



Scoping Newsletter

Susquehanna to Roseland Transmission Line Environmental Impact Statement

Letter from the Superintendents

Dear Friends:

We would like to inform you of a new planning effort at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation and PSE&G, have proposed to upgrade and expand a power transmission line that currently crosses the three Parks by improving the existing 230 kilovolt (kV) line and adding a second 500 kV line. Together the two companies have applied for construction and right-of-way (ROW) permits from the National Park Service (NPS) to implement their transmission line routing and development. The NPS is initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the Applicants' proposal and to assist us in making a decision on whether to issue the permits.

The purpose of this newsletter is not only to provide you with information about this important planning effort, but also to ask for your help. We encourage you to attend the public meetings that will be held in February and to stay involved in the project as it progresses. By sharing your opinions about the project and what you value about these three national park units, you can make a difference in the eventual outcome. These resources belong to all of the citizens and your knowledge and comments are essential to a successful EIS process and decision. Thank you for your interest in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John J. Donahue, Superintendent
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Pam Underhill, Superintendent
Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Purpose and Need For Action

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation and PSE&G, jointly known as the Applicants, have proposed the expansion of an existing 230 kV electric transmission line from Susquehanna (Berwick, Pennsylvania) to Roseland, New Jersey (the S-R Line). In order to proceed with their proposed actions, the Applicants must obtain construction and ROW permits from the NPS. The Federal action under consideration for this EIS is whether the NPS grants the permits the Applicants' have requested in their proposal.

The NPS's purpose in taking action is to respond to the Applicants' expressed need to expand its current ROW; to access this ROW via existing park natural areas; to construct new and taller power line structures; and add an additional 500 kV power line. The NPS must take into account the purposes and resources of the affected units of the National Park System, as expressed in statutes, regulations, and policies. The NPS, therefore, has a duty to consider whether, and with what conditions, if any, to issue the requested permits.

The NPS will soon be requesting comments from the public regarding the development of an EIS for the proposed upgrade and replacement of transmission lines and towers within the boundaries of three NPS units in Pennsylvania and New Jersey: Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA), Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River (MDSR), and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA).

The NPS is seeking public comment on the purpose, need, and objectives for the federal action under consideration, and other issues to be addressed in the EIS. The 30-day public comment period will begin no later than February 1, 2010 and end on March 5, 2010. The NPS will hold public meetings to discuss the project and receive input from the citizens. The public meetings are open to everyone and provide an opportunity to learn more about the proposed project. The meeting dates, locations, and times can be found on the last page of this newsletter.



Canoeists enjoying a day on the River

Park Significance

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

The purpose of DEWA, like all units of the National Park System, is to allow visitation while conserving the natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the recreation area. As one of the largest public open spaces remaining in the northeastern metropolitan corridor, the Park provides a broad diversity of exceptional and unique recreational opportunities; and specifically, in such a manner as to leave the resources unimpaired for future generations and for the more than 60 million people who live within a 6-hour drive of the Park, as well as visitors from elsewhere.

Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

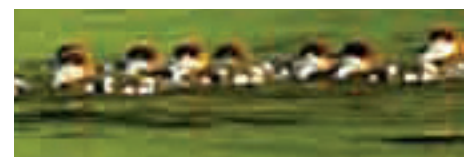
In 1968, the Delaware River within DEWA was designated as a scenic and recreational river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The provisions of the Act stipulate that as a scenic and recreational river, the Middle Delaware shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values, which caused it to be included in the wild and scenic rivers system without limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration, primary emphasis shall be given to protect the area's aesthetic, scenic, historic, archeological, and scientific features.

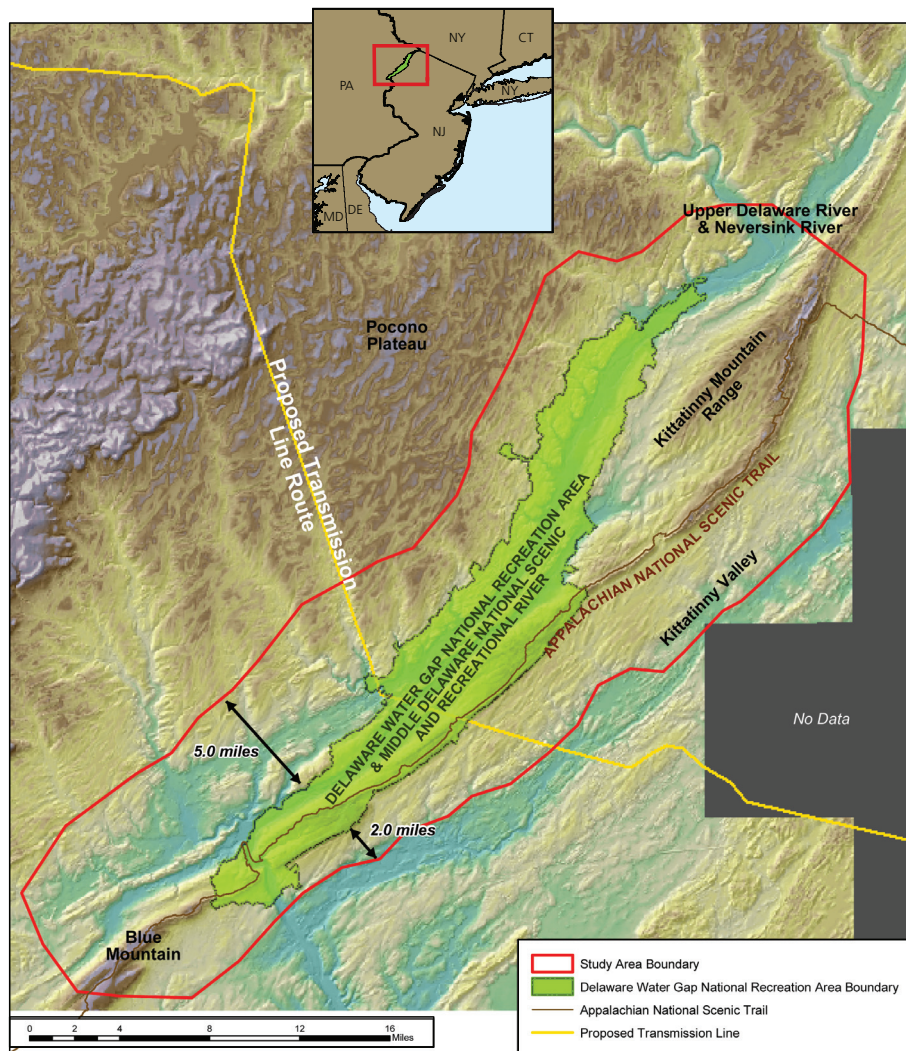
Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The APPA is administered primarily as a footpath in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the 14 states encompassing the Trail, providing for maximum outdoor recreation potential as an extended trail and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural resources of the areas through which the Trail passes. The APPA is a 2,179-mile trail, continuous from Maine to Georgia, for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains. It is a means of sojourning among these lands, such that visitors may experience them by their own unaided efforts.



Common merganser





Study Area Boundary for the EIS

DEWA, MDSR, and APPA
National Park Service / U.S Department of the Interior

Figure 1

DSC • Jan 2010 • 620 • 1000840

Preliminary Alternatives

The EIS will compare routes that have been proposed by the Applicants to determine the alternative that would minimize impacts to the natural, scenic, cultural and recreational, and human resources within the Parks and surrounding areas. Other alternatives are currently being considered by the NPS and may include relocation of the project partially or entirely outside of Park boundaries; installation of portions of the entire upgraded power line underground; installation of the power line on the bottom of the river; or an alternative that uses direct current from two wires instead

of the proposed three to eight wires. Additionally, the No Action Alternative is also being considered, in which the existing power lines running through the Parks would be kept but the current request for permits would not be granted.

Proposed Project Description

The Applicants' proposal includes replacing the existing 80-foot towers with new larger towers (up to 200 feet high) and adding an additional 500 kV transmission line. The action would occur in Pike and Monroe Counties in Pennsylvania and Sussex and Warren Counties in New Jersey. This would necessitate widening the existing ROW, and in areas, would

require granting additional legal rights beyond the Applicants' current rights. The Applicants' proposal would also include the construction of new access roads and the rehabilitation and widening of existing roads for accessing the transmission line corridor. The project will result in the existing non-critical element of the grid becoming a critical part of the grid, requiring a much more constant and intrusive operational presence. The current study area boundary, developed by the NPS (Figure 1) includes the area potentially affected by the Applicants' proposal, a 4.18-mile portion of the transmission line that traverses DEWA, MDSR, and a section of APPA. The study area has been expanded beyond the ROW to include other areas within the NPS units affected by alternatives not yet developed by the NPS and the surrounding human environment affected directly by the NPS action.

Project Background

The project is based on direction for electric transmission expansion provided by the Regional Transmission Operator, PJM Interconnection (PJM), which oversees the overall movement of wholesale electricity between many electric utilities throughout a 13 state region.

The Applicants' stated purpose for the project is to strengthen the reliability of the grid at the direction of PJM. Adding a 500 kV transmission line between Susquehanna in Pennsylvania and Roseland in New Jersey is identified as the only reliable method of preventing overloads in the system at this time.

PJM recognized the need for expansion of the transmission line in 2007 and this need was confirmed in the 2008 and 2009 regional transmission expansion plans. PJM estimates that the upgrade will need to be completed by June 1, 2012 to avoid interruptions of electric service.

National Park Service Objectives for the Environment Impact Statement

The following objectives were developed by the interdisciplinary team represented at the internal scoping meeting for each project issue.

- Natural Resources – Overall objective for natural resources would be to avoid or to minimize adverse effects to rare, threatened and endangered species and habitats; migratory birds; rare communities; landscape connectivity; wetlands, floodplains and streams; and avoid infestation of invasive species
- Socioeconomics / Community Impacts – Construction of, or alterations to, park and community roads would not adversely affect surrounding land use or visitor experience.
- Health and Safety of Visitors and Staff – Safety of staff and visitors would not be compromised, including closures of roads, the river, trails and airspace, as necessary.
- Paleontological and Geological Resources – Adverse effects to paleontological and geological resources would be avoided.
- Visitor Experience – Maintain existing visitor experiences including preserving key qualities such as primitive, solitary, and pastoral experiences.
- National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Eligibility – The eligibility of cultural resources for NRHP nomination would not be compromised.
- Scenic Resources and Viewsheds – Impacts to scenic resources, viewsheds, and cultural landscapes would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated.
- Cultural Resources – Adverse effects to identified cultural resources would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated.
- Park Operations – The proposed action and alternatives would not adversely affect the parks' fiscal and operating resources, including volunteer organizations.

Objectives are specific statements of purpose. Objectives must be grounded in the parks' enabling legislation, purpose, significance and mission goals, and must be compatible with direction and guidance provided in the parks' general management plans, comprehensive management plans, strategic plans and/or other management guidance, including NPS policies.



Tulip poplar in bloom



Indian pipes breaking through the leaf litter

Issues and Impact Topics

Based on internal scoping by the NPS, the following issues and potential impacts to natural, scenic, cultural, and socioeconomic resources associated with the transmission line upgrade have been identified. Decisions regarding the anticipated impacts are subject to change as the planning process continues.

- Geology and Soils
- Viewsheds
- Noise and Soundscape
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Vegetation
- Wildlife and Aquatic Life
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- Cultural Landscapes and Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Visitor Use and Experience



Marsh habitat in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Project Schedule

February - early March 2010. Scoping

Fall 2010. Public Alternatives Workshop

Summer 2011. Draft EIS

Spring 2012. Final EIS & Record of Decision



Fishing in the River



Stones lining the banks of the River



Pond off of Millbrook Road



Snapping turtle



A kayaker out for a paddle

Public Meetings

Public scoping meetings will be held in three locations, one in Pennsylvania and two in New Jersey. The scoping meetings will begin at 6:00 PM with an open house, followed by an NPS presentation at 6:30 PM. After the presentation, starting at 6:45 PM, there will be a formal public comment session with a court reporter, followed by a return to the open house. NPS staff will be on hand to visit with you, answer questions and record your input. The locations, times and dates are presented below:

February 16, 2010

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Fernwood Hotel (Victorian Room)

U.S. Route 209 North

Bushkill, PA 18234

February 17, 2010

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Camp Jefferson

81 Weldon Road

Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849

February 18, 2010

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Sheraton Parsippany Hotel

199 Smith Road

Parsippany, NJ 07054



Water Gap from Mt. Tammany



Smithfield Beach



Looking North from Smithfield Beach

Providing Comments

Your participation is vital to our planning process. Because of your interest in DEWA, MDSR, and APPA, we are requesting your input in developing the EIS to address the proposed Susquehanna to Roseland line. At this time, the NPS is announcing a 30-day public scoping period to solicit public comments on this project. You may submit your comments on the project using any of the following methods:

- electronically through NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website (<http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa>);
- in person at the public meetings;
- by telephone on the Park Planning Information Telephone Line (570-426-2491); or
- by mailing comments to National Park Service, Attention: DEWA PPL EIS Planning Team, Denver Service Center-Planning Division, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, P.O. Box 25287, Denver CO 80225-0287.

Please submit comments by March 5, 2010.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Updates on the planning process will be provided online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa> and on our Park Planning Information Telephone Line at 570-426-2491.

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**Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
New Jersey and Pennsylvania**

Newsletter 1
January 2010



**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Inside this issue...

This newsletter includes information about a proposed project (the Susquehanna to Roseland Line) to upgrade and expand a power transmission line that currently crosses three national park units by improving the existing 230 kilovolt (kV) line and adding a second 500 kV line. The newsletter includes information on the purpose and need of the action, the preliminary alternatives developed for the action, the significance of the Parks, the potential issues and impact topics related to the action, and ways to provide input and comments. This newsletter contains information for three public meetings that you can attend to learn more about the proposed project and to express your concerns regarding the proposed project.

Thank you for your interest in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.