

FILE



# MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## Headquarters

2901 West Truman Boulevard, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0180  
Telephone: 573/751-4115 ▲ Missouri Relay Center: 1-800-735-2966 (TDD)

JOHN D. HOSKINS, Director

March 19, 2007

06-1142-GA-BIN

Bart Jensen  
Natural Resource Group, Inc.  
1000 IDS Center  
80 South Eighth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Dear Mr. Jensen:

RE: ROCKIES EXPRESS PIPELINE PROJECT (REX-EAST) IN MISSOURI

The Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) is responsible for fish, forest, and wildlife resources in Missouri. As such, we actively participate in regulatory project reviews when projects might affect those resources, such as the Rockies Express Pipeline Project (REX-East). The Department has been working with REX and NRG to evaluate environmental impacts and offer comments and recommendations to assist in avoiding or minimizing impact to sensitive ecosystems and watersheds.

Missouri's approach to conserving all wildlife, including "at-risk" species, is one that focuses on restoring and enhancing the natural communities where possible and practical. Part of the Department's approach to conservation of wildlife species in Missouri is the designation of aquatic and terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) across the state. The REX-West project will intersect or potentially affect one (1) aquatic COA and one (1) terrestrial COA along its proposed route (see table).

Conservation Opportunity Areas represent landscape level geographies, often containing one or more watersheds for terrestrial issues and sub-watersheds or stream valley segments for aquatic issues. COAs are selected on criteria including, but not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1) natural communities and land type associations;
- 2) rare or threatened species, both federal and state;
- 3) historical range and habitat for such species;
- 4) greatest opportunity for species recovery effort;
- 5) stream system of high integrity or minimal alterations (i.e. unchannelized); or
- 6) stream systems with a high number of aquatic species (often designated as a State Outstanding Stream)

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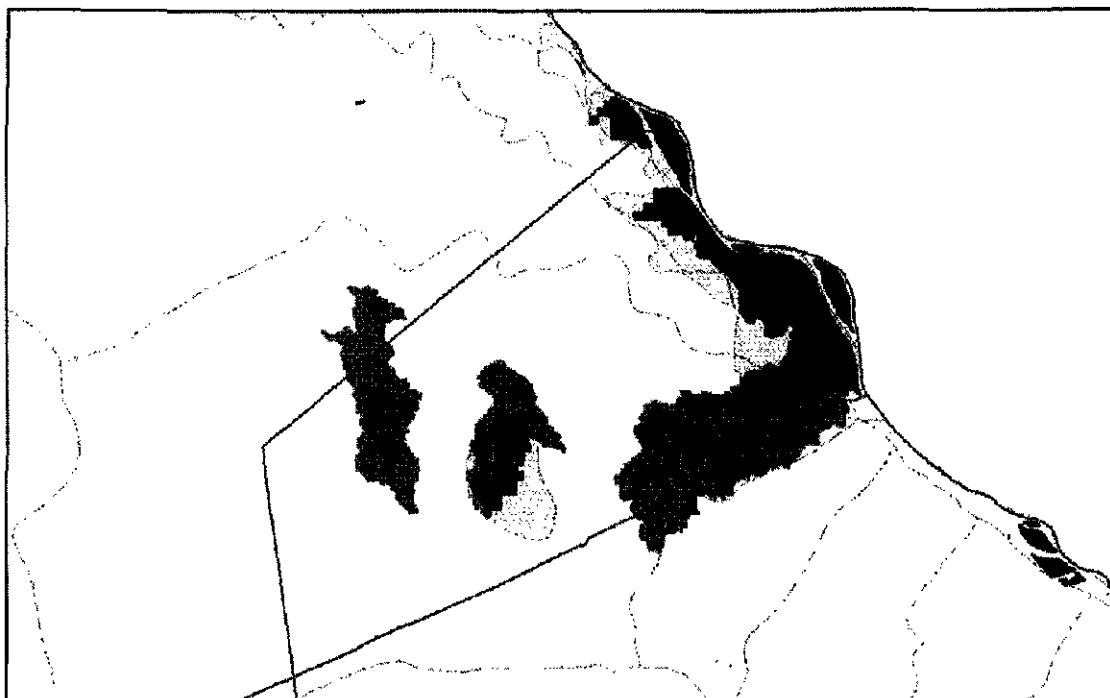
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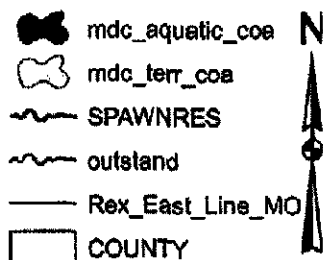
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For the REX-West project, the aquatic COA (Grassy Creek) represents a high degree of stream integrity, confluence area with a larger river system (fish spawning and nursery potential), and biological richness (both aquatic and terrestrial). The terrestrial COA (Upper Mississippi) also includes public lands owned or managed by MDC and represents a vast complex of wetland communities and a high number of Species of Conservation Concern. The nature and sensitivity of both landscapes should further reviewed further by the REX-East project in terms of avoiding and minimizing adverse impacts.



**Figure 1 Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) in relation to REX-East**

**Legend**



The best management practices would include timing the construction to avoid conflicts with fisheries, including spawning activities and ability to move freely, "necking down" the project to minimize stream crossings and impacts to wetlands, as much as practical. Keep clearing of riparian corridor to a minimal and ensuring construction at crossings allow aquatic organism passage even at low flow conditions. Re-vegetation selected for reconstruction should be beneficial for wildlife with an emphasis on native prairie grasses and forbs. The following recommendations should limit and control the spread of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.

- Inspect equipment thoroughly, and remove any mud, soil, trash, plants or animals before leaving any water body or work area.
- Drain water from the equipment including (but not limited to) the motor, live-well, bilge and transom wells, tracks, buckets, and any other water from their equipment before leaving any water body.
- Wash and rinse ALL equipment thoroughly with hard spray or HOT water, like that found at a do-it-yourself carwash.
- Whenever possible, thoroughly dry equipment in the hot sun before using them again.
- Inspect and remove seed, mowing debris, and soil from tires and tracks, and from the decks of mowers, trailers and other equipment.
- Properly dispose of all plant materials to prevent its regrowth and its introduction to new areas.

If you have additional questions or need clarifications, please call me at 573-522-4115, ext. 3355.

Sincerely,



DOYLE F. BROWN  
POLICY COORDINATOR