



RE: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA
 Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA
 09/29/2014 11:13 AM

EI-20549
 CN

To:
 Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov
 Hide Details
 From: "Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA" <vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov>
 To: "Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov" <Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>

History: This message has been replied to.

It is fine the way you have submitted it.

Thanks,
 Vince

From: Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov [<mailto:Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>]
Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 11:09 AM
To: Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA
Subject: RE: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA

Vince,

That explains it. I never received your comments with the map!

The railroad would like to salvage rails, ties and ballast as soon as possible and needs our approval before they can do so. We have no other concerns expressed by any other agencies etc. that we contacted.

As I never received your comments (only the map), I thought the issue was impacts to farmlands, not invasive plants. The condition addressing your concerns that I included in the EA is as follows:

1. **The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided a map showing areas of prime farmland located along the right-of-way of the proposed abandonment. Accordingly, CTC shall consult with NRCS prior to commencement of any salvage activities regarding measures to minimize impacts to prime farmlands.**

Do you want me to revise the current condition to state your concerns about invasive species, or do you feel that

your conversations with the railroad have been sufficient in expressing your concerns? If we revise the condition, it would essentially require that the railroad consult with you regarding invasive species. However, it would not prohibit them from salvaging the line.

Just so you know, there would be no new construction as the MA DOT is intending to convert the rail line into a trail.

-Cathy

Catherine Nadals
Environmental Protection Specialist
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 20423
(202) 245-0293

From: "Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA" <vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov>
To: "Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov" <Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>
Date: 09/29/2014 10:02 AM
Subject: RE: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA

The map was meant to show the location of the soils with respect to the project. The text of my email (below) was where I included my opinion. Invasive plants can always pose a problem when left unchecked, but I am not opposed to the conversion of the rail line to a trail. I don't think it will have negative effects on the important farmland soils.

Vince

"Mr. Heffner,
I am the District Conservationist that covers Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The original packet of information was sent to our Westford Field Office at the other end of the state. In any event, I am contacting you to weigh in on the effect that abandoning the rail lines will have on prime agricultural lands. I have attached a map showing the locations of Farmland of statewide and unique importance. At present, these soils are not being used for agricultural purposes. The abandonment of these rail lines could potentially increase the populations of invasive plants if the corridor is not maintained. With the knowledge I have of that area, I don't foresee any other negative impacts to important farmland soils.

Regards,
Vince

Vincent Snyder
District Conservationist
Western MA Field Offices
Hadley, MA"

From: Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov [<mailto:Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>]
Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 9:54 AM

To: Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA
Subject: RE: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA

Yes, I received the map. Does the map imply that you are opposed to the action? This is unclear.

Thanks,
 Cathy

Catherine Nadals
 Environmental Protection Specialist
 Office of Environmental Analysis
 Surface Transportation Board
 Washington, DC 20423
 (202) 245-0293

From: "Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA" <vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov>
 To: "Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov" <Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>
 Date: 09/29/2014 09:51 AM
 Subject: RE: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA

Hi Catherine,
 I had previously responded to John Heffner but maybe it didn't get forwarded along. I have attached my earlier email. Let me know if you need anything else.

Regards,
 Vince

Vincent Snyder | District Conservationist for Western MA Field Offices | **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** | 195 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035
vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov | P: 413-585-1000 ext 133 | F: 855-596-7671 | www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov

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From: Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov [<mailto:Catherine.Nadals@stb.dot.gov>]
Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 9:30 AM
To: Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA
Subject: Rail Abandonment in Pittsfield, MA

Dear Vince Snyder,

I have attached a link to an EA that addresses a proposed abandonment action in Pittsfield, MA. A map of the area of the abandonment indicates that the surrounding area includes farmland of unique importance.

Please let me know if you believe there would be impacts from the proposed action. The MA DOT has informed us that it intends to purchase the "Coltsville Line" from the Housatonic Railroad for conversion into a trail. No

construction is planned although the railroad would remove rail, ties and ballast.

Link to the EA [here](#).

Sincerely,

Catherine Nadals
Environmental Protection Specialist
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 20423
(202) 245-0293

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----- Message from "Snyder, Vince - NRCS, Hadley, MA" <vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov> on Thu, 14 Aug 2014 19:52:25 +0000 -----

To: "john.heffner@strasburger.com" <john.heffner@strasburger.com>

Subject: Docket Nos: AB-733X and AB-1121X

Mr. Heffner,

I am the District Conservationist that covers Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The original packet of information was sent to our Westford Field Office at the other end of the state. In any event, I am contacting you to weigh in on the effect that abandoning the rail lines will have on prime agricultural lands. I have attached a map showing the locations of Farmland of statewide and unique importance. At present, these soils are not being used for agricultural purposes. The abandonment of these rail lines could potentially increase the populations of invasive plants if the corridor is not maintained. With the knowledge I have of that area, I don't foresee any other negative impacts to important farmland soils.

Regards,

Vince

Vincent Snyder
District Conservationist
Western MA Field Offices
Hadley, MA