



## Project Scoping

November 27, 2007

### Proposal to Install, Operate and Maintain an Electrical Transmission Line within Big Thicket National Preserve

Kelson Transmission Company intends to apply for a right-of-way permit from the National Park Service (NPS) to install, operate and maintain a 345-kilovolt double-circuit electrical transmission line (the line) within Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve). Kelson has applied to the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) for a certificate of convenience and necessity (certificate) for the line. The proposal by Kelson to the PUC includes two alternative routes that could potentially affect the Preserve. One route, the Proposed Route, would cross land (shown in blue on the map to right) currently owned by The Conservation Fund, a non-profit conservation partner of the NPS, which could become part of the Preserve before the PUC certificate is issued or the line constructed. The other route, the Alternative Route, would cross the Preserve (shown in green) in three places.

The NPS will develop an environmental assessment (EA) of Kelson's proposal in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This document will explore a range of alternatives and their possible effects on Preserve resources and values, and will identify mitigation measures that would reduce the intensity of those effects. The EA will enable the NPS to decide whether or not to issue a right-of-way permit for the line, and what form such a permit would take if issued.

The NPS encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process during which the public has two opportunities to comment on the project; once during the public scoping, and again following the release of the EA. We are currently in the scoping phase of the project, and I invite you to voice your ideas, comments or concerns about the project. Your comments will be used to identify issues, areas requiring additional study, and topics that will be analyzed in the EA.

Sincerely,

Todd W. Brindle  
Superintendent

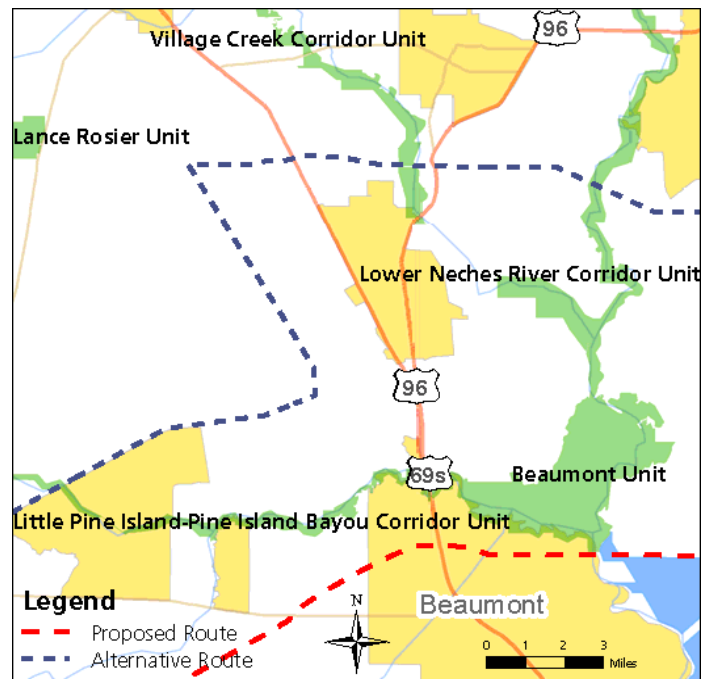
### Overview of the Process

Project milestones include:

**Public scoping period (closes December 27, 2007)\***

Preparation of environmental assessment  
Public review of environmental assessment\*  
Analysis of public comment  
Preparation of decision document  
Announcement of decision

**Where we are now;** \*opportunities for public comment



### Alternatives

The preliminary range of alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental assessment are listed here:

- 1) No-Action Alternative. The NPS would not issue Kelson a right-of-way permit, and the line would not be constructed within the Preserve.
- 2) Proposed Route. Kelson would construct the line along the Proposed Route generally as proposed in its application to the PUC; that is, utilizing steel monopole towers.
- 3) Alternate Route. Kelson would construct the line along the Alternative Route generally as proposed in its application to the PUC.
- 4) Alternative Construction Methodology. Kelson would construct the line along one of the proposed routes utilizing a different method than that proposed to the PUC, like placing the line underground.

### Resources and Concerns

Internal project scoping identified the following resources and other concerns for consideration in the environmental assessment (EA).

|                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Air quality                   | Cultural resources     |
| Geology and soils             | Visual resources       |
| Water quality or quantity     | Energy resources       |
| Streamflow characteristics    | Visitor use/experience |
| Floodplains or wetlands       | Natural soundscape     |
| Vegetation                    | Adjacent landowners    |
| Fish and wildlife             | Socioeconomics         |
| Species of management concern | Preserve operations    |

## Ideas to Consider

Following are a few ideas to keep in mind as you develop your comments on this proposal:

1. Do you have any ideas to share about issues/concerns, or are there any issues/concerns about the project that you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered?
3. Do you have other comments and suggestions for us to consider in the environmental assessment?

## How Do I Comment on This Project?

Please submit your comments online at the NPS Planning Environment and Public Comment System, or PEPC, here:

**<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.**

**Please provide all comments by December 27, 2007.** If you wish to be added to or removed from the Preserve's mailing list for future correspondence, please indicate that in your response.

If you are unable to submit comments electronically through this website, then you may also submit written comments to:

Superintendent  
Big Thicket National Preserve  
Attn: Dusty Pate  
6044 FM 420  
Kountze, TX 77625

You may also hand deliver comments to the Headquarters or Visitor Center of Big Thicket National Preserve.