**Meeting Summary**

**NorthWestern Energy Transmission Advisory Committee**

**July 29, 2015**

**9:30 AM, MDT**

**Meeting Participants**

This Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) meeting was conducted in person at NorthWestern Energy’s offices in Butte, via teleconference and the internet site GoTo Meeting.com for those not able to join in person. Those participating included:

**Name Organization**

Joining Meeting NorthWestern Energy (NWE) Offices

Don Bauer NWE Transmission & Distribution Planning and Capacity West

Kathleen Bauer NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Jim Hadley NWE Transmission & Distribution Planning and Capacity West

Chelsea Loomis NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Kelly Lovell NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Cathy Mathews NWE Transmission & Distribution Planning and Capacity West

Kim McClafferty NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Shea Mattix NWE Transmission & Distribution Planning and Capacity West

B.J. Schubert NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Josh Laurandeau NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Emmett Riordan NWE Transmission Engineering, Construction and Planning

Dale Mahugh NWE Customer Care Key Accounts/Meeting Facilitator

Joining Meeting via Telephone & Internet

John Leland Consultant for Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG)

Jonathan Pytka Talen Energy (formerly PPL)

Brian DeKiep Northwest Power and Conservation Council

Antonio Utrillas NaturEner

Madison Pike KR Saline & Associates

**Standards of Conduct & Anti-Trust Policy Review**

Kelly Lovell began the meeting by reviewing NWE’s Standards of Conduct and the Safeguards and Antitrust Policy. These documents are available at the following Oasis web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/01-Agenda_07-29-15-TRANSAC.doc>

**Agenda**

Dale Mahugh reviewed the posted agenda for this meeting with the group.

**Administration**

March 11, 2015 Meeting Summary - The participants were asked if they had reviewed the summary of this meeting and if so, did anyone have any changes or corrections. None were noted. The meeting summary is posted at the following Oasis web address:

[http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/TRANSAC\_Meeting\_Notes\_3-11-15.doc](https://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/TRANSAC_Meeting_Notes_3-11-15.doc)

Action Item List – Kelly Lovell shared that there are no outstanding items appearing on the list at this time. This has been posted on the website at the following Oasis web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/02-Action_Items.xls>

Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Load and Resource Data Request – The 2015 WECC L & R request was received and returned after NorthWestern Energy (MT) polled each of its large industrial customers and each large generation entity. Cathy Mathews reported that the overall response rate this year was about 71%, slightly higher than last year. Some of this may be attributed to PPL’s suggestion to its customers to participate in the request. Cathy noted that NERC has released it Summer Reliability Assessment and despite severe drought in the West, coal plant retirements and some growth in the industrial sector, the reserve margins are adequate at this time. She also noted WECC’s 2015 State of the Interconnection Report was released on June 15, 2015 and found a statement released by EEI in its July 13 issue of the EEI Daily Energy News reported that gas has over taken coal at U.S. power stations. Cathy’s report, including the various web addresses to access the referenced items may be found at the following Oasis web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/03-L&R_Update.docx>

Compliance Efforts – Cathy Mathews reported that the NERC/WECC Compliance audit is now over. Two minor findings (violations) were noted, but these were corrected immediately. Their next full scale audit will take place in 2018. NorthWestern Energy is currently involved with a FERC audit which involves our adherence to FERC rules and regulations. Cathy also shared that on May 25, 2015, the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) reached a settlement with FERC regarding the Arizona-Southern California outages that occurred on September 8, 2011 and included the web address that outlines the settlement. She also shared that the new standard TPL-007 involving geo-magnetic disturbances is still being refined and at such time as FERC approves them, they will be phased in over a five year period. Lastly, she noted that MOD-031-1 Demand and Energy Data has been approved by FERC. This replaces several other MOD’s that had been in effect up to this time. Cathy’s report, including web addresses to access referenced discussion items, may be accessed at the following Oasis web address.

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/04-Compliance_Update.docx>

Generation Interconnection Update – Kelly Lovell provided the update using the document which can be found at the following Oasis web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/05-TRANSAC-GIA_Queue_Update_7-15.docx>

It was noted that the format of this report is slightly changed to better reference that all generation is located in Montana.

*Question: It was asked if a note can be made on the spreadsheet posted on Oasis to indicate any changes made. It was noted that it is sometimes difficult to recognize changes have been made.*

Answer: Kelly will see if the affected cells can be highlighted to provide more clarity of a change having been made.

**Regional and Bulk Electric System Updates**

Chelsea Loomis provided an update of the Northern Tier Transmission Group.

She noted that the NTTG has received back comments on the Transmission Plan document and it references that no new lines were anticipated at this time.

FERC Order 1000

As was noted at our last meeting, the FERC Order 1000 filing was submitted on February 18, 2015. A meeting took place in Portland on February 26th to discuss the mechanics of interregional planning within the Western Interconnection and details are now being worked out and a large question remains; how will data be able to be shared between regions and to what extent. Discussions are taking place now to find ways do this and comply within the framework of the order. FERC Order 1000 is scheduled to go into effect later this year (October 2015).

Consideration of Retirement of Colstrip Units 1 & 2- Kim McClafferty shared a document prepared by Regional Electric Transmission Planning acting as a working group of the NTTG that examines the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 111-D order concerning their exerting authority under section 111 of the Clean air Act to issue standards, regulations or guidelines, as appropriate, that address carbon pollution from new and existing power plants, including modifications of those plants. Colstrip 1 & 2 was reviewed under this scenario and assumptions were evaluated as to what effect this would have on the system if they were to be retired and removed from the energy supply mix. A number of considerations were analyzed to make up for this loss in generation and how those could impact regional transmission. This report may be viewed at the following Oasis we address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/06-EPA_111D-Colstrip_1-2_Retirement_Study-5-8-15_Final.pdf>

**Local Area Plan Update**

Mitigation Studies results-

Jim Hadley shared the status of the various Mitigation for Highest Priority Problems in the 2014-2015 Plan as provided in the first portion of the document that can be accessed at the Oasis web address noted below:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/07-LAP_Update_07-29-15.pptx>

While going through the list, Jim added additional detail to several items and shared alternative solutions.

1. Loss of Missoula #4 to Hamilton Heights 161 kV lines (N-2): He shared that NERC standards have relaxed the double contingency requirements which may allow the Stevensville – Hamilton Heights 69kV conversion to be deferred to a later date..
2. Loss of Broadview- Wicks 230kV and Broadview-Alkali Creek 230 kV lines (N-2) – It was added that loss of both lines would cause low voltage in the Billings area, leading to voltage collapse as the Billings area grows. Retirement of the Corette Plant contributed to this, but it was not the primary factor. Lower Duck Creek – Columbus Rapelje 161 kV Line or Big Timber 161/50 kV Auto Outage. It was noted that the addition of 161 kV breakers and the autobank upgrade at Big Timber scheduled to be completed in 2019 will also help to address low voltage issues out of Big Timber.

It was noted that there was an error on the Rainbow switchyard 69kV Bus Outage line item. The document indicates “will be fully mitigated in 2016 when balance of 69kV facilities at Crooked Falls transferred to Rainbow”. It should read “facilities at Rainbow transferred to Crooked Falls”.

Review Proposed Uncertainty Scenarios- Don Bauer next shared the suggested uncertainly scenarios under consideration. He said they had hoped to have this complete by now, but are still working on it. The details are also contained in the presentation update noted above. In the area of Extreme Localized Growth, Bozeman was singled out as an area that will remain under close watch. With the extremely dry weather that much of the area is experiencing, forest (and range) fire impacts could take its toll as noted in a Stakeholder comment. If extreme fires were to take place, considerations are taken into account if there are multiple lines exposed in a common corridor. Also considered was if a fire were to take out a multitude of facilities (lines, substations, etc.).

*Question: What if the future turns out different than projected concerning the mix of resources being different than projected?*

Answer: This is a distinct possibility and thus these scenarios must constantly be reviewed and updated. John Leland suggested using the allocation scenarios of the NTTG as a start and also consider where the sources of future generation may be located.

John shared that he had written a paper sometime back that contained four distinct scenarios. He will forward a copy to NorthWestern Energy for their consideration.

Proposed Public Meetings- Don also shared Quarter 7 and Quarter 8 to do items. These are also contained in the presentation noted above. It was noted that the public meetings are in the process of being scheduled for Billings and Missoula with proposed dates of October 8 and 14 respectively.

*Question: Are the impacts of solar generation and voltage variability being considered system-wide?*

Answer: There are no significant projects on the horizon at this time. As storage technology improves, this should definitely help to address this issue. It was also shared that of the projects known at this time, all are small capacity and are situated on local distribution lines and not transmission.

*Question: It was mentioned that different generation scenarios are considered. Seeing that there are a number of smaller solar projects in the mix, from a planning perspective, have these been taken into consideration?*

Answer: It was noted that all are smaller projects are looking for QF contracts and are looking for available property near substations in order to hold connection costs down and should not pose a significant impact on the system.

**Action Item List Review**

The only Action Item identified during the meeting was to further review the Generation and Interconnection Queue Update for possible further clarification opportunities.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Kelly thanked the group for being flexible in scheduling this meeting. With vacation schedules and other conflicts, extra time was needed to complete several of the items necessary for presentation.

The proposed dates and topics for TRANSAC meetings during the remainder of 2015 are as follows:

* Wednesday, September 16, 2015 – (Quarter #7) Review Draft Two-Year Plan Document
* Thursday, October 8, 2015- Public Meeting in Billings
* Wednesday, October 14, 2015- Public Meeting in Missoula
* Wednesday, December 16, 2015 – (Quarter #8) Reporting and Final Document

**Disclaimer**

Committee members provide advice to NWE as individual professionals; the advice they provide does not bind the agencies or organizations they serve.