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SEA

SERVICE DATE – SEPTEMBER 9, 2005

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**STB DOCKET NO. AB-103 (Sub-No. 18X)**

**Kansas City Southern Railway Company – Abandonment Exemption –  
in Winn Parish County, LA**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, Kansas City Southern Railway Company (KCSR) filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a line of railroad near Winnfield, in Winn Parish County, Louisiana. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 3.16 miles from milepost 144.64 to milepost 147.80. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties, and other railroad appurtenances and dispose of the right-of-way.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE**

According to KCSR, the line proposed for abandonment is believed to have been constructed in approximately 1902 or 1903, and there are three open deck timber trestle bridges on the line that are 50 years old or older. These bridges range from 29 feet to 110 feet in length. KCSR states that it does not intend to remove the bridges, but two at-grade road crossings would be removed as a result of the proposed abandonment.

KCSR states that there has been no traffic on the line for at least two years and any overhead traffic on the line can be rerouted over other lines. Land use along the line is flat and is primarily forest area with some residential and industrial areas near Winnfield. The width of the right-of-way is generally 25 feet from the centerline of track but can reach up to 100 feet wide.

Should it receive authority to abandon the line, KCSR intends to remove rail materials and cross ties but does not intend to disturb any of the underlying roadbed or perform any activities that would cause sedimentation or erosion of the soil. In addition, the railroad does not anticipate any dredging or use of fill in the removal of the track material. Any removal of material would be accomplished by use of the right-of-way or existing public and private roads and no new access roads are contemplated. Furthermore, any crossties and debris would be transported away from the line and would not be discarded along the right-of-way or placed in streams or wetlands or along the banks of waterways. During track removal, appropriate measures would be implemented to prevent or control spills from fuel, lubricant, or any other pollutant materials from entering any waterway

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

KCSR submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. KCSR served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

As stated above, there has been no local traffic on the line for at least two years. Accordingly, the railroad states that the proposed abandonment would not adversely impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities; transportation of ozone-depleting materials; or result in the diversion of rail traffic to truck traffic that could result in significant impacts to air quality or the local transportation network.

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) identified 2 geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment and requests 90 days notification in advance of any activities that will disturb or destroy these markers in order to plan for their relocation. Therefore, we recommend that the railroad notify NGS at least 90 days prior to conducting salvage activities in order to plan for the possible relocation of the station markers by NGS.

Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Restoration and Management (CRM) reviewed the proposed abandonment for consistency with the approved Louisiana Coastal Resources Program as required by the Coastal Zone Management Act. CRM determined that the proposed project falls outside the Coastal Zone and, therefore, requires no formal consistency review.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Region 4 reviewed the proposed project for effects to resources under its jurisdiction and protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. USFWS has indicated that the proposed abandonment will have no effect on those resources. Accordingly, no mitigation measures were recommended.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Louisiana Field Office (USFWS Field Office) submitted comments stating that the project area may be inhabited by the red-cockaded woodpecker, a Federally listed endangered species. The USFWS Field Office further stated that if the proposed project area does not contain suitable nesting or foraging habitat, no further consultation would be necessary. However, if suitable nesting or foraging habitat does exist within .5 miles of the project area, the USFWS Field Office recommended that a qualified biologist survey the area. On August 9, 2005, a representative for KCSR consulted with Ms. Angela C. Trahan at the USFWS Field Office. Taking into account additional information about the proposed abandonment and project area, the USFWS Field Office does not expect the planned salvage activities to have any adverse effect on the red-cockaded woodpecker or other species. However, the USFWS Field Office also stated that the proposed project could impact wetlands and

recommended that the railroad contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This concern is addressed below.

According to KCSR, the line passes through the 100-year floodplain of two creeks. However, the railroad states that it does not intend to remove the trestles that cross the creeks, and as stated above, the railroad does not intend to disturb any of the underlying roadbed or perform any activities that would cause sedimentation or erosion of the soil. In addition, KCSR has no plans to undertake in-stream work, dredging, or use of fill materials in connection with the proposed abandonment. Because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) had not responded to the railroad's environmental report at the time this Environmental Assessment was prepared, we recommend that KCSR consult with the Corps regarding its requirements prior to commencement of salvage activities.

To ensure that the 100-year floodplain is not adversely affected, we also recommend that KCSR consult with the local Floodplain Administrator, Mr. Timothy Howell at (318) 628-6342, regarding potential impacts to the floodplain and comply with the reasonable requirements of the Floodplain Administrator to mitigate any potential impacts prior to commencement of any salvage activities.

The Winn Parish Police Jury submitted comments stating that it is unaware of any environmental or historic impacts that could result from the proposed abandonment. Accordingly, no mitigation measures were recommended.

According to KCSR, there are no known hazardous waste sites or hazardous material spills on the subject right-of-way. In addition, KCSR is not aware of any wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, or of any National or state parks or forests, that would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

KCSR states that the right-of-way should be suitable for alternative public use such as trail use.

## **HISTORIC REVIEW**

KCSR submitted an historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)] and served the report on Louisiana's Division of Historic Preservation (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). At the time this environmental assessment was prepared, the SHPO had not completed its assessment of the proposed abandonment. Pending completion of the SHPO's review, we recommend a condition to ensure compliance with the Section 106 process of the NHPA.

## **CONDITIONS**

SEA recommends that the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. Kansas City Southern Railway Company shall notify the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities to plan for the possible relocation of the geodetic station markers by NGS.
2. Kansas City Southern Railway Company shall consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District regarding its requirements and shall report the results of these consultations in writing to the Section of Environmental Analysis prior to the commencement of salvage activities.
3. To ensure that the 100-year floodplain is not adversely affected, Kansas City Southern Railway Company (KCSR) shall consult with the local Floodplain Administrator, Mr. Timothy Howell at (318) 628-6342, regarding potential impacts to the floodplain and comply with the reasonable requirements of the Floodplain Administrator to mitigate any potential impacts prior to commencement of any salvage activities. KCSR shall report the results of these consultations in writing to the Section of Environmental Analysis prior to the commencement of salvage activities.
4. Because Louisiana's Division of Historic Preservation (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) has not completed its evaluation of the potential impact of this project on historic resources, Kansas City Southern Railway Company (KCSR) shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way that are 50 years old or older until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f. KCSR shall report back to the Section of Environmental Analysis regarding the results of any consultations with the SHPO.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, SEA concludes that, as currently proposed, and if the recommended conditions are imposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

## **PUBLIC USE**

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

## **TRAILS USE**

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the notice for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

## **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

## **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this Environmental Assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Christa Dean who prepared this Environmental Assessment. Environmental comments may also be filed electronically on the Board's web site, [www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov), by clicking on the "E-FILING" link. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-103 (Sub-No. 18X) in all correspondence, including e-filings, addressed to the Board.** If you have any questions regarding this Environmental Assessment, please contact Christa Dean, the environmental contact for this case, by phone at (202) 565-1606, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at [deanc@stb.dot.gov](mailto:deanc@stb.dot.gov).

Date made available to the public: September 9, 2005.

**Comment due date: September 26, 2005.**

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment