

# Utilities Will Offer to Expand, Enhance National Parks

## Major Land Acquisitions Would Mitigate for Construction of Proposed Susquehanna-Roseland Power Line

PPL Electric Utilities

Recognizing that the [Susquehanna-Roseland power line](#) would have impacts on federal lands, the utilities building the project will propose a mitigation package that would have significant benefits for the public, three [National Park Service](#) units, the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) and other public land-managing agencies.

Mitigation is a routine part of the environmental impact review process when power lines or other infrastructure improvements impact federal lands. It is typically required by federal agencies for impacts that cannot be avoided.

Under the mitigation package to be proposed by [PPL Electric Utilities Corp.](#) and Public Service Electric & Gas Co., thousands of acres of land – identified as priorities by conservation groups – would be purchased or preserved at a cost of tens of millions of dollars.

These acquisitions would protect scenic vistas for hikers on the Appalachian Trail and significantly expand National Park Service land holdings in and around the [Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area](#) – one of the most visited park service units in the nation.

In addition, the mitigation package could potentially bridge gaps between existing federal and state lands in the area. This would create a half-million-acre swath of contiguous publicly owned or preserved natural lands for recreation and wildlife preservation within easy driving distance of major Northeast metropolitan areas.

The utilities will outline more details of the mitigation proposal when they file their comments on the National Park Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the [Susquehanna-Roseland](#) power line project. The draft is open for comment through the end of January.

The tracts of land that could be acquired or preserved have been identified as particularly important to the National Park Service's mission, resources and values. In addition, acquiring the tracts would prevent development and protect wildlife corridors in the region.

To advise and assist in executing the land transactions, the utilities are working with a number of national, regional and local organizations to conserve lands that have benefits for scenery, wildlife, water quality, outdoor recreation and other public values.

The new [Susquehanna-Roseland](#) power line is being built to maintain the reliability of the electric grid for millions of people in the Northeast region. In addition, it is estimated that the project will save consumers more than \$200 million per year by relieving congestion on the power grid, which will reduce electric bills for some customers.

The two utilities have been working to develop a mitigation proposal for several months. Mitigation includes three components – avoiding impacts, minimizing impacts and compensating for unavoidable impacts on federal lands.

"The National Park Service correctly sets a very high bar for protecting and enhancing federal lands as part of this process," said Ralph LaRossa, president and chief operating officer of PSE&G. "We are committed to doing the right thing as we meet our obligation to keep the lights on reliably, safely and cost effectively for millions of homes and businesses."

"This mitigation would be an example of the excellent result that is possible when public and private interests work together for the common good," said David G. DeCampi, president of [PPL Electric Utilities](#). "The mitigation

package, if accepted as part of the National Park Service decision-making process, would have a lasting benefit for National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lands, for conservation and wildlife interests, and for the people who visit these areas now and in the future."

The Susquehanna-Roseland power line will run from Berwick, Pa., to Roseland, N.J. The independent regional power grid operator, [PJM Interconnection](#), ordered the new line to prevent violations of national standards for the operation of the nation's electric power grid. PJM recently reconfirmed the need for the line.

The utilities' chosen route has already been approved by both the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. About 95 percent of this 145-mile route would follow the path of an existing 85-year-old power line that must be replaced because it is approaching the end of its useful life and is undersized for today's electricity demands. Following an existing power line route would help reduce the project's overall impact on people and the environment.

About four miles of this route would cross the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The land acquisition package is intended to mitigate for impacts to these federal lands if the utilities' application is approved.

The Obama administration selected the Susquehanna-Roseland line as one of seven transmission lines nationwide for fast-track treatment by the administration's [Rapid Response Team for Transmission](#). The team is expected to streamline the review and permitting of transmission line projects to increase reliability and save consumers money by modernizing the grid, while still ensuring careful federal review. The project will create thousands of jobs during its three-year construction period.

PPL Electric Utilities, a subsidiary of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), provides electric delivery services to about 1.4 million customers in Pennsylvania and has consistently ranked among the best companies for customer service in the United States. More information is available at [www.pplelectric.com](http://www.pplelectric.com).

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