



Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC

**Requirement G-2 – Threatened and Endangered Species
Coordination Summary**

**Regional Energy Access Expansion Project –
Regional Energy Lateral and Existing Compressor Station 515**

**April 2021
(Revised July 2022)**

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES COORDINATION SUMMARY

This section discusses the presence of federally- and state-listed rare plant and animal species potentially occurring within or near the Project area. Coordination has been initiated with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Agency coordination resulted in the identification of several species that may occur within the Project area and are provided below in Table G-2.1. Transco is still in a concurrent review phase with the USFWS with final clearance pending. Transco will submit the USFWS clearance to PADEP upon receipt. Transco has completed and concluded consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and the Pennsylvania Game Commission. A summary of the consultation with these agencies is provided within this portion of the application.

Regional Energy Access Expansion Project – Regional Energy Lateral
 PA DEP Chapter 105 Joint Permit Application
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**Table G.2-1
 Federally- and State-Listed Species Potentially Occurring Within the Project Area**

Species Group	Species Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status ^a	Project Components with Potential Occurrence	County of Potential Occurrence within Project Area ^b	Planned Survey Timeframe	Survey Status
Mammals	Indiana bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Project components with tree clearing in PA including Regional Energy Lateral, Effort Loop, and facility modifications	All PA counties	Summer Presence/Absence Survey: May 15 – August 15; Potential Hibernacula: anytime without snow cover;	Complete
	Northern long-eared bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Threatened	Endangered	Project components in PA including Regional Energy Lateral, Effort Loop, and facility modifications	All PA counties	Potential Hibernacula Presence/Absence Surveys: September 15 – October 31	
	Eastern small-footed bat	<i>Myotis leibii</i>	Not listed	Threatened	Portions of the Regional Energy Lateral	Luzerne County, PA	Summer Day Roost Habitat Assessment: anytime without snow cover; Summer Emergence Counts: June 15 – July 31; Potential Hibernacula Presence/Absence Survey: September 15 – October 31; Potential Hibernacula: anytime without snow cover;	Complete

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**Table G.2-1
Federally- and State-Listed Species Potentially Occurring Within the Project Area**

Species Group	Species Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status ^a	Project Components with Potential Occurrence	County of Potential Occurrence within Project Area ^b	Planned Survey Timeframe	Survey Status
Reptiles	Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horidus</i>	Not Listed	Species of Special Concern	Portion of Regional Energy Lateral	Luzerne County, PA	Phase I: Anytime without snow cover Phase II: April 15 – May 15	Complete
Mussels ^c	Elktoe	<i>Alasmidonta marginata</i>	Not listed	Rare	Vicinity of Regional Energy Lateral at the Susquehanna River	Luzerne County, PA	May 15 – October 1	Surveys not currently proposed due to trenchless crossing
	Green Floater	<i>Lasmigona subviridis</i>	Not listed	Rare	Vicinity of Regional Energy Lateral at the Susquehanna River	Luzerne County, PA	May 15 – October 1	Surveys not currently proposed due to trenchless crossing
	Triangle Floater	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Not listed	Rare	Vicinity of Regional Energy Lateral at the Susquehanna River	Luzerne County, PA	May 15 – October 1	Surveys not currently proposed due to trenchless crossing
Plants	Northeastern Bulrush	<i>Scirpus ancistrochaetus</i>	Endangered	Endangered (Proposed Threatened)	Regional Energy Lateral, Effort Loop, Compressor Station 515, Hildebrandt Tie-in, Lower Demunds REL Tie-in, Carverton Tie-in, Delaware River Regulator	Luzerne, Monroe, and Northampton Counties, PA	June 1 – September 30	Complete
	Soft-leaved Sedge	<i>Carex disperma</i>	Not listed	Rare	Regional Energy Lateral, Compressor Station 515, Hildebrandt Tie-in, Lower Demunds REL Tie-in, Carverton Tie-in	Luzerne County, PA (Dallas and Kingston Townships)	July – August	Complete

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Species Group	Species Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status^a	Project Components with Potential Occurrence	County of Potential Occurrence within Project Area^b	Planned Survey Timeframe	Survey Status
	Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Not listed	Rare	Regional Energy Lateral	Luzerne County, PA (Plains Township)	July	Complete

Sources: USFWS (Jahrsdoerfer 2020), PFBC (Lech 2020), PADCNr (Podnieszinski 2020), PGC (Braun 2020)

^a Current status listed for PA – see column titled “County/State of Potential Occurrence within Project Area” for locations of possible occurrence.

^b Based on federal and state resource agency feedback.

^c Crossing at the Susquehanna River will be conducted via trenchless crossing methods. Field surveys are not necessary for molluscs when trenchless crossings are used and are not required for water withdrawal activities.

USFWS Coordination

Indiana Bat

The USFWS PA Field Office indicated the Project facilities in PA are within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), which is federally listed as endangered. In order to determine whether the Project will affect potential habitat for this species, the USFWS requested summer presence/absence surveys and winter habitat surveys to be conducted.

To minimize direct human contact with bats, PGC has imposed a temporary moratorium on the 2019-2020 bat mist net survey season to minimize potential disease transmission to bat populations. In lieu of mist net surveys, Transco conducted acoustic surveys during summer 2020 for bats for the pipelines and aboveground facilities in PA where forest clearing is required. Acoustic surveys involve placing detectors to record bat calls within suitable summer habitat. The acoustic samples are then analyzed using USFWS-approved acoustic bat identification software. A report was submitted to the USFWS and PGC on November 25, 2020.

A Phase I hibernacula search was conducted to identify potential hibernacula within 0.5 mile of the Regional Energy Lateral component of the Project between MPs 8.0 and 17.5 in Luzerne County, PA. A desktop analysis indicated that portions of the Regional Energy Lateral are located within areas that were previously mined. As a result, ground assessments were conducted throughout 2020. A total of 56 potential hibernacula were found within the survey area. Transco conducted acoustic sampling at 28 of these potential hibernacula in fall 2020. The acoustic surveys determined probable presence for the federally and state endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) at one location. A report with the 2020 fall acoustic results was submitted on February 25, 2021. Additionally, a report with locations and photos of the additional 28 potential hibernacula was also submitted. The remaining 26 suitable potential hibernacula were surveyed in 2021 (2 of the 28 were not surveyed, as they were flooded). A report with the 2021 fall sampling results was submitted on December 1, 2021. No Indiana bats were identified during these additional surveys.

As part of continued coordination with the USFWS, Transco is reviewing the results of the surveys with the agencies to determine the appropriate mitigation measures and time of year restrictions.

Northern Long-eared Bat

As noted in the USFWS PA Field Office correspondence dated May 12, 2020, the entire proposed Project in PA is located within the range of the federally-threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). The summer and fall acoustic surveys being conducted for Indiana bats also includes results for northern long-eared bats and other bat species. Summer acoustic surveys determined the probable presence of the northern long-eared bat at three survey sites associated with the Regional Energy Lateral. Reports were submitted to the USFWS on November 25, 2020 outlining the results of the 2020 Summer Acoustic Surveys. 2020 Fall acoustic surveys indicated a probable presence at three locations. On February 25, 2021, a report was submitted to the outlining the results of the 2020 Fall Bat Acoustic Phase 2 Hibernacula Survey completed for the Regional Energy Lateral. 2021 Fall Trapping surveys identified presence of the Northern Long-eared bat at one location. A report with the 2021 fall sampling results was submitted on December 1, 2021.

As part of continued coordination with the USFWS, Transco is reviewing the results of the surveys with the agencies to determine the appropriate mitigation measures and time of year restrictions.

Northeast Bulrush

Project components in PA are within the range of the northeastern bulrush (*Scirpus ancistrochaetus*), which is federally-listed as endangered (Jahrsdoerfer 2020). In order to conserve northeastern bulrush (if present), the USFWS PA Field Office recommended a 300-foot-wide upland buffer around wetlands, as well as 50- to 100-foot-wide buffers along waterways to filter pollutants and stabilize streambanks. If buffers are included, the USFWS PA Field Office states the proposed Project is not likely to adversely affect the northeastern bulrush (Jahrsdoerfer 2020). If this buffer could not be adopted, the USFWS requested a survey of potentially suitable wetland habitat for the presence of this species.

Surveys for northeastern bulrush were completed during the flowering/fruiting season between June and September 2020. The species was not found within the Project limits. A Northeastern Bulrush Survey Report has been submitted to the USFWS on November 25, 2020. and is under review.

Bog Turtle

The USFWS PA Field Office did not identify sections of the Regional Energy Lateral component of the Project located in Luzerne County as being within the known range for the bog turtle (*Clemmy muhlenbergii*).

Transco is proposing wetland mitigation at an off-site location in Northampton County. The PNDI review indicated a potential occurrence of the bog turtle. A phase 1 survey was completed at the site in September 2020, and it was determined that potentially suitable bog turtle habitat is present. A Phase 2 Presence/Absence Survey and Phase 3 Trapping survey was completed in the spring of 2021, and no bog turtles were found. A report was submitted to the USFWS and a response letter was provided on October 6, 2021, indicating the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the bog turtle.

USFWS Consultation Conclusion

Transco is still in a concurrent review phase with the USFWS with final clearance pending. Transco will submit the USFWS clearance to PADEP upon receipt.

DCNR Coordination

State-Listed Plant Species

The DCNR identified several target plant species within the counties crossed by the pipeline facilities (see Table G.2-1). Target species include those that are state-listed or proposed for state listing as rare, threatened, or endangered. The PADCNR indicated these species were documented in or near the proposed ROW, and they requested plant surveys be conducted for these target species in the Project area (Podnieszinski 2020, Podnieszinski 2020b). Survey windows vary for each species based primarily on flowering times, or other times of year when the plant is most readily apparent. Table G.2-2 describes suitable habitat and flowering windows for the two state-listed plant species. The federally-listed northeastern bulrush is previously described under the USFWS Coordination section.

**Table G.2-2
 Habitat and Flowering Windows for State-Listed Plant Species Potentially Occurring Within the Project Area**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat	Flowering Window
Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Alluvial sand and gravel bars, open fields, wood edges and roadsides in	April-July

Table G.2-2
Habitat and Flowering Windows for State-Listed Plant Species Potentially Occurring Within the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat	Flowering Window
		sandy soils	
Soft-leaved Sedge	<i>Carex disperma</i>	Swampy woods, bogs, and rhododendron swamp	May-August (Fruit)
Sources: Podniesinski 2020			

Field surveys for Soft-leaved Sedge and Lupine are complete throughout the Project area with no target species identified based on survey results from 2020 and 2021. Surveys identified one plant that was not on the DCNR PNDI response: purple bedstraw (*Galium latifolium*). A Botanical Survey Report was submitted to the DCNR on November 25, 2020. A field survey for Lupine was completed in 2021 from MPs 8.3 to 9.9 on the Regional Energy Lateral, with no Lupine identified during the surveys. A report was submitted to the DCNR on August 12, 2021 outlining the results of the survey findings. On August 23, 2022, the DCNR provided a response letter for the Project indicating “No Impact Anticipated per Avoidance, Mitigation, and Monitoring”.

DCNR Consultation Conclusion

On April 21, 2022, Transco submitted an updated PNDI submission with the current Project footprint as proposed in the permit application. The DCNR issued a response letter on May 3, 2022 again indicating that “No Impact Anticipated per Avoidance, Mitigation, and Monitoring” based on the measures proposed in the previous correspondences (Podniesinski, 2022).

PFBC Coordination

Timber Rattlesnake

According to correspondence with the PFBC, the portion of the Regional Energy Lateral east of I-476 is in close proximity to known critical timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) habitat (Lech 2020b). The PFBC requested Transco complete a habitat assessment to be conducted in the portions of the Regional Energy Lateral located East of I-476. During follow up email correspondence, the study area was refined to approximately milepost 6.5 and 9.0 (I-476) (Lech 2020c).

Transco completed Phase I habitat assessment surveys in summer 2020 between approximately MP 6.5 and MP 9.0. Surveys were conducted within a survey corridor extending 300 feet of the LOD. Potential denning and gestational habitat were identified in the study area

during Phase I Habitat Assessment surveys. A Phase II presence/absence survey was completed in 2021 in habitat areas where potential denning habitat was identified. One den location was confirmed during surveys. Transco submitted a survey report outlining the results and the PFBC provided a response on September 7, 2021 (Lech 2021). Transco has adopted the recommended avoidance and minimization measures which include workspace reductions, exclusion fencing and construction monitoring (Lech 2021). Additionally, Transco proposes to re-construct rock habitat identified as gestation habitat during the Project construction restoration (Lech 2020e). Consultation with the PFBC regarding the Timber Rattlesnake is complete.

Mussels

The PFBC has determined that three species of rare mussels are known from the vicinity of the Regional Energy Lateral Susquehanna River crossing and are likely to occur within the proposed Project area. The species include: Elktoe (*Alasmidonta marginata*), Green Floater (*Lasmigona subviridis*), and Triangle Floater (*Alasmidonta undulata*). The PFBC recommended mussel surveys to be completed in the areas that may be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed in-stream work that will take place within the Susquehanna River, unless the pipeline will be installed via horizontal directional drill (Lech 2020, Lech 2020b). Transco proposes to cross the Susquehanna River via a trenchless technique (Direct Pipe®) and therefore does not anticipate a need for mussel surveys. PFBC also confirmed that the small cable that may be laid in the streambed for surveying the location of the Direct Pipe® progress and that temporary water intake at the river crossing would not require mussel surveys. Instead, the PFBC recommended running a PNDI as part of the water withdrawal application, for which no impacts were found (Lech 2020c). Therefore, consultation is complete with the PFBC regarding mussels and no impacts to protected mussels are anticipated as a result of this Project.

PFBC Consultation Conclusion

On April 21, 2022, Transco submitted an updated PNDI submission with the current Project footprint as proposed in the permit application. The PFBC issued a response letter on May 3, 2022, indicating that there have been no changes in the on-site biological information, therefore the PFBC's comments regarding potential impacts to species under their jurisdiction remain unchanged as detailed in the September 7, 2021, letter. The PFBC indicated "In summary, impacts to Freshwater Mussel species will be avoided using trenchless methods and avoidance measures, including but not limited to qualified biologist oversight, near the known and confirmed Timber Rattlesnake Den will minimize potential impacts to the species" (Lech, 2022).

PGC Coordination

Eastern Small-footed Bat

The PGC has determined the Eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*), a threatened species in PA, is located within the vicinity of the Project. Therefore, the PGC recommended surveys to be conducted for areas associated with the Project located between MPs 8.0 and 17.5 of the Regional Energy Lateral portion located in Luzerne County, PA. Field surveys to be completed include: Summer Day Roost Habitat Assessment and Winter Hibernacula Habitat assessment (Braun 2020, Braun 2020b).

Transco completed an assessment of Eastern Small-Footed Bat summer habitat within 0.25 mile of the Regional Energy Lateral component of the Project between MPs 8.0 and 17.5 in Luzerne County, PA throughout 2020. A total of 14 sites containing potentially suitable day roost rocky habitat were documented. A report was submitted to the PGC on November 25, 2020.. Transco completed Presence/Absence Surveys of the day roost habitat in 2021 and none of the habitats had documented use. A report was submitted to the PGC on September 24, 2021 and the PGC indicated they had no questions or comments after their review on September 27, 2021.

A 2020 Summer Bat Acoustic Presence/Absence Survey Report was also submitted to the USFWS and PGC on November 25, 2020. The report outlined the probable presence of the eastern small-footed bat at 4 locations associated with the Regional Energy Lateral.

A Phase I hibernacula search was conducted to identify potential hibernacula within 0.5 mile of the Regional Energy Lateral component of the Project between MP 8.0 and 17.5 in Luzerne County, PA. A desktop analysis indicated that portions of the Regional Energy Lateral are located within areas that were previously mined. As a result, ground assessments were conducted throughout 2020. A total of 56 potential hibernacula were found within the survey area. Transco conducted acoustic sampling at 28 of these potential hibernacula in fall 2020 and determined the probable presence of the state-threatened eastern small-footed bat at 8 locations. A report with the 2020 fall acoustic results was submitted on February 25, 2021. Additionally, a report with locations and photos of the additional 28 potential hibernacula was submitted.

The remaining 26 suitable potential hibernacula were surveyed in 2021 (2 of the 28 were not surveyed, as they were flooded). A report with the 2021 fall sampling results was submitted on December 1, 2021. Two hibernacula had documented use of the Eastern Small-Footed Bat.

A 2020 Summer Bat Acoustic Presence/Absence Survey Report was also submitted to the USFWS and PGC on November 25, 2020. The report outlined the probable presence of the eastern small-footed bat at 4 locations associated with the Regional Energy Lateral.

As part of continued coordination with the PGC, Transco is reviewing the results of the surveys with the agencies to determine the appropriate mitigation measures and time of year restrictions.

Additional State-Listed Bat Species

Though the autoclassifier used to conduct acoustic surveys has not been specifically approved for species other than federally-listed species, the detectors determined the probable presence of two Pennsylvania state endangered bat species: little brown bat and tri-colored bat. During the 2020 Summer Bat Acoustic Surveys probable presence for the little brown at 10 sites on the Regional Energy Lateral. Probable presence was also determined for the tri-colored bat at 2 sites on the Regional Energy Lateral. During 2020 Fall Bat Acoustic Phase 2 Hibernacula Surveys, the probable presence of the little brown bat was identified at 5 locations and at 2 locations for the tri-colored bat. During the 2021 Fall Trapping surveys, the tri-colored bat was captured at two locations.

PGC Consultation Conclusion

On March 15, 2022, Transco submitted a summary of surveys, reports and proposed Project-specific restrictions to protect the state-listed bat species and Transco has agreed to conduct species-specific conservation measures to reduce potential adverse effects. On May 4, 2022, issued a response letter for the Project, indicating that no impacts are likely and no further coordination with the PGC Environmental Review Division will be necessary for the Project at this time (Guers, 2022).

REFERENCES

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- Guers, Sue. 2022. Updated PNDI Response. PGC ID Number 202002030501. May 4, 2022.
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Podniesinski, Greg. 2021. Updated PNDI Response. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR). August 23, 2021.

Podniesinski, Greg. 2022. Updated PNDI Response. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR). May 3, 2022.