

Assenza, Adam

From: Blodgett, Kenneth
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2017 9:32 AM
To: Assenza, Adam
Subject: FW: GLBTR docket # FD35952
Attachments: DOCKET # FD 35952 GLBTR EIS LETTER.pdf

From: JENNIFER FILES [mailto:smejafdn@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 4:15 PM
To: Blodgett, Kenneth <Kenneth.Blodgett@stb.gov>
Subject: GLBTR docket # FD35952

Please accept this for the public record.

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April 27, 2017

Mr. Ken Blodgett
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Docket # FD 35952

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

In March, 2016 Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc. (GLBT) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) an application for a permit to construct and operate a new rail line through northwest Indiana and northern Illinois to connect with existing rail lines in southern Wisconsin. The STB issued a "Notice of Intent and Draft Scope of Study" for an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the preferred route at the time. The comment period for the Draft Scope of Study closed on July 15, 2016.

On September 20, 2016 the GLBT proposed a new preferred route that shifted it from Boone County, Illinois to Winnebago County, Illinois through land owned by the Smeja Family Foundation. The land is located north of the Rock River in Section 21, T. 43 N., R. 1 E, 3 P.M. and along the Kishwaukee River in Section 28, T. 43 N., R. 1 E., 3 P.M., Winnebago County, Illinois. (See attached map) This land has significant historical and archeological resources including Archaic and Late Woodland sites identified by the Illinois State Archeological Survey and earlier archeological surveys conducted by UW-Milwaukee as part of the National Historic Sites Survey.

The land that will be effected by the proposed railroad includes an unmapped Late Woodland effigy mound group in the bluffs north of Illinois Rt. 2 and a large, multi-component village site on the lower terraces of the Rock River that are in the path of the new preferred route of the railroad. Attached is a "sketch" of the mound group draw by Stephen Pearl Lathrop, Professor of Natural Sciences at Beloit College in 1852. The mounds have never been mapped, or registered with the State.

The village site along the Kishwaukee River is likely the location where Black Hawk, the famous Sauk Chief, camped when he and his warriors came up the Rock River to the mouth of the Kishwaukee to recruit allies in their fight against the "English" at the start of the Black Hawk War in 1832. It is also the location of one of the first sawmills in the area. In addition to the historic resources, the preferred route of the

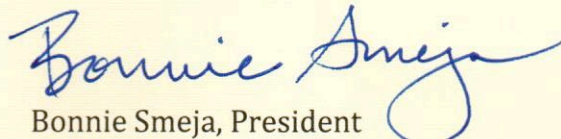
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Mr. Ken Blodgett
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GLBT railroad crosses the Kishwaukee River, a highly valued natural resource that harbors a large mussel bed at this location that supports healthy populations of black sandshell mussels, as well as many other mussel species.

The Smeja Family Foundation is a private non-profit foundation that is actively engaged in protecting lands with significant historical, archeological and natural resources. It owns and operates Indian Hill Manor and Farm, an educational retreat center and working farm, listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2001). The Foundation is working with archeologists from the Ho Chunk Nation and the Illinois State Archeological Survey to map the archeological resources on the land that would be impacted by the preferred alignment of the GLBT railroad. However, the information from these surveys will not be available until later this year.

Therefore, the Board of Directors of the Smeja Family Foundation requests that the STB require a complete archeological survey of the new preferred route of the GLBT railroad where it crosses the Kishwaukee and Rock rivers, that the STB issue a new Notice of Intent and Draft Scope of Study, and that it reopens the public comment period for the new preferred route of the GLBT railroad through Ogle and Winnebago Counties in Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,



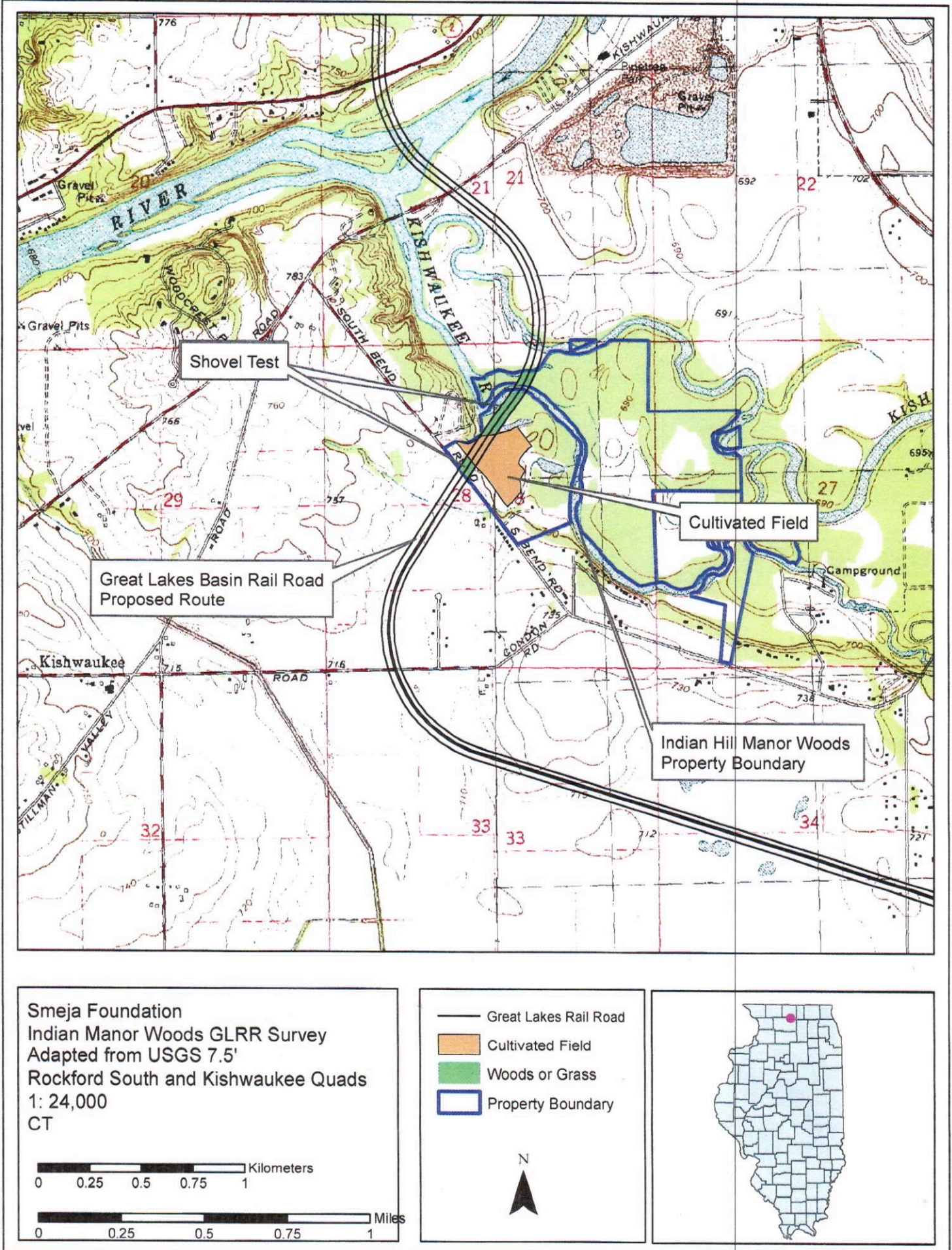
Bonnie Smeja, President
Smeja Family Foundation

Attachments:

Topographic map showing location of
Foundation lands in relation to GLBT railroad
Sketch of the Ancient Mounds by Prof. S. P. Lathrop

Cc: Congressman Adam Kinzinger

Figure 1



1852

Sketch
of the Ancient Mounds
near the junction of the
Kishwaukee & Rock rivers
in Illinois by Prof. S. P. Leatherup

