

Implementing a Pollinator Program at your Company: Xcel Energy's Experience

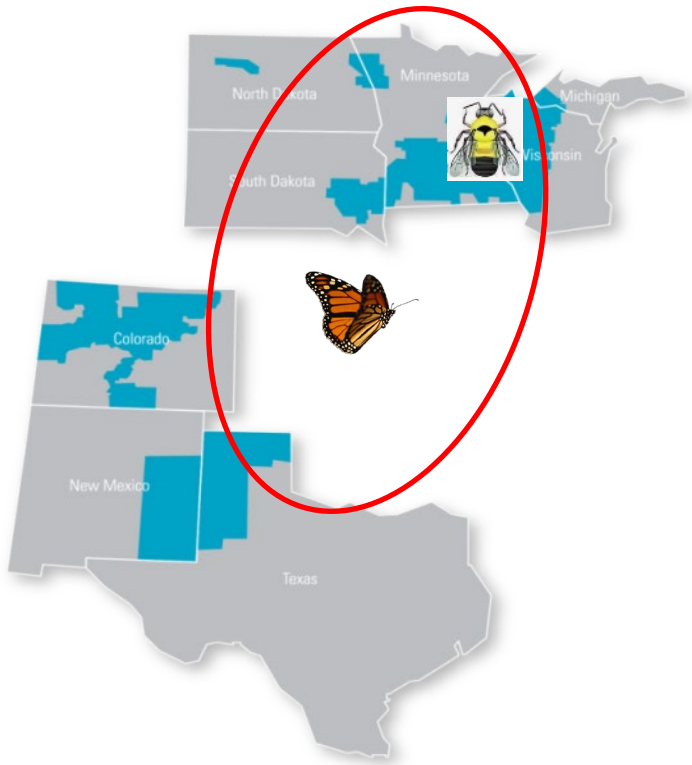
Rights of Way as Habitat Meeting
February 21, 2019



Pam Rasmussen, Sr. Manager
Siting & Land Rights

Serves eight states

- 3.6 million electricity customers
- 2 million natural gas customers
- 12,000 employees



Upper Midwest Focus

- Landscape provides many opportunities
- Major powerplant land holdings
- State initiatives – MN solar gardens
- Target Species
 - Monarch “Highway”
 - Rusty patched bumble bee

Xcel Energy Pollinator Sites-WI, MN,ND



- Over 2,100 Acres in management
 - Ranging from .25 acres to 800 acre sites
- 44 Active Sites
 - 1 natural gas line
 - 1 solar garden (not owned by Xcel Energy)
 - 1 wind project (Operating building)
 - 1 landowner (Powerline)
 - 2 excess lands
 - 2 company office sites
 - 7 power lines
 - 6 substation sites
 - 10 power plants
 - 13 community solar garden sites
- 8-12 Potential Sites
- Working on adding sites in Colorado & Texas



First Lake Substation, 2017
Monticello, WI



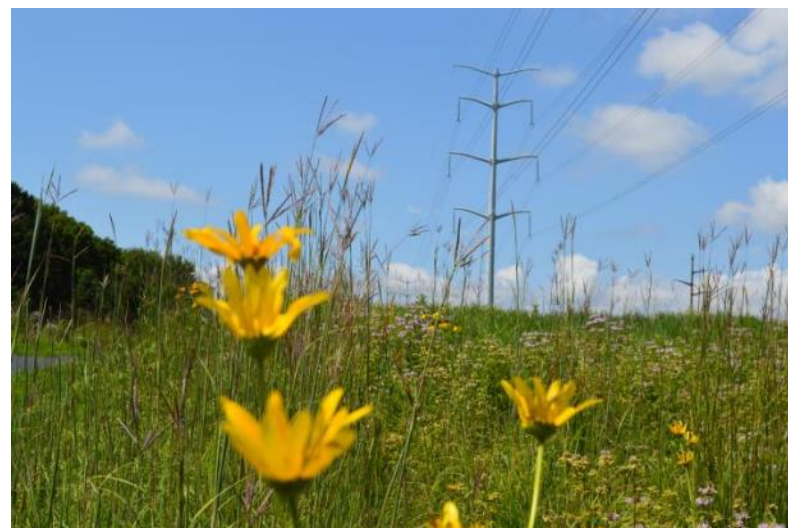
Sherco Oak Savannah Restoration, 2018
Becker, WI

Pollinator Program History

- Focused on Upper Midwest Service Territory past 30 years
- Periodic collaborations with groups to create prairie habitat and protect remnant populations
 - Transmission line corridors
 - Excess Lands
 - Power plant sites
- But, there was minimal follow-up



High Bridge Power Plant, 2014
St. Paul, MN



Cottage Grove Prairie Restoration, 2018
Cottage Grove, WI

Past Land Management Practices

- Vegetation Management
 - Focus on tree removal
 - Some interest in projects
- Construction restoration
 - Reseed with State DOT mix
 - Arbor vitae the tree of choice
- Land management
 - Reactive
 - Limited time and money commitment
 - Proactive measures discouraged



Tyrone Prairie, 2018
Durand, Wisconsin

What Changed?

- Proactive land management implemented
 - Management changes
 - Staff expertise
 - Tyrone lands – 4400 acres
- Positive feedback for proactive management
 - Public feedback
 - Timber harvest revenue
 - Partnerships
- Geospatial data improved information analysis and sharing



Big Stone-Brookings Transmission Line, 2017
Brookings, MN

What Started Initiative?

In 2015, three projects hit the spotlight at the same time:

1. Event with USFWS & Sen. Amy Klobuchar for Celebration of Monarch Funding
2. Substation Construction recommended native plant landscaping at new substation to reduce future maintenance.
3. Company signed St. Croix Valley Pollinator Partnership

Favorable reception from Leadership

- Created team to coordinate pollinator projects
 - Share information
 - Look for opportunities
 - Create long term commitment



Monarch Conservation Celebration, 2015
Dan Ashe, USFWS; US Senator Amy Klobuchar,



St. Croix Pollinator Pledge, 2015
Bay Port, MN

Pollinator Initiative: First steps

- Upper Management Sponsorship
- Appointed lead staff
- Assembled interested employees from various areas
- Shared information on what we were doing
 - First Lake Substation
 - Siting and Land Rights goal to create more projects
 - Community relations
- Budget
 - Seek upcoming construction projects
 - Set O&M targets for NSPM and NSPW
- Set Goals



Pollinator Initiative Goals

Top Priority is Site Safety and System Reliability

Seek and strengthen partnerships and educational opportunities

- Partner with businesses, communities, agencies and non-profits
- Supports efforts to continue to build relationships with the communities we serve

Support and initiate projects that make a difference

- Sites need to be able to support pollinator habitat (prairie, rain garden, garden).
- Supports target species of concern: Monarch butterfly, Rusty Patched bumblebee, Karner blue butterfly, restoration of native prairie ecosystems



Monarch caterpillar, 2018
Sky Park Prairie

Pollinator Initiative Goals

Invest wisely

- Focus on sites with high probability of success and outreach (prefer to have 10 great sites rather than 50 mediocre sites).
- Potential to reduce O&M costs factored into project;
- Long term management needs to be ensured by Company or partner
- Capital projects assessed to determine opportunities

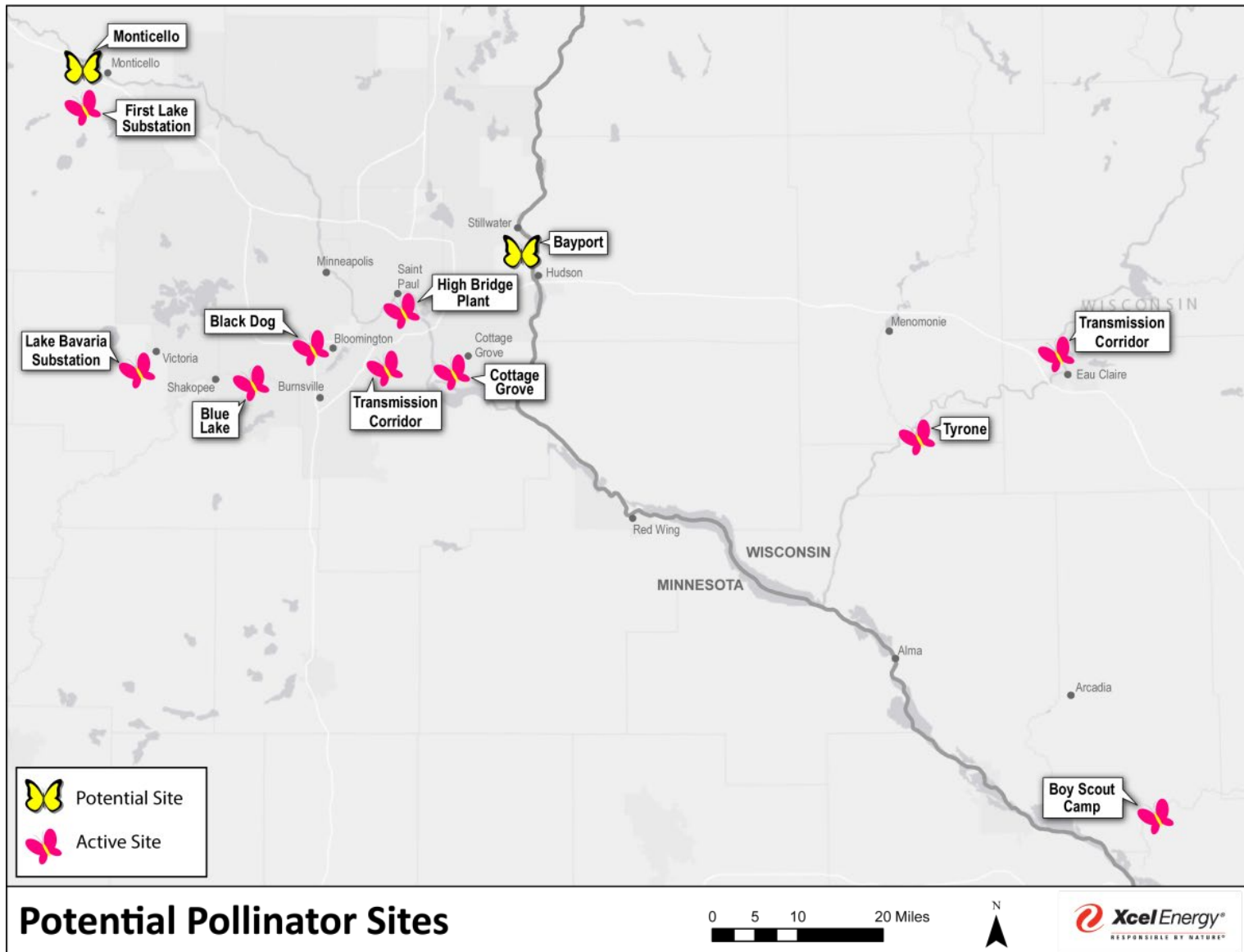
Clear Expectations

- Allow time for site development
- The business area that manages the asset shall be consulted

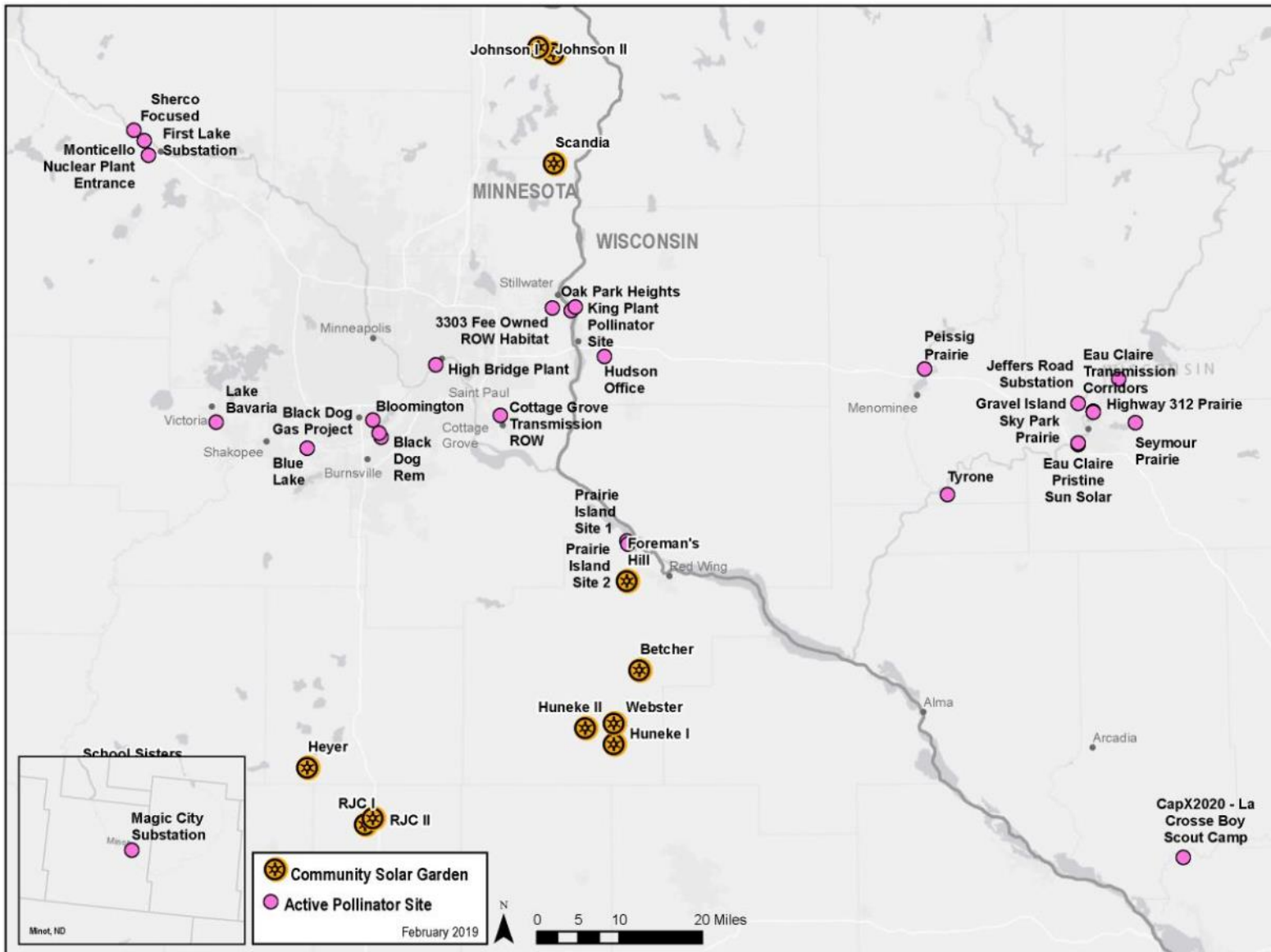


Common Primrose, 2016

Pollinator Sites 2016



Pollinator Sites 2019



Identifying Successes

- Education & Outreach for children and community
- Increased public acceptance of native landscaping
- Employees showing positive land management ethic
- Increased partnerships and strengthened relationships
- Went from 4 projects to 44 projects in 5 years.



Sky Park Pollinator Week Event 2018
Eau Claire, WI



Burnsville Pollinator Week Event 2018
Burnsville, MN

Recognizing Challenges

- Substation Native Landscaping
 - Pilot project
 - 5 years minimum to determine success
- Tracking and gathering information
- Assuring long term commitment
 - Budget
 - Maintenance
 - Communications wants “instant pretty”
- Reaching interested landowners



First Lake Substation Planting 2016
Monticello, MN



Landowner Managed Prairie 2017
Mankato, MN

Future Focus

- Education & Outreach
 - Internal
 - External
- Focus on easement holders
 - Landowner driven projects will be important to create additional habitats
 - Identify sites
- Partnerships
 - USFWS Urban Biologist
 - Beekeeper Associations
- Support research
 - Utilize company properties
 - Focus on vegetation management, land management



Sky Park Pollinator Week Event 2018
Eau Claire, WI



City of Cottage Grove Prairie Restoration 2018
Cottage Grove , MN

Recommendations for Implementing a Pollinator Program at Your Company

What to Consider

- What do you want to accomplish?
- What management support do you have today?
- Set clear expectations
- Identify one staff member to coordinate effort
- Include communications from day one
- Allow team members to move their projects forward
- Set reasonable budget expectations



Sherco Oak Savannah Restoration, 2018
Becker, MN

Key Recommendations

- Publicize efforts internally and externally
- Important members
 - Coordinator
 - Community relations staff
 - Construction & maintenance staff
 - Communications staff
- Be selective about projects
 - Quality, not quantity is important
 - Visible projects help build support
- Seek out partners



First Lake Substation Dedication, 2017
Monticello, MN

Overview of Xcel Energy Initiative Team Activities

- Monthly Conference Calls
 - Updates on active projects
 - Discuss potential projects, determine viability
 - Consider potential communication efforts based on upcoming projects, status of existing projects
 - Discuss events for participation
- Team Member actions
 - Move current projects forward
 - Seek opportunities for partners and events
- Sponsor Oversight
 - Approval of projects to move forward by sponsor
 - Assurance business areas support projects

Members:

- Siting & Land Rights
- Communications
- Community Relations
- Vegetation Management
- Environmental Services
- Project Management
- Construction Staff
- Geospatial Staff

Information Sharing

Sharepoint
Geospatial maps
Web site



Addendum

Information on various projects

Partnership Projects

- Bloomington, Minnesota
 - 2-mile fee owned strip
 - Required mowing, existing habitat
- City Partnership
 - Xcel Energy planted
 - Future goal to plant entire strip (XX acres)
 - Walking trails, City maintains site
- Educational event



Bloomington Event, 2017
Bloomington, MN

Top, Bloomington in 2015
Bottom, Bloomington in 2018
Bloomington, MN

Blue Lake Power Plant – Minnesota

- 21 Acre Oak Savannah Remnant
- Partner with Great River Greening
 - Develop Seed Bank Site, 10 year commitment
 - \$30,000 grant for seed
 - Great River takes 30% seed
 - Xcel Energy prep and plant site
 - ~\$10,000 cost



Blue Lake Seed Bank, 2018
Shakopee, MN

Xcel Energy Volunteer Day Planting, 2018
Shakopee, MN

Sherco Plant Oak Savannah Restoration

- Sherco and Monticello Power plants
 - 9000 acres combined
- Large Oak Savannah Habitat--overgrown
 - 800 Acres
- Initial plan to clear site
 - Removed undergrowth
 - Kept select trees
- Restoration focus
 - 30 acres
- Long term plan
 - Consider options to maintain larger area
 - Deer?
 - Partners?
 - Funding?



Sherco Oak Savannah Restoration 2018
Becker, MN



Vonco

6 Ac (Oak Savanna Harvest + Restoration)

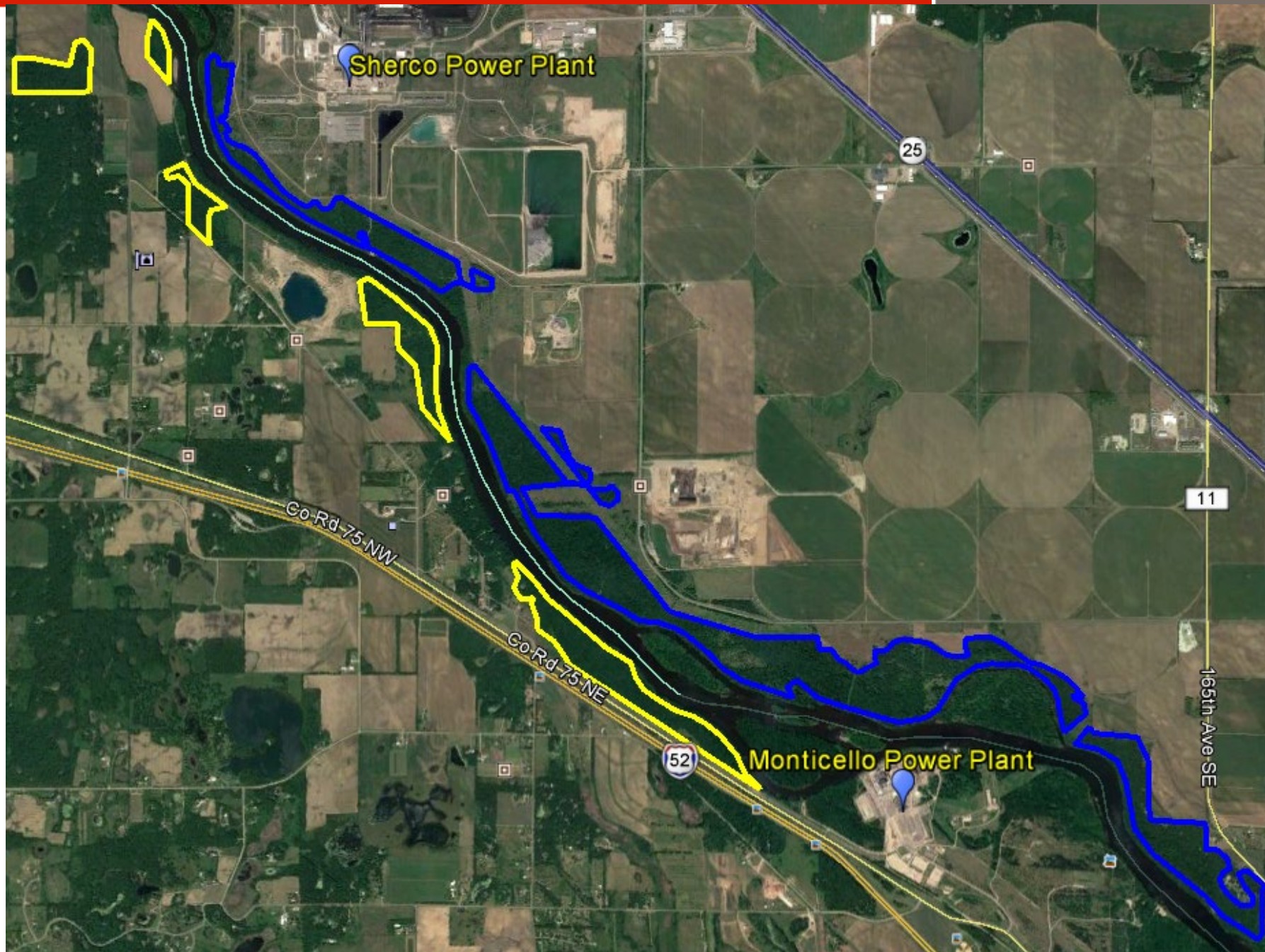
5 Ac (Oak Savanna Harvest + Restoration)

92 Ac Oak Savanna Harvest + Natural Regeneration

21 Ac Oak Savanna Harvest + Restoration

Monticello Nuclear Plant

© 2017 Google



Sherco Power Plant

25

11

Co Rd 75 NW

Co Rd 75 NE

52

Monticello Power Plant

165th Ave SE