

AWR 93-4

CREATING THE INTERAGENCY ABANDONED RAIL COORIDOR COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, cooridors and right-of-way containing railroad trackage are an important part of the transportation infrastructure in Texas; and

WHEREAS, many miles of active railroad line are abandoned and revert to private, non-railroad use in Texas each year; and

WHEREAS, once abandoned, these painstakingly assembled rights-of-way are fragmented and lost to public use; and

WHEREAS, public uses of abandoned rail cooridors include: recreation trails, utility cooridors, roadways, light rail, wildlife habitat and other uses; and

WHEREAS, the railbanking provision of the National Trails System Act Amendment of 1983 provides a legal means of preserving these important cooridors; and

WHEREAS, no mechanism exists to ensure that the needs and concerns of all parties affected by railroad abandonments are heard and considered; and

WHEREAS, no central clearinghouse exists for the purposes of maintaining and providing information on the status of rail cooridors, alternate uses, funding sources and legal procedures; and

WHEREAS, no mechanism currently exists for the resolution of use conflicts arising from rail cooridor abandonments; and

WHEREAS, a strong need exists for timely notification of all affected parties upon commencement of abandonment procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ann W. Richards, Governor of Texas, under the authority vested in me, do hereby create the Interagency Abandoned Rail Cooridor Committee. The Committee is composed for designated staff from the following agencies: General Land Office, Office of the Attorney General, Public Utility Commission, Railroad Commission of Texas, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Commerce, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Historical Commission, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Governor's Office.

The Committee shall meet quarterly or the call of the co-chairs.

The goals of the Committee are:

1. To preserve abandoned rights-of-way intact, at least long enough to give interested parties time to determine if the cooridors have value for other uses.
2. To improve the notification process informing state agencies, local officials, and citizens of upcoming abandonments, their on-going status, and proposals for future uses.
3. To develop a process to evaluate abandoned cooridors for various uses, including railbanking for future rail service.
4. To support rural communities in their efforts to enhance their economies and consider the interests of communities and adjacent landowners in determining future uses of abandoned cooridors.
5. To identify possible sources of funding for acquiring, developing, managing, and operating cooridors.
6. To develop appropriate management strategies for railbanked cooridors that have been identified for needed current and future public uses.

The Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are authorized, on the recommendation of the Committee, to jointly file with the Interstate Commerce Commission for Interim Trail Use/Railbanking and Public Use Condition on behalf of and in the name of the State of Texas on each cooridor proposed for abandonment, thus providing a 180-day study period, and shall make sure affected parties are notified and full public input is assured.

The Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department shall provide staff persons to co-chair the Committee.

The participating agencies shall absorb the costs of the Committee activities within their respective agencies.

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Ann W. Richards
Governor of Texas

AWR 93-5

CREATING THE TEXAS MOST WANTED FUGITIVE TEAM

WHEREAS, in the interest of public safety and to remove violent parole violators from the streets, immediate measures are required to apprehend them; and

WHEREAS, such a major effort requires nothing less than statewide cooperation among agencies of the Texas criminal justice system;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ann W. Richards, Governor of Texas, do hereby create the Texas Most Wanted Fugitive Team, hereinafter referred