

NOTICE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is soliciting public comments for a new proposed use. Central Power Electrical COOP would like to use an unmanned aerial system (UAS) to conduct a reconnaissance mission of the power poles located within the currently existing power pole right-of-way on J. Clark Salyer NWR.

The proposed work locations include:

T158N R76W Section 17 East ½, 8 East ½, 5 East ½ and T159N R76W Section 32 East ½. Specifically, the currently existing 85 ft. wide right of way that follows the east boundaries of the previously listed legal sections.

The proposed work is as follows:

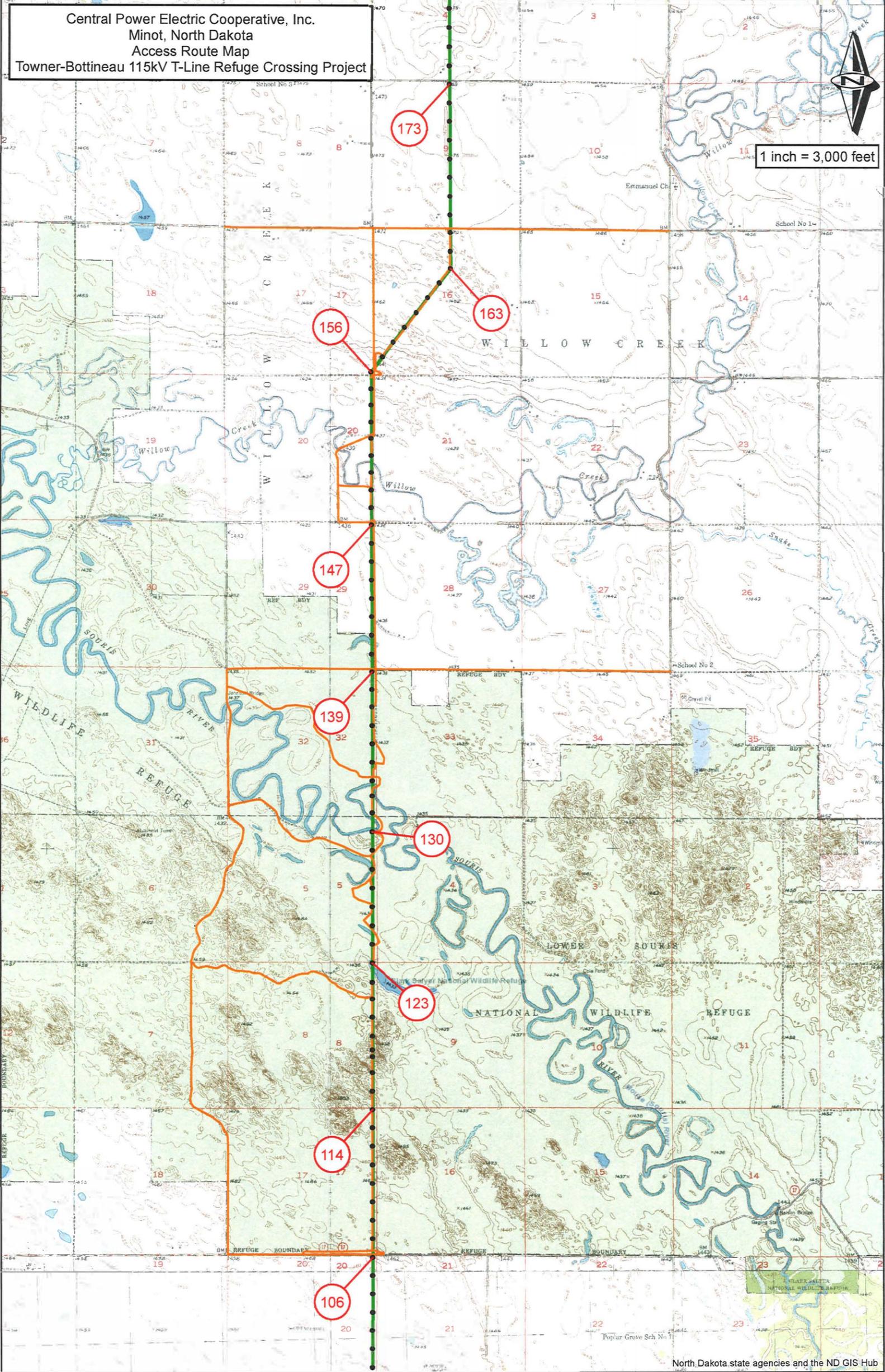
The purpose of this project is to use a UAS to conduct a reconnaissance mission of the existing power line prior to replacing the existing power poles. Use of a UAS, as opposed to traditional methods utilizing UTVs and other vehicles, will reduce the overall impact to wildlife and wildlife habitat resources by greatly decreasing the level of equipment needed and time spent. The proposed UAS mission will take approximately 12 minutes to complete.

This notice will be posted at the J. Clark Salyer NWR headquarters and on the J. Clark Salyer NWR web site (http://www.fws.gov/refuge/J_Clark_Salyer/) from July 19th 2016 through July 28th 2016. A copy of the draft Compatibility Determination and associated map is available upon request. People wishing to provide comments can do so by close of business on July 28th 2016 by submitting them in writing to Att: Project Leader, J. Clark Salyer NWR, 681 Salyer Road, Upham, ND 58789 or at the refuge office located at this same address. For more information, contact Frank Durbian, Project Leader, 701-768-2548 x113.

Central Power Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Minot, North Dakota
Access Route Map
Towner-Bottineau 115kV T-Line Refuge Crossing Project



1 inch = 3,000 feet



Compatibility Determination

Use: UAS Reconnaissance Mission for Central Power Pole Replacement Project

Refuge Name: J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge

County: McHenry, North Dakota

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies):

Executive Order 7170, September 4, 1935; and 16 USC 715d; Migratory Bird Conservation Act

Refuge Purpose(s):

"... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wild life ..." Executive Order 7170, dated Sept. 4, 1935

"... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

The mission of the System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Description of Use:

What is the use? Is the use a wildlife-dependent public use?

Central Power Electrical COOP would like to use an unmanned aerial system (UAS) to conduct a reconnaissance mission of the power poles located within the currently existing power pole right-of-way on J. Clark Salyer NWR.

This is not a wildlife-dependant public use.

Where would the use be conducted?

The proposed work location is T158N R76W Section 17 East ½, 8 East ½, 5 East ½ and T159N

UAS Reconnaissance Mission for Central Power Pole Replacement Project at J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge

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R76W Section 32 East ½ (see attached map). Specifically, the currently existing 85 ft. wide right of way that follows the east boundaries of the previously listed legal sections (see attached map).

When would the use be conducted?

The mission would take place during the late summer or early fall of 2016.

How would the use be conducted?

The Guidance Flowchart for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) v.20160504 was used to develop this CD. Use of UAS and completion of mission will be conducted according to the USFWS 603 FW 1 (Appropriate Use), 50 CFR 27.34 (Harassment of Wildlife) and other applicable laws, regulations and policies.

Central Power Electric COOP or it's designee (contractor/sub-contractor) will be responsible for following all applicable laws and regulations related to the use of UAS including but not limited to 14 CFR 21, 43, 61, 91, 101, 107, 119, 133, and 183.

Why is this use being proposed?

The purpose of this project is to use a UAS to conduct a reconnaissance mission of the existing power line prior to replacing the existing power poles. Use of a UAS, as opposed to traditional methods utilizing UTVs and other vehicles, will reduce the overall impact to wildlife and wildlife habitat resources by greatly decreasing the level of equipment needed and time spent. The proposed UAS mission will take approximately 12 minutes to complete.

Availability of Resources:

Resources involved in the administration and management of the use: Limited to development of this Compatibility Determination and issuance of Special Use Permit for activity.

Special equipment, facilities, or improvements necessary to support the use: None

Maintenance costs: Minor and insignificant.

Monitoring costs: None

Offsetting revenues: None

Anticipated Impacts of the Use:

Short-term impacts:

Temporary disturbance to wildlife, specifically birds, exist during the UAS flight period. Unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) are increasingly being tested or used as wildlife management tools across the globe (Goebel et al., 2015; Hodgson et al., 2013; Koh and Wich, 2012; Mu lero-Pazmany et al., 2014; Sarda-Palomera et al., 2011) which informs current understanding of the effects of these systems on birds. Yet, the science regarding wildlife effects associated with use of UAS remains young. Vas et al. (2015) studied the behavioral effects of a quadricopter drone on mallards (*Anas p/tyrhyrachos*), flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*), and common greenshanks (*Tringa nebu/aria*). The birds had no significant reactions to different drone speeds or different colored drones, and there appeared to be no cumulative effects of successive flights. Also, the birds had very little reaction to lower approach angles, but consistently reacted when the drones approached from directly overhead. These results are consistent with those of Sarda-Palomera et al. (2011) who monitored the effects among gulls of a UAS used for population monitoring; and with results of Goebel et al. (2015) who found no reaction among penguins or seals of UAS used for population monitoring. More powerful drones of larger size that make more noise may have a greater effect on birds and other wildlife.

Long-term impacts:

None.

Cumulative impacts:

None.

Public Review and Comment:

Public notice and solicitation for public comment was posted at the J. Clark Salyer NWR Headquarters and on the J. Clark Salyer NWR web site (http://www.fws.gov/refuge/J_Clark_Salyer/) from July 19th through July 28th, 2016.

Determination:

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

The SUP authorizing this use will include stipulations, conditions and restrictions to ensure compatibility and mitigate for potential anticipated impacts to refuge resources. Stipulations may be associated with placement of equipment, timing of activities and types of equipment used.

Justification:

This project will reduce the overall impact to wildlife and wildlife habitat resources by greatly decreasing the level of equipment needed and time spent.

If the proposed use is an economic use of refuge natural resources, how would it contribute to the purposes of the refuge or the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System?

N/A

Signatures:

Frank Durbian, Project Leader

Date

Review:

Barbara Boyle, Refuge Supervisor

Date

Approval:

Will Meeks, Refuge Chief
Region 6

Date

Mandatory 10- or 15-Year Re-Evaluation Date: _____