

Construction Notice for the Stuart-Beatty 345 kV Transmission Line Adjustment Project



An **AEP** Company

PUCO Case No. 26-0885-EL-BNR

Submitted to:
The Ohio Power Siting Board
Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code
Section 4906-6-05

Submitted by:
Ohio Power Company

August 31, 2026

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE FOR THE STUART-BEATTY 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE

Ohio Power Company

Stuart-Beatty 345 kV Transmission Line Adjustment

4906-6-05 Accelerated Application Requirements

Ohio Power Company (the Company) provides the following information to the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) in accordance with the accelerated application requirements of Ohio Administrative Code Section 4906-6-05.

4906-6-05(B) General Information

B(1) Project Description

Provide the name of the project and applicant's reference number, names and reference number(s) of resulting circuits, a brief description of the project, and why the project meets the requirements for a letter of notification or construction notice application.

The Company proposes the Stuart-Beatty 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Adjustment Project ("Project") in Monroe and Darby Townships, Pickaway County, Ohio. The Project involves adding steel extension sections to two existing lattice tower structures to raise the existing conductor. Proposed structure heights will increase by 15 to 20 feet. The non-consecutive structures are approximately 8.6 miles apart along the existing transmission line, although the affected portion of the line is under 0.1 mile. The structures to be raised are within existing right-of-way ("ROW"). The location of the Project is shown in **Figures 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B** in **Appendix A**.

The Project meets the requirements for a Construction Notice (CN) as defined by Item 2(a) of Appendix A to Ohio Administrative Code Section 4906-1-01, *Application Requirement Matrix for Electric Power Transmission Lines*:

- (2) Adding new circuits on existing structures designed for multiple circuit use, replacing conductors on existing structures with larger or bundled conductors, adding structures to an existing transmission line, or replacing structures with a different type of structure, for a distance of:
 - (a) Two miles or less.**

The Project has been assigned Case No. 26-0885-EL-BNR.

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE FOR THE STUART-BEATTY 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

B(2) Statement of Need

If the proposed project is an electric power transmission line or gas pipeline, the applicant provide a statement explaining the need for the proposed facility.

The Company conducted a sag clearance study on 157 miles of existing 345 kV transmission lines including Stuart-Beatty, Stuart-Beatty (A), Greene-Beatty, Stuart-Point O, and Point O-Don Marquis. The sag clearance study identified 88 steel lattice towers that require additional reinforcement to keep them consistent with National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and AEP standard load cases. While the overall sag remediation study requires re-enforcement of 88 structures, this Project only pertains to two existing structures along the Beatty-Stuart 345 kV line; the Company will submit additional OPSB filings for the remaining structures. This project will utilize advanced transmission technologies by using the AMPJACK lift system which will remediate clearance concerns, increase capacity, and improve the safety and reliability of the line without the need for an outage or substantial construction activities.

The conductors on these lines were installed in the 1970s and the original conductors are still in-service. The majority of the structures are steel lattice structures and are approximately 50 years old. After the Company acquired these assets upon the dissolution of CCD, the Company performed the sag clearance study mentioned above. To remediate clearance violations and to maintain the Maximum Operating Temperature ("MOT") of the conductor, there are 88 structures that will need to be reinforced to increase the height of the structures. This relates to approximately 10% of the structures across these lines. When the Company acquired these lines from CCD, the lines were already operating at their maximum capability as designed and rated by CCD. In order to maintain these ratings, the clearances and sag mitigations to bring the line back into AEP standards is required, allowing the line to continue to operate at full capability during high loading or emergency scenarios.

Failure to move forward with this project could result in future thermal violations due to the need to reduce the rating of the line if sag clearance concerns are not addressed. Not performing this work would leave the line out of compliance with NESC and AEP standards, limiting the amount of power that can travel through the line.

There is no operation, modeling, or topology change as a result of the Project; therefore, the Project will not be submitted to PJM. The Project is also not reported in the Long-Term Forecast Report because the Project was unknown at the time of filing.

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE FOR THE STUART-BEATTY 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

B(3) Project Location

Provide the location of the project in relation to existing or proposed lines and substations shown on an area system map of sufficient scale and size to show existing and proposed transmission facilities in the project area.

The location of the Project in relation to existing transmission lines and substations is shown on **Figures 1A and 1B**, in **Appendix A**.

B(4) Alternatives Considered

Describe the alternatives considered and reasons why the proposed location or route is best suited for the proposed facility, including but not be limited to, impacts associated with socioeconomic, ecological, construction, or engineering aspects of the project.

The Project installs steel inserts on two existing steel lattice tower structures along an existing 345 kV electric transmission line to increase the height of conductors where clearance violations have been identified. The Company evaluated alternatives to alleviate the clearance violations which included raising or replacing the structures. Raising the existing structures is the most suitable solution for the Project, as other alternatives would require additional or more costly structures or relocating the existing transmission line. By raising the existing structures at their current locations, the proposed Project is not anticipated to impact wetlands, streams, or any known cultural resource areas eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Therefore, this alternative represents the most suitable location and is the most appropriate solution for meeting the Company's needs in the area.

B(5) Public Information Program

Describe its public information program to inform affected property owners and residents of the nature of the project and the proposed timeframe for project construction and restoration activities.

The Company maintains a website (<http://AEPOhio.com/BeattyStuart>) on which an electronic copy of this CN is available. An electronic copy of the CN will be served to the public library in each political subdivision affected by this Project. The Company also retains land agents who will discuss project timelines, construction and restoration activities with affected owners and tenants.

B(6) Construction Schedule

Provide an anticipated construction schedule and proposed in-service date of the project.

Construction of the Project is planned to begin in December 2026 with an anticipated in-service date of May 2027.

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE FOR THE STUART-BEATTY 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

B(7) Area Map

Provide a map of at least 1:24,000 scale clearly depicting the facility and proposed limits of disturbance with clearly marked streets, roads, and highways, and an aerial image.

Figures 1A and 1B, in Appendix A, identifies the location of the Project area on a United States Geological Survey 1:24,000 quadrangle maps of Five Points and Harrisburg, Ohio. **Appendix A, Figures 2A and 2B** displays the Project components on a 2022 aerial photograph.

B(8) Property Agreements

Provide a list of properties for which the applicant has obtained easements, options, and/or land use agreements necessary to construct and operate the facility and a list of the additional properties for which such agreements have not been obtained.

A list of properties required for the Project are provided in **Table 1**, below.

Table 1 – Property Agreements

Property Parcel Number	Agreement Type	Easement or Option Obtained (Yes/No)
G1700010047400	Existing Easement	Yes
B0600010055200	Existing Easement	Yes

B(9) Technical Features

Describe the following information regarding the technical features of the project:

B(9)(a) Operating characteristics, estimated number and types of structures required, and right-of-way and/or land requirements.

Transmission Lines

The existing transmission line includes the following operating characteristics:

Voltage: 345kV
Conductors: 2-bundle 983.1 kcmil ACAR 30/7 (Existing)
Static Wire: (2) 7#8 Alumoweld (Existing)
Insulators: Ceramic (Existing)
ROW Width: 150 feet
Structure Type: One (1) single circuit, steel lattice tower, Type A
One (1) single circuit, steel lattice tower, Type B

The proposed height increases at each structure for the Project are provided in **Table 2**, below.

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE FOR THE STUART-BEATTY 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

Table 2 – Lattice Tower Height Increases

Structure Number	Proposed Height Increase (feet)
436	20
483	15

A summary of the proposed process for extending the steel lattice towers is provided in **Appendix B**.

B(9)(b) Electric and Magnetic Fields

For electric power transmission lines that are within one hundred feet of an occupied residence or institution, the production of electric and magnetic fields during the operation of the proposed electric power transmission line.

No occupied residences or institutions are located within 100 feet of the Project.

B(9)(c) Project Cost

The estimated capital cost of the project.

The cost estimate for the Project, which is comprised of applicable tangible and capital costs, is approximately \$2,000,000 using a Class 4 estimate. Pursuant to the PJM OATT, the costs for this Project will be recovered in the Ohio Power Company's FERC formula rate (Attachment H-14 to the PJM OATT) and allocated to the AEP Zone.

B(10) Social and Ecological Impacts

The applicant shall describe the social and ecological impacts of the project:

B(10)(a) Land Use

Provide a brief, general description of land use within the vicinity of the proposed project, including a list of municipalities, townships, and counties affected.

The Project location and vicinity are primarily agricultural land with scattered woodlots. An aerial photograph of the Project vicinity is provided as **Figures 2A and 2B**. The Project is mapped within Monroe and Darby Townships in Pickaway County. The structures to be raised are within existing ROW. The Project vicinity is currently rural in nature and is comprised primarily of agricultural land used for row crops, forested land, landscaped areas, and scattered residences. No tree clearing is anticipated for the Project.

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B(10)(b) Agricultural Land

Provide the acreage and a general description of all agricultural land, and separately all agricultural district land, existing at least sixty days prior to submission of the application within the potential disturbance area of the project.

The Project Area is characterized by existing ROW crossing agricultural land use with low density residential land uses dispersed throughout. The dominant agricultural use appears to be row crops (i.e. soybeans and corn). Large, open agricultural fields are present in the Project Area. No permanent impacts to agricultural land are anticipated by raising the existing structures.

Based on data received from the Pickaway County Auditor's office on August 11, 2026, there are no agricultural district parcels within the potential disturbance area of the Project. No Ohio Department of Agriculture easements were identified as affected by the Project.

B(10)(c) Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Provide a description of the applicant's investigation concerning the presence or absence of significant archaeological or cultural resources that may be located within the potential disturbance area of the project, a statement of the findings of the investigation, and a copy of any document produced as a result of the investigation.

A cultural resource survey and report were conducted by the Company's consultant for the Project in December 2025. Correspondence from the State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") was received in January 2026, see **Appendix C**. The SHPO stated that that the Project will have no adverse effect on historic properties and that no further archaeological work is necessary.

B(10)(d) Local, State, and Federal Agency Correspondence

Provide a list of the local, state, and federal governmental agencies known to have requirements that must be met in connection with the construction of the project, and a list of documents that have been or are being filed with those agencies in connection with siting and constructing the project.

A summary of anticipated permits and authorizations for the Project is provided in the **Table 3**, below. There are no other known local, state, or federal requirements that must be met prior to commencement of the Project.

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Table 3 – Anticipated Permits

Permit/Authorization/Coordination	Agency	Date
Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	Not Required. Ground disturbance less than 1 acre.
	Pickaway County	
Notice Criteria	Federal Aviation Administration	Submitted through Criteria Tool on 4/9/2026, no further action required.
Clean Water Act Section 404/401	United States Army Corps of Engineers	Not Required
	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	
Archaeology/Architectural	Ohio Historic Preservation Office	Coordination complete 1/13/2026, no additional work required
Threatened and Endangered Species	United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Consultation complete 2/8/2023
Threatened and Endangered Species	Ohio Department of Natural Resources	Consultation complete 11/19/2025

B(10)(e) Threatened, Endangered, and Rare Species

Provide a description of the applicant's investigation concerning the presence or absence of federal and state designated species (including endangered species, threatened species, rare species, species proposed for listing, species under review for listing, and species of special interest) that may be located within the potential disturbance area of the project, a statement of the findings of the investigation, and a copy of any document produced as a result of the investigation.

On January 24, 2023, coordination letters were submitted to the United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Ohio Natural Heritage Program (ONHP) and Division of Wildlife (DOW), seeking an environmental review of the Project for potential impacts to state and/or federally protected species. ODNR and USFWS provided responses on February 8, 2023 and November 19, 2025, respectively. Copies of the agencies' responses are presented in **Appendix C**.

Table 2, in **Appendix D** lists the federal and state threatened or endangered species in the Project area.

Based on the nature of the proposed Project activities and habitat characteristics of the surrounding vicinity, construction impacts to protected species are not anticipated.

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B(10)(f) Areas of Ecological Concern

Provide a description of the applicant's investigation concerning the presence or absence of areas of ecological concern (including national and state forests and parks, floodplains, wetlands, designated or proposed wilderness areas, national and state wild and scenic rivers, wildlife areas, wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, and wildlife sanctuaries) that may be located within the potential disturbance area of the project, a statement of the findings of the investigation, and a copy of any document produced as a result of the investigation.

The Company's consultant conducted a wetland and stream delineation survey in an extended area that included the Project structures and work areas on November 21 and November 22, 2022 and prepared an Ecological Survey Report, which is provided in **Appendix D**. The survey of the Project area identified no wetlands and one stream. Construction activities will not result in discharge of fill in the stream as it was delineated in the extended study area which is not included in the Project.

Based on a review of the Protected Areas Database of the United States as well as the Conservation Easement Database, there are no state or national parks, forests, wildlife areas or mapped conservation easements in the vicinity of the Project.

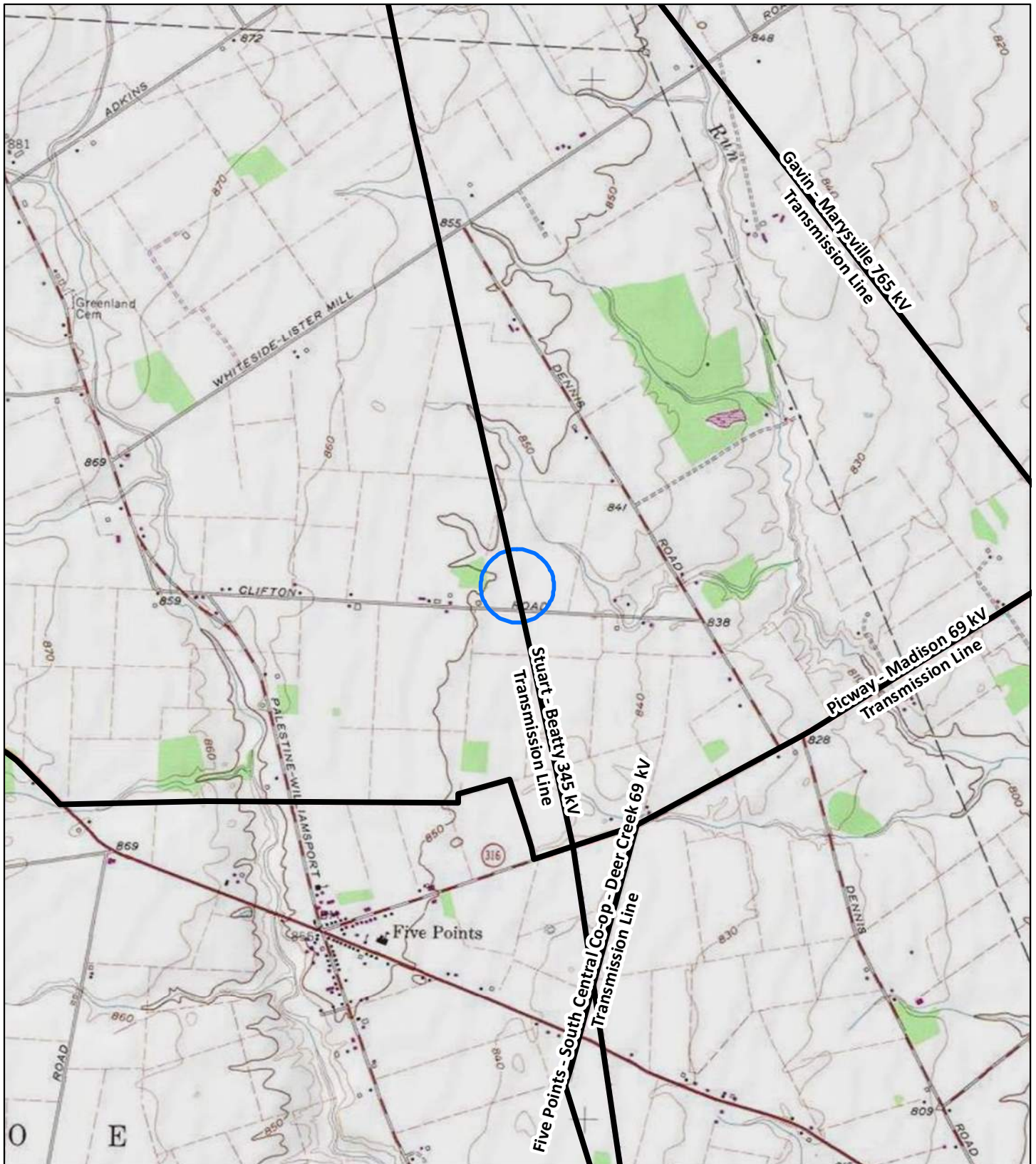
The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map ("FIRM") was reviewed to identify any floodplains/flood hazard areas that have been mapped within the Project Area (specifically, map number 39097C0450D, 39129C0025J). Based on this mapping, neither of the structures is located within the FEMA-designated 100-year flood zone or floodway. No local floodplain permitting is expected to be necessary for the Project.

B(10)(g) Unusual Conditions

Provide any known additional information that will describe any unusual conditions resulting in significant environmental, social, health, or safety impacts.

To the best of the Company's knowledge, no unusual conditions exist that would result in significant environmental, social, health, or safety impacts.

Appendix A Project Maps



 Project
 Existing Transmission

Data Sources: AEP, USGS 7.5'
 Topographic Quadrangles
 (Harrisburg & Five Points, Ohio)

Ohio State Plane South
 NAD 1983



August 24, 2026

PROJECT LOCATION

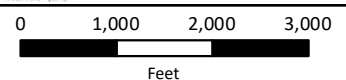


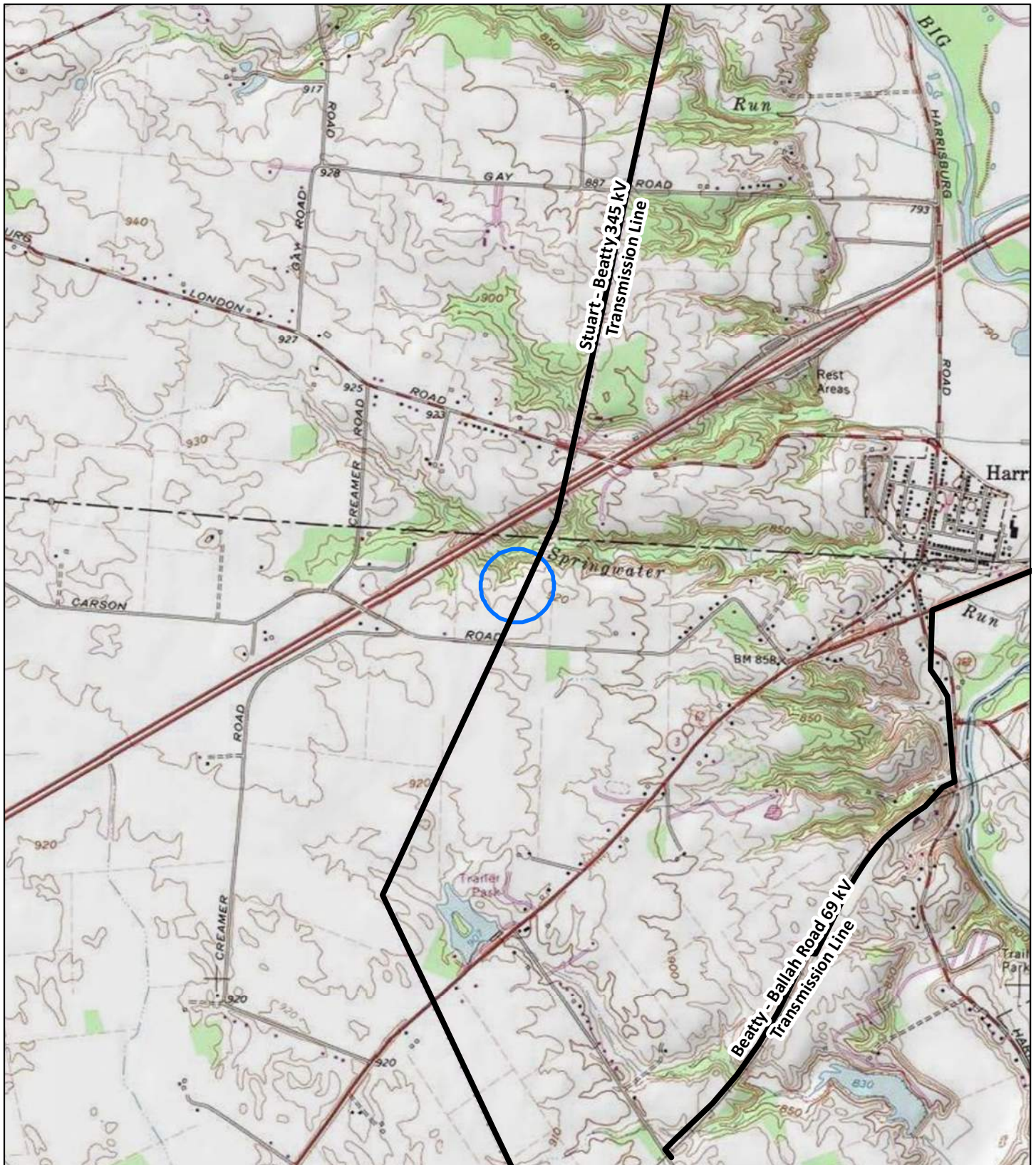
PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO

FIGURE 1A TOPOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW



Stuart-Beatty 345 kV
 Transmission Line
 Adjustment Project





 Project
 Existing Transmission

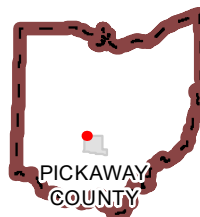
Data Sources: AEP, USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangles (Harrisburg & Five Points, Ohio)

Ohio State Plane South
NAD 1983



August 24, 2026

PROJECT LOCATION

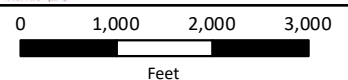


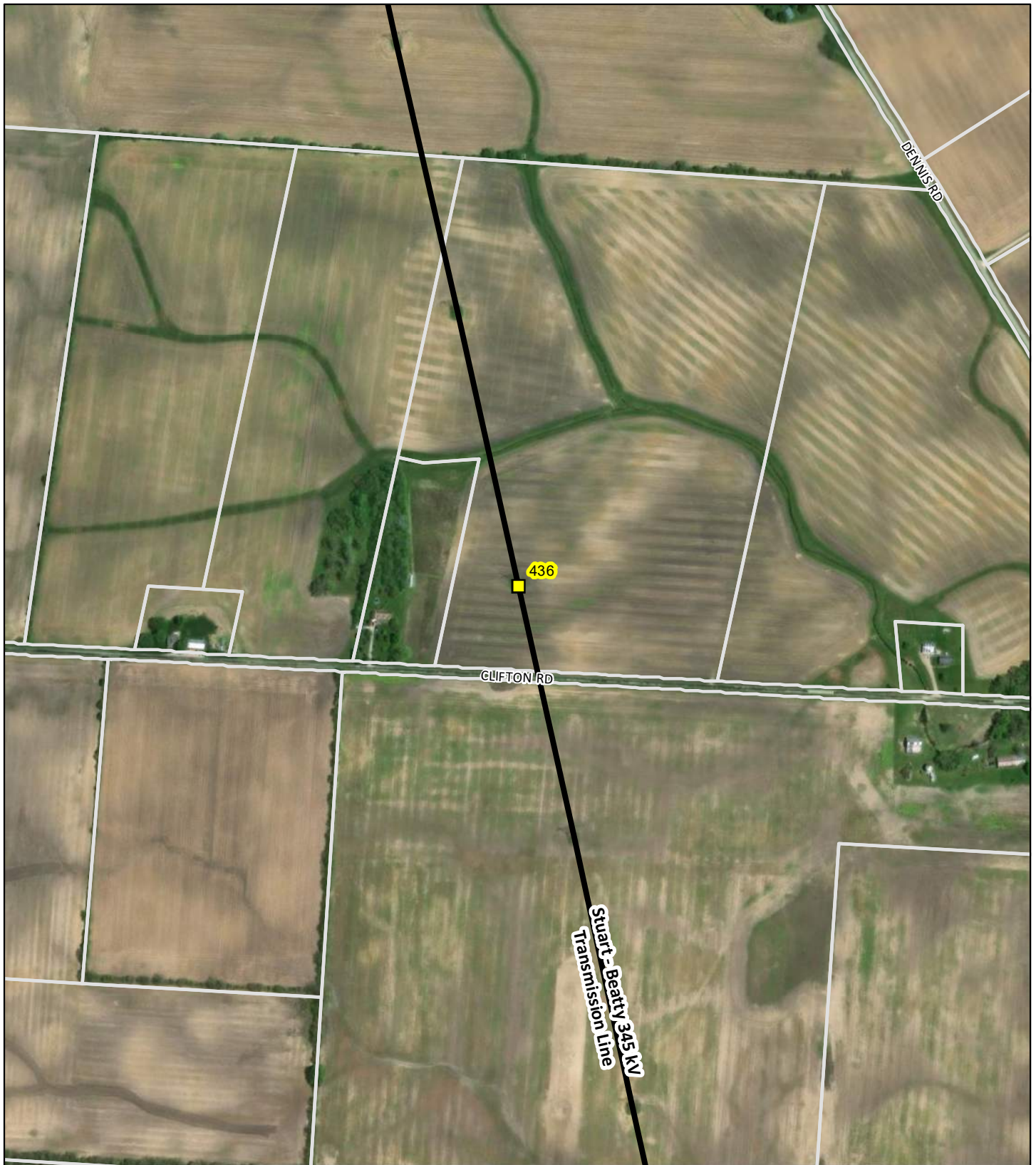
PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO

FIGURE 1B TOPOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW



Stuart-Beatty 345 kV
Transmission Line
Adjustment Project





Legend:

- Proposed Structure Raise
- Existing Transmission Line

Data Sources: AEP,
ESRI World Imagery, 2022

Ohio State Plane South
NAD 1983



August 24, 2026

PROJECT LOCATION

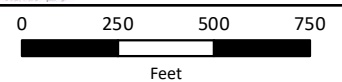


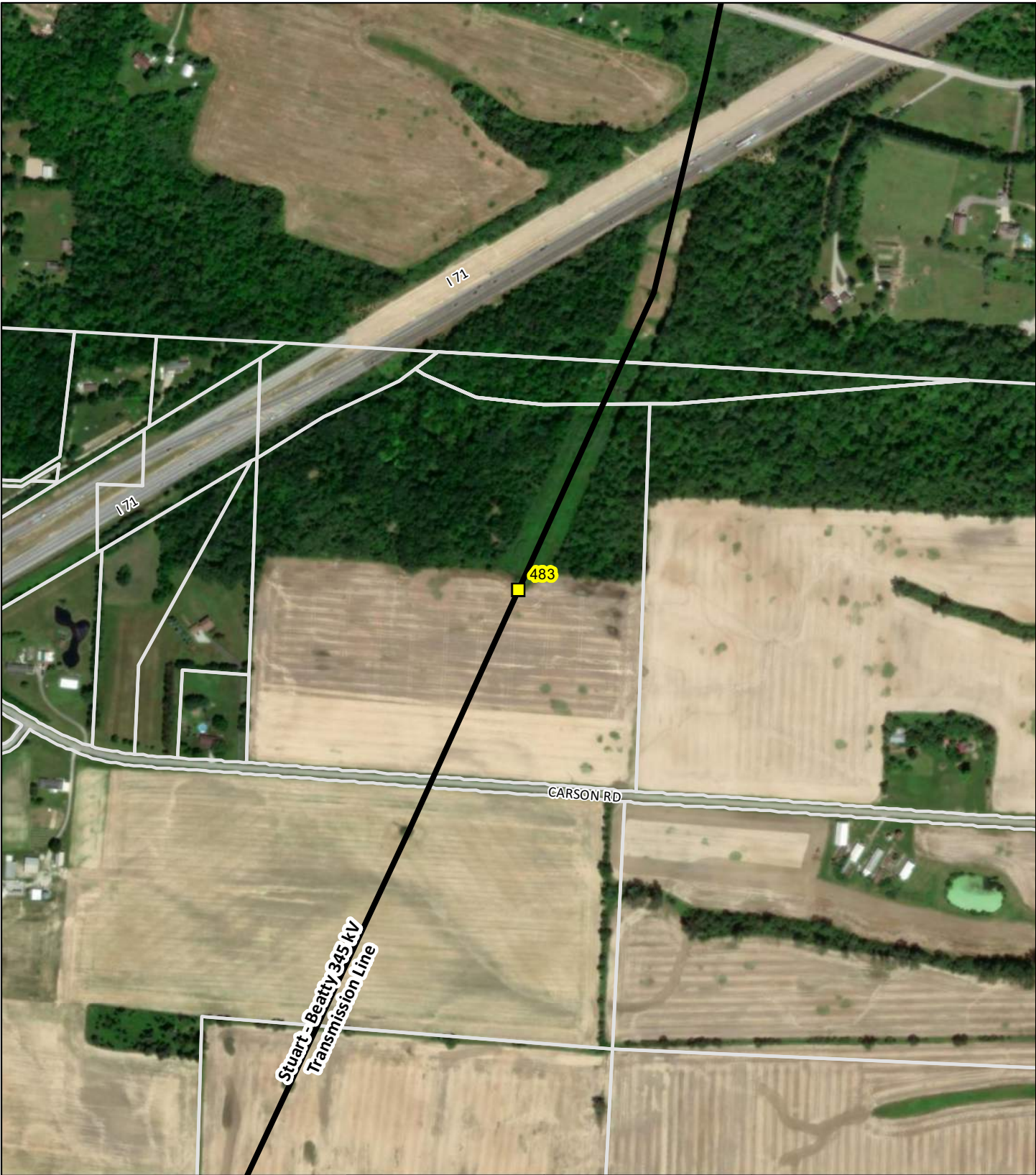
PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO

**FIGURE 2A
PROJECT AERIAL MAP**



Stuart-Beatty 345 kV
Transmission Line
Adjustment Project





Legend:

-  Proposed Structure Raise
-  Existing Transmission Line

Data Sources: AEP,
ESRI World Imagery, 2022

Ohio State Plane South
NAD 1983



August 24, 2026

PROJECT LOCATION

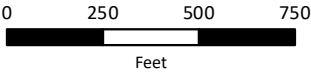


PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO

FIGURE 2B
PROJECT AERIAL MAP



Stuart-Beatty 345 kV
Transmission Line
Adjustment Project



Appendix B Tower Raise Process Summary



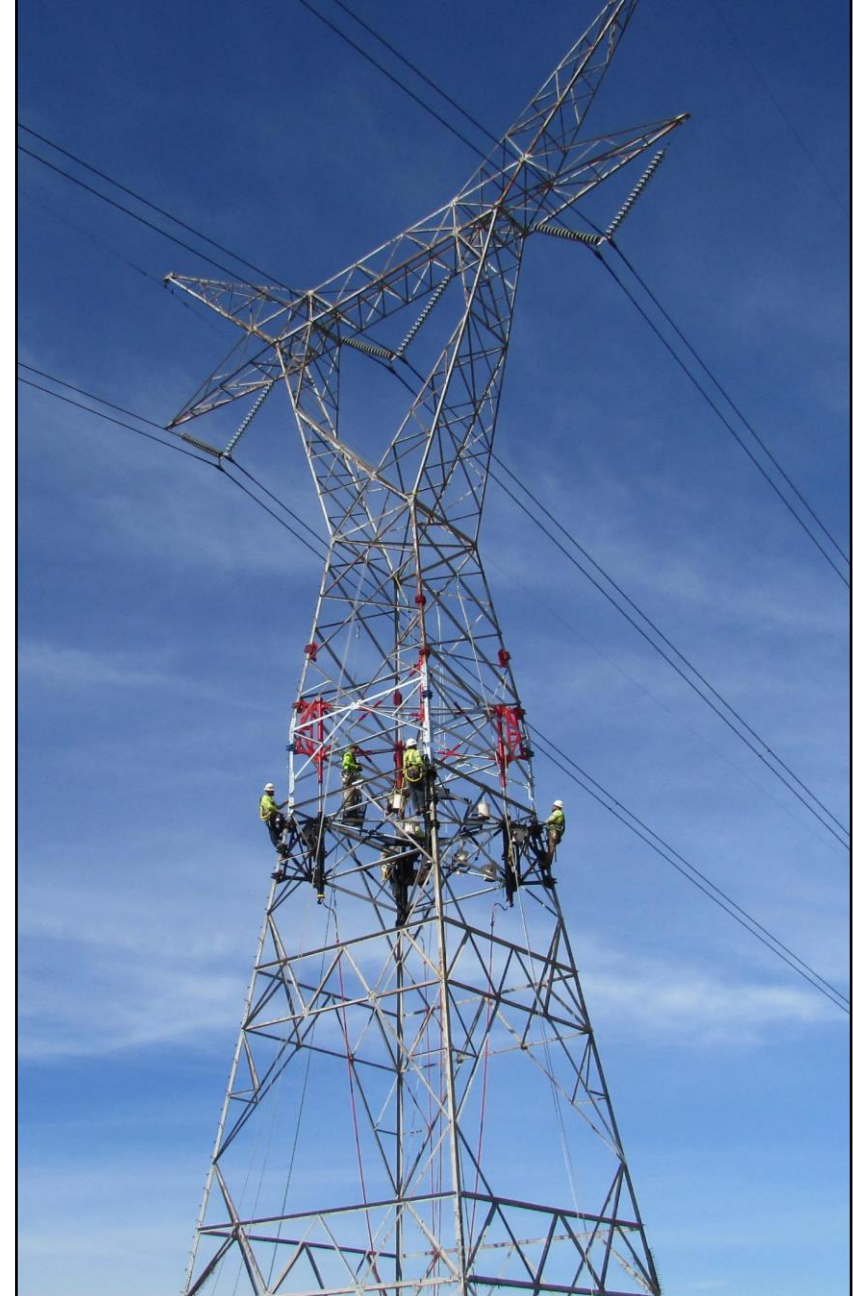
Transmission Line Clearance Enhancement Using the AMPJACK® Lift System



What is the AMPJACK® Lift System

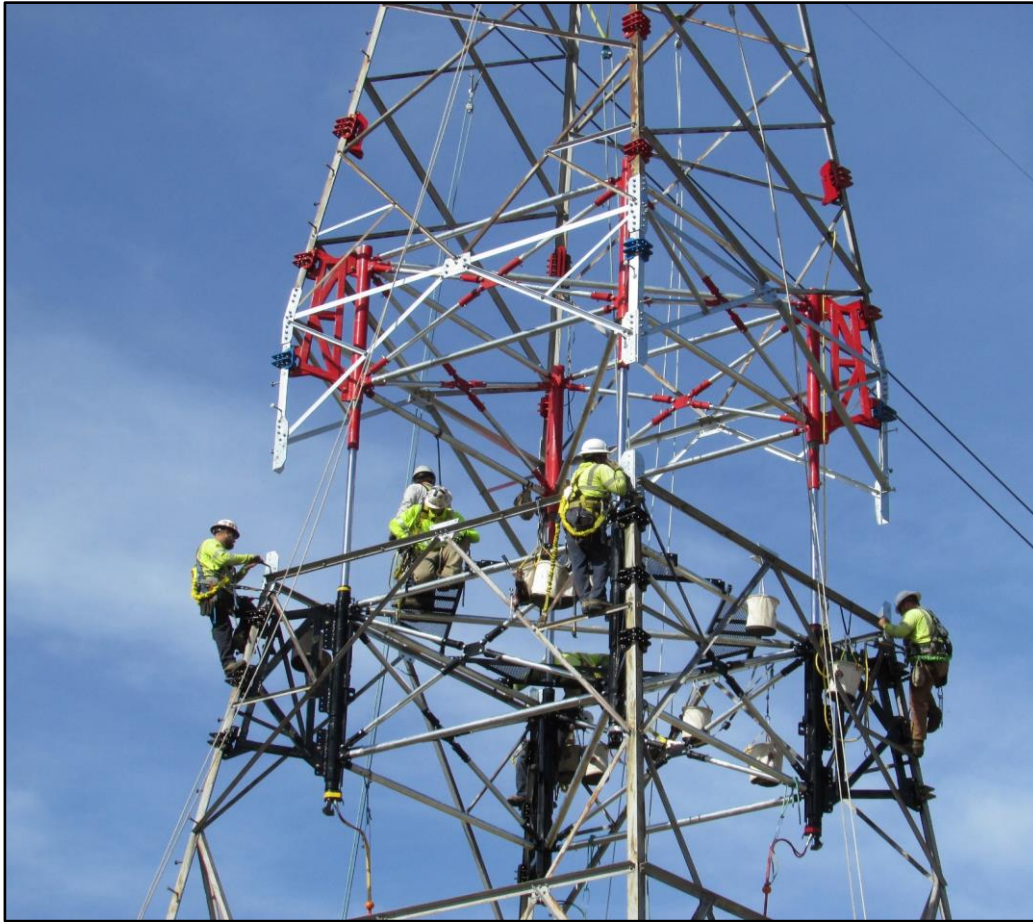
The **AMPJACK® Lift System** is a hydraulically driven, self-contained “crane in a Box” that can be transported and installed easily with minimal environmental impact.

Implemented to increase the height of existing transmission lines without the need of an **Outage.**



AMPJACK® Construction Method

(No Cranes and Minimal Footprint)



- Positive Control = Live Line & Live Load Capabilities
- Eliminates Suspended Loads
- Handles Overturning Loads
Tension/Compression/Shear

AMPJACK® Operational Benefits

- Utilize Existing Structures & Residual Capacity
- Top-Down Engineering
 - Each lift plan evaluates the wire system, structure & foundation
- Increased SAFETY!
 - Tower does not hang from a crane, so there are NO SUSPENDED LOADS!
 - AMPJACK® always maintains positive control of the tower.
- Facilities remain in service, allowing flexibility in scheduling transmission line work.
- Increased productivity—work can be executed at multiple locations in parallel.
- Versatility for efficient integration at tower locations.



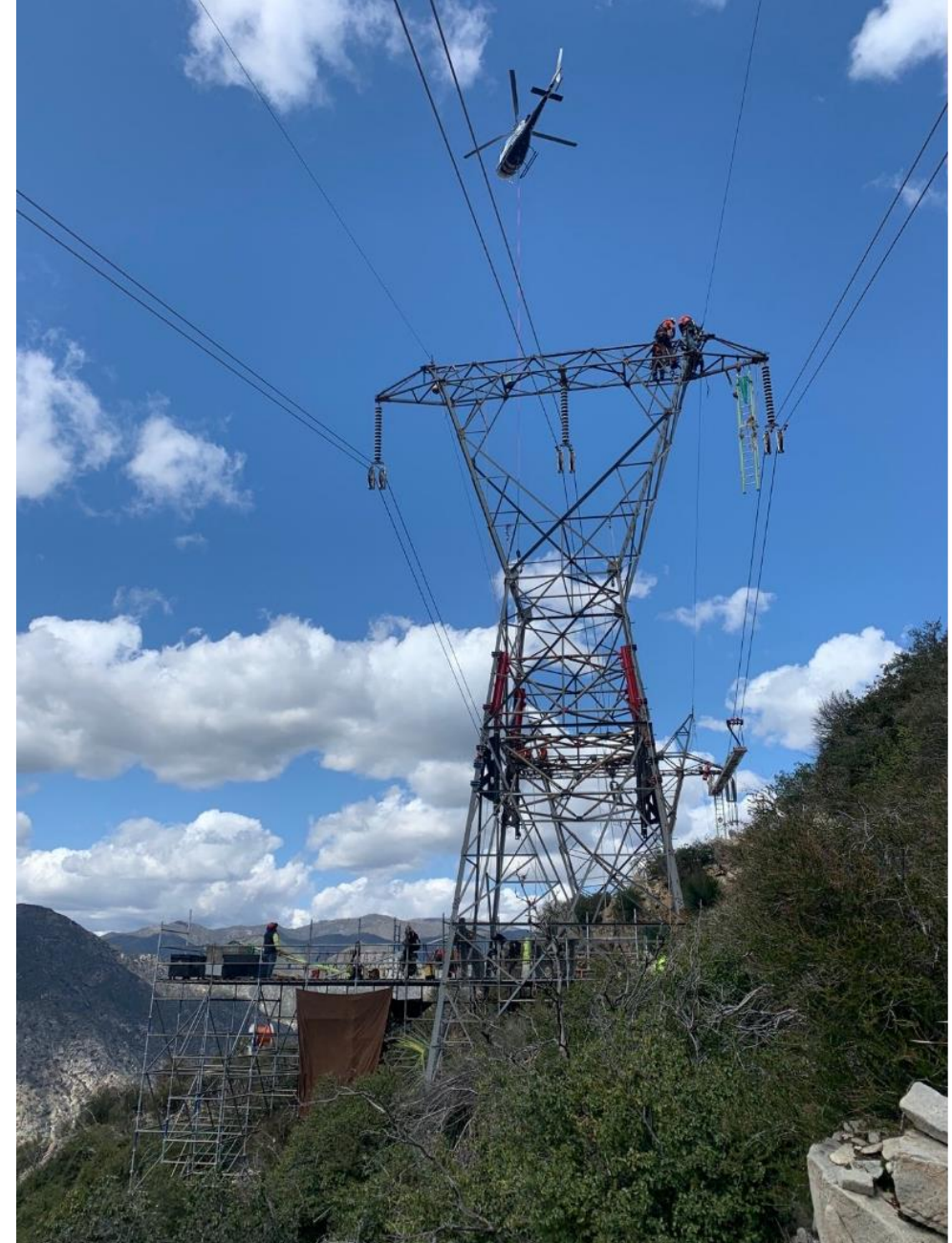
Remote Access Capabilities

Helicopter Access into Remote Areas:

All work at this site included:

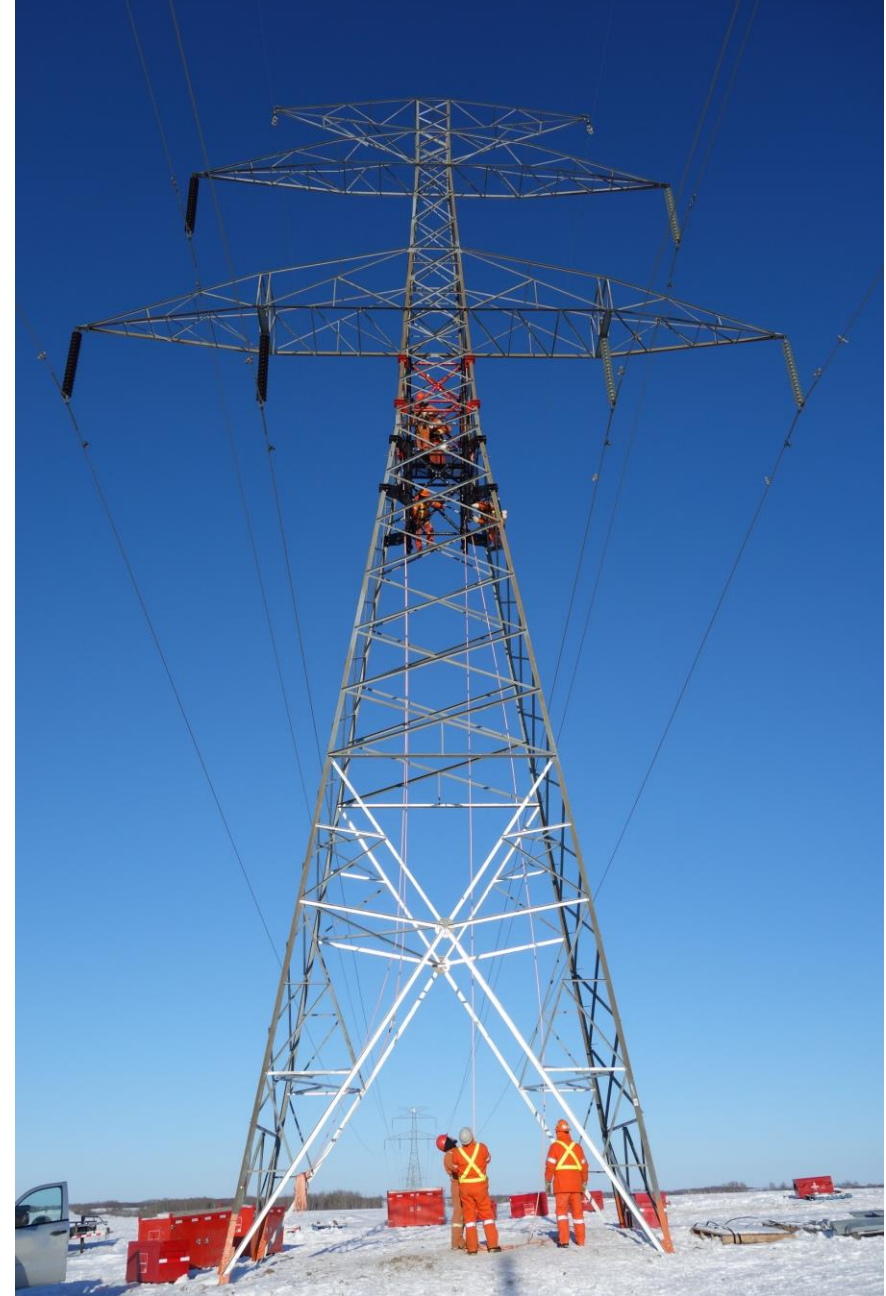
- Custom scaffolding platform installed for crew & equipment access
- Insulator change-outs
- Conductor re-tensioning
- 15Ft. AMPJACK® tower raise completed by helicopter access only

This work caused very little ground disturbance.



AMPJACK® and the *Environment*

- Minimal environmental impact
- No cranes or large aerial equipment needed
- Minimal matting or new access road work required
- Can be installed with a small crew of 10-14
- Install requires only lightweight equipment



Execution

Construction Timelines

- On average, the AMPJACK® system takes...
 - ½ day to 1 ½ days to install – depending on complexity
 - Approx. 2 to 4 hours per 5-ft. lift increment
 - 1 day to remove, clean up and demobilize to next site



Execution



Appendix C Agency Correspondence



In reply, refer to
2023-MLT-56868

January 13, 2026

Ryan J. Weller
Weller & Associates, Inc.
1395 West Fifth Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43212
rweller@wellercrm.com

RE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Remediation Project, Monroe and Darby Townships, Pickaway County, Ohio – Structures 436 and 483

Dear Mr. Weller:

This letter is in response to the correspondence received on December 19, 2025, regarding the proposed Stuart-Beatty 345kV Remediation Project located in Monroe and Darby Townships, Pickaway County, Ohio. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project. The comments of the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) are made pursuant to Section 149.53 of the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) rules for siting this project (OAC 4906-4 & 4906-5). The comments of the Ohio SHPO are also submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 306108 [36 CFR 800]).

The following comments pertain to the *Phase I Archaeological Investigations for Structures 436 and 483 of the Stuart-Beatty 345kV Remediation Project in Monroe and Darby Townships, Pickaway County, Ohio* by Ryan J. Weller (Weller & Associates, Inc. 2025). The submission addresses work areas and access roads associated with the proposed maintenance and raising of Structures 436 and 483 within the Stuart-Beatty transmission line. A literature review, visual inspection, and shovel test unit excavations were conducted for these investigations. There were no previously documented archaeological sites located within the project areas, nor were any new archaeological sites identified during the current survey. Our office agrees no additional archaeological survey is required.

Based on the information provided, it is our office's opinion that the project, as proposed, will have no effect on historic properties. No further coordination with this office is necessary, unless the project changes or unless new or additional cultural resources are discovered during the implementation of this project. In such a situation, this office should be contacted. If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail at cgullett@ohiohistory.org. Thank you for your cooperation.

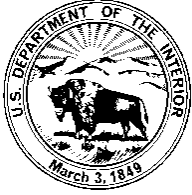
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Gullett".

Catherine Gullett, Project Reviews Coordinator - Archaeology
Resource Protection and Review
State Historic Preservation Office

RPR Serial No. 1112216

United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230
(614) 416-8993 / FAX (614) 416-8994



February 8, 2023

Re: Stuart – Beatty 345kV

Project Code: 2023-0028673

Dear Ms. Speckman:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received your recent correspondence requesting information about the subject proposal. We offer the following comments and recommendations to assist you in minimizing and avoiding adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), as amended (ESA).

Federally Threatened and Endangered Species: The endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) occur throughout the State of Ohio. The Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat may be found 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 breed that may also include adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, woodlots, fallow fields, and pastures. Roost trees for both species include live and standing dead trees ≥ 3 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) that have any exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, hollows and/or cavities. These roost trees may be located in forested habitats as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet 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, rock crevices and abandoned mines.

Seasonal Tree Clearing for Federally Listed Bat Species: The proposed project is in the vicinity of one or more confirmed records of Indiana bats. Should the proposed project site contain trees ≥ 3 inches dbh, we recommend avoiding tree removal 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 removal of any trees ≥ 3 inches dbh only occur between October 1 and March 31. Seasonal clearing is recommended to avoid adverse effects to Indiana bats and northern long-eared bats. While incidental take of northern long-eared bats from most tree clearing is exempted by a 4(d) rule (see <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045>), incidental take of Indiana bats is still prohibited without a project-specific exemption. Thus, seasonal clearing is recommended where Indiana bats are known or assumed present. Please note that, because Indiana bat presence has already been

confirmed in the project vicinity, any additional summer surveys would not constitute presence/absence surveys for this species.

Section 7 Coordination: If there is a federal nexus for the project (e.g., federal funding provided, federal permits required to construct), then 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 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. This letter provides technical assistance only and does not serve as a completed section 7 consultation document.

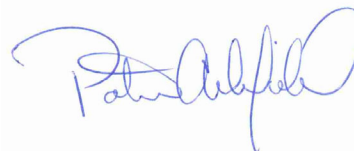
Stream and Wetland Avoidance: Over 90% of the wetlands in Ohio have been drained, filled, or modified by human activities, thus it is important to conserve the functions and values of the remaining wetlands in Ohio (https://epa.ohio.gov/portals/47/facts/ohio_wetlands.pdf). We recommend avoiding and minimizing project impacts to all wetland habitats (e.g., forests, streams, vernal pools) to the maximum extent possible in order to benefit water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. Additionally, natural buffers around streams and wetlands should be preserved to enhance beneficial functions. If streams or wetlands will be impacted, the U.S. Army 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. Disturbed areas should be mulched and revegetated with native plant species. In addition, prevention of non-native, invasive plant establishment is critical in maintaining high quality habitats.

Due to the project type, size, and location, we do not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species, or proposed or designated critical habitat. Should the project design change, or 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, coordination with the Service should be initiated to assess any potential impacts.

Thank you for your efforts to conserve listed species and sensitive habitats in Ohio. We recommend coordinating with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources due to the potential for the proposed project to affect state listed species and/or state lands. Contact Mike Pettegrew, Acting Environmental Services Administrator, at (614) 265-6387 or at mike.pettegrew@dnr.state.oh.us.

If you have questions, or if we can be of further assistance in this matter, please contact our office at (614) 416-8993 or ohio@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Patrice Ashfield
Field Office Supervisor



**Department of
Natural Resources**
ohiodnr.gov

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor
Mary Mertz, Director

Office of Real Estate & Land Management

Tara Paciorek - Chief
2045 Morse Road – E-2
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693

November 19, 2025

Tanner Dickson
V3 Companies
3700 South Boulevard, Suite 200
Charlotte, North Carolina 28209

Re: 25-1612_#210180.102 Stuart Beatty 345kV

Project: The proposed project involves raising two structures along the existing transmission line located at I-71 and Carson Road and extending to Clifton Road and Dennis Road.

Location: The proposed project is located in Franklin and Pickaway Counties, 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: A review of the Ohio Natural Heritage Database indicates there are no records of state or federally listed plants or animals within one mile of the specified project area. Records searched date from 1980.

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.

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

The DOW recommends that impacts to streams, 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 vicinity of records for the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species, and the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), a state endangered species. Because presence of state endangered bat species has been established in the area, summer tree clearing is not recommended, and additional summer surveys would not constitute presence/absence in

the area. However, limited summer tree clearing inside this buffer may be acceptable after further consultation with DOW (contact Eileen Wyza at Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov).

In addition, the entire state of Ohio is within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species, the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), a state endangered species, and the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), a state endangered species. During the spring and summer (April 1 through September 30), these bat species predominately roost in trees behind loose, exfoliating bark, in crevices and cavities, or in clusters of dead leaves on tree limbs. However, these species are also dependent on the forest structure surrounding roost trees. The DOW recommends tree and/or tree limb clearing only occur from October 1 through March 31, conserving trees with loose, shaggy bark and/or crevices, holes, or cavities, as well as trees with a Diameter Breast Height (DBH) $\geq 20''$ if possible.

For every project, the DOW also recommends that a winter bat habitat assessment is conducted to determine if potential hibernacula are present within the project area. This is to limit possible disturbances that seasonal tree clearing and/or subsurface work (e.g., trenching, blasting, etc.) may cause to hibernating bats. Potential hibernacula include rocky outcroppings, caves, and underground mines. Direction on how to conduct winter habitat assessments can be found in the joint guidance [OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE \(OH-FIELD OFFICE\) JOINT GUIDANCE FOR BAT SURVEYS](#). If a potential or known hibernaculum is found, the DOW recommends a 0.25-mile permanent tree clearing buffer around the hibernaculum entrance. Limited summer or winter tree clearing may be acceptable after consultation with the DOW. If a habitat assessment for projects involving subsurface disturbance finds that a potential hibernaculum is present within 5 miles of the project area, please consult with Eileen Wyza for project recommendations. If no tree clearing or subsurface impacts to a hibernaculum are proposed, this project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the following listed mussel species.

Federally Endangered

clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*)
fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*)
northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*)
purple cat's paw (*Epioblasma obliquata*)
rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*)
snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*)

Federally Threatened

rabbitsfoot (*Theliderma cylindrica*)

State Endangered

butterfly (*Ellipsaria lineolata*)
ebonyshell (*Fusconaia ebenus*)
elephant-ear (*Elliptio crassidens*)
long-solid (*Fusconaia subrotunda*)
Ohio pigtoe (*Pleurobema cordatum*)
pyramid pigtoe (*Pleurobema rubrum*)
sharp-ridged pocketbook (*Lampsilis ovata*)
washboard (*Megaloniais nervosa*)

State Threatened

pondhorn (*Uniomerus tetralasmus*)

Salamander Mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*)

Due to the location, and that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream of sufficient size, this project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the following listed fish species.

State Endangered

bigeye shiner (*Notropis boops*)

goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*)

northern brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*)

northern madtom (*Noturus stigmosus*)

shortnose gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*)

spotted darter (*Etheostoma maculatum*)

shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*)

State Threatened

blue sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*)

lake chubsucker (*Erimyzon sucetta*)

paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*)

The DOW recommends no in-water work in perennial streams from March 15 through June 30 to reduce impacts to indigenous aquatic species and their habitat. If no in-water work is proposed in a perennial stream, this project is not likely to impact these or other aquatic species.

The project is within the range of the northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), 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. If this type of habitat will be impacted, construction should be avoided in this habitat during the species' nesting period of April 15 through July 31. If this habitat will not be impacted, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis*), a state threatened species. Sandhill cranes are primarily a wetland-dependent species. On their wintering grounds, they will utilize agricultural fields; however, they roost in shallow, standing water or moist bottomlands. On breeding grounds, they require a rather large tract of wet meadow, shallow marsh, or bog for nesting. If grassland, prairie, or wetland habitat will be impacted, construction should be avoided in this habitat during the species' nesting period of April 1 through August 31. If this habitat will not be impacted, this project is not likely to have an impact on this species.

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

Water Resources: The Division of Water Resources has not conducted a project specific review and/or comments, however, the guidance provided below should be reviewed by the Environmental Review applicant for applicability on this project and subsequent compliance.

If the subject project is in a floodplain regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the [local floodplain administrator](#) should be contacted concerning the possible need for any floodplain permits or approvals. The FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NHFL) Viewer [website](#) can be utilized to see if the project is in a FEMA regulated floodplain. If the project is not in a FEMA regulated floodplain, then no further action is required.

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 1521.16 mandates that any owner of a property or a facility that has the capacity of withdrawing 100,000 gallons per day (gpd) of water from groundwater, surface water, or both must register with the Division of Water Resources' [Water Withdrawal Facilities Registration \(WWFR\) Program](#) and report their withdrawals annually.

Additional coordination may be required depending on the location of the withdrawal and consumptive use. Restrictions or permitting may be required for:

- New or increased consumptive use of water averaging 2 million gallons per day (mgd) within 30 days within the Ohio River basin.
- New or increased withdrawal and consumptive water use in the Lake Erie watershed averaging 1 million gallons per day (mgd) or more in 90 days.
- New or increased water withdrawal directly from Lake Erie averaging 2.5 million gallons per day (mgd) or more in 90 days.
- Diversion or movement of water across the Ohio River and Lake Erie basin divide.

If the project does not involve activities that are subject to water withdrawal regulatory requirements as described above, then no further action is required. For more information, visit the [Water Inventory & Planning website](#).

ODNR appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact Mike Pettegrew (Environmental Services Administrator) at mike.pettegrew@dnr.ohio.gov if you have questions about these comments or need additional information.

Expiration: *ODNR Environmental Reviews are typically valid for 2 years from the issuance date. If the scope of work, project area, construction limits, and/or anticipated impacts to natural resources have changed significantly from the original project submittal, then a new Environmental Review request should be submitted.*

Appendix D Ecological Survey Report

STUART-BEATTY 345kV WERS

ECOLOGICAL REPORT



PROJECT SITE:

Beginning at I-71 and Harrisburg & London Road and
Extending to Five Points Pike and Yankeetown Pike
Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio

PREPARED FOR:

AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.
8600 Smiths Mill Road
New Albany, Ohio 43054



An **AEP** Company

BOUNDLESS ENERGY™

PREPARED BY:

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February 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

V3 Companies, Ltd. (V3) performed an ecological survey and report for the proposed Stuart-Beatty 345kV WERS project on 21 and 22 November 2022. The project consists of five existing structures and associated access routes beginning at I-71 and Harrisburg & London Road in Franklin County, Ohio, and extending to Five Points Pike and Yankeetown Pike in Pickaway County, Ohio (SITE). V3 reached the following conclusions based on review of available and reasonably ascertainable federal, state, and local resources, and a SITE inspection conducted on the date referenced above.

- One stream, ST-486-INT, was identified within the SITE area. The stream would likely qualify as a federally jurisdictional “Water of the U.S.” subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) authority.
- An official species list obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website indicated that the SITE is within the ranges of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), and snuffbox mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*), the proposed endangered tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. V3 did not observe potential roost trees on-SITE at the time of the SITE reconnaissance. The USFWS made recommendations to avoid impacts to on-SITE streams and to avoid clearing potential roost trees for the federally listed bat species outside the recommended seasonal clearing dates. The USFWS stated the due to the project, type, size, and location, the agency does not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species or proposed or designated critical habitat.
- A review of the Ohio Natural Heritage Database with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) indicates records of one state species of special concern within one mile of the specified project area. Additionally, the ODNR Division of Fish and Wildlife stated that the project is within range of 27 threatened or endangered species. The ODNR stated that the project is not likely to impact these species and provided recommendations to avoid and minimize impact to these species and their habitats.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared solely in accordance with an agreement between American Electric Power (“CLIENT”) and V3 Companies (“V3”), Ltd.

The services performed by V3 have been conducted in a manner consistent with the level of quality and skill generally exercised by members of its profession and consulting practices relating to this type of engagement.

This report is solely for the use of CLIENT and was prepared based upon an understanding of CLIENT’s specific objective(s) and based upon information obtained by V3 in furtherance of CLIENT’s specific objective(s). Any reliance of this report by third parties shall be at such third party's sole risk as this report may not contain, or be based upon, sufficient information for purposes of other parties, for their objectives, or for other uses. This report shall only be presented in full and may not be used to support any other objectives than those for CLIENT as set out in the report, except where written approval and consent are expressly provided by CLIENT and V3.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation was to conduct an ecological survey and report of the SITE to evaluate potential land development permitting requirements regarding natural resources. In this report, V3 provides a detailed description of the information reviewed and collected as part of the scope of work for this project. V3 summarizes the jurisdictional framework applicable to this project, provides a desktop review of relevant and publicly available documents, and details information collected during the SITE reconnaissance including a wetlands determination, an evaluation of the potential presence of other natural resources within the SITE boundary, and a discussion of endangered, threatened, and rare (ETR) species and habitat. The Conclusions section summarizes V3’s findings, addresses potential areas of concern and permitting, regulatory, and other relevant issues.

The SITE begins at I-71 and Harrisburg & London Road in Franklin County, Ohio, and extending to Five Points Pike and Yankeetown Pike in Pickaway County, Ohio (**Figure 1**).



CHAPTER 2 JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

2.1 WETLANDS

Wetlands offer a variety of functions and values that may include, but are not limited to, groundwater recharge/discharge, flood flow alteration, sediment/toxicant retention, and fish and wildlife habitat. Because of the perceived functions and values of wetlands, USACE developed the Wetlands Delineation Manual, (*1987 Manual*)¹ to identify wetlands.

Wetlands are defined in the *1987 Manual* as, “Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”² The *1987 Manual* outlines the protocol for distinguishing wetland areas from “upland” areas. Wetland areas are delineated according to three primary criteria: vegetation, soil, and hydrology. An area is determined to qualify as a wetland if it meets the following “general diagnostic environmental characteristics:”

- Hydrophytic vegetation
- Hydrology
- Hydric Soil

¹ USACE. Waterways Experiment Station. Wetlands Research Program. “Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual.” Vicksburg, MS: Environmental Laboratory, 1987



CHAPTER 3 DESKTOP REVIEW

V3 reviewed applicable, readily available, and accessible historical information for the potential presence of wetlands, “Waters of the U.S.,” and other natural resources.

3.1 UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE MAP

A USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle map displays contour lines to portray the shape and elevation of the land surface. Quadrangle maps render the three-dimensional changes in elevation of the terrain on a two-dimensional surface. The maps usually portray both manmade and natural topographic features. Although they show lakes, rivers, various surface water drainage trends, vegetation, etc., they typically do not provide the level of detail needed for accurate evaluation of wetlands. However, the existence of these features may suggest the potential presence of wetlands.

The SITE is situated in the Harrisburg and Five Points, Ohio, USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Maps. V3 evaluated the topography and concluded that the SITE elevation ranges from approximately 805 to 920 feet above mean sea level. Springwater Run is mapped north of Structure 483, at the north end of the SITE and Buskirk Creek is mapped on the southern end of the SITE (**Figure 1**).

3.2 NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps were developed to meet a USFWS mandate to map the wetland and deepwater habitats of the U.S. These maps were developed using high altitude aerial photographs and USGS Quadrangle maps as a topographic base. Indicators that exhibited pre-determined wetland characteristics, visible in the photographs, were identified according to a detailed classification system. The NWI map retains some of the detail of the Quadrangle map; however, it is used primarily for demonstration of wetland areas identified by the agency. The maps are accurate to a scale of 1:24,000. In general, the NWI information requires field verification.

NWI data is shown projected over aerial photography in **Figure 2**. One NWI feature, a riverine, intermittent, streambed, seasonally flooded (R4SBC) polygon is mapped south of Structure 486 within the SITE. The presence of NWI features mapped partially or fully within the SITE area suggests the potential presence of wetlands or other regulated aquatic features on-SITE.

3.3 FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was developed in 1979 to reform disaster relief and recovery, civil defense, and to prepare and mitigate for natural hazards. The Mitigation Division of FEMA manages the National Flood Insurance Program which provides guidance on how to lessen the impact of disasters on communities through flood insurance, floodplain management, and flood hazard mapping. Proper floodplain management has the ability to minimize the extent of flooding and flood damage and improve stormwater quality by reducing stormwater velocities and erosion. The one percent annual chance flood (100-year flood) boundary must be kept free of encroachment as the national standard for the program.

V3 reviewed National Flood Hazard Zone data for Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio. No portion of the SITE is mapped within a Flood Zone or Floodway (**Figure 2**).



3.4 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SOIL SURVEY

V3 reviewed the soils mapped on-SITE in the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) digital soil survey data for Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio. This data is projected over aerial photography, illustrating distinct soil map unit boundaries, in **Figure 3**. Six soil units are classified on-SITE.

Table 1 : Soil Units On-SITE

County	Map Soil Symbol	Description	Hydric Soil
Franklin	CeB	Celina silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	No
	HeF2	Hennepin and Miamian loams, 25 to 50 percent slopes, eroded	No
Pickaway	CrA	Crosby silt loam, Southern Ohio Till Plain, 0 to 2 percent slopes	No
	Ko	Kokomo silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Yes
	MIA	Miamian-Lewisburg silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	No
	MLB	Miamian-Lewisburg silt loams, 2 to 6 percent slopes	No

One of the soil units mapped within the SITE area, Kokomo silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes is considered hydric in Pickaway County, Ohio. Soils are considered hydric if more than 50 percent of the soil contains hydric components according to the NRCS Web Soil Survey. The presence of hydric soil units within the SITE area suggests appropriate wetland soils are located on-SITE.

3.5 ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND RARE SPECIES EVALUATION

An official species list obtained from the USFWS IPaC website indicated that the SITE is within the ranges of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), and snuffbox mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*), the proposed endangered tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The USFWS made recommendations to avoid impacts to on-SITE streams and wetlands, and to avoid clearing potential roost trees for the federally listed bat species outside the recommended seasonal clearing dates. The USFWS stated the due to the project, type, size, and location, the agency does not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species or proposed or designated critical habitat.

A review of the Ohio Natural Heritage Database with the ODNR indicates records of one state species of special concern within one mile of the specified project area. Additionally, the ODNR Division of Fish and Wildlife stated that the project is within range of 27 threatened or endangered species. The ODNR stated that the project is not likely to impact these species and provided recommendations to avoid and minimize impact to these species and their habitats.

Based on the documentation referenced above, additional correspondence with the agencies does not appear to be warranted at this time. If federal permitting or federal financing will be used in future development, additional coordination may be necessary. Copies of agency correspondence can be referenced in **Appendix A**.

Table 2 : ETR Species List

Scientific Name	Common Name	State Listed Status	Federally Listed Status	Typical Habitat Description	Habitat Observed In Survey Area	Avoidance Dates	Agency Comment (Appendix A)	Potential Impacts
Mussels								
<i>Pleurobema clava</i>	Club shell	Endangered	Endangered	Perennial streams	No	N/A	ODNR - Proposed project not likely to impact this species.	No
<i>Villosa fabalis</i>	Rayed bean	Endangered	Endangered	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Epioblasma torulosa rangiana</i>	Northern riffleshell	Endangered	Endangered	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Epioblasma triquetra</i>	Snuffbox	Endangered	Endangered	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Epioblasma o. obliquata</i>	Purple cat's paw	Endangered	Endangered	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica</i>	Rabbitsfoot	Endangered	Threatened	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Elliptio crassidens crassidens</i>	Elephant-ear	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Lampsilis ovata</i>	Pocketbook	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Fusconaia maculata maculate</i>	Long solid	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Megaloniaias nervosa</i>	Washboard	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Pleurobema cordatum</i>	Ohio pigtoe	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Uniomerus tetralasmus</i>	Pondhorn	Threatened	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No
<i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i>	Salamander Mussel	Threatened	N/A	Perennial streams	No	N/A		No

Birds								
<i>Circus hudsonis</i>	Northern harrier	Endangered	N/A	Common migrant and winter species. Nesters occasionally breed in large marshes and grasslands. Hunt over grasslands.	No	15 April to 31 July	ODNR – If habitat will be impacted, construction should be avoided during this species’ nesting period of 15 April to 31 July. If this habitat will not be impacted, this project is not likely to impact this species.	No
Fishes								
<i>Erimyzon claviformis</i>	Western creek chubsucker	Species of Concern	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June	ODNR - Proposed project not likely to impact this species.	No
<i>Hiodon alosoides</i>	Goldeye	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Lepisosteus platostomus</i>	Shortnose gar	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Etheostoma exile</i>	Iowa darter	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Etheostoma maculatum</i>	Spotted darter	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Ichthyomyzon fossor</i>	Northern brook lamprey	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Exoglossum laurae</i>	Tonguetied minnow	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Notropis ariommus</i>	Popeye shiner	Endangered	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Erimyzon sucetta</i>	Lake chubsucker	Threatened	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No
<i>Polyodon spathula</i>	Paddlefish	Threatened	N/A	Perennial streams	No	15 March to 30 June		No

Mammals								
<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Little brown bat	Endangered	N/A	During the spring and summer (April 1 through September 30), these bat species predominately roost in trees behind loose, exfoliating bark, in crevices and cavities, or in the leaves. However, these species are also dependent on the forest structure surrounding roost trees	No	1 April to 30 September	ODNR/USFWS - Cutting of trees is recommended between 1 October and 31 March. If seasonal tree cutting is not possible, a mist net survey or acoustic survey may be conducted by an approved surveyor between 1 June and 15 August. ODNR - If a habitat assessment finds that potential hibernacula are present within 0.25 mile of the project area, please send this information to Erin Hazelton for project recommendations. If a potential or known hibernaculum is found, the Division of Wildlife (DOW) recommends a 0.25-mile tree cutting and subsurface disturbance buffer around the hibernaculum entrance, however, limited summer or winter tree cutting may be acceptable after consultation with the DOW. If no tree cutting or subsurface impacts to a hibernaculum are proposed, this project is not likely to impact these species.	No
<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Northern long-eared bat	Endangered	Threatened		No			
<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Indiana bat	Endangered	Endangered		No			
<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Tricolored bat	Endangered	N/A		No			

CHAPTER 4 SITE RECONNAISSANCE

4.1 METHODOLOGY

V3 conducted a field investigation at the SITE on 21 and 22 November 2022. During this investigation, V3 noted the presumed land use of the SITE and surrounding area and evaluated the SITE for the potential presence of wetlands, “waters of the U.S.,” and natural resources using the findings of the desktop review and field observations. Photographs were taken during the field investigation and are provided in **Appendix B**.

V3 used the Routine Determination Method (RDM) with an established baseline and transects as described in the *1987 Manual* for typical sites over five acres. V3 recorded data from a number of data points (DP) along the transect as a function of diversity of vegetation, property size, soil types, habitat variability, and other SITE features as deemed appropriate by V3. Where evidence of a wetland was suspected, three wetland criteria were applied to determine if the area in question was representative of a wetland using the methodology set forth by USACE. More specifically, V3 visually examined and recorded the dominant vegetation, recorded soil properties such as texture and color using the Munsell Soil Color Chart (Munsell Color Chart), excavated soil pits, and evaluated the primary and secondary hydrologic indicators as discussed in **Section 2.1.2**.

If all three criteria were met, i.e. vegetation, soil properties, and hydrologic indicators, a second DP was established adjacent to the wetland DP in an area outside of the presumed wetland boundary for the purpose of delineating between the wetland and non-wetland areas. Once delineated, V3 continued the RDM to evaluate the remainder of the SITE.

4.2 SITE AND ADJACENT PROPERTY LAND USE

Land use on-SITE is dominated by agricultural land. Adjacent land use consists of woodland, agricultural land, residential areas, and turf.

4.3 WETLAND SUMMARY

Using the methodology set forth in the *1987 Manual* and the *Midwest Regional Supplement*, V3 identified no wetlands within the SITE area.

4.4 DATA POINT SUMMARY

Following is a description of the information collected at each DP during the 21 and 22 November 2022 field investigation. The data points named in reference to the nearest structure where collected. Information that was collected at each DP is summarized on the forms provided in **Appendix C**. DP placement is shown in **Figure 4**.

DP 486

This DP was collected southwest of Structure 486. This area did not meet any criteria. Since all three criteria were not met, this area does not qualify as a wetland. The dominant vegetation for each stratum present consisted of tall fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*, FACU, 80% cover). No indicators of hydric soils were observed. No indicators of wetland hydrology were observed.

DP 483

This DP was collected west of Structure 483. This area did not meet any criteria. Since all three criteria were not met, this area does not qualify as a wetland. The dominant vegetation for each stratum



present consisted of autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*, UPL, 50% cover), tall fescue (FACU, 50% cover), Japanese bristlegrass (*Setaria faberi*, FACU, 20% cover), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*, FACW, 20% cover). No indicators of hydric soils were observed. No indicators of wetland hydrology were observed.

DP 449

This DP was collected south of Structure 449. This area did not meet any criteria. Since all three criteria were not met, this area does not qualify as a wetland. The dominant vegetation for each stratum present consisted of Kentucky blue-grass (*Poa pratensis*, FAC, 35%), hairy crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*, FACU, 30%), and tall fescue (FACU, 30%). No indicators of hydric soils were observed. No indicators of wetland hydrology were observed.

4.5 DRAINAGE FEATURES, STREAMS, AND OTHER POTENTIAL “WATERS OF THE U.S.”

One stream was identified during this investigation using the methods described in Chapter 2. Information that V3 collected at each feature on 21 and 22 November 2022 is described in the following section. An overall SITE delineation map is included as **Figure 4**. The Primary Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index the stream is included as **Appendix D**.

4.5.1 ST-486-INT – (± 200 -linear feet Delineated, Intermittent)

ST-486-INT is located southwest of structure 486 and consisted of approximately 200 linear feet of intermittent stream within the SITE area. The substrate of ST-486-INT consisted of cobble, gravel, sand, and silt. ST-486-INT exhibited an OHWM and will likely qualify as federally jurisdictional “Waters of the U.S.” subject to USACE and OEPA authority.

Table 3: Delineated Stream Identified Within the Survey Area

Feature	Location		Stream Type	Delineated Length (LF)	Bankfull Width (feet)	OHWM Width (feet)	Field Evaluation			OEPA 401 Eligibility
	Latitude	Longitude					Method	Score	Category / Rating / OAC Designation	
ST-486-INT	39.81421°	-83.18940°	Intermittent	± 200 LF	9	5	HHEI	60	Class II Primary Headwater	Possibly Eligible

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

On 21 and 22 November 2022, V3 performed an ecological survey and report for the SITE situated in Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio.

One stream, ST-486-INT, was identified within the SITE area. The streams would likely qualify as a federally jurisdictional “Water of the U.S.” subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) authority.

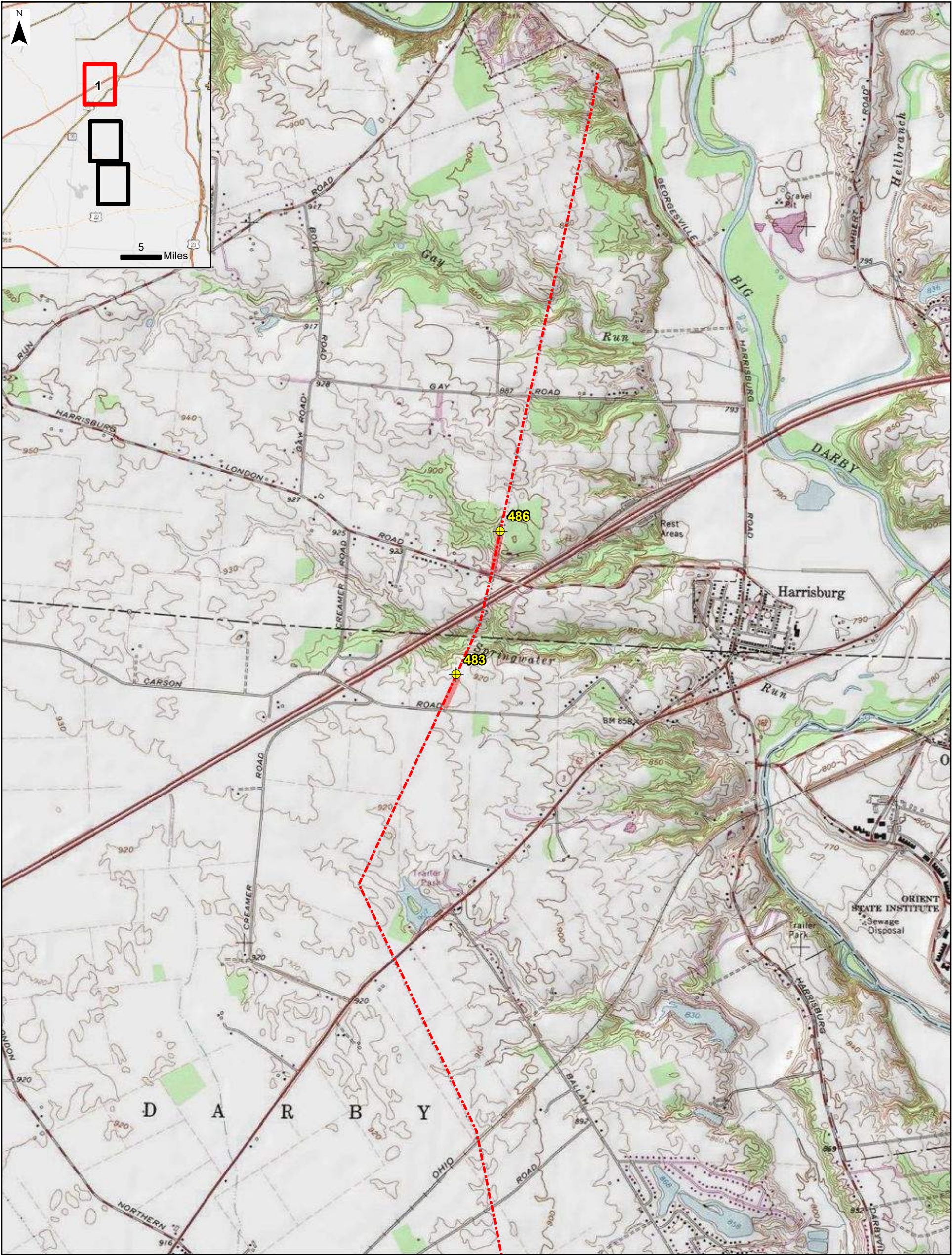
An official species list obtained from the USFWS IPaC website indicated that the SITE is within the ranges of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), and snuffbox mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*), the proposed endangered tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. V3 did not observe potential roost trees on-SITE at the time of the SITE reconnaissance. The USFWS made recommendations to avoid impacts to on-SITE streams and to avoid clearing potential roost trees for the federally listed bat species outside the recommended seasonal clearing dates. The USFWS stated the due to the project, type, size, and location, the agency does not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species or proposed or designated critical habitat.

A review of the Ohio Natural Heritage Database with the ODNR indicates records of one state species of special concern within one mile of the specified project area. Additionally, the ODNR Division of Fish and Wildlife stated that the project is within range of 27 threatened or endangered species. The ODNR stated that the project is not likely to impact these species and provided recommendations to avoid and minimize impact to these species and their habitats.



FIGURES

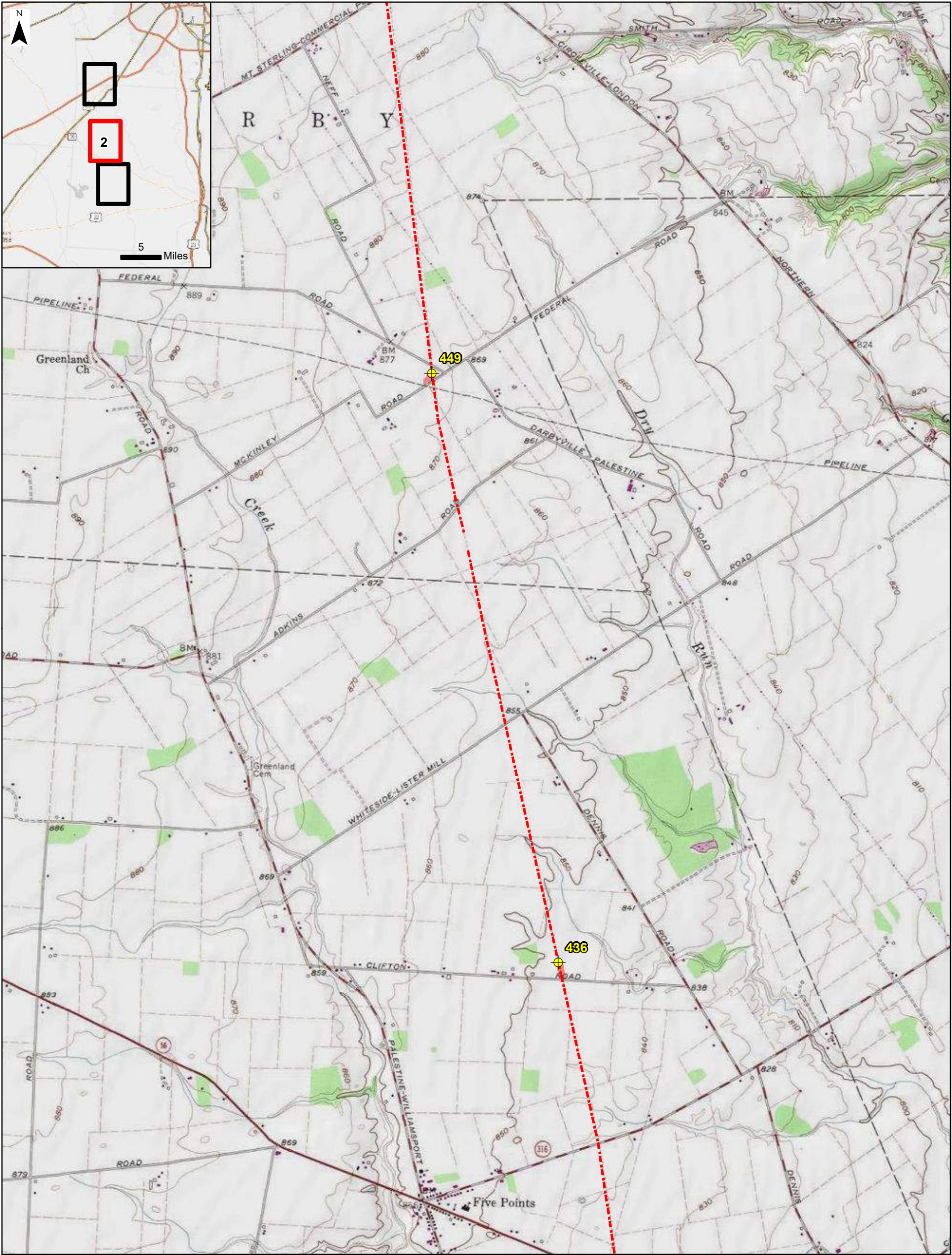




LEGEND:

- Project Structure
- Transmission Line
- Access Route Provided by AEP

 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP	 0 1,000 2,000 Feet SCALE: 1:24,000 FIGURE: Figure 1 Page 1 of 3
	CREATED BY: ODS		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 12/29/2022	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	
	BASE LAYER: USA Topographic Map		



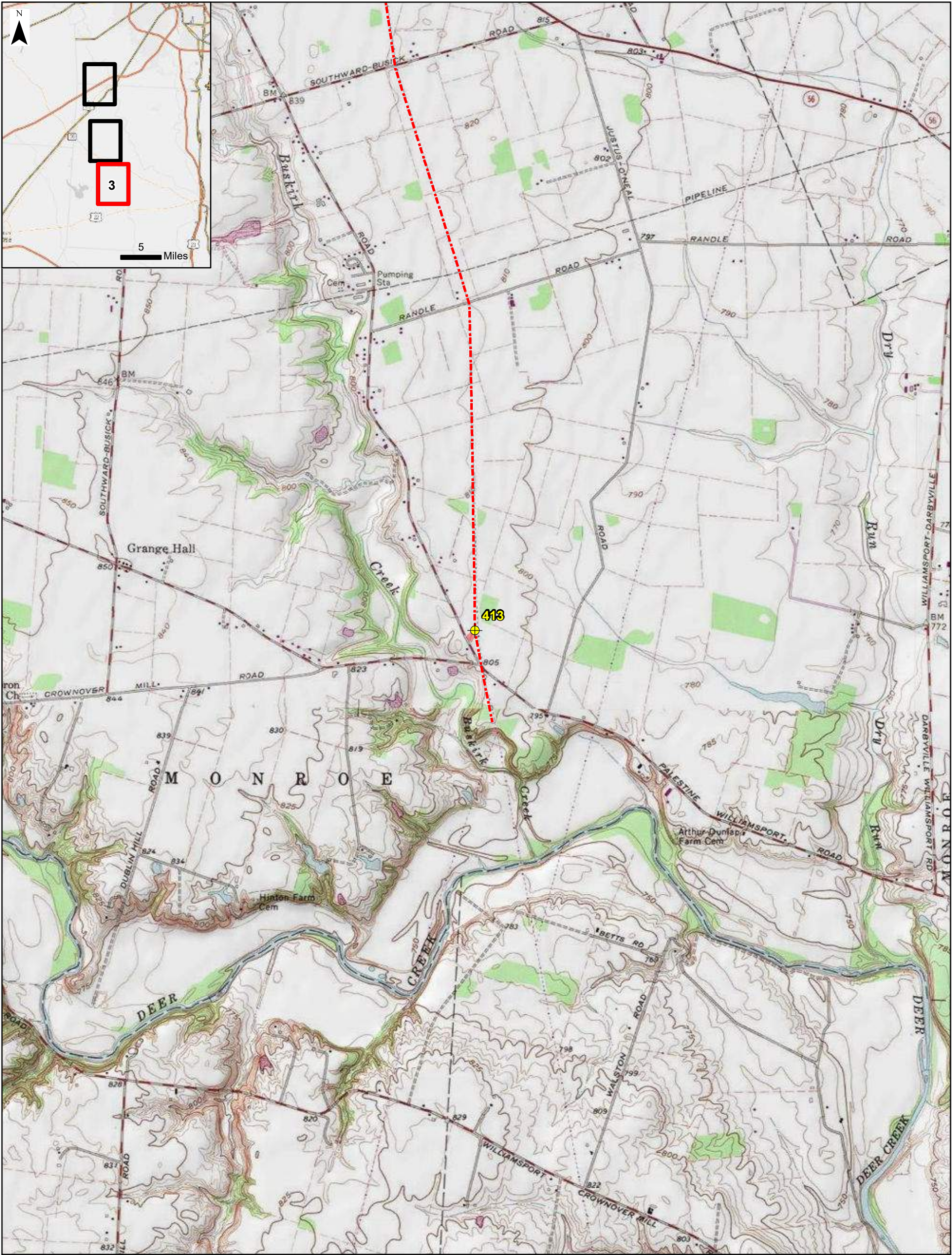
LEGEND:

Project Structure

Transmission Line

Access Route Provided by AEP

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	CREATED BY: ODS		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 12/29/2022	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:24,000
	BASE LAYER: USA Topographic Map		FIGURE: Figure 1 Page 2 of 3



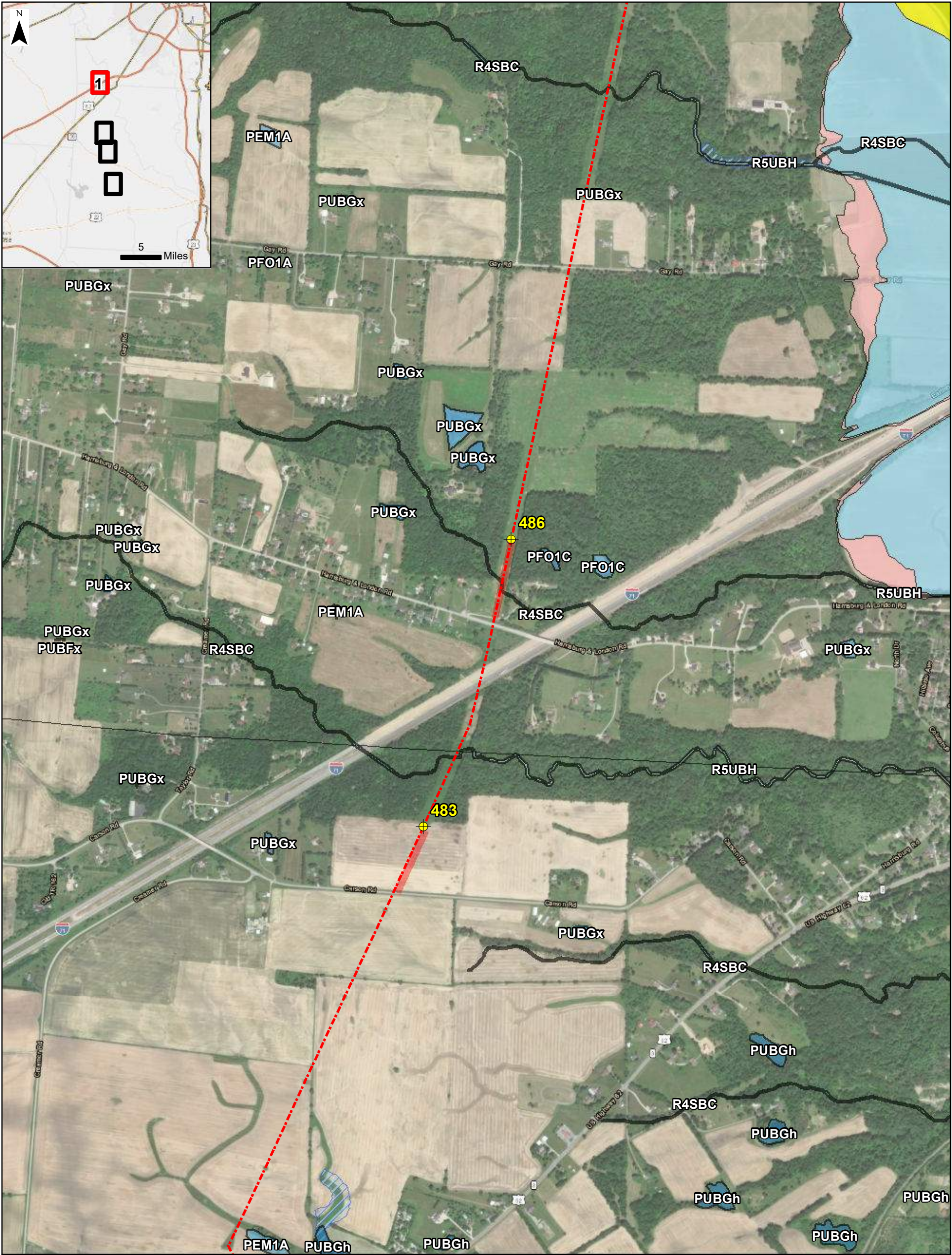
LEGEND:

 Project Structure

 Transmission Line

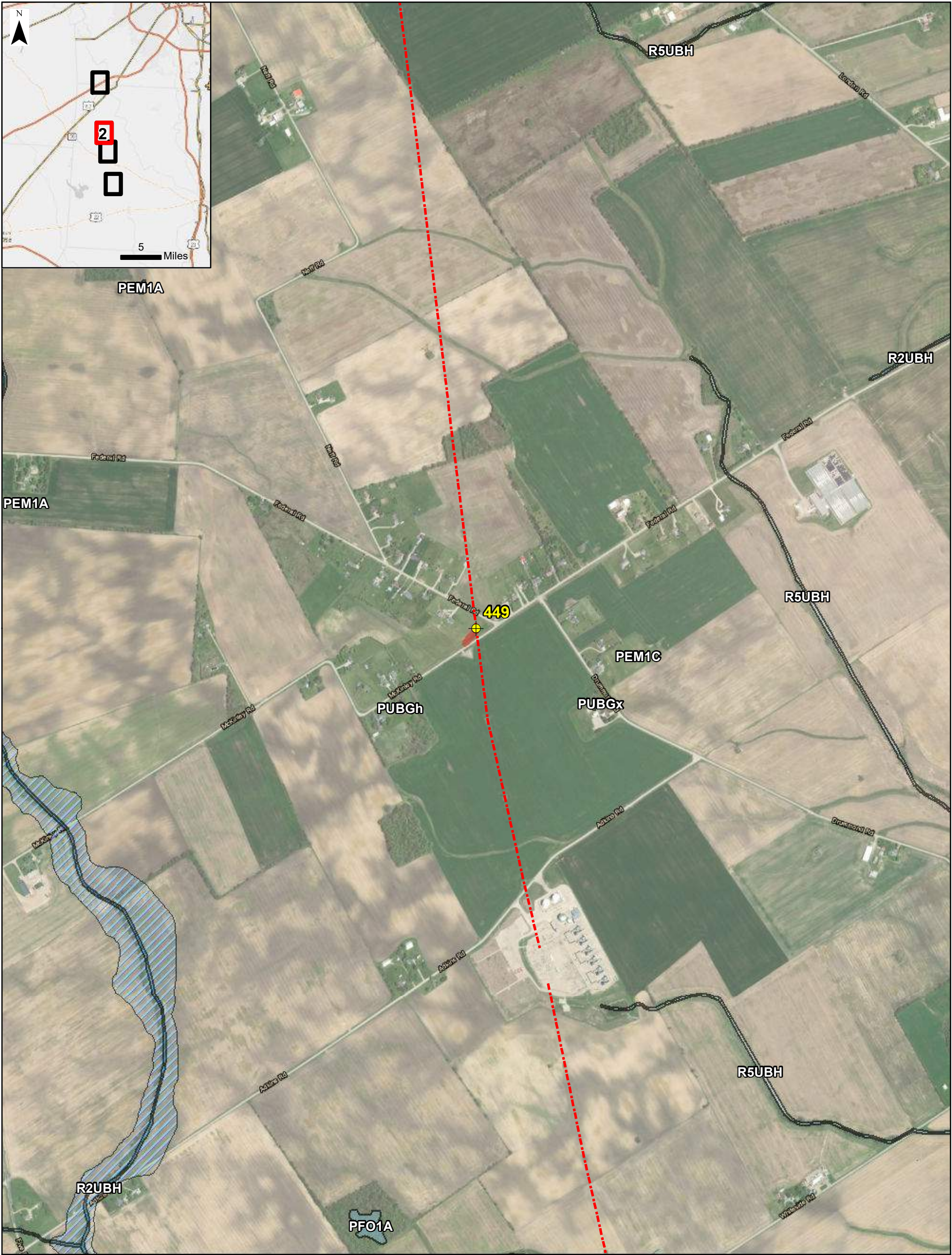
 Access Route Provided by AEP

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	CREATED BY: ODS		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 12/29/2022	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:24,000
	BASE LAYER: USA Topographic Map		FIGURE: Figure 1 Page 3 of 3



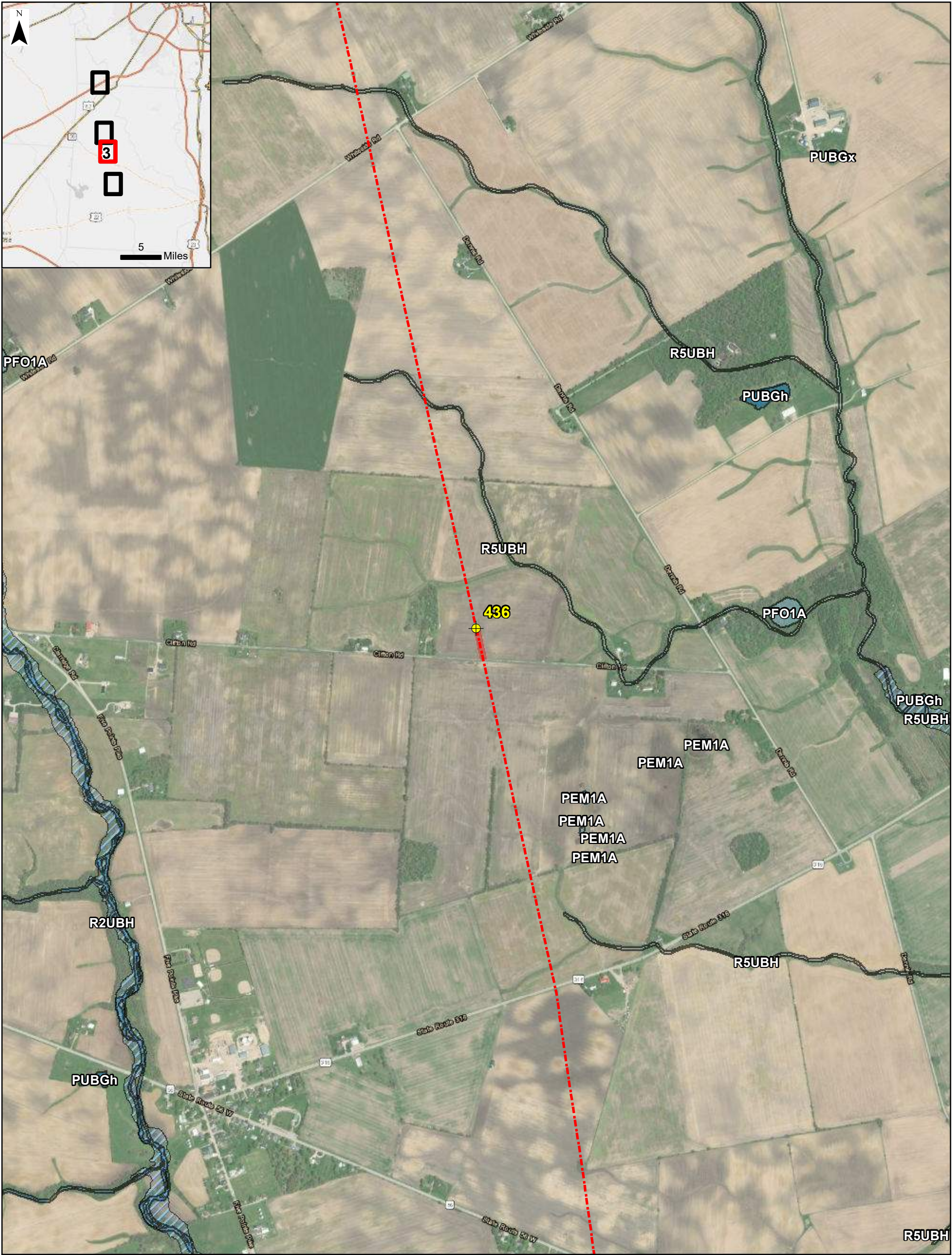
LEGEND:		
	Project Structure	 Zone A
	Transmission Line	 Zone AE
	Access Route Provided by AEP	 Zone AE, Floodway
		 Zone X, 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
		 Zone X
		 Area Not Included

 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: FLOOD ZONES OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO, & NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP	 0 500 1,000 Feet
	CREATED BY: MAR		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin & Pickaway County, Ohio	SCALE: 1:12,000
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 2 Page 1 of 4



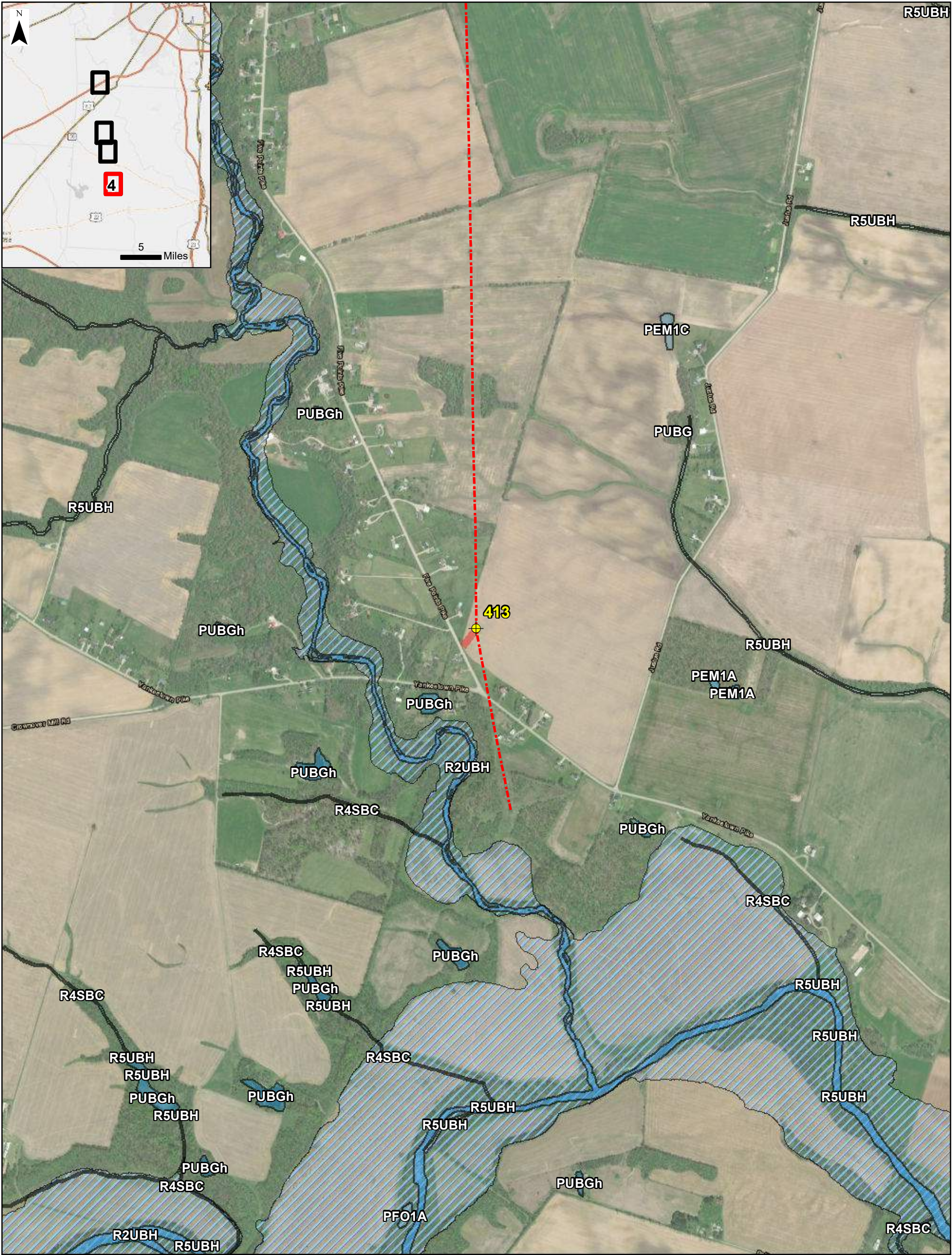
LEGEND:			
	Project Structure		Zone A
	Transmission Line		Zone AE
	Access Route Provided by AEP		Zone AE, Floodway
			Zone X, 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
			Zone X
			Area Not Included

	8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: FLOOD ZONES OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO, & NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP	 0 500 1,000 Feet
		CREATED BY: MAR		
	619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin & Pickaway County, Ohio	SCALE: 1:12,000
		BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 2 Page 2 of 4



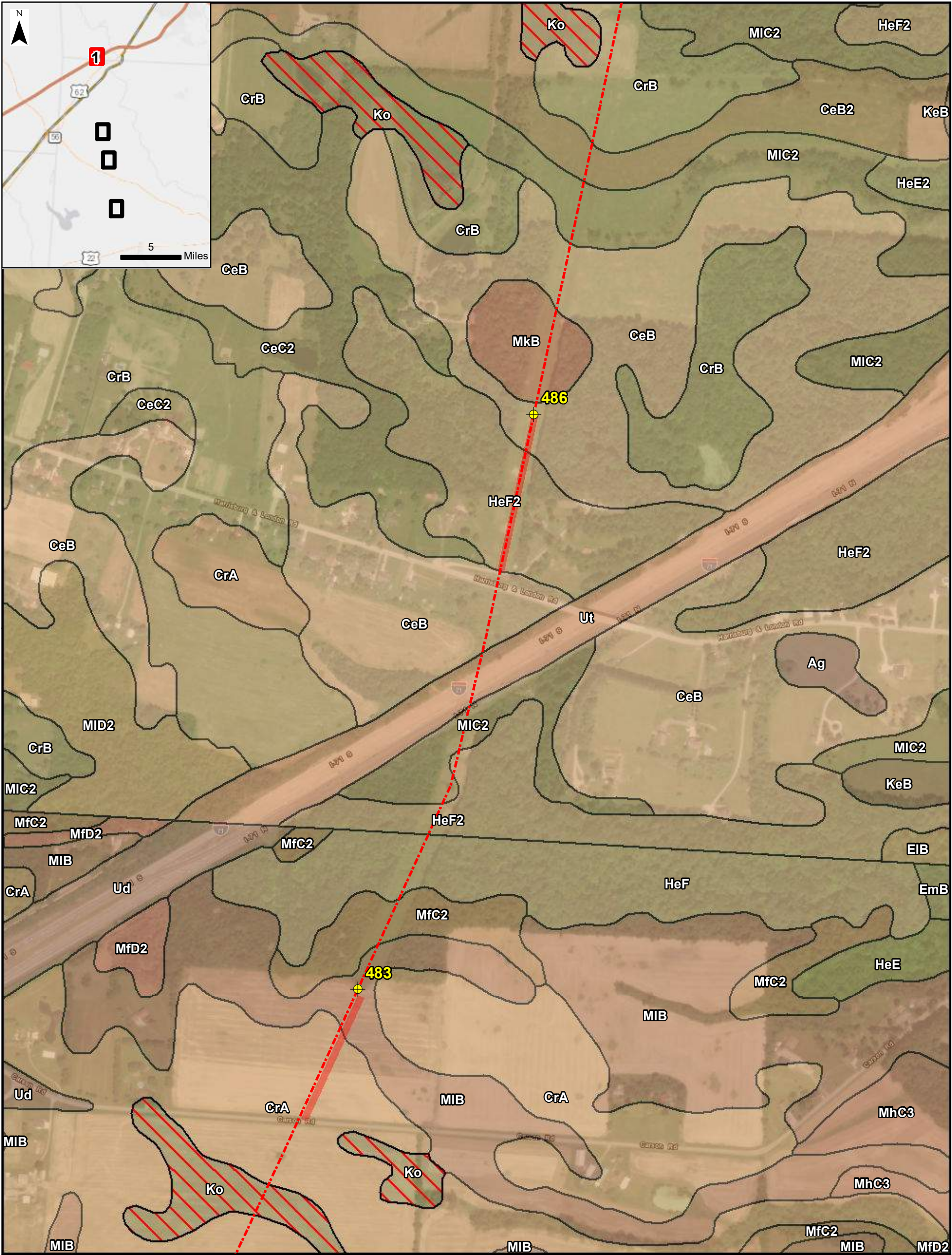
LEGEND:		
	Project Structure	Zone A
	Transmission Line	Zone AE
	Access Route Provided by AEP	Zone AE, Floodway
		Zone X, 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
		Zone X
		Area Not Included

	8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: FLOOD ZONES OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO, & NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP	
		CREATED BY: MAR		
	619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin & Pickaway County, Ohio	SCALE: 1:12,000
		BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 2 Page 3 of 4



LEGEND:					
	Project Structure		Zone A		Zone X, 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
	Transmission Line		Zone AE		Zone X
	Access Route Provided by AEP		Zone AE, Floodway		Area Not Included

	8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.:	210180.102	TITLE: FLOOD ZONES OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTY, OHIO, & NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP	 0 500 1,000 Feet
		CREATED BY:	MAR		
	619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE:	01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin & Pickaway County, Ohio	SCALE: 1:12,000
		BASE LAYER:	Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 2 Page 4 of 4



LEGEND:

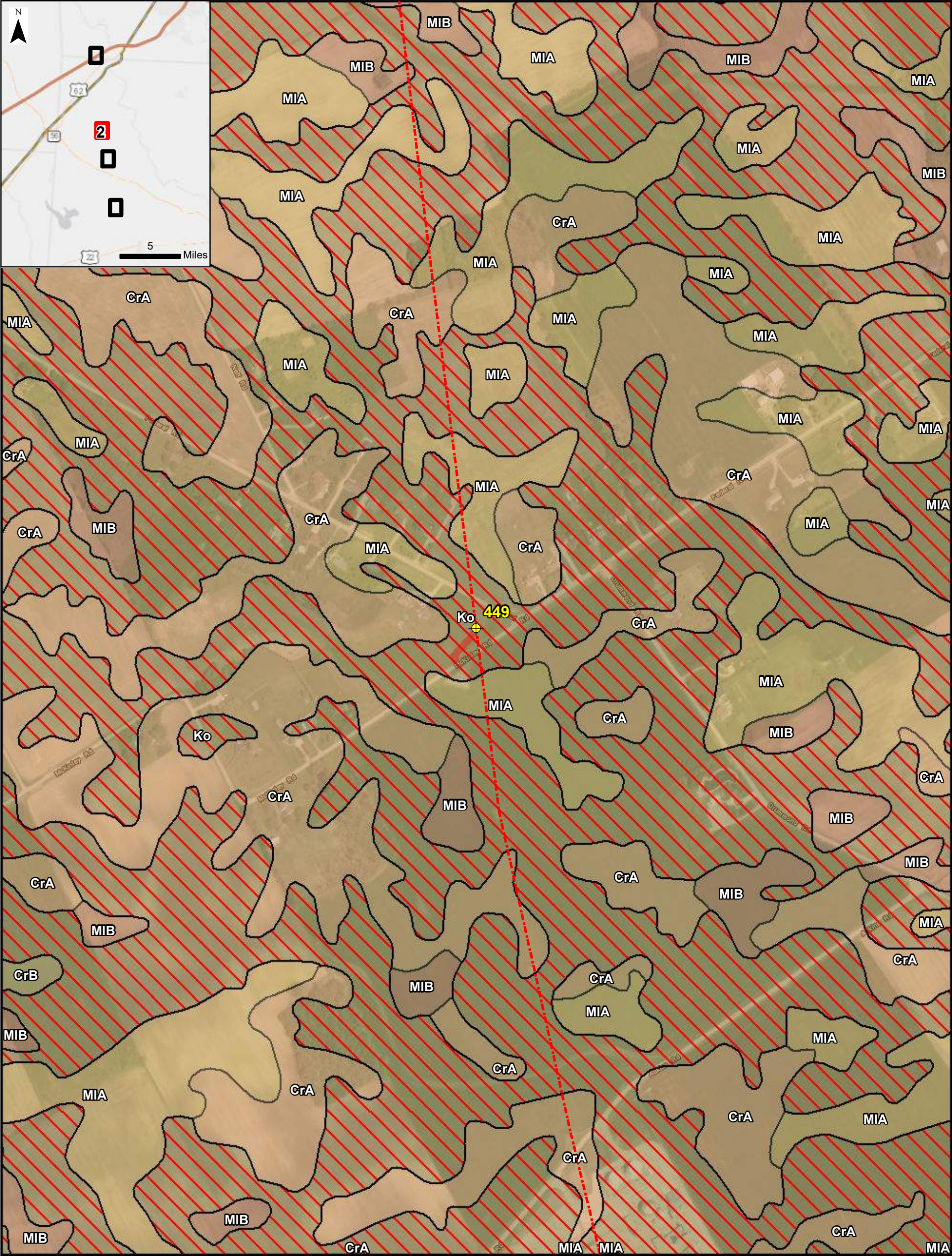
 Project Structure

 Transmission Line

 Access Route Provided by AEP

 Hydric Soils of Ohio

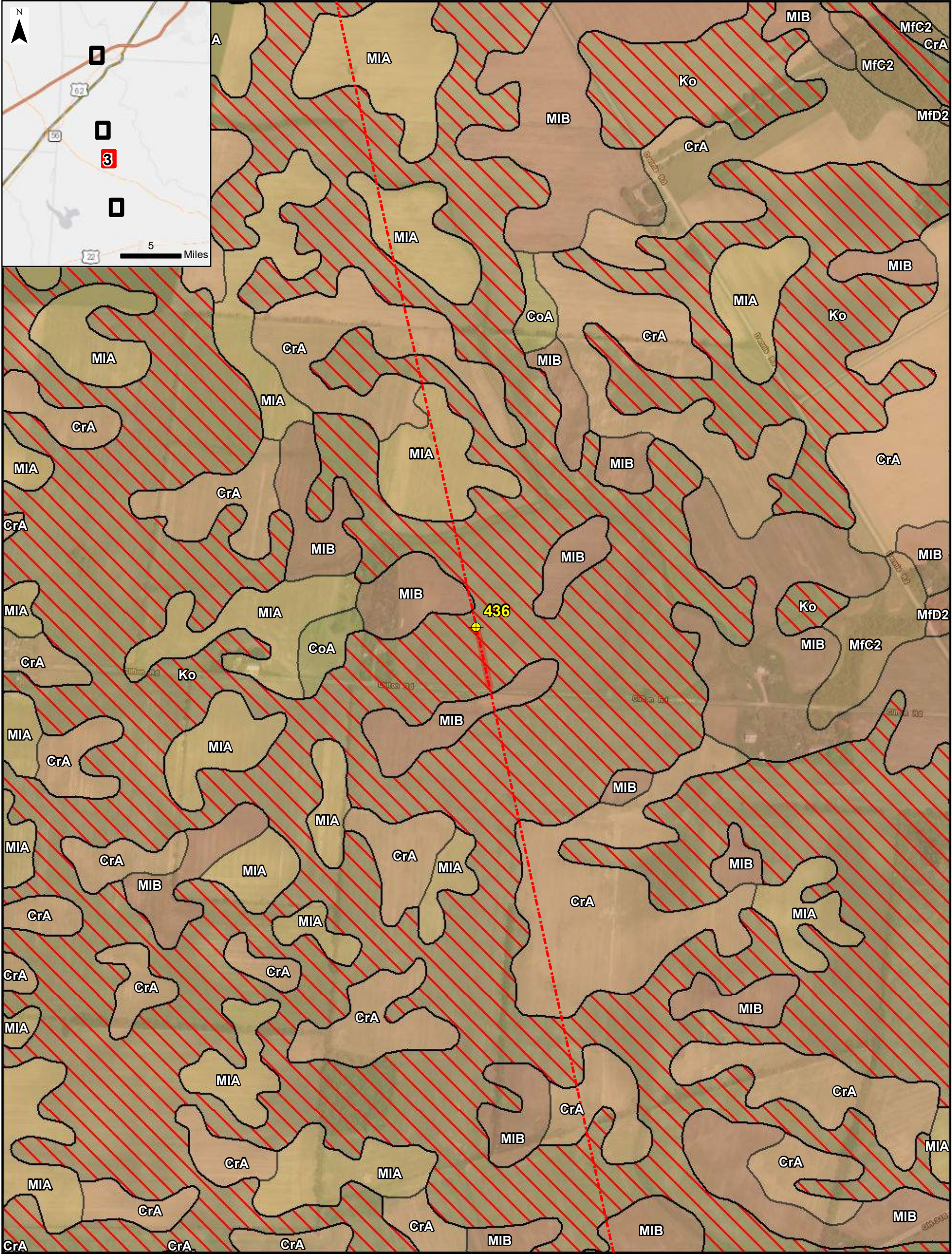
 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: SOIL SURVEY OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTIES, OH (2020) MAP	 0 250 500 Feet
	CREATED BY: MAR		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:6,000
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 3, Page 1 of 4



LEGEND:

- Project Structure
- Transmission Line
- Access Route Provided by AEP
- Hydric Soils of Ohio

 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: SOIL SURVEY OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTIES, OH (2020) MAP	 0 250 500 Feet SCALE: 1:6,000 FIGURE: Figure 3, Page 2 of 4
	CREATED BY: MAR		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		



LEGEND:

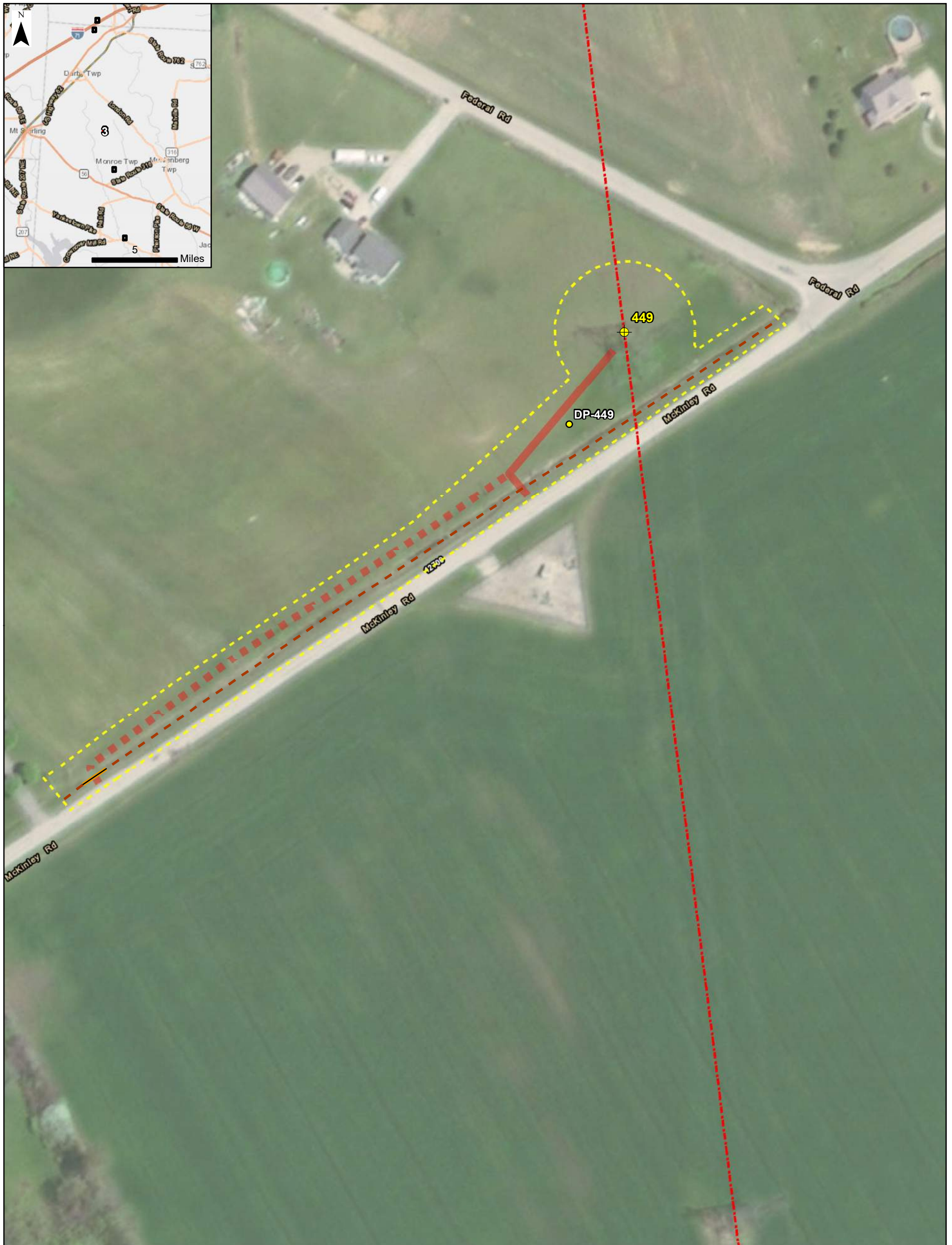
 Project Structure

 Transmission Line

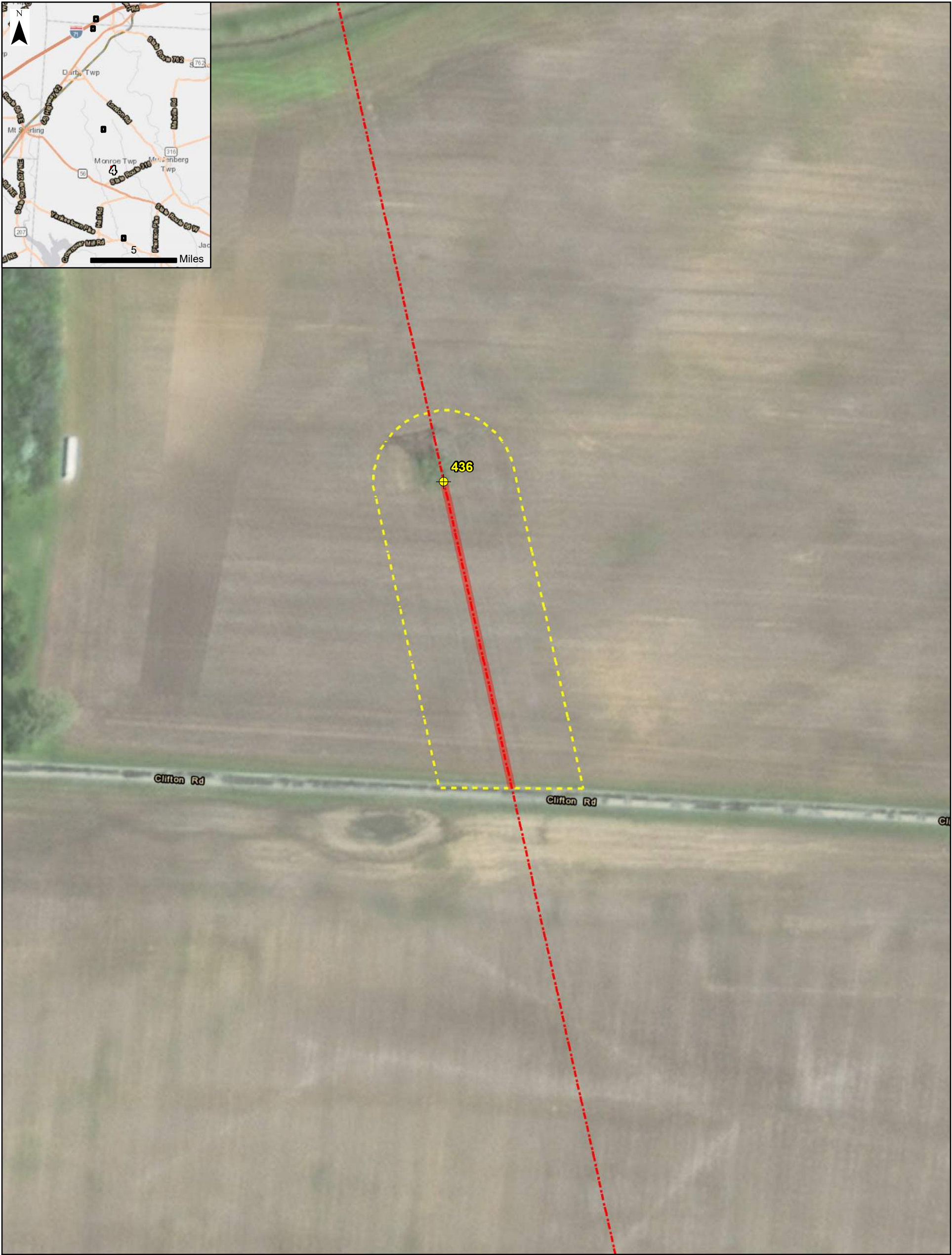
 Access Route Provided by AEP

 Hydric Soils of Ohio

 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: SOIL SURVEY OF FRANKLIN AND PICKAWAY COUNTIES, OH (2020) MAP	 0 250 500 Feet
	CREATED BY: MAR		
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 01/30/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:6,000
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2021)		FIGURE: Figure 3, Page 3 of 4



LEGEND:  Project Structure  Transmission Line  Access Route Provided by AEP  Proposed Alternate Access Route  Investigated Area  Data Point  Existing Culvert  Existing Fence  Intermittent Stream  Ditch				
 8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: WETLAND DELINEATION MAP	 050100 Feet	
	CREATED BY: ODS			
 619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 02/22/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:1,200	
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2022)		FIGURE: Figure 4, 3 of 5	



LEGEND:			
	Project Structure		Data Point
	Transmission Line		Existing Culvert
	Access Route Provided by AEP		Existing Fence
	Proposed Alternate Access Route		Intermittent Stream
	Investigated Area		Ditch

	8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.:	210180.102	TITLE: WETLAND DELINEATION MAP	
		CREATED BY:	ODS		
	619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE:	02/22/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:1,200
		BASE LAYER:	Aerial Imagery (2022)		FIGURE: Figure 4, 4 of 5



LEGEND:

Project Structure

Data Point

Transmission Line

Existing Culvert

Access Route Provided by AEP

Existing Fence

Proposed Alternate Access Route

Intermittent Stream

Investigated Area

Ditch

8600 Smiths Mill Road New Albany, Ohio 43054 www.aep.com	PROJECT NO.: 210180.102	TITLE: WETLAND DELINEATION MAP	 0 50 100 Feet
	CREATED BY: ODS		
619 N. Pennsylvania Street Indianapolis, IN 46204 www.v3co.com	DATE: 02/22/2023	SITE: Stuart-Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Franklin and Pickaway Counties, Ohio	SCALE: 1:1,200
	BASE LAYER: Aerial Imagery (2022)		FIGURE: Figure 4, 5 of 5

APPENDIX A

ETR SPECIES CORRESPONDENCE





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ohio Ecological Services Field Office

4625 Morse Road, Suite 104

Columbus, OH 43230-8355

Phone: (614) 416-8993 Fax: (614) 416-8994



In Reply Refer To:

Project Code: 2023-0028673

Project Name: Stuart - Beatty 345kV

December 27, 2022

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological

evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations.php>.

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures see <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/threats-to-birds.php>.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/executive-orders/e0-13186.php>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Ohio Ecological Services Field Office

4625 Morse Road, Suite 104

Columbus, OH 43230-8355

(614) 416-8993

Project Summary

Project Code: 2023-0028673

Project Name: Stuart - Beatty 345kV

Project Type: Transmission Line - Maintenance/Modification - Above Ground

Project Description: Transmission Line structure replacement

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@39.719986750000004,-83.17971598634307,14z>



Counties: Franklin and Pickaway counties, Ohio

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 6 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Indiana Bat <i>Myotis sodalis</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5949	Endangered
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered
Tricolored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515	Proposed Endangered

Clams

NAME	STATUS
Rayed Bean <i>Villosa fabalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5862	Endangered
Snuffbox Mussel <i>Epioblasma triquetra</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4135	Endangered

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

IPaC User Contact Information

Agency: V3 Companies

Name: Michael Raun

Address: 619 N. Pennsylvania Street

City: Indianapolis

State: IN

Zip: 46204

Email: mraun@v3co.com

Phone: 3179185041

United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230
(614) 416-8993 / FAX (614) 416-8994



February 8, 2023

Re: Stuart – Beatty 345kV

Project Code: 2023-0028673

Dear Ms. Speckman:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received your recent correspondence requesting information about the subject proposal. We offer the following comments and recommendations to assist you in minimizing and avoiding adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), as amended (ESA).

Federally Threatened and Endangered Species: The endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) occur throughout the State of Ohio. The Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat may be found 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 breed that may also include adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, woodlots, fallow fields, and pastures. Roost trees for both species include live and standing dead trees ≥ 3 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) that have any exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, hollows and/or cavities. These roost trees may be located in forested habitats as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet 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, rock crevices and abandoned mines.

Seasonal Tree Clearing for Federally Listed Bat Species: The proposed project is in the vicinity of one or more confirmed records of Indiana bats. Should the proposed project site contain trees ≥ 3 inches dbh, we recommend avoiding tree removal 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 removal of any trees ≥ 3 inches dbh only occur between October 1 and March 31. Seasonal clearing is recommended to avoid adverse effects to Indiana bats and northern long-eared bats. While incidental take of northern long-eared bats from most tree clearing is exempted by a 4(d) rule (see <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045>), incidental take of Indiana bats is still prohibited without a project-specific exemption. Thus, seasonal clearing is recommended where Indiana bats are known or assumed present. Please note that, because Indiana bat presence has already been

confirmed in the project vicinity, any additional summer surveys would not constitute presence/absence surveys for this species.

Section 7 Coordination: If there is a federal nexus for the project (e.g., federal funding provided, federal permits required to construct), then 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 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. This letter provides technical assistance only and does not serve as a completed section 7 consultation document.

Stream and Wetland Avoidance: Over 90% of the wetlands in Ohio have been drained, filled, or modified by human activities, thus it is important to conserve the functions and values of the remaining wetlands in Ohio (https://epa.ohio.gov/portals/47/facts/ohio_wetlands.pdf). We recommend avoiding and minimizing project impacts to all wetland habitats (e.g., forests, streams, vernal pools) to the maximum extent possible in order to benefit water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. Additionally, natural buffers around streams and wetlands should be preserved to enhance beneficial functions. If streams or wetlands will be impacted, the U.S. Army 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. Disturbed areas should be mulched and revegetated with native plant species. In addition, prevention of non-native, invasive plant establishment is critical in maintaining high quality habitats.

Due to the project type, size, and location, we do not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species, or proposed or designated critical habitat. Should the project design change, or 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, coordination with the Service should be initiated to assess any potential impacts.

Thank you for your efforts to conserve listed species and sensitive habitats in Ohio. We recommend coordinating with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources due to the potential for the proposed project to affect state listed species and/or state lands. Contact Mike Pettegrew, Acting Environmental Services Administrator, at (614) 265-6387 or at mike.pettegrew@dnr.state.oh.us.

If you have questions, or if we can be of further assistance in this matter, please contact our office at (614) 416-8993 or ohio@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Patrice Ashfield
Field Office Supervisor

cc: Nathan Reardon, ODNR-DOW
Eileen Wyza, ODNR-DOW



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

MIKE DEWINE, GOVERNOR

MARY MERTZ, DIRECTOR

Office of Real Estate

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Olivia Speckman
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Re: 23-0082; Stuart Beatty 345kV Transmission Line Remediation Project

Project: The proposed project involves replacing five structures along the existing transmission line located at I-71 and Harrisburg & London Road.

Location: The proposed project is located in Pleasant, Darby, and Monroe townships, Franklin and Pickaway counties, 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 data within one mile of the project area:

Western Creek Chubsucker (*Erimyzon claviformis*), state species of concern

The review was performed on the specified project area as well as an additional one-mile radius. Records searched date from 1980. Please note that Ohio has not been completely surveyed and we rely on receiving information from many sources. Therefore, a lack of records for an area is not a statement that rare species or unique features are absent from that area.

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

The DOW recommends that impacts to streams, 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 vicinity of records for the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a state endangered and federally threatened species, and the little brown bat

(*Myotis lucifugus*), a state endangered species. Because presence of state endangered bat species has been established in the area, summer tree cutting is not recommended, and additional summer surveys would not constitute presence/absence in the area. However, limited summer tree cutting inside this buffer may be acceptable after further consultation with DOW (contact Eileen Wyza at Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov).

In addition, the entire state of Ohio is within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a state endangered and federally endangered species, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a state endangered and federally threatened species, the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), a state endangered species, and the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), a state endangered species. During the spring and summer (April 1 through September 30), these bat species predominately roost in trees behind loose, exfoliating bark, in crevices and cavities, or in the leaves. However, these species are also dependent on the forest structure surrounding roost trees. The DOW recommends tree cutting only occur from October 1 through March 31, conserving trees with loose, shaggy bark and/or crevices, holes, or cavities, as well as trees with DBH ≥ 20 if possible.

The DOW also recommends that a desktop habitat assessment is conducted, followed by a field assessment if needed, to determine if a potential hibernaculum is present within the project area. Direction on how to conduct habitat assessments can be found in the current USFWS "[RANGE-WIDE INDIANA BAT & NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT SURVEY GUIDELINES](#)." If a habitat assessment finds that a potential hibernaculum is present within 0.25 miles of the project area, please send this information to Eileen Wyza for project recommendations. If a potential or known hibernaculum is found, the DOW recommends a 0.25-mile tree cutting and subsurface disturbance buffer around the hibernaculum entrance, however, limited summer or winter tree cutting may be acceptable after consultation with the DOW. If no tree cutting or subsurface impacts to a hibernaculum are proposed, this project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the following listed mussel species.

Federally Endangered

clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*)
rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*)
northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*)
snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*)
purple cat's paw (*Epioblasma o. obliquata*)

Federally Threatened

rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*)

State Endangered

elephant-ear (*Elliptio crassidens crassidens*)
pocketbook (*Lampsilis ovata*)
long solid (*Fusconaia maculata maculate*)
washboard (*Megaloniaias nervosa*)
Ohio pigtoe (*Pleurobema cordatum*)

State Threatened

pondhorn (*Unio merus tetralasmus*)
Salamander Mussel (*Simpsoniaias ambigua*)

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 following listed fish species.

State Endangered

goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*)
shortnose gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*)
Iowa darter (*Etheostoma exile*)
spotted darter (*Etheostoma maculatum*)
northern brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*)
tonguetied minnow (*Exoglossum laurae*)
popeye shiner (*Notropis ariommus*)

State Threatened

lake chubsucker (*Erimyzon sucetta*)
paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*)

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 northern harrier (*Circus hudsonis*), 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. If this type of habitat will be impacted, construction should be avoided in this habitat during the species' nesting period of April 15 through July 31. If this habitat will not be impacted, 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 US 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.

ODNR appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact Mike Pettegrew at mike.pettegrew@dnr.ohio.gov if you have questions about these comments or need additional information.

Mike Pettegrew
Environmental Services Administrator