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SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 8, 2003

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB DOCKET NO. AB-33 (Sub-No. 200X)

**Union Pacific Railroad Company - Abandonment Exemption - in Franklin and Butler
Counties, IA**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP or railroad) filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for UP to abandon an eastern portion of its Bristow Subdivision rail line. The portion of rail line proposed for abandonment spans 23.61 miles from Milepost 318.36 near Hampton to Milepost 294.75 near Allison in Franklin and Butler counties, Iowa. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to this report. If the petition becomes effective, UP would be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and dispose of the right-of-way (ROW).

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The rail line is located in Franklin and Butler counties in north-central Iowa (IA). The only source of rail activity on the line in the past two years was AgVantage FS, Inc. (AgVantage), which historically shipped corn. Recent shipments included 393 railcars in 2002 and 148 railcars in 2001. AgVantage recently terminated use of the line and now trucks its grain to a recently-enlarged UP facility at Chapin, IA. The terrain in the vicinity of the rail line is flat to gently sloping and the surrounding land use predominantly agricultural. The total width of the ROW is generally 100 feet and it is subject to reversionary property interests.

The vast majority of the subject rail line was originally constructed in 1878 and 1879 by the Dubuque and Dakota Railroad. There are 15 bridges on the line that are 50 years of age or older.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad submitted a combined environmental and historical report that indicates that the quality of the human environment would not be affected significantly as a result of the

abandonment or any post-abandonment activities. The railroad served this report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's (Board) environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

At the time this environmental assessment (EA) was prepared, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had not yet indicated whether prime agricultural land may be present in the vicinity of the rail line.

The Iowa Trails Council has requested a notice of interim trail use for the subject rail line. By letter dated July 15, 2003, UP indicated it was willing to negotiate with the Iowa Trails Council regarding trails use.

Noise emissions associated with any rail removal and salvage operations would be temporary and would not be expected to have significant impacts on adjacent land uses.

Because traffic is no longer moving on the subject rail line, the proposed abandonment would not be expected to impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities, or result in the diversion of rail traffic to truck traffic that could result in impacts to air quality or the local transportation network.

At the time this EA was prepared, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had not yet responded regarding potential impacts to any Federally-listed or proposed endangered or threatened species or critical habitats. UP stated that it is not aware of any wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, or any national or state parks or forests that could be affected by the proposed abandonment.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Rock Island District stated that the project would not require a Department of the Army Section 404 permit for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States. The rail line is not located within a coastal zone management area.

The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has advised the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis that 13 geodetic station markers have been identified and could be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend a condition to address this concern.

UP stated that it has no knowledge of any hazardous waste sites or sites of hazardous material spills that would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

_____The State Historical Society of Iowa (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) has not completed its assessment of the potential impact of this project on historic resources, and we recommend a condition to address this concern.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. The railroad shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the right-of-way until completion of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.
2. The National Geodetic Survey has identified 13 geodetic station markers that could be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, the applicants shall notify NGS 90 days prior to salvage activities in order to plan for their potential relocation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line would 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

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does take place, the ROW 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 Surface Transportation 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 Surface Transportation Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 20 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of ROWs 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 the Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL 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 David Navecky, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 200X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board. Questions regarding this environmental assessment should be referred to David Navecky at 202-565-1593 (naveckyd@stb.dot.gov).**

Date made available to the public: August 8, 2003.

Comment due date: **September 5, 2003.**

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

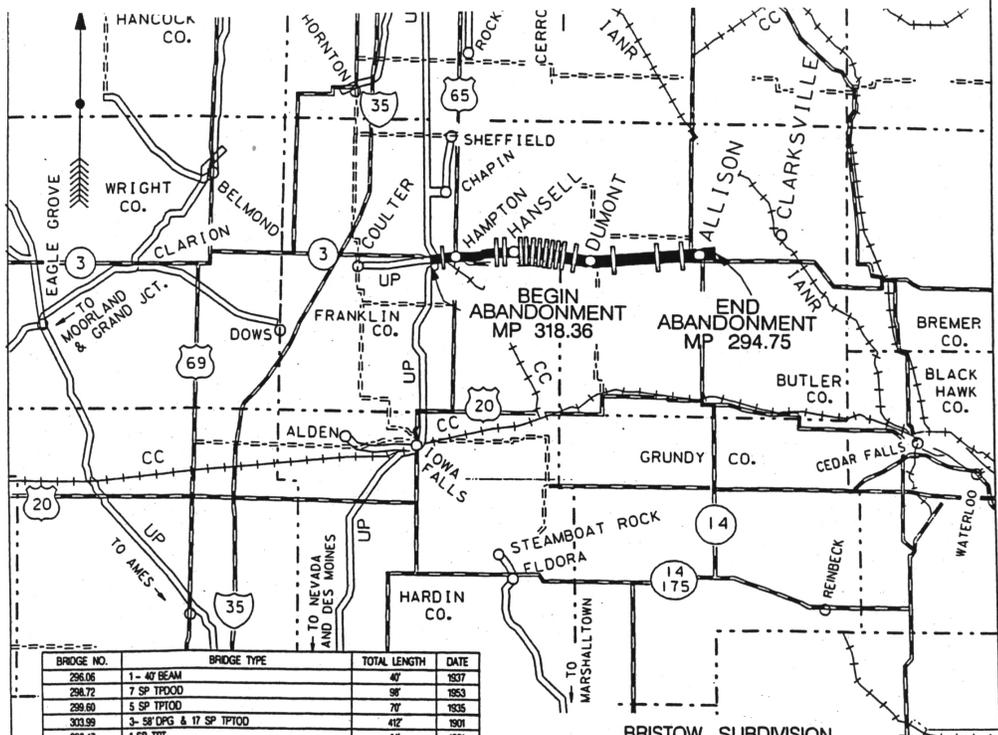
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Decision ID 33718

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BRIDGE NO.	BRIDGE TYPE	TOTAL LENGTH	DATE
296.06	1 - 40' BEAM	40'	1937
298.72	7 SP TPTOD	98'	1953
299.60	5 SP TPTOD	70'	1935
303.99	3 - 50' DPG & 17 SP TPTOD	412'	1901
308.47	1 SP TPT	14'	1931
307.22	2 SP TPT	28'	1941
307.70	2 SP TPT	28'	1939
307.90	4 SP TPT	56'	1952
308.04	3 SP TPT	42'	1953
308.73	3 SP TPT	42'	1941
310.67	2 SP TPT	28'	1939
311.41	4 SP TPT	56'	1952
312.80	7 SP TPT	98'	1953
313.70	14 SP TPT	196'	1952
317.84	8 SP TPT	112'	1953

MP 318.36 TO MP 294.75
BRISTOW SUBDIVISION A TOTAL OF 23.61 MILES
IN FRANKLIN AND BUTLER COUNTIES, IOWA

STATION	MILE POST	AGENCY
HAMPTON	317.50	NO
HANSELL	312.10	NO
DUMONT	305.50	NO
BRISTOW	301.30	NO
ALLISON	296.40	NO

- LEGEND**
- UPRR LINES TO BE ABANDONED
 - OTHER UPRR LINES
 - OTHER RAILROADS
 - 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES
 - PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS
 - OTHER ROADS

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CO.
BRISTOW SUBDIVISION
INCL 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES

SCALE MILES

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