

Marshland - Briggs Road (Q1-D) 161 kV Rebuild Project

Frequently Asked Questions



Can you tell me about the Project?

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), a not-for-profit generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in La Crosse, Wisconsin is proposing to rebuild approximately 13 miles of the north segment of the Q-1D 161 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. This 13-mile Project, referred to as the Q-1D Project, extends from 1.5 miles south of the Marshland Substation located in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin to the Briggs Road Substation located in La Crosse County, Wisconsin.

Construction of the Project would occur entirely within the existing right-of-way (ROW), and would require use of existing and temporary access routes and two temporary staging areas. Three miles of the project would cross the ecologically sensitive Black River floodplain, which includes 0.9 miles of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Refuge) and approximately 0.3 miles of the Van Loon Wildlife Area.

DPC intends to seek financial assistance for the Project from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which makes the Project a federal action subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and all applicable federal environmental law and regulations. RUS has determined that the Project would require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts to the natural and human environments. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies.

Why is the Project needed?

The Q-1D line was built in 1950 and needs to be rebuilt due to its age and condition. Over the last several years a number of outages have been caused by transmission structures failing also impacting fiber optic service. Construction of the Project would increase the longevity of the transmission line. The Project would allow for the continuation of reliable service to the customers of DPC.

TERMS TO KNOW

Conductor: A wire made up of multiple aluminum strands around a steel core that together carry electricity. A bundled conductor is two or more conductors connected to increase the capacity of a transmission line.

Circuit: A continuous electrical path along which electricity can flow from a source, like a power plant, to where it is used, like a home.

Insulator: An object made of a material like glass, porcelain or composite polymer that is a poor conductor of electricity. Insulators are used to attach conductors to the transmission structure and to prevent a short circuit from happening between the conductor and the structure.

Right of way: Land area legally acquired for a specific purpose, such as the placement of transmission facilities and for maintenance access.

Structure: Towers or poles that support a transmission line.

Substation: A facility that monitors and controls electrical power flows, uses high voltage circuit breaker to protect power lines and transforms voltage levels as needed to further distribute energy into the electrical grid.

Is the DPC Q-1D Project part of the CapX2020 Hampton – Rochester – La Crosse Transmission Improvement Project?

The 161 kV line between the Marshland to Briggs Road substations is **not** part of the CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse Transmission Line (CapX2020) Project.

The Q-1D Project was analyzed as an alternative under the federal draft EIS for the CapX2020 project released in December 2011, but was eliminated from further detailed consideration under the federal final EIS released in July 2012 because of potential impacts to high quality resources. RUS stated in the final EIS for the CapX2020 project that DPC could apply for financial assistance for the Q-1D Project at a later time. If you would like more information on the CapX2020 project EIS documents, they can be found on RUS website at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWP-CapX2020-Hampton-Rochester-LaCrosse.html>

Why doesn't DPC remove the line from the Black River floodplain?

Three alternate routes to constructing within the Black River floodplain were considered, including a Highway 35 Route, a Seven Bridges Route and a Galesville Route. The alternatives were evaluated by taking into consideration technical feasibility; environmental issues; cost-effectiveness; reliability; and collocation with existing utility corridors, highway and railroad corridors, and recreational trails. The three alternate routes impacted more residences, increased the length of the line, were substantially more costly, and had greater environmental impact by requiring conversion of other land uses to a utility corridor than rebuilding the Q-1D along its existing alignment. A detailed analysis of these route alternatives is discussed in Section 3.1 and Appendix E of the EA.

Is the DPC Q-1D Project part of the American Transmission Company (ATC)/Xcel Energy Badger Coulee Project?

ATC and Xcel Energy filed with the Public Service Commission to build a 160- to 180-mile, 345 kV transmission line from north of La Crosse to northern Dane County.

The DPC Q-1D Project is **not** part of the ATC/Xcel Energy Badger Coulee Project. . More information on the Badger Coulee Project is available at: <http://www.atc-projects.com/projects/badger-coulee/>

When would the Q-1D Project be constructed?

The Q-1D line would be rebuilt as soon as possible to avoid interruptions in service and costly maintenance issues. However, the Q-1 D line needs to remain in service during construction of the CapX2020 project. CapX2020 is expected to be completed in May or June of 2015, so DPC plans to construct the Q-1D line between August and December 2015. This timeframe also avoids impacts to certain protected species, wetlands, and waterways.

Would the new transmission structures look different from the existing structures?

The existing wooden H-frame structures (average height of 55 feet and span of about 700 feet between

structures) would be replaced by new steel transmission structures. DPC would use Y-frame steel structures for the three-mile section that crosses the Black River floodplain to:

- Limit new transmission line height to average of 65 feet to remain at or below the average tree height as requested by Refuge and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- Decrease the width of the ROW to 65 feet to reduce impacts related to maintaining a wider cleared ROW and allow for part of the existing ROW to revert to native vegetation.
- Reduce the number of structures needed in the Black River floodplain from 22 H-frame structures (44 poles) to 21 single Y-frame structures.

Monopole steel structures would be used for the remainder of the route where the need for more costly Y-frame structures, used to address environmental concerns in the Black River floodplain, is reduced.

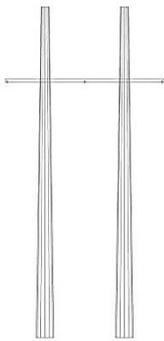
What measures will DPC use to minimize environmental impacts to the Black River floodplain?

For the portion of the Project that would cross the ecologically sensitive Black River floodplain, DPC would use specialized heavy lift helicopter construction methods to minimize impacts in this area.

How can I get involved?

The public will have thirty (30) days to submit comments following the publication of the notice of availability of the EA in the newspaper. Comments should be submitted to Stephanie Strength, Environmental Protection Specialist at Stephanie.strength@wdc.usda.gov or at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 1571, Room 2242, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The typical design characteristics associated with the transmission structures are shown below.

<p><u>Y-Frame Steel Structures</u> Average 65 Feet Tall Average 730 Foot Span Between Structures</p>		<p>Used in Black River Floodplain 28 Y-frame structures (22 within the floodplain and 3 on each side of the floodplain)</p>
<p><u>H-Frame Deadend Steel Structures</u> 65 to 70 Feet Tall</p>		<p>Used Where Construction Starts and Stops 4 deadend structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At each end of the three-mile Black River floodplain crossing • At the east and west ends of the Project
<p><u>Steel Monopole Structures</u> Average 90 Feet Tall Average 780 Foot Span Between Structures</p>		<p>Used In Upland Areas 69 steel monopole structures</p>