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Section 7.0

Preparers

7.0 PREPARERS

This Environmental Assessment was prepared for WCEC by PBS&J. WCEC and C-PCE provided much of the material for Section 1.0, as well as the monetary cost information presented in Section 2.0. PBS&J employees with primary responsibilities for preparation of this document include the following:

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Ecology	Derek Green	Senior Project Manager
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Section 8.0

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Appendix A

Open-House Information

August 25, 2004

**SUBJECT: WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Dallas Water Utility Pump Station 138kV Transmission Project**

Dear Landowner or Member:

Wood County Electric Cooperative (WCEC), of Quitman, Texas, plans to construct a 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line in Wood County, Texas. This project is in the preliminary stages of planning. The project will require an application to be filed for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) with the Public Utility Commission of Texas. The application has **not** been filed with the Commission.

A Public Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 9, 2004, at the WCEC headquarters in Quitman, Texas. WCEC headquarters are located at 501 S. Main Street, Quitman, Texas. The meeting room door will open at 3:00 P.M. and close at 7:00 P.M. The meeting format will be informal, "Come & Go", during which the public will have access to Cooperative personnel and their consultants who are responsible for the project. There **will not** be any formal presentation made. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the public to be individually involved in the process to increase the social, economic and environmental data available for the routing process. Visitors will be given an opportunity to make suggestions about the routing of the line within the specified study area, ask questions, and express concerns with regard to the project.

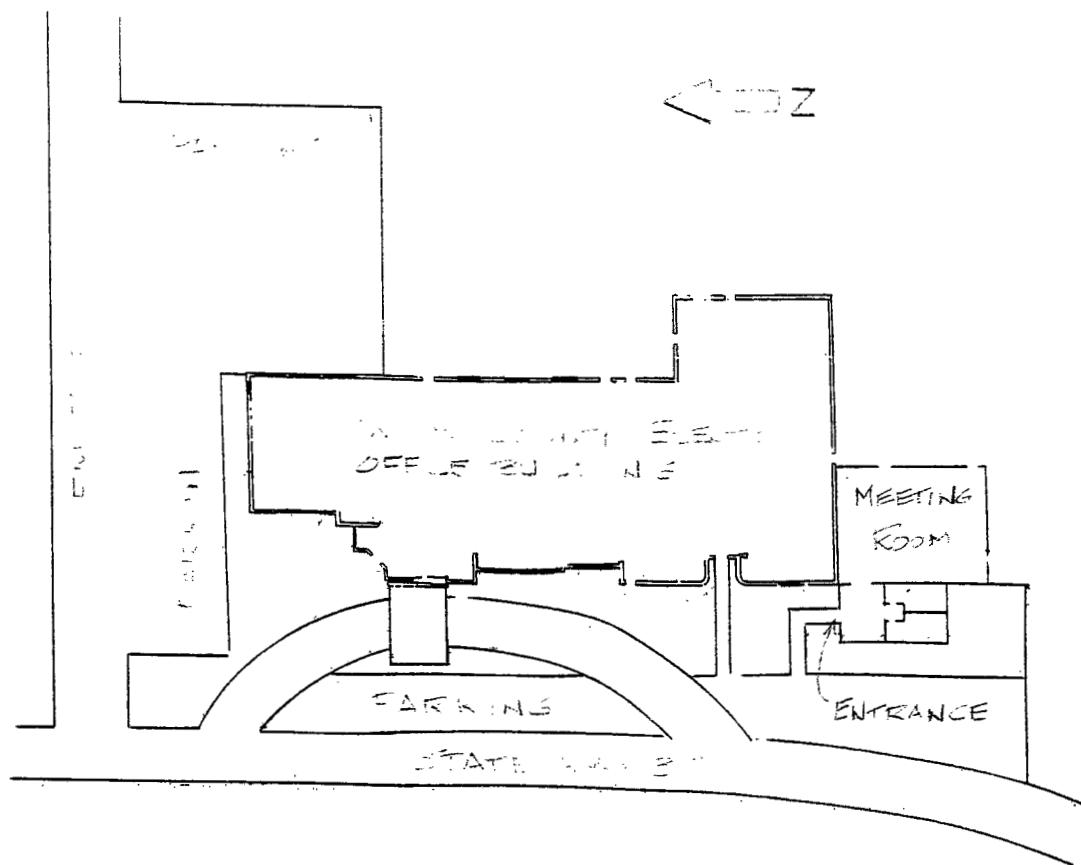
Environmental consultants from PBS&J, the consultant that will prepare the environmental assessment and routing analysis for the project, will be available at the meeting to explain the environmental analysis criteria and route selection process.

Engineering consultants from Cornelius-Pierce Consulting Engineers, Inc. will also be on hand to address any questions about the type of structures initially planned for the project, construction methods, and right-of-way requirements.

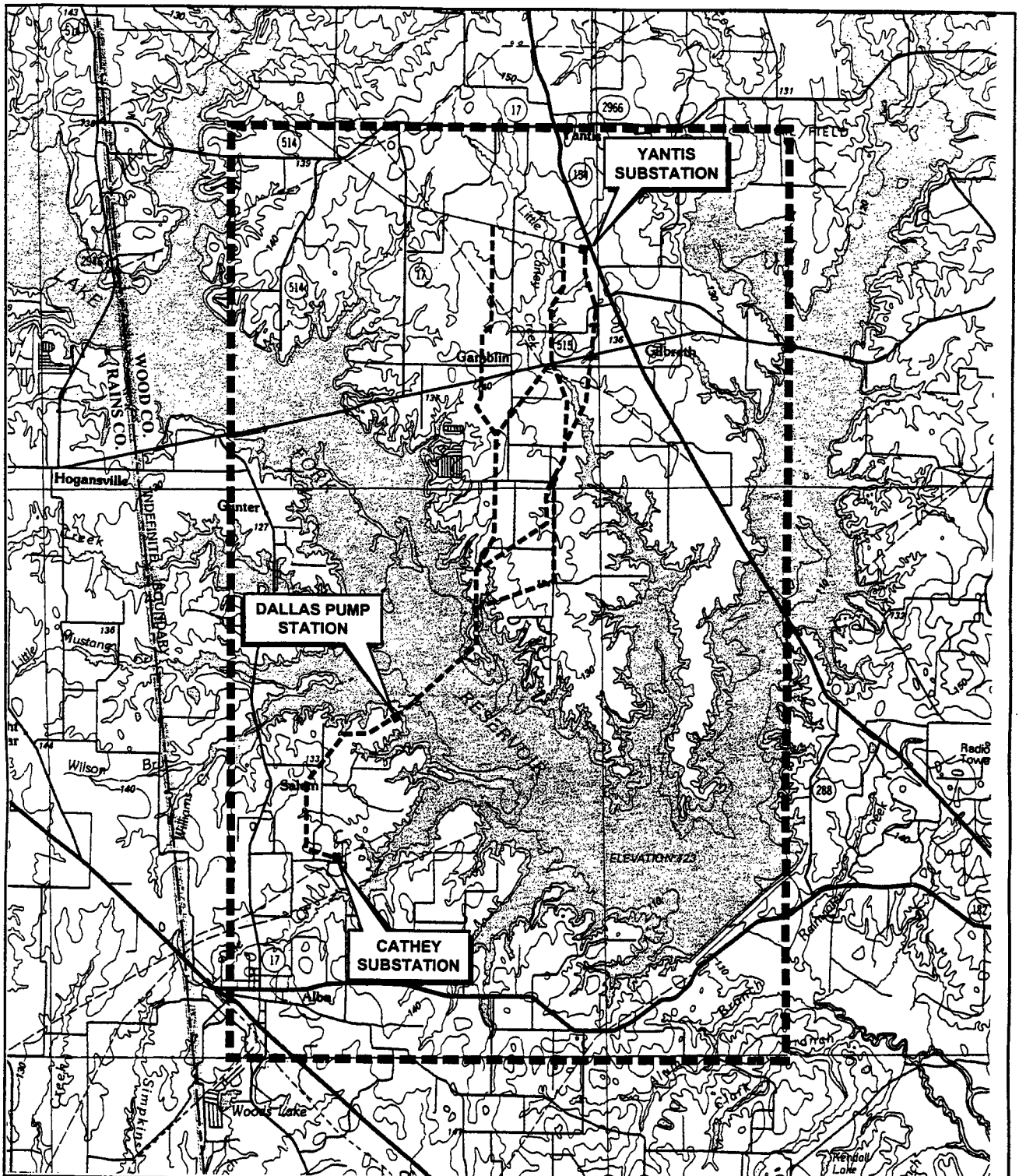
The proposed transmission line will consist of approximately 5.5 miles of double circuit, single pole, 138kV structures. The transmission line will begin at a tap point located on the existing transmission line that extends from the Poole Community (NE Rains Co) to the Yantis Substation. The line will end at a proposed substation on the Dallas Pump Station property. Attached is a project study area map with preliminary routes shown.

If you would like further information or have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Robert Norman of Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., at (903) 763-2203.

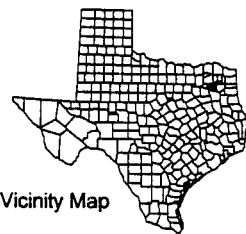
Sincerely,
Robert Norman
Chief Operating Officer
Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc.



Meeting Room Entrance



- Study Area Boundary
- Alternative Route

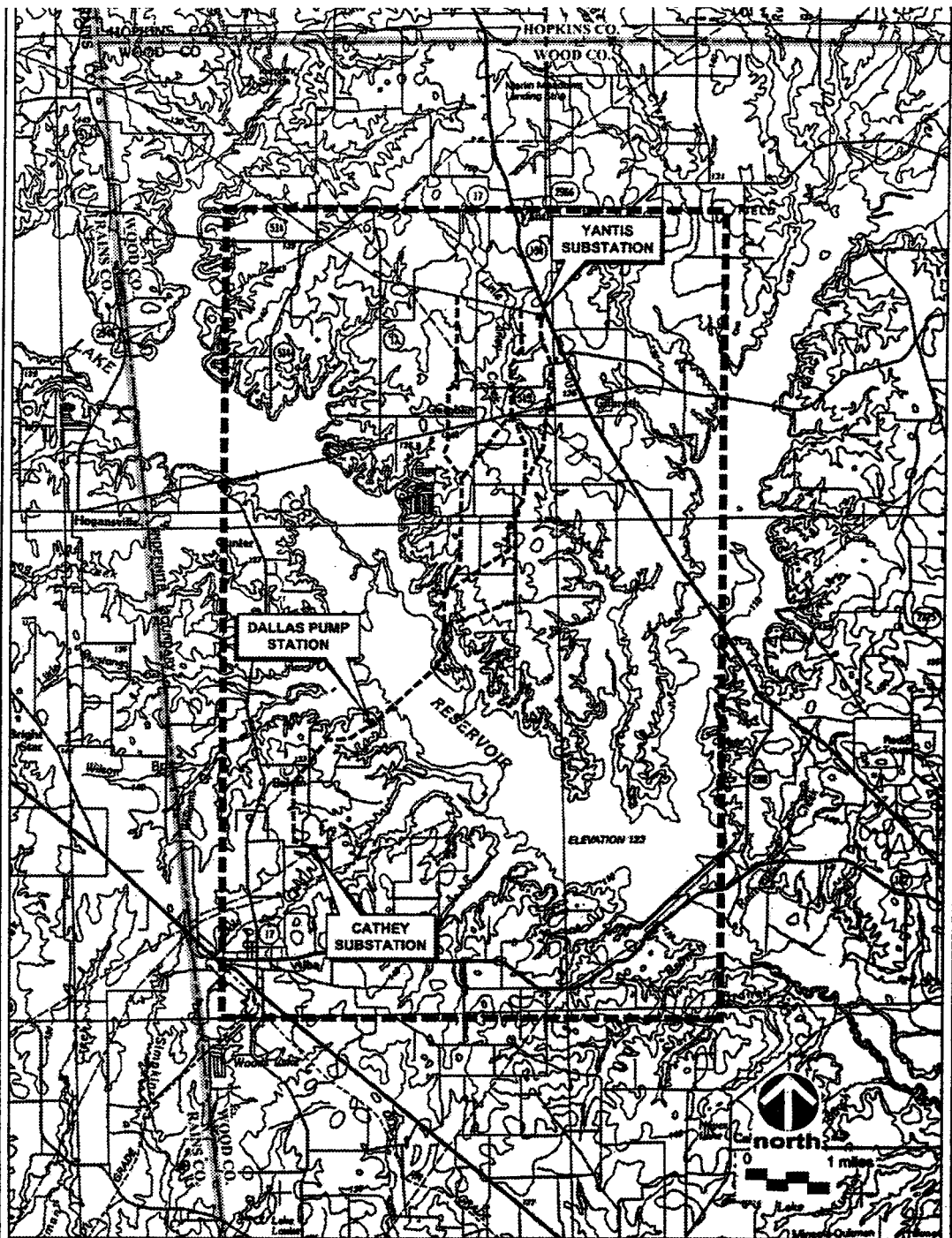


- Engineering
- Environmental Consulting
- Surveying

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES
YANTIS-CATHEY 69/138-KV
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Base Map: USGS 1:100,000 Quadrangle; Mineola, Texas

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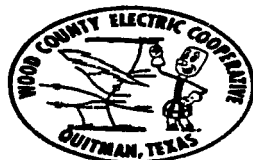
Dallas Water Utility Pump Station 69/138kV Transmission Project Open House

Wood County Electric Cooperative Headquarters

September 9, 2004 ~ 3:00 – 7:00 PM

Wood County Electric Cooperative (WCEC) is proposing to construct a new 69/138 kV double circuit transmission line in Wood County from the Yantis community area to the Dallas Water Utility property on Lake Fork. The map included represents the study area where alternative route are being considered. Easement widths of 100 feet will be required.

The purpose of this project is to meet the required electrical needs of the City of Dallas for their new raw water pump station located on Lake Fork. WCEC is committed to routing the proposed transmission line in a manner considerate of community values and consistent with directives provided by the Public Utility Commission of Texas. The "Open House" format allows for information sharing and discussion of issues in an informal setting. Input from the community is considered for further routing evaluation. You may come and go any time you please during this time period. For questions regarding the open house please contact Robert Norman at (903) 763-2203.



**Wood County Electric
Cooperative, Inc.
Quitman, Texas**

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF WOOD

BEFORE ME. the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared

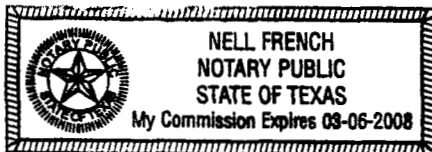
Kiki Bettis who after being duly sworn,

deposes and says that she is the office manager of the Wood County Democrat, which is the newspaper of general circulation in the city of Quitman and County of Wood. Texas, and that a true and correct copy of the Legal Notice hereto attached was published in said paper in the issued dated September 8, 2004.

Kiki Bettis

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME. This 11th day of October 2004.

Nell French



Notary Public in and for Texas

WELCOME

OPEN HOUSE
Wood County Electric Cooperative
September 9, 2004

Thank you for taking time to attend this open house for the proposed **Dallas Water Utility Pump Station 138kV Transmission Project**. The purpose of this meeting is to present information, to answer your questions and to allow you to be individually involved in the process in order to receive your ideas and concerns and increase data available for the routing process.

The purpose of this project is to meet the required electrical needs of the City of Dallas for their new raw water pump station located on Lake Fork. The proposed transmission line will consist of approximately 5.5 miles of double circuit, single pole, 138kV structures. The transmission line will begin at a tap point located on the existing transmission line that extends from the Poole Community (NE Rains Co) to the Yantis Substation. The line will end at the electrical substation on the Dallas Pump Station property.

We invite you to spend as much time as you need at each display station to gain a complete understanding of the project and the routing process. Before you leave we simply ask that you complete the attached questionnaire to allow us to document any concern you may have. Your response will allow the project team to incorporate all viewpoints into the routing process.

WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
DALLAS WATER UTILITY
69/138kV DOUBLE CIRCUIT TRANSMISSION PROJECT

1. In your opinion, has the need for the project been adequately explained to you?

2. Were the exhibits and explanations of the need for this project helpful to you?

3. Which of the following applies to your situation?

Potential transmission route is near my home.

Potential transmission route is near my property.

Potential transmission route crosses my property.

Other _____

4. What areas do you believe should be considered of greatest concern in routing the transmission line? (If you have multiple concerns, please rank them 1st, 2nd, etc.)

<u>Description</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Agricultural land	_____
Floodplains or wetlands	_____
Recreational or park areas	_____
Residential areas or subdivisions	_____
Existing rights-of-way (Roads, pipelines, etc.)	_____
Historic/cultural sites	_____
Wildlife	_____
Distance to houses	_____
Visual impacts	_____
Cost of proposed transmission routes	_____
Reliable electric service	_____
Others (please specify)	_____

5. Are there any other features of the study area you feel are important?

6. What kinds of things do you feel most concerned about that should be addressed in the routing of this line?

7. Established procedures for selecting transmission line routes provides for alternate route analysis based upon: Project Economics, Environmental Concerns, and Landowner Concerns. What percentage weight do you believe this route selection should use?

Economics

Environmental

Landowner Concerns

8. Do you have a concern with a particular transmission line segment(s) shown on the displays?

9. Do you have any general remarks or questions?

10. Would you like a follow-up contact to discuss the project in more detail?

WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
DALLAS WATER UTILITY
69/138kV DOUBLE CIRCUIT TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Responses as of September 10, 2004

Note: Comments are coded such that R1, Respondent #1, always refers to the same individual's response.

- 1. In your opinion, has the need for the project been adequately explained to you?**
Yes 10 No 4

Comments:

- R4. Who will pay for all this in the long run? No one here has been able to tell me what the cost will be for customers. I believe better proposed routes could be ascertained.
R5. No, I believe routes west of the lake have not been properly rationalized.
R6. Yes, but wish it come off other side of lake.
R7. Maybe.
R10. Yes, but I don't know who will absorb the cost, and how will I a coop member benefit.
R13. Don't want on J.

- 2. Were the exhibits and explanations of the need for this project helpful to you?**
Yes 13 No 2

Comments:

- R1. Could have used more localized drawings.
R4. Somewhat.
R6. Yes, at this time.
R12. Double talk. They have a contract signed with Dallas already.
R13. Don't want on J.

- 3. Which of the following applies to your situation?**
- | | |
|---|---|
| Potential transmission route is near my home. | 8 |
| Potential transmission route is near my property. | 8 |
| Potential transmission route crosses my property. | 9 |
| Other | 3 |

Comments:

- R4. C and E is close to future home site of my son and myself. We have been planning this construction for a year. I am opposed to all proposed sites but especially C and E.
R7. I own a subdivision (Wood County Road 1541) that adjoins the water right-of-way.
R8. I don't have a home there yet but plan to retire there.
R9. Crosses my lease property.
R10. Also, F route will go across my future home site.
R12. Don't cut our trees or run cancer causing lines near me. I like nothing that goes thru J or close to J.
R13. Don't like anything that goes thru J.
R15. Wolf Creek Bay
R16. According to the maps, the line will be about a mile from our home. I do not want it any closer.

4. What areas do you believe should be considered of greatest concern in routing the transmission line? (If you have multiple concerns, please rank them 1st, 2nd, etc.)

<u>Description</u>	<u>Number of Attendees Ranking</u>		
	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Agricultural land	6		
Floodplains or wetlands		2	
Recreational or park areas	2		
Residential areas or subdivisions	5	3	3
Existing rights-of-way (Roads, pipelines, etc.)	2	1	3
Historic/cultural sites	2		
Wildlife	2		1
Distance to houses	8	3	
Visual impacts	2	2	3
Cost of proposed transmission routes	2		1
Reliable electric service	4	1	1
Others (please specify)			

Comments:

- R4. Agri - 80% (1); Res - 75% (2); Ex ROW - 45%; Distance - 60%; Visual - 70% (3)
 R6. This cross too much of my land.
 R10. Agri - 80% (1); Res - 70% (3); Ex ROW - 40%; Distance - 80% (2); Visual - 50%
 R13. No cutting of trees. (No particular ranking, all were checked.)
 R17. Other: Maximize reimbursement for use of land in magnetic field.

5. Are there any other features of the study area you feel are important?

Comments:

- R2. No.
 R4. Depreciation of land value! We are paying for Dallas and being impacted adversely. I am concerned about the costs of probable litigation cancer - this needs to be factored in! (Please see attached Waveguide.)
 R6. I feel your crossing very value property.
 R10. Depreciation of land values. Dallas should pay more of the bill and compensations.
 R11. None.
 R12. Every landowner's input is seriously considered.
 R13. Don't want on J.
 R16. I know nothing about the study - my concern is Dallas will take too much water from Lake Fork and even our property values.
 R17. I felt the line for Dallas Power Pump Station should have followed their own pipeline easement to Dallas. If was explained to me by WCE personnel - that only WCE could furnish this power for the DPPS sits several hundred yards within Wood County boundaries. No other utility can cross their lines. Additionally, was told East Texas is not as yet de-energized.

6. What kinds of things do you feel most concerned about that should be addressed in the routing of this line?

Comments:

- R2. Kept away from residential areas as fr as possible. County Road 1970 has existing traffic overflow already especially with construction vehicles for building in Lands End.
 R3. Health dangers to residents. Eye sore of poles and lines across property-some 300' from residential housing. Increase in price in electrical utility.

- R4. Proximity to houses and proposed houses. I am concerned about the potential damage to the lake/fishing and tourism.
- R5. The plan routes are in a resort area with large future development potential - Large.
- R6. G cross my ranch 1960 and 1967, and I also use that field for air field - plane. Coming down L and F way but not J, H, and G way.
- R8. Distance from housing.
- R9. The "M" runs in a flood plain and near homes.
- R12. I'm concerned with my little piece of paradise. Please keep the serpents out!
- R13. Don't want on J.
- R17. Should not cause additional power outages in excess for those we already have (which has caused damage to electrical motors, etc. - already recommending (WCE) phase protectors at every meter.
- R18. Reliability.

7. Established procedures for selecting transmission line routes provides for alternate route analysis based upon: Project Economics, Environmental Concerns, and Landowner Concerns. What percentage weight do you believe this route selection should use?

Comments:

	<u>Economics</u>	<u>Environmental</u>	<u>Landowner Concerns</u>
R1.	30	10	60
R2.	10	10	80
R3.	10	30	60
R4.			
R5.	5	5	90
R6.			100
R7.		80	20
R8.		10	90
R9.	10	25	65
R10.	10	10	80
R11.	50	20	40
R12.			
R13.			
R14.	100	100	100
R15.			
R16.		100	100
R17.	3	1	2
R18.	25	25	50

Comments:

8. Do you have a concern with a particular transmission line segment(s) shown on the displays?

Comments:

- R2. Would rather that Route C not be used.
- R3. Yes. Location.
- R4. Yes, E and C impact me negatively the most. I am opposed to all proposed sites. I don't want any of the routes but I could live with F more easily than E and C because there is where I have a proposed home site for myself, son, and daughter.
- R5. Yes, Segment G.

- R6. Yes, G, J, and H will hurt me most crossing my field right in front of expense house. I will fight tooth and nail not to go G, J, and H. This is also my flight field.
- R7. Yes.
- R8. Pump station to Cathey Substation.
- R9. Yes, the "M" line follows Little Caney Creek which floods on a regular basis. It also passes close by several homes.
- R10. Yes, E and C, all the proposed lines cross my property but of the 3 lines that cross F is more acceptable. **I will not accept E. NO TO E.**
- R11. None.
- R12. Yes, any pertaining to J.
- R13. Don't want on J.
- R16. No, if it remains at least a mile from our home.
- R17. If they must come, the best should be chosen paying maximum compensation to landowner wherever it is located. We are furnishing our land and country atmosphere for lines string all across our property (which does not look as good) and the magnetic field it will create in those areas, radio reception, TV, etc, danger during wet weather.

9. Do you have any general remarks or questions?

Comments:

- R1. Buyer beware.
- R2. Appreciated the information at hand and the assistance received during Q and A.
- R3. If this has to be run on pipeline right-of-way, I would like and suggest that it be on southern most location away from residential housing. Concerning my property - is underground cable a possibility?
- R4. I am very opposed to any proposed lines because of the proven link between cancer and high voltage lines. I have researched this connection for 5 years and there is a proven relationship as evidenced by several years of study - (See epidemiological studies compiled by the National Library of Medicine.)
- R6. No matter this is going to cost me on land values, but G the most.
- R7. I would have no objections to this project if the transmission line was south of the Dallas Water Line right-of-way. In other words being totally south of the Dallas right-of-way with no overhang on the right-of-way.
- R8. My hope is that the line is run in the center of Wood County Electric's right-of-way on the south side of Dallas Water Line right-of-way.
- R10. I feel that Dallas is dictating our coop what to do. I feel like Dallas is getting everything and the coop members are the big losers.
- R12. I do not want any line on or near J. They emit radiation causing cancer. I do not want virgin timber cut. We have been so careful to preserve every tree.
- R13. Don't want on J. Don't want any trees cut - at all.
- R17. Progress moves on if we must participate - compensation would ease the pain of living with more power lines to accommodate Dallas County.

10. Would you like a follow-up contact to discuss the project in more detail?

Yes 6 No 3

Comments:

- R1. Have scheduled with Paul Bozeman.
- R2. Yes. Charles Strebeck, 228 CR 1541, Alba, TX 75410, 903/765-3354.

- R4. Yes, I would like a follow-up contact because I have not yet been able to find out what the fiscal cost will be for customers. Also, I want to know if an environmental impact study has been made. I don't believe this is economically feasible/practical. Dr. Boyd McCreight, POB 177, Yantis, TX 75497 (See attachment.)
- R6. Yes, once you know which way so I know how much to fight it. Lance Nichols, 1085 County Road 1960, Yantis, TX 75497, 903/383-7500.
- R7. Konrad Gwaltney, 158 CR 1583, Alba, TX 75410, 903/765-3413.
- R8. I would like to receive additional info once the position of the line in respect to the Wood County Electric right-of-way has been decided. I own a lot on CR 1541. Michael McBride, 1038 Louisiana Downs Circle, Terrell, TX 75160.
- R10. Yes.
- R12. What good does it do? Royce Reed, CR 1907, Route J; 903/482-5470.
- R13. It wouldn't do any good - its all cut and dried.
- R17. Yes. Linda Hurly, 207 CR 1739, Yantis, TX 75497; 903/383-3000.

Appendix B

Agency Correspondence



An employee-owned company

June 23, 2004

PBS&J Job No. 441383

Dear :

Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WCEC) is proposing to construct a new electric transmission line in Wood County, Texas. The proposed line will connect WCEC's existing Cathey and Yantis substations via the Dallas Pump Station, which will be constructed on the south shore of Lake Fork Reservoir. The portion of the line between the Cathey Substation and the Dallas Pump Station will be 69 kilovolt (kV), approximately 2 miles in length, and constructed primarily on single poles within an 80-foot (ft) wide existing WCEC right-of-way (ROW). The portion of the line between the Dallas Pump Station and the Yantis Substation or tie-point into the existing North Emory Tap-Yantis 138-kV line will be a double-circuit 69/138-kV line constructed on single poles within a 100-ft wide ROW. This portion of the new transmission line will be approximately 6 miles long, including approximately 1 mile across Lake Fork Reservoir. The study area, existing substations and preliminary alternative route network for this project are shown in the attached figure.

PBS&J is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Alternative Route Analysis for the project to support WCEC's application for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) from the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC). PBS&J is currently in the process of gathering data on the existing environment of the study area, and is therefore requesting that your office provide information concerning the natural, human, or cultural resources within the study area. Your comments will be an important consideration in the evaluation of alternative routes and in the assessment of impacts. In addition, should you identify any area requiring permits, easements, or other approvals by your office, or if you are aware of any major development or construction projects in the study area, we would also appreciate receiving this information.

Your office was contacted regarding this project on August 6, 1993, June 25, 1999, September 25, 2000, and October 5, 2000. You may have responded at that time. The project was put on hold in late 1993 and again in 2001, but has now been re-initiated. It was the intent of WCEC during 1993 to explore routing options for the 69-kV line around the western edge of Lake Fork Reservoir. Due primarily to significantly less line length, it is now WCEC's intent to cross the lake with an overhead 69/138-kV line. We would appreciate your comments/updated comments concerning WCEC's proposed project.

L:\Projects\Hc1\WCEC\441383 (Yantis-Cathey)\Agency Contact\Yantis agency ltr.doc

Thank you for your assistance with this electric transmission line project. Please contact Mr. Derek Green or me at (512) 327-6840 if you have questions or require additional information. Your earliest reply will be appreciated.

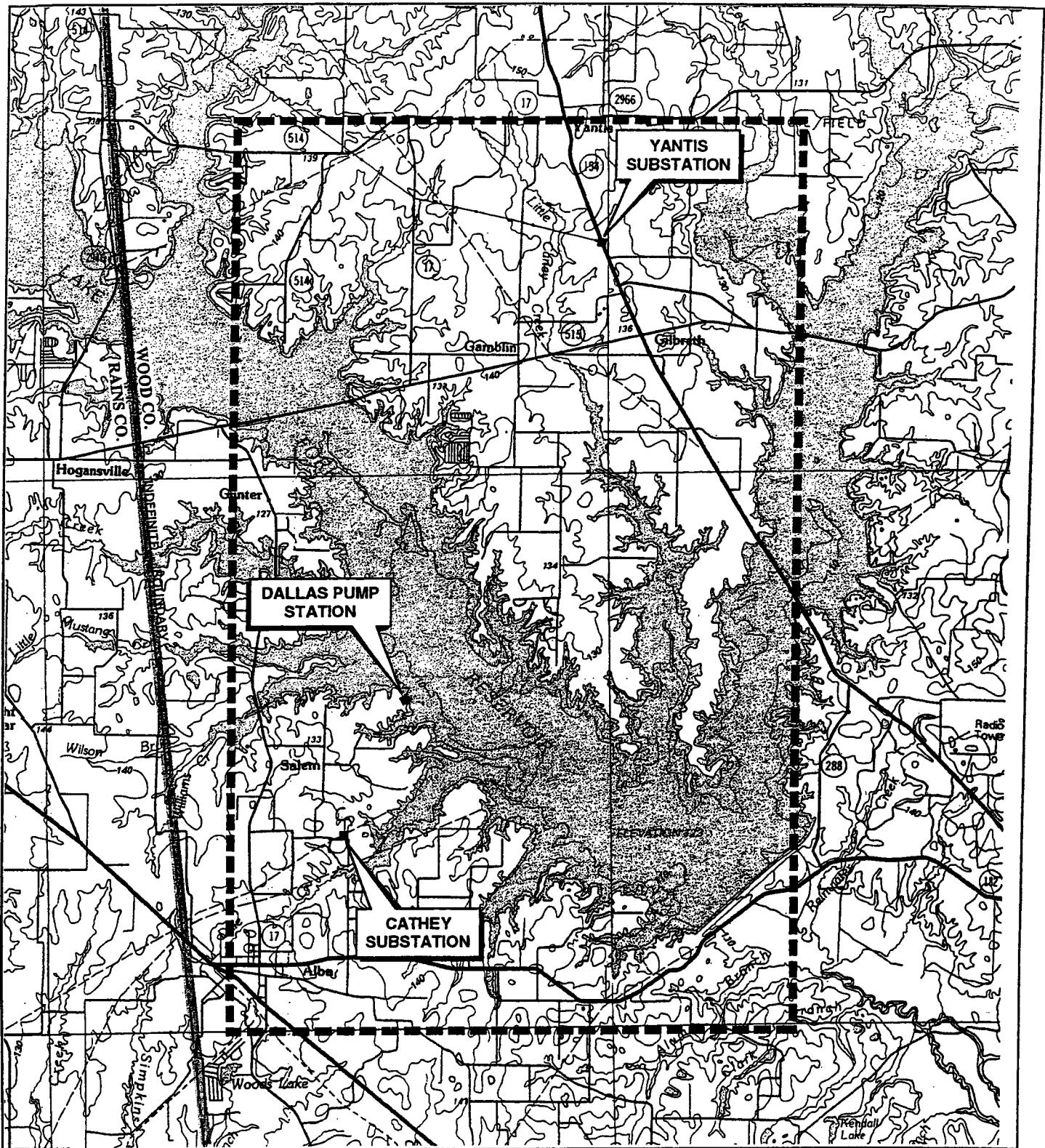
Sincerely,

Rob R. Reid
Project Manager
Vice President

RRR:dg

attachment

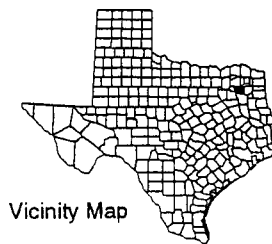
cc: Robert Norman, WCEC
Derek Green, PBS&J



--- Study Area Boundary



0 1 miles



Vicinity Map



- Engineering
- Environmental Consulting
- Surveying

Figure 1-1

STUDY AREA
YANTIS-CATHEY 69/138-KV
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Base Map: USGS 1:100,000 Quadrangle; Mineola, Texas

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**STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES/OFFICIALS CONTACTED
YANTIS-DALLAS PUMP STATION 69/138-KV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
JUNE 2004**

Ms. Kathy Boydston
Habitat Assessment Program
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Mr. William Mullican
Deputy Executive Administrator for Planning
Texas Water Development Board
1700 N. Congress Avenue.
Austin, TX 78701

Ms. Linda Howard
Manager, Planning & Programming
Texas Department of Transportation
Department of Aviation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Ms. Dianna Noble
Director, Environmental Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Mr. F. Lawrence Oaks
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711

Ms. Margaret Hoffman
Executive Director
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Mr. Larry D. Butler, Ph.D.
State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 S. Main
Temple, TX 76501-7682

Mr. Richard Greene
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6, Suite 1200
1445 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Mr. Ralph Christian III
Program Manager
Texas Airport Development Office
Federal Aviation Administration
2601 Mechem Boulevard
Fort Worth, TX 73137-4298

Ms. Kyle M. Mills, P.E.
Regional Environmental Officer
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region VI
Federal Center, 800 N. Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209-3698

Mr. Robert Short
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
711 Stadium Drive East, Suite 252
Arlington, TX 76011

Mr. Wayne Lea
Chief, Regulatory Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CESWF-OD-R
P.O. Box 17300
Fort Worth, TX 76102-0300

Ms. Chris Turk
Planning and Environmental Quality
Intermountain Support Office
National Park Service
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

LOCAL AGENCIES/OFFICIALS CONTACTED
YANTIS-DALLAS PUMP STATION 69/138-KV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
JUNE 2004

Mr. L. D. Williamson
Executive Director
Ark-Tex Council of Governments
P.O. Box 5307
Texarkana, TX 75505-5307

Mr. Glynn J. Knight
Executive Director
East Texas Council of Governments
3800 Stone Road
Kilgore, TX 75662-6297

The Honorable Roy Shipp
Wood County Commissioner
Precinct 1
County Barn
P. O. Box 938
Quitman, TX 75783

The Honorable Jerry Gaskill
Wood County Commissioner
Precinct 2
County Barn
P. O. Box 938
Mineola, TX 75783

The Honorable Roger Pace
Wood County Commissioner
Precinct 3
County Barn
P. O. Box 938
Quitman, TX 75783

The Honorable Jerry Galloway
Wood County Commissioner
Precinct 4
County Barn
P. O. Box 938
Quitman, TX 75783

The Honorable Royce McCoy
Wood County Judge
P. O. Box 938
Quitman, TX 75783



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

June 29, 2004

Planning, Environmental, and Regulatory Division
Regulatory Branch

SUBJECT: Project Number 200400364, NEW ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE, CATHEY

Mr. Rob R. Reid
Project Manager
Vice President
PBS&J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78730

Dear Mr. Reid:

Thank you for your letter dated June 23, 2004. Your request has been assigned Project Number 200400364.

Mr. Ken Laterza has been assigned as the regulatory project manager for your request and will be evaluating it as expeditiously as possible. However, because of our permit workload it will take a while for us to respond.

You may be contacted for additional information about your request. For your information, please reference the Fort Worth District Regulatory Branch homepage at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/regulatory/> and particularly guidance on submittals at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/regulatory/local/submittal.pdf> and mitigation at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/regulatory/local/mitigate.pdf> that may help you supplement your current request or prepare future requests.

If you have any questions about the evaluation of your submittal or would like to request a copy of one of the documents referenced above, please contact Mr. Ken Laterza at the address above or telephone (817)886-1735 and refer to your assigned project number. Please note that it is unlawful to start work without a Department of the Army permit if one is required.

Wayne A. Lea
Chief, Regulatory Branch



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
Intermountain Support Office
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287



JUN 30 2004

Rob R. Reid
PBS&J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78730

Subject: PBS&J Job No. 441383

Dear Mr. Reid:

The National Park Service has reviewed the subject project and has determined there are no National Park Service Units in the vicinity. In view of this, the National Park Service has no comments on this project.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact me at (303)969-2851.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Eckhardt
NEPA/Section 106 Specialist

TAKE PRIDE®
IN AMERICA



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
WinSystems Center Building
711 Stadium Drive, Suite 252
Arlington, Texas 76011

2-12-01-I-005

July 1, 2004

Mr. Rob R. Reid
PBS&J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78730

Dear Mr. Reid:

This responds to your June 23, 2004, letter requesting comments on Wood County Electric Cooperative's (WCEC) proposed construction of the Dallas Pump Station and associated 69-kilovolt and 138-kilovolt electric transmission lines in Wood County, Texas. This office has previously provided comments on the general study area in two letters dated July 22, 1999 and October 12, 2000. The project was put on hold in 2001 but has now been re-initiated. We are providing these updated comments to assist you in assessing and avoiding impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species, wetlands, and other fish and wildlife resources.

Our records indicate that the following threatened (T), endangered (E), and candidate (C) species have been documented, or are known to occur in Wood County:

bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – T
interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) – E
Louisiana pine snake (*Pituophus ruthveni*) – C

There is no designated critical habitat for listed species in Wood County. Candidate species are not afforded federal protection under the Endangered Species Act; however, we recommend that potential impacts to these species be considered during project planning. For information on the general biology of these species, visit our website at <http://arlingtontexas.fws.gov>.

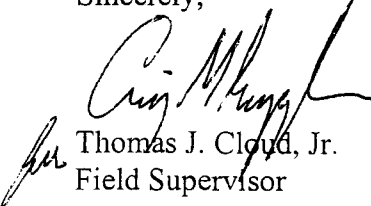
The bald eagle is a winter and spring resident in Wood County and has been documented nesting at Lake Fork Reservoir in recent years. The interior least tern has been observed at Lake Fork Reservoir and nesting has been documented at nearby Cooper Reservoir and Lake Tawakoni Reservoir. Therefore, we have concerns about the potential impacts to these species as a result of the proposed project. We recommend an evaluation be conducted and a determination of affect be made regarding these species.

Your letter does not include specific electric transmission line routes but does indicate that it is WCEC's intent to cross Lake Fork Reservoir with an overhead 69/138 kilovolt line. We reiterate

our previous comments with regard to potential impacts to federally listed species, wetlands, and other fish and wildlife resources imposed by powerline crossings of large waterbodies. Enclosed are copies of the two letters offered by this office in response to previous invitations to comment on the general study area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide updated comments on the proposed project. If you have any questions, please contact Omar Bocanegra of my staff at (817) 277-1100.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Cloud, Jr.
Field Supervisor

enclosures



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
WinSystems Center Building
711 Stadium Drive, Suite 252
Arlington, Texas 76011

2-12-01-I-005

October 12, 2000

Mr. Rob Reid
PBS&J
206 Wild Basin Road, Suite 300
Austin, Texas 78746

Dear Mr. Reid:

This responds to your September 25, 2000, letter requesting comments on Wood County Electric Cooperative's (WCEC) proposed construction of a new 69-kilovolt electric transmission line in Hopkins, Rains, and Wood Counties, Texas. This office provided comments on the general study area in a letter dated July 22, 1999 (Service Consultation # 2-12-99-I-364); however, alternative routes have been selected and the project has been modified to include the proposed Dallas Pump Station which would be connected by a 138-kilovolt line.

Threatened and Endangered Species

As noted in our original letter, Lake Fork Reservoir is a known nesting and wintering area for the threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Therefore, we have concerns about potential impacts to the eagle as a result of the proposed project. We recommend that an assessment be made to evaluate each of the route alternatives potential to impact bald eagle roosting and/or nesting sites, as well as document the occurrence of bald eagle habitat in close proximity to the routes. If a preferred route is selected that would impact eagle roost or nest sites, or is adjacent to eagle habitat, this office should be contacted to discuss the need for formal consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If it is determined that the preferred route would not impact these areas, we believe impacts to the eagle would be avoided.

In a letter received by this office dated October 5, 2000, it is noted that WCEC is considering building an overhead transmission line to cross the lake as an alternative to the underwater cables proposed in your original letter. We have concerns about the potential hazard created by overhead wires spanning a reservoir used by eagles for feeding. Overhead wires spanning Lake Fork Reservoir may affect the bald eagle by increasing the probability of eagle collisions with powerlines. Therefore, we strongly recommend the use of underwater cables to avoid a potential

affect to the bald eagle. Should WCEC decide to use overhead lines, please contact this office for further evaluation. It should also be noted that the endangered interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) has recently been reported at Lake Fork Reservoir, however, no nesting sites have been observed.

Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat

Due to the large size of the general study area, a review of the National Wetlands Inventory maps for specific types and locations of wetlands within this area was not practical. However, it is noted that several creeks and streams associated with Lake Fork Reservoir and numerous forested, emergent, and open-water wetland areas occur within the general study area.

The Service is concerned with the construction of new transmission line right-of-ways that are often 100 feet in width and extend for miles creating hundreds of acres of linear corridors. These right-of-ways frequently fragment valuable bottomland and forested upland habitat which may have adverse affects on migratory birds and resident wildlife species. For this reason, it is important to consider all possible route alignments in the planning phase of new power line right-of-ways. In addition to considering cost, feasibility, regulations, and aesthetics in the planning of right-of-ways, other factors such as land use, topography, habitat type, and method of right-of-way clearing should be explored if all impacts to fish and wildlife resources are to be avoided and/or minimized to the maximum extent possible. Management techniques have been developed for the construction of power lines that mitigate the potential environmental impacts commonly associated with these projects. These techniques involve the alignment of power lines with regard to the terrain, vegetation, and wildlife species present within the general study area and are designed to lessen the fragmenting of forested areas by maintaining natural migratory corridors across right-of-ways. The Environmental Assessment for the proposed project should consider this and other pertinent information in the analysis of potential impacts of each of the route alternatives.

As noted in your letters, it is proposed to cross the main body of Lake Fork Reservoir with underwater cables or overhead transmission lines. Additionally, several of the route alternatives also cross small areas of the lake for which the method of construction is not disclosed. These areas include the crossing at the confluence of the reservoir with Mustang and Lake Fork Creeks. These areas are likely stop-over and feeding areas for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and passerines. Transmission lines spanning these and other waterbodies in the study area pose a hazard for birds and could result in unauthorized "take" under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Therefore, we recommend underwater cables be used at the lake crossing and a route analysis be conducted to evaluate the potential for avian collisions along each route and a preferred route be selected that would be constructed at a minimum distance of one (1) mile from the nearest waterbody. Additional information on mitigating avian collisions can be found in the publication "Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1994", which can be acquired from the Edison Electric Institute, 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-2696.

In addition to route selection, we believe the construction of the transmission line right-of-way should employ current techniques developed to minimize habitat fragmentation often associated with power line construction. These techniques include, but are not limited to, removing only tall growing woody vegetation (> 12 feet), maintaining a diverse shrub community within the right-of-way, and topping and girdling "danger" trees to create snags. This office would be glad to provide technical assistance on route selection and/or mitigation planning if requested.

Because of the significant amount of wetlands potentially impacted, you should contact the Fort Worth District Corps of Engineers, Permits Section, CESWF-EV-R, P.O. Box 17300, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300, to determine if a permit is required by that Agency prior to commencement of construction activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If you have any questions, please contact Omar Bocanegra of my staff at (817) 277-1100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tom Cloud".

Thomas J. Cloud, Jr.
Field Supervisor



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Stadium Centre Building
711 Stadium Drive, Suite 252
Arlington, Texas 76011

2-12-99-I-364

July 22, 1999

Mr. Rob R. Reid
PBS & J
206 Wild Basin Road, Suite 300
Austin, Texas 78746-3343

Dear Mr. Reid:

This responds to your June 25, 1999, letter requesting comments on Wood County Electric Cooperative's proposed construction of a 69-kilovolt electric transmission line to connect the existing Cathey Substation with the existing Yantis Substation in Hopkins, Rains, and Wood Counties, Texas. Only a general study area has been submitted for our review at this time, for which our comments will be used in the evaluation and selection of alternative routes and for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The only federally listed threatened or endangered species known to occur in Hopkins, Rains, and Wood Counties is the threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Bald eagles are considered to be winter and possible spring residents of northeast Texas, with nesting eagles having been documented at Lake Fork Reservoir in recent years. Bald eagles nest, roost, and perch in tall trees near water and feed primarily on fish and waterfowl. Winter habitat includes reservoirs, lakes, playas, rivers, and marshes. Most wintering bald eagles migrate north February through March; however, nesting eagles either stay throughout the entire year or migrate late in the summer.

For information regarding State listed species and Species of Concern, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Biological and Conservation Data System, 3000 South IH-35, Suite 100, Austin, Texas 78704, or call them at (512) 912-7011.

Route Alternatives

Because only a general project area for the proposed overhead electrical transmission line has been submitted for our review, specific comments on proposed route alternatives cannot be addressed

at this time. However, we would like to offer a few suggestions for selecting a preferred route alternative which avoids and minimizes the potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources and the environment. We prefer selection of a route alignment that:

- 1) utilizes as much existing utility or road right-of-way as possible.
- 2) avoids impacts to wetland areas.
- 3) has the least number of creek, stream, river, or other waterbody crossings.
- 4) avoids impacts to riparian and upland forested areas.
- 5) avoids areas which may contain suitable habitat or have documented occurrences of federally listed species.

We would be glad to provide technical assistance at any stage of the planning and development process for the specific electrical transmission line route alternatives.

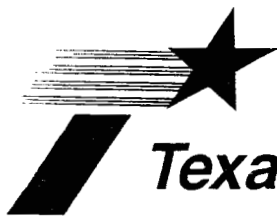
The Environmental Assessment for the proposed project should include a qualification and quantification of all impacts to fish and wildlife resources (especially to wetland, riparian, and upland forested areas). A mitigation plan should be developed early in the project planning process, and subsequently reviewed by the resource agencies, which demonstrates how impacts to fish and wildlife resources would be avoided, how impacts would be minimized, and plans developed to rectify/compensate for project related impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If you have any questions, please contact Clayton Napier or Omar Bocanegra at (817) 277-1100.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Cloud, Jr.
Field Supervisor



Texas Department of Transportation

AVIATION DIVISION

125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • 512/ 416-4500 • FAX 512/416-4510

July 2, 2004

Mr. Robert R. Reid / PBS&J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway
Suite 200
Austin, TX 78730

Dear Mr. Reid;

I received your letter dated June 23, 2004 concerning the proposed new electrical transmission line in Wood County, PBS&J job # 441383.

Title 14, US Code, Part 77 of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) requires notice to the FAA if the facility to be constructed fits either of the below listed conditions:

77.13 A 2 (i) Any vertical obstruction, temporary or permanent, that penetrates a 100 to 1 slope for a horizontal distance of 20,000 feet from the nearest point of the nearest runway, starting at the surface at the edge of that runway, for each airport with at least one runway more than 3,200 feet in actual length, excluding heliports.

77.13(1) Any construction or alteration of more than 200' above the surface of the ground at its location.

There is one public use airport within the study area which may meet the criteria of 77.13 A (2)(i) – Wood County Airport (KJDD, formerly 3T1), 32-44-31.930 N / 095-29-47.310 W Airport Reference Point. If either of the two referenced FAR criteria is met, the FAA must be notified in four copies using FAA Form 7460-1, "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration". Copies are enclosed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (512) 416-4507 or <wgunn@dot.state.tx.us>

Sincerely,


William B. Gunn



TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

19 July 2004

Rob Reid
Project Manager, Vice President
PBS&J
206 Wild Basin Road, Suite 300
Austin, Texas 78746-3343

Re: Project review under the Antiquities Code of Texas, Wood County Electric Cooperative's Yantis-Cathey 69/138-kV Transmission Line Project, Wood County, Texas (PUC)

Dear Mr. Reid:

Thank you for your correspondence describing the above referenced project. This letter presents the comments of the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency responsible for administering the Antiquities Code of Texas.

The review staff, led by Debra L. Beene, has completed its review. We will most likely recommend a cultural resources survey for the above-mentioned project near Lake Fork Reservoir; however, the transmission line route has not been identified. We will be pleased to review the project again once the placement of the line has been established or have PBS&J archeologists submit their in-house assessment and recommendations for concurrence or review.

We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your assistance in this state review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. **If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Debra L. Beene at 512/463-5865.**

Sincerely,

for

F. Lawrence Oaks, State Historic Preservation Officer

FLO/dlb

Kathleen Hartnett White, *Chairman*
R. B. "Ralph" Marquez, *Commissioner*
Larry R. Soward, *Commissioner*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

August 12, 2004

Mr. Rob R. Reid
PBS & J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78730

Re: TCEQ GEARS #6157, PBS&J Job No. 441383

Dear Mr. Reid:

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has reviewed the above-referenced project and offers the following comments:

A review of the project for General Conformity impact in accordance with 40 CFR Part 93 and Title 30, Texas Administrative Code § 101.30 indicates that the proposed action is located in Wood County, which is currently unclassified or in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for all six criteria air pollutants. Therefore, general conformity does not apply.

Although any demolition, construction, rehabilitation or repair project will produce dust and particulate emissions, these actions should pose no significant impact upon air quality standards. Any minimal dust and particulate emissions should be easily controlled by the construction contractors using standard dust mitigation techniques.

We recommend the environmental assessment address actions that will be taken to prevent surface and groundwater contamination during and after construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Daniel Burke, Policy and Regulations Division, at (512) 239-1543.

Sincerely,


Jim Muse, Director
Policy and Regulations Division



September 28, 2004

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ROBERT L. COOK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rob R. Reid
PBS&J
6504 Bridge Point Parkway, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78730

RE: Proposed Wood County Electric Cooperative Transmission Line, Wood County

Dear Mr. Reid:

Thank you for coordinating with this agency in your planning activities regarding the proposed construction of an electric transmission line near Lake Fork Reservoir. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) staff has reviewed the project and offer the following comments.

The proposed project entails the construction of a transmission line on single poles within. The proposed transmission line would connect the existing Cathey and Yantis substations via the Dallas Pump Station. From the Cathey substation to the Dallas Pump Station the proposed project would consist of a 2-mile long, 69-kV transmission line within the existing 80-foot wide Wood County Electric Cooperative right-of-way. The section between the Dallas Pump Station and the Yantis substation would consist of a double-circuit 69/138 kV transmission line constructed on single poles within a 100-foot wide right-of-way. This section would be approximately 6 miles long including a 1-mile long section across the Lake Fork Reservoir.

For your information, I have attached a list of rare, threatened, and endangered species that may occur in Wood County. Although this list should prove useful as background material, it is not intended as a substitute for comprehensive on-site evaluations by competent biologists. Determination of the actual presence of a species in a given area depends on a number of variables such as daily and seasonal activity cycles, environmental activity cues, preferred habitat, transiency, and population density (both wildlife and human). Absence of a species can be demonstrated only with great difficulty and then only with repeated negative observations, taking into account all of the variable factors contributing to the lack



Take a kid
hunting or fishing

• • •

Visit a state park
or historic site

Rob R. Reid
Page 2
September 28, 2004

of observability. Information regarding known locations and potential adverse impacts to sensitive species and natural communities near the proposed project area can be obtained by contacting Celeste Brancel at 3000 IH-35, Suite 100, Austin, TX 78704 or at (512) 912-7021.

Migratory birds receive protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which implicitly prohibits intentional and unintentional take of migratory birds, including their nests and eggs, except where permitted. If migratory bird species are found nesting on or adjacent to the project area, they must be dealt with in a manner consistent with the MBTA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Migratory Bird Office should be contacted at (505) 912-7021 for more information on potential impacts to migratory birds.

TPWD recommends routing new transmission lines along existing utility and road right-of-ways and easements whenever feasible. By utilizing existing road and utility corridors, adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources are mitigated by avoiding and/or minimizing the impacts to undisturbed habitats. Birds typically establish flight corridors along and within river and creek drainages. In addition, shorebirds and waterfowl would utilize the habitats in and around the Lake Fork Reservoir. TPWD recommends installing line markers on the transmission line where it crosses the Lake Fork Reservoir and at other water crossings to reduce the potential of collisions by birds flying along or near the drainage corridors and open water.

In order to enhance the stabilization of exposed soils resulting from construction activities, newly disturbed areas should be seeded or sodded with native plant species. Measures should be taken to eliminate the use of non-authorized vehicles on any access roads. These measures could include the restoration of the access road and/or the placement of physical barriers where the access road intersects public roads. Natural buffers contiguous to any wetlands and aquatic systems should remain undisturbed, to preserve wildlife cover, food sources, and travel corridors. Additional information can be found in the USDI/EPA guidelines published in the *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines and Impact of Transmission Lines on Birds in Flight*.

I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this project. Please contact me at (512) 389-4579 if we may be of further assistance. I apologize for the lateness of our reply.