

Public Comments on Environmental Assessment (EA) Affecting Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Possible Future of Cardinal-Hickory Creek

We have been given a second chance to protect the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge fws.gov/refuge/upper_mississippi_river/ At the same time we can stop Cardinal-Hickory Creek because the line cannot exist unless it crosses the Mississippi River. The developers have requested a change to the Right of Way, which requires a new Environmental Assessment, and part of that process involves public comments. Three federal agencies previously gave approval for CHC to be built through the Wildlife Refuge and are being sued in federal court for inadequacies. They will use this EA to make a new decision and we need to convince them not to approve the project.

Submit Comments by **Saturday, July 24 to this email address:**

CardinaltoHickoryCreekEIS@usda.gov

Information for Comments (Use only if you need help, otherwise state your own reasons)

- * The proposed changes still encroach upon the Refuge and avoid the fact that a National Refuge should be what the name implies: a “refuge.” Permits should have not been granted previously and they should not be re-granted for this environmentally-destructive transmission line.
- * The 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act states that national refuges were designed to protect and conserve our Nation’s wildlife resources. Federal agencies are obligated by law to follow this Act, as well as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act.
- * The Upper Mississippi River Refuge is a designated Wetland of International Importance as well as a Globally Important Bird Area. It lies within the Mississippi Flyway, a route used by more than 325 migratory bird species and up to 40 percent of the continent’s waterfowl population. The CHC high-voltage transmission line does not belong in this major birding area.
- * The Upper Mississippi Refuge is one of the most-visited National Wildlife Refuges and provides opportunities for people to fish, hunt, canoe, and birdwatch. The tranquility of these experiences will be negatively impacted by the sight of industrial-scale transmission towers and the sound of their buzzing electric lines.
- * Almost 50,000 people indicated their desire to protect the Refuge from transmission lines when they signed Driftless Defenders' online petition. change.org/StopCHCdestruction Their comments state the basic and obvious reason: A National Refuge should be a refuge, i.e., a safe haven for wildlife that protects and conserves our nation’s wildlife resources. It is not the place for CHC.
- * The present EA (Environmental Assessment) is based on an earlier EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) that is being challenged by lawsuits filed in federal court. They allege that the EIS was inadequate and violated NEPA, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, and the Endangered Species Act. A completely new, robust EA should therefore be developed.
- * The proposed ROW changes and consequent need for an EA provide an opportunity for the agencies to re-think, improve, and re-do their original analysis. We urge them to do so.
- * The comment time period is not adequate and it should not have been limited to on-line submissions.

DriftlessDefenders.com

