CONSTRUCTION NOTICE

FOR THE

F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project
PUCO Case No. 19-1277-EL-BNR

Submitted to:

The Ohio Power Siting Board

Pursuant to O.A.C. 4906-06

Submitted by:

Duke Energy Ohio, Inc.

June 2019

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE

This Construction Notice has been prepared by Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., (hereafter "Duke Energy Ohio") in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) Section **4906-6-05** for the review of Accelerated Certificate Applications. The following sections correspond to the administrative code sections for the requirements of a Construction Notice.

4906-06-05: ACCELERATED APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

4906-6-05(B): General Information

4906-6-05(B)(1): Name, Reference Number, Brief Description, and Construction Notice Requirement

Name of Project:

Duke Energy Ohio F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project (Project)

2018 LTFR Reference: The Project was included in the, Case No. 18-484-EL-FOR, pp. 59 and 60. The PJM upgrade identification number for the Project is S1289.

Brief Description of the Project:

Duke Energy Ohio is planning to re-arrange the feed into Wards Corner Substation. Wards Corner Substation is currently fed from the 138-kilovolt (kV) transmission line circuit F9482. Circuit F9482 in final conditions will bypass Wards Corner Substation and 138-kV transmission line circuit F3881 will be routed into Wards Corner Substation as the new feed. To get this arrangement, there will need to be removal of three (3) existing structures and installation of eight (8) steel pole structures. The Project is located in Miami Township, Clermont County, Ohio, at Wards Corner Substation on Duke Energy Ohio property.

Construction Notice Requirement:

This Project qualifies as a Construction Notice filing because it meets the requirements outlined in O.A.C. 4906-6-05, Appendix A, item (1)(a). Item (1)(a) allows the filing of a Construction Notice for "*New construction, extension, or relocation of single or multiple circuit electric power transmission line(s) or upgrading existing transmission or distribution line(s) for operation at a higher transmission voltage, as follows: (a) Line(s) not greater than 0.2 miles in length.*"

4906-6-05(B)(2): Need for the Project

The purpose and need for the F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project is to reduce the potential for excess loading on the F9482 circuit and to eliminate the need to re-conductor the F9482 line from Feldman to Wards Corner. The existing F9482 line provides 138 kV electric transmission service to residential and commercial/industrial facilities. Using the PJM RTEP planning model, circuits might not be able to operate reliably if the F9482 line were to be in an overloaded condition, which could result in customer load being

disrupted. Based on this modeling, circuit F3881 would be able to support the load at Wards Corner if it were re-fed off this circuit and the existing circuit F9482 would not need to be reconductored.

4906-6-05(B)(3): Location of the Project Relative to Existing or Proposed Lines

The location of the Project is depicted in Attachment A – Project Details. Figure 1 shows the general Project vicinity depicted on a USGS quadrangle topographic map. Figure 2 depicts the planned transmission line location, compared to existing transmission lines in the Project vicinity and additional details depicted on an aerial imagery map.

4906-6-05(B)(4): Alternatives Considered

No action alternative was considered; however, the potential for overloads during contengenices or segmenting the system to prevent overload during heavy load conditions is not acceptable and load would need to drop, reducing reliability of service to customers. The alternative solution to prevent overload on the system would be to reconductor 2.9 miles of F9482 towards Feldman. Based on the existing structures along this line and the weight of the reconductor, there would need to be multiple structures replaced to support the reconductor. This solution would be more costly and impact more of the public during the re-conductor/re-build. Therefore, the proposed configuration is the most cost reasonable solution with least amount of impacts on the public.

4906-6-05(B)(5): Public Information Program

Since the Project is located within existing property owned by Duke Energy Ohio, property owners within 500-feet of the substation will be notified by mail prior to the initiation of any construction. Further information on the ongoing status of this Project and other Duke Energy Ohio Projects can be found at the following website: https://www.duke-energy.com/our-company/about-us/electric-transmission-projects.

4906-6-05(B)(6): Construction Schedule

Work on the Project is scheduled to start in July 2019 with a planned outage scheduled in September 2019. Work is scheduled to be completed by July 2020, during a second outage.

4906-6-05(B)(7): Area Map

Attachment A – Project Details - depicts the general location of the Project. Figure 1, shows the general Project vicinity depicted on a United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle topographic map. Figure 2, shows the planned transmission line location and additional details depicted on an aerial imagery map.

4906-6-05(B)(8): Property Owner List

The Project is located entirely within property owned by Duke Energy Ohio (Parcel Number 182518K067). No new easements have been obtained for this Project.

4906-6-05(B)(9): Technical Features of the Project

The Project involves the installation of approximately 844 feet (0.16 miles) of 138 kV single circuit, electrical transmission line. The work will involve removing three (3) existing structures and installing eight (8) galvanized steel single-pole structures within existing Duke Energy Ohio property. Structure locations are shown on Figure 2 in Attachment A.

4906-6-05(B)(9)(a): Operating Characteristics

Voltage:	138 kV
Structure Type:	Three (3) new overhead engineered steel structures with concrete foundation and five (5) new light duty steel poles
Structure Height:	Ranging from 70 feet to 142 feet
Conductors:	844 feet of 138-kV conductor (954 kcmil ACSR 45x7 "RAIL", 477 ASCR 26x7 "HAWK")
Static Wire:	7#8 Alumoweld, 159 ASCR 12x7 "GUINEA"
Insulators:	138 kV Polymer post insulators and glass suspension
ROW Land Requirements:	Property owned entirely by Duke Energy Ohio

4906-6-05(B)(9)(b): Electric and Magnetic Fields

There are no occupied residences or institutions within one hundred feet of the proposed lines in this Project. Therefore, this section is not applicable.

4906-6-05(B)(9)(c): Estimated Cost

The approximate cost for the proposed Project is approximately $1,050,000.

4906-6-05(B)(10): Social and Ecological Impacts

4906-6-05(B)(10)(a): Land Uses

The Project is located in Miami Township, within Clermont County, Ohio, approximately 6.25 miles northeast of Cincinnati. Miami Township, which covers 33.4 square miles, contains a population of 40,848 people based on the 2010 census data. The land use immediately surrounding the Project area is predominantly forested residential, commercial, and industrial property.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(b): Agricultural Land

Due to the Project being entirely on Duke Energy Ohio Property, no agricultural lands will be impacted.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(c): Archaeological or Cultural Resources

The Ohio History Connection, Ohio's Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) online mapping system, was consulted to identify previously recorded cultural resources within 1 mile of the Project Area (the Study Area). The OHPO records check indicates that thirteen (13) historic structures (CLE0002001, CLE0030001, CLE0006001, CLE0002101, CLE0029701, CLE0006101, CLE0002201, CLE0006201, CLE0007301, CLE0029801, CLE0029901, CLE006301, and CLE0006401) and one historic cemetery (CLE0030201 McGill-Ranson Cemetery) have been previously recorded in the Study Area. None of these are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). None of these resources are located within the Project Area footprint. There are no previously recorded surveys mapped within the one-mile buffer of the Project Area.

As planned, the Project does not trigger a Federal Nexus, requiring further coordination with the OHPO, as there are likely no impacts to wetlands or streams that would require Federal permitting.

Given that the Project involves primarily removal of existing structures and the installation of new structures requiring relatively little ground disturbance on Duke Energy Ohio property, it does not appear that impacts to significant cultural resources will occur as a result of the Project. The minimal impacts associated with the Project do not warrant additional cultural resource surveys based on the proposed scope of work.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(d): Local, State, and Federal Requirements

As the Project is expected to disturb less than one acre, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Site General Permit from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) for the Project is not required.

No other local, state or federal permit or other authorizations are required for the Project.

Duke Energy Ohio has applied for clearance from Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation for the Project on the structures not impacting navigable airspace.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(e): Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Species Investigation

Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was initiated on November 13, 2018, in an effort to identify the Project's potential effect on any federally listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat within a one-mile radius of the Study Area. A response from USFWS was received November 19, 2018, regarding RTE species located within the Study Area vicinity. The response from USFWS indicated three (3) federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species, or their habitats, could potentially exist within the Project site or vicinity. A copy of the USFWS response can be found in Attachment B – Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Correspondence and is summarized below.

All projects in the State of Ohio lie within the range of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). In Ohio, presence of the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat is assumed wherever suitable habitat occurs unless a presence/absence survey has been performed to document absence. It is recommended by USFWS that any clearing of trees should occur between October 1 and March 31 in order to avoid incidental taking of these species. Any tree clearing will occur within this seasonal clearing timeframe, thus it is anticipated that there will be no adverse effect to these bat species. No tree clearing is anticipated for this Project.

Also, the proposed Project lies within the range of running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), a federally listed endangered species. Two known populations of this plant occur within three (3) miles of the proposed Project Area. If suitable habitat is present within a project site, it is recommended by USFWS that surveys for this species be conducted by a trained botanist in May or June when the plant is in flower.

As a part of the investigation, Duke Energy Ohio hired GAI Consultants (GAI) to review field conditions on the Project. GAI did not note any suitable habitat during field review as noted in Section 4906-6-05(B)(10)(f).

According to USFWS, due to the Project type, size, and location, there are no anticipated adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or candidate species.

Additionally, a request was submitted to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Environmental Review Program on November 13, 2018, in an effort to identify the Project's potential effect on any state-listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat within the vicinity of the Study Area. A response from ODNR – Division of Wildlife (DOW) was received on January 7, 2019. This response can be found in Attachment B – Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Correspondence and is summarized below.

The ODNR-DOW noted the potential presence of the state-endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and recommended the same seasonal tree clearing timeframe as the USFWS. ODNR-DOW also indicated that the Project is within the range of eighteen (18) state endangered and two (2) state threatened mussel species as well as four (4) state endangered and five (5) state threatened fish species. Due to the fact that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream, this Project is not going to impact these species. ODNR-DOW also indicated that the Project is within range of one (1) state threatened reptile, and one (1) state endangered bird species. Due to the potential impacts to federally and state listed species, ODNR DOW recommended that this Project be coordinated with the USFWS. Due to the location, the type of habitat present at the Project site and within the vicinity of the Project area, and the type of work proposed, this Project is not likely to impact these federally and state listed threatened and/or endangered species.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(f): Areas of Ecological Concern

As a part of the investigation, GAI also conducted an investigation for areas of ecological concern. As a part of GAI's investigation, a request was submitted to the ODNR Natural Heritage Program on November 13, 2018, to research the presence of any unique ecological sites, geological features, animal assemblages, scenic rivers, state wildlife areas, nature preserves, parks or forest, national wildlife refuges, or other protected areas within one-mile of the Project Area, using the ODNR Natural Heritage Database.

A response from the ODNR – Office of Real Estate was received on January 7, 2019, indicated that there are five (5) unique ecological sites, geological features, animal assemblages, scenic rivers, state wildlife areas, nature preserves, parks or forests, national wildlife refuges, and/or other protected areas within one-mile of the Project Area, but are not anticipated to be affected. These unique ecological sites can be found in Attachment B – Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Correspondence.

As a part of the field investigation and ecological assessment, GAI conducted a Regulated Waters Assessment of the Project Area. GAI's investigation included approximately a 0.16-mile by 100-foot-wide Study Area around the proposed centerline, access roads, and additional workspace areas. During the investigation, GAI identified no potentially regulated waters within the Project's Study Area. However, one likely jurisdictional water was identified, due west of the Project Study Area. No impacts to regulated waters or RTE habitat are anticipated by the Project. Results from GAI's field investigation can be found in Attachment C – Regulated Waters Assessment.

A review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) revealed that the Project Area lies within an area of minimal flood hazard and crosses no 100-year floodplains and/or floodways. There are no proposed structures to be constructed within a regulatory floodway.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(g): Other Information

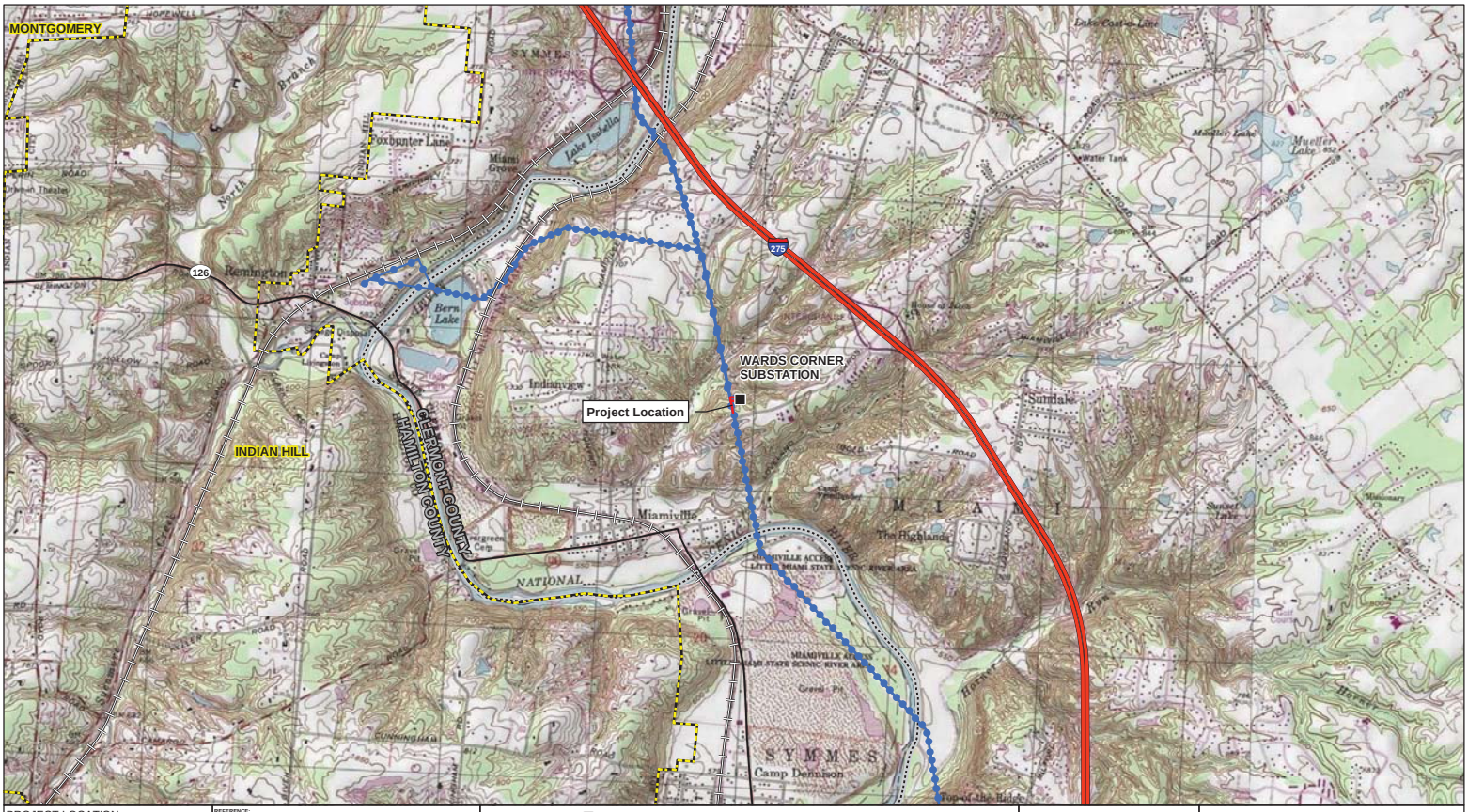
To the best of Duke Energy Ohio's knowledge, no unusual conditions exist that would result in environmental, social, health, or safety impacts. Construction and operation of the proposed Project will meet all applicable safety standards established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and will be in accordance with the requirements specified in the latest revision of the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC), as adopted by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

4906-6-07: SERVICE AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION OF ACCELERATED CERTIFICATE APPLICATIONS

A notice of filing and a link to this Application have been electronically submitted to the appropriate public officials of Miami Township and Clermont County as well as to the Clermont County Public Library. Information on how to request an electronic or paper copy of the Construction Notice as well as additional information on the ongoing status of this Project are available online.

ATTACHMENT A

Project Details



PROJECT LOCATION

CLERMONT COUNTY, OH

REFERENCE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH:
ESRI's World Imagery, Accessed: 2/25/2019.
INCORPORATED AREA:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Cities, 2018.
COUNTY BOUNDARY:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Counties, 2018.
INTERSTATE AND HIGHWAY:
ESRI's USA Major Roads, 05/10/2018.
RAILWAY:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Railways, 2017.
PROJECT DETAILS:
Duke Energy.

Interstate Highway
State Highway
Railway
Incorporated Area
County Boundary
Existing Facility
Route Centerline
138 kV Transmission Line

DUKE ENERGY.

gai consultants

0 1,000 2,000 Feet
1 in = 2,000 feet

FIGURE 1
PROJECT LOCATION

Ohio Power Siting Board Construction Notice

F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project

DRAWN BY: PPD DATE: 2/25/2019
CHECKED: TDB APPROVED: MRW

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PROJECT LOCATION

CLERMONT COUNTY, OH

REFERENCE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH:
ESRI's World Imagery, Accessed: 2/25/2019.
LOCAL ROAD:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Roads, 2017.
PARCEL BOUNDARY:
Clermont County Parcels, 2018.
PROJECT DETAILS:
Duke Energy.

Local Road
Existing Structure
Proposed Structure
Existing Facility
Route Centerline
Parcel Boundary
138 kV Transmission Line

DUKE ENERGY.

gai consultants

0 100 200 Feet
1 in = 200 feet

FIGURE 2
PROJECT LAYOUT

Ohio Power Siting Board Construction Notice

SHEET 1 of 1

F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project

DRAWN BY: PPD DATE: 2/25/2019
CHECKED: TDB APPROVED: MRW

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ATTACHMENT B

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Correspondence

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

JOHN R. KASICH, GOVERNOR JAMES ZEHRINGER, DIRECTOR

Office of Real Estate
Paul R. Baldridge, Chief
2045 Morse Road – Bldg. E-2
Columbus, OH 43229
Phone: (614) 265-6649
Fax: (614) 267-4764

January 7, 2019

Bradley Rolfes
GAI Consultants, Inc.
1830 Airport Exchange Blvd., Suite 220
Erlanger, Kentucky 41018

Re: 18-1295; Duke Energy F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project

Project: The proposed project includes the installation of 8 steel pole structures and approximately 800 feet of conductor to re-feed an existing line into the Wards Corner Station and switch it out with the F3881 circuit.

Location: The proposed project is located in Miami Township, Clermont County, Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has completed a review of the above referenced project. These comments were generated by an inter-disciplinary review within the Department. These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, Ohio Revised Code and other applicable laws and regulations. These comments are also based on ODNR's experience as the state natural resource management agency and do not supersede or replace the regulatory authority of any local, state or federal agency nor relieve the applicant of the obligation to comply with any local, state or federal laws or regulations.

Natural Heritage Database: The Natural Heritage Database has the following records at or within a one-mile radius of the project area:

Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), P
Showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*), T
Lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), E
Fawnsfoot (*Truncilla donaciformis*), T
Mussel bed
Little Miami State Scenic River
Little Miami Scenic State Park – ODNR Division of Parks & Watercraft
Little Miami Miamiville Scenic River Lands – ODNR Scenic Rivers Program
Kelley Nature Preserve – Clermont Co. Park District

The review was performed on the project area you specified in your request as well as an additional one-mile radius. Records searched date from 1980. This information is provided to inform you of features present within your project area and vicinity. Additional comments on some of the features may be found in pertinent sections below.

Please note that Ohio has not been completely surveyed and we rely on receiving information from many sources. Therefore, a lack of records for any particular area is not a statement that rare species or unique features are absent from that area. Although all types of plant communities have been surveyed, we only maintain records on the highest quality areas.

Statuses are defined as: E = state endangered; T = state threatened; P = state potentially threatened; SC = state species of concern; SI = state special interest; A = species recently added to state inventory, status not yet determined; X = presumed extirpated in Ohio; FE = federal endangered, FT = federal threatened, FSC = federal species of concern, FC = federal candidate species.

Fish and Wildlife: The Division of Wildlife (DOW) has the following comments.

The DOW recommends that impacts to wetlands and other water resources be avoided and minimized to the fullest extent possible, and that best management practices be utilized to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

The project is within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species. The following species of trees have relatively high value as potential Indiana bat roost trees: shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), shellbark hickory (*Carya laciniosa*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), shingle oak (*Quercus imbricaria*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), and white oak (*Quercus alba*). Indiana bat roost trees consists of trees that include dead and dying trees with exfoliating bark, crevices, or cavities in upland areas or riparian corridors and living trees with exfoliating bark, cavities, or hollow areas formed from broken branches or tops. However, Indiana bats are also dependent on the forest structure surrounding roost trees. If suitable habitat occurs within the project area, the DOW recommends trees be conserved. If suitable habitat occurs within the project area and trees must be cut, the DOW recommends cutting occur between October 1 and March 31. If suitable trees must be cut during the summer months, the DOW recommends a net survey be conducted between June 1 and August 15, prior to any cutting. Net surveys should incorporate either nine net nights per square 0.5 kilometer of project area, or four net nights per kilometer for linear projects. If no tree removal is proposed, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered mussel, the sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphyus*), a state endangered and federally endangered mussel, the fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*), a state endangered and federally endangered mussel, the pink mucket (*Lampsilis orbiculata*), a state endangered and federally endangered mussel, the snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), a state endangered and federally endangered mussel, the washboard (*Megalonaias nervosa*), a state endangered mussel, the ebonyshell (*Fusconaia ebena*), a state endangered mussel, the butterfly (*Ellipsaria lineolata*), a state endangered mussel, the elephant-ear (*Elliptio crassidens crassidens*), a state endangered mussel, the Ohio pigtoe (*Pleurobema cordatum*), a state endangered mussel, the little spectaclecase (*Villosa lienosa*), a state endangered mussel, the monkey face (*Quadrula metanevra*), a state endangered mussel, the wartyback (*Quadrula nodulata*), a state endangered mussel, the threehorn wartyback (*Obliquaria reflexa*), a state threatened mussel, and the fawnsfoot (*Truncilla donaciformis*), a state threatened mussel. Due to the location, and that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream, this project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the shortnose gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*), a state endangered fish, the northern madtom (*Noturus stigmosus*), a state endangered fish, the shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platorynchus*), a state endangered fish, the goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*), a state endangered fish, the mountain madtom (*Noturus eleutherus*), a state threatened fish, the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) a state threatened fish, the river darter (*Percina shumardi*), a state threatened fish, the bigeye shiner (*Notropis boops*), a state threatened fish, and the channel darter (*Percina copelandi*) a state threatened fish. Due to the location, and that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream, this project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*), a state threatened species. This secretive species prefers wet fields and meadows. Due to the location and the type of habitat present at the project site, and within the vicinity of the project area, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), a state endangered bird. This is a common migrant and winter species. Nesters are much rarer, although they occasionally breed in large marshes and grasslands. Harriers often nest in loose colonies. The female builds a nest out of sticks on the ground, often on top of a mound. Harriers hunt over grasslands. Due to the location and the type of habitat present at the project site, and within the vicinity of the project area, this project is not likely to impact this species.

Due to the potential of impacts to federally listed species, as well as to state listed species, we recommend that this project be coordinated with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Water Resources: The Division of Water Resources has the following comment.

The local floodplain administrator should be contacted concerning the possible need for any floodplain permits or approvals for this project. Your local floodplain administrator contact information can be found at the website below.

http://water.ohiodnr.gov/portals/soilwater/pdf/floodplain/Floodplain%20Manager%20Community%20Contact%20List_8_16.pdf

ODNR appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact Sarah Tebbe, Environmental Specialist, at (614) 265-6397 or Sarah.Tebbe@dnr.state.oh.us if you have questions about these comments or need additional information.

John Kessler
Environmental Services Administrator

Bradley Rolfes

From: Finfera, Jennifer <jennifer_finfera@fws.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2018 12:39 PM
To: Bradley Rolfes
Subject: Duke Energy, Proposed F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project, Clermont County

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

TAILS# 03E15000-2019-TA-0300

Re: Duke Energy, Proposed F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project, Clermont County

Dear Mr. Rolfes,

We have received your recent correspondence requesting information about the subject proposal. There are no federal wilderness areas, wildlife refuges or designated critical habitat within the vicinity of the project area. The following comments and recommendations will assist you in fulfilling the requirements for consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recommends that proposed developments avoid and minimize water quality impacts and impacts to high quality fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., forests, streams, wetlands). Additionally, natural buffers around streams and wetlands should be preserved to enhance beneficial functions. If streams or wetlands will be impacted, the Corps of Engineers should be contacted to determine whether a Clean Water Act section 404 permit is required. Best management practices should be used to minimize erosion, especially on slopes. All disturbed areas should be mulched and revegetated with native plant species. Prevention of non-native, invasive plant establishment is critical in maintaining high quality habitats.

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES COMMENTS: All projects in the State of Ohio lie within the range of the federally endangered **Indiana bat** (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened **northern long-eared bat** (*Myotis septentrionalis*). In Ohio, presence of the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat is assumed wherever suitable habitat occurs unless a presence/absence survey has been performed to document absence. Suitable summer habitat for Indiana bats and northern long-eared bats consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where they roost, forage, and travel and may also include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields and pastures. This includes forests and woodlots containing potential roosts (i.e., live trees and/or snags ≥3 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) that have any exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, hollows and/or cavities), as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. These wooded areas may be dense or loose aggregates of trees with variable amounts of canopy closure. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet (305 meters) of other forested/wooded habitat. Northern long-eared bats have also been observed roosting in human-made structures, such as buildings, barns, bridges, and bat houses; therefore, these structures should also be considered potential summer habitat. In the winter, Indiana bats and northern long-eared bats hibernate in caves and abandoned mines.

We recommend that trees be saved wherever possible. If any caves or abandoned mines may be disturbed, further coordination with this office is requested to determine if fall or spring portal surveys are warranted. If no caves or abandoned mines are present and trees ≥3 inches dbh cannot be avoided, we recommend that removal of any trees ≥3 inches dbh only occur between October 1 and March 31. While incidental take of northern long-eared bats from most tree clearing is exempted by a 4(d) rule (see http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/index.html), incidental take of Indiana bats is still prohibited without a project-specific exemption. Thus, seasonal clearing between October 1 and March 31 is recommended where Indiana bats are assumed present.

If there is a federal nexus for the project (e.g., federal funding provided, federal permits required to construct), no tree clearing should occur on any portion of the project area until consultation under section 7 of the ESA, between the Service and the federal action agency, is completed. We recommend that the federal action agency submit a determination of effects to this office, relative to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, for our review and concurrence.

The proposed project lies within the range of **running buffalo clover** (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), a federally listed endangered species. Two known populations of this plant occur within 3 miles of the proposed project. This plant can be found in partially shaded woodlots, mowed areas (lawns, parks, cemeteries), and along streams and trails. Running buffalo clover requires periodic disturbance and a somewhat open habitat to successfully flourish, but cannot tolerate full-sun, full-shade, or severe disturbance. If suitable habitat is present, we recommend that surveys for this species be conducted by a trained botanist in May or June when the plant is in flower. The survey must be coordinated with this office in advance.

Due to the project type, size, and location, we do not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species. Should the project design change, or during the term of this action, additional information on listed or proposed species or their critical habitat become available, or if new information reveals effects of the action that were not previously considered, consultation with the Service should be initiated to assess any potential impacts.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the ESA, and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Service's Mitigation Policy. This letter provides technical assistance only and does not serve as a completed section 7 consultation document.

If you have questions please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jenny Finfera

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Jenny Finfera
Wildlife Biologist
Ecological Services
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230

Phone: 614-416-8993 ext.13
Fax: 614-416-8994

ATTACHMENT C

Regulated Waters Assessment

gai consultants

Indianapolis Office
201 North Illinois Street
Suite 1700
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

T 317.570.6800
F 317.570.6810

January 30, 2019

GAI Project No. D181236.00

Ms. Kate Keck
Permitting Specialist
Duke Energy
139 East 4th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Regulated Waters Assessment
F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project
Duke Energy Project No. TOH1870
Clermont County, Ohio

Dear Ms. Keck:

This report presents the findings of the regulated waters assessment and identifies the resulting anticipated regulatory permitting compliance requirements for the F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed (Project), located in Clermont County, Ohio **(Appendix A, Figure 1)**.

This field survey effort was done in support of due diligence as required for a Construction Notice (CN), submitted to The Ohio Power Sitting Board (OPSB). Results from the regulated waters field survey are summarized below:

Project Summary

The Project will require the re-feed of the F9482 transmission line entry into the Wards Corner Station to switch it out with the circuit F3881, as the new loop. The proposed alignment will be approximately 0.15 miles of new 138 kV transmission line on Duke Energy property and consist of eight new overhead support structures **(Appendix A, Figure 2)**. Photos of the Project area can be found in **Appendix B**.

Work Summary

A remote environmental screening review followed by an on-site field survey was completed by GAI Consultants Inc. (GAI) on November 14, 2018 in order to evaluate potential regulated waters impacts associated with the Project. These investigations were limited to an approximate 100-foot-wide review corridor of the proposed transmission line and associated structure locations.

During the field survey, it was determined that all areas of the existing right-of-way (ROW) are accessible by construction equipment without grade improvements and are all located within maintained Duke Energy substation property.

Environmental Survey Results

National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps were reviewed for potential wetland locations within the Project area. The NWI maps were prepared from high altitude photography and, in most cases, were not field verified. As a result, wetlands are sometimes erroneously identified, missed, or misidentified within this data set. The presence of an NWI wetland

does not necessarily constitute the presence of a wetland meeting USACE criteria. The NWI map of the area identified no NWI features in the study area.

100-Year Floodplain and Floodway

A review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) revealed that the Project area lies within an area of minimal flood hazard and crosses no 100-year floodplains and/or floodways.

Wetlands

No likely jurisdictional wetlands were identified within the Project study area.

Waterbodies

No likely jurisdictional waterbodies were identified within the Project study area. However, one likely jurisdictional water was found, approximately 35 feet west of the project study area.

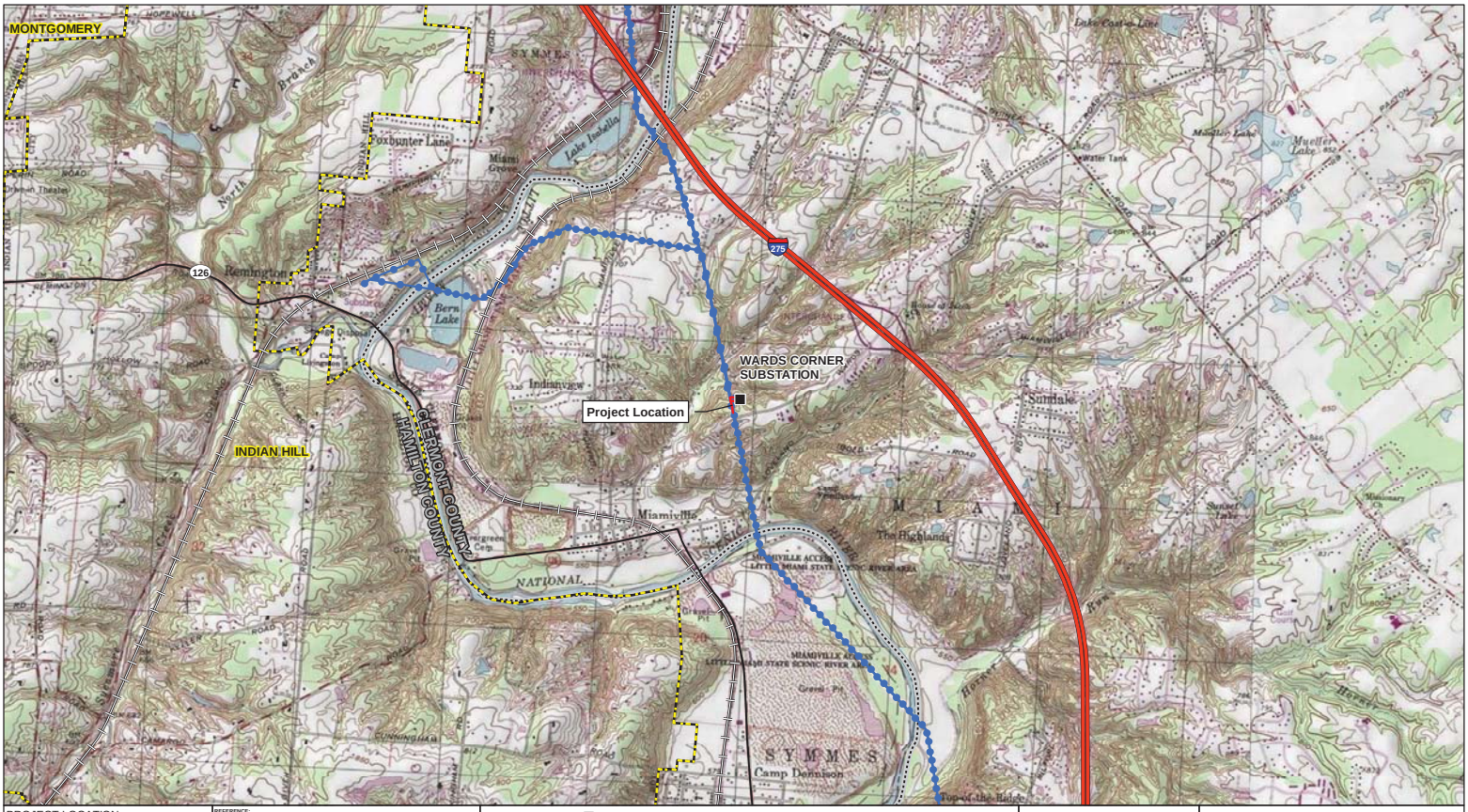
It is GAI's opinion that construction activities as a result of this this Project will not affect any regulated waters and no additional permitting will be required.

Sincerely,
GAI Consultants, Inc.

Brad Rolfes
Environmental Specialist

Attachments: Appendix A- Figures
Appendix B- Photographs

APPENDIX A
Figures



PROJECT LOCATION

CLERMONT COUNTY, OH

REFERENCE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH:
ESRI's World Imagery, Accessed: 2/25/2019.
INCORPORATED AREA:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Cities, 2018.
COUNTY BOUNDARY:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Counties, 2018.
INTERSTATE AND HIGHWAY:
ESRI's USA Major Roads, 05/10/2018.
RAILWAY:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Railways, 2017.
PROJECT DETAILS:
Duke Energy.

Interstate Highway
State Highway
Railway
Incorporated Area
County Boundary
Existing Facility
Route Centerline
138 kV Transmission Line

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0 1,000 2,000 Feet
1 in = 2,000 feet

FIGURE 1
PROJECT LOCATION

Ohio Power Siting Board Regulated Waters Assessment Report

F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project

DRAWN BY: PPD DATE: 2/25/2019
CHECKED: TDB APPROVED: MRW

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PROJECT LOCATION

CLERMONT COUNTY, OH

REFERENCE:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH:
ESRI's World Imagery, Accessed: 2/25/2019.
LOCAL ROAD:
Ohio Department of Transportation's Roads, 2017.
NHD FLOWLINE:
United States Geological Survey's National Hydrography Dataset Best Resolution, 2018.
NWI WETLAND:
United States Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory, 2018.
FLOODPLAIN AND FLOODWAY:
Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Hazard Layer, 2018.
PARCEL BOUNDARY:
Various County Parcels, 2018.
5-FOOT CONTOUR:
Ohio Geographically Referenced Information Program (OGRIP), Clermont County, 2007.
PROJECT DETAILS:
Duke Energy.

Local Road
Existing Structure
Proposed Structure
Existing Facility
Route Centerline
Delineated Stream
138 kV Transmission Line
Study Area
NHD Flowline
NWI Wetland
100-Year Floodplain
Floodway
Parcel Boundary
5-Foot Contour

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0 100 200 Feet
1 in = 200 feet

FIGURE 2
RESOURCE LOCATION

Ohio Power Siting Board Regulated Waters Assessment Report

SHEET 1 of 1

F3881 Wards Corner Re-Feed Project

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APPENDIX B
Photographs

Photographs

Photograph 1. Location of Str. HL907. Looking south. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 2. Location of Str. HL906. Looking north. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 3. Severe stormwater erosion, adjacent to gravel access road. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 4. Location of Str. HL905. Looking north. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 5. Stream channel, west of project study area. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 6. Stream outside of project study area, looking southeast (Upstream). (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 7: Stream outside of project study area, looking northwest (downstream). (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 8: Looking east towards Str. HL904 with substation beyond. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 9: Vegetation clearing for Str. HL901 and HL902, looking west. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 10: Looking east towards Str. HL903 and substation beyond. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 11: Location of Str HL901, looking north. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 12: Looking east toward Str. HL902 and HL903. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 13: Fence along back property line, looking northeast. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 14: Surface drainage, northwest of Str. HL901, leading to stream outside of project study area. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 15. Existing line, looking south. (November 14, 2018)

Photograph 16: Existing tower structure near proposed structures (HL900 – HL905). (November 14, 2018)