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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE JANUARY 6, 1999

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-103 (Sub-No. 11X)

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY--ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION--
-IN HEMPSTEAD, LAFAYETTE AND COLUMBIA COUNTIES, AR

Decided: January 5, 1999

On January 9, 1998, a decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) was served, authorizing a 180-day period for the Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism for the City of Hope, AR (HPRT), to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with the Kansas City Southern Railway Company (KCS) for its line of railroad between milepost 4.00 at or near Hope, and milepost 46.78 at the Arkansas-Louisiana State Line, a distance of 42.78 miles, in Hempstead, Lafayette and Columbia Counties, AR. The negotiation period was subsequently extended through January 4, 1999, by decision served July 20, 1998.

On December 31, 1998, HPRT filed a request for an additional 180-day extension of the negotiation period. Also on December 31, 1998, KCS advised that it is agreeable to the extension request.

Because KCS is willing to continue trail use negotiations with HPRT and an extension of the negotiation period will promote the establishment of trail use and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (Trails Act), the requested extension of the negotiation period under the NITU will be granted. The purpose of the Trails Act is to preserve rail corridors for possible reactivation of rail service by permitting and encouraging their interim use as recreational trails. See Policy Statement on Rails to Trails Conversions, Ex Parte No. 274 (Sub-No. 13B) (ICC served Feb. 5, 1990).

This decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

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It is ordered:

1. The negotiating period under the NITU is extended to July 3, 1999.
2. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary