

**AMERICAN TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS,
INCORPORATED
A FIRSTENERGY COMPANY,**

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE

**EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND NO.3 138 kV
TRANSMISSION LINE SWITCH REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

OPSB CASE NO.: 25-0913-EL-BNR

November 25, 2025

**American Transmission Systems, Incorporated
341 White Pond Dr.
Akron, Ohio 44320**

**CONSTRUCTION NOTICE
EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND NO. 3 138 kV TRANSMISSION LINE
SWITCH REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

The following information is being provided in accordance with Chapter 4906-6 of the Ohio Administrative Code (“Adm.Code”) for the application and review of Accelerated Certificate Applications. Based upon the requirements found in Appendix A to Adm.Code 4906-1-01, this Project qualifies for submittal to the Ohio Power Siting Board (“Board”) as a Construction Notice.

4906-6-05: ACCELERATED APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

4906-6-05: Name and Reference Number

<u>Name of Project:</u>	Evergreen-Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission Line Switch Replacement Project
Reference Number:	2022

4906-6-05 (B)(1): Brief Description of the Project

American Transmission Systems, Incorporated (“ATSI”), a FirstEnergy company, proposes to replace two (2) existing transmission line switches on the Evergreen-Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission Line. The Project will require the replacement of two (2) existing switches, the replacement of one (1) existing structure (#293), and the addition of one new structure (#9029A). Currently existing switch, A-295 is housed on existing structure #295. The new SCADA controlled 2000A switch (#A-797) will be relocated and installed on the new switch structure that replaces #293. Existing switch A-9029 will be removed from structure #9029. The switch will be replaced with a new SCADA controlled 2000A switch and placed on new structure #9029A. The Project will also require approximately 70 feet of new 477 KCMIL 26/7 “HAWK” ACSR conductor that will span from existing structure #9029 to new structure #9029A and to a midspan “air tap” point on the existing transmission line between structures #9029 and #9030.

The general location of the Project is shown in **Exhibit 1**, a partial copy of the United States Geologic Survey, Trumbull County OH, Quad Map. **Exhibit 2** provides a partial copy of ESRI aerial imagery of the Project area. The General Layout is attached as **Exhibit 3**. The Project is located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio.

4906-6-05 (B)(1): Construction Notice Requirement

The Project meets the requirements for a Construction Notice because the Project is within the types of projects defined by Items (2)(a) of the Application Requirement Matrix for Electric Power Transmission Lines, Appendix A of OAC 4906-101. Item (2)(a) states.

(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 is within the requirements of Item (2)(a) because the proposed Project will replace existing structures and add structures to an existing transmission line for a distance less than two miles.

4906-6-05 (B)(2): Need For the Project

The Project is needed to replace existing switches A-295 and A-9029 on the existing Evergreen-Highland No.3 138 kV Transmission Line. The line air switches are obsolete, of a design that no longer meets present standards, and are no longer supported for repair parts. The supporting lattice tower structures were installed in 1947, and indications are that these switches were part of the original design. The last cyclic maintenance occurred in 2022, however the viability of continued maintenance is questionable. In consultation with Engineering and Regional Operations, the combination of aged conditions, unavailability of parts and operational history indicate that attempts to prolong service

would be temporary in nature or unsuccessful. The proposed solution is to replace both switches and install SCADA-controlled motor operators, using an improved design meeting present engineering standard.

The implementation of advanced transmission technologies was considered as part of this Project. A SCADA controlled switch will replace an existing air switch. SCADA switches offer significant advantages over traditional air switches, primarily due to their enhanced remote control, monitoring, and automation capabilities. SCADA systems allow for real-time data collection and analysis, enabling remote monitoring of multiple devices, troubleshooting problems, and even controlling equipment from anywhere. Air switches, while simple, lack these advanced features and are typically manually operated.

4906-6-05 (B)(3): Location of the Project Relative to Existing or Proposed Lines

The location of the Project relative to existing or proposed lines is shown in the ATSI Transmission Network Map, included as part of the confidential portion of the FirstEnergy Corp. 2025 Long-Term Forecast Report. This map was submitted to the Public Utility Commission of Ohio (“PUCO”) in Case No. 25-0504-EL-FOR under Adm.Code 4901:5-5:04 (C)(2)(b). This Project was not included in the 2025 Long Term Forecast Report nor vetted through the PJM RTEP process as it does not entail any topology or rating change.

4906-6-05 (B)(4): Alternatives Considered

Two alternatives considered in lieu of the project were to continue to maintain and repair the existing switches. This solution was not recommended due to the lack of replacement parts and the implied risk of future operational failure due to age.

Another alternative was to remove the switches from the transmission line without replacing them. This solution was not recommended because it would create an unacceptable sectionalizing scheme on the transmission line.

4906-6-05 (B)(5): Public Information Program

ATSI's manager of External Affairs will advise local officials of features and the status of the proposed Project as necessary. ATSI will maintain a copy of this Construction Notice, along with other Project information, on FirstEnergy's website:

https://www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission_projects/ohio.html.

During all phases of this Project, the public may ask questions, submit comments or contact ATSI through the transmission projects hotline at 1-888-311-4737 or via email at: transmissionprojects@firstenergycorp.com.

4906-6-05 (B)(6): Construction Schedule

Construction on this Project is expected to begin as early as March 11, 2026 and be completed and placed in service by June 1, 2026.

4906-6-05 (B)(7): Area Map

Exhibit 1 provides a partial copy of the USGS Topographic Map, Trumbull County, Ohio, Quad Map. **Exhibit 2** provides a partial copy of ESRI aerial imagery.

4906-6-05 (B)(8): Property List

The proposed Project is located wholly within existing ROW on two separate parcels (21-153750, 21-153756). No new easements will be required for the Project.

4906-6-05 (B)(9): TECHNICAL FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

4906-6-05 (B)(9)(a): Operating Characteristics

The transmission line construction will have the following characteristics:

Voltage:	138 kV
ROW Width:	100 ft
Conductors:	477 kcmil 26/7 “HAWK” ACSR
Static Wire:	7#8 Alumoweld
Insulators:	Porcelain
Structure Type:	Exhibit 4: Custom 138 kV single circuit tubular steel pole switch structure single pole (structure 293) Exhibit 5: Custom 138 kV single circuit tubular steel pole switch structure single pole (structure 9029A)

4906-6-05 (B)(9)(b): Electric and Magnetic Fields

As there are occupied residences or institutions within 100 feet from the existing transmission line centerline, Electric and Magnetic Field (“EMF”) calculations are required by this code provision.

4906-6-05 (B)(9)(b)(i): Calculated Electric and Magnetic Fields Strength Levels

The Project is an approximately 7.03 - mile single circuit 138kV transmission line located on 100-foot rights-of-way that does not share the right-of-way with any other transmission lines.

Table 1 itemizes the line loading of the Project. The normal line loading represents FirstEnergy’s peak system load for the transmission line. The emergency line loading represents the maximum line loading under contingency operation. The winter rating is based on the continuous maximum conductor rating (“MCR”) of the circuit for the single conductors per phase and an ambient temperature of zero degrees centigrade (32 °F), wind speed of 1.3 miles per hour, and a circuit design operating temperature of 100 °C (212 °F).

Table 1: Transmission Line Loading

Line Name	Normal Loading Amps	Emergency Loading Amps	Winter Rating Amps
Evergreen-Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission Line	838	946	950

Table 2 provides an approximation of the magnetic and electric fields strengths of the Evergreen-highland No. 3 Transmission Line between tangent-to-tangent structures. The calculations provide an approximation of the electric and magnetic fields levels based on specific assumptions utilizing the EPRI EMF Workstation 2015 program software. This program software assumes the input transmission line configuration is located on flat terrain. Also, a balanced, three-phase circuit loading is assumed for the transmission circuit. The model utilizes the normal, emergency, and winter rating of the transmission line.

Table 2: EMF Calculations for Evergreen-Highland No.3 138 kV Transmission Line Tangent to Tangent Structures

Evergreen-Highland No.3 138 kV Transmission Line Tangent to Tangent Structures, 100-foot ROW		Electric Field kV/m	Magnetic Field mG
Normal Loading	Under Lowest Conductors	0.629	42.92
	At Right-of-Way Edges	0.07 / 0.23	18.41 / 21.85
Emergency Loading	Under Lowest Conductors	0.629	48.97
	At Right-of-Way Edges	0.07 / 0.23	21.02 / 24.78
Winter Rating	Under Lowest Conductors	0.629	49.17
	At Right-of-Way Edges	0.07 / 0.23	21.11 / 24.87

4906-6-05 (B)(9)(b)(ii): Alternative Design Consideration for Electric and Magnetic Fields

The strength of EMFs can potentially be reduced by installing the transmission line conductors in a compact configuration by selecting conductor phasing that reduces the field strengths. ATSI designs its facilities according to the requirements of the NESC. The pole heights and configuration were chosen based on NESC specifications, engineering parameters, and cost. In this Project ATSI proposes to install 138 kV transmission lines primarily on double circuit steel pole tangent structures supported on suspension insulators.

4906-6-05 (B)(9)(c): Estimated Cost

The estimated cost for the proposed Project is \$1,703,000 Although not statutorily required for approval, at the request of OPSB Staff, ATSI confirms that ATSI's costs will be captured and allocated via FERC formula rates for the ATSI Transmission Zone, Attachment H-21 in the PJM OATT.

4906-6-05 (B)(10): SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(a): Land Uses

The Project is located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. The land use within the vicinity of the proposed Project is residential and industrial use. This project will take place in existing right of way.

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(b): Agricultural Land

There are no parcels within the Project Area designated as an Agricultural District property, therefore there will be no impact to any agricultural land.

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(c): Archaeological or Cultural Resources

As part of the investigation for this Construction Notice, TRC Companies, Inc. ("TRC") submitted a request to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on behalf of ATSI to

review and provide comments for the Project Study Area (Area of Potential Effects or APE) with a one (1)-mile search radius. On January 21, 2025, SHPO replied to the request and the response is attached as Exhibit 6. SHPO concurred that the Project, as proposed, will not affect any historic properties or cultural resources. No further coordination is required unless the scope of work changes or new/additional archaeological deposits are discovered during construction.

The SHPO database also includes the Ohio Historic Inventory (“OHI”), the Ohio Archaeological Inventory (“OAI”), previous cultural resource surveys, and the Ohio Genealogical Society (“OGS”) cemetery inventory. The SHPO database includes all Ohio listings on the National Register of Historic Places (“NRHP”), including districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The results of the search indicate there are no NRHP-listed or -eligible above-ground historic resources or archaeological sites recorded within one (1)-mi of the proposed Project.

There are three (3) above-ground historic resources that have not yet been evaluated for NRHP eligibility and two (2) Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS) Cemeteries recorded within one (1)-mi of the Study Area. All three (3) of the above-ground historic resources are located to the southeast, near the town of Niles, with the nearest situated 0.9 mi away. The OGS cemeteries are located 60 ft to the west of the northern Project extent and 0.42 mi south of the southwestern Project extent.

There has been one (1) prior archaeological survey conducted within one (1) mi of the proposed Study Area. Two (2) archaeological sites are recorded within one (1) mi, 0.88 mi west and 0.52 mi south. The sites include one (1) pre-contact open camp/village/unspecified habitation that dates to the Archaic, Late Woodland, and Late Prehistoric Periods, and one (1) historic residential site that dates from the middle nineteenth century to middle twentieth century.

The Project Study Area is comprised of an existing, maintained, utility right-of-way (ROW), industrial land use, overgrown areas, and manicured lawns. The regional

landscape is predominantly industrial and wooded with large-scale residential areas to the southeast. The proposed Project is not expected to have any adverse effects on known historic properties. No further coordination is required for this Project unless the scope of work changes or archaeological remains are discovered during the course of the Project completion. To date, TRC has not conducted any on-site cultural resources surveys.

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(d): Construction Filings with Local, State and Federal Governmental Agencies

Coordination with Trumbull County Engineer's Office will be completed to obtain ROW permits necessary for work along and across Warren Avenue, based on the proposed Project with less than one (1) acre of earth disturbance. If more than one (1) acre of earth disturbance is proposed in the Project scope, then submittal of a Notice of Intent (NOI) application to the Ohio EPA will be required for coverage under the general construction stormwater permit (OHC000006), and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be submitted to the Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District. All permitting and/or coordination necessary to comply with local, state, and federal agencies with jurisdiction regarding this Project will be completed prior to the commencement of construction. A list of possible government agency requirements can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. List of Government Agency Requirements

Agency	Requirement
Ohio EPA	General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Storm Water Permit OHC000006
Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District	SWPPP Review
Trumbull County Engineer's Office	ROW Permit(s)

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(e): Endangered, Threatened, Rare and Designated Species Investigation

As part of the investigation, ATSI retained TRC to conduct necessary surveys. TRC submitted a request to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (“ODNR”) Office of Real Estate to conduct an Environmental Review. As part of the Environmental Review, the ODNR Office of Real Estate conducted a search of the ODNR Division of Wildlife’s Natural Heritage Database to research the presence of any endangered, threatened, or rare species within one (1) mile of the Project Study Area. The ODNR’s Office of Real Estate’s response on January 21, 2025, stated that there are no records of state and/or federally listed plants or animals located within a one (1) mile radius of the Project Study Area. However, the Project is within the range of ten (10) state and/or federally listed animal species. A copy of ODNR’s Office of Real Estate’s response is included as **Exhibit 7**.

In addition, the ODNR-DOW stated that the Project 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. These bat species predominantly roost in trees behind loose, exfoliating bark, in crevices, and cavities, or in the leaves. These species are dependent on the forest structure surrounding the roost tress. The DOW recommended a desktop bat hibernaculum assessment be completed for the Project, which TRC completed for ATSI and submitted to ODNR for concurrence on January 29, 2025. ODNR responded on February 3, 2025, attached as **Exhibit 8**, concurring that no caves, cliffs, or mine openings occur in the Project Study Area; therefore, the Project is not likely to impact hibernating bats. In assessing compliance with NWP General Condition 18, TRC determined that tree clearing is not anticipated within the Project Study Area. If tree clearing needed as a result of this Project, it will take place within the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommended tree clearing dates (October 1 – March 31); therefore, no impacts to bat species are anticipated as a result of the construction of this Project.

The Project is within the range of the northern brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*), a state endangered fish, and the mountain brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon greeleyi*), a state endangered fish. 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. Since no in-water work is proposed in a perennial stream, this Project will not impact these or other aquatic species.

The Project is within the range of the eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), a state endangered and a federally threatened snake species. The eastern massasauga uses a range of habitats including wet prairies, fens, and other wetlands, as well as drier upland habitat. Due to the location, the type of habitat within the Project area, and the type of work proposed, this Project is not likely to impact this species.

The Project is within the range of the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), a state threatened species. This species prefers fens, bogs and marshes, but also is known to inhabit wet prairies, meadows, pond edges, wet woods, and the shallow sluggish waters of small streams and ditches. Due to the location, the type of habitat within the Project area, and the type of work proposed, this Project is not likely to impact this species.

The Project is within the range of the eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*), a state endangered species and a federal species of concern. This long-lived, entirely aquatic salamander inhabits perennial streams with large flat rocks. Projects that contribute to altered flow regimes (e.g., by increasing areas of impervious surfaces or modifying the floodplain) can also adversely affect hellbender habitat. Due to the location, and that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream to provide suitable habitat, this Project will not impact this species.

The Project is within the range of the northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), a state endangered bird species. This species prefers marshes and grasslands where they often hunt and nest in loose colonies. Due to the industrial and developed land use, that there is a lack of suitable habitat, and that the species is not likely present within the Project Study Area, no impacts are anticipated to this species.

As part of the investigation, TRC submitted a request to the USFWS on December 20, 2024, for an Ecological Review to research the presence of any endangered, threatened, rare, or designated species within the Project Study Area. A copy of the USFWS' Ecological Review response, dated January 6, 2025, is included as **Exhibit 9**. The response states that due to the Project type, size, location, and the proposed implementation of seasonal tree cutting (clearing of trees ≥ 3 inches diameter at breast height between October 1 and March 31) to avoid impacts to the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and the tricolored bat, USFWS does not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species, or proposed or designated critical habitat.

A list of all endangered, threatened, and rare species, as identified by ODNR, within the range of the Project is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. List of Endangered and Threatened Species within range of the Project Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Listed Status	State Listed Status	Affected Habitat
Amphibian				
Eastern hellbender	<i>Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis</i>	Species of concern	Endangered	Perennial streams with large flat rocks.
Bird				
Northern harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	N/A	Endangered	Marshes and grasslands.
Mammals				
Indiana bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Trees, forests, caves, and caverns.
Little brown bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	N/A	Endangered	Trees, forests, caves, and caverns.
Northern long-eared bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Trees, forests, caves, and caverns.
Tricolored bat	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Proposed Endangered	Endangered	Trees, forests, caves, and caverns.
Fish				
Northern brook lamprey	<i>Ichthyomyzon fossor</i>	N/A	Endangered	Perennial streams.
Mountain brook lamprey	<i>Ichthyomyzon greeleyi</i>	N/A	Endangered	Perennial streams.
Reptiles				

Eastern massasauga	<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>	Threatened	Endangered	Wet prairies, fens, and other wetlands, as well as drier upland habitat.
Spotted turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	N/A	Threatened	Fens, bogs and marshes, wet prairies, meadows, pond edges, wet woods, and the shallow sluggish waters of small streams and ditches.

4906-6-05 (B)(10)(f): Areas of Ecological Concern

TRC conducted a surface water delineation report for the Project, as shown in **Exhibit 10**. The Project Study Area is 4.32 acres located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. One (1) palustrine emergent wetland (W-EVN-1) and one (1) perennial stream (S-EVN-1) were identified and delineated within the Project Study Area. There are no anticipated impacts to the listed resources.

The Project Study Area consists of an existing, maintained, utility ROW, industrial land use, developed open space, and upland habitat. TRC did not observe the presence of any of the ODNR or federally listed species during the field investigation due to the highly maintained nature of the utility ROW and surrounding industrial and developed land use. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated to any of the listed species detailed in the ODNR correspondence.

A review of the USGS Protected Areas Database (www.usgs.gov/programs/gap-analysis-project/science/protected-areas) revealed no conservation easements within the Project Study Area. The National Conservation Easement Database is no longer in use due to the database no longer being actively updated and supported.

4906-6-05(B)(10)(g): Other Information

Construction and operation of the proposed Project will be in accordance with the requirements specified in the latest revision of the National Electrical Safety Code as

adopted by the PUCO and will meet all applicable safety standards established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

No other or unusual conditions are expected that will result in significant environmental, social, health or safety impacts.

4906-6-07: Documentation of Construction Notice Transmittal and Availability for Public Review

This Construction Notice application is being provided concurrently with its docketing with the Board to the following officials in the City of Warren, Howland Township, and Warren Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. A copy will also be provided to the Warren-Trumbull County Public Library for public review/reference.

Trumbull County

Tony Bernard
Trumbull County Commissioner
Tony.Bernard@co.trumbull.oh.us
160 High St. NW
Warren, OH 44481

Martha Yoder
Trumbull County Auditor
auditor@co.trumbull.oh.us
160 High St. NW
Warren, OH 44481

Rick Hernandez
Trumbull County President
Rick.Hernandez@co.trumbull.oh.us
160 High St. NW
Warren, OH 44481

Denny Malloy
Trumbull County Commissioner
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160 High St. NW
Warren, OH 44481

Trumbull SWCD
amy@trumbullohswcd.org
520 W. Main St. Suite 3,
Cortland, OH 44410

Weathersfield Township

Steven Gerberry
Weathersfield Township Trustee
mailbox@weathersfieldtwp.com
1451 Prospect St.
Mineral Ridge, OH 44440

Richard Harkins
Weathersfield Township Trustee
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1451 Prospect St.
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Edward Whittaker
Weathersfield Township Trustee
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1451 Prospect St.
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Patrick Glunt
Weathersfield Fiscal Officer
mailbox@weathersfieldtwp.com
1451 Prospect St.
Mineral Ridge, OH 44440

Library

Jim Wilkins, Director
Warren-Trumbull County Public Library
444 Mahoning Ave NW
Warren, Ohio 44483
wilkinsj@wtcpl.org

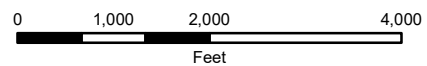
Copies of the transmittal letters to these officials have been included with this application as proof of compliance under Adm.Code 4906-6-07 (B) to provide the Board with proof of notice to local officials as required by Adm.Code 4906-6-07 (A)(1) and to the library per Adm.Code 4906-6-07 (A)(2).

Information is posted at www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission_projects/ohio.html on how to request an electronic or paper copy of this Construction Notice application. The link to this website is being provided to meet the requirements of Adm.Code 4906-6-07 (B) and to provide the Board with proof of compliance with the notice requirements in Adm.Code 4906-6-07 (A)(3).



LEGEND:

★ Project



Reference:
USGS Topographical Overlay

Coordinate System:
NAD_1983_StatePlane_Ohio_North_FIPS_3401_Feet
WKID: 3734 Authority: EPSG

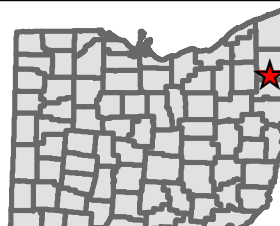
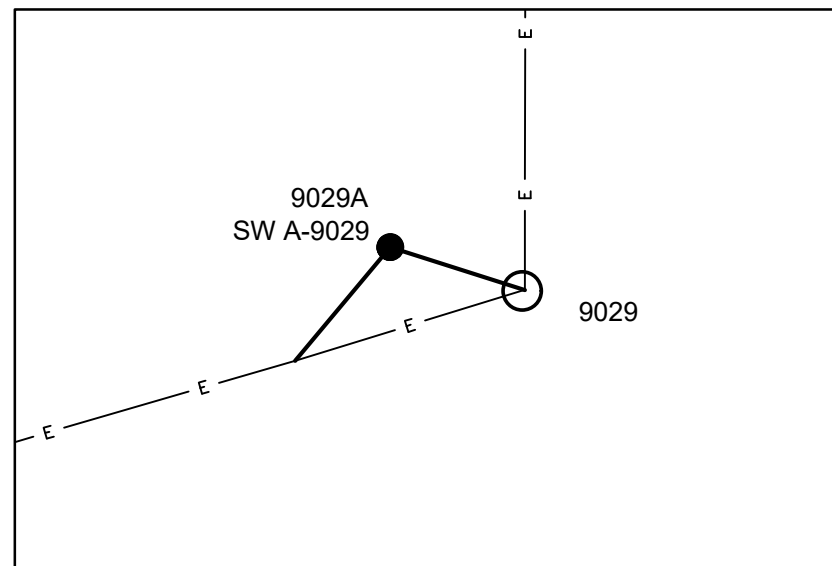


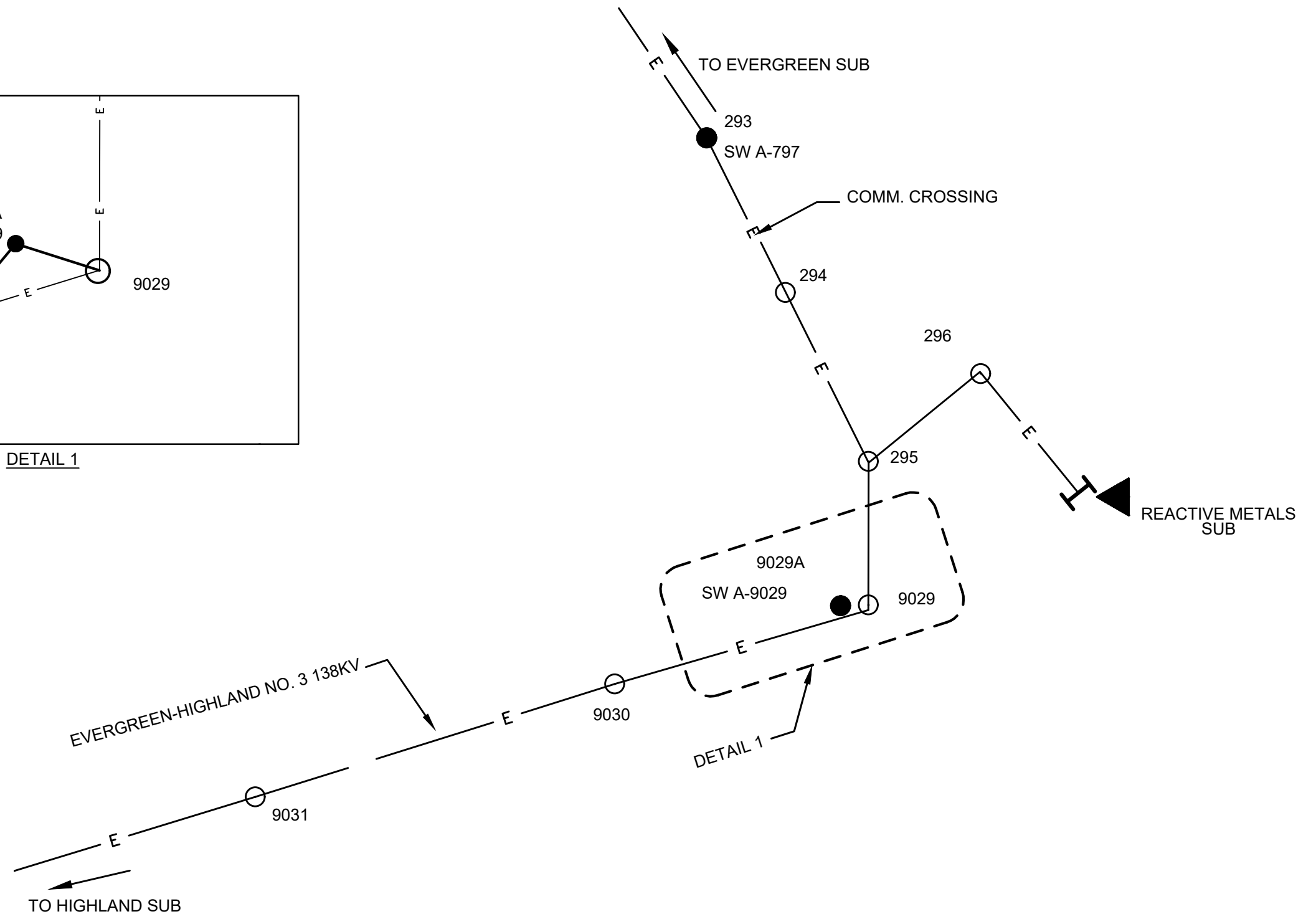
EXHIBIT 2

ATSI
American Transmission Systems, Inc.
a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp.






**Evergreen-Highland No. 3
138 kV Transmission Line
Switch Replacement Project**

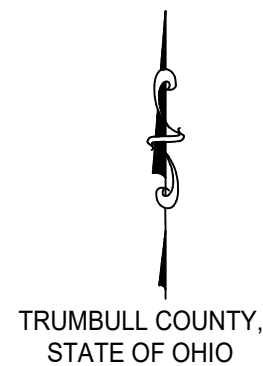


DETAIL 1



LEGEND

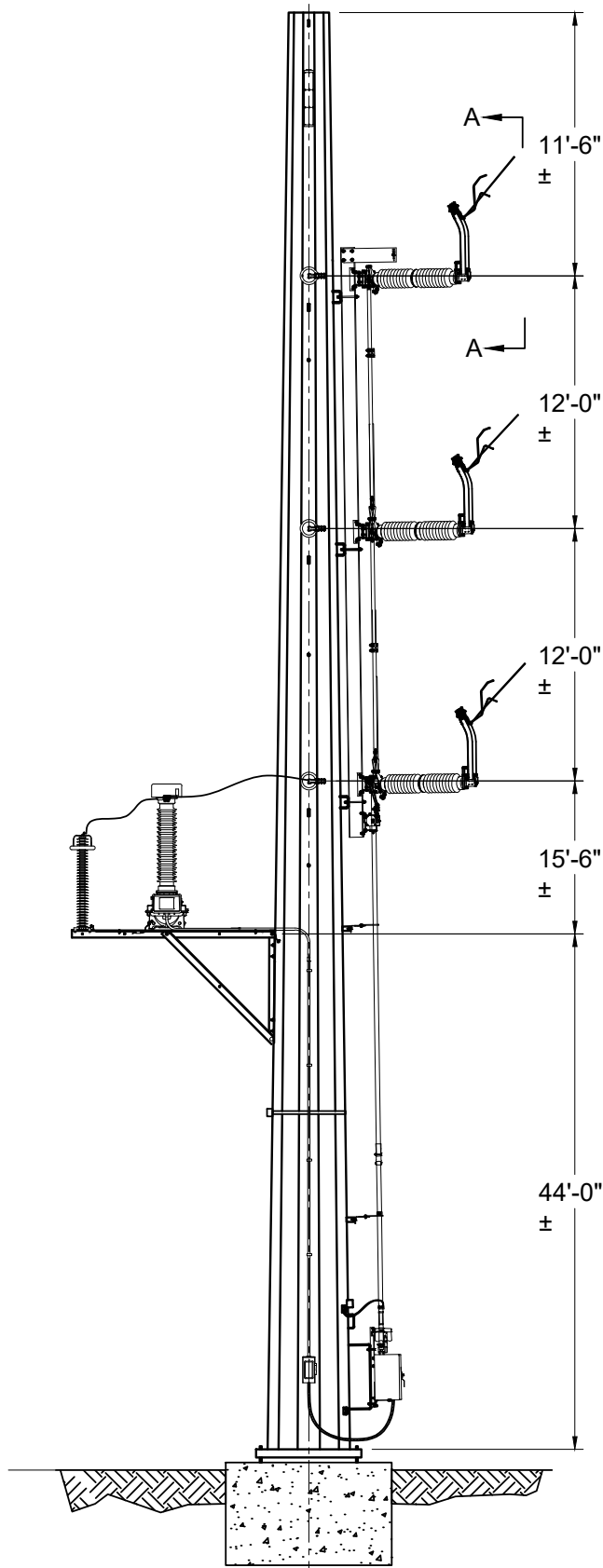
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-  - EXISTING STRUCTURE
-  - SUBSTATION
-  - NEW CONDUCTOR
-  - EXISTING CONDUCTOR TO REMAIN



Evergreen - Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission
Line Switch Replacement Project

GENERAL LAYOUT

Exhibit 3



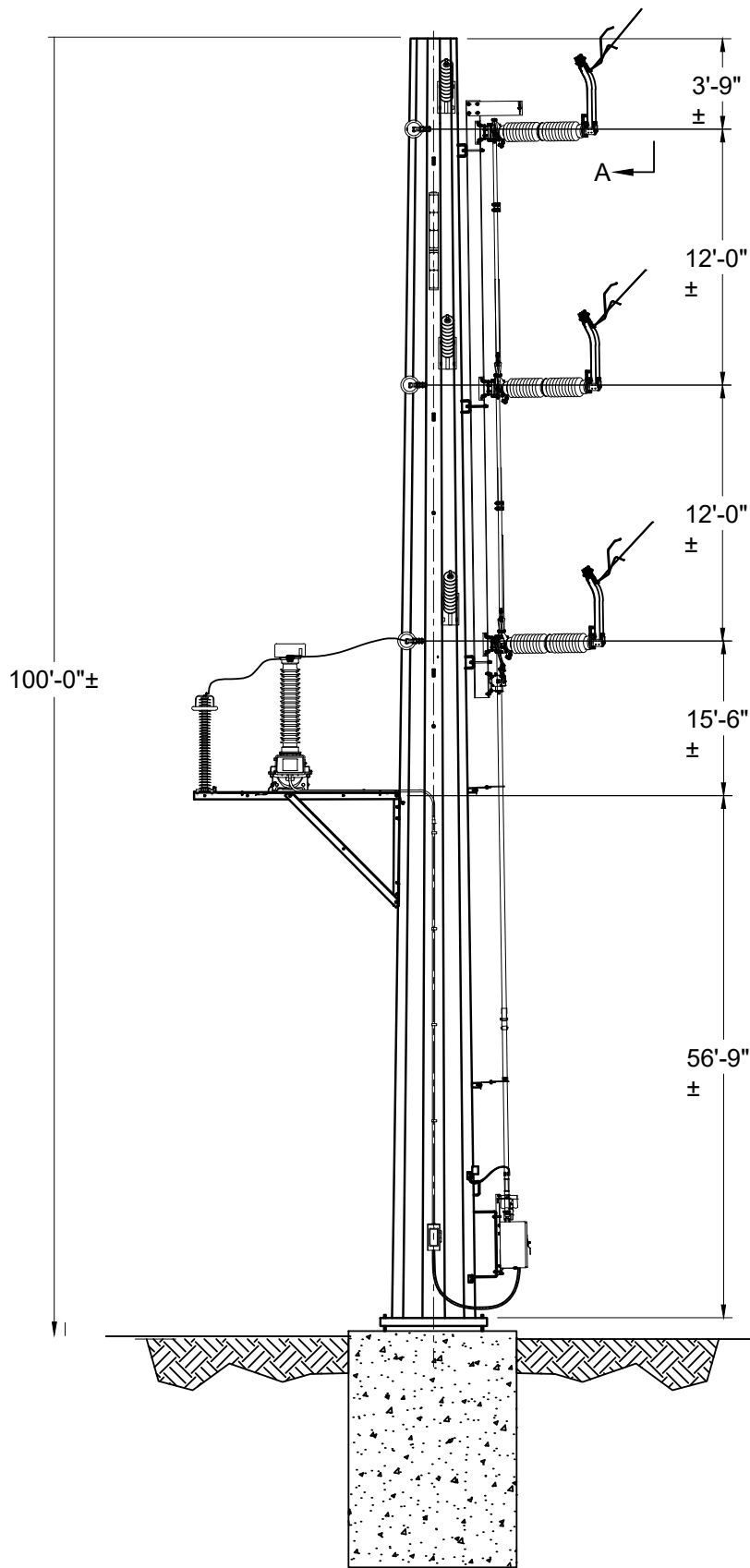
ATSI

American Transmission Systems, Inc.
A subsidiary of Tractech Corp.

Evergreen - Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission
Line Switch Replacement Project

CUSTOM 138KV SINGLE CIRCUIT
TUBULAR STEEL POLE SWITCH STRUCTURE SINGLE POLE

Exhibit 4



ATSI

American Transmission Systems, Inc.
a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp.

Evergreen - Highland No. 3 138 kV Transmission
Line Switch Replacement Project

CUSTOM 138KV SINGLE CIRCUIT
TUBULAR STEEL POLE SWITCH STRUCTURE SINGLE POLE

Exhibit 5



In reply refer to:
2024-TRU-63422

January 21, 2025

Justin McKissick, MA, RPA
Project Archaeologist/Field Director
TRC Environmental Corporation
317 E Carson Street, Suite 113
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Email: JMcKissick@trccompanies.com

RE: Section 106 Review: Evergreen-Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project, Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio

Dear Mr. McKissick:

This letter is in response to the correspondence received on December 23, 2024, regarding the above-referenced project in Trumbull 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 (O.R.C.) and the Ohio Power Siting Board rules for siting this project. 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 proposed project involves the relocation of switch A-9029 and A-295 onto nearby existing poles. All proposed work activities will be within the existing right-of-way. Based on information submitted by you, which included a Project Summary Form, no historic properties, districts, or archaeological sites are located within the direct Area of Potential Effect (APE), as defined by you. The relocation of the existing switches will not create new visual impacts. Therefore, it is our opinion that there will be no effect on historic resources as a result of the project. No cultural resource studies are warranted for the project. No further coordination is required for this project unless the scope of work changes or archaeological remains are discovered during the course of the project. In such a situation, this office should be contacted. If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact either myself via email at sbiehl@ohiohistory.org or Ms. Joy Williams at jwilliams@ohiohistory.org. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen M. Biehl".

Stephen M. Biehl, Project Reviews Manager-Archaeology
Resource Protection and Review
State Historic Preservation Office

RPR Serial No. 1106350



Office of Real Estate & Land Management

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

January 21, 2025

Emma Given
TRC Companies, Inc.
1382 West 9th Street, Suite 400
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Re: 24-2002 - A-9029 & A-295 Switch

Project: The proposed project involves the relocation of two switches onto nearby existing poles along the Evergreen-Highland transmission line.

Location: The proposed project is located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, 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 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 species of bats 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. If trees are present within the project area, and trees must be cut, the DOW recommends 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. If trees are present within the project area, and trees must be cut during the summer months, the DOW recommends a mist net survey or acoustic survey be conducted from June 1 through August 15, prior to any cutting. Mist net and acoustic surveys should be conducted in accordance with the most recent version of the "[OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE GUIDANCE FOR BAT SURVEYS AND TREE CLEARING](#)". If state listed bats are documented, DOW recommends cutting only occur from October 1 through March 31. However, limited summer tree cutting may be acceptable after consultation with the DOW (contact Eileen Wyza at Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov).

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 northern brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*), a state endangered fish, and the mountain brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon greeleyi*), a state endangered fish. 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 eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), a state endangered and a federally threatened snake species. The eastern massasauga uses a range of habitats including wet prairies, fens, and other wetlands, as well as drier upland habitat. Due to the location, the type of habitat within the project area, and the type of work proposed, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), a state threatened species. This species prefers fens, bogs and marshes, but also is known to inhabit wet prairies, meadows, pond edges, wet woods, and the shallow sluggish waters of small streams and ditches. Due to the location, the type of habitat within the project area, and the type of work proposed, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*), a state endangered species and a federal species of concern. This long-lived, entirely aquatic salamander inhabits perennial streams with large flat rocks. In-water work in hellbender streams can reduce availability of large cover rocks and can destroy hellbender nests and/or kill adults and juveniles. The contribution of additional sediment to hellbender streams can smother large cover rocks and gravel/cobble substrate (used by juveniles), making them unsuitable for refuge and nesting. Projects

that contribute to altered flow regimes (e.g., by increasing areas of impervious surfaces or modifying the floodplain) can also adversely affect hellbender habitat. Due to the location, and that there is no in-water work proposed in a perennial stream to provide suitable habitat, this project is not likely to impact this 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.

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.

If the subject project is in a floodplain regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the local [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.

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.*

Stolarski, Adrianna

From: Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 8:21 AM
To: Given, Emma
Cc: Molnar, Maggie; Falkinburg, Brad M (Ruszala, Amy M); Stolarski, Adrianna
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: 24-2022_Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project-ODNR Comments: Desktop Hibernacula Assessment

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Hi Emma,

Thank you for that information. Per review of the desktop survey provided for the Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project, the Ohio Division of Wildlife concurs with your assessment that no caves, cliffs, or mine openings occur in the project area. Additionally, because the project does not involve blasting or impacting the bedrock, the project is not likely to impact hibernating bats that may be present in the nearby underground mines.

Should any reported conditions change before or during construction, please contact me for additional guidance.

Thank you,

Eileen Wyza, Ph.D.
(she/her/hers)
Wildlife Biologist
Ohio Division of Wildlife
Phone: 614-265-6764
Email: Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov



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Emma <EGiven@trccompanies.com>

Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 1:09 PM

To: Wyza, Eileen <Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov>

Cc: Molnar, Maggie <MMolnar@trccompanies.com>; Falkinburg, Brad <BFalkinburg@trccompanies.com>; Stolarski, Adrianna <astolarski@firstenergycorp.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: 24-2022_Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project- ODNR Comments: Desktop Hibernacula Assessment

From:
Given,

Hi Eileen,

To answer your question regarding subsurface disturbance, bedrock will not be impacted as a result of this proposed Project. Poles will be placed in the ground, but if bedrock is met, no disturbance to the bedrock will be required.

Please let us know if you have any additional follow up questions.

Thank you,

Emma Given, Ph.D.

Ecologist

Planning, Permitting, and Licensing



1382 W 9th St, Suite 400, Cleveland, OH 44113

C 330.446.0265 | Egiven@trccompanies.com

[LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Blog](#) | TRCcompanies.com

From: Given, Emma

Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 8:58 AM

To: Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov

Cc: Molnar, Maggie <MMolnar@trccompanies.com>; Falkinburg, Brad <BFalkinburg@trccompanies.com>; Stolarski, Adrianna <astolarski@firstenergycorp.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: 24-2022_Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project- ODNR Comments: Desktop Hibernacula Assessment

Hello Eileen,

Thank you for reaching out with your question. I will follow up once I have the answer for you.

Thanks!

Emma Given, Ph.D.

Ecologist

Planning, Permitting, and Licensing



1382 W 9th St, Suite 400, Cleveland, OH 44113

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From: Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov <Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov>

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2025 8:12 AM

To: Given, Emma <EGiven@trccompanies.com>

Cc: Molnar, Maggie <MMolnar@trccompanies.com>; Falkinburg, Brad <BFalkinburg@trccompanies.com>; Stolarski, Adrianna <astolarski@firstenergycorp.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: 24-2022_Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project- ODNR Comments: Desktop Hibernacula Assessment

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Hello Emma,

Do you know if subsurface disturbance is planned for this project, and if so, what level of disturbance is anticipated?

Thanks!

Eileen Wyza, Ph.D.

(she/her/hers)

Wildlife Biologist

Ohio Division of Wildlife

Phone: 614-265-6764

Email: Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov



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<EGiven@trccompanies.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:31 PM

To: Wyza, Eileen <Eileen.Wyza@dnr.ohio.gov>

Cc: Molnar, Maggie <MMolnar@trccompanies.com>; Falkinburg, Brad <BFalkinburg@trccompanies.com>; Stolarski, Adrianna <astolarski@firstenergycorp.com>

Subject: 24-2022_Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project- ODNR Comments: Desktop Hibernacula Assessment

Eileen,

In response to ODNR's DOW recommendations (attached), TRC completed a desktop habitat assessment to determine if potential hibernaculum is present within FirstEnergy's proposed Evergreen Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio.

From:
Given,
Emma

Please let us know if you have any questions on the provided desktop assessment.

Thank you,

Emma Given, Ph.D.

Ecologist

Planning, Permitting, and Licensing



1382 W 9th St, Suite 400, Cleveland, OH 44113

C 330.446.0265 | Egiven@trccompanies.com

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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



January 6, 2025

Project Code: 2025-0031140

Dear Ms. Given:

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: Due to the project type, size, location, and the proposed implementation of seasonal tree cutting (clearing of trees ≥ 3 inches diameter at breast height between October 1 and March 31) to avoid impacts to the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and the proposed endangered tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) 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.

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 is it 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.

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, Environmental Services Administrator, at (614) 265-6387 or at mike.pettegrew@dnr.ohio.gov.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Knoll".

Erin Knoll
Field Office Supervisor

Surface Water Delineation Report

**Evergreen-Highland Switch A-
9029 & A-295 Project**

September 2025

**Weathersfield Township,
Trumbull County, Ohio**

Prepared For:



FirstEnergy Corporation
341 White Pond Drive, Building B3
Akron, Ohio 44320

Prepared By:
TRC Environmental Corporation
1382 West Ninth Street, Suite 400
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

TRC Project Number: 664676 Phase 4



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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

1987 Manual	United States Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAC	Facultative
FACU	Facultative Upland
FACW	Facultative Wetland
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FirstEnergy	FirstEnergy Corporation
GPS	Global Positioning System
HHEI	Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NWP	Nationwide Permit
OAC	Ohio Administrative Code
OBL	Obligate Wetland
OEPA	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
ORAM	Ohio Rapid Assessment Method
PCN	Pre-Construction Notification
PEM	Palustrine Emergent
PHW	Primary Headwater
Project	Evergreen-Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project
Project Study Area	4.315 acres, located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio
QHEI	Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index
Redox	Redoximorphic
Regional Supplement	Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region (Version 2.0)
Report	Surface Water Delineation Report
TRC	TRC Environmental Corporation
UPL	Obligate Upland
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA-NRCS	United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WQC	Water Quality Certification

1.0 Introduction

On behalf of FirstEnergy Corporation (FirstEnergy), TRC Environmental Corporation (TRC) performed a surface water delineation for the Evergreen-Highland Switch A-9029 & A-295 Project (Project). The Project is 4.315 acres, located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio (Project Study Area). The proposed Project involves the relocation of two (2) switches onto nearby existing poles along the Evergreen-Highland transmission line. TRC conducted the required field investigations and prepared this Surface Water Delineation Report (Report) for the Project. A site location map of the proposed Project Study Area can be found in **Appendix A, Figure 1**.

On November 18th, 2024, TRC personnel performed field investigations to evaluate and delineate surface water resources (i.e., wetlands and streams) located within the Project Study Area. The delineations were conducted by qualified wetland scientists in accordance with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) parameters. The objective was to evaluate and delineate potential surface water resources within the Project Study Area, such that the resources could be considered during each phase of the Project. This Report describes the surface water delineation methodology implemented and the existing surface water resources identified within the Project Study Area during field investigations.

The Project Study Area is located at the following approximate centroid coordinates: 41.191066 - 80.785611; located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. The Project Study Area consists of an existing, maintained, utility right-of-way (ROW), industrial land use, developed open space, and upland habitat. **Appendix A, Figure 1**, and **Figure 2**, provides further information on the location of the proposed Project Study Area.

2.0 Methodology

To complete the surface water delineation and evaluation of the Project Study Area, TRC followed the guidelines and methods outlined by the USACE and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), as described within this section.

2.1 Wetland Parameters

The *USACE 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual (1987 Manual)* (USACE, 1987) and *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region (Version 2.0) (Regional Supplement)* (USACE, 2012), and the March 6, 1992 guidance memorandum (Williams, 1992) emphasize a three parameter approach to wetland boundary determination in the field. This approach involves the following:

- Evidence of wetland hydrology;
- Presence of hydric soils; and
- Predominance of hydrophytic vegetation as defined by *The National Wetland Plant List: 2022 Wetland Ratings* (USACE, 2023).

Positive indicators of all three parameters are normally present in wetlands and serve to distinguish between both dry land and transitional plant communities.

2.1.1 Hydrology

The *1987 Manual* and *Regional Supplement* provides guidelines for determining the presence of wetland hydrology. Criteria for wetland hydrology are met if the area is inundated or saturated at the soil surface during the growing season for a time sufficient to develop hydric soils and to support hydrophytic vegetation.

2.1.2 Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are defined as soils “that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil” (Federal Register, 1994). Hydric soil indicators described in the *Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States: A Guide for Identifying and Delineating Hydric Soils Version 9.0* (USDA, NRCS, 2024) were used to identify and document hydric soils as described in the *Regional Supplement*.

2.1.3 Hydrophytic Vegetation

To determine the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, the dominant and non-dominant species in each major vegetative stratum (e.g., tree, shrub/sapling, herbaceous, and woody vine) were identified and recorded.

Plants are placed into indicator status categories depending on their probability of occurring in a wetland in accordance with the USACE’s *The National Wetland Plant List: 2022 wetland ratings* (USACE, 2023). There are five (5) indicator status categories for plants:

1. Obligate wetland plants (OBL): plants that occur almost always (>99%) in wetlands in natural conditions, but which may also occur rarely (<1%) in non-wetlands;
2. Facultative wetland plants (FACW): plants that occur usually (>67-99%) in wetlands but also occur (1-33%) in non-wetlands;
3. Facultative plants (FAC): plants with a similar likelihood (33-67%) of occurring in both wetlands and non-wetlands;
4. Facultative upland plants (FACU): plants that occur sometimes (1-<33%) in wetlands, but occur more often (>67-99%) in non-wetlands; and
5. Obligate upland plants (UPL): plants that occur rarely (<1%) in wetlands but occur almost always (>99%) in non-wetlands under natural conditions.

A prevalence of dominant species that are FAC, FACW, and/or OBL indicates the presence of hydrophytic vegetation.

2.2 USACE Wetland Delineation

Qualified wetland scientists from TRC conducted surface water field investigations on November 18th, 2024. The surface water field investigations were conducted within the predetermined Project Study Area that was developed in accordance with the Project location information provided by FirstEnergy (**Appendix A, Figure 2**). Surface water delineations were conducted using the Federal Routine Determination Method presented in the *1987 Manual* and *Regional Supplement*, including clarifications and interpretations provided in the March 6, 1992, guidance memorandum, and the USACE and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidance on jurisdictional forms (EPA and USACE, 2007 and USACE, 2008).

Hydrology was determined based on a number of indicators that are divided into two categories, primary and secondary. The *1987 Manual* defines hydrology as present when at least one (1) primary indicator (i.e., surface water, saturation, etc.) or two (2) secondary indicators (i.e., geomorphic position, stunted or stressed plants, etc.) are identified. One (1) primary indicator is sufficient to determine if hydrology is present; however, if these are absent then two (2) or more of the secondary indicators are required to determine hydrology. If other probable hydrologic evidence was found, then this was subsequently documented on the data form.

Soils were examined in the field by using a soil auger, generally to a depth of at least 22 inches below the soil surface, until refusal, or positive hydric soil indicators were met below 22 inches, whichever was shallower. Soil coloration was identified using a *Munsell Soil Color Chart* (Munsell Color Company, 2009). Other characteristics, such as the presence of redoximorphic (Redox) concentrations and depletions and soil texture were also recorded. Redox concentrations and depletions are created when the soil is saturated and has anaerobic conditions (without oxygen gas) which leads to changes in the chemical processes in the soil that produce visible color changes in the soil. Hydric characteristics such as organic soil layers, depleted matrix, gleying, and hydrogen sulfide odor, were noted when observed. Soils at both wetland (if present) and dry land data plot locations were characterized and recorded on the data form.

The presence of hydrophytic vegetation was determined using the procedures described in the *Regional Supplement* and recorded on the data form. Vegetation in both dry land and wetland communities was characterized using a real dominance method, with a radius of 30-feet around the soil sample location for trees and woody vines, 15-foot radius for saplings and shrubs, and a 5-foot radius for herbaceous plants. Plant communities meeting the “50/20” Rule or meeting one (1) of the other indicators set forth in the *1987 Manual*, *Regional Supplement*, and guidance memorandums are considered hydrophytic for the purposes of the wetland classification criteria. In areas where the vegetation was disturbed or not identifiable due to seasonal conditions, soil and hydrology characteristics, and professional judgment/experience were utilized in assessing the primary determining factors for classification as wetlands.

If the soils, hydrology, and vegetation characteristics at a survey point indicated that it was within a wetland, the boundary of the wetland was determined, and the approximate boundary was flagged using wetland flagging and recorded using a handheld Trimble R1 and Juniper Systems

Geode, both with sub-meter accuracy. Areas observed to have problematic or difficult situations were delineated utilizing the procedures identified in the *Regional Supplement*, Section 5 – “Difficult Wetland Situations in the Northcentral and Northeast Region.” Data from the Global Positioning System (GPS) survey was downloaded and integrated into a Geographic Information Systems database for the proposed work areas and used to make the accompanying figures. Identified wetlands were classified according to Cowardin et al. (Cowardin, Carter, Golet, & LaRoe, 1979). Photographs are included in **Appendix B**.

2.3 Ohio Environmental Protection Agency’s Ohio Rapid Assessment Method

According to the Ohio Wetland Water Quality Standards, a wetland quality category (Category 1, Category 2, or Category 3) must be assigned for each wetland if a project will require discharge of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional wetlands. In general, Category 1 wetlands are considered to be of “low quality”, Category 2 wetlands are considered to be of “moderate quality” and Category 3 wetlands are considered to be of “high quality.”

The OEPA has developed the Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (ORAM), which can be utilized to evaluate wetland habitat quality based on the apparent functions and values of the wetland resource. The two (2) primary components of the ORAM are the Narrative Rating and the Quantitative Rating. Each delineated wetland resource received a provisional category designation based on the results of the ORAM Narrative and Quantitative Ratings and review of narrative criteria in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-1-54(C) (Mack, 2000).

2.4 USACE Waterbody Identification

During field investigations, other waterbody features including streams, ponds, lakes, etc. were investigated. Streams within the Project Study Area were identified by the presence of an ordinary high-water mark and scoured channel or defined bed and banks. All streams identified in the Project Study Area that were wider than five feet were demarcated via GPS from bank-to-bank. Streams that were less than five feet wide had the centerline demarcated.

Identified streams were evaluated utilizing OEPA approved methods for stream habitat assessment which include the Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) (OEPA, 2006) and/or the Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index (HHEI) (OEPA, 2020) assessment method. These approved assessment methods provide an empirical, quantified evaluation of streams as required by the State of Ohio for permitting and mitigation purposes. These methods assess stream habitat to provide a qualitative index (or score) to determine the level of compensatory mitigation that may be needed for impacts to waters of the U.S. (i.e., streams).

Use of the QHEI or HHEI assessment method is determined based on the size of the stream’s drainage area and/or the stream’s pool depths. Where coverage was available, the drainage area was calculated using automated basin characteristics from StreamStats v4.29.2: Ohio (USGS, 2022).

Following OEPA guidance, streams with a drainage area of greater than 1.0 square mile (2.6 square kilometers) or which have pools with maximum depths over 15.8 inches (40.0 centimeters), as determined by measuring pool depth within the stream, were evaluated using the QHEI. Data on these streams were collected on the QHEI form provided by the OEPA. The QHEI is composed of six (6) principal metrics: substrate, instream cover, channel morphology, riparian zone and bank erosion, pool/glide and riffle-run quality, and map gradient. Each metric is scored separately and summed to obtain the total QHEI score. Using the scoring methods associated with these forms, the stream is placed into the following general narrative ranges, dependent on stream size; for smaller streams (≤ 20 sq. mi): Excellent >70 , Good 55-69, Fair 43-54, Poor 30-42, and Very Poor <30 ; for larger streams (>20 sq. mi): Excellent >75 , Good 60-74, Fair 45-59, Poor 30-44, and Very Poor <30 .

The HHEI was utilized to score streams with a drainage area of <1.0 square mile (2.6 square kilometers). Data on these streams were collected on the HHEI forms, provided by the OEPA. Observational data regarding the physical nature of the stream corridor including stream flow, riparian zone land use and buffer width, and channel modification were recorded. Measurements included bankfull width, maximum pool depth and substrate composition.

Streams identified during the course of the investigation were classified as perennial, intermittent, or ephemeral waterways in accordance with the rationale defined by the USACE.

The Project Study Area was also investigated for areas that were considered “open water” by the USACE. According to the USACE an open water is any area that in a year with normal patterns of precipitation has water flowing or standing above ground to the extent that an ordinary high-water mark can be determined. Aquatic vegetation within the area of flowing or standing water is either non-emergent, sparse, or absent. Vegetated shallows are considered to be open waters. Examples of “open waters” may include rivers, lakes, and ponds. Artificial “open water” features may include stormwater retention basins, fish hatchery ponds, drainage tile pump stations, etc.

3.0 Results

3.1 Site Description

The Project Study Area is 4.315 acres total in size, located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio and is within the City of Warren-Mahoning River watershed (12-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code: 050301030603) (USGS, 2022).

The Project Study Area is shown on the Warren, Ohio (2019) United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute series topographic quadrangle (**Appendix A, Figure 1**).

The United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Web Soil Survey (USDA-NRCS, 2016) was used to identify the soil types contained within the Project Study Area (**Appendix A, Figure 3**). **Table 1** provides a summary of the soil types identified within the proposed Project Study Area.

Table 1. Soil Types Summary

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Hydric Status	Acres Within Study Area	Percent Cover in Study Area
EhB	Ellsworth silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	Non-Hydric with Hydric Inclusions	0.142	3.3%
EhF	Ellsworth silt loam, 25 to 70 percent slopes	Non-Hydric	1.294	30.0%
FcA	Fitchville silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Non-Hydric with Hydric Inclusions	1.468	34.0%
GfB	Glenford silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	Non-Hydric	0.613	14.2%
Ur	Urban land	Non-Hydric	0.798	18.5%
TOTAL			4.315	100.0%

Note: Accessed online September 2025 at: <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

There are no United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) features within the Project Study Area (**Appendix A, Figure 4**) (USFWS, 2022).

The USGS National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) (USGS, 2018) Downloadable Data Collection from The National Map (USGS, 2022) is a comprehensive set of digital spatial data that encodes information about naturally occurring and constructed bodies of surface water (e.g., lakes, ponds, and reservoirs), paths through which water flows (e.g., canals, ditches, streams, and rivers) and related entities such as point features (e.g., springs, wells, stream gages, and dams). There are no NHD streams mapped within the Project Study Area (**Appendix A, Figure 4**).

According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map Panel Number: 39155C0383D (effective date: 6/18/2010), the proposed Project is not located within a mapped 100-year floodplain (**Appendix A, Figure 4**) (FEMA, 2025).

3.2 Surface Water Resource Field Delineations

TRC performed field investigations on November 18th, 2024. Weather conditions were normal for the season during the field investigation. Both native and non-native herbaceous vegetation was observed within the Project Study Area. The USACE maintains the final authority that determines jurisdiction; therefore, statements about jurisdiction within this Report are preliminary and subject to final determination by the USACE and OEPA.

3.2.1 Wetland

During the field investigation, one (1) wetland, W-EVN-1, was identified and delineated within the Project Study Area. The delineated wetland boundary and sample points are shown on **Figure 5** in **Appendix A**. Representative photographs of sample points and other areas of interest are

provided in **Appendix B**. Data was collected and recorded on the USACE Wetland Determination Data Forms – Northcentral and Northeast Region and a wetland functional assessment was completed for the delineated wetland using the ORAM (**Appendix C**). The delineated wetland within the Project Study Area is summarized in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Delineated Wetland Feature Summary Table

Resource ID ¹	Cowardin Classification ²	Connection ³	Provisional Jurisdictional Status ⁴	ORAM Score	ORAM Category ⁵	Approximate Delineated Area within Project Study Area ⁶ (acres)
W-EVN-1	PEM	Adjacent	USACE Jurisdictional, Wetland	26	Cat. 1	0.054
TOTAL						0.054
¹ TRC resource identification. ² Cowardin Wetland Classification (approximation based upon field identification and delineation) (Cowardin, Carter, Golet, & LaRoe, 1979): PEM – Palustrine Emergent. ³ Connection to a jurisdictional waterway: Adjacent as determined by TRC; subject to USACE verification. Wetland connection is pending an update from OEPA and USACE based on the Sackett vs. EPA case. ⁴ Jurisdiction status is based upon field observations and mapping review of apparent connectivity or adjacency of the resource to Waters of the United States or Waters of the State and the assumption that a preliminary jurisdictional determination process will be utilized for the project. ⁵ ORAM Category based on scoring breakpoints from Table 2 of the ORAM v. 5.0 Quantitative Score Calibration; scores falling within a “gray zone” or “modified” category were rounded up. ⁶ Area is rounded to nearest 0.001-acre, based upon GPS data.						

3.2.2 Stream

During the field investigation, one (1) perennial stream, S-EVN-1 (unnamed tributary to the Mahoning River) was delineated within the Project Study Area. A detailed summary of the waterbody resource identified is provided in **Table 2** and **Appendix A, Figure 5**. Data points were recorded to provide a characterization of the delineated waterbody resource located within the Project Study Area, which was recorded on the OEPA HHEI data form. Representative photographs of the described waterbody identified within the Project Study Area can be found in **Appendix B**. The HHEI data form is provided within **Appendix C**.

Table 3. Delineated Waterbody Resource Summary Table

Waterbody ID ¹	Resource Name ²	Flow Regime	HHEI Score ³	Existing Use Designation ⁴	Approximate Delineated Length and Area within the Project Study Area ⁵ (Linear Feet/Acres)
S-EVN-1	UNT to the Mahoning River	Perennial	40	Modified Class II PHW	17 feet (0.001-acre)
TOTAL					17 feet (0.001-acre)
¹ TRC resource identification. ² UNT = Unnamed Tributary ³ HHEI, for streams with drainage areas of less than 1.0 square mile and a maximum pool depth of less than 40 centimeters. ⁴ Determined by TRC, subject to verification by OEPA. PHW = Primary Headwater. ⁵ Area is rounded to nearest 0.001-acre, based upon GPS data. Delineated length is rounded to the nearest whole foot.					

4.0 Permitting Considerations

As currently proposed, it is TRC’s understanding that this Project falls under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 57 – Electric Utility Line and Telecommunications Activities (USACE, 2022). This Project is located in Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, which is within the USACE Pittsburgh Regulatory District. All Townships in Trumbull County are listed in Appendix 1 to Regional General Condition 5(a) (Endangered Species and Threatened Species), which would trigger the need for a Section 404 Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) for construction activities performed within a regulated feature. It is anticipated that due to the nature of the Project, all jurisdictional resources will be avoided by the proposed Project activities. Therefore, NWP 57 conditions are met and there is no potential trigger for a Section 404 PCN to USACE. A PCN may be required if NWP 57 conditions are not met and/or thresholds are exceeded.

Additionally, the Project is located within an “Eligible” area according to OEPA’s Stream Eligibility for Nationwide Permit Program (OEPA, 2017) (**Appendix A, Figure 6**); however, OEPA’s 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) for NWP 57 is currently waived. No additional screening procedures are required for the Project regarding compliance with OEPA’s 401 WQC as the 401 WQC would be covered by the NWP.

4.1 USACE Verification

The USACE has the authority to determine and/or verify the geographical boundaries of Waters of the United States in accordance with 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 328 and 33 CFR 329; therefore, the results of this Report are termed “preliminary” until verified and accepted by the USACE. This verification is part of the Jurisdictional Determination process, which is required for approval under Section 404 Clean Water Act, Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and/or isolated wetland permitting process through OEPA. It is the responsibility of any party that intends

to discharge dredge or fill material into Waters of the United States to comply with all applicable regulations.

5.0 Limitations

This Report is limited in scope to the specific terms of the Agreement previously entered into between TRC and FirstEnergy. This Report represents the conditions within the Project Study Area identified herein, as of the inspection dates.

Should the Project change from the scope described herein, TRC should be immediately notified such that additional investigations may be conducted to amend the content of the Report herein. Human-induced and/or natural changes within the Project Study Area may occur after the date of this investigation and may result in changes to the presence, extent, and classification of the surface water resources identified within this Report.

6.0 References

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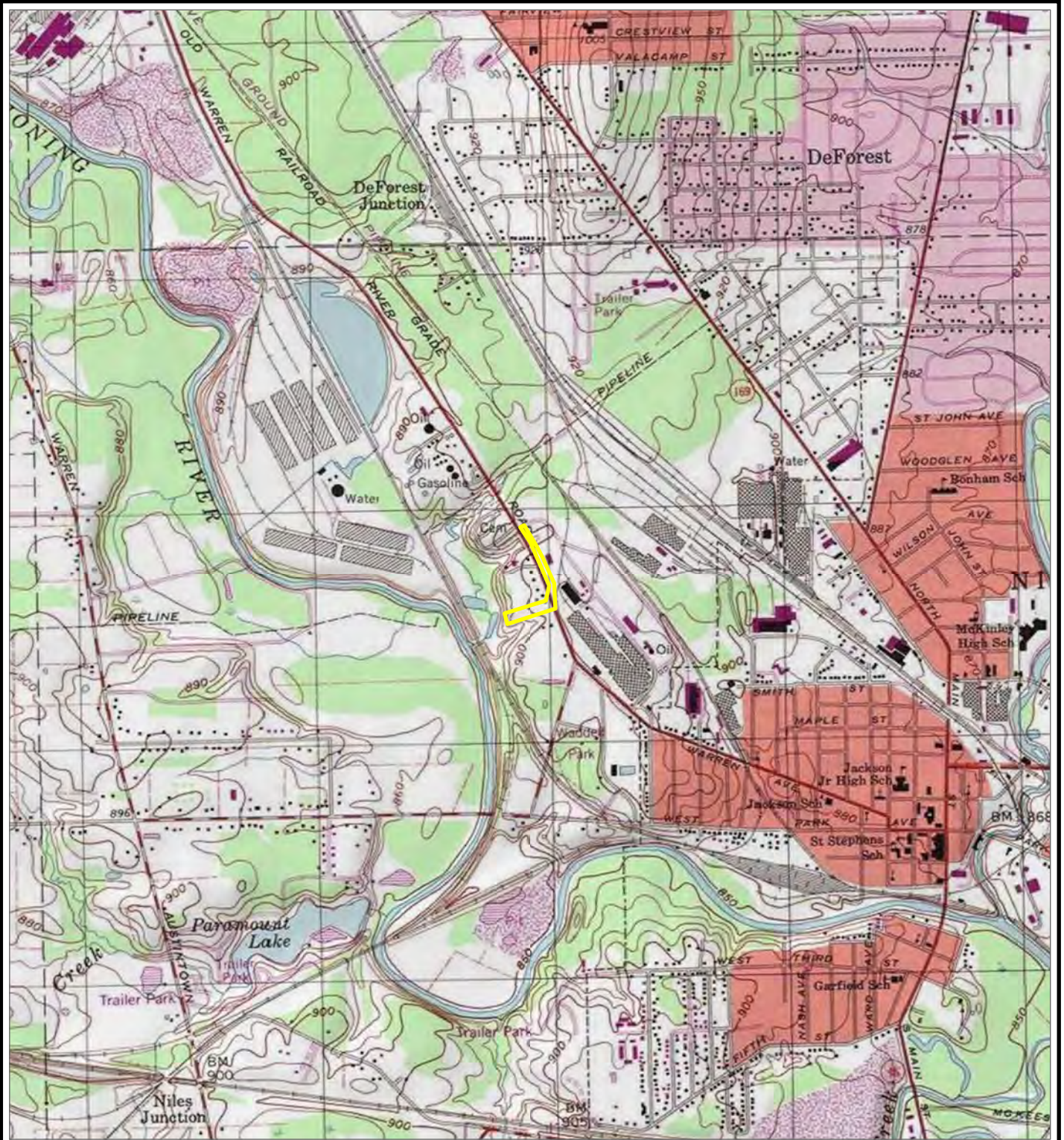
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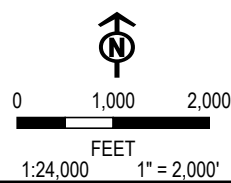
Appendix A

Figures

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 PROJECT STUDY AREA



BASE MAP: USA TOPO MAPS MAP SERVICE, WARREN QUAD

PROJECT: **FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND
SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT
TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH**

TITLE: **SITE LOCATION MAP**

DRAWN BY: M. OPEL PROJ. NO.: 664676 P4

CHECKED BY: M. MOLNAR

APPROVED BY: B. FALKINBURG

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2025

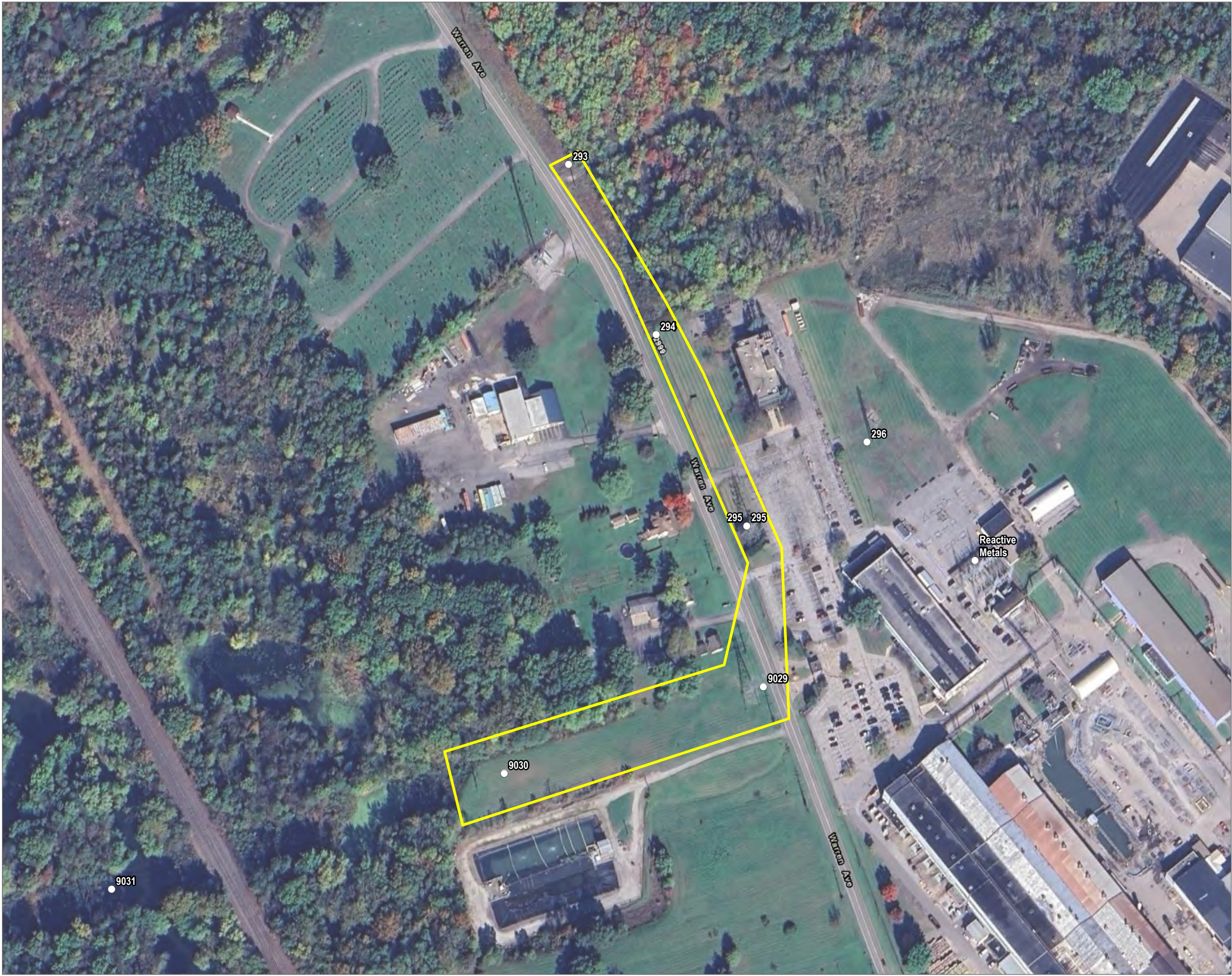
FIGURE 1



1382 WEST NINTH STREET
SUITE 400
CLEVELAND, OH 44113
PHONE: 216-344-3072

FILE: WDR

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Ohio North FIPS 3401 Feet, Map Rotation: 0
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- PROJECT STUDY AREA
- EXISTING STRUCTURE


BASE MAP: GOOGLE MAPS.



1:2,400
1" = 200'

0 200 400 FEET



PROJECT: FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH			
TITLE: AERIAL MAP			
DRAWN BY:	M. OPEL	PROJ. NO.:	664676 P4
CHECKED BY:	M. MOLNAR	FIGURE 2	
APPROVED BY:	B. FALKINBURG		
DATE:	SEPTEMBER 2025		
		1382 WEST NINTH STREET SUITE 400 CLEVELAND, OH 44113 PHONE: 216-344-3072	
FILE:		WDR.aprx	

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Ohio North FIPS 3401 Feet, Map Rotation: 0
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- PROJECT STUDY AREA
- HYDRIC SOIL
- NON-HYDRIC W/ HYDRIC INCLUSIONS SOIL
- NON-HYDRIC SOIL

BASE MAP: GOOGLE MAPS.
DATA SOURCES: SOILS DATA ACQUIRED FROM USDA/NRCS SSURGO DATABASE.

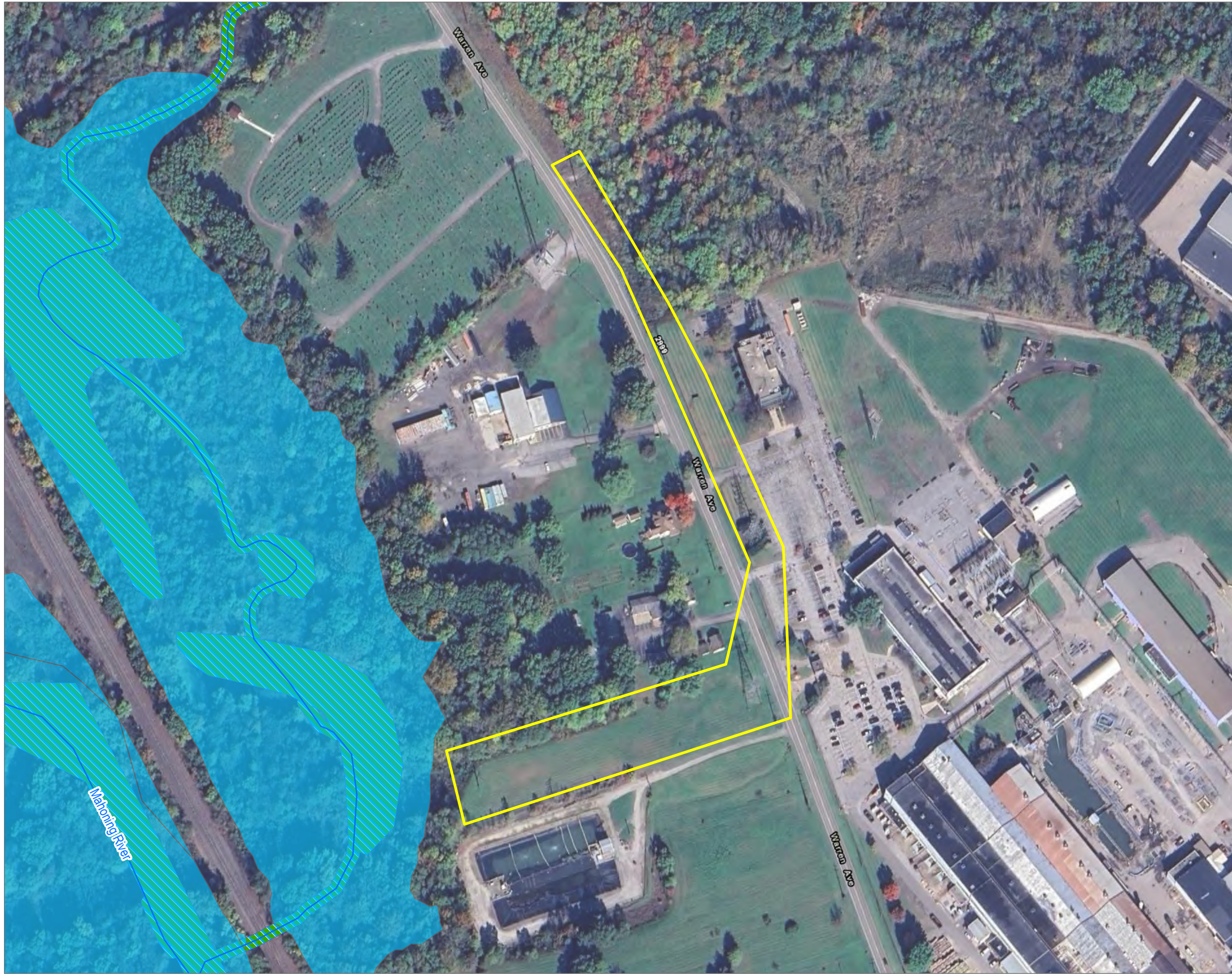


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PROJECT: FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT			
TITLE: SOILS MAP			
DRAWN BY:	A. CORDAS	PROJ. NO.:	664676 P4
CHECKED BY:	M. MOLNAR	FIGURE 3	
APPROVED BY:	B. FALKINBURG		
DATE:	SEPTEMBER 2025		
		1382 WEST NINTH STREET SUITE 400 CLEVELAND, OH 44113 PHONE: 216-344-3072	
FILE:		WDR.aprx	

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Ohio North FIPS 3401 Feet, Map Rotation: 0
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- PROJECT STUDY AREA
- NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHY DATASET (NHD) STREAM
- NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY (NWI) FEATURE
- 100-YEAR FLOOD ZONE

BASE MAP: GOOGLE MAPS.
DATA SOURCES: WETLAND DATA ACQUIRED FROM U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE, NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY (NWI). STREAM DATA ACQUIRED FROM USGS, NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHY DATASET (NHD). FLOOD DATA ACQUIRED FROM FEMA, NATIONAL FLOOD HAZARD LAYER (NFHL).



1:2,400
1" = 200'
0 200 400 FEET

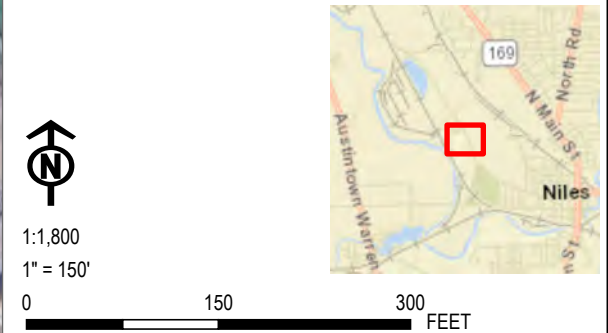
PROJECT: FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT		
TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH		
TITLE: NHD, NWI AND FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAP		
DRAWN BY: A. CORDAS	PROJ. NO.: 664676 P4	FIGURE 4
CHECKED BY: M. MOLNAR		
APPROVED BY: B. FALKINBURG		
DATE: SEPTEMBER 2025		
		1382 WEST NINTH STREET SUITE 400 CLEVELAND, OH 44113 PHONE: 216-344-3072
FILE:	WDR.aprx	

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Ohio North FIPS 3401 Feet; Map Rotation: 0
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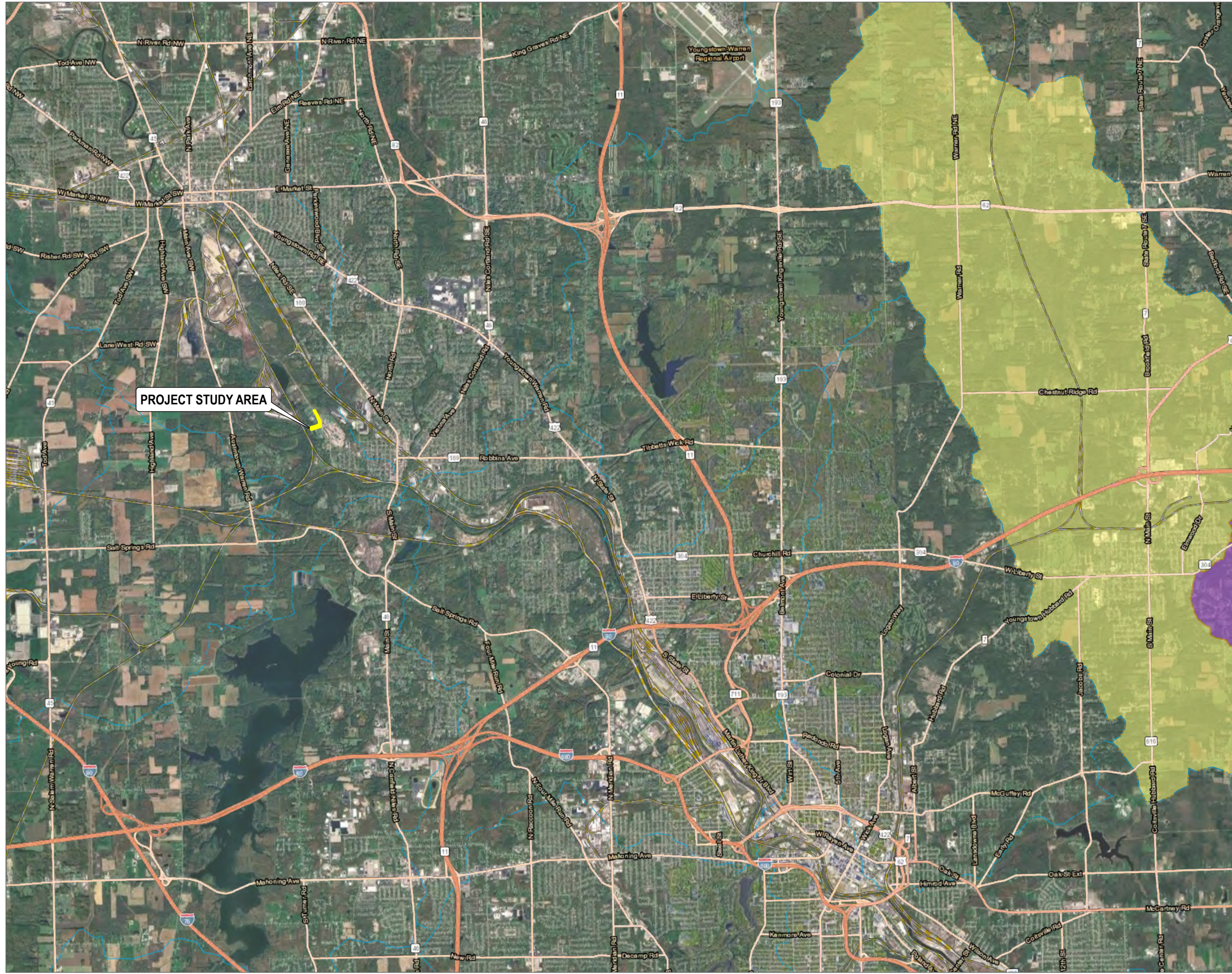
- PROJECT STUDY AREA
- EXISTING STRUCTURE
- CULVERT
- PERENNIAL STREAM
- PEM WETLAND
- WETLAND CONTINUES
- WETLAND DATA POINT
- UPLAND DATA POINT

BASE MAP: GOOGLE MAPS.
DATA SOURCES: TRC WETLAND DELINEATION COMPLETED NOVEMBER 18, 2024.



PROJECT: FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH			
TITLE: DELINEATED RESOURCES MAP			
DRAWN BY: M. OPEL	PROJ. NO.: 664676 P4		
CHECKED BY: M. MOLNAR	FIGURE 5		
APPROVED BY: B. FALKINBURG			
DATE: SEPTEMBER 2025			
		1382 WEST NINTH STREET SUITE 400 CLEVELAND, OH 44113 PHONE: 216-344-3072	
FILE:		WDR.aprx	

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- PROJECT STUDY AREA
- OHIO EPA 401 WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR
NATIONWIDE PERMIT ELIGIBILITY
- INELIGIBLE
 - POSSIBLY ELIGIBLE
 - ELIGIBLE


BASE MAP: GOOGLE MAPS.
DATA SOURCES: NATIONWIDE PERMITS STREAM DATA ACQUIRED FROM
THE OHIO EPA.



1:84,000
1" = 7,000'

0 7,000 14,000 FEET



PROJECT: FIRSTENERGY - EVERGREEN-HIGHLAND SWITCH A-9029 & A-295 PROJECT TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH			
TITLE: NATIONWIDE PERMITS STREAM ELIGIBILITY MAP			
DRAWN BY:	M. OPEL	PROJ. NO.:	664676 P4
CHECKED BY:	M. MOLNAR	FIGURE 6	
APPROVED BY:	B. FALKINBURG		
DATE:	SEPTEMBER 2025		
		1382 WEST NINTH STREET SUITE 400 CLEVELAND, OH 44113 PHONE: 216-344-3072	
FILE:		WDR.aprx	

Appendix B

Photographic Record

Client Name: FirstEnergy	Site Location: Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	Project No. 664676 Phase 4
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Photo No. 1.		
Photo Date: 11/18/2024		
Description: Stream S-EVN-1 looking downstream, photo facing west.		

Photo No. 2.		
Photo Date: 11/18/2024		
Description: Stream S-EVN-1, view of the observed substrate, photo facing down.		

Client Name: FirstEnergy	Site Location: Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	Project No. 664676 Phase 4
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Photo No. 3.	
Photo Date: 11/18/2024	
Description: Stream S-EVN-1 looking upstream, photo facing east.	

Photo No. 4.	
Photo Date: 11/18/2024	
Description: Wetland W-EVN-1 facing north.	

Client Name: FirstEnergy	Site Location: Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	Project No. 664676 Phase 4
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Photo No. 5.	
Photo Date: 11/18/2024	
Description: Wetland W-EVN-1 facing east.	

Photo No. 6.	
Photo Date: 11/18/2024	
Description: Wetland W-EVN-1 facing south.	