

36067  
SEA

SERVICE DATE – AUGUST 16, 2005

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**STB DOCKET NO. AB-103 (Sub-No. 19X)**

**The Kansas City Southern Railway Company – Abandonment Exemption – in Webster Parish, LA**

**BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, the 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 in Springhill, Webster Parish, Louisiana. The “Line” extends approximately 1.12 miles from milepost 48.48 to milepost 49.60. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. The rail, ties and other track materials were previously removed from the Line. KCSR believes this may have occurred when the track on the adjoining segment was salvaged to create a trail following abandonment. The right-of-way (ROW) remains under KCSR ownership and KCSR continues to have common carrier obligations over the Line. KCSR affirms that removal of the rail and track materials occurred without any intent on their part to abandon the Line. If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to dispose of the ROW.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE**

The ROW consists of a 100-foot wide strip of land approximately 1.12 miles long. The Line is surrounded by urban/suburban land uses and the topography is generally flat. According to KCSR, the Line was originally part of the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway (L&A) and was probably built between 1898 and 1902 as a southward extension to Minden, a city in Louisiana located approximately 35 miles from Springhill. In 1903, the L&A was extended north to Hope, Arkansas to connect with the Missouri Pacific and the Frisco railroads. Through acquisitions and further construction, the L&A was extended south to New Orleans and west to Dallas. In 1939, KCSR acquired control of the L&A, and in 1992, the L&A merged with KCSR. The abandonment will not result in any change to KCSR’s operations because the Line has been inactive for more than two years and the line to the north was converted to a trail in 1999. According to KCSR’s records, there are no structures on the Line that are 50 years or older.

## **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 (the Board) 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, no traffic has moved on the line segment within the last two years. Accordingly, 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.

KCSR believes the proposed abandonment will be consistent with existing land use plans. This section of ROW adjoins ROW covered in an earlier abandonment. The City of Springhill and others proposed converting that ROW to a trail and negotiated with KCSR to reach a trail use agreement. KCSR anticipates that a similar result may occur with this abandonment. KCSR contacted the City of Springhill and Webster Parish regarding this abandonment, but to date, has not received a response.

It is anticipated that this proposed abandonment will not have an adverse impact on public health and safety because there will be no diversion of rail traffic to other modes. Noise is not expected to be significant because the tracks and ties have already been removed. Hazardous materials are not expected to be transported, and KCSR is not aware of any hazardous waste sites or hazardous materials spills along the Line.

KCSR does not believe the proposed abandonment will have an adverse impact on any prime agricultural land. The Line lies within the City of Springhill and generally parallels a main road in the community. KCSR contacted the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, regarding this abandonment, but to date, has not received a response.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Restoration and Management, has determined that the proposed abandonment falls outside of the Coastal Zone and will have no effect on coastal zone management.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4, has determined that the proposed abandonment is not likely to have an adverse impact on any federally-listed species, or adversely modify any areas designated as critical habitats.

KCSR notified the National Park Service and requested assistance in identifying any potential effects on wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, or National or state parks or forests, but to date has not received a response. Impacts to such resources are not anticipated because the land use is urban/suburban, the existing roadbed will be left intact, and the soil will not be disturbed.

KCSR contacted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding impacts to designated wetlands, waterways, and 100-year floodplain, but to date, has not received a response. It is anticipated that permits, in accordance with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, will not be required because the roadbed will be left intact, soil will not be disturbed, and salvaged material will not be placed in any waterways, wetlands, or 100-year floodplain.

KCSR contacted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality regarding impacts to water quality in accordance with Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, and to determine if the proposed abandonment is consistent with applicable Federal, State, or local water quality standards. To date, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has not advised SEA of any adverse impacts, but the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality commented on various permit requirements for land disturbance activities. KCSR does not believe that a permit under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act will be required for the abandonment. However, any work necessary to prepare the ROW for use as a trail will be subject to measures to prevent or control spills from fuels, lubricants, or any other pollutants from entering waterways.

KCSR contacted the National Geodetic Survey regarding impacts to geodetic markers. To date, the National Geodetic Survey has not responded. However, to prevent the destruction of any markers, either from previous or future activities, SEA is recommending a condition requiring KCSR to coordinate with the National Geodetic Survey prior to consummation of the abandonment.

## **HISTORIC REVIEW**

KCSR submitted an historic report as required by the Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)] and served the report on the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Office of Cultural Development (SHPO), pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). KCSR indicates that there are no structures on the Line that are 50 years or older. KCSR is unaware of any archaeological resources or any other previously unknown historic properties on the line. Various track work and/or construction occurred over the many years that the track was in operation. Such work may have disturbed the potential for recovery of archaeological resources. Based on KCSR's historic report, SEA does not believe there are any historic properties involved in the proposed abandonment that meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The SHPO has submitted comments stating that no known archaeological or historic properties will be affected by this undertaking. However, this effect determination could change, should new information become available. We have reviewed the report and the information provided by the SHPO and concur with the SHPO's comments.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1) and 36 CFR 800.8, we have determined that the proposed abandonment will have no effect on historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 CFR 800.11(d), consists of KCSR's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this environmental assessment, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public.

## **CONDITIONS**

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

1. Prior to consummation of this abandonment, the Kansas City Southern Railway Company shall coordinate with the National Geodetic Survey for any impacts to geodetic markers.

## **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), and discontinuance of service without abandonment. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

## **PUBLIC USE**

Following abandonment 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 petition 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 Diana Wood, 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. 19X) in all correspondence, including e-filings, addressed to the Board.** If you have any questions regarding this environmental assessment, please contact Diana Wood, the environmental contact for this case, by phone at (202) 565-1552, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at [woodd@stb.dot.gov](mailto:woodd@stb.dot.gov)

Date made available to the public: August 16, 2005.

**Comment due date: August 31, 2005.**

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

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment