



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Bruce Rauner, Governor
Wayne A. Rosenthal, Acting Director

January 29, 2015

Mr. Brien Sheahan, Chairman
527 E. Capitol St.
Springfield IL 62701

**RE: Grand Prairie Gateway 345-kV Transmission Line
Endangered Species Consultation Program
EcoCAT Review #1508552**

Dear Chairman Sheahan:

The Department has received from Stantec, on behalf of Commonwealth Edison, a submission for the purpose of consultation between the Department and the Commission pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code Part 1075*.

EcoCAT Review #1508552 identified the **Beach Cemetery Nature Preserve and Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) Site** and a record for the **Blacknose Shiner**, *Notropis heterolepis*, as potentially in the vicinity of the proposed action.

Containing a dry-mesic prairie natural community, the Nature Preserve also supports a population of the State-listed endangered **Prairie Dandelion**, *Nothocalais cuspidata*. The Nature Preserve is located approximately one half-mile north of the proposed power line route and, while the new power line will be visible from the Nature Preserve, the Preserve will not otherwise be adversely modified by the proposed action. The seeds of the Prairie Dandelion, like those of its more-familiar cousin, are wind-borne. This species occurs at scattered locations in Ogle County. It is not impossible that this species occurs on any un-wooded portions of the proposed route which have not been disturbed for several years. However, the Department regards this as unlikely.

The record for the Blacknose Shiner is in Stillman Creek, a stream which is crossed by the proposed route. However, except near the Creek, the entire area likely to be affected by the project is currently in agricultural rowcrop production. *The Department recommends that all reasonable measures should be taken to prevent siltation or sedimentation of the Stillman Creek channel, and to promptly repair and revegetate disturbed areas in the Creek's floodplain. No vehicles should ford the Creek.*

There are several points where the proposed route passes through or is directly adjacent to woodlands, particularly just north of the unincorporated community of Holcomb, where the route intersects an abandoned railroad grade, such that some tree-removal may be necessary to establish required clearances. Due to a pending federal decision to list the **Northern Long-Eared Bat**, *Myotis septentrionalis*, as “endangered” or “threatened,” and because the federally-listed endangered **Indiana Bat**, *Myotis sodalis*, is known to occur in Ogle County, *the Department recommends tree removal should follow standard guidelines for avoiding adverse impacts to Indiana Bats or be immediately preceded by mist-netting surveys to assure the trees to be removed are not occupied by protected species.*

This consultation is valid for two years unless new information becomes available which was not previously considered; or the proposed action is substantially modified; or additional species, essential habitats, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the project has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above-listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resource review primarily reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of this consultation, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments.

If additional protected resources are encountered during the project’s implementation, the applicant must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations. Also, note that closing consultation does not imply IDNR’s authorization or endorsement of the proposed action. Please contact me if you have questions regarding this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith M. Shank". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Keith M. Shank
Division of Ecosystems and Environment
keith.shank@illinois.gov
(217) 785-5500

cc: Brian Bub, Stantec