

9th Annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference

R-Project Update “Where We are Today”

Tom Kent
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer
Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)

R-Project

- 345 kV transmission line from Gerald Gentleman Station to Holt County
 - Approximately 225 miles in length
- Approved by Southwest Power Pool (SPP) in 2012
- Public involvement process began January 2013
- Final line route announced January 2015

Need and Benefits of the R-Project

Benefits are three-fold:

- Enhance Reliability
- Reduce congestion on existing power lines to allow for better system operation
- Provide opportunities for interconnection of Renewable generation resources

R-Project Current Status



R-Project Current Status

(As of November 2, 2016)

Survey activities:

- Acquired 832 of 832 (100%) section corners
- Easement acquisition:
 - Easement packages released for acquisition – 430 of 647 (66%)
 - Easements acquired – 175 of 647 (27% or 66 miles of transmission line)
- Completed draft Habit Conservation Plan (HCP) to support application for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Milestones

- Final Line Route Announcement – January 2015
- Began Easement Acquisition – December 2015
- Record of Decision from USFWS – Anticipated September 2017
- Begin Construction – To Be Determined
- In-service – To Be Determined

Public Involvement

- 18 public open houses
- 8 public hearings
- Over 1,700 individuals attended these public meetings/hearings
- 8 newsletters sent to over 3,500 landowners
- Conducted meetings with community leaders and local elected officials for a total of 44 meetings prior to the public hearings

Public Involvement

- Over 2,500 public comments reviewed
- Reviewed against the routing criteria
- Establish a route that minimizes impact to landowners and can be constructed, operated, and maintained in a safe and environmentally responsible manner
- We continue to work with landowners to make minor adjustments to further minimize impact on their property when appropriate

Public Involvement

- Week of November 14, NPPD will be holding community conversations with landowners
- Three meetings per day to hear from landowners (by invitation)
- Intended to listen to landowner concerns, answer questions, and hopefully correct some of the misinformation being spread about the project

R-Project in the Social Media

- Extensive social media occurring on Facebook
- Opposition to the R-Project Transmission Line
- Opposition to wind energy development
- Encouraging activism and involvement in public process

What social media is saying

- **NPPD is planning to build a “T” and “U” transmission line**
- **The T-Line will run through Hyannis and west towards Scottsbluff**

Fact

- A “T-Line” was considered at one time
 - Did not get much traction
- The “U-Line” has never been discussed and doesn’t make sense

What social media is saying

- **You can't build and maintain high voltage lines in the Sandhills**

Utility	Voltage (kV)	Length in Miles
Nebraska Public Power District	115	301.5
Nebraska Public Power District	230	57.8
Nebraska Public Power District	345	140.5
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association	115	140.7
Western Area Power Administration	115	20.4
Western Area Power Administration	345	36.3

What social media is saying

- **All the power coming through the R-Project transmission line goes out-of-state**

What social media is saying

Fact

- NPPD (and other Nebraska utilities) participates in a regional electricity market
 - All energy produced is sold into the market
 - All energy needed to serve load is bought from the market
 - From a practical sense, the electricity produced flows from generation to load via the path of least resistance
- The R-Project line is part of a transmission network that spans the eastern United States
- Nebraskans benefit directly through:
 - Increased Reliability
 - Reduced Congestion

What social media is saying

- **Damage to the Sandhills is unrepairable**

Fact

- NPPD has built transmission lines in the Sandhills and works to restore damages
- Growth will take time to return

Ericson Substation Restoration

April 2012



Ericson Substation Restoration

June 15, 2016



Theford to Ainsworth Restoration

September 14, 2013

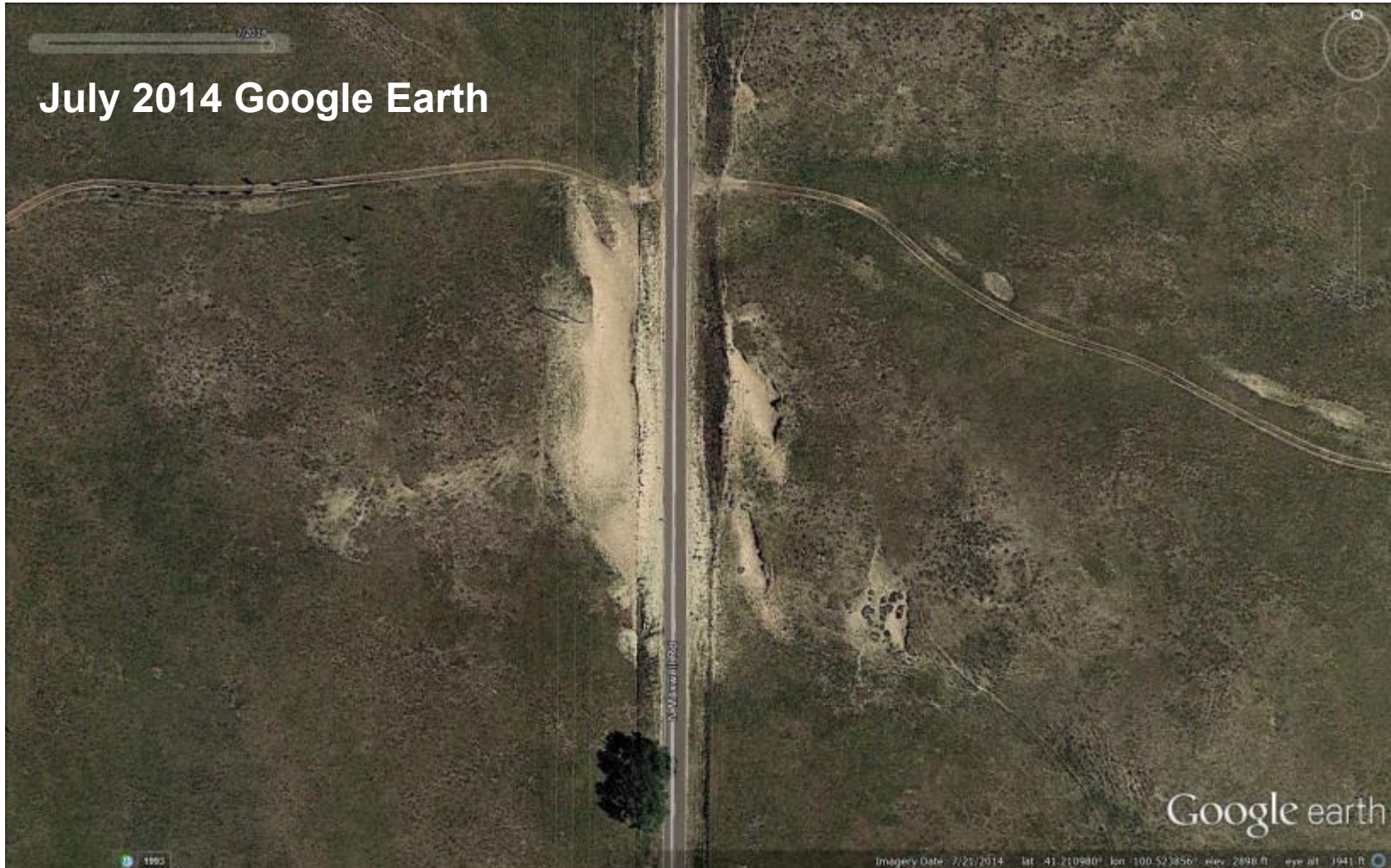


Theford to Ainsworth Restoration

October 26, 2016



Blowout Repair on Maxwell-Thedford Before



Blowout Repair on Maxwell-Thedford Before

September 2014



Blowout Repair on Maxwell-Thedford Before

June 1, 2016



What social media is saying

- **NPPD and Cherry County wind will be taking one million acres for a wind farm**
- **NPPD is taking water rights in Cherry County**
- **NPPD wants the mineral rights in Cherry County**

Fact

- Not happening!

What social media is saying

- **NPPD is taking the land from its owners**

Fact

- NPPD seeks easements to construct, operate, and maintain lines
- NPPD will compensate landowners for an easement and pay a structure fee
- Landowners maintain use of the property with some limitations
- NPPD is responsible for repairing the damage
 - During construction, maintenance, or storm damage

What social media is saying

- **The R-Project transmission line was planned for the Cherry County Wind Association**

Fact

- The line is being built for reliability, relief of congestion on the lines, and the potential for renewable energy development
- The line is not being built to meet the needs of any specific wind developers

What social media is saying

- **NPPD trespasses on property**

Fact

- NPPD has authority granted by the state that allows us to gain access to property under certain conditions
 - We prefer voluntary access to land
- Challenged by a lawsuit in District Court
- Court ruled in favor of NPPD

What social media is saying

- **The line could have been placed further south, starting at Stapleton on an abandoned line**

Fact

- The project has to interconnect at Thedford to a new transformer that will link to the underlying 115 kV system
- This is a key piece of the reliability benefit

What social media is saying

- **USFWS will force NPPD to change its route by not issuing a permit**

Fact

- NPPD is requesting an ITP for the American Burying Beetle
- USFWS has no routing authority in this process

Questions

