

EO-2490

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

**SUPPLEMENTAL FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN

DOCKET NO. AB-290 (Sub-No. 318X)
and
DOCKET NO. AB-1059X

February 9, 2015

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) has expired in this:
(X) Notice of Exemption () Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

In this proceeding, Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) and Georgia Midland Railroad Company (GMR) (collectively, “railroads”) jointly filed a notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.20 for NSR to abandon and GMR to discontinue service over a line of railroad in Crawford County, Georgia (Ga). The subject rail line extends 5.06 miles between Milepost FV 90.44 and Milepost FV 95.50 in Roberta, Ga (the “Line”).

The Georgia Historic Preservation Division (the State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) concluded in a June 24, 2010 letter that the Line and two bridges should be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. The SHPO also concluded that removal of the two bridges would result in an adverse effect to historic properties (SHPO Project Reference No. GA-100611-005). NSR communicated with the SHPO on August 23 and 24, 2010 to clarify the SHPO’s conclusion. During those discussions, the SHPO stated that should no third party come forward to preserve the Line’s right-of-way and the two bridges, NSR could remove the two bridges and dispose of the right-of-way if NSR first complied with SHPO-prescribed mitigation. The SHPO advised NSR that the mitigation requirement would consist of the railroad creating a permanent archival record of the two bridges and immediately surrounding area.

On November 24, 2010, the Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served an EA in this case. Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 C.F.R. § 800.4(d)(1), and following consultation with the SHPO and the public, OEA determined

that the proposed abandonment may have an adverse effect on historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11(d), consists of the railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public through posting on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

In the EA, OEA recommend the following condition that requires NSR to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places until completion of the Section 106 process:

“Norfolk Southern Railway Company shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures, and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) that are eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places until the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 470f¹, has been completed. Norfolk Southern Railway Company shall report to the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) regarding any consultations with Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division (the State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) and the public. Norfolk Southern Railway Company may not file its consummation notice or initiate any salvage activities related to abandonment (including removal of tracks and ties) until the Section 106 process has been completed and the Board has removed this condition.”

By decision served on December 22, 2010, the Board imposed the Section 106 condition recommended by OEA.

() NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

(X) NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

New Comments

NSR provided the SHPO the requested documentation, entitled *Abandoned Railroad Bridges, Permanent Archival Record, HP GA-10061-005 and HP-111107-003, Henry and Crawford Counties, Georgia*, dated January 9, 2015. In a February 3, 2015 letter (attached), the SHPO states it has reviewed the permanent archival record of the bridges and concludes that the NSR-supplied documentation is adequate mitigation for the adverse effects associated with the proposed abandonment.

Conclusions

¹ Effective December 19, 2014, the National Historic Preservation Act was recodified; accordingly, 16 U.S.C. § 470f is now 54 U.S.C. § 306108.

OEA has also reviewed the NSR-supplied documentation and concurs with the SHPO that the material is adequate mitigation for the adverse effects associated with the proposed abandonment. This completes the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act and OEA recommends that the Section 106 condition imposed by the Board in this proceeding be removed at this time.

Attachment

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 GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS
DIVISION DIRECTOR

February 3, 2015

Terri Gillett
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New South Associates
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**RE: Rail Abandonment: Roberta and McDonough Spurs, 3 Trestle Bridges
Crawford and Henry Counties, Georgia
GA-100611-005 and HP-111107-003**

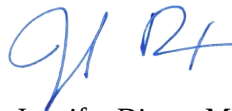
Dear Ms. Gillett:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the photographic documentation entitled *Abandoned Railroad Bridges, Permanent Archival Record*, dated January 9, 2015, as part of the mitigation for the above referenced undertakings. Our comments are offered to assist the Surface Transportation Board and Norfolk Southern Railway Company in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Our office has reviewed the permanent archival record of the three trestle bridges associated with the rail abandonments taking place near Roberta and McDonough in Crawford and Henry Counties, respectively. In our opinion, the document is adequate mitigation for the adverse effects associated with this undertaking.

If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (404) 651-6546 or jennifer.dixon@dnr.state.ga.us.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Dixon, MHP, LEED Green Associate
Program Manager
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning