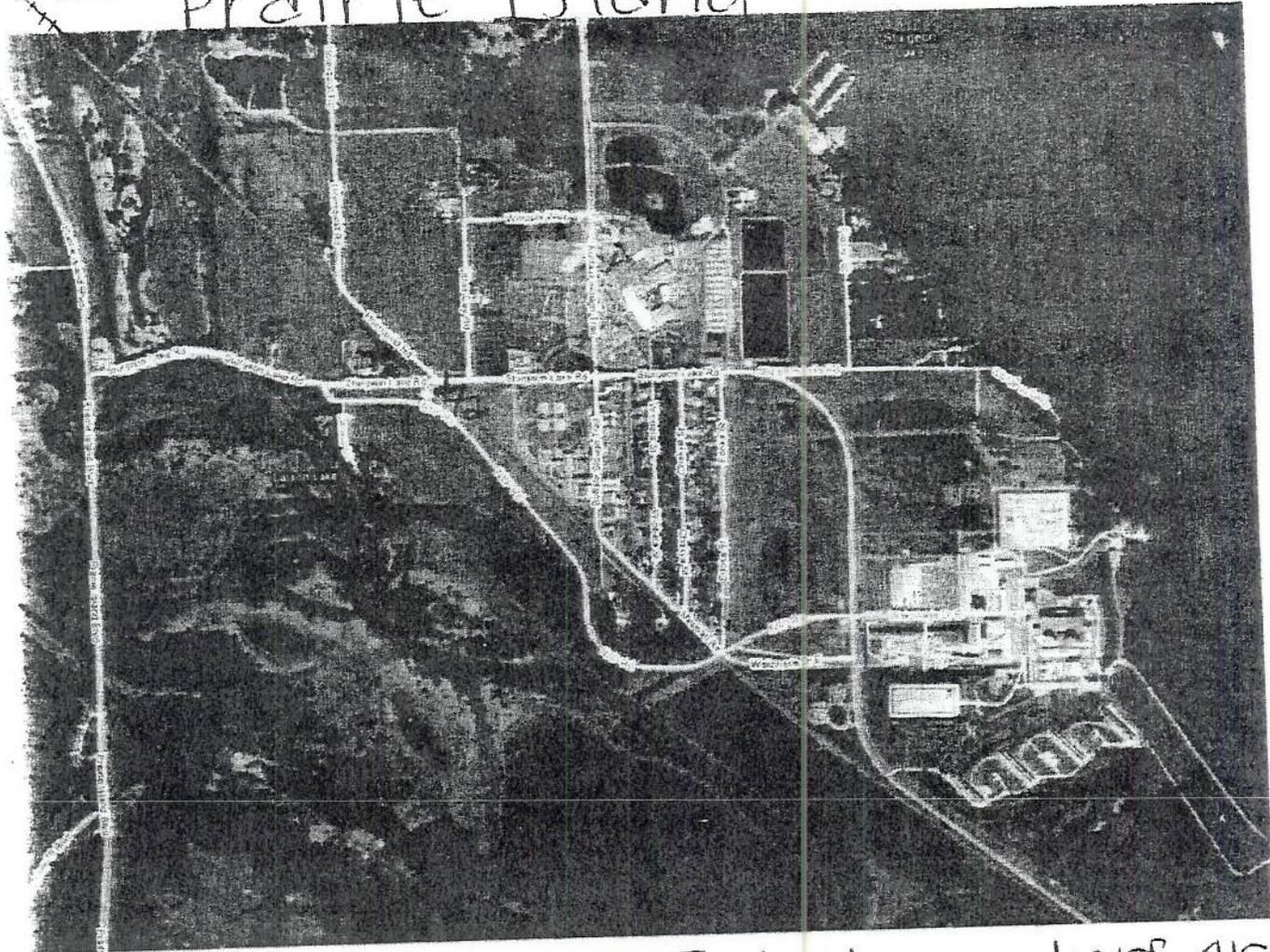
4

RXR = Railroad crossing.

1" = 1,000 Ft.

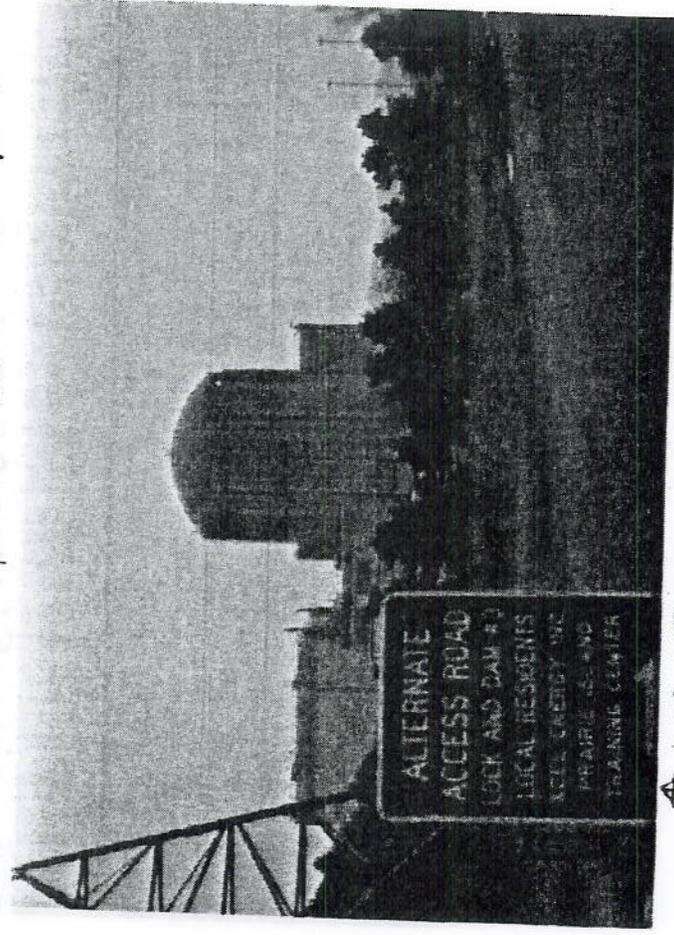
Google  
Maps

## Prairie Island



Notice how close the Tribal members are living to the Prairie Island Plant. There are only 2 roads off the Island. One of which is paved and the train tracks run across both of them. The State Gov. and Xcel didn't even see fit to build an evacuation over pass. This is wrong.

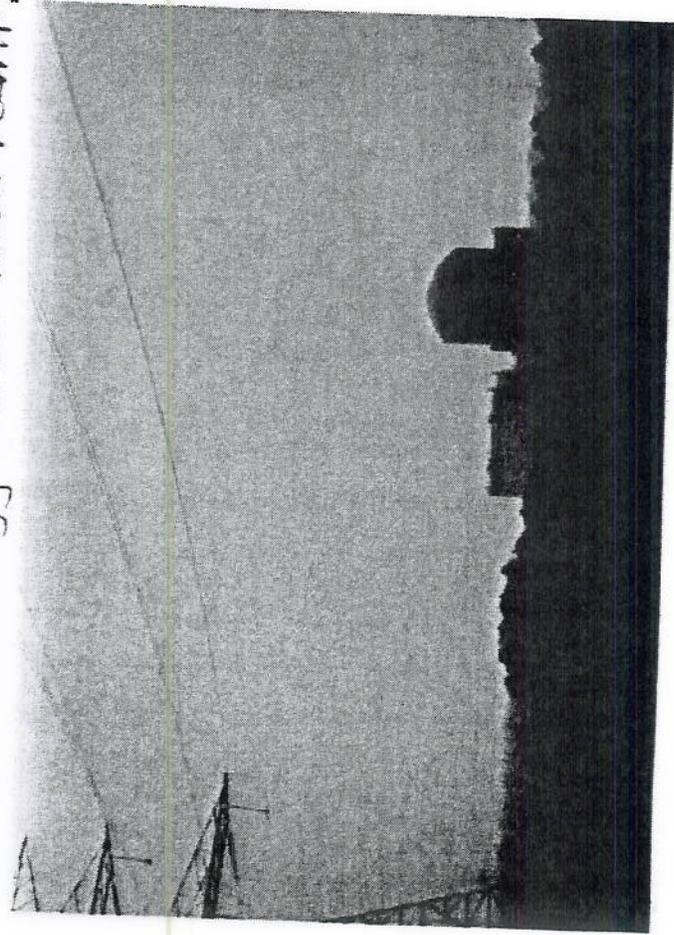
I took these pictures Feb. 17, 09 1



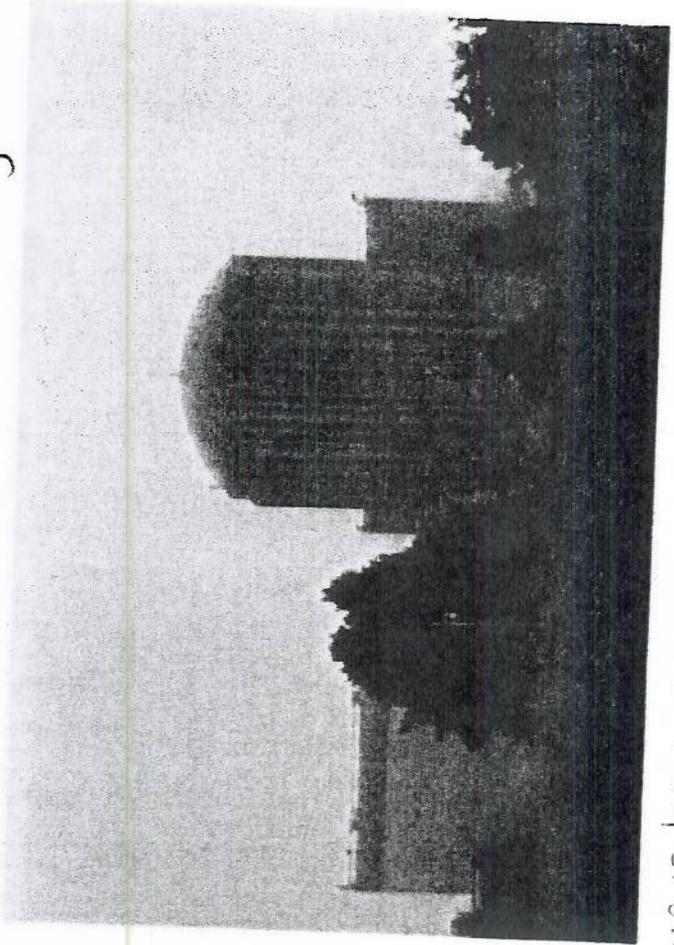
↑ Xcel Energy Nuclear Power Plant.



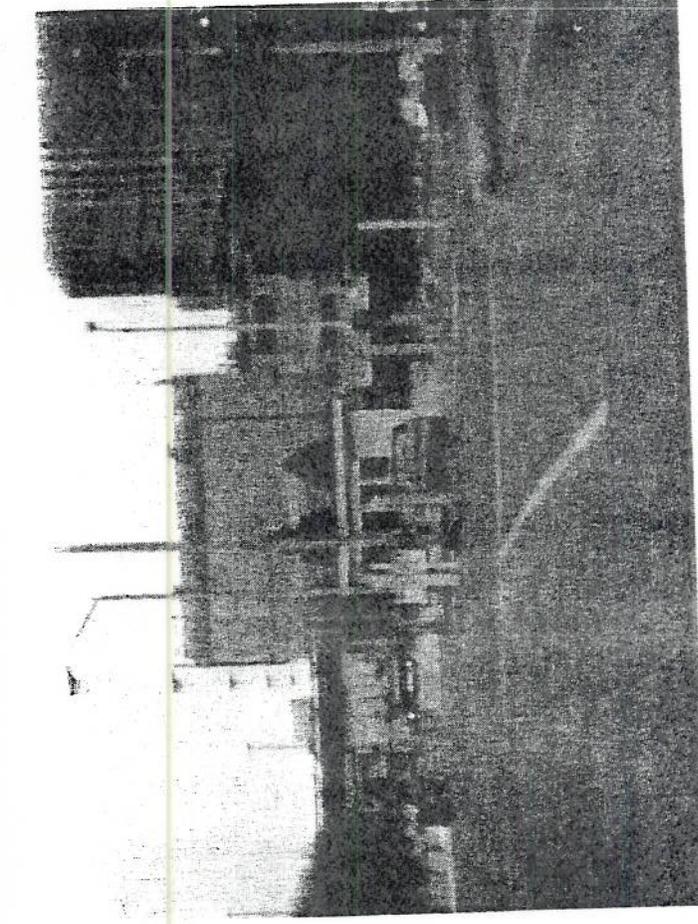
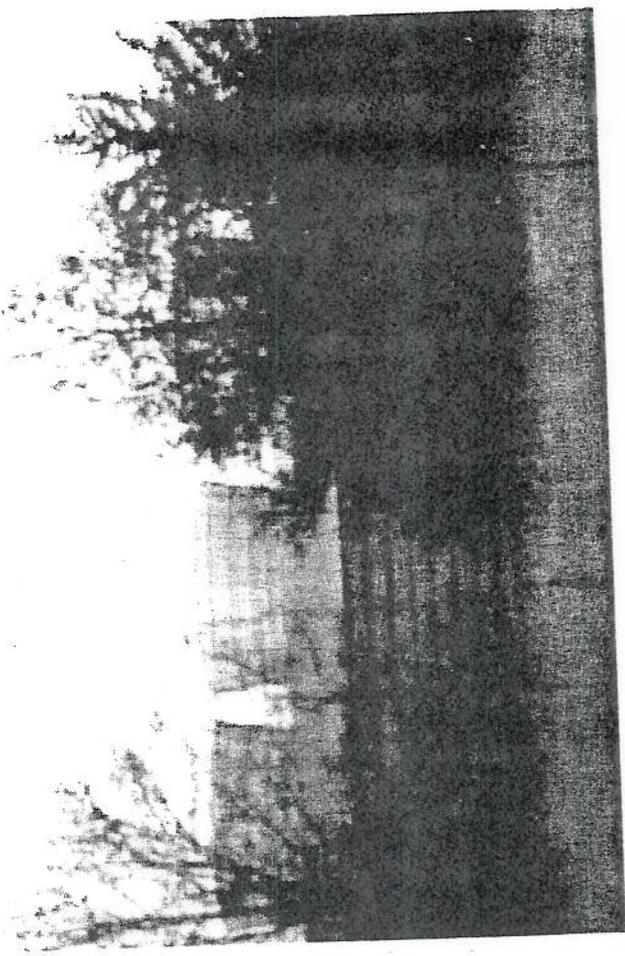
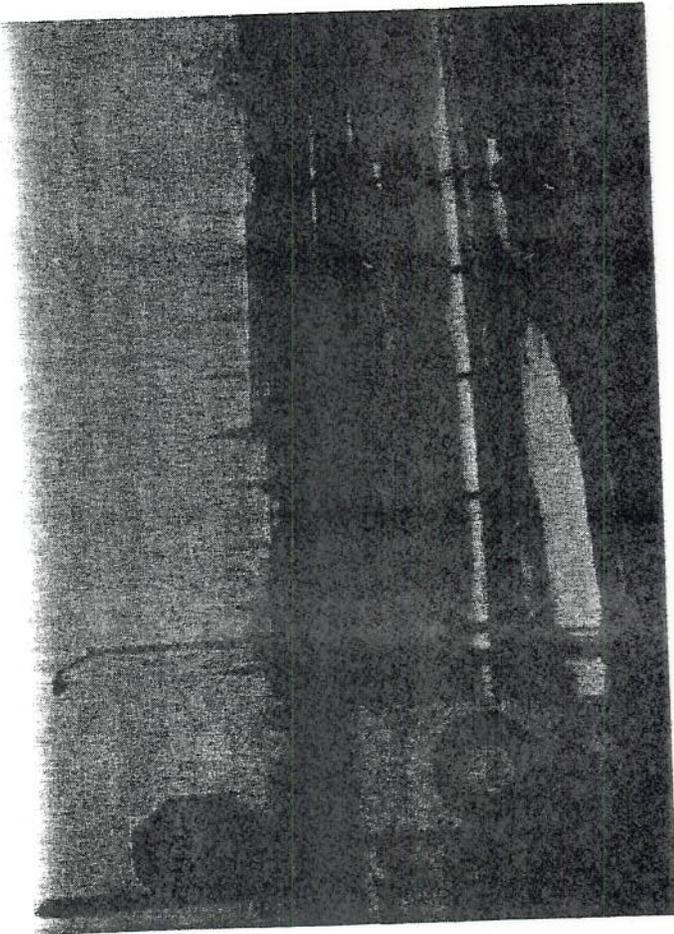
This is how close we can get.



... So this is how close anyone can get.

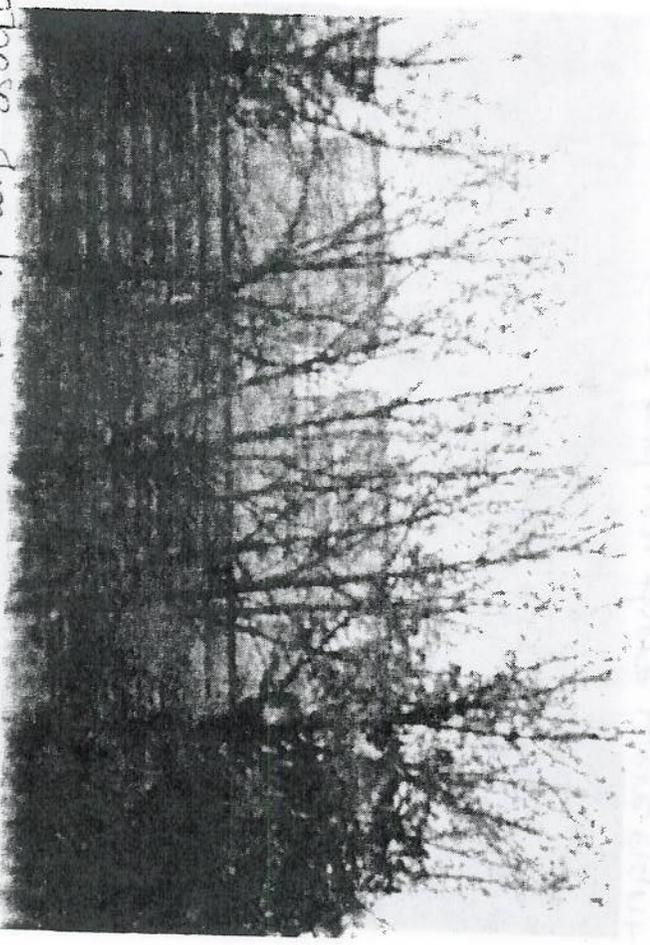


2

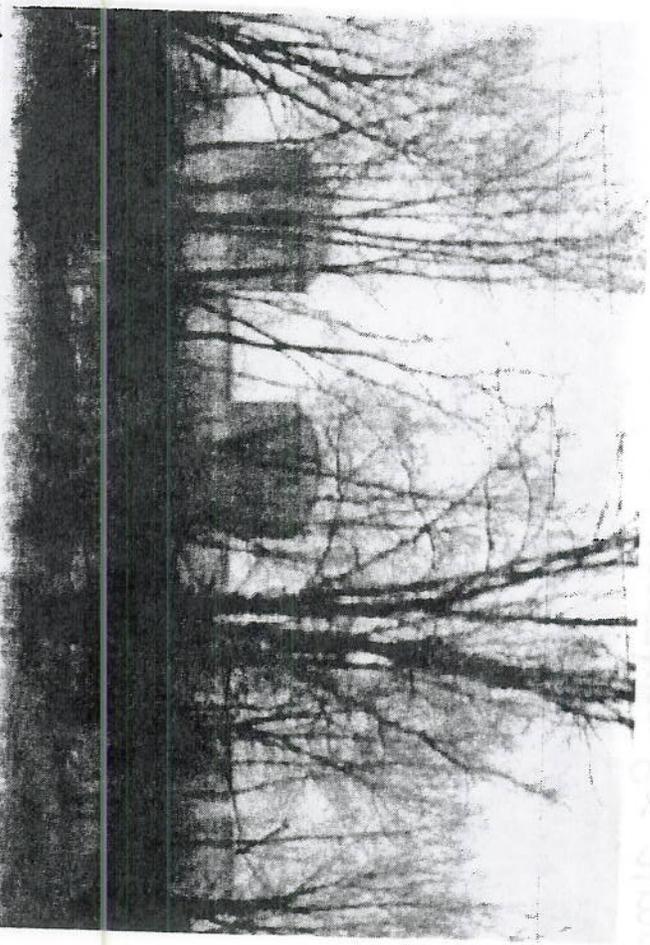


security station.

These are the steam releasing towers. You can see them from the road.

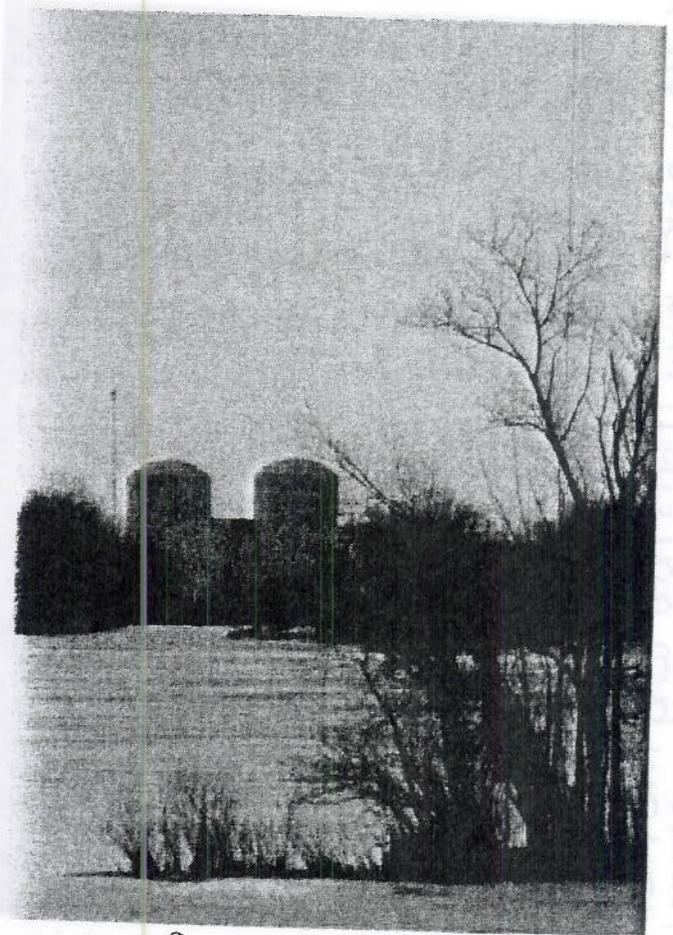


There is just a fence between us



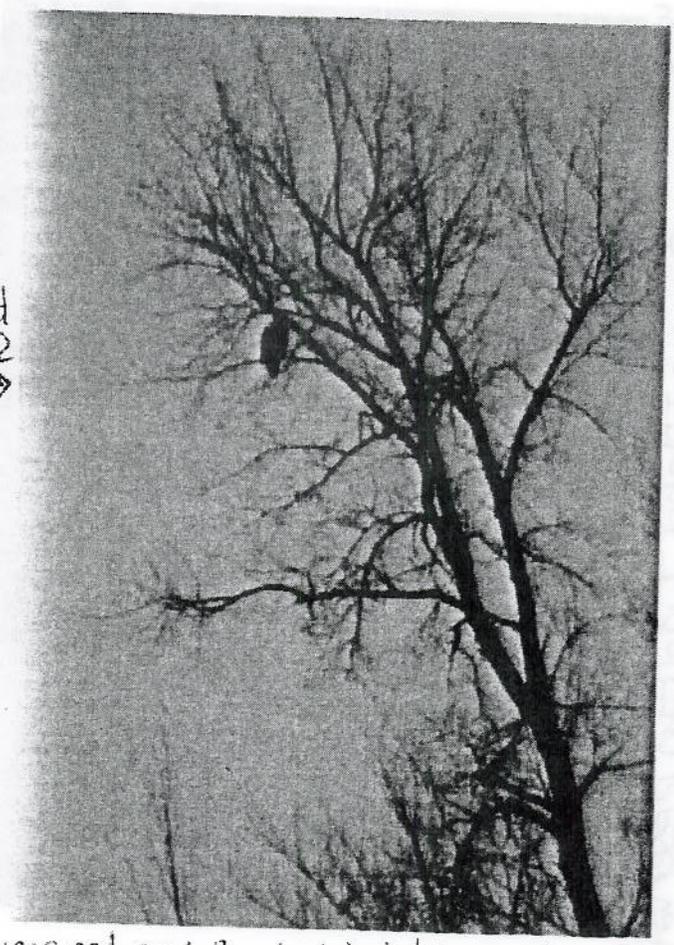
3

These are the steam releasing towers. You can see them from the road.

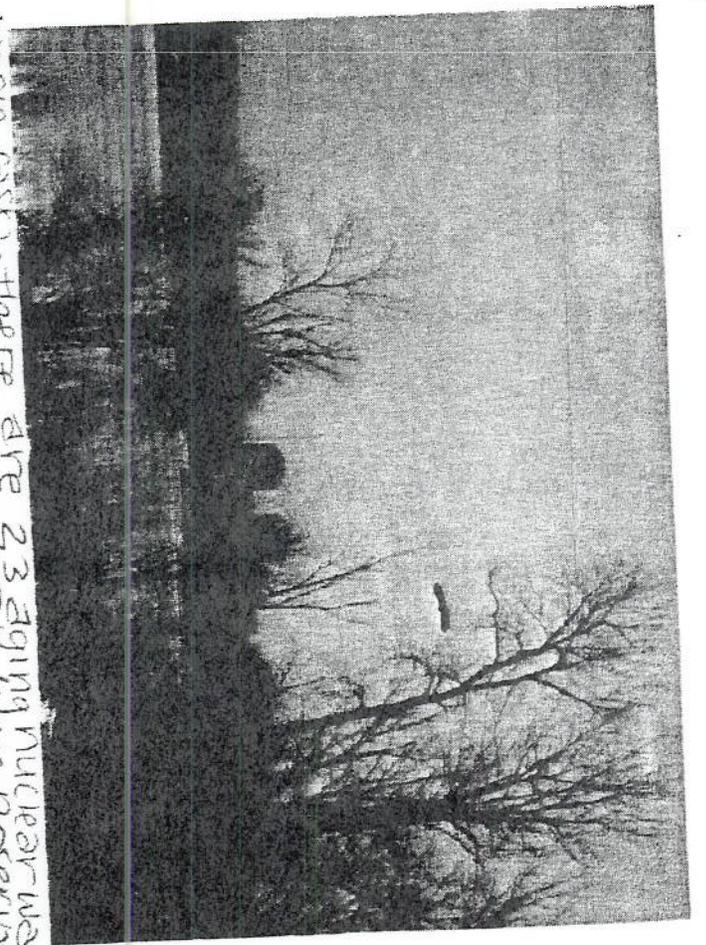
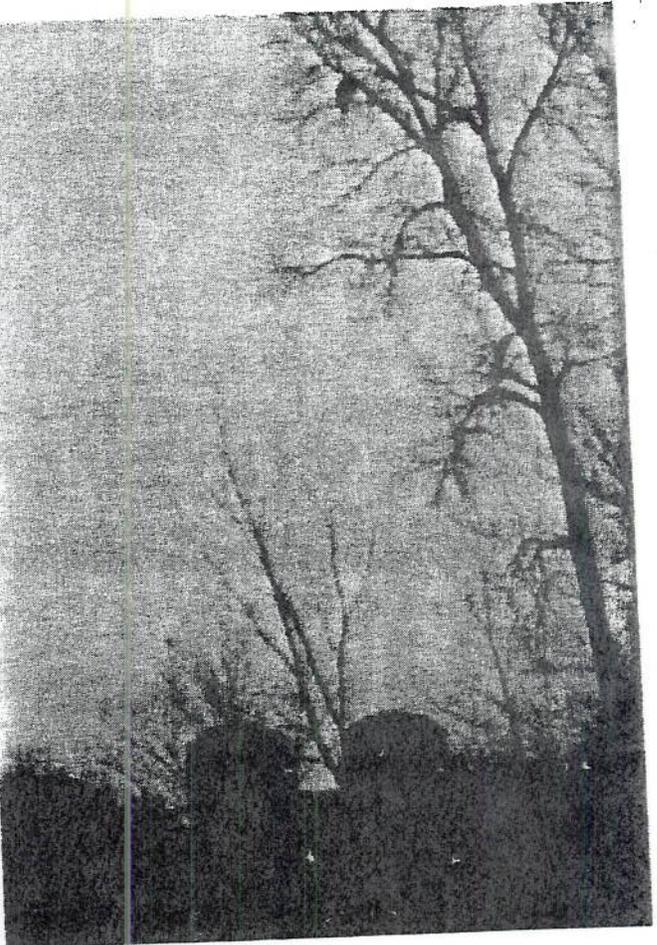


View from the Back side

Bald eagle

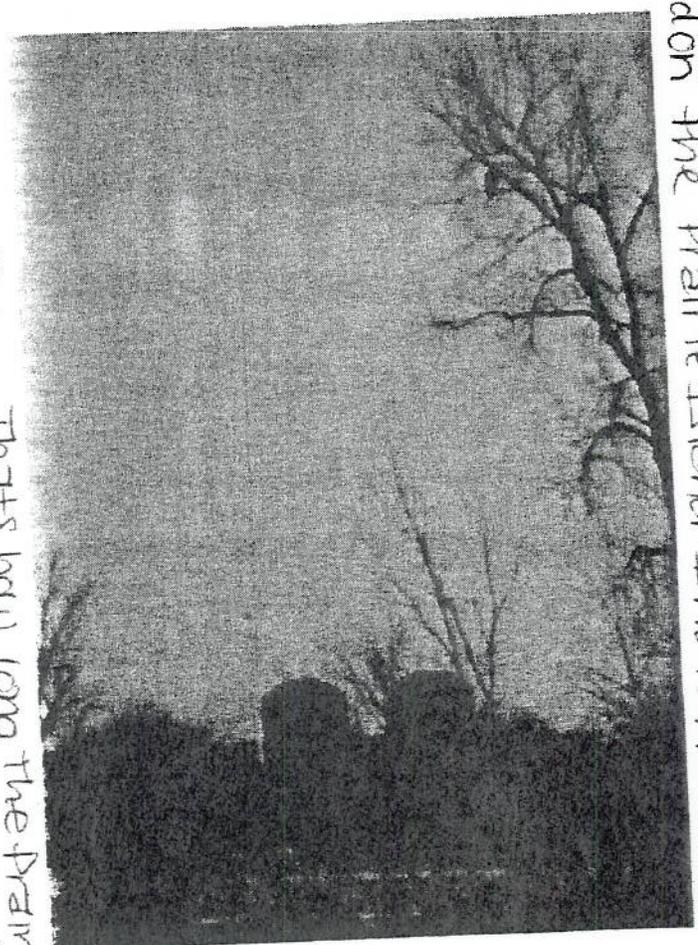


Remember what I told you about those eagles.



I was wrong when I told you there were eight waste casks stored at the Xcel Nuclear Power Plant. There are 23 aging nuclear waste casks stored at the Xcel Nuclear Power Plant.

There are 23 aging nuclear waste casks stored at the Prairie Island Nuclear Reservation.

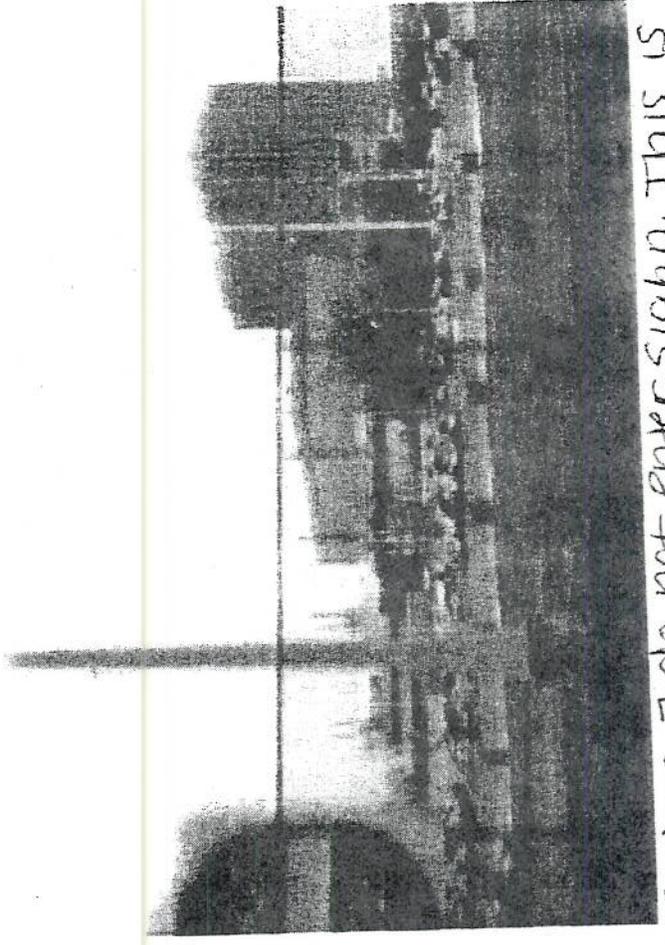
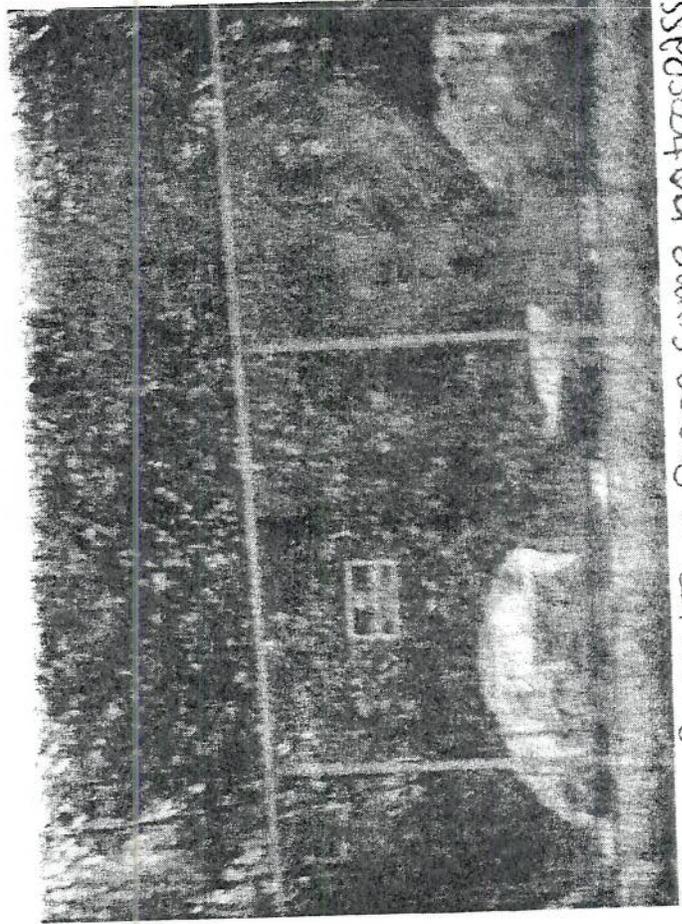
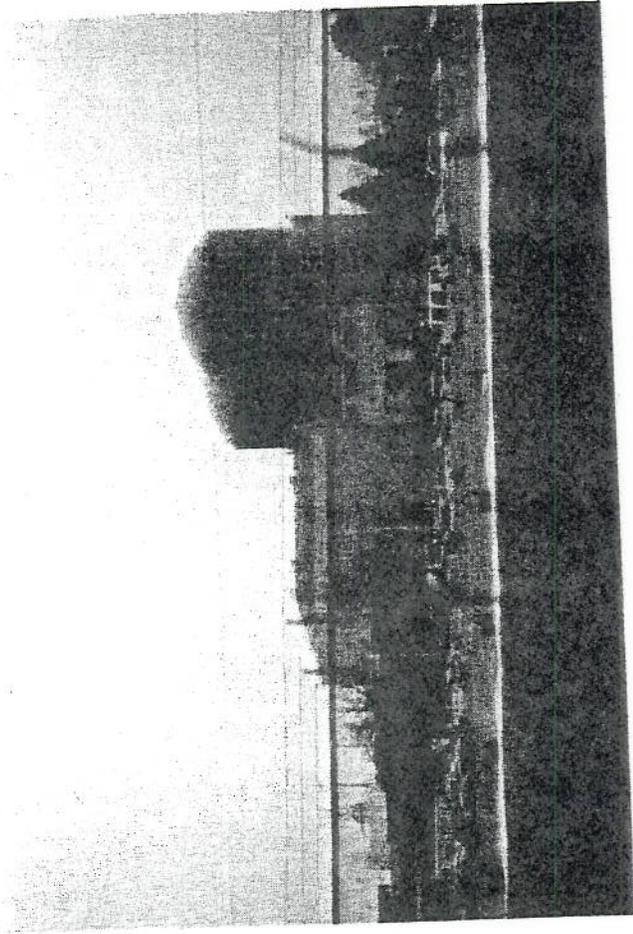


This plant has been operating for almost 40 years now. That's how long the Prairie Island Nuclear Reservation has been operating. That's how long their voices have been heard.

and pattern right in



6



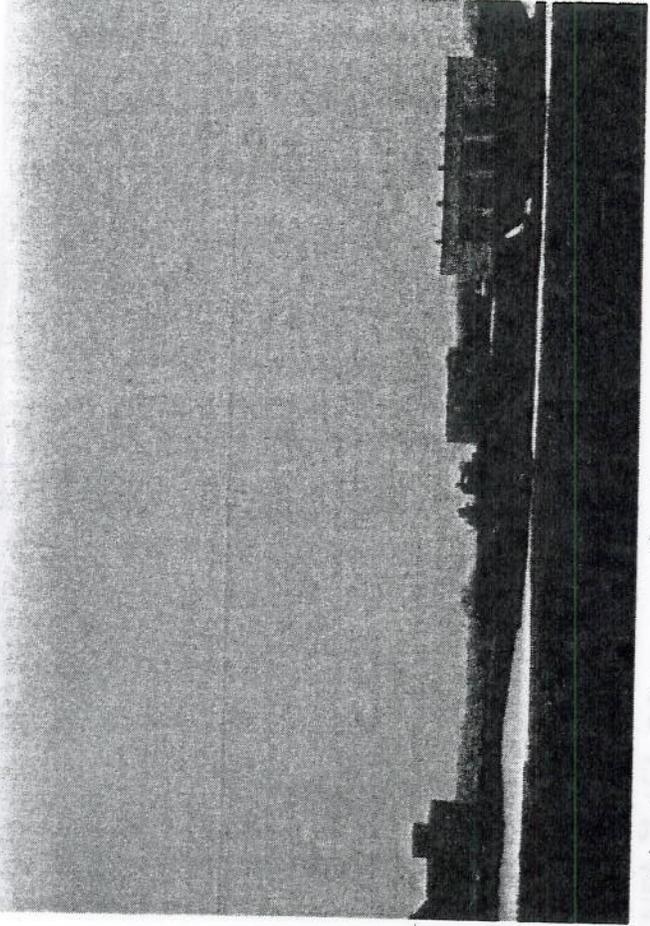
A Row of rocks, a fence, some no trespassing signs, a do not enter sign. This is  
walk T, idea of responsible security. So what else have they been irresponsible with

The Casino ↓



7

Align flow the SYPTC M3/6L 3 (05/2)



The Water treatment Plant.

The Power Plant came to Prairie Island with the Help of the State of Minnesota.

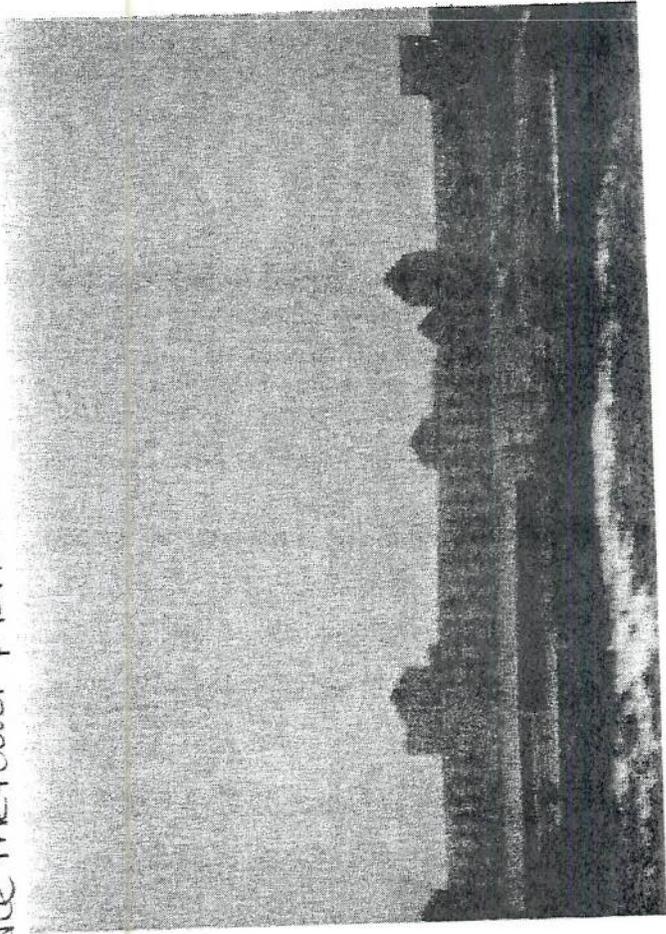


knowingly putting the environment and the Tribe in the danger zone.

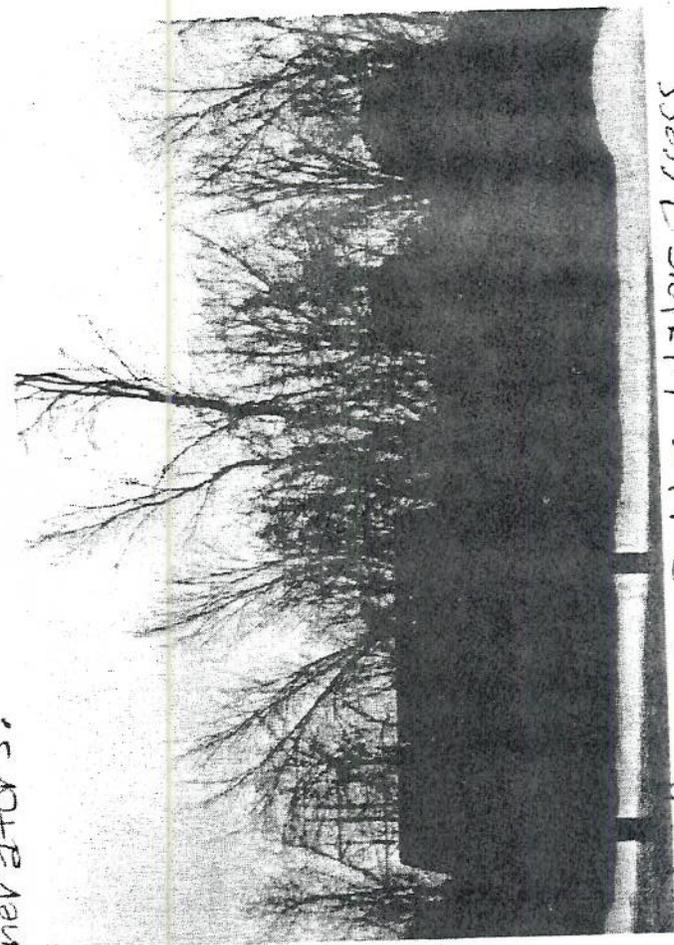
from this window they have a beautiful view of the MISSISSIPPI RIVER.



From this window they look out at their work place the Power plant. beautiful view of the two generators.

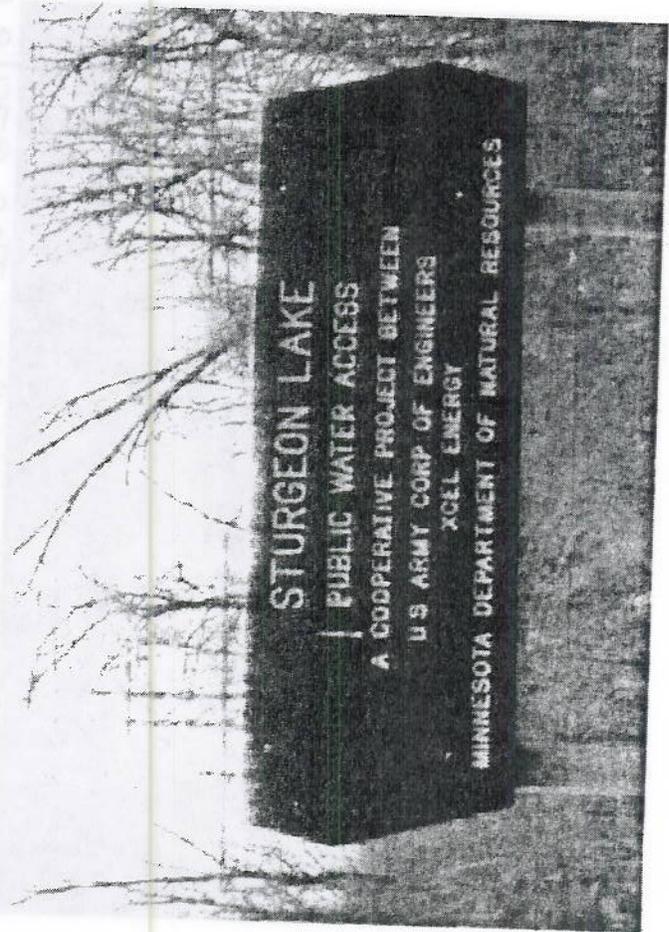
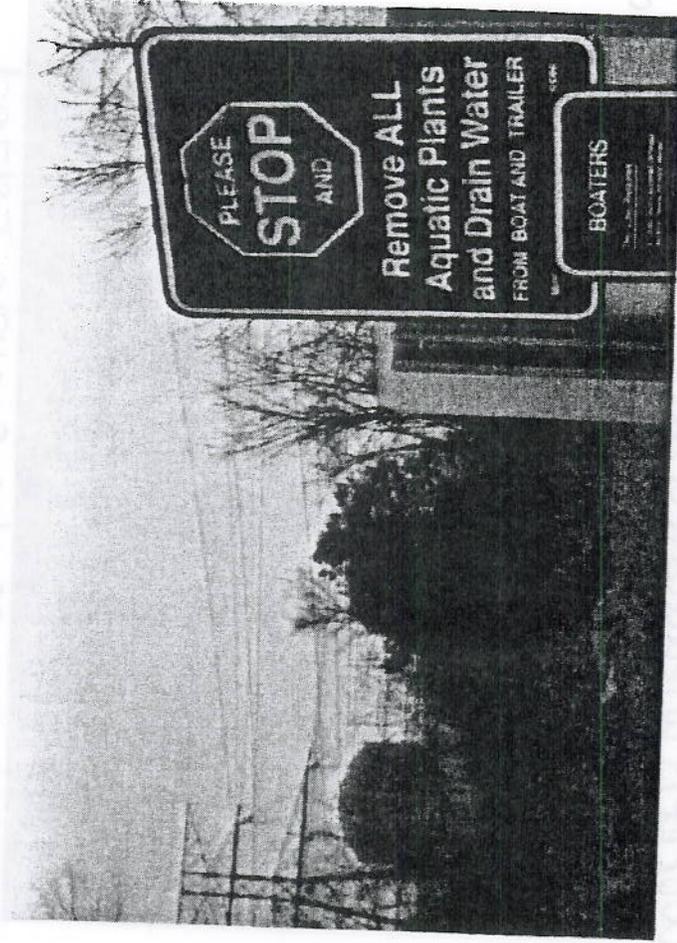
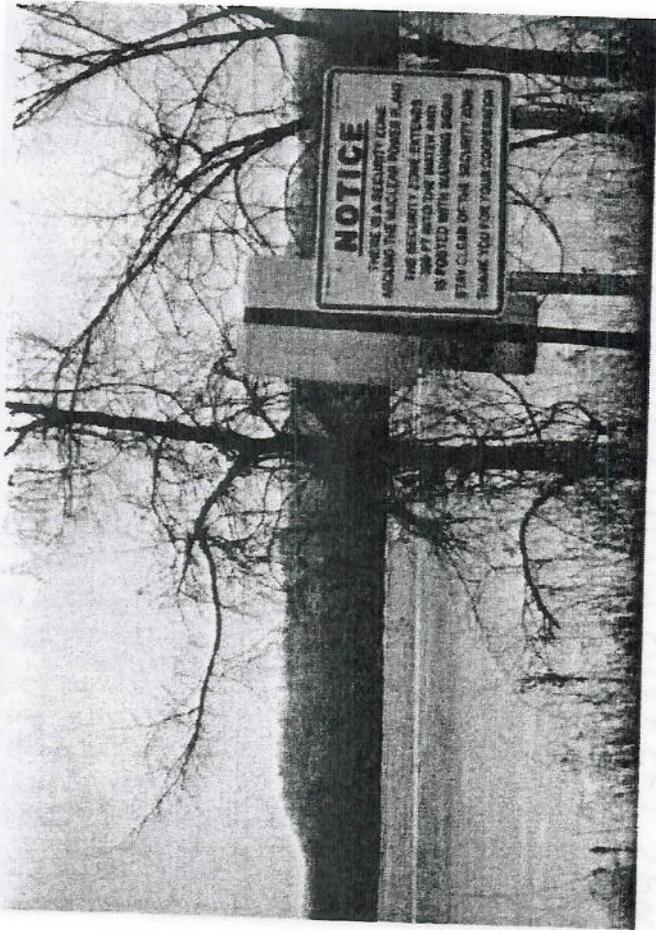


View from the Public Water Access.

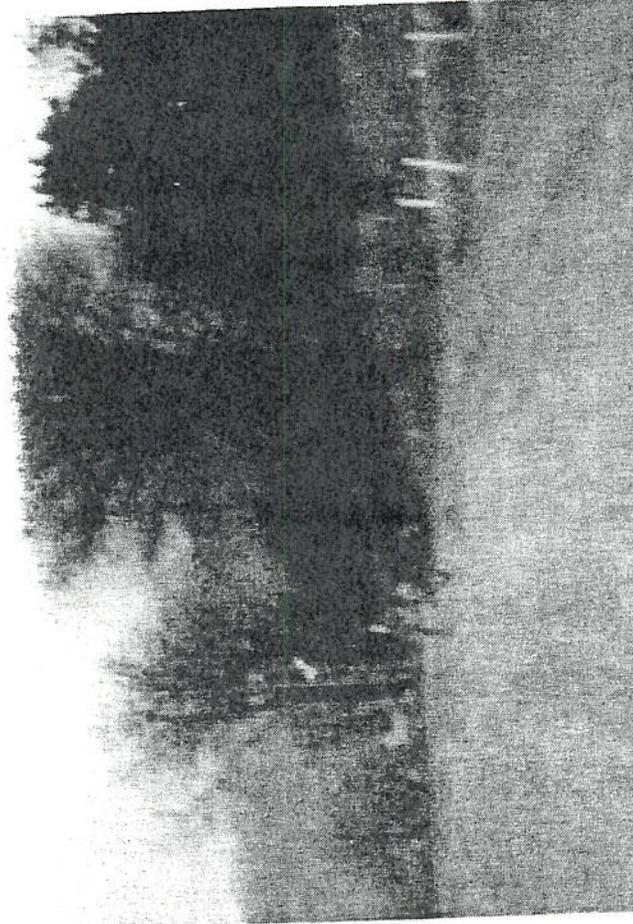


View from the Public Water Access.

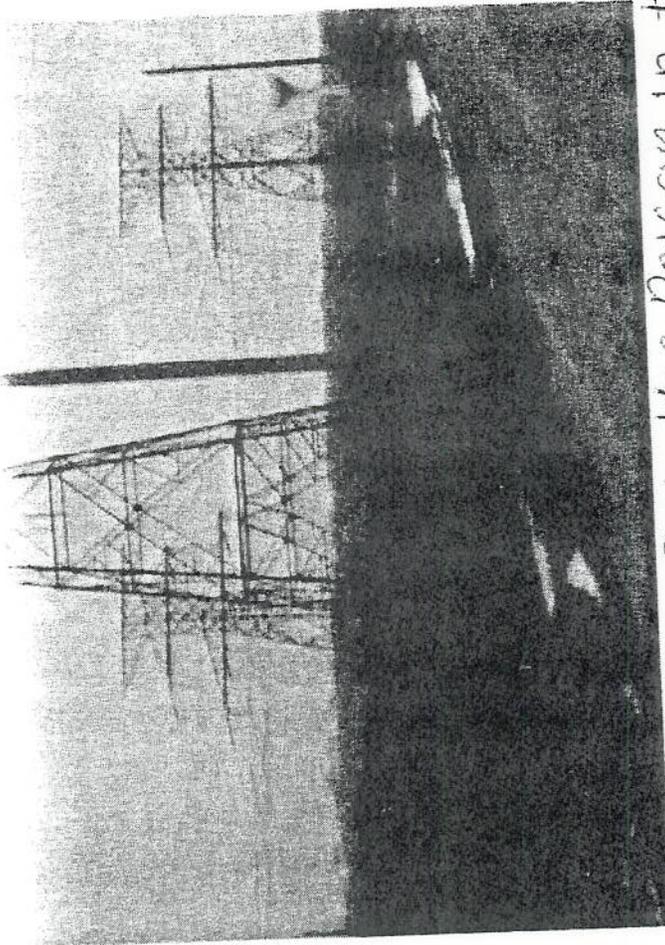
we are At the Public's water access,



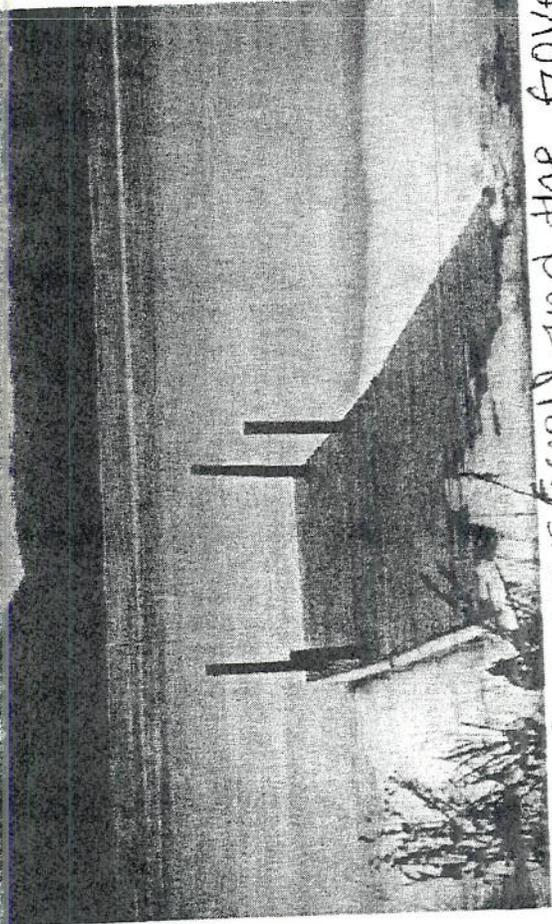
Why would anyone want to hurt this? Minnesota is to BEAUTIFUL to throw away



The Animals still run free The eagle still flies. The Poision in the Woods. Its this dirty little secret. The whole world is uneducated about what's really going on.



The Poision in the Woods. Its this dirty little secret. The whole world is uneducated about what's really going on.

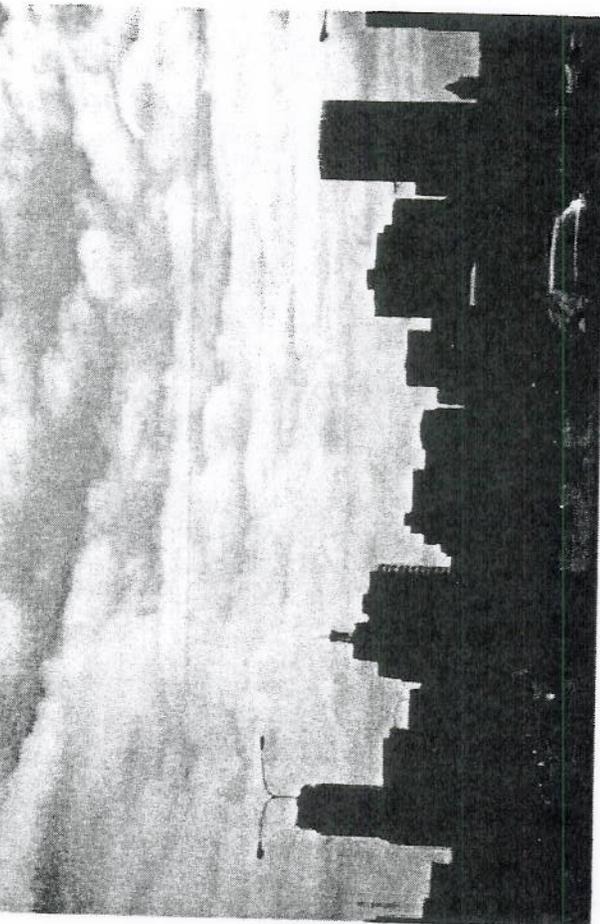


The Big Compansys (xcell) and the Government keeps the Prairie Island Indians as their neighbors.



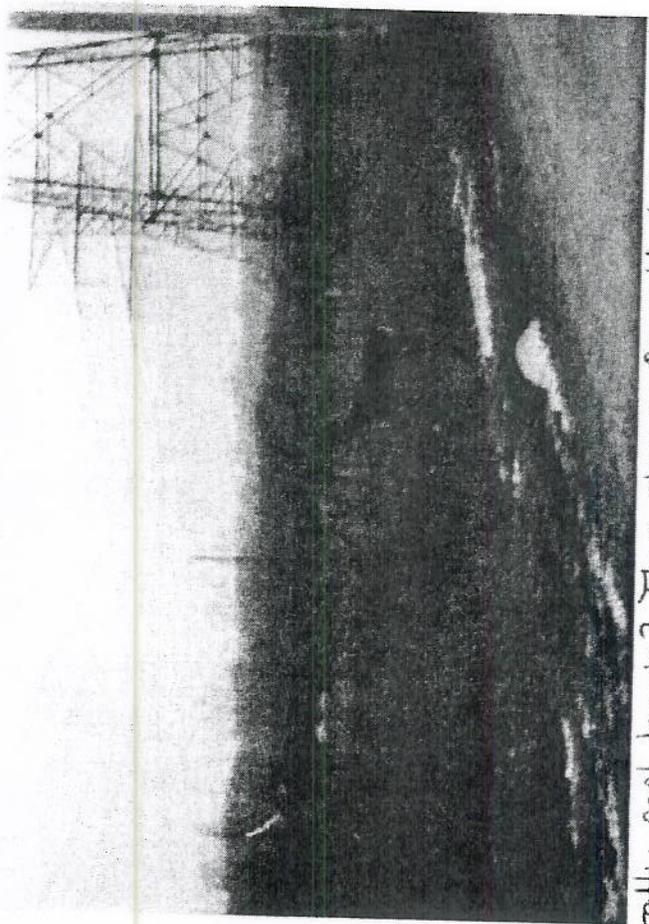
The Big Compansys (xcell) and the Government keeps the Prairie Island Indians as their neighbors.

St. Paul our Capitol city. Just 60 miles or so up the road from  
from Prairie Island. These pictures make it all the clearer why  
Excel must change.



11

St. Paul Pic taken  
Feb 18, 09



Pretty cool huh? The deer. Quick lil' guys.



WRITTEN AND PICTURES BY EZRIEL ROACH.