

2.0 Results of Desktop Review

The USFWS identified the species listed in Table 1 as occurring, or potentially occurring, in Carroll County, Ohio.

TABLE 1

Federally-listed Species Identified within Carroll County, Ohio

Common Name (Federal Status) ¹	Species Name	General Habitat Notes ^{2,3}
Indiana bat (Endangered)	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Hibernates in caves and mines. Roosts in exfoliating/loose tree bark of living and dead trees, or cavities and hollows of dead trees. Maternity and foraging habitat includes small stream corridors with well-developed riparian woods and upland forests.
Northern long-eared bat (Proposed as Endangered)	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Hibernates in caves and mines. Swarms in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During late spring and summer roosts and forages in upland forests. In summer, night roosts include caves, mines, quarry tunnels, while day roosts include crevices, hollows, or under loose bark of trees, or in small spaces associated with buildings and other structures.

¹Source: USFWS, 2013a

²Source: ODNR DOW, 2014

³Source: NatureServe Explorer, 2014

The ODNR DOW identified one species and conservancy area, listed in Table 2, as occurring within 1.5 miles of the Project area (Schneider, 2014, personal communication). Known locations provided by the ODNR DOW are depicted on Figure 2 of Attachment 1.

TABLE 2

State-listed Species and Management Area Identified within a 1.5-mile Radius of the Project Area

Common Name ¹ (State Status) ²	Species Name ¹	Known Record Location ¹	General Habitat Notes ³
Richardson's Pondweed (Threatened)	<i>Potamogeton richardsonii</i>	Nearest known occurrence is approximately 1.4 miles northeast of the Project area.	Found in brackish or alkaline waters up to 5 meters in depth
Leesville Lake – Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District	--	Leesville Lake is approximately 1-mile northeast of the Project area.	N/A

¹Source: Schneider, 2014, personal communication

²Source: ODNR DOW, 2012

³Source: ODNR DNAP, 1983

3.0 Site Observations

CH2M HILL biologists investigated the Project area during site visits in December 2013 and January 2014 to document existing vegetation communities and hydrologic conditions. CH2M HILL identified and delineated nine waterbodies within the Project area, including one perennial stream, seven ephemeral streams, and one pond. CH2M HILL also identified seven wetlands – one palustrine emergent (PEM) wetland, two palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS) wetlands, and four mixed PEM/PSS wetlands within the Project area. The Project area was disturbed with vehicle tracks and debris from mining activities. Attachment 3 provides representative photos of the streams, wetlands, and habitats.

The majority of the Project area is comprised of woodlands consisting of secondary growth forest interspersed with smaller areas of new field and early successional forest, ROW, and agricultural fields. Dominant canopy vegetation in the forested areas included Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), white pine (*Pinus strobus*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and white oak (*Quercus alba*). The understory was comprised mostly of multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*).

Property surrounding the existing substation was comprised mostly of mowed turf grass.

Dominant vegetation within the maintained ROW and new fields included multiflora rose and fescue grasses (*Festuca* sp.), including nodding fescue (*Festuca subverticillata*).

Agricultural fields showed indications of being planted with corn (*Zea mays*) during the growing season.

PSS wetlands were dominated by black willow (*Salix nigra*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), multiflora rose, and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Herbaceous species in PSS wetlands included sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* sp.), sedge (*Carex* sp.), giant goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*), and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*).

PEM wetlands were dominated by broadleaf cattail (*Typha latifolia*), common rush (*Juncus effusus*), wool grass (*Scirpus cyperinus*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* sp.), and common sedge.

4.0 Listed Species Effects Determinations

Preliminary effects determinations have been made for the federally listed species outlined in Table 1, and are provided in the following sections. State-listed species and habitats are not discussed below, because they do not maintain a federal listing.

Indiana Bat

In Ohio, the Indiana bat is known currently to inhabit a limited number of abandoned mines during the winter months. In the summer months, the Indiana bat is found in both the glaciated and unglaciated portions of the state (USFWS, 2007). Although, the entire state of Ohio is considered potential Indiana bat breeding habitat, the Indiana bat has only been recorded in 46 of Ohio's 88 counties (ODNR DOW, 2013). According to the USFWS (2007) and ODNR DOW (2013), no summer or winter occurrences of Indiana bat or maternity colonies have been documented in Carroll County. The nearest summer occurrences of Indiana bat are documented in Columbiana, Belmont, Summit, and Wayne Counties, Ohio (ODNR DOW, 2013). The nearest Indiana bat hibernacula to Carroll County are located in Hocking County, Ohio and Beaver and Lawrence Counties, Pennsylvania (USFWS, 2007 and ODNR DOW, 2013). Data obtained from the ODNR DOW do not indicate known occurrences of the Indiana bat from the Project area or within a 1.5-mile radius (Schneider, 2014, personal communication; Attachment 1; Figure 2).

Potentially suitable Indiana bat habitat observations were made within the Project area during wetland surveys and site visits conducted on December 27 and 28, 2013, and January 14, 2014. Limited potential summer roosting and foraging habitat was observed within the Project area. No caves or sinkholes were observed, although an extensive species specific survey was not performed.

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), sugar maple, white oak, and elm were observed along the proposed route. These tree species have been identified as potential roosts for Indiana bats (USFWS, 2007). However, the majority of the suitable tree specimens were less than 20 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), the preferential size for roosting trees (ODNR DOW, 2013).

Anticipated forest impacts associated with the Project will total 5.16 acres. This includes the proposed clearing of trees within the 100-foot wide permanent transmission line ROW over the 1.35-mile Project route.

Due to the lack of known Indiana bat occurrences in the area and the limited amount of proposed tree clearing, CH2M HILL requests USFWS concurrence that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Indiana bat.

Northern Long-eared Bat

As noted in Table 1, suitable habitat for the northern long-eared bat includes caves, mines, and wooded areas. The range of the northern long-eared bat includes much of the eastern and north central United States (USFWS, 2013b), and this species is known to occur in Carroll County (USFWS, 2013a). The northern long-eared bat was

proposed endangered by the USFWS on October 2, 2013 (USFWS, 2013c). The service will make a final decision on listing the species after a 12-month review period (USFWS, 2013c).

Forested areas, containing potentially suitable northern long-eared bat habitat, were observed within the Project area. Although data obtained from the ODNR DOW did not indicate any known occurrences of the northern long-eared bat from the Project area or within a 1.5-mile radius, this may be indicative of the relatively recent listing of this species rather than its absence (Attachment 1; Figure 2).

Anticipated forest impacts associated with the Project will total approximately 5.16 acres. This includes the proposed clearing of trees within the 100-foot wide permanent transmission line ROW over the approximately 1.35-mile Project route.

Based on the limited amount of tree clearing proposed for the Project, CH2M HILL, on behalf of AEP, requests concurrence that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the northern long-eared bat.

5.0 Other Species Effects Determinations

Bald Eagle

Data obtained from the ODNR DOW did not indicate known occurrences of the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) within a 1.5-mile radius of the Project area. Leesville Lake is the nearest large body of water located within a 1-mile radius of the Project area. No nests were observed during the site visits; however, a specific nest survey was not conducted. Although the USFWS removed the bald eagle from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in August 2007, the bald eagle is protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Lacey Act (USFWS, 2013d). Therefore, based on the lack of known occurrences near the Project area, it is not anticipated that the Project will not affect the bald eagle.

6.0 Migratory Bird Treaty Act Compliance

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) provides federal protection to migratory birds, including their nests and eggs. AEP recognizes that the MBTA protects both migratory and non-migratory birds, and that intentionally causing loss of an active bird nest site, incubating adults, eggs, or young as a result of construction activities would violate the MBTA.

The Project construction schedule is currently under development. The primary concern for nesting birds is cutting, clearing, and removal of existing vegetation. If construction occurs during the primary nesting season (early March through mid-July), efforts will be made to minimize potential impacts to nesting species. AEP will minimize impacts under the MBTA by co-locating the transmission line along an existing, maintained ROW to the greatest extent possible. It is estimated that approximately 5.16 acres of tree clearing is required for the Project. AEP requests comments from the USFWS on bird species protected under the MBTA. In addition, AEP requests what specific measures or requirements, if any, might be required for MBTA compliance.

7.0 Conclusions

No occurrences of the federally listed endangered Indiana bat or proposed-endangered northern long-eared bat are known in the Project area or within 1.5 miles of the Project. CH2M HILL believes that the proposed Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat.

Bald eagles were not observed within the Project area or its vicinity during field surveys, and no occurrences of the bald eagle have been documented within a 1.5-mile radius of the Project area. Based on the lack of known occurrences near the Project area, CH2M HILL believes that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the bald eagle. If newly identified bald eagle nests are observed during tree clearing, AEP will coordinate further with the USFWS.

Dr. Mary Knapp, USFWS

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February 5, 2014

On behalf of our client, AEP, we respectfully request your concurrence with the above effects determinations for federally listed species. AEP also seeks your comments on bird species protected under the MBTA. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Suzann Collins at 215-640-9118 or by email at Suzann.Collins@ch2m.com, or Mark Driscoll at 617-626-7061 or by email at Mark.Driscoll@ch2m.com.

Sincerely,



Suzann Collins
Environmental Scientist



Mark Driscoll
Project Manager

cc: Ms. Rebekah Hovermale, AEP

Attachments:

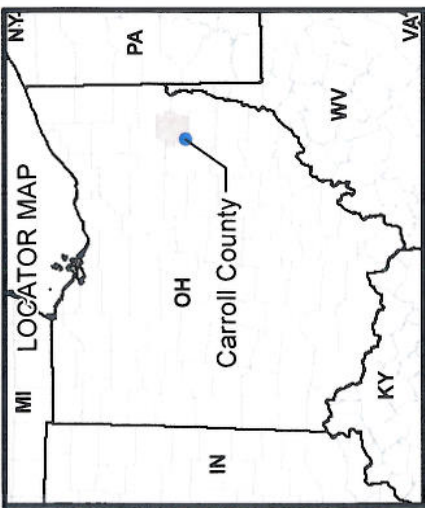
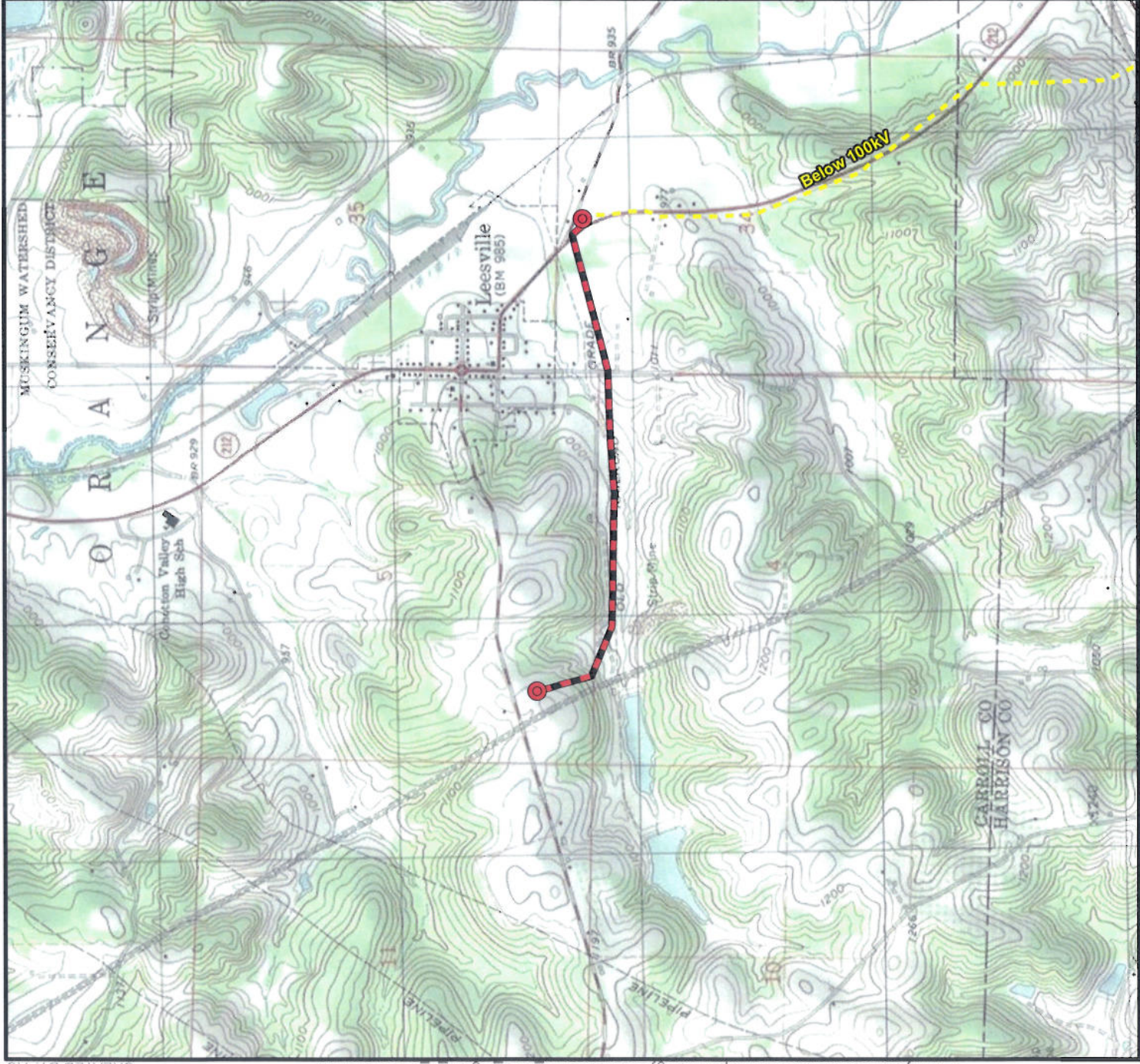
- Attachment 1 Figures
- Attachment 2 ODNR Correspondence
- Attachment 3 Photographic Documentation

References

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Attachment 1

Figures



LEGEND:

- Substation
- Proposed Route
- Below 138 kV
- Existing Transmission Line

Scale In Feet

0 2,000 4,000

BASE MAP SOURCE:
USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle:
Bowerston (published 1963)

LOCATOR MAP SOURCE:
ESRI Data and Maps, 2010:
U.S. States; U.S. Counties

AEP

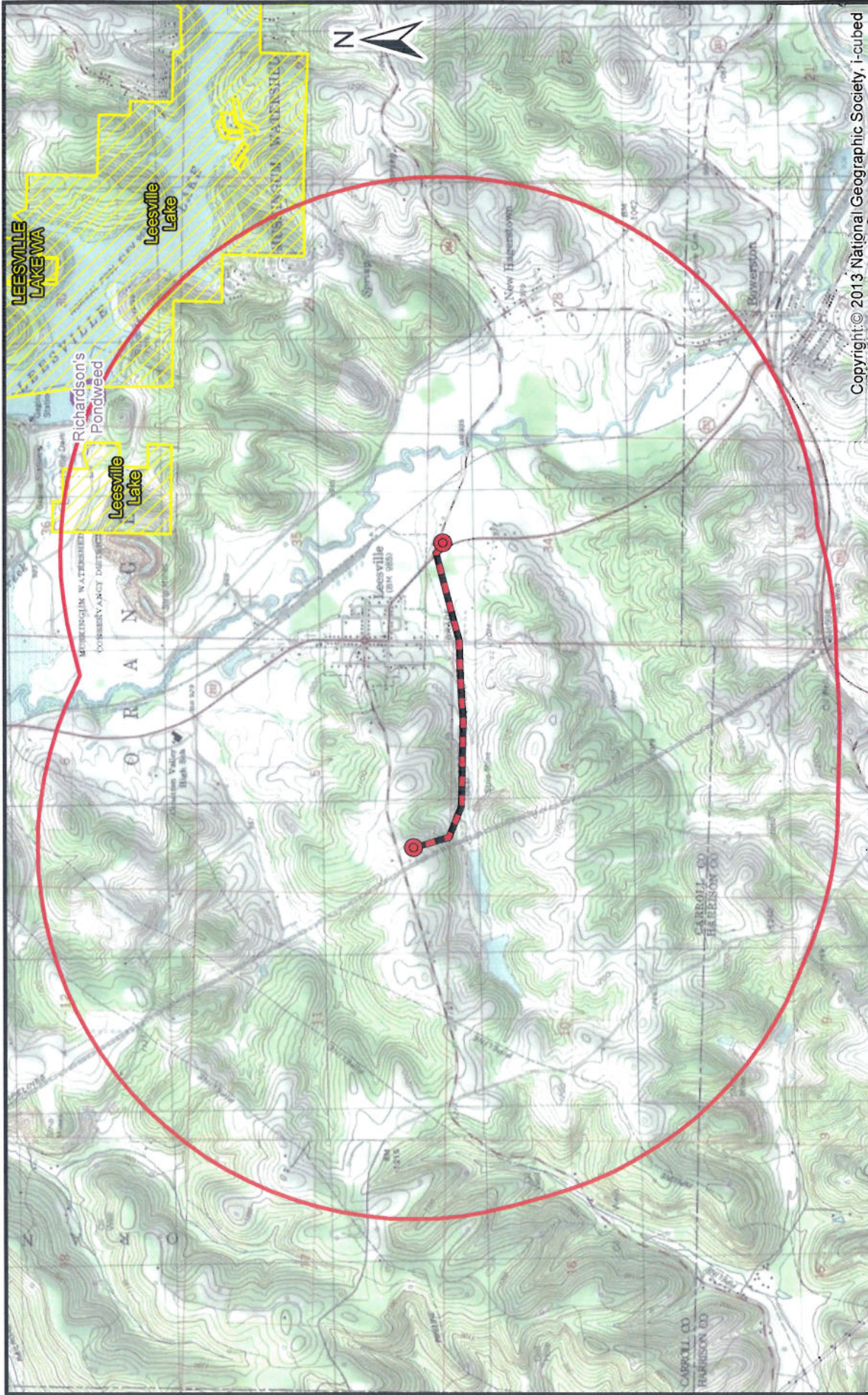
Leesville
Momentum Project
Carroll County, OH

**FIGURE 1
OVERVIEW MAP**

PN: 485272

DATE: 1/29/2014

CH2MHILL



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LEGEND:

- Substation
- Proposed Route
- 1.5 Mile Buffer
- ODNR Managed Area
- Threatened Species



Leesville
Momentum Project
Carroll County, OH

FIGURE 2 HABITAT ASSESSMENT MAP

BASE MAP SOURCE:
USGS 7.5-minute Topographic Quadrangle
Bowerston (published 1963)

Managed Area and Threatened Species - Ohio Department
of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, 1/8/2014

PN: 485272

DATE: 1/28/2014



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Attachment 2
ODNR Correspondence



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

JOHN R. KASICH, GOVERNOR

JAMES ZEHRINGER, DIRECTOR

Ohio Division of Wildlife
Scott Zody, Chief
2045 Morse Rd., Bldg. G
Columbus, OH 43229-6693

January 8, 2014

Alicia Cross
CH2M Hill
10123 Alliance Road, Suite 300
Cincinnati, OH 45242

Dear Ms. Cross

I have reviewed the Natural Heritage Database for the Southern Carroll and Northern County - Confidential Utility Siting Project. We have records for rare species and managed areas in your project area. I am attaching a shape file for the rare and endangered plants and animals, geologic features, high quality plant communities and animal assemblages. Fields included are scientific and common names, state and federal statuses, as well as date of the most recent observation. State and federal statuses are defined as: E = endangered, T = threatened, P = potentially threatened, SC = species of concern, SI = special interest, FE = federal endangered, FT = federal threatened, FPE = federal potentially endangered, FC = federal candidate and FSC = federal species of concern, F = federal listing only. This data may not be published or distributed beyond the scope of the project description on the data request form without prior written permission of the Natural Heritage Program. I have also attached a shape file for managed areas that include state wildlife areas, nature preserves, parks and forests, national wildlife refuges, county metro parks, as well as sites owned by non-profit groups. Please be aware that the managed areas layer may not be complete. We are continually updating this layer as additional information becomes available to us.

Our inventory program has not completely surveyed Ohio and relies on information supplied by many individuals and organizations. 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 we inventory all types of plant communities, we only maintain records on the highest quality areas.

This letter only represents a review of rare species and natural features data within the Ohio Natural Heritage Database. It does not fulfill coordination under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and does 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.

Please contact me at 614-265-6452 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Schneider".

Greg Schneider, Administrator
Ohio Natural Heritage Program



Photo 1: Representative photo of PSS wetlands (WRG009) along the proposed transmission line looking northeast.



Photo 2: Representative photo of PEM wetlands (WRG001) along the proposed transmission line looking southeast.



Photo 3: Representative photo of riparian forest habitat along the proposed transmission line looking northwest.



Photo 4: Representative photo of mowed turf grass along the proposed transmission line looking southeast toward the existing substation.



Photo 5: Representative photo of agricultural fields along the proposed transmission line looking west.



Photo 6: Representative photo of new field habitat along the proposed transmission line looking west.



Photo 7: Representative photo of existing transmission line right-of-way looking east.



Photo 8: Representative photo of ephemeral streams (SRG006) along the proposed transmission line looking northwest.

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2/7/2014 4:33:27 PM

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Case No(s). 14-0195-EL-BLN

Summary: Letter of Notification Azalea 138 kV Extension East Project (Part 4 of 5)
electronically filed by Mr. Yazen Alami on behalf of Ohio Power Company