



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**
Omaha District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application Number: 2007-02778-KEA

Applicant: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway

Waterway: Platte River and adjacent wetlands, Wood River and adjacent wetlands, Wood River flood channel, Moores Creek

Issue Date: June 3, 2011

Expiration Date: June 24, 2011

21-DAY NOTICE

Reply To:

Kearney Regulatory Office

2214 2nd Avenue Kearney, NE 68847-5315

(308) 234-1403

<http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/od-rne/nehome.html>

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE: This public notice is issued jointly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). The NDEQ, PO Box 98922, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922, will review the proposed project for state certification in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. NDEQ hereby incorporates this public notice as its own public notice and procedures by reference thereto. For the purposes of NDEQ, this public notice will expire 30 days from the above issue date.

AUTHORITY: Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344).

APPLICANT: Burlington North Santa Fe Railway 3700 Globeville Road Denver, Colorado 80216
TranSystems 2400 Pershing Road Suite 400 Kansas City, Kansas 64108

PROJECT LOCATION: Start: Section 26, Township 11 North, Range 8 West, Hamilton County
End: NW¹/₄ Section 34, Township 12 North, Range 10 West, Hall County
Nebraska.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to construct a second track between the above locations. The project consists of the construction of a second mainline parallel to the BNSF's existing track through the project area and support tracks at either end of the project. The project begins east of the town of Phillips with setout tracks on either side of the existing BNSF double track between Mile Post (MP) 87.8 and 88.2. The new segment of second main track begins in Phillips at MP 89.8 on the north side of the existing main track and at 15-foot center to center from the existing main track in order to match the location of the existing second main track. The proposed main track transitions to the south side and out to 25-foot center to center from the existing main track near MP 89.4 in order to avoid impacts to the parallel county road that runs along the north side of the BNSF right-of-way. Twenty-five-foot center to center from the existing main track is the preferred operations location of BNSF second main tracks unless otherwise required by existing track alignment or bridge configuration. The new main track continues across the Platte River on a new bridge alignment approximately 35 feet south of the existing bridge (as required by the existing bridge configuration) and then transitions back to 25-foot track centers. The proposed alignment continues into the City of Grand Island with another setout track

on the south side between MP 93.17 and 93.72 before crossing the Wood River near MP 94.29. The new main track begins to elevate near MP 95 in order to match the existing main track profile, which was grade separated in the early 1990s. The existing and proposed mains will be at roughly the same elevation on embankment with some areas of retaining walls through Grand Island. The elevated alignment through Grand Island also includes six bridges over roadways, one bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad and two pedestrian undercrossings. The proposed main track transition back to the north side and from 25-foot to 15-foot track centers near MP 97.4 in order to match the location of the existing main line northwest of Grand Island at MP 99.1, a location referred to by BNSF as McDonald. Prior to McDonald, the proposed main track crosses Moores Creek at MP 98.84. Another set of support tracks either side of the existing BNSF double track are proposed approximately two miles northwest of McDonald between MP 101.1 and 101.7. track will be constructed with a track laying machine (TLM), which rides on new track immediately behind the track it is construction. Once the steel rails and concrete ties that make up the track structure a replaced, rock ballast is dumped and the track is raised to final line and grade with other on-track equipment. The TLM operates on a track roadbed having a width of approximately 25 feet, which will support the ballast section after the track is raised to final grade. A 13-foot wide maintenance road is to be constructed along the proposed track roadbed. The roadbed will consist of either asphalt or crushed rock immediately beneath the track and crushed rock across the rest of the roadbed and maintenance road. The side slopes and ditches will be seeded with native grass.

The proposed new crossing over the Platte River will be constructed utilizing a temporary bridge and will require the installation of eight cofferdams at foundations located on the outer portions of the proposed bridge. These cofferdams are required to construct larger foundations near the ends of the bridge, which are needed to match the existing span arrangement. In order to construct the temporary bridge, the contractor will install two steel pipe piles every 30 feet and then place beams across the pipe piles. A decking capable of supporting cranes and other heavy equipment will be installed over the pile and beam framework as the temporary bridge is build out into the river channel. The contractor will construct the new railroad bridge from the decking of the temporary bridge. The cofferdams will be constructed by placing steel sheet piling in a roughly square shape matching the outside dimension of the proposed railroad bridge foundations for the first three longer spans of the bridge at either end. The proposed railroad bridge foundations for these six 60-foot spans will be constructed within the sheet pile cofferdam and then the cofferdams will be removed. The other nineteen spans between the longer end spans are each 25 feet length and the foundations will be constructed with steel H-pile encased in concrete without the need for cofferdams. Upon completion of the new railroad bridge, stone riprap will be placed at the two abutments of the bridge. The west abutment riprap will over an area of approximately 50 feet up the slope with a length of 50 feet at the abutment and 20 feet up the slope with a length of 280 feet along the toe of the proposed embankment. The east abutment riprap will cover an area of approximately 50 feet up the slope with a length of 50 feet along the toe of the proposed embankment. The riprap will have an average stone size of 1.7 feet and a layer thickness of approximately three feet. A double layer of riprap will be placed at the toe up to a height of 6½ feet for a total thickness of six feet in this section. The estimated total quantity of riprap placed at Bridge 91.20 is 2,360 cubic yards with 785 cubic yards of this total placed below the ordinary high water elevation.

The proposed new crossing over the Wood River consists of four spans, each approximately 35 feet in length and the foundations will be constructed with steel H-pile without the need for cofferdams. Upon completion of the new railroad bridge, stone riprap will be placed at the two abutment so of the bridge over an area of approximately 10 feet up the slope by 60 feet across the slope. The riprap will be an average size of 12 inches. The proposed crossing of the Wood River overflow channel consists of two 6-foot X 5-foot and one 10-foot X 5-foot reinforced concrete boxes. The Wood River overflow channel structure does not require riprap.

The proposed new crossing over Moore's Creek consist of a single span of approximately 25 feet in length bearing on abutments supported by H-pile without the need for cofferdams. Approximately two feet of the existing bridge abutments must be removed to fit the proposed bridge at the required 15-foot track centers. Upon completion of the new

railroad bridge, stone riprap will be placed at the two abutment of the bridge over an area of approximately five feet up the slope by 20 feet across the slope. The riprap will be an average size of 12 inches.

PROJECT PURPOSE: The applicant's project purpose is to improve the capacity of the existing route now and in the future. The increased capacity will in turn decrease the train congestion currently experienced at the outer ends of the project as trains wait to pass on the existing segments of double track before traversing the existing single track. The reduction in train congestion will lead to decreased blockage of vehicular grade crossings by trains throughout the area adjacent to the project.

SPECIAL AQUATIC SITES: The following table illustrates the wetland impacts; Wetland 3, Wetland 8 and the isolated pond/fringe wetland will not be impacted (see attached map for wetland locations):

Wetland 1	.031	Riverine flood plain PEMA/C
Wetland 2	.053	Riverine flood plain PEMA/C
Wetland 4	.024	Riverine flood plain PEMA/C
Wetland 5	.018	Riverine flood plain PEMA/C
Wetland 6	1.31	Riverine flood plain PEMA/C
Wetland 7	.097	Riverine channel
Platte Wetlands	.028	Riverine channel
Total	1.436	Riverine flood plain
	.125	Riverine channel

MITIGATION: Agency coordination was begun in the initial planning stages of the project. Solicitation letters were sent to the NE Game & Parks Commission, NE State Historical Society and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. This task was performed to identify potential avoidance measures to be incorporated into the project design.

Minimization measures that have been or will be taken:

- *fragmentation of habitat will be avoided to the extent practicable
- *maintaining the current alignment of railway for the second track is the preferred alternative
- *the proposed Platte River bridge will maintain the current OHW width of the river
- *will coordinate the timing of construction activities to accommodate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act guidelines; if construction occurs during migration, surveys will be required.
- *perform whooping crane, interior least tern, piping plover and river otter surveys
- *construct the Platte River bridge via the use of a temporary bridge

A conceptual compensatory mitigation plan includes the restoration and enhancement of degraded Platte River slough channels located in Phelps County, Nebraska. Negotiations are currently underway regarding the mitigation site. A detailed mitigation plan will be made available when more information is obtained. The ratio for re-establishment will be a minimum of 1½ : 1 and the ratio for enhancement will be a minimum of 4 : 1.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The Corps of Engineers, Omaha District will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and amendments and the procedures set forth in 33 CFR 325, Appendix C. We have checked the National Register of Historic Places and its current supplements and there are no known National Register sites in the vicinity. However, we will evaluate input by the State Historic Preservation Office, Tribes and the public in response to this public notice and we may conduct or require a reconnaissance survey of the permit area to check for unknown historic or prehistoric properties, if warranted.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: In compliance with the Endangered Species Act, a preliminary determination has been made that the described work will not affect species designated as threatened or endangered or adversely affect critical habitat. In order to complete our evaluation of this activity, comments are solicited from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other interested agencies and individuals.

FLOODPLAIN: This activity is being reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, which discourages direct or indirect support of floodplain development whenever there is a practicable alternative. By this notice, comments are requested from individuals and agencies that believe the described work will adversely impact the floodplain.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) requires that all discharges of fill material must be certified by the appropriate state agency as complying with applicable effluent limitations and water quality standards. This public notice serves as an application to the state in which the discharge site is located for certification of the discharge. The discharge must be certified before a Department of the Army permit can be issued. Certification, if issued, expresses the state's opinion that the discharge will not violate applicable water quality standards.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW: The decision whether to issue the Corps' permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against their reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, the evaluation of the impact of the work on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230).

COMMENTS: The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and Local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this project. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the activity.

Anyone whose interests may be affected by the proposed/completed work is invited to submit favorable or unfavorable written comments to the **Kearney Regulatory Office 2214 2nd Avenue Kearney, NE 68847-6856 or send an e-mail to barbara.j.friskopp@usace.army.mil**. The District Engineer is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic system's functional values, cumulative and secondary effects and endangered species. All comments received will be considered public information; copies of all comments, including names and addresses of commentors, may be provided to the applicant unless confidentiality is requested. Comments must be submitted on or before the expiration date (located at the top of the first page) of this notice to be considered in the subsequent actions on this application.

PUBLIC HEARING: Before the expiration date of this notice, anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the District Engineer determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For additional information, please call **Mrs. Barb Friskopp at (308) 234-1403.**

REQUEST TO POSTMASTERS: Please post this notice conspicuously and continuously until the expiration date specified at the top of page one.

NOTICE TO EDITORS: This notice is provided as background information for your use in formatting news stories. This notice is not a contract for classified display or advertising.