### **Final**

A Field Survey of Plant Communities at the Proposed Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Site, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania



Submitted to: AREVA NP, Inc. Marlborough, MA

Rev. 6 September 2011

### Revision 6

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September 2011

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Appendix A – Photographs

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### **Record of Revisions**

Revision	Date	Pages/Sections Changed	Brief Description
000	September 2008	All	Initial release
001	July 2009	Title Page	Title
001		Table 1	Deleted stiff goldenrod (Solidago rigida)
002	July 2010	Title Page	Title
002		Page 2	Introduction-survey area
002		Page 3	Methods-updated to reflect additional 2010 field survey for Plot Plan Change
002		Page 3	Site Description-revised to reflect Plot Plan Change
002		Table 1	Added new plant species
002		Figure 1	Revised site boundary and added limit of disturbance to site location map
002		Figure 2	Revised site boundary, added field survey boundary to aerial photograph, and moved location of BBNPP to reflect Plot Plan Change
002		Figure 3	Added new plant communities within revised site boundary associated with Plot Plan Change
003	August 2010	Page 2	Modified text in regard to additional field surveys
003		Page 3	Included additional description of sampling methodology
003		Page 7	Modified text in regard to invasive species and added mile-a-minute weed
004	October 2010	Figures	All Figures were revised to include the modified BBNPP Project Boundary and Figure 3 was revised to include changes to wetland boundaries
004		References	AREVA 2010 reference updated to include most recent revision of document
005	November 2010	Figure 3	Revised wetland boundaries to reflect the wetland boundaries that had been determined prior to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> JD walk-through
005		Table 1	Modified title to reflect name change to BBNPP Project Boundary
005		Page 6	Revised stream name to conform with response to RAI AE 2.3-1
005		Pages 2 and 6	Modified text to reflect project boundary name change
006	September 2011	Title page	Updated submission date and revision number

Revision	Date	Pages/Sections Changed	Brief Description
006		TOC	Updated page numbers
006		Page 3	Updated text to indicate additional field surveys during July 2011
006		Page 4	Revised text to include July 2011 sampling period and revised the potential area of disturbance
006		Page 9	Updated text to include most recent information regarding agency correspondence
006	46 H	Figures	Revised BBNPP Project Boundary per changes related to disposal of excess cut material and updated data layers to correspond with revised BBNPP Project Boundary
006	# ## ## ## ## ## ## ## ## ## ## ## ## #	Table 1	Revised to include additional species and added footnote
006		Appendix B	Updated to include letter from PDCNR and submission date of USFWS letter
006	de de	References	Added reference for PDCNR 2010 letter and updated AREVA reference to 2011 revision 7.

#### INTRODUCTION

Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant (BBNPP) is proposed to be sited adjacent to the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station in Salem Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (Figure 1). Normandeau Associates, Inc. was contracted by AREVA NP, Inc. to map the terrestrial plant communities within and adjacent to potential areas of disturbance within the BBNPP Project Boundary (herein referred to as the BBNPP Site). Potential areas of disturbance are illustrated in Figure 1. The actual field survey area that bounds potential areas of disturbance is displayed in Figure 2.

Field studies of new parcels were performed in 2011 to supplement the ecological survey data previously obtained and reported in the prior revision of this report. This revision includes the new data as well as previously reported information.

#### Personnel

This survey was coordinated by Project Manager Paul Harmon and Principal Ecologist Robert Blye. Field work was accomplished by Normandeau biologists Elizabeth Garlo, Jayme Schaeffer, Chris Roche and Keith Maurice. Dr. James Montgomery of Ecology III, Inc. also participated in the field work and provided technical assistance. Keith Maurice prepared the report.

#### **METHODS**

Mapping of terrestrial plant communities was initiated by a review of relevant literature and readily available natural resources mapping in order to anticipate the distribution of plant communities across the site. References consulted included the Natural Resources Conservation Service Luzerne County Soil Survey, National Wetlands Inventory mapping, aerial photography and

information on plant species of special concern.

Field mapping within the survey area (Figure 2) took place during the period of July 2007 through August 2008, April to June 2010, and July 2011 in combination with wetlands delineation field studies. Wetlands and uplands plant communities where extensively surveyed and documented during these time periods.

Additional botanical field studies consisting of observational meander surveys were conducted during July and August 2008 to ensure that all plant communities onsite were thoroughly investigated and to inventory any plant species that weren't previously documented during the wetlands delineations.

No new types of wetlands or uplands habitats were encountered during the April to June 2010 or July 2011 delineation field studies. Therefore, no additional botanical studies were conducted. Documentation of the plant communities included an inventory of common plant species and representative photographs.

Mapping of plant communities outside of the survey area was based upon existing natural resource mapping references, as noted above, and were not field verified.

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

Areas of disturbance associated with BBNPP include 687 acres (1.1 miles<sup>2</sup>) of property adjacent to SSES (Figure 1). The terrain is variable and ranges from steeply sloping hills in the west to the relatively level floodplain of the Susquehanna Riverlands in the east. Net topographic relief is approximately 400 feet.

Land uses consist largely of cropland in use for the production of corn and hay and fallow farmland including an abandoned orchard and deciduous forest.

Prominent hydrologic features include the Susquehanna River, Walker Run, the North Branch Canal, several former farm ponds and a beaver pond. Man-made features consist of two active gravel quarries, several outlying SSES facilities and

electric transmission line corridors, and two large soil stockpiles resulting from SSES construction in the 1970s. An aerial view of the site layout is presented in Figure 2.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Bell Bend Site encompasses large tracts of upland plant communities, wetland plant communities, agricultural land and developed properties including several former gravel quarries (Figure 3). Descriptions of the upland and wetland communities within the survey area are presented in the following sections.

#### **Upland Plant Communities**

#### **Old Field/Former Agricultural**

Old-field vegetation cover is composed of a variety of grasses and herbaceous plants. During 2007, old-field vegetation extended over much of the fallow farmland in the western section of the site. However, during 2008 some of this habitat was returned to agricultural use for the production of corn. Dominant old field species include daisy fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), wrinkled goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*), flat-top fragrant goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), giant foxtail grass (*Setaria faberi*), white heath aster (*Aster pilosus*), lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*), red clover (*Trifolium pretense*) and common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*).

Included with this habitat type in Figure 3 is an abandoned apple orchard several acres in size which is located in the vicinity of the proposed location for the power block.

A list of common plant species observed in the BBNPP site is presented in Table 1.

#### **Upland Scrub/Shrub**

Upland shrub habitat occurs mostly along transmission line corridors and in several abandoned farm fields located around the site that are undergoing secondary succession. This community consists primarily of bush honeysuckle (Lonicera tatarica), multiflora rose (Rosa multiflora), Allegheny blackberry (Rubus allegheniensis), and Russian olive (Elaeagnus angustifolia).

#### **Upland Deciduous Forest**

Upland deciduous forest covers a large portion of the site to the west of Route 11. Common overstory species include northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), sweet birch (*Betula lenta*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*).

Upland forest understories are composed predominantly of spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), round-leaved greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) and saplings of overstory species. Groundcover species include may-apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*), hayscented fern (*Dennsteadtia punctilobula*), tree clubmoss (*Lycopodium obscurum*), partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*), ground cedar (*Lycopodium tristachyum*) and stilt grass (*Eulalia viminea*).

#### **Wetland Plant Communities**

#### **Palustrine Emergent Wetlands**

Palustrine emergent wetlands are located throughout the site. A diverse group of

herbaceous hydrophytic plants is present including soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), sedges (*Carex spp.*), arrow-leaf tearthumb (*Polygonum sagittatum*), common boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), giant goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*), seedbox (*Ludwigia alternifolia*), nutsedges (*Cyperus spp.*), blue vervain (*Verbena hasta*), New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), swamp aster (*Aster puniceus*), cut-leaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), broad-leaved cattail (*Typha latifolia*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).

#### **Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetlands**

Several large palustrine scrub/shrub wetlands are located immediately southwest of SSES and hydrophytic shrubs are a common component of many wetlands across the BBNPP site. Spicebush is overwhelmingly the most abundant wetland-preferring shrub onsite. Other frequently occurring wetland shrubs are highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), meadowsweet (*Spirea latifolia*), alders (*Alnus spp.*), silky dogwood (*Cornus ammomum*), arrow-wood (*Viburnum dentatum*) and grey dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*).

#### **Palustrine Forested Wetlands**

Palustrine forested wetlands are the principal wetland type in the BBNPP site, and large contiguous blocks of this habitat are associated with Walker Run and its eastern tributary (Unnamed Tributary No. 1). Trees commonly found in forested wetlands onsite include red maple (*Acer rubrum*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) and river birch (*Betula nigra*). In addition, upland-preferring species such as white ash and yellow poplar are present on microsites scattered throughout some forested wetlands.

Wetland forest understories are comprised largely of spicebush, highbush

blueberry, arrow-wood and winterberry (*Ilex verticellata*). Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) predominates in the groundcover along with sedges, jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), clearweed (*Pilea pumila*), cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), stout woodreed grass (*Cinna arundinacea*), and swamp dewberry (*Rubus hispidus*).

#### **INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES**

Non-native invasive plants occur abundantly within particular upland and wetland habitats in the BBNPP site but were not dominant across the site as a whole. Invasive species in wetlands include reed canary grass, purple loosestrife, and common reed (*Phragmites australis*), which are herbaceous plants that commonly colonize emergent wetland habitat. Reed canary grass is a dominant species throughout much of the emergent wetlands onsite and forms monocultures in some areas. Purple loosestrife is moderately abundant and common reed is currently limited to a small area near the southeastern corner. These species will likely colonize additional emergent wetland habitats over time.

Invasive species in uplands include mile-a-minute (*Polygonum perfoliatum*), garlic mustard, stilt grass, multiflora rose and bush honeysuckle. Garlic mustard and stilt grass are herbaceous plants that are very common in the groundcover of upland forests. Multiflora rose and bush honeysuckle are shrubs that occur in dense concentrations in successional old-field habitat and along forest edges. Mile-a-minute was common in the vicinity of the intake structure.

#### SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Information concerning the presence of threatened, endangered, and other special concern plants within a 0.5-mile radius of an area encompassing the site, PPL-owned lands to the north and the Susquehanna Riverlands was requested

via correspondence submitted 21 December 2007 to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PDCNR). USFWS jurisdiction includes flora designated as listed, proposed or candidate under the Federal Endangered Species Act. PDCNR has iurisdiction over flora and natural communities considered to be rare in Pennsylvania. Neither agency reported any known occurrences of plants designated as threatened, endangered or of special concern within the search area (USFWS 2008 and PDCNR 2008). No threatened, endangered or other special concern plants were observed during Normandeau's field surveys. Requests for updated information concerning species of special concern were submitted by PPL Bell Bend LLC to USFWS and PDCNR on 20 September 2010. A response was received from PDCNR on 1 November 2010 which indicated that no plant species designated as threatened, endangered, or special concern occur within the search area (PDCNR 2010). A response to the 2010 letter from the USFWS is anticipated and the letter will be incorporated into Appendix B and summarized in this section upon receipt.

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Table 1. Common plants identified within the BBNPP Project Boundary.

#### **Common Name**

silver maple

#### **Trees and Saplings**

Acer saccharinum Acer rubrum Ailanthus altissima Betula alleghaniensis Betula lenta Betula nigra Betula populifolia Carya cordiformis Carya ovata Carva tomentosa Celtis occidentalis Cornus florida Fagus grandifolia Fraxinus americana Fraxinus pennsylvanica Juglans nigra Juniperus virginiana Liriodendron tulipifera Malus spp. Nyssa sylvatica Pinus resinosa Pinus strobus Pinus sylvestris Platanus occidentalis Populus deltoides Populus tremuloides Prunus serotina Quercus alba **Quercus** bicolor Quercus palustris Quercus rubra Quercus velutina Robinia pseudoacacia Sassafras albidum Tilia americana Tsuga canadensis

red maple tree-of-heaven yellow birch sweet birch river birch gray birch bitternut hickory shagbark hickory mockernut hickory hackberry flowering dogwood American beech white ash green ash black walnut eastern red cedar yellow poplar apples black gum red pine eastern white pine Scots pine American sycamore eastern cottonwood quaking aspen black cherry white oak swamp white oak pin oak northern red oak

**Woody Vines** 

Ulmus rubra

Lonicera japonica Parthenocissus quinquefolia Rubus flagellaris Smilax glauca Japanese honeysuckle Virginia creeper northern dewberry cat greenbrier

black oak

sassafras

black locust

slippery elm

American basswood

eastern hemlock

#### **Common Name**

#### **Woody Vines**

Smilax rotundifolia Toxicodendron radicans Vitis labrusca common greenbrier poison ivy fox grape

#### **Shrubs**

Alnus spp. Alnus serrulata Cornus amomum Cornus racemosa Elaeagnus angustifolia Hamamelis virginianus Ilex verticillata Kalmia latifolia Ligustrum obtusifolium Lindera benzoin Lonicera tatarica Rhus typhina Rosa multiflora Rubus allegheniensis Rubus occidentalis Sambucus canadensis Salix discolor Salix nigra Spirea latifolia Vaccinium corymbosum Viburnum cassinoides Viburnum dentatum Viburnum prunifolium

alders Smooth alder silky dogwood swamp dogwood Russian olive American witch-hazel winterberry mountain laurel privet northern spicebush tartarian honeysuckle staghorn sumac multiflora rose Allegheny blackberry black raspberry American elder pussy willow black willow broad-leaf meadow-sweet highbush blueberry withe-rod arrow-wood black-haw

#### **Herbs**

Achillea millefolium
Artemisia vulgaris
Acorus calamus
Agropyron repens
Agrostis gigantea
Alisma subcordatum
Alliaria petiolata
Allium vineale
Ambrosia artemisiifolia
Anthoxanthum odoratum

common yarrow
mugwort
sweetflag
quack grass
redtop grass
subcordate water-plantain
garlic mustard
field garlic
common ragweed
sweet vernal grass

#### Common Name

#### Herbs

Apocynum cannabinum Asclepias incarnata Asclepias syriaca Aster pilosus Aster puniceus Aster simplex Barbarea vulgaris Bidens spp.

Boehmeria cylindrica Bromus inermis Carex spp

Carex spp.
Carex lurida
Carex stricta
Chenopodium

Chenopodium album Cicuta bulbifera Cinna arundinacea Cirsium arvense Cirsium vulgare Claytonia virginica Conyza canadensis Coronilla varia Cyperus spp.

Dactylis glomerata Dennstaedtia punctilobula

Dichanthelium clandestinum Dipsacus sylvestris Digitaria sanguinalis Dryopteris spinulosa Eleocharis spp.

Erechtites hieraciifolia

Erigeron annuus

Erigeron philadelphicus Erythronium americanum

Erythronium americanum Eulalia viminea Eupatoriadelphus spp. Eupatorium perfoliatum Euthamia graminifolia Fragaria virginianum

Galium mollugo Geum canadense Glyceria striata Hesperis matronalis clasping leaf dogbane swamp milkweed

common milkweed white heath aster

swamp aster panicled aster winter-cress beggar-ticks

false nettle smooth brome grass

sedges

sedges
shallow sedge
uptight sedge
lamb's quarters
water hemlock
stout wood-reedgrass

Canada thistle bull thistle spring beauty

horseweed crown-vetch nutsedges orchard grass hayscented fern deer-tongue grass

teasel crabgrass

spinulose wood fern

spikerushes American burn daisy fleabane Philadelphia fleabane

dogtooth violet Nepal microstegium

Joe-Pye-weed common boneset

flat-top fragrant goldenrod

Virginia strawberry

wild madder white avens fowl manna grass dames rocket

#### **Common Name**

#### **Herbs**

Holcus lanatus Hypericum perforatum Impatiens capensis Juncus effusus Juncus tenuis Lamium purpureum Leersia oryzoides

Lemna spp.

Leucanthemum vulgare Lilium canadense Lonicera tatarica Lotus corniculatus Ludwigia alternifolia Ludwigia palustris Lycopodium obscurum Lycopodium tristachyum Lycopus spp. Lysimachia ciliata

Lysimachia nummularia Lythrum salicaria

Maianthemum canadense Mentha spp.

Mitchella repens Oenothera biennis Onoclea sensibilis

Osmunda cinnamomea

Oxalis spp. Panicum dichotomiflorum Phalaris arundinacea Phleum pretense Phragmites australis Phytolacca americana Plantago lanceolata Plantago major Pilea pumila Poa pratensis

Poa trivialis Podophyllum peltatum Polygonum arifolium Polygonum cespitosum Polygonum hydropiperiodes Polygonum pensylvanicum Polygonum perfoliatum Polygonum sagittatum

common velvet grass St. John's wort iewelweed soft rush path rush purple dead nettle rice cutgrass duckweeds oxeye daisy Canada lily Tatarian honeysuckle

birds-foot trefoil seedbox marsh seedbox

tree clubmoss ground cedar bugleweeds fringed loosestrife moneywort

purple loosestrife false lily-of-the-valley

mints

partridge-berry

common evening-primrose sensitive fern

cinnamon fern wood-sorrels fall panic grass Reed canary grass timothy grass common reed common pokeweed English plantain common plantain Clearweed

Kentucky bluegrass rough bluegrass

may-apple

halberd-leaf tearthumb cespitose knotweed swamp smartweed Pennsylvania smartweed

mile-a-minute

arrow-leaved tearthumb

#### Common Name

#### Herbs

Polygonum virginianum Potentilla canadense Potentilla simplex Prunella vulgaris Ranunculus acris Rubus hispidus Rudbeckia hirta Rudbeckia laciniata Rumex crispus Sagittaria latifolia Saponaria officinalis Schizachrium scoparium Scirpus cyperinus Scirpus spp. Setaria faberi Setaria glauca Smilacina racemosa Solanum carolinense Solidago canadensis Solidago gigantea Solidago rugosa Sparganium spp.

Thelypteris noveboracensis Tridens flavus Trifolium pratense Typha latifolia Urtica dioica Uvularia sessilifolia Verbascum blattaria Verbascum thapsus Verbena hastata Vernonia noveboracensis

Symplocarpus foetidus

Taraxacum officinale

Virginia knotweed dwarf cinquefoil old-field cinquefoil

heal-all common buttercup bristly blackberry black-eyed Susan cut-leaf coneflower

curly dock

broad-leaf arrow-head

bouncing-bet little bluestem wool-grass bulrushes

Japanese bristle grass yellow bristle grass

feather false-Solomon's-seal

Carolina nightshade Canada goldenrod giant goldenrod wrinkled goldenrod

burreeds skunk-cabbage common dandelion New York fern purple-top tridens

red clover

broad-leaved cattail stinging nettle sessile-leaf bellwort moth mullein common mullein blue vervain New York ironweed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Additional species observed only during the 2010 surveys are indicated in blue font.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Additional species observed only during the 2011 surveys are indicated in red font.

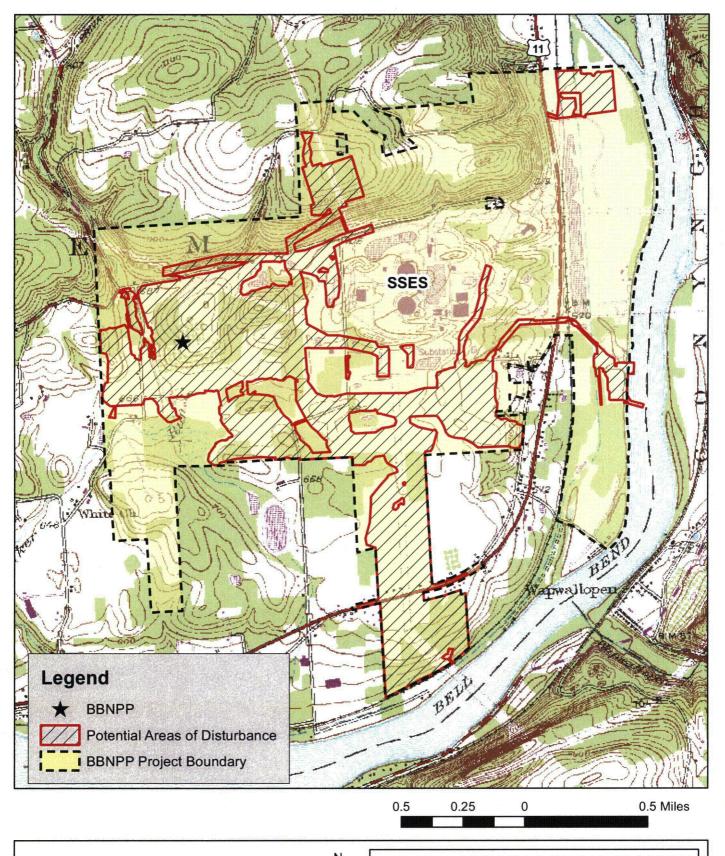


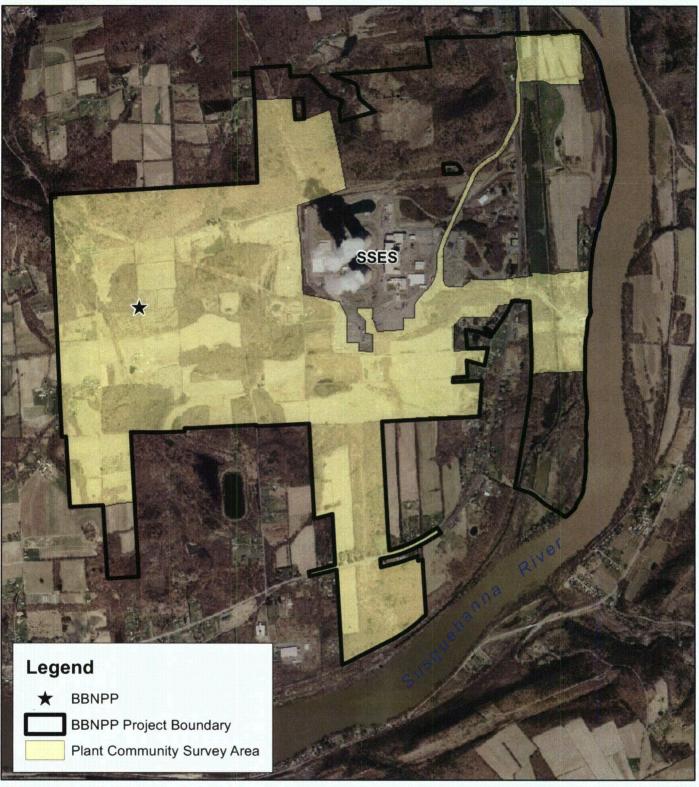
Figure 1.
Location of Proposed BBNPP



# NORMANDEAU ASSOCIATES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS 400 Old Reading Pike, Bldg A, Suite 101 Stowe, PA 19464

date: 07/27/10 prepared by: s.sherman project: 22474.000

rev. date: 10/12/10, 09/09/11 prepared for: b.lees file name: Figure1.BBNPP\_Site\_USGS



Aerial Photography from PAMAP Program, PA DCNR, Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, 2005

Figure 2. Location of the Plant Community Survey Area within the BBNPP Project Boundary

2,000 1,000

# NORMANDEAU ASSOCIATES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS 400 Old Reading Pike, Bldg A, Suite 101 Stowe, PA 19464

date: 07/27/10 prepared by: s.sherman project: 22474.000

rev. date: 10/01/10, 09/09/11 prepared for: b.lees file name: Figure2.BBNPP\_Site\_Aerial

2,000 Feet

