File this form with Form 2, maps, and other supporting documents in the project folder under appropriate district or SO Small Projects Day subfolder.

Save shapefiles and map projects (mxd files) on the T drive:
T:\FS\NFS\WhiteMountain\Program\1900Planning\GIS\NEPA_Process\SmallProjectsDay

1. Project Name
Eversource X178 Geotechnical Investigations
2. Project Location—Include town(s), major roadways, and other pertinent landmark labels. Attach a map. Map should be at an appropriate scale and extent to orient a reader unfamiliar with the project location:
The X178 Transmission Line crosses through the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) in the Towns of Woodstock, Lincoln, and Easton in Grafton County, New Hampshire (NH).
3. Project Proponent/Contact—Include applicant information if project is not internal. Include White Mountain National Forest contact information:
Public Service Company of NH dba Eversource Energy is the applicant, Attn: Kurt Nelson, Licensing and Permitting, kurt.nelson@eversource.com, 603-634-3256 WMNF contact: Jasmin Faunce, Realty Specialist, jasmin.faunce@usda.gov, 603-481-4376
4. Implementation Timeframe—When is the project expected to start? Is timing critical? If so, why?
Eversource's goal is to perform this work in the winter timeframe in 2025, with a desired start in February or March.
5. Project Funding—Is the project funded, or expected to be funded within proposed timeframe?
The project is fully funded.
6. Implementation Mechanism (e.g., contract, partner, permittee, force account):
Third party contractor, Crux
7. Special Uses
Does the project require a special use permit? Yes, temporary permit would be issued If yes, has an application been accepted? Not applicable If yes, what level of review is needed? NA
8. Project fits a Categorical Exclusion? ☒**Yes** ☐**No**
9a. Applicable Categorical Exclusion(s): 36 CFR 220.6(d)(8) Approve minor short-term special uses This category is applicable for this project because the geotechnical investigation work is temporary and of short duration to inform the proposed project which is located within an existing and maintained utility line right-of-way (ROW). Upon completion of the investigation, the transmission line ROW will continue to function and be maintained as an electrical utility line corridor.
9b. Is a Decision Memo required? ☐**Yes** ☒**No**
10. Purpose and Need—Describe relationship between the current and desired future condition. Why is the project needed?
The 115 kV X178 Transmission Line is being rebuilt as it is a critical source of Transmission infrastructure for northern New Hampshire. The structure locations described in section 11 require geotechnical subsurface drilling investigations to collect data for structure foundation design needs. The 15 borings are proposed in support of the 23 structures which are proposed to be installed using

micropile structure foundations that can be installed using helicopter construction methods utilizing light-weight drilling equipment that can be flown into the ROW corridor. This includes both the locations in the bog and structure locations in the Kinsman Ridge area which will likely encounter shallow ledge. The boring locations proposed should provide enough data for design of the foundations for these 23 structures. The other structures in the WMNF are proposed to be installed using conventional direct imbed methods that will involve use of traditional larger drilling equipment. The purpose of the geotechnical investigations is to collect boring data and samples to undergo laboratory testing to aid in design for the future replacement structures.

11. Project Description—Who, what, where, when, and how. Will trees be cut (about how many, what diameter, is a timber prescription needed)? Are there seasonal restrictions? Describe acres (footprint), access, methods, equipment, and duration, etc.

The proposed project at 15 existing structure locations in the transmission line corridor as it crosses through the WMNF between Lost River Road in the Town of Woodstock through the Town of Lincoln and to Easton Valley Road in the Town of Easton: 12 structures in Lincoln (STR 248, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259 and 263) and 3 structures in Easton (STR 264, 267, and 270).Given the remote location of the proposed worksites along the X178 Transmission Line and lack of suitable access, Eversource proposed to utilize portable rotary core drills which will be transported by helicopter to the 15 drilling locations. A helicopter landing zone outside of the WMNF near Route 116 in Easton, an existing helicopter landing area near STR265 just north of the Lincoln/Easton boundary, and 5 helicopter landing areas (16 foot x 20 foot) within the ROW corridor will be utilized to support this effort. Geotechnical drill personnel will be transported to various locations in the ROW via helicopter each working day and will travel on foot to the geotechnical boring locations. The work is proposed to be conducted by two three-man crews and it is anticipated that it will take 16 days to complete the work. Delays caused by weather or other factors would prolong the work timeframe. Geotechnical work is proposed to take place this winter to maximize seasonal avoidance of impacts to wetlands and rare species.

Each drilling location requires a 30 foot by 30 foot temporary work platform to support the drilling effort. Temporary matting will also be utilized at wetland drilling locations. Further, polyethylene sheeting will be utilized in conjunction with the matting for fuel and spill containment purposes. Light brush maintenance (no tree cutting) within the ROW adjacent to drilling locations may be needed for proper placement of the 30 foot by 30 foot temporary work platforms and/or temporary matting. If required, cribbing or matting and leveling decks or platforms will be used to create a level working surface. All geotechnical drilling fluids will be recovered and removed from each drilling location.

Subsurface Exploration: 15 Standard Penetration test borings with one boring at each of the follow structure locations: 248, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 263, 264, 267, and 274. HWT casing and HQ drill rods no larger than 6 inches in diameter will be used. Where auger drilling refusal is encountered due to bedrock, rock coring will be performed to penetrate and sample bedrock up to 10 feet below the encountered refusal depth. No bedrock will be sampled if auger refusal occurs within 5 feet of planned termination depth. Boreholes will be logged in accordance with the Unified Soil Classification System. Groundwater levels, if encountered, will be recorded during drilling and before hole abandonment. Sampling will include standard split spoon sampling at a minimum of four samples in the top 10 feet and 5-foot intervals thereafter. Obtain tube samples where cohesive materials with blow counts less than 20 are encountered, and bulk soil samples collected from auger cuttings for select laboratory testing. A field representative will characterize and document encountered subsurface conditions on field logs. Laboratory testing will follow to evaluate index and geotechnical engineering characteristics and design requirements for the proposed structures.

12. Management Areas and Forest Plan—Describe affected management areas (MAs) and any potential inconsistencies with the forest plan.

2.1 General Forest Management

6.3 Semi-Primitive Motorized (allowing snowmobile)

8.3 Appalachian Trail

13. Known Resource Conditions/Issues:

There may be cultural resources in the area. Eversource and GZA Consultants has completed a Geotechnical Boring Plan Set to limit and avoid impacts to resources including wetlands, protected species, and cultural resources.

Kinsman Ridge Trail, a portion of the Appalachian Trail, passes through the existing ROW by existing structure 259. The boring work location avoids the trail and no disturbance to the trail is proposed.

14. Additional Resource Considerations: Will your project occur (check all boxes that may apply and use the box below for any comments):

Within one-half mile from (1) talus or (2) anthropogenic or naturally formed rock crevices in rocky outcrops, rock faces or cliffs? Yes ☒ No ☐

During the bat inactive season (November 1 to April 14)? Yes ☒ No ☐

During the bat active season (April 15 to October 31)? Yes ☐ No ☒

During the bat pup season (May 15 to August 15)? Yes ☐ No ☒

The below information will help inform if engineering review is required or needed for decision and level of review. If all answers are no, engineering review is not required per project scope.

1. Bridge (all types other than bog bridge)	Yes ☐ No ☒	2. Dam	Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Building (administrative, backcountry shelter, bathroom, garage, others.)	Yes ☐ No ☒	4. Road	Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Retaining wall greater than three feet	Yes ☐ No ☒	6. Parking area	Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Other infrastructure (please describe)	Yes ☐ No ☒	8. Culvert	Yes ☐ No ☒

15. Public Involvement—Describe anticipated level of public involvement (e.g., SOPA only, length of scoping period, etc.). What is target SOPA publication date? Will Public Affairs be needed?

None.

16. Required Supplemental Information—The following materials must be included with the proposal for Responsible Official signature.

☒ Photographs and/or video documentation of project area

☒ Figure and/or spatial data

Project is appropriate and ready for consideration at Small Projects Day.
BROOKE BROWN Digitally signed by BROOKE BROWN Date: 2025.01.31 11:48:55 -05'00'
Responsible Official and Date