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SERVICE DATE - MARCH 19, 2004

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-43 (Sub-No. 173X)

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY—ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—
IN FORREST COUNTY, MS

Decided: March 16, 2004

On March 28, 2003, a decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment (NITU) was served authorizing a 180-day period for the Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-to-Trails Recreational District (District) to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with the Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC) for approximately 2.4 miles of a line of railroad known as the Central District Trackage, extending from milepost MH 0.66 to milepost MH 3.06 in Forrest County, MS. At the request of the District, the negotiating period under the NITU was extended by decisions served on October 3, 2003, and December 22, 2003. The latest extension is scheduled to expire on March 22, 2004.

On March 9, 2004, the District requested an 180-day extension of the negotiating period. The District states that it needs the time to continue to finalize the trail use negotiations. On March 10, 2004, IC responded that it is agreeable to the additional 180-day extension request.

Where, as here, the carrier is willing to continue trail use negotiations, the negotiating period may be extended. An extension of the negotiating period will promote the establishment of trails and rail banking consistent with the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d). Accordingly, the negotiating period will be extended for an additional 180 days from March 22, 2004.

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

It is ordered:

1. The request to extend the NITU negotiating period is granted.
2. The NITU negotiating period is extended until September 18, 2004.

3. This decision is effective on the date of service.

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

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary