



Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC

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

Regional Energy Access Expansion Project – Effort Loop

**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.

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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;	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		
Reptiles	Bog Turtle	<i>Clemmys muhlenbergii</i>	Threatened	Not listed	Portions of Effort Loop, Delaware River Regulator, Compressor Station 200, Compressor Station 195, Offsite wetland mitigation area	Delaware, Northampton, York, Chester and portions of Monroe County, PA	Habitat: Anytime soils are not frozen and without snow cover; Presence/absence: April 15 – June 15	Complete
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
	Blunt Manna-grass	<i>Glyceria obtusa</i>	Not listed	Endangered	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	July – August	Complete
	Variable Sedge	<i>Carex polymorpha</i>	Not listed	Endangered (Proposed)	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock	July – August	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
				Threatened)		Township)		
	Collin's Sedge	<i>Carex collinsii</i>	Not listed	Endangered (Proposed Threatened)	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	July	Complete
	Bog Goldenrod	<i>Solidago ulginosa</i>	Not listed	Threatened	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	August	Complete
	Roundleaf Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Not listed	Special Concern (Proposed Endangered)	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	Late April (due to late start to growing season on the Pocono plateau)	Complete
	White Fringed-orchid	<i>Platanthera blephariglottis</i>	Not listed	Special Concern (Proposed Endangered)	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	July – August	Complete
	Screw-stem	<i>Bartonia paniculate</i>	Not listed	Special Concern (Proposed Rare)	Effort Loop	Monroe County, PA (Tunkhannock Township)	August	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.

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 Effort Loop 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. No probable presence was determined for the Indiana bat as a result of the 2020 Summer Acoustic Surveys completed on the Effort Loop. A report was submitted to the USFWS on November 25, 2020.

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 and state endangered northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). Summer acoustic surveys determined the probable presence of the northern long-eared bat at two survey sites associated with the Effort Loop. The 2020 Summer Acoustic Presence/Absence Survey Report was submitted to the USFWS and PGC on November 25, 2020 outlining the results of the 2020 Summer Acoustic 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.

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/fruitletting 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 states that sections of the Project located in Chester, Delaware, Northampton, York, and portions on Monroe County, PA are within the known range for the bog turtle (*Clemmy muhlenbergii*), which is federally-listed as threatened. Since wetlands occur within the Project area, the USFWS PA Field Office determined a Phase 1 Bog Turtle Habitat Survey should be completed. The survey was required within areas that will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed Project, as applicable. Bog Turtle field surveys were completed in April and July 2020, and one potential site was found. As a result, further consultation with the USFWS regarding the potential site took place. Since disturbance is located adjacent to the wetland at the one location, and there will be no disturbance or hydrologic impacts to the potential bog turtle habitat, the USFWS concluded that Phase 2 surveys did not need to be conducted at the location. Based on field survey results and consultation with the USFWS PA Field Office, Transco does not anticipate impacts to bog turtles for the Effort Loop. A Negative Phase I Survey Results Report was submitted to the USFWS on 9/03/2020.

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 PADCNR identified several target plant species within Monroe County 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 Effort Loop Project area (Podniesinski 2020, Podniesinski 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 each of the seven 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
Blunt Mana-grass	<i>Glyceria obtusa</i>	Swamps, bogs; moist, sandy, peaty ground	July-August
Variable Sedge	<i>Carex polymorpha</i>	Moist, open woods and barrens; sandy-peaty soils	June -Early August (Fruit)
Collin’s Sedge	<i>Carex collinsii</i>	Flowers	June-mid August (Fruit)
Bog Goldenrod	<i>Solidago ulginosa</i>	Bogs and swamps	August-October
Roundleaf Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Open woods, rocky slopes and barrens	Mid-April; Fruits June-early July
White Fringed-orchid	<i>Platanthera blephariglottis</i>	Sphagnum bogs and swamps	June-August
Screw-stem	<i>Bartonia paniculata</i>	Hummocks in wet woods, wooded bogs, and sphagnous pond margins	August-October
Sources: Podniesinski 2020			

Transco completed surveys for state-listed plant species identified within and surrounding the Project area. Two state-listed species were identified within the LOD. Blunt Mannagrass and the non-target species Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa* – Pennsylvania Species of Special Concern) are both located within the LOD. White Fringed-orchid is located within the existing right-of-way; however, it is outside of the LOD. Although the white fringed-orchid is outside of the LOD, Transco has proposed to place orange safety fencing along the LOD immediately adjacent to the white fringed-orchid.

Blunt Manna-grass

Blunt manna-grass is listed as a Pennsylvania endangered species. Blunt mannagrass was found in multiple wetlands within the existing right-of-way (more than 1,000 individuals were found) within the LOD and adjacent to the proposed Effort Loop. The blunt mannagrass was observed within open areas where no canopy was present, primarily in wetlands. To minimize impacts to the populations of blunt mannagrass, topsoil segregations is proposed to maintain the existing seed source within the soils. These areas will be allowed to re-seed naturally, and no permanent seed mixes are proposed within these areas for restoration. Wash racks will be utilized during construction to control the spread of invasive species at the construction access locations immediate to these populations.

Showy Goldenrod

Showy goldenrod is listed as a Pennsylvania proposed threatened species. Showy goldenrod was found within and adjacent to several wetlands along and adjacent to the proposed Effort Loop. The showy goldenrod was found in open light conditions in the same general areas that the blunt manna-grass is located. Thousands of individuals were observed. To minimize impacts to the populations of showy goldenrod, topsoil segregations is proposed to maintain the existing seed source within the soils. These areas will be allowed to re-seed naturally, and no permanent seed mixes are proposed within these areas for restoration. Wash racks will be utilized during construction to control the spread of invasive species at the construction access locations immediate to these populations.

A Botanical Survey Report was submitted to the PADCNR on November 25, 2020. Additional surveys were completed on the Regional Energy Lateral portion of the Project in 2021. 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

According to correspondence with the PFBC on October 6, 2020, the Effort Loop portion of Project did not contain species of concern and further investigations were not recommended for that portion of the Project. 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 (Luzerne County) 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 (Luzerne County) will minimize potential impacts to the species" (Lech, 2022). Consultation with the PFBC is complete.

PGC Coordination

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 was detected at 2 sites, and probable presence for the tri-colored bat was detected at 1 site.

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

- Braun, Olivia A. 2020. Initial PNDI Response. PGC ID Number 202002030501. March 12, 2020.
- Braun, Olivia A. 2020. Updated PNDI Response. PGC ID Number 202002030501. October 19, 2020
- Guers, Sue. 2022. Updated PNDI Response. PGC ID Number 202002030501. May 4, 2022.
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- Jahrsdoerfer, Sonja. 2021. Bog Turtle Survey Response Letter. October 6, 2021.
- Lech, Greg. 2020. Initial PNDI Response. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). February 6, 2020.
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- Podniesinski, Greg. 2020. Initial PNDI Response. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR). February 12, 2020.
- Podniesinski, Greg. 2020. Updated PNDI Response. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR). October 20, 2020.

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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.