

Questionnaire and Comment Form

Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's
Proposed Rail Construction in Medina County, TX
STB Finance Docket No. 34284

June 12, 2003

This questionnaire and comment form is designed to help you identify and describe any issues of interest to you regarding Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's Proposed Rail Construction in Medina County, TX. Your comments will help the Surface Transportation Board, Section of Environmental Analysis understand public interests and concerns about the project as we conduct our environmental review.

Please complete this questionnaire after you have reviewed the exhibits. If you have a concern about a particular geographic area, please circle it on the attached map.

Please give us the completed form tonight or mail it to:

Attn: FD 34284
Rini Ghosh
Attorney-Adviser
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Your name and address are optional, but would be useful if you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive subsequent information regarding this project.

Name: Judy Dittmar

Address: 3980 FM 2676

City, State, Zip: Horde, Tx. 78861

Telephone: 830 741 3674

1. Which of the following applies to your situation?

- The proposed rail line is near my ^{farm} home which houses my 36 yr old son + his family
- The proposed rail line is near my business.
- The proposed rail line crosses my property in the worst way
- Other, please specify

2. What are your concerns regarding potential environmental impacts and do you have any mitigation suggestions?

My main concern is our source of water - the Edwards Aquifer - if this water is contaminated the whole country will suffer. This is our primary source of drinking water.

The rail is being built in the flood plain which is definitely going to do serious damage to the entire town of Drieh if not constructed correctly. The last year (1997) had us trapped in the house. A few more inches of water will destroy many homes including 30 to 35 homes of historical value, a church complex, cemeteries & businesses.

3. Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions.

The traffic problem created by the rail could be solved. Firetrucks, ambulances, emergency law vehicles, and buses will have to wait until it's too late.

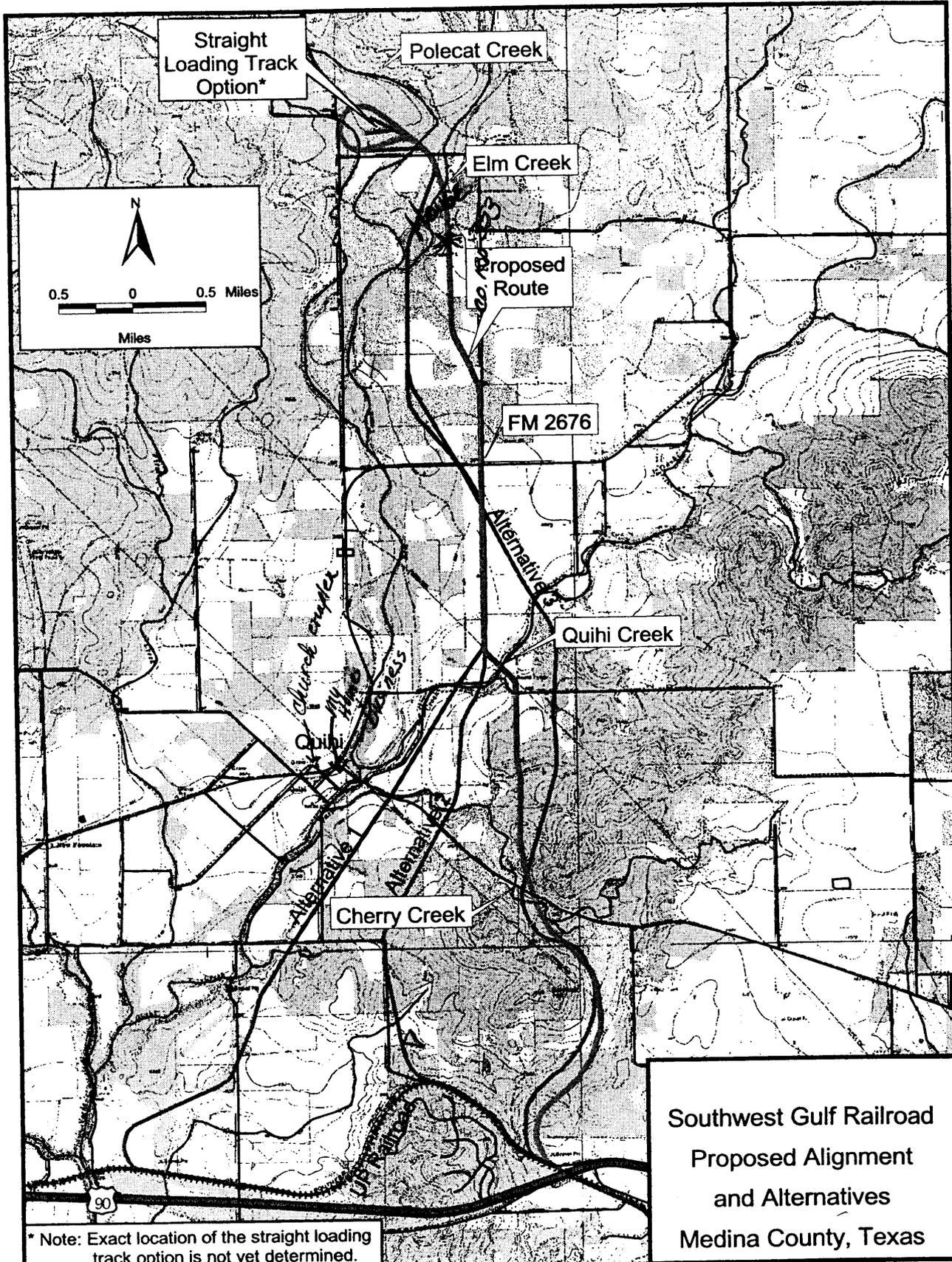
Air quality will cause major medical problems. The dust we had enough already and adding the dust from the locomotive will affect many people.

I'm concerned that we will not get enough money for damages to our farm. My son, his wife, and new baby are living on this farm and trying to set up a construction system. The rail will be right behind the house and the gravel road in front will be highly traveled by traffic to the quarry headquarters and head of rail.

Thank you for your comments.

It is beyond me why they would put a rail through the middle of the flood plain - there's flat land to the east which is lot less populated and wouldn't cause the flood damage this place will.

See attached letter



Straight Loading Track Option*

Polecat Creek

Elm Creek

Proposed Route

FM 2676

Quihi Creek

Cherry Creek

Southwest Gulf Railroad
Proposed Alignment
and Alternatives
Medina County, Texas

* Note: Exact location of the straight loading track option is not yet determined.

June 12, 2003

3980 FM 2676
Hondo, Texas 78861

Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 21423

To Whom It May Concern:

Today I, as a concerned party and a Director of Medina County Environmental Action Association, am taking part in an Open House conducted by your Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) to express our concerns of the Southwest Gulf Railroad's (SGR) proposed rail construction.

This proposal aims to destroy our peaceful community, a community where many generations have been enjoying a peaceful rural life, and, where new people have come to escape just such environmental destruction as we are now facing.

My major concern is the possible contamination of the Edwards Aquifer. This is everyone's source of water. The proposed quarry sight and the possible contamination from the rail cars, is much too close to the Edwards Water. There are caves, sink holes, fault line veins, etc. which can carry this contamination right into our water source.

I speak of my own farm where land use is concerned. We have a small farm. Our son, wife, and new baby live on the farm in the approximately 70 year old home. We have tried to set up somewhat of a grass and grazing pattern, and, even installed a pipeline for better distribution of grazing, as an attempt to prevent soil erosion and provide cleaner air. This area is near the beginning of the proposed rail which will cut right through the best part of the farm and much too near the house, waterwell, and pipeline. Cutting the farm as it does will mean starting over. Closer to the house on the other side of the house is CR 353, a dusty gravel road which will carry the traffic to and from the proposed quarry loading area and headquarters.

There is mass travel on the two roadways to be crossed by the proposed surface rail (State Highway 2676 and County Road 4516). This travel will be detained by all concerned—fire trucks, ambulances, emergency law officers, school buses,

and many, many people going to work to and from San Antonio and other area points. Contrary to what newspaper articles (from people who do not live here) have stated, these roads are heavily traveled. It is my understanding that county Road 4516 has been studied for State Highway status because of it's traffic load.

Flooding in the whole area of the rail could be devastating to the whole Quihi area. My home is in Quihi near the Elm and Quihi Creeks. The farm, approximately 4 miles north on County Road 353, is near the Elm creek. In recent years, the normal flood waters of these two creeks trapped us in our home for the first time in the 40 years we live here. A few more inches of water (if regular flow of creeks is changed) could destroy our home, among others, including some 30 to 35 homes with historical value, the church complex, several cemeteries, and a couple of businesses within Quihi.

Noise would probably be of lesser concern than air quality. We see the dust from the existing quarries and the trucks that are on the road now, we can only imagine the amount coming from the rail cars. Wetting down would last only a few minutes, what about the rest of the trip. There are asthma patients, plus other respiratory problems in any area, and I know of some in the rail area.

I do not know how to address the safety issue. It is never safe near a railroad or in the path of a speeding gravel truck. We can only hope that agencies such as yours will see that all safety regulations are followed and continue to be enforced.

Wildlife must be protected. This is a reason for living in a rural area, and, hunting has also become, in some cases, a necessary form of income.

Who am I to stop progress-- but this is disaster-a danger threat to the whole area. Why put a railroad through the creeks and the flood plain, threatening a whole town, when you could move just a little further in either direction and cause much less damage and destruction.

It's sad to think that the townspeople to our east and west are willing to give up their environmental safety (possible damage to the Medina Lake Dam from additional area blasting) or, possibly their source of clean water, rather than supporting our cause. Do they really expect to receive any personal gain?

I do hope that our concerns, along with your survey, will save us from this physical and environmental destruction.

Sincerely,


Judy Dittmar