

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

**Newsletter 2
July 2010**

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



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Philadelphia District**



Preliminary Alternatives Newsletter

Susquehanna to Roseland Alternative Transmission Line Routes Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Friends,

In February 2010, we introduced you to a planning effort the National Park Service (NPS) is embarking upon in review of a proposal to upgrade and expand a power transmission line that currently crosses three park units: the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River. At this time, we are sharing our progress with you and are asking you to share your thoughts and ideas. In this newsletter, you will find summaries of the work we have accomplished so far, including brief summaries of the preliminary alternatives, as well as the “no action” alternative. Your review and comments will help refine these preliminary alternatives and guide the planning team in developing the preferred alternative. Once fully developed, one of these alternatives could be selected as the National Park Service’s preferred alternative or a new alternative could emerge that combines elements from some or all of the preliminary alternatives. We want to be clear that the National Park Service is not dictating or directing where the power companies can, will or might choose to place their transmission lines outside of lands and waters of the National Park units involved. The alternatives depicted demonstrate only actual potential crossings being examined for the three park units affected.

The portions of alternatives displayed outside of park lands are shown only as examples of potentially viable and feasible alternative routes that these power companies could choose to complete a transmission line between their two identified end points along other existing rights-of-way. There are numerous possible routes that reach the potential park crossings depicted in these graphics. The lines depicted between Susquehanna and Roseland are intended merely to demonstrate that other alternatives are available. It remains the responsibility of the power companies to determine where they would site the remainder of any lines connecting to the NPS-identified alternatives, and is in no way the responsibility of the NPS. It is also notable that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently joined the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and more information on that aspect will be included in our next newsletter.

We invite you to review the alternatives and offer us your comments by mail or electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. You may also submit your comments at any of the three public meetings announced in the newsletter. Your participation is critical to ensure that we consider a wide range of stakeholder views in developing the alternatives. We greatly appreciate the valuable information you have supplied thus far, and we ask that you to continue to provide input, as the planning process is at a stage where the alternatives are still evolving. Only with your help can we successfully develop an EIS that analyzes the potential impacts of the project proposal and proposed alternatives, crucial in maintaining and protecting the parks’ resources.

Thank you for your continued interest in this process.

Sincerely,

John J. Donahue, Superintendent
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

Pamela Underhill, Superintendent
Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Public Meetings

Open House 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Public Hearing 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17
Fernwood Hotel and Resort
U.S. 209
Bushkill, PA 18324

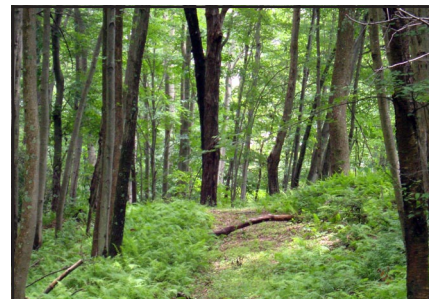
Wednesday, August 18
Stroudsmoor Country Inn - Terraview
RD #4 Stroudsmoor Road
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Thursday, August 19
Farmstead Golf and Country Club
88 Lawrence Road
Lafayette, NJ 07848

Project Background

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation and PSE&G (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 right-of-way (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 to 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.



Remote trails, hidden ponds, and dense forest are just a few of the scenes found along the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Delaware River, and Appalachian Trail

Progress

Planning for the S-R Line EIS for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA), Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA), and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River (MDSR) is progressing. The National Park Service has compiled relevant data, conducted scoping and focus group meetings with Park stakeholders, and developed and refined the transmission route alternatives based on public input received earlier in the year.

Moving forward, the public will have several opportunities to review and comment on the alternatives, either by attending any of the three public workshops listed on page 1, using the electronic comment form at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, or by mailing your comments to the address listed on the back of this newsletter. The public comment period will begin on August 9, 2010 and continue through September 7, 2010.

Following the comment period on the preliminary alternatives, the planning team will analyze input received from the public and undertake the process of fully developing the alternatives and identifying a preferred alternative. The planning team will develop and release a Draft EIS in mid-2011. The Final EIS and Record of Decision are anticipated for approval in 2012. There will be an extensive public review and comment period, following the release of the Draft EIS.

Park Purpose/Significance

APPA, DEWA, and MDSR are public parks for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. They are significant in many ways, by providing the following:

- Waters of exceptional quality (the approximately 40 miles of river within DEWA are designated the Middle Delaware Scenic and Recreational River);
- One of the largest public open spaces in the northeastern metropolitan corridor;
- Outstanding geologic and natural features including the world renowned Delaware Water Gap;
- Habitat for rare and threatened species, as well as a significant pathway for migratory birds;
- Open spaces that create a multi-state greenway corridor;
- Significant concentrations and diversity of known archeological resources; and
- A continuous path from Maine to Georgia for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains.



Gazing into Pennsylvania from New Jersey on the Appalachian Trail

NEPA Process

The NPS must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, to ensure consideration of important environmental issues. NEPA requires Federal agencies to objectively analyze a major project proposal, consider alternatives in a systematic planning process, and include the interested and affected public in the planning process prior to making a decision. The construction of a new transmission line encroaching on APPA, DEWA, and MDSR will be analyzed during the NEPA process, which will assess effects resulting from the proposed transmission route and alternative routes.

The analysis will consider impacts to topics such as wildlife habitat, vegetation, special status species, water resources, air quality, socioeconomics, cultural resources, park visitor use and experience, and public health and safety.

The EIS will evaluate short-term, long-term, and cumulative effects of the proposed transmission routes (action alternatives), along with the “no action” alternative. By comparing the proposed action alternative, and identifying mitigation measures that would minimize adverse effects, the EIS will assist stakeholders, and other members of the public, in the decision-making process.

Issues and Impact Topics

Each of the alternatives included in the EIS will be evaluated for impacts to the following topics:

- Natural Resources
- Socio-economic/Community Impacts
- Scenic Resources and Viewsheds
- National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Eligibility
- Paleontological and Geological Resources
- Health and Safety of Visitors and Staff
- Cultural Resources
- Visitor Experience
- Park Operations



Legislation

The **Organic Act** creating the National Park Service states that the NPS will “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and...provide for the enjoyment of the same means as we leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (16 USC 1, the *National Park Service Organic Act*).

The **Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973**, requires an examination of Federally listed threatened or endangered species. NPS policy also requires examination of the impacts on Federal candidate species, state-listed threatened, endangered candidate, rare, declining, and sensitive species. Section 7 of the ESA requires Federal agencies, through consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by them is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or modify their critical habitat. (16 USC 1531-1544, 87 Stat. 884), as Amended

The **Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979** was enacted “...to secure, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the protection of archaeological resources and sites which are on public lands and Indian lands, and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals” (16 USC 470aa-470mm; Public Law 96-95, Sec. 2(4)(b)), as Amended.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Public Law 90-543 (16 USC 1241 et. Seq.)

“...so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreational potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.”

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Public Law 89-158; 89th Congress H.R. 89

Directs for the “...preservation of the scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters...”

Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River
Public Law 95-625; National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 USC 1274), Section 705
“...primary emphasis shall be given to protect [the area’s] esthetic, scenic, historic, agricultural, and scientific features.”



Spotted wintergreen

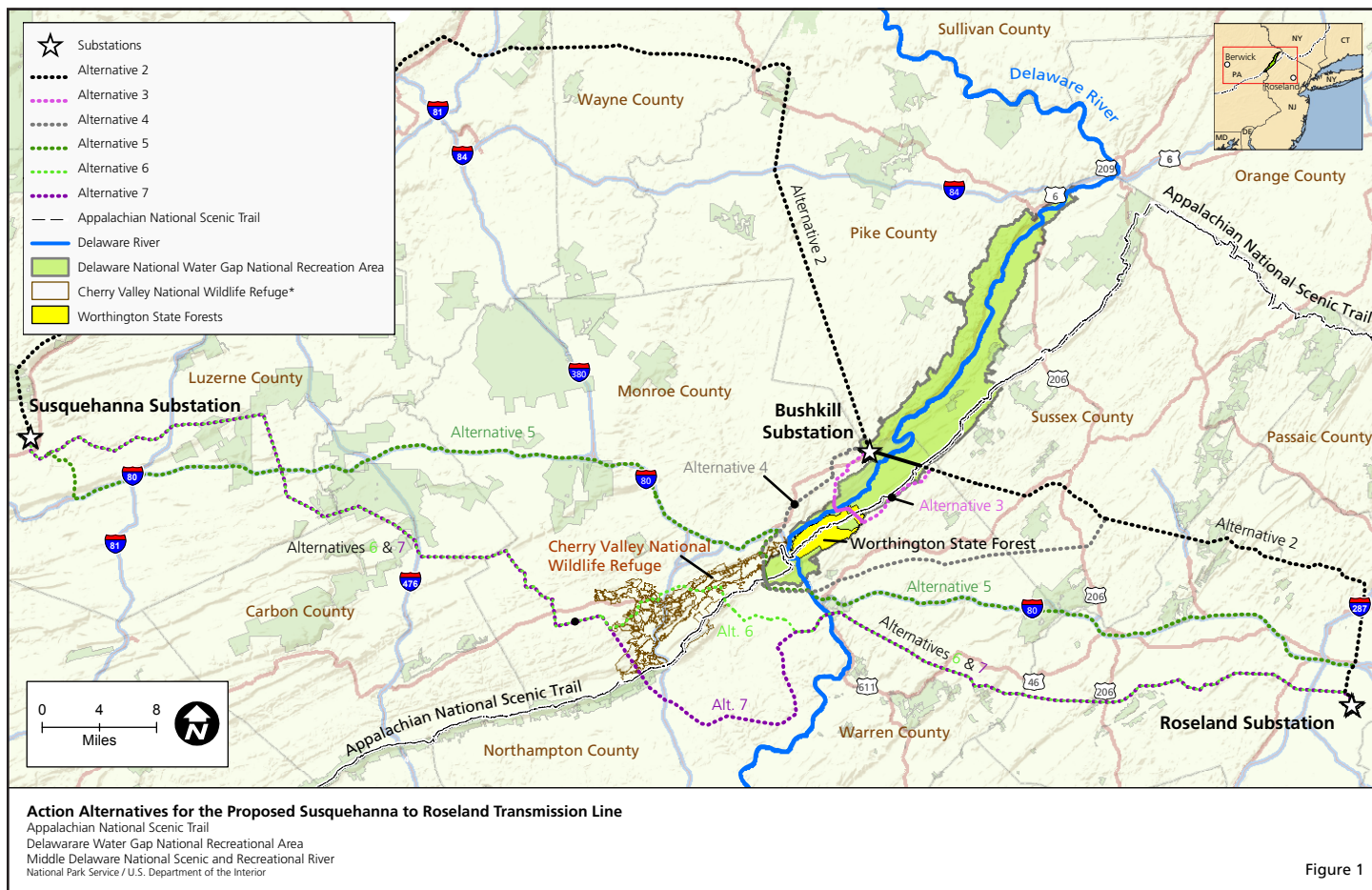


Figure 1

* NOTE: The depiction of Cherry Valley N.W.R. is a representation of the proposed boundary and therefore does not currently indicate Federal ownership.

Sections in bold are within the National Park System and require NPS permits. Sections outside these crossings represent NPS' analysis of possible feasible routes to get to these crossing points. The Applicants may choose and get approval from the states for other approaches to the crossing points if one of the alternative crossings is selected; thus the farther from the crossing point, the less certain it is that the line will actually follow the depicted route. There is no certainty that the Applicants would in fact adopt any of the routes identified as feasible in these National Park Service depictions.

Preliminary Alternatives

Several alternatives have been suggested as a result of your help and input. After evaluating numerous alternatives, including 11 different routes, the NPS has selected seven preliminary alternatives based on specific criteria. Six action alternatives and the "no action" alternative (Alternative 1) are feasible and reasonable and are moving forward as preliminary alternatives at this stage of the EIS.

The "no action" alternative, which would leave the existing 230 kV transmission line in place, is required by law and serves as a baseline for analyzing the action alternatives. The six action alternatives described on the following pages are the result of ideas and options suggested through public scoping in February 2010, and further agency scoping. They take into account NPS rules and regulations.

Various actions are common to all of the action alternatives (except the Applicants' proposed alternative – Alternative 2) including the utilization of existing ROW and river crossings, removal of the existing 230 kV transmission line, and employment of a conservation-based strategy.

Approval of any action alternative would include surrender of current crossing of NPS lands to consolidate crossings of the NPS system. The conservation-based strategy will mitigate direct impacts including, but not limited to, stream and wetland crossings, trail closures, and vegetation removal, while assuring the protection of sustainable land and water ecosystems through the identification of priority resources and the implementation of specific stewardship initiatives.

"No Action" Alternative

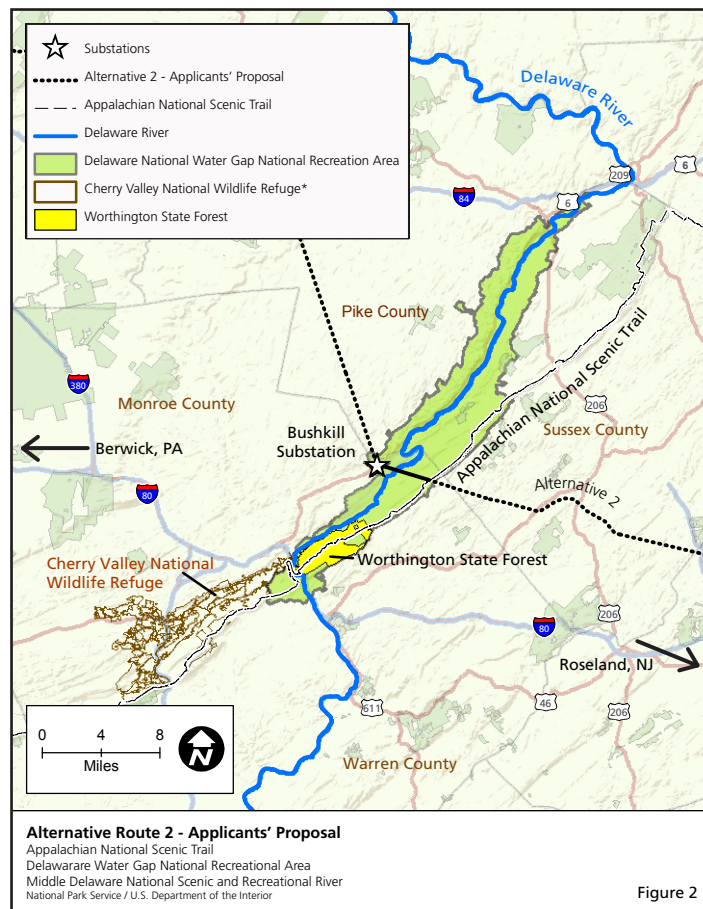
Currently, a 230kV transmission line traverses APPA, DEWA, and MDSR. Access roads to the transmission line structures are unmaintained, and therefore overgrown. This alternative would continue operation and maintenance of the existing line as-is with no major changes.





Alternative 2

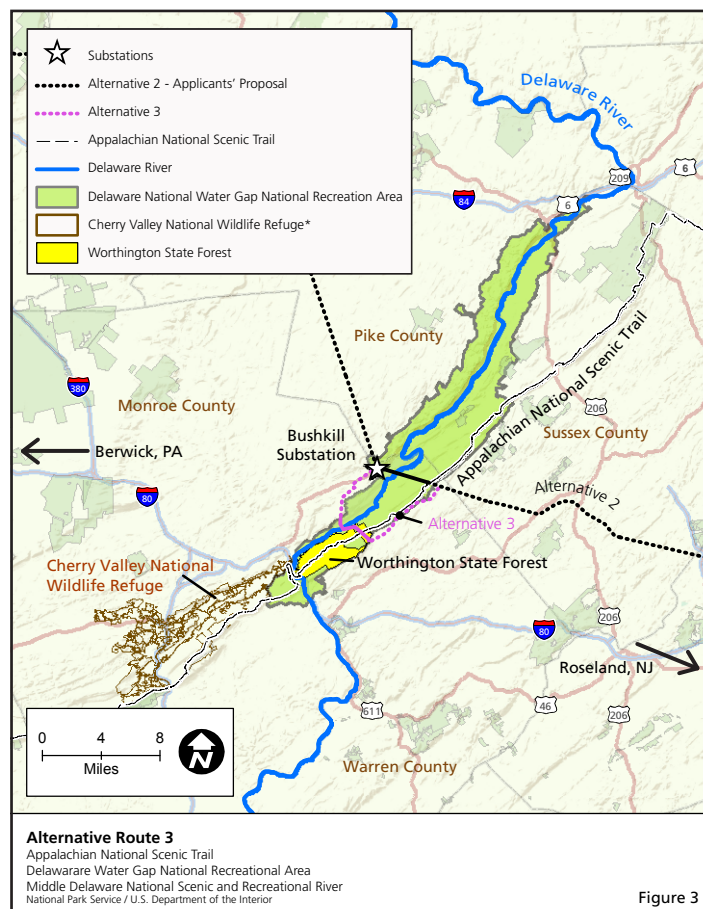
Alternative 2, the Applicants' proposed route, follows the path of the original 230 kV transmission line crossing through NPS DEWA lands and the AT entering near Bushkill, PA. The length of the transmission line within DEWA is 4.2 miles. Although this alternative uses existing ROW, it would require extensive construction along ROW within the park units, in addition to the creation/rehabilitation of access roads. This alternative would make this line an essential element to the transmission grid; currently it is not.

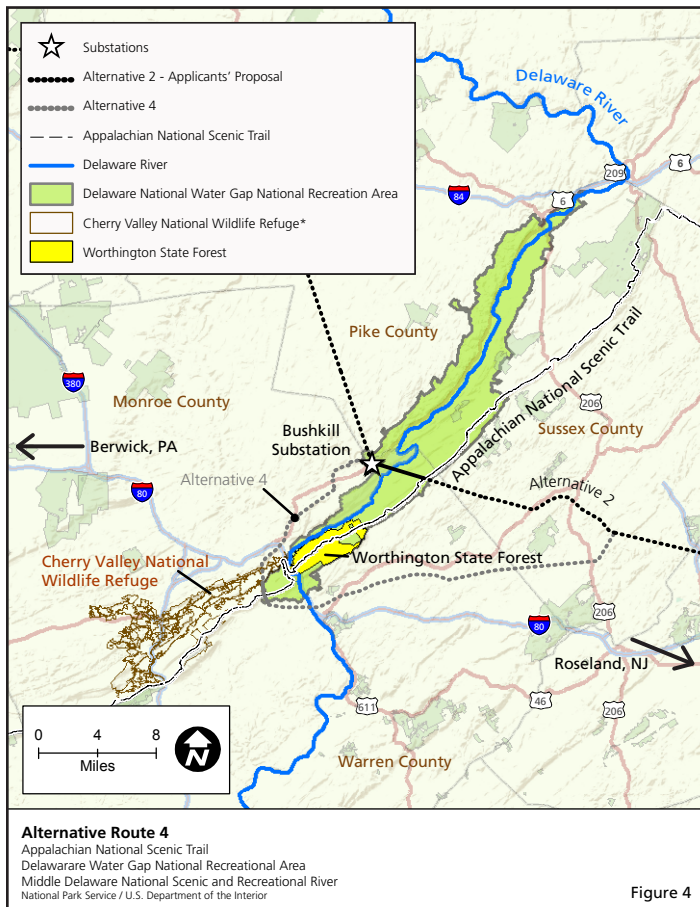


Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would parallel APPA along the boundary of DEWA, crossing through the DEWA lands for 1.2 miles. Existing access roads along this route would need less improvement for construction access than roads that would need to be created for other routes.

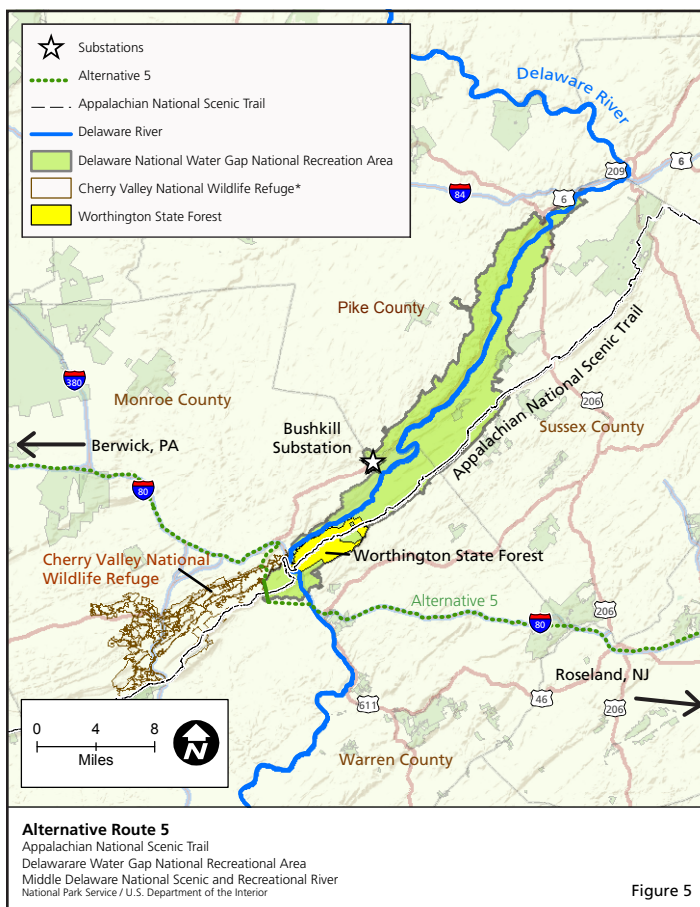
This alternative would cross over APPA and Worthington State Forest, in addition to crossing the Kittatinny and Raccoon Ridges, two premiere bird watching and fall foliage viewing locales.





Alternative 4

Alternative 4 provides a feasible transmission route around the Park and several businesses and communities. This alternative uses an existing utility corridor and would serve primarily as another way around most of the NPS land, crossing through DEWA lands for 1.2 miles. It would also cross APPA and portions of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge (CVNWR) area.



Alternative 5

Alternative 5, which parallels Interstate 80 (I-80), would use existing ROW where available and would share the corridor with the state highway lands of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. This alternative would cross DEWA lands for 1.3 miles at the southwestern-most tip of the park, in addition to crossing APPA and portions of the CVNWR area.





Alternative 6

Alternative 6 would use existing ROW south of I-80, running east to Roseland, NJ from Susquehanna substation in Berwick, PA. It would cross the AT and Delaware River using existing ROW. This alternative would require ROW acquisition for widening the corridor. It would also pass through boundaries of the newly designated CVNWR area.

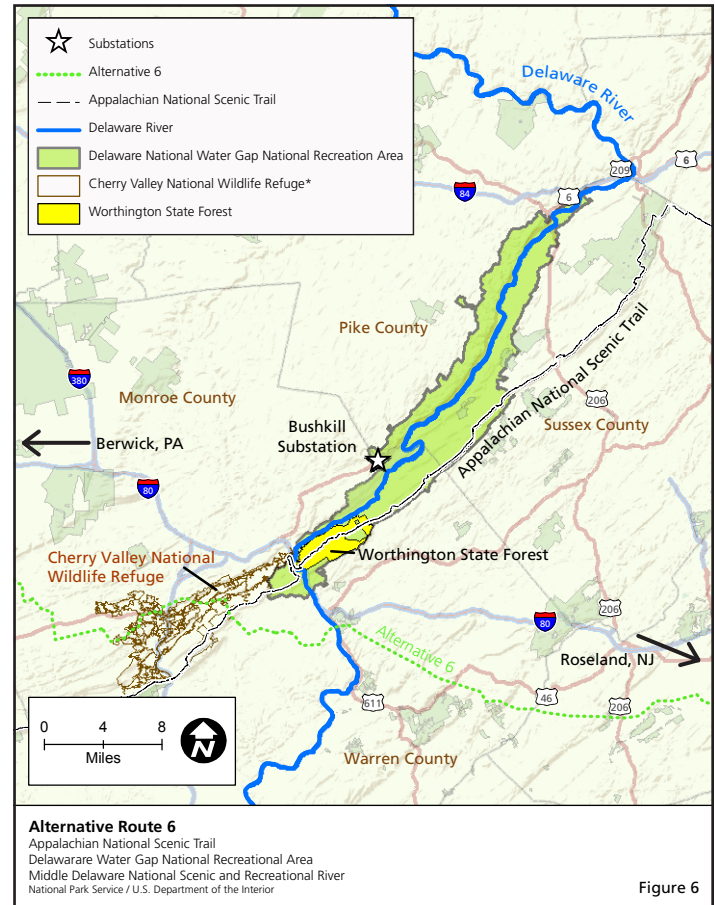


Figure 6

Alternative 7

Alternative 7 would also use existing ROW south of I-80, running east to Roseland, NJ from Susquehanna substation in Berwick, PA. It would offer a direct route and maximize shared corridor, while using an existing river crossing. This alternative would also cross APPA lands and pass through the southern portion of the CVNWR area.

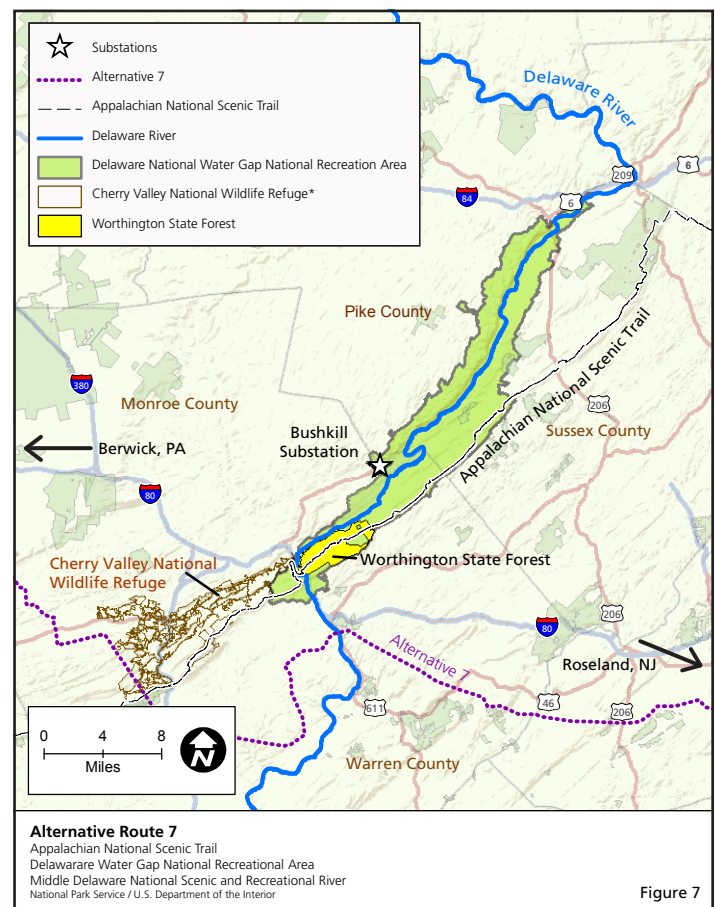


Figure 7

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
 DENVER SERVICE CENTER – STEVE CULVER, TRANSPORTATION
 12795 WEST ALAMEDA PARKWAY
 PO Box 25287
 DENVER CO 80225-0287

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How To Participate

The planning team welcomes your comments throughout the planning process. The National Park Service is seeking public comment on the preliminary alternatives identified for the S-R Line EIS project. At this time NPS is announcing a 30-day public comment period to solicit comments on this project. You may provide comments using any one of the following methods:

- attend the public meetings (see page 1 for dates and locations);
- comment online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa>; or
- mail comments to the National Park Service, ATTN: DEWA PPL EIS Planning Team, DSC-P, PO Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287.

Please submit comments by September 7, 2010.

Before including your personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be publicly available at any time. Although you may request in your comment that we withhold your personal information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Project Schedule

Dates	Planning Activity	How To Get Involved
Summer 2010	<i>Identify Project Alternatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read newsletter • Send us your ideas and comments • Attend the public meetings
Summer 2010 – Summer 2011	<i>Develop and Publish the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read draft plan • Send us your ideas and comments • Participate in public meetings/hearings
Summer 2011 – Fall 2012	<i>Develop and Publish the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the final plan, including NPS responses to substantive public comments and agency letters