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FD 35952

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To: Surface Transportation Board  
From: iMpress Alpacas/Dr. Michelle Pressler/Mr. William Ward  
Date: May 20, 2017  
Re: Docket # FD 35952

Dear Surface Transportation Board,

We are writing to inform the board how the proposed railline will affect us, express concerns and question several aspects of the proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad Proposal-Docket # FD 35952.

We don't believe that the full aspect of the installation of the Great Lakes Basin Railroad (GLBR) has been examined. Moreover, should a derailment occur, we will be directly affected by this event; our livestock will be decimated and our water supply (household and livestock) will be contaminated; along with several areas near our property. It will be a devastating event both for the installation of the railroad and in the event of a derailment. We comment here only on about a radius of 5 miles of our property.

Although we are extremely concerned as to how the railroad will affect us and our livelihood, we have also detailed some other aspects per our observations as they may not get communicated in all the submissions to this inbox. Please see our description/concerns described in detail below.

#### 1. How the Railroad Effects Our Property

We have included a pdf for your review as to how it affects our property, business and environmental aspects should the project (GLBR) move forward.

My husband and I work full-time. We also own and operate a growing suri alpaca farm. The proposed railroad will be 570 yards from our female and cria (baby alpaca) barn.

The property we own was once part of a centennial farm which was divided up to the 3 offspring at the time of the owner's death. We purchased one parcel that includes the original farmhouse and buildings. The other 2 parcels are farmed with corn or soybeans and are adjacent to our parcel. The proposed rail-line goes through the adjacent farmland (other 2 parcels). (Please see enclosed first slide in the attached file.)

It is our understanding that the rail line can move in either direction from the proposed route. The rail could come even closer (or farther) to our barn/property than the current proposal.

When researching property for our farm 5 years ago, we chose this parcel due to several factors:

- i. Water: The water would not be contaminated by any possible future subdivision development (laws according to Winnebago county property management) and property accessibility. (No subdivisions or new houses can be built around our property due to zoning laws.)
- ii. Population density: we are the only house on the west side of Clover Road. The property allows for expansion of the alpaca farm both from pasture expansion and extension of hay fields. We know the owner of the 150 acres farmed around us and they are willing to sell us small additional parcels when we were ready to expand our farm.
- iii. Weather: alpacas need colder weather for luxurious fiber growth (main product from this animal); appropriate weather conditions for alpaca livelihood are here in northern IL.
- iv. Farming conditions: Alpacas are very sensitive animals and are used to remote areas such as the Andes Mountains for their fiber growth. Due to the lack of population (animal and human) our parcel is ideal for alpaca husbandry and we are already reaping the benefits of our well thought out farm. We are already reaping the benefits of our farm situation; we currently have the highest rated alpaca in the US for fiber in 2016. We are concerned how the noise, pollution and vibration will effect the well being of our alpaca herd should the railroad be installed.

Should the railroad project move forward, what effect will it have on:

- i. Water:
  - a. What effect will the railroad have on our water supply?
  - b. Will the installation change the aquifer?
  - c. Will the installation cut off our water supply?
  - d. Will the vibration from the rail line change the path and affect the amount of our water and quality?
  - e. No one has given us any information as to the repercussions of this project.
- ii. Farming Conditions:
  - a. What will be the effect on the on our hay due to pollution?
  - b. What effect will the noise, vibration and pollution have on our growing alpaca herd?
  - c. Mortality rates due to new stress and uncertain noise levels on the alpacas?
  - d. Air Pollution?
- iii. Local Economy:

We have and will continue to hire farmhands as part of our farm expansion, maintenance and day to day operations. Should the rail move in, we will be forced to move our farm, not hire workers and lose our property value (which affects property tax revenue). It will dramatically affect every aspect of our life.

- iv. We haven't even begun to discuss what would happen in the event of a derailment 570 yards from our property (Slide 2).

## 2. What kind of bird?

Finally, on the 3rd slide, I have included a picture of a pair of birds that frequented our pasture last spring. I tried on various websites on-line and in several books to determine what kind of bird these two are. They were obviously a mating pair based on their coloring (not identical in pattern) and in their behavior. I can't seem to identify them in any capacity.

They returned this year but I didn't take any pictures of them.

We have many other thoughts that we are working on to communicate to you such as: local environmental effects, the resulting lowering of property values and financial effects on property taxes but will end here.

We look forward to an accurate and updated communication regarding our concerns and those of others around us.

Thank you for your service,  
Dr. Michelle Pressler  
William Ward  
iMpress Alpacas  
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201149

Original centennial  
Farm parcel

Proposed Rail Line

Raccoon Creek

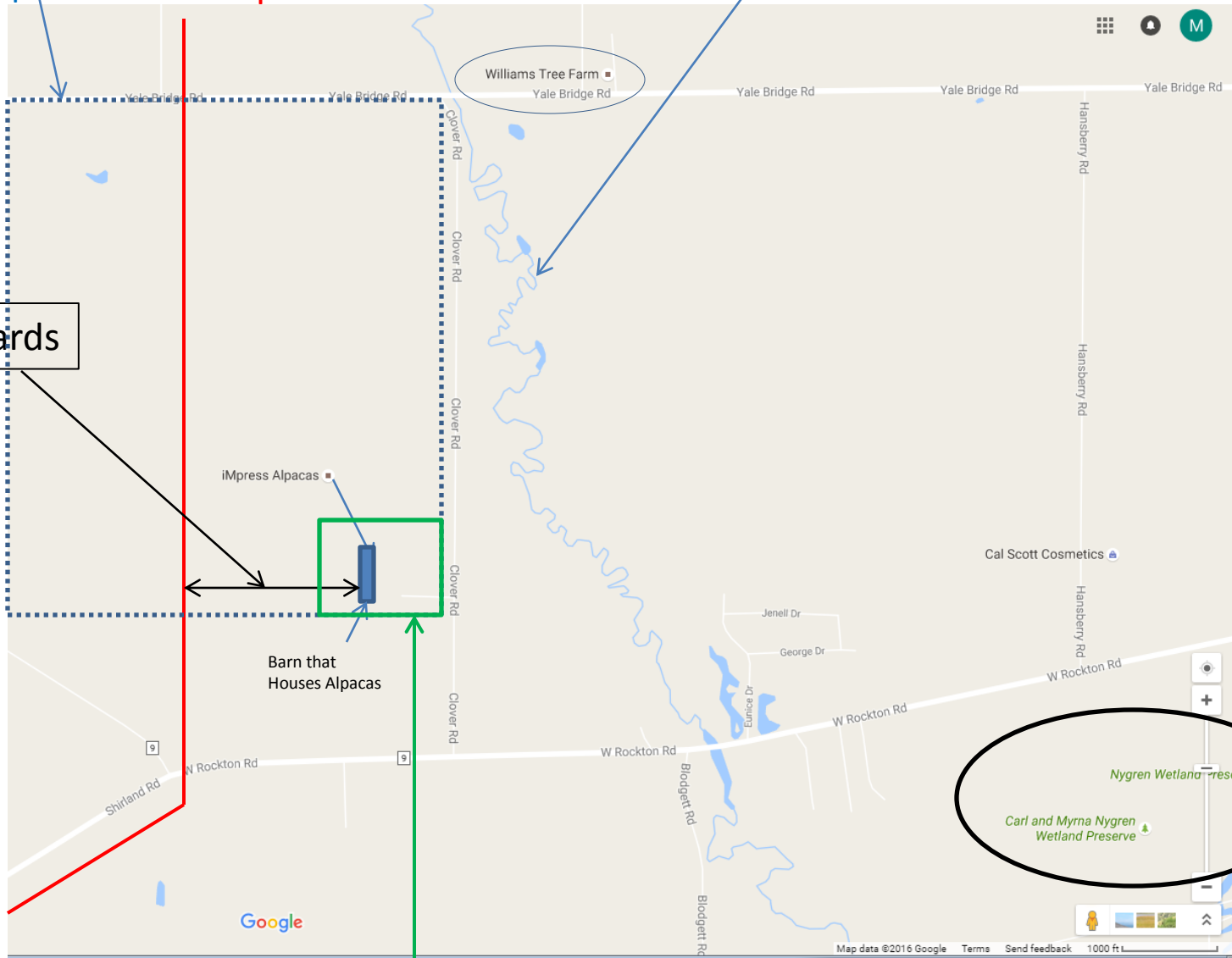
570 Yards

iMpress Alpacas

Barn that  
Houses Alpacas

iMpress Alpacas/Pressler-Ward Parcel

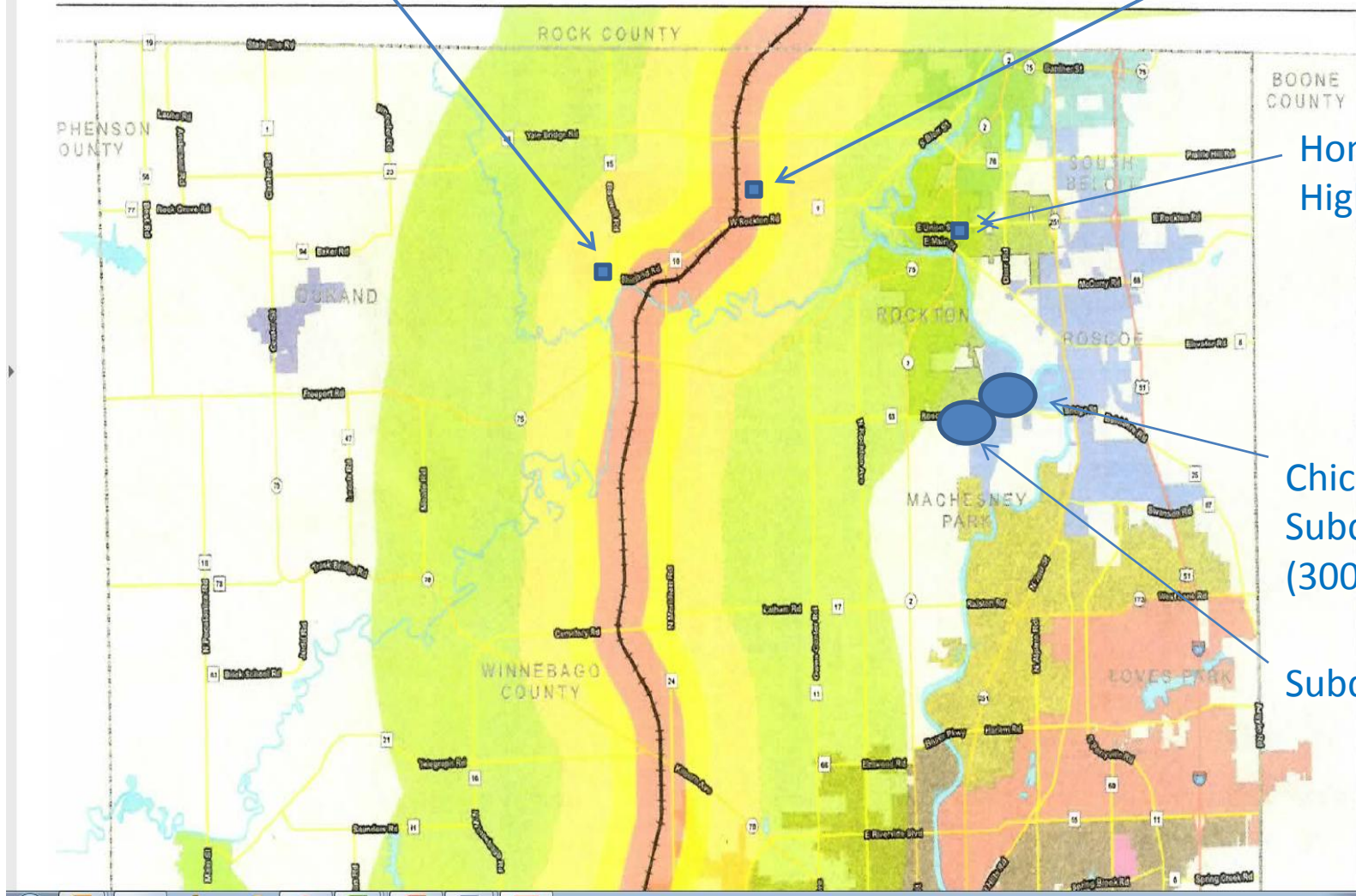
Existing  
Wetlands



Shirland Grade School

# Great Lakes Basin Railroad

iMpress Alpacas



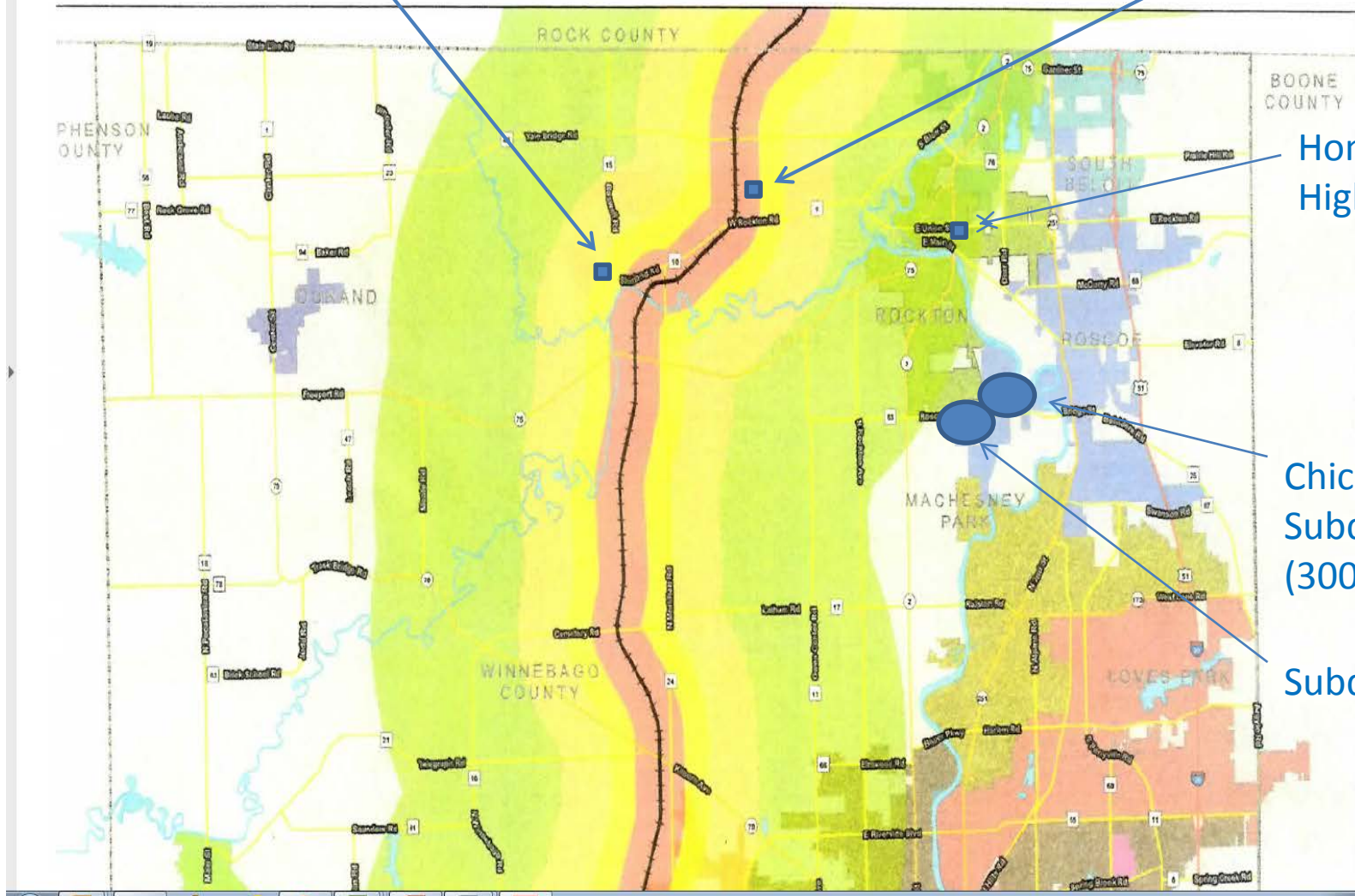
Evacuation Area-red 1/2 mile, yellow = 1 mile, green = 5 miles



Shirland Grade School

# Great Lakes Basin Railroad

iMpress Alpacas



Hononegah High School

Chicory Ridge Subdivision (300+houses)

Subdivision

Evacuation Area-red 1/2 mile, yellow = 1 mile, green = 5 miles

