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Abandoned Railroad Corridors in Kentucky:

An Inventory and Assessment

Kentucky Department for Local Government

June 2003

Prepared by the Kentucky Transportation Center

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16. Abstract This report provides an inventory of Kentucky's abandoned rail lines and a detailed assessment to highlight the lines that may be the most suitable for future trail use. A secondary purpose of the report was to inventory historic railroad structures. Over 125 different abandoned rail lines were identified, mapped using GIS technology, and assessed for their current use and condition. These abandoned rights of way exist in all regions of the state, in urban and rural areas.			
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We have highlighted sixteen lines that appear to have high potential value as rail to trail conversions. Some of these lines already have portions that are trails or have sections that have been considered for trail projects in the past. Others have never been considered for trails. These lines were chosen based on several factors, including: contiguity, a right of way that is intact and not destroyed by natural or built causes, presence of railroad artifacts such as depots, tunnels or bridges, access to natural areas or parks, access to population, and connection between amenities and communities. The unaccounted for factors that often determine the feasibility of trail projects are public support, funding, and the ability to acquire the right of way for trail use. We have seen in other states that even long-abandoned, discontinuous lines can become successful trails with enough political, local, and financial support, while many recently abandoned trail candidates are never completed because of problems in these areas. These are things that need to be kept in mind while reading the descriptions of lines with trail potential, understanding that there are other lines not on the list that have fewer “amenities” or “artifacts” but may enjoy greater support and therefore are more likely to become a successful trail than these high value lines. There are also many other rail lines that are proposed as trails but are still in the planning or support-raising stage. Those lines were omitted from this list because they are already recognized as having high trail potential. Please refer to Appendix B for a list of these lines.

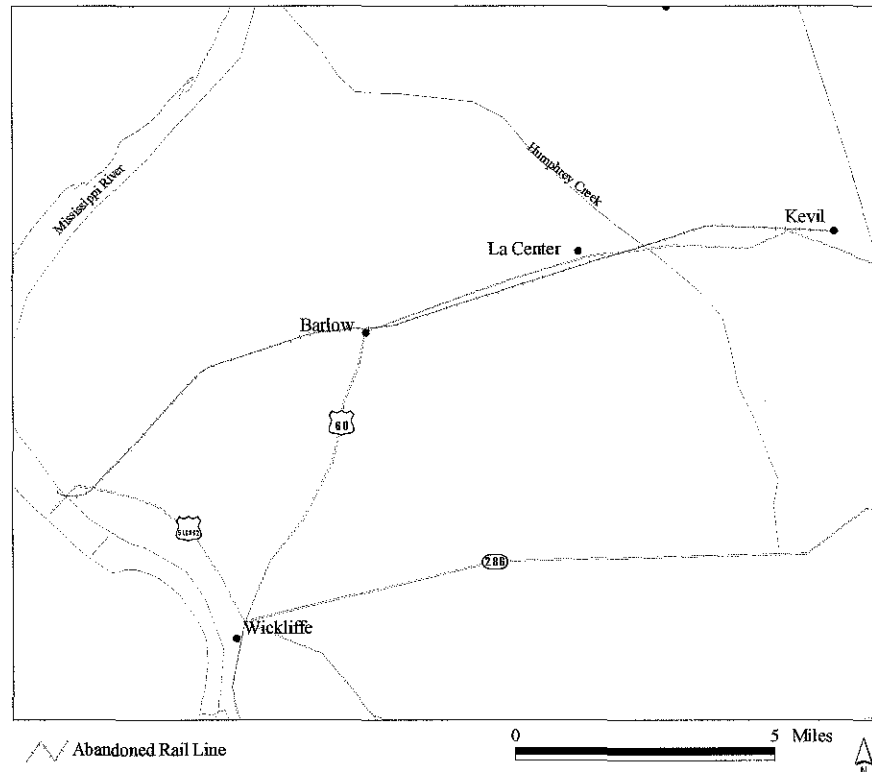
There are lines with great trail potential in all regions of the state. Some are fairly short – only a few miles – while others cross several counties and connect many cities. We tried to choose lines that are representative of the variety of possibilities in the state:

ones that serve to connect urban areas or travel through rural natural areas, lines in the mountains and others in agricultural areas or river valleys.



Railbed that has been converted to an auto road
with the original railroad bridge still in use.
Glen Dean, Breckinridge County.

Map 5.2: Kevil to Mississippi River



1. Kevil to Mississippi River
Ballard County
16.7 miles

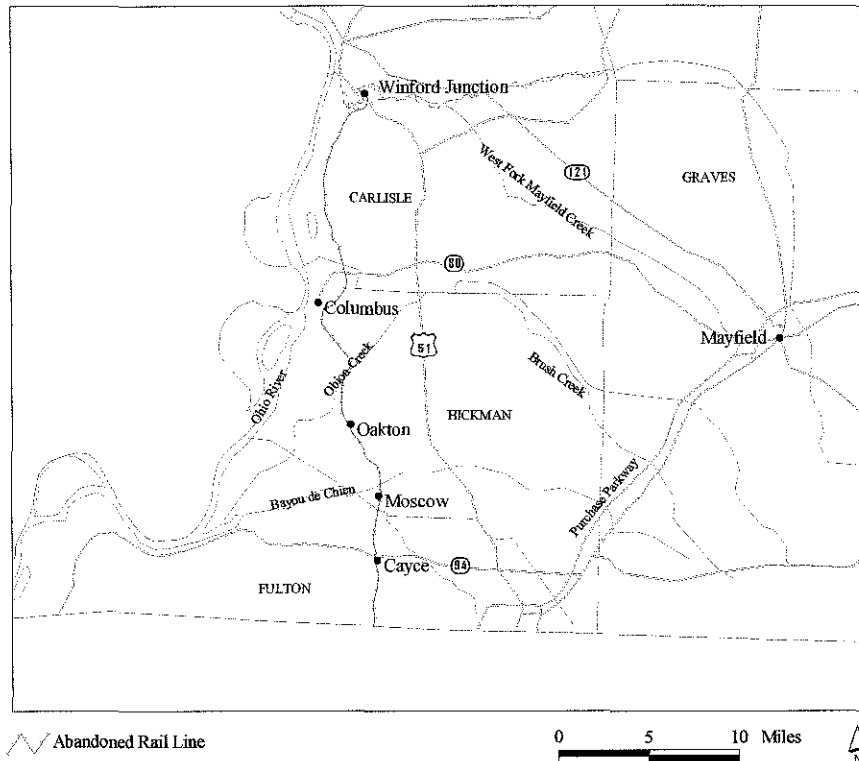
The line from Barlow to the river was abandoned in 1943, while the line from Kevil (just west of Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant) to Barlow remained in service until 1978. Constructed by the Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans RR (a subsidiary of Illinois Central RR), it later took the ICRR name and at abandonment was part of the Illinois Central Gulf RR.

Most of the rural areas of right of way are intact. Some parts are clear and see some informal use while others are more overgrown. At least one steel bridge remains and there are concrete bridge piers in Barlow. There are a few smaller artifacts, such as a cement mile marker, that stand between Kevil and Barlow.

In LaCenter most of the right of way is built over by new commercial buildings since the line ran closely parallel with the main highway through town.

At the west, the line passes through and near several wildlife management areas, lakes, the Mississippi River flood plain, and provides access to the river.

Map 5.3: Winford Junction to Tennessee Border



Near Laketon, Carlisle County



**2. Winford Junction to Tennessee border
Carlisle, Hickman, and Fulton Counties
32.5 miles**

This line was abandoned from Winford Junction to Columbus by the Illinois Central Gulf RR in 1976; the

remainder was abandoned in sections during the 1980s. It was built by the Mobile & Ohio RR; the first part in 1861, the second part was finished in 1880.

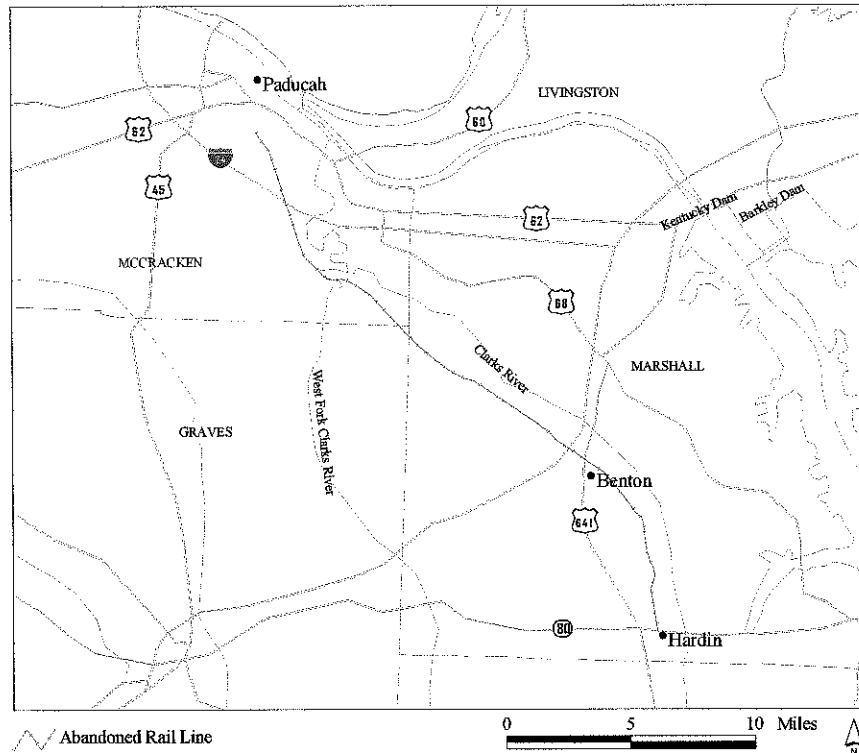
Much of the line follows fairly close to the Mississippi River – there are access points at Laketon and Columbus (among others). The line provides connection to

Belmont State Park at Columbus, Westvaco Wildlife Management Area, and several creeks and bayous. It intersects in several places with the Mississippi River Trail, a designated on-road bicycle pathway. The right of way also passes through Cayce, the boyhood home of railroad legend Casey Jones.

Many parts of the right of way are intact and used as local roads or informal ATV pathways. Some parts have been absorbed by neighboring property owners and are built on by farmsites or mobile homes.

At the time of the abandonment of the first section in the late 1970s there was local and state interest in conversion to a recreational trail (mentioned in 1978 State Rail Plan), but apparently a trail project was never completed.

Map 5.4: Hardin to Paducah



National Wildlife Refuge Trail in Benton



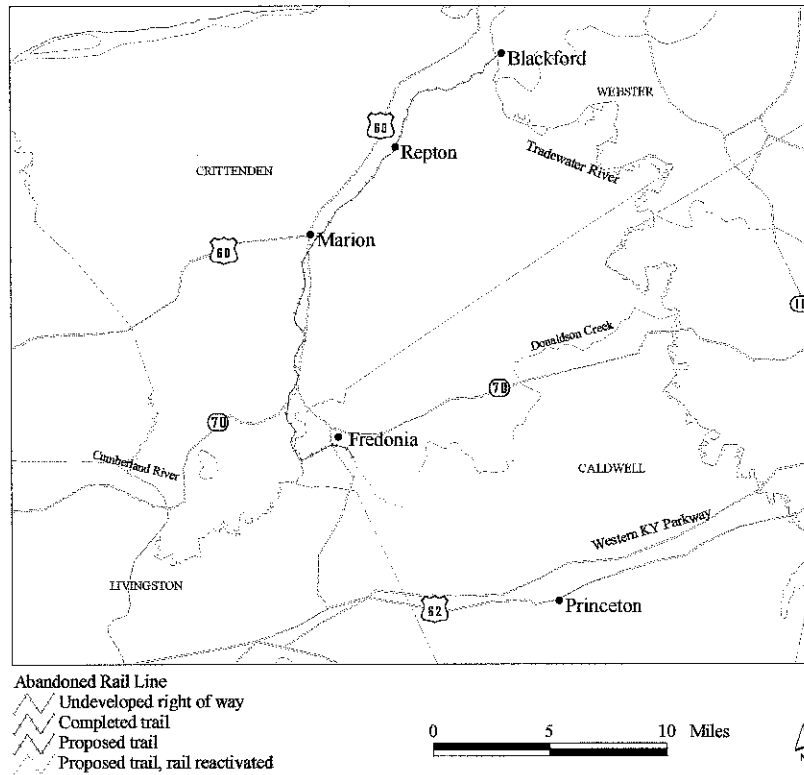
3. Hardin to Paducah Marshall and McCracken Counties 27.6 miles

The line from Hardin to Paducah was abandoned in the early 1980s by Seaboard/CSXT, but spent most of its life run by the Louisville & Nashville RR. It

was built in 1890 as the Paducah, Tennessee & Alabama RR. At the southern end, the line connects to trackage owned by the Hardin Southern RR which runs excursion trains. Several passenger cars and a caboose are stored on the end of the tracks in Hardin. The line travels through quite rural areas – Benton is the only town along the way. The

highlight of the line is the National Wildlife Refuge in the valley of the East Fork of Clarks River. The line passes through several areas of river valley, forest, marshes, and swamps. In addition it is very near the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. In Benton a section of the line is already designated a non-motorized path and there are other sections of the line in the NWR that are marked as trail. Elsewhere there are signs that the line is used as an ATV or 4x4 track. Most of the line is intact and clear or somewhat vegetated. In a few areas the line is undetectable or obliterated, particularly in an area of recent construction on the north side of Benton.

Map 5.5: Blackford to Fredonia



Right of way in Marion



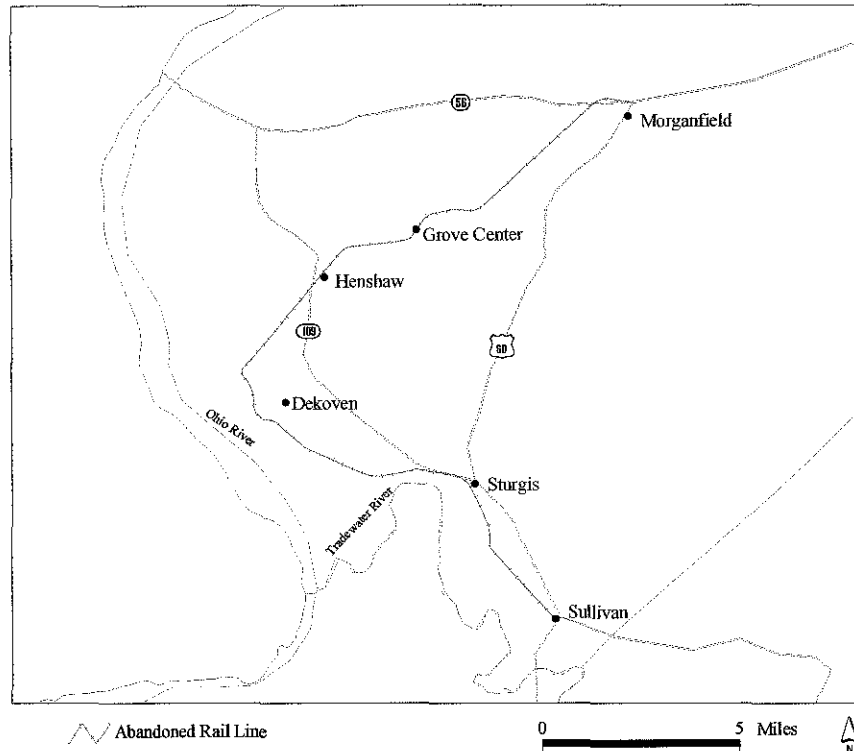
4. Blackford to Fredonia Crittenden and Caldwell Counties 28 miles

The line from Blackford to Princeton was probably built in 1886-1887 by the Ohio Valley RR, though it appears that during or shortly after construction the Illinois Central RR assumed ownership of the line. It remained in the ICRR family until the 1980s when the ICRR abandoned and sold much of its Kentucky trackage. Tradewater Railway operated the line for a time and at its abandonment in 1996, Western Kentucky Rail Lines was operating the line. In 1998 the

section from Fredonia to Princeton was reactivated as the Fredonia Valley Railway to serve a quarry just south of Fredonia. In 2001 a short segment of track was re-abandoned between Fredonia and the quarry. The line between the quarry and Princeton remains active, though it is unclear how often the line sees use or if it may be abandoned in the future. Portions of this original rail line south of Princeton were abandoned recently and there may be some potential for connection or extension through the future abandonment of the Fredonia Valley Railway or through a rail with trail initiative.

In Blackford there is a community effort to save and restore the steel railroad bridge over the Tradewater River for pedestrian and bicycle use. This project is currently in the planning and fundraising stage, and construction is expected to begin in 2003. The line south of the Tradewater River passes through a quail hunting preserve. In this area and south from here the right of way is clear and graveled – it appears to be used informally by pedestrians and off-road vehicles. Between Marion and Fredonia a trail has been proposed. The line is mostly clear in this section, much of it is grassy and many parts are tree-lined. Railroad crossing signs and signals remain at two crossings in Marion. In Fredonia a small section of the rail line has been included in a community walking path. The rest of the path is routed on sidewalks. At the trail head by the abandoned right of way is a small parking area, signs, and a bench. This line provides access to the residential neighborhoods and commercial areas of small communities, and a park and athletic field in Marion.

Map 5.6: Morganfield to Sullivan



Right of way near Dekoven and River



5. Morganfield to Sullivan Union County 24 miles

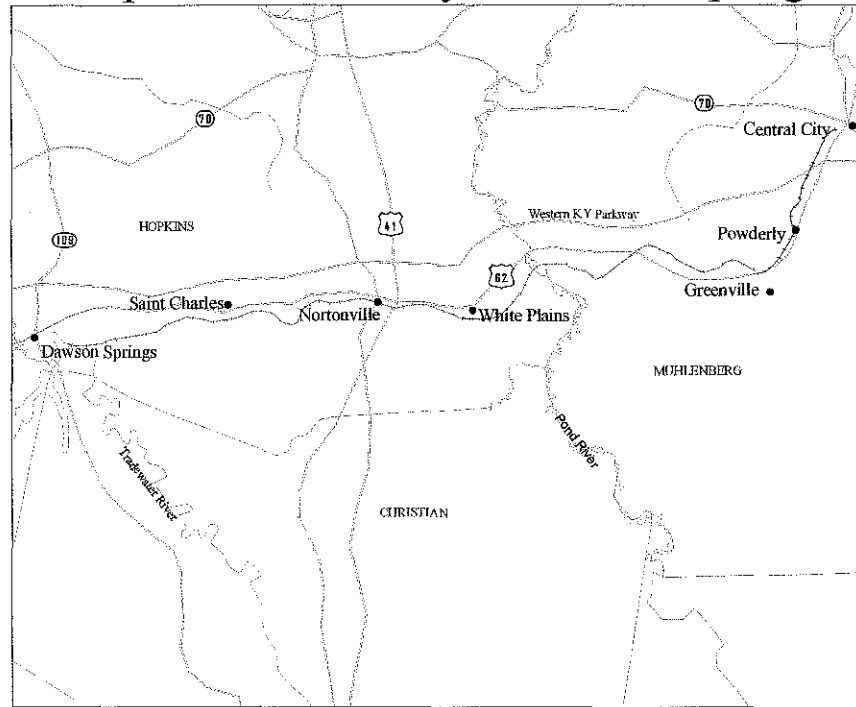
The line from Morganfield to Sullivan was built around the turn of the Twentieth Century by the Illinois Central RR. It stayed in the ICRR family until the early 1980s when the ICRR sold off most of its Kentucky lines. A large portion of these lines became the Paducah & Louisville RY, but this line from

Morganfield to Sullivan was abandoned by ICRR and reactivated by Western Kentucky Rail Lines. It was then re-abandoned by WKRL in the late 1990s. Because of its recent abandonment, much of the line remains in excellent condition.

A few portions have been reused as auto roads, though none have been paved. These areas are in the town of Morganfield and along the Mississippi River floodplain and wildlife area near Dekoven. Other sections of the line remain in clear condition and see informal use by pedestrians and off road vehicles. In addition to the natural areas, the right of way provides access to several small towns and villages and their residential and commercial areas.

Morganfield and Sturgis still have their depots. In Morganfield it is a stucco combination depot that now houses a few businesses. The wooden depot in Sturgis recently suffered damage from a fire – about half of the structure is still standing. There are also two pre-fab concrete railroad telephone booths left along the line, one in Morganfield and one near Dekoven. Sturgis has a short section of another abandoned right of way that has been paved as a trail and is associated with the town's elementary school, which is nearby. The Morganfield-Sullivan line does not connect directly, but it is not far from the finished trail.

Map 5.7: Central City to Dawson Springs



Abandoned Rail Line
 Undeveloped Right of Way
 Completed Trail



Right of way near Ilsley



**6. Central City to Dawson Springs
 Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties
 36.2 miles**

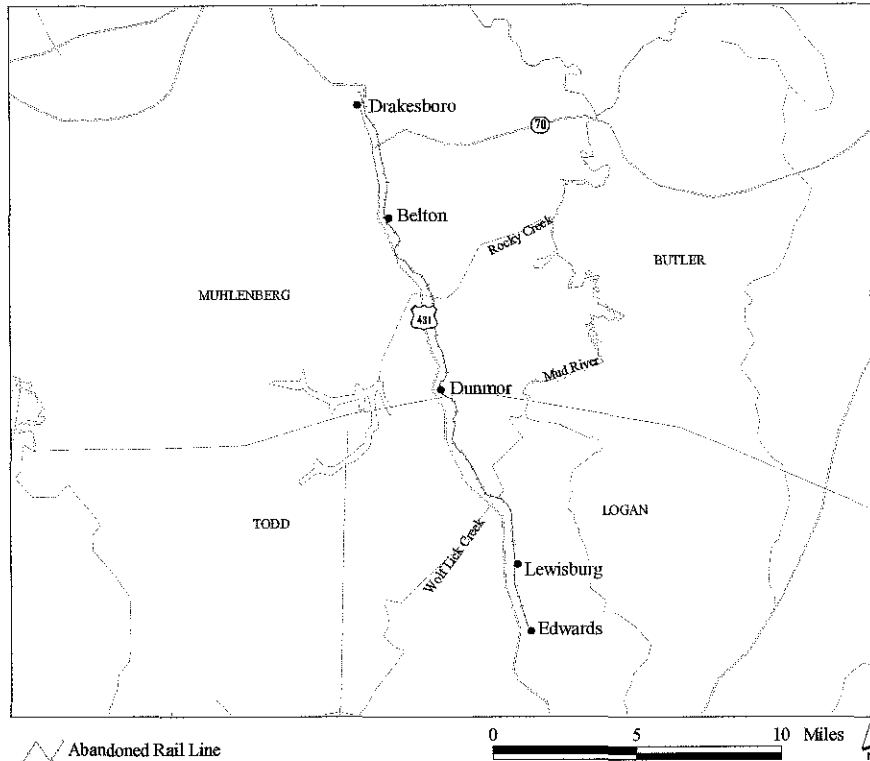
This line began its life as the Elizabethtown & Paducah RR, built in 1869. Later it was absorbed into the Illinois Central RR system and remained there until the mid-1980s when it became a part of the regional shortline Paducah & Louisville RR. The portion between Central City and Greenville was

abandoned by the P&L in 1996. Through the interest and initiative of Muhlenberg County Judge Executive Rodney Kirtley and local residents, this section became a successful rails to trails project.

West of Greenville the line was abandoned in 1997. Most of this line is in excellent condition – either used informally as ATV or non-motorized trails or lying unused and somewhat overgrown. It passes through some lovely natural areas, but also through some recently abandoned strip mine areas that are in varying stages of reclamation. There is a small completed trail in the town of White Plains. This project is about 1.5 miles long and is paved.

The line continues to be in excellent and clear condition as it goes west. The westernmost portion was the most recently abandoned in 2001 (between Ilsley and Dawson Springs). There is a proposal for a trail in the Ilsley area, but there does not seem to be any progress there yet. The rails and ties have been removed to Ilsley and the large crushed stone ballast remains. The right of way is still free from vegetation. From Ilsley to Dawson Springs the rails remain on the ground. Near Dawson Springs the line passes near the Pennyrile State Forest and through some very scenic woodland and marsh areas.

Map 5.8: Drakesboro to Edwards



Right of way near Dunmor



7. Drakesboro to Edwards Muhlenberg and Logan Counties 20.9 miles

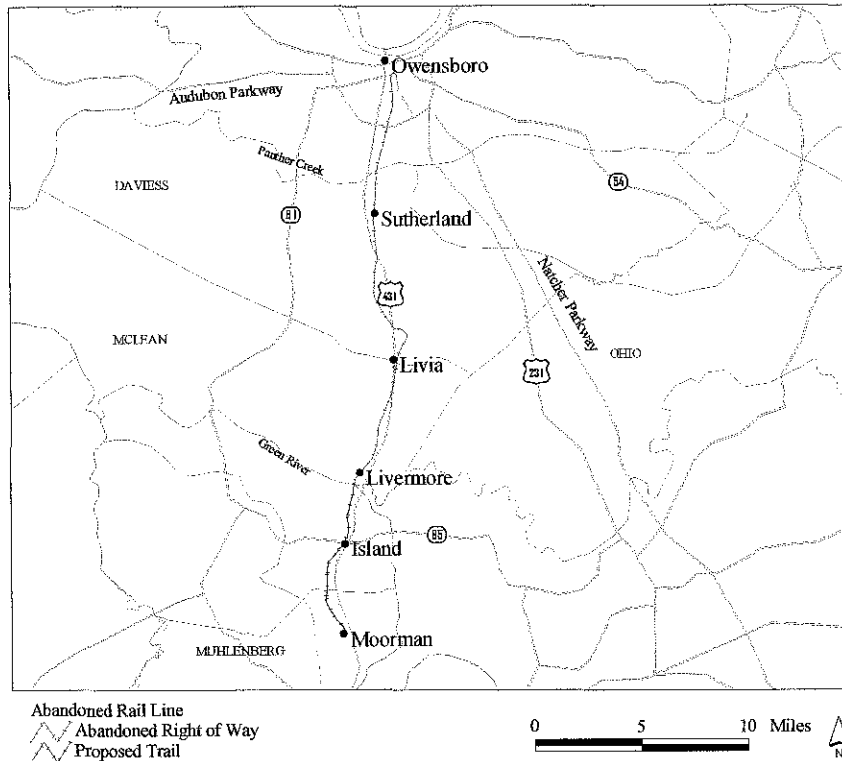
This line was recently abandoned by CSXT, but spent most of its life in the Louisville & Nashville RR family. It was built between 1871 and 1883, a portion of the Owensboro & Russellville RR that ran between its namesake cities.

The abandoned line begins on the north in the small town of Drakesboro and continues south through a few small towns and villages. In Beechmont it passes directly behind the local school and in Lewisburg it passes the

classic block-long commercial district that faces the right of way. At the southern terminus of the abandoned section there is a large aluminum plant that is rail served.

Most of the right of way is intact and in clear or only slightly overgrown condition. We did not observe any bridges that had been left in place, but none of the crossings were very long. Long sections of the line pass through heavily wooded areas and most intact sections are tree lined. The line parallels Highway 431 for its entire length, so there is convenient access. A tunnel remains north of Lewisburg, but its condition is unknown.

Map 5.9: Owensboro to Moorman



Park and caboose at former depot site in Livermore



8. Owensboro to Livermore (Livermore to Moorman already proposed to be a trail)
Daviess, McLean, and Muhlenberg Counties
20.6 miles

This former Louisville & Nashville line ran from Owensboro to Moorman where it joined an east-west line of the

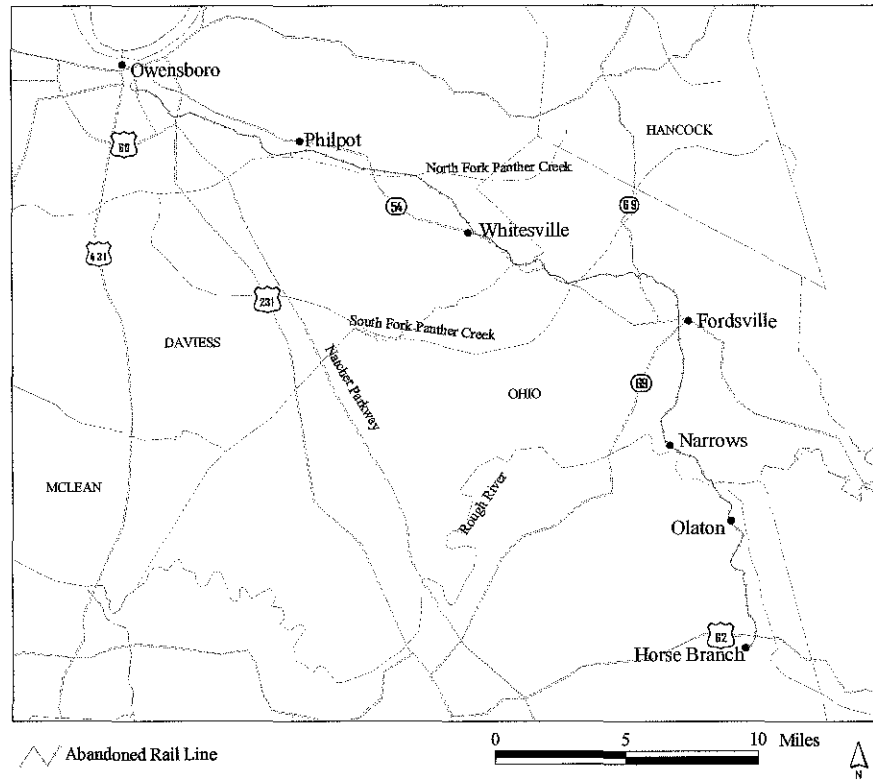
L&N. It was built in 1871 as the Owensboro and Russellville RR and abandoned to Livermore in 1984. The portion from Livermore to Moorman was abandoned in 2000 by CSXT and was proposed for trail use. The line was going through railbanking procedures and there are still rails and ties on the ground here.

Between Owensboro and Livermore the line is almost completely intact. A few sections have been obliterated by new construction (particularly in Owensboro) and some sections have been used by adjacent property owners (it has been absorbed into a salvage yard at one spot). The rest is mainly clear right of way with limited vegetation growing over it. Some sections have been mowed and maintained because they share a right of way and ditch with county roads.

In Livermore, the right of way is mostly intact, though it disappears in and out of yards in some places as it has been reclaimed by neighbors. At the site of the former depot a small park has been developed that includes a restored caboose and short walking path. At the river there is another park with a picnic shelter and a pier remaining from the original railroad bridge that was dismantled at abandonment. There are steps and an overlook platform at the top of the pier along with interpretive signs.

If trails were developed on the portion south of the river and north of the river a new bridge would be necessary to join them because the railroad bridge is gone and the highway bridge has no shoulders or sidewalks.

Map 5.10: Owensboro to Horse Branch



Caboose at park in Whitesville



9. Owensboro to Fordsville to Horse Branch Daviess and Ohio Counties 40.4 miles

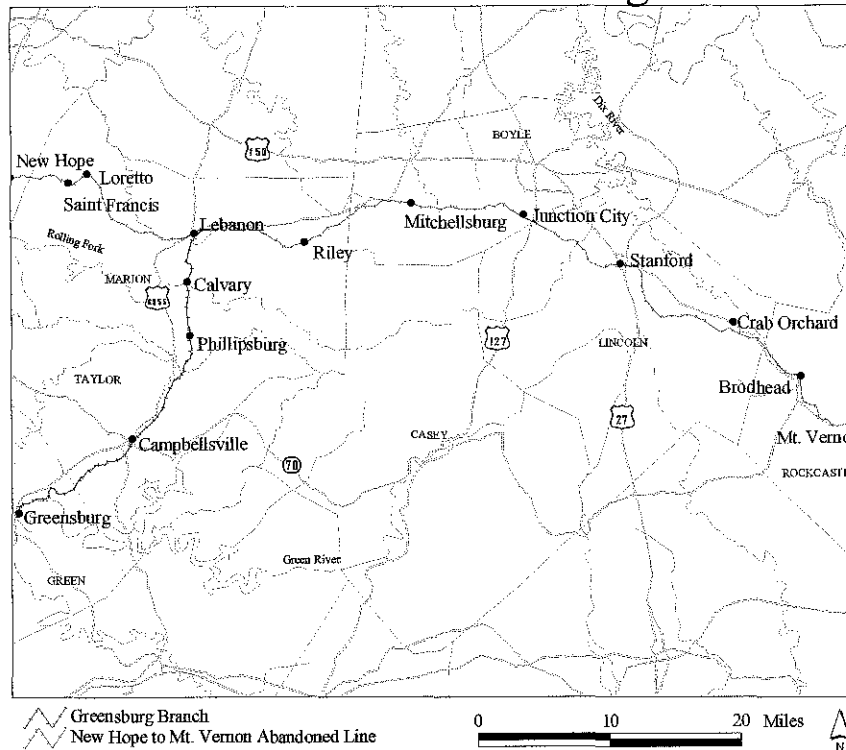
This line was abandoned by Illinois Central RR in the early 1980s. It connects Owensboro to smaller towns including Whitesville, Fordsville, and Horse Branch

and several other villages. The right of way is almost completely intact and in many places the bridges are still standing.

In Owensboro the right of way passes through neighborhoods and subdivisions. For a short while the line is part of the Owensboro Parks Greenbelt trail on the east edge

of the city. The abandoned line is adjacent to a park in Whitesville that has a caboose and a picnic shelter. In Fordsville the right of way passes the Louisville & Nashville depot that has been restored as a museum. Fordsville was a railroad junction town and the L&N line is also abandoned. Though much of this L&N line has been reused as a road, it has low levels of auto traffic (many miles of it are gravel) and is suitable as a bicycle route. These lines connect downtown Fordsville to the school and athletic fields as well as industrial and residential areas. The abandoned Illinois Central right of way ends in Horse Branch at the junction with an active rail line. Adjacent to the line is a park with ball fields, a picnic shelter, a caboose, and a short, paved trail. Between towns the line crosses many creeks and through a variety of agricultural and wooded landscapes.

Map 5.11: New Hope to Mt. Vernon and Lebanon to Greensburg



Depot and park in Stanford



10. New Hope to Stanford to Mt. Vernon Nelson, Marion, Boyle, Lincoln, Rockcastle Counties 77 miles

The former Louisville & Nashville RR's "Lebanon Branch" ran from Lebanon Junction in Bullitt County to near Mt. Vernon in Rockcastle County.

Construction of the branch began in 1857, reaching Lebanon in that year. The line was extended to Crab Orchard in 1866 and completed in 1868. Most of the line was abandoned in 1987. The portion from Stanford to Mt. Vernon was abandoned during the 1990s.

Most of the line is intact and in fairly clear condition. At the west, it connects with trackage of the Kentucky Railway Museum, headquartered in New Haven. KRM runs excursion trains from New Haven to Boston and owns the tracks to New Hope (a bridge in need of repair prevents using the tracks east of New Haven, though a fundraising campaign is underway to raise the money to repair the bridge – the tracks are otherwise maintained). The museum owns a large collection of historic passenger and freight cars and locomotives and these are stored along sidings from New Haven to Gethsemane.

Between New Hope and Stanford the line passes through a number of small towns that provide basic services and also a variety of interesting historic sites. These include churches in New Hope and St. Francis, and the Maker's Mark Distillery near Loretto. The largest town in this section is Lebanon, which has a restored downtown area with many historic buildings housing shops and restaurants. The railroad right of way passes one block behind the main street and is intact, being used as a parking area.

Between Lebanon and Stanford the rail line passes through several small towns along the border between the Outer Bluegrass and the Knobs. Just west of Stanford the line passes near the site of historic Fort Logan. Though presently undeveloped, there are plans in the county for developing this as a historic site. In Stanford, they have successfully restored the Louisville & Nashville RR depot as a museum and community center. Also at the depot site are a playground, picnic gazebo, restored caboose and maintenance of way car, and a short walking trail on the right of way. This area would make an excellent trail head – there is already ample parking and easy access to the services in downtown Stanford.

East of Stanford the line passes through what will become the new lake formed by the impoundment of Cedar Creek. This project was finished in 2002 and will provide boating, fishing, and other recreational opportunities. If a trail were to be developed, it would have to be rerouted from the original right of way, but it could be a vital part of this new recreational and natural area.

Just east of this lake is the historic William Whitley house. It is a state historic site and is open as a museum and park with a playground, picnic shelter, and restrooms. The line is intact and fairly clear as it passes this site.

Between the Whitley house and Mt. Vernon the line passes through a few small communities that offer restaurants, shops, and convenience stores. There are a number of creek crossings that offer lovely views, however the bridges have been removed.

Depot in Greensburg



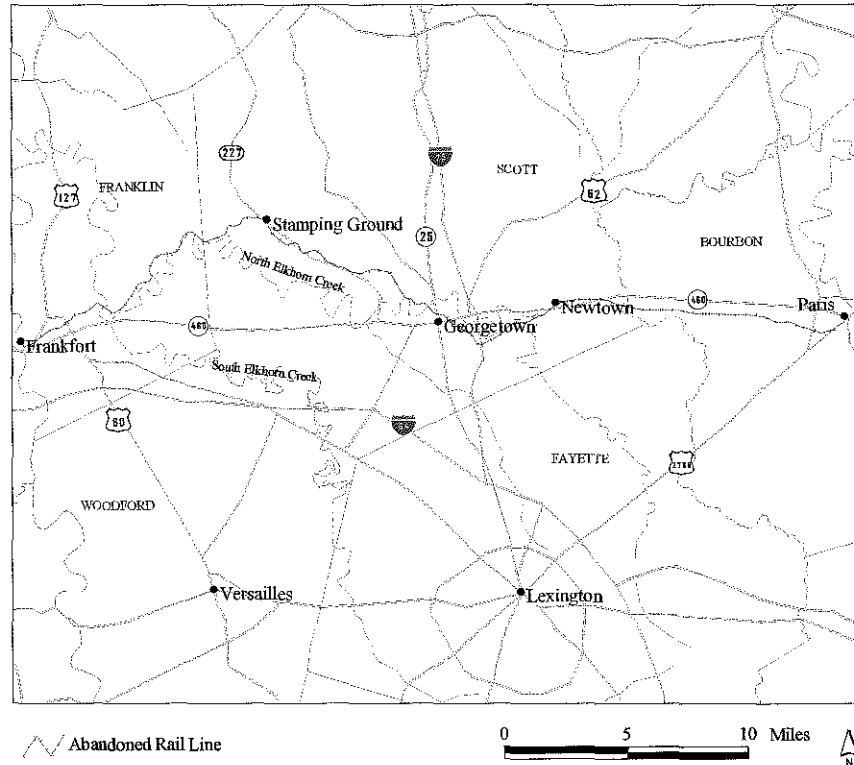
**11. Lebanon to Greensburg
Marion, Taylor, and Green Counties
30.4 miles**

This line, a branch off of the Louisville & Nashville's Lebanon Branch, was built in 1879 and abandoned 100 years later. The section from Greensburg to just south of Campbellsville was abandoned first in 1979 and the rest of the line was abandoned in the mid-1980s.

Most of the line is intact with conditions that vary between clear informal pathways and overgrown road bed. The right of way has been made into a street in downtown Campbellsville; there are a few other short sections used as local access roads in rural areas, but most sections do not see any car traffic.

There are two tunnels, one near Greensburg and the other near Campbellsville, but their statuses are unknown. The Greensburg depot was recently restored and the Campbellsville depot sees use by the police department and Boy Scouts. A unique pedestrian bridge connects the depot area to downtown Greensburg where there are several historic buildings and the courthouse square. This line makes a connection with another high value abandoned line in Lebanon and provides connection between several small towns and their schools, post offices, commercial, and residential areas.

Map 5.12: Frankfort to Georgetown to Paris



Right of way in downtown Frankfort



**12. Frankfort to Georgetown to Paris
Franklin, Scott, and Bourbon Counties
40 miles**

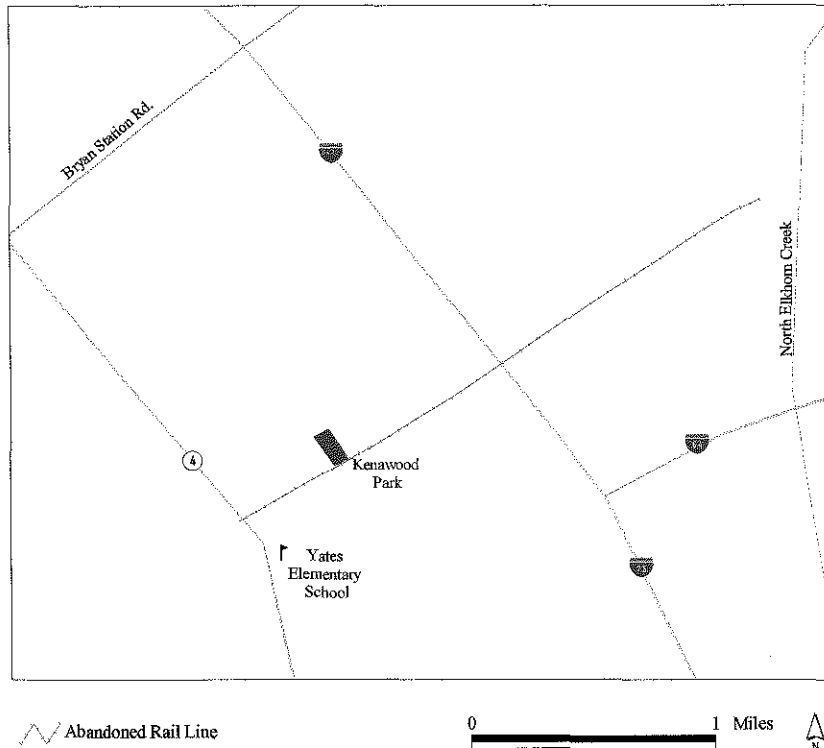
The line of the Frankfort and Cincinnati Railroad ran from Frankfort to Paris, where it connected with the mainline of the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific RR. It was nicknamed “The Whiskey Route” because of the number of distilleries it served along the way. Built in 1889-90, most of the route was abandoned in 1967 and the early 1970s. A small section of the line in Frankfort remained in service until the mid 1980s, serving one remaining distillery there. Sections of this line have been

obliterated by road and urban development, especially near Georgetown, but other sections remain completely intact. Except for a few sections that have been built over, the line from downtown Paris to Centerville is intact. It is a tree-lined embankment that passes through the small villages of Elizabeth Station and Centerville and travels through some of Kentucky's most picturesque horse farms. A railroad building, most likely the depot, remains in Elizabeth Station and the depot in Centerville is being used as a private residence. A section of the line is intact east of Georgetown and a metal bridge remains in place, but closer to Georgetown sections of the line have been built over or reused as private driveways.

West of Georgetown, much of the line remains intact, again lined thickly with trees. This portion of the line passes through Stamping Ground, which has interesting distillery building ruins, and through Switzer, home to the Switzer covered bridge.

East of Frankfort, some of the line has been obliterated from development, but most of it remains intact. This line passes near shopping areas, schools, a county recreation park, and residential neighborhoods and connects to downtown Frankfort near the tunnel (still in use). It is cut into the side of a steep bank as it makes its descent into downtown and is surrounded by thick wooded areas. The road bed in this area is mostly free from thick brush – the main barrier is a missing bridge over a deep creek valley. This line has great potential for local commuters, school children, recreational use, and for tourists wishing to visit Frankfort, other towns, Switzer Bridge, and the horse farms.

Map 5.13: New Circle Road to North Elkhorn Creek



Along the boundary of Kenwood Park
the ROW sees informal use



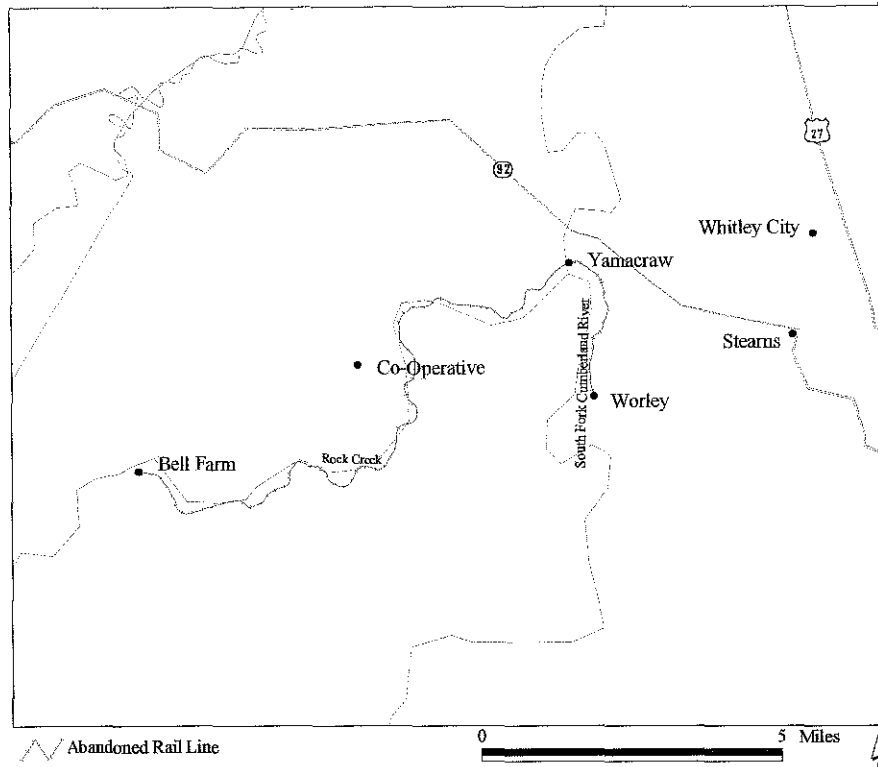
13. Lexington: New Circle Road to I-75, I-75 to North Elkhorn Creek Fayette County 2.5 miles

This short section of abandoned line was once part of the original Louisville and Nashville RR line to Winchester, the rest of which is still the current active CSXT line. It was abandoned when it became redundant and traffic was rerouted to an essentially parallel line just to the north.

Between New Circle Road and just past Kenawood Park the line is intact and tree lined. The right of way is grassy with some overgrowth and deadfall. It is on an embankment that runs between yards and divides neighborhoods. The rail line becomes the boundary of Kenawood Park and would provide an effective link between neighborhoods, the park, commercial areas, and possibly Yates Elementary School as well. The school is quite near the line but not directly on it.

Between Kenawood Park and I-75 only parts of the right of way remain intact. Some of it has been built on by garages and sheds and in other places the space is clear, but the embankment and trees have been removed. On the east side of I-75 the rail bed is still intact and tree lined. The embankment is quite high at Hume Road and there is evidence of an overpass that used to cross over the road, though no bridge remains. At the northern terminus the line connects to an active rail line. Nearby is the southern terminus of another abandoned Louisville and Nashville RR line that ran from Paris and was abandoned in the 1950s.

Map 5.14: Worley to Bell Farm



Tracks left near Worley



14. Worley to Yamacraw to Bell Farm McCreary County 14.2 miles

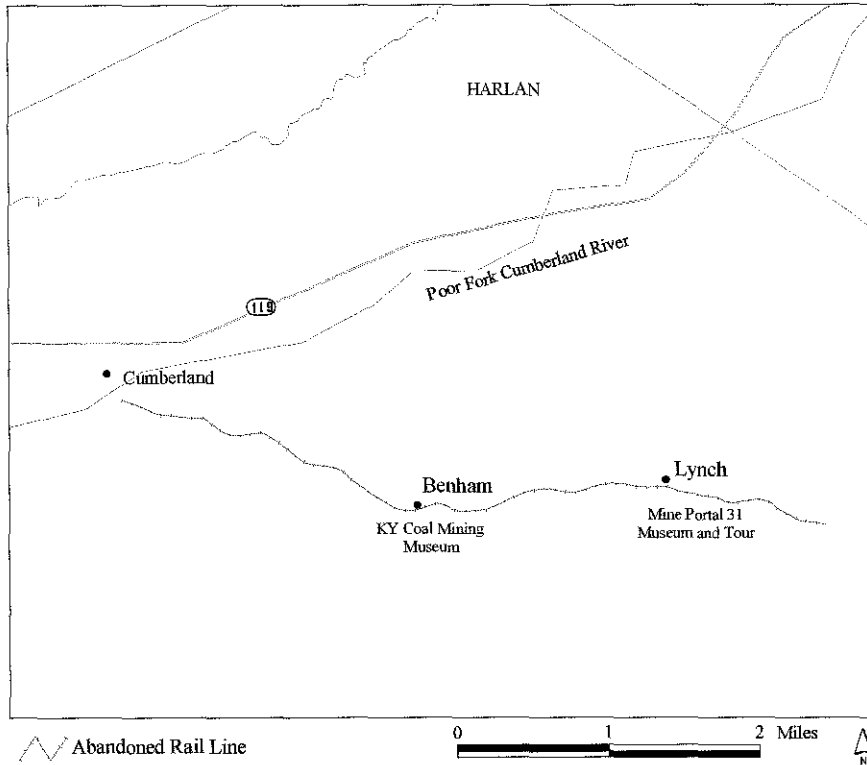
This line was constructed to serve the mines and lumber operations of the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company around 1900. It is well suited for trail development because it is mostly within the property of the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Big South Fork National River Recreation Area. It begins at a point near Worley. The south end of this section is part of the BSF Scenic Railway which brings trains from Stearns to Blue Heron, but there are rails on the ground until about a mile past Worley. It is unclear where the point of active use of the rails

ends, but at Worley they are warped, buckled, and washed out so it is clear these are no longer maintained. The ownership of the right of way that contains rails is also unclear, though according to maps from the National Forest, it lies completely within the boundaries of the national recreation area. The actual tracks may be owned by the Kentucky & Tennessee RR, which runs the BSF scenic railway.

At Worley there are the remains of the coal processing facility, tipple, and conveyor bridge across the river. North of Worley there is at least one foundation visible from a former home or industrial building. Near the bridge at Yamacraw there are no longer rails on the ground (there are ties embedded in the grass for a while) but the right of way is clear and wide and appears to be mown regularly. The concrete bridge at Yamacraw was built in 1907 and is still in remarkably good condition. The span is ballasted and covered with grass – there are no holes and it is safe to walk on, except for the lack of guard rails. West of the bridge, the condition is not as clear. Parts of it are grassy and run next to the road, while others are more overgrown and cross over to the other side of the creek from the road. It appears though that aside from some erosion, the bed is intact in these places. Just west of Yamacraw Bridge, there is a remaining concrete coaling tower or tipple structure.

Between White Oak Junction and Bell farm the line is used as a gravel auto road. While there is little opportunity for this to be converted to a dedicated non-motorized trail, it has very little traffic and would be well suited for hiking and biking and passes through some very scenic areas and along creeks. South of Bell Farm it appears that the line continues as a road through the National Forest and NRRA and connects with other hiking trails in the area. The line connects with the Sheltopee Trace trail near Yamacraw

Map 5.15: Cumberland to Benham and Lynch



Depot and rail cars in Lynch



15. Cumberland to Benham and Lynch Harlan County 5 miles

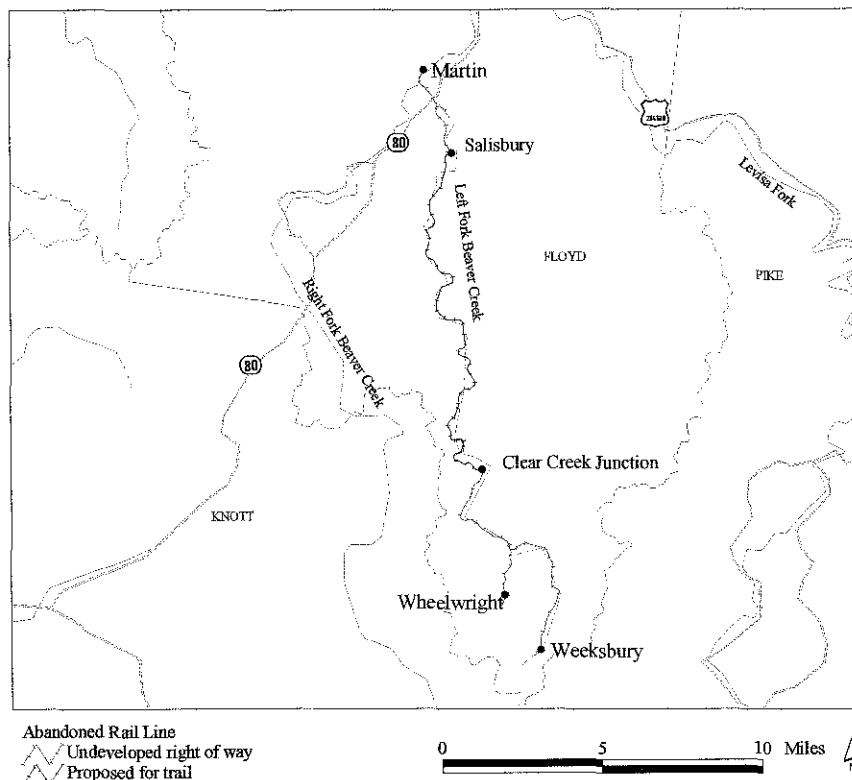
This line was begun first by the Looney Creek RR to open up mines in the Looney Creek Valley and to develop the towns of Benham and Lynch; the Louisville and Nashville assumed ownership early in the line's history. The railroad was opened to Benham in 1911 and Lynch in 1918. Benham was a company town developed by the International Harvester company and Lynch was developed by US Coal and Coke, a subsidiary of US Steel. At the time it was built, Lynch was the largest coal camp in the

world. There remain extensive remnants of the mining industry and company town landscape. Many of the original company houses are intact as well as some company offices, coal processing facilities, and schools. Portal 31 Museum is open in a former lamp house and conducts tours inside a former coal mine. Various mining equipment is on display here as well as a caboose and locomotive at the refurbished Louisville & Nashville depot. Some rails remain on the ground here between the coal processing plant and the depot. In Benham, a former company store houses a coal mining museum and the former school houses a bed and breakfast. This town is also an exceptional example of a model coal company town. A small section of the right of way has been paved behind the mining museum in Benham and it is part of a park area.

The line was abandoned in 1996 and still intact, with some overgrowth. There is great potential for a trail here for a number of reasons. The first is the prior tourism/historic preservation developments. A trail connecting these sites would further complement them and could be an additional avenue for historic interpretation. The second is that the line is in quite good shape and would require minimal reconstruction. The third reason is that it would connect the two smaller towns of Benham and Lynch to Cumberland with a safe, off-road transportation corridor. Cumberland is home to the area's schools, community college, and virtually all commercial activity. Currently there is a narrow sidewalk leading most of the way from Cumberland to Lynch, but it follows closely along the road. A pathway on the railroad right of way would provide a safe path for children and trips to stores and civic amenities.

Surface Transportation Board records indicate that the abandoning railroad company, CSXT, was asked to delay disposing of the line until historic preservation

Map 5.16: Martin to Wheelwright



Tunnel near Orkney



16. Martin to Wheelwright Floyd County 13.4 miles

The line from Salisbury to Clear Creek Junction was officially abandoned by CSXT in 2003, but had been unused for many years, even though rails were still on the ground. The newly abandoned section

is part of a line that ran from Martin to Wheelwright and Weeksbury. The branch to Wheelwright has been abandoned for many years while the Weeksbury branch was abandoned more recently. There are still rails on the ground from Martin to Clear Creek

Junction and it would appear that the section north of Salisbury has not been officially abandoned, though portions of it are in poor condition and the rails have been severed. This line was built in 1916 to serve mines and was a Chesapeake and Ohio RY line until becoming part of the Chessie System and then the CSXT family. Wheelwright was a model company town built by the Inland Steel Company and many of its original buildings remain including company and community offices, the company store, housing, and mine portals.

There were several tunnels along the northern part of this line. One remains open and is in the newly abandoned section. This tunnel was constructed as an unlined bore and is in quite good condition with very little roof fall or drainage problems. A second tunnel has been sealed with concrete block, a third was obliterated when a hill was cleared for a new school football field, and the status of the fourth is unknown. Several steel bridges remain in good condition along the line.

Much of the line runs through quite rural area but it is parallel to the highway so there are many houses and a few businesses adjacent to the rail line. The section abandoned in 2003 is currently under Negotiations for Interim Trail Use with the railroad; Floyd County is sponsoring the negotiation effort.

Appendix B

Status of Trail Projects in Kentucky

Note: Some of these proposed trails may now be in progress; others have been cancelled. This information is based on the KY Rails to Trails Council website, <http://www.kyrailtrail.org/local.html>.

Finished trails:

- Cadiz Trail
- Wingo Trail
- Sturgis Trail
- Uniontown Trail
- Benton National Wildlife Refuge Trail
- Cathy Crockett Memorial Trail (northern part)
- Muhlenberg Rail Trail
- White Plains Trail
- Louisville Riverwalk (part is rail trail)

In Progress trails:

- Brighton East Rail Trail
- Cathy Crockett Memorial Trail (southern part)
- Winchester
- Mt. Sterling
- Morehead
- Oldham County Interurban Greenway
- Pineville to Pine Mountain State Resort Park

Proposed trails:

Wild Turkey Trail	Evarts to Woods
Bullitt County Rail-with-Trail*	St. Charles to Ilesley
Blackford Pedestrian Bridge*	Wilmore to Highbridge Trail
Marion to Princeton	Madison County Wetlands Trail
South Elkhorn Rail with Trail	Moorman-Island Trail
Frankfort Trail	Salisbury to Clear Creek Junction
Leavell Tunnel	Casey County Kings Mountain
Elizabethtown Trail	Trail
Loyall Trail	
Benham-Lynch Trail*	* has received some funding

Appendix C

Resources and contact information

Surface Transportation Board

New Federal agency that has taken over duties formerly held by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Website contains recent abandonment information and posts new notices and decisions weekly.

Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Number for General information:
(202) 565-1674

Website: www.stb.dot.gov

Interstate Commerce Commission

The archival records from the ICC are housed at the National Archives and Records Administration, though some records are available online or in local libraries' archives.

The National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

(866) 272-6272 (toll free)

Website: www.archives.gov

Kentucky Rails to Trails Council

Promotes and supports trail development in Kentucky.

Kentucky Rails to Trails Council
P. O. Box 597
Lexington, KY 40588-0597

Chair:
Robert Strosnider
118 Churchill Dr.
Winchester, KY 40391
(859) 744-0019

Website: www.kyrailtrail.org

Rails to Trails Conservancy

National organization that provides leadership, assistance, advocacy, and funding for rails to trails projects across the United States.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
1100 17th Street, 10th Floor, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 331-9696 (main reception line)

Website: www.railtrails.org

Kentucky Historical Society

Research library contains a variety of resources relating to railroad history.

Kentucky History Center
Special Collections
100 W. Broadway
Frankfort, KY 40601-4701

(502) 564-1792

Website: www.kyhistory.org

University of Kentucky Library and Special Collections

Library contains many primary and secondary sources relating to Kentucky and US railroad and local history.

Website: www.uky.edu/Libraries/

Main Library
William T. Young Library
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-0500

Map Collection
Gwenn Curtis, Director
4th Floor King Library South
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-1853

Special Collections and Archives
2nd Floor King Library South
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-8611

Kentucky Rail Trail contacts

State Rail Trail Coordinator
Lee Creech
Department for Local Government
1024 Capital Center Dr., Ste. 340
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 573-2512
(800) 346-5606

Coordinator for Bicycle/Pedestrian Programs
Paula Nye
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
501 High Street
Frankfort, KY 40622
(502) 564-4890

Bluegrass Rails to Trails Foundation
Robin Reams
266 White Station Rd.
Berea, KY 40403

Daniel Boone Rails to Trails Foundation
April Haight
105 E. Main St.
Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 784-5989

Greenways for Oldham County
P.O. Box 868
Crestwood, KY 40014

Lake Cumberland Trail Foundation
Rick Bates
2292 South Hwy. 27, Ste. 310
Somerset, KY 42501
(606) 677-6000

Little Mount Trail Commission (Mt. Sterling)
Lisa Browning
51 North Maysville
Mt. Sterling, KY 40353

Muhlenberg Rails to Trails
Rodney Kirtley
Judge Executive
P.O. Box 137
Greenville, KY 42345

Rails to Trails Conservancy Resources

These are all available for download as PDFs at <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org/> in the “Technical Assistance” section. Many other resources on trail planning and maintenance are available at this site.

Rail Trails and Community Sentiments

Rail Trails and Safe Communities

Rail-Trails and Liability: A Primer on Trail-Related Liability Issues and Risk Management Techniques

Rails-with-Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Rail Lines

Secrets of Successful Rail Trails

Acquiring Rail Corridors

Tunnels on Trails

Rail-Trail Maintenance: Preparing for the Future of Your Trail

The Promise of Pathways

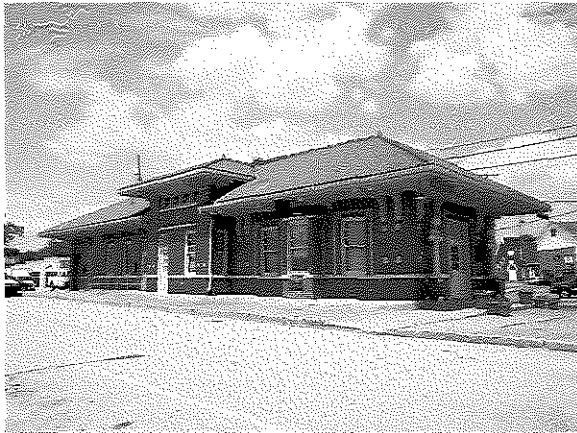
The Road to a Cleaner Environment: How to Use Highway Funds to Enhance Water Quality, Wetlands, and Habitat Connections

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



Rails on the ground in Lynch, Harlan County



Depot in Eminence, Henry County



Weedy right of way near Island, Muhlenburg County

The purpose of the Abandoned Railroad Corridor Inventory Project was to map and inventory Kentucky's abandoned railroad network and analyze the suitability of each corridor in regard to future trail reuse. This analysis was to ascertain the land ownership status and the dates of abandonment of the abandoned segments. The physical integrity of corridors was to be noted as well. This relates to the presence or absence of railroad structures such as bridges, tunnels, and culverts that may be useful in future trail development.

These objectives were to be accomplished through gathering information to create a thorough GIS database of alignments of all abandoned railroad of all types including common carriers and private lines. The future trail potential of abandoned railroad rights of way was to be assessed with information on ownership, connectivity to other railbeds, nearness to population centers, proximity to parks and forests, and access to natural and historic features, as well as connection to civic and cultural amenities and commercial services.

The results of this study will help existing rails to trails organizations, such as Kentucky Rails to Trails Council, expand their effort into new areas, identify new lines with trail potential, and assist local community trail initiatives with projects. Local groups, elected officials or interested individuals will also find the report useful in identifying abandoned rail resources in their area.

The GIS database created through this study is intended to be compatible with the State Rail Plan that focuses on active rail lines. These two studies can be used together to show a complete picture of Kentucky's rail network, past and present. The database is designed to be added to and maintained as future abandonments occur and as more

CHAPTER 2

KENTUCKY'S RAILROAD HISTORY IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT

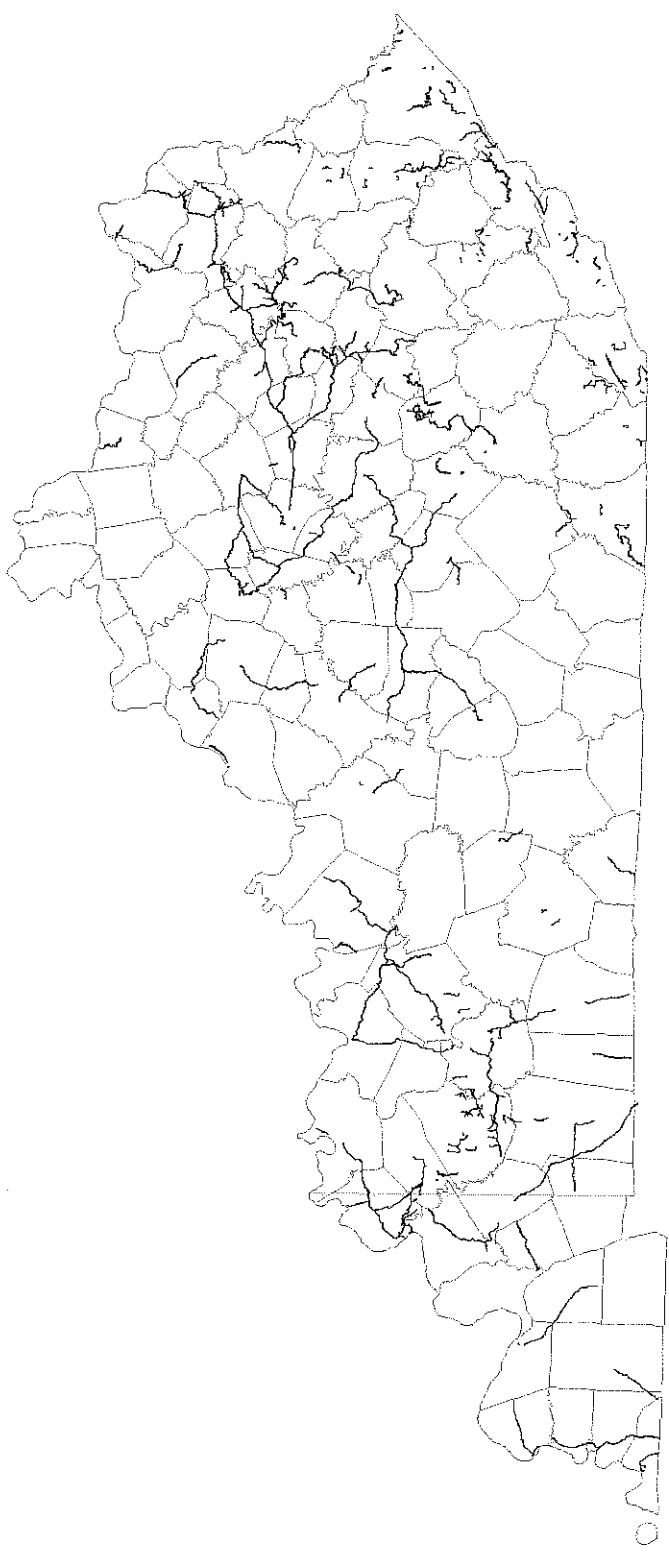


End of the line in Carter County



Former crossing near Greenville

Map 2.1: Kentucky's Abandoned Railroads

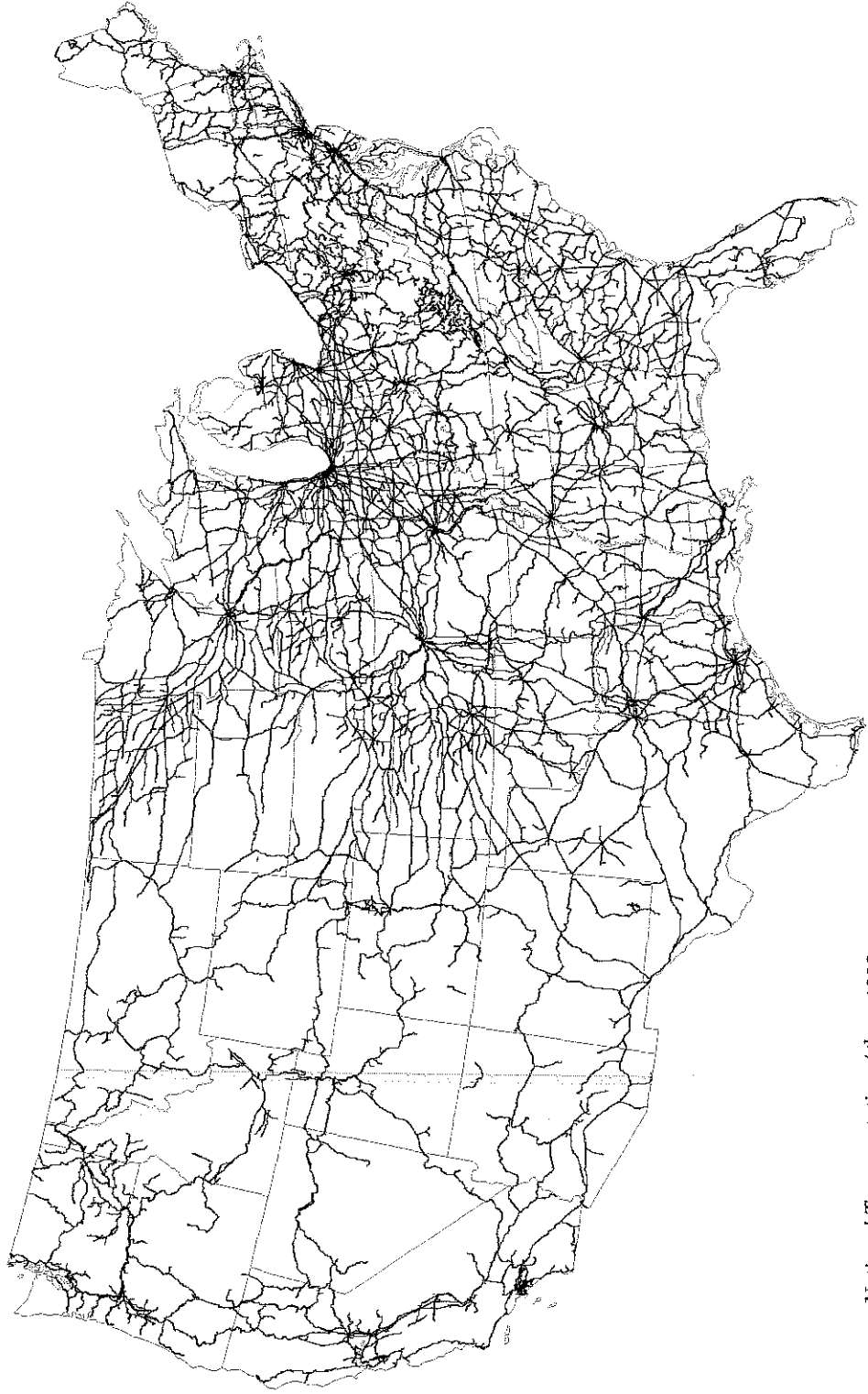


Kentucky has a network of abandoned common carrier mainlines, narrow gauge logging railroads, and short lived spurs that served coal mines. There are lines that were abandoned over 100 years ago and lines that are undergoing the process of abandonment today. Kentucky railroad mileage peaked in 1930 at over 4,000 miles (Sulzer 1998). As of 2000, the state had approximately 2,800 miles of track (Wilbur Smith Associates 2002). Rail mileage peaked in the nation at 254,000 miles in 1916, had dropped to 130,000 by 1995, and now stands at around 120,000 miles of track served by Class I railroads (Schweiteman 2002, Association of American Railroads 2002).

While rail lines were abandoned during every decade since the first lines were built, there were certain eras that stand out with more abandonments. Between 1930 and 1945, 500 miles of railroad were abandoned in the state, twelve percent of the total mileage (Sulzer 1998). During the Depression years many railroad companies in Kentucky became unprofitable and failed. The need for scrap metal during the years of WWII spurred the salvage of functionally abandoned or otherwise marginal lines. The war brought a short-lived increase in business and prosperity for railroads but steady decline returned shortly after it ended.

This activity coincided with the rise in automobile and truck use in the U.S., as more areas became accessible by car and more goods began to be shipped by truck. It is debatable how primary the influence of the auto was on the demise of railroads. Railroad abandonment is a product of a wide array of variables that changed in importance over time and from place to place. These variables related to poor management of the railroad companies, labor issues, changes in markets affecting shippers, burdensome regulation, initial over-construction, and unequal government subsidies to other modes of travel (Black 1975).

Map 2.2:
U.S. Railroad Network, 1996



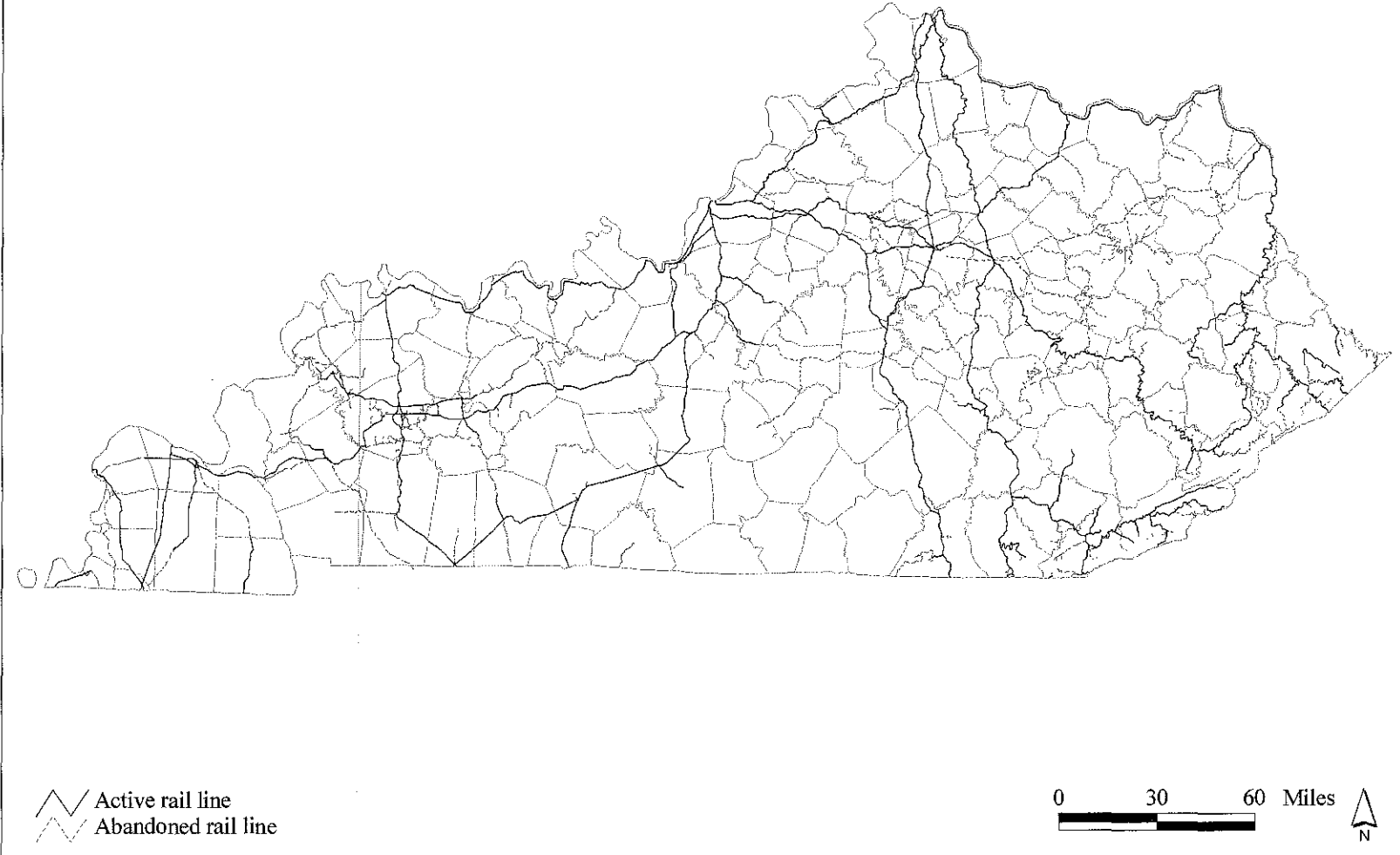
Source: *National Transportation Atlas, 1998*

Louisiana	5223	2753	47%
Massachusetts	2106	1071	49%
Maryland	1472	760	48%
Maine	2295	1202	48%
Michigan	8734	3699	58%
Minnesota	9114	4504	51%
Missouri	8117	4168	49%
Mississippi	4369	2613	40%
Montana	5072	3293	35%
North Carolina	5522	3251	41%
North Dakota	5311	3795	29%
Nebraska	6166	3480	44%
New Hampshire	1252	437	65%
New Jersey	2352	922	60%
New Mexico	2972	1966	34%
Nevada	2160	1199	44%
New York	8390	3788	55%
Ohio	9002	5484	39%
Oklahoma	6572	3286	50%
Oregon	3305	2334	29%
Pennsylvania	11551	5145	55%
Rhode Island	211	102	52%
South Carolina	3814	2367	38%
South Dakota	4276	1768	59%
Tennessee	4078	2682	34%
Texas	16125	10473	35%
Utah	2161	1443	33%
Virginia	4703	3262	31%
Vermont	1077	600	44%
Washington	5587	3145	44%
Washington, D.C.	n/a	25	n/a
Wisconsin	7554	3478	54%
West Virginia	3996	2433	39%
Wyoming	1931	1904	1%

2001 data from Association of American Railroads

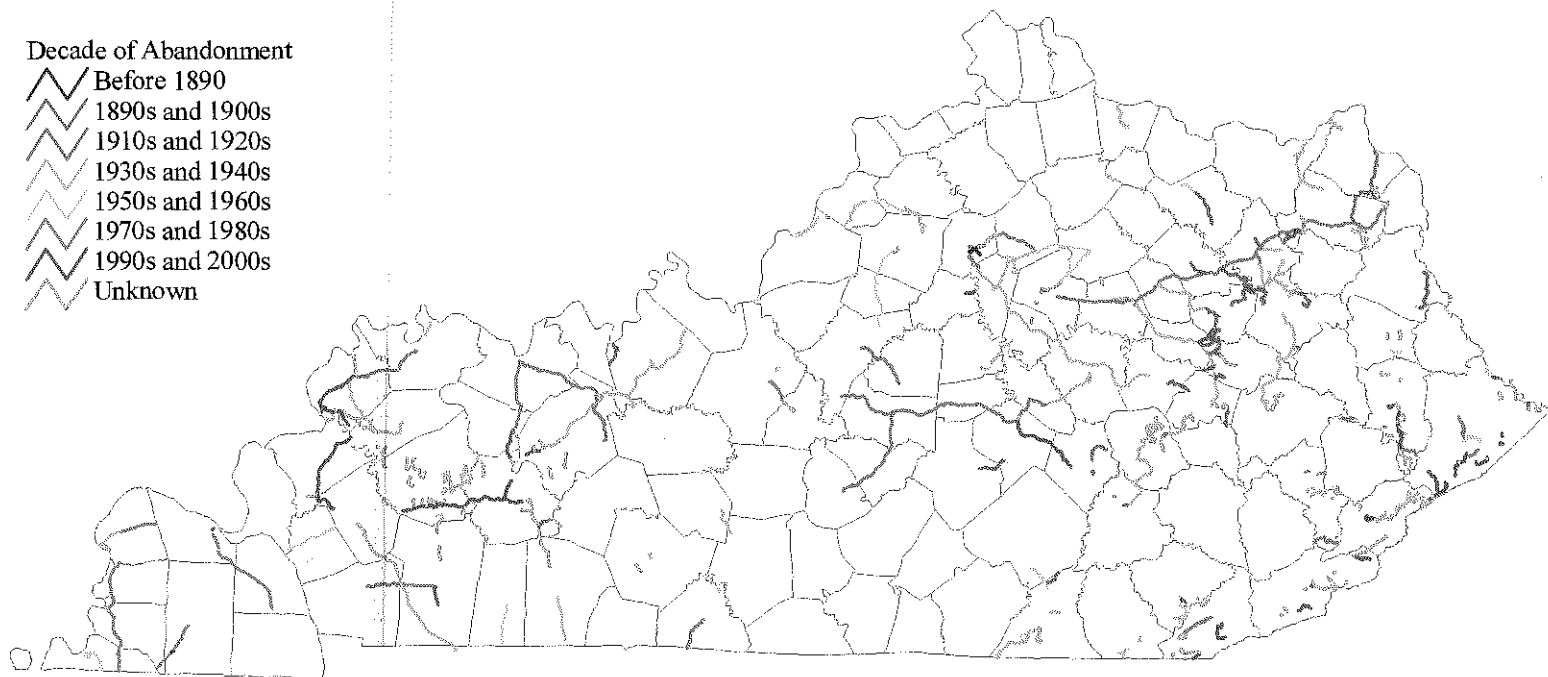
1920 data from *The Routledge Historical Atlas of the American Railroads*

Map 2.3: Kentucky's Active and Abandoned Rail Lines



Map 2.4: Rail Line Abandonments by Decade

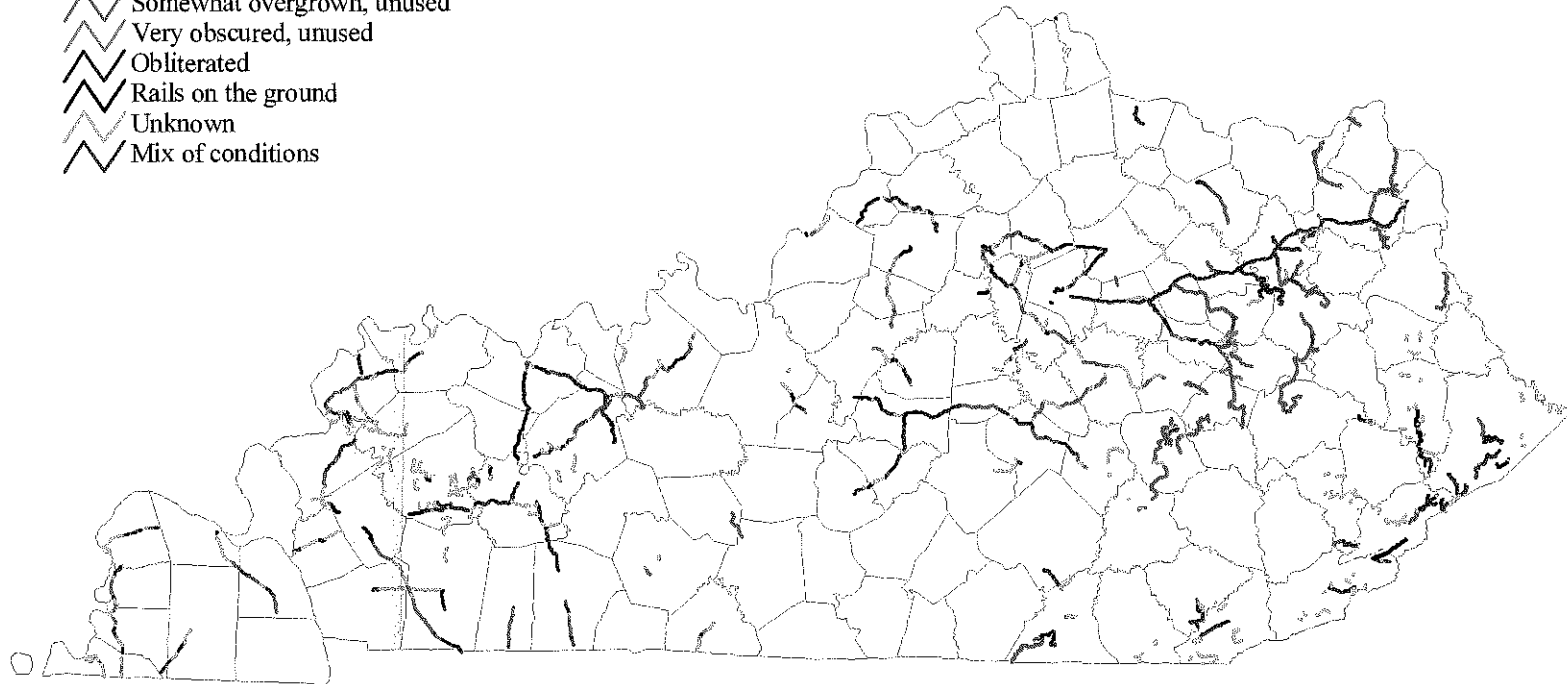
- Decade of Abandonment
- Before 1890
 - 1890s and 1900s
 - 1910s and 1920s
 - 1930s and 1940s
 - 1950s and 1960s
 - 1970s and 1980s
 - 1990s and 2000s
 - Unknown



Map 2.5: Current Use and Condition of Abandoned Rail Lines

Current Use and Condition

- Auto road
- Clear path, non-car traffic
- Overgrown, non-car traffic
- Clear path, unused
- Somewhat overgrown, unused
- Very obscured, unused
- Obliterated
- Rails on the ground
- Unknown
- Mix of conditions



0 30 60 Miles



In addition to the network of abandoned railroad right of way, an array of railroad related structures is the legacy of these cycles of abandonment and the wide variety circumstances under which the lines were abandoned. We discovered a number of tunnels, bridges, culverts, depots, and small railroad artifacts such as mile markers, signals, signs, ties, rails, and spikes. It was a surprise to find so many tunnels, bridges, and trestles intact with potential for reuse and historic interpretation as part of future trail projects. It is imperative that these structures be documented and preserved if at all possible, even if a trail is not built. The locations and descriptions of these point features are noted in the GIS database of abandonments and are presented in list form in Appendix A.

Boxcar in Clearfield, Rowan County



Yamacraw Bridge, McCreary County



Rails to Trails History

The National Trails System Act, enacted by Congress in 1968, created a national system of recreational trails and designated several national scenic and national historic trails. Some of these trails include the Appalachian Trail, the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail. The act declared that trails should be established first near urban population centers and secondarily in rural areas to promote preservation of and access to the nation's natural and historic resources.

The National Trails System Act was amended in 1983 to allow for “railbanking”. Railbanking is a way for abandoned railroad corridors to be preserved for future railroad use and in the mean time it allows for the corridors to be used for recreational trails or utility easements. Railbanking in effect delays abandonment indefinitely so that the land moves from railroad company ownership to management by an interim agency. The land is not sold piecemeal nor does it revert to adjacent owners in the case of easements. The managing agency (often a local government or park board) becomes the owner of the right of way.

The first formal rail trail projects in the U.S. began in the 1960s. The Elroy Sparta Trail in Wisconsin and the Prairie Path outside Chicago were some of the first. There were several more rail trail projects in the following twenty years; the passage of the railbanking amendment encouraged the creation of many more.

In 1986 a national organization, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, was founded to help communities through the process of creating trails from abandoned rail corridors. This non-profit organization serves to: promote policy that supports rail trails, provide information and assistance to local trail project groups, and provide leadership and vision to the national trails and greenways movement. To date there are over 12,000 miles of rail trails in the U.S. The Rails to Trails Conservancy has a national office in Washington, D.C. as well as field offices in Michigan, Ohio, California, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Florida.

Kentucky citizens interested in rails to trails organized in 1994 as the Kentucky Rails to Trails Council. There are chapters in the Bluegrass, Lake Cumberland area, Morehead area, Muhlenberg County, and Wilmore. These groups are entirely volunteer

and they are active in building community awareness of Rails to Trails; building support for proposed projects; pursuing funding, planning and design; and educating others on the

Rail Trail in Greenville



benefits of rail trails. To date there are fewer than 15 miles of completed rail trail projects in Kentucky, but there are close to 200 miles in various stages from proposal to construction. Nearly every other state in the US has more miles of developed rail trails than Kentucky (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and

Michigan have over 1,000 miles); many of these states began their first trail projects 20 or 30 years ago. Many states are trying to develop their rail trails into a cohesive network that connects people with recreation areas, shopping, historic sites, other trails and greenways, and also into a network that serves commuters

Table 2: States with the Most Rail Trail Mileage

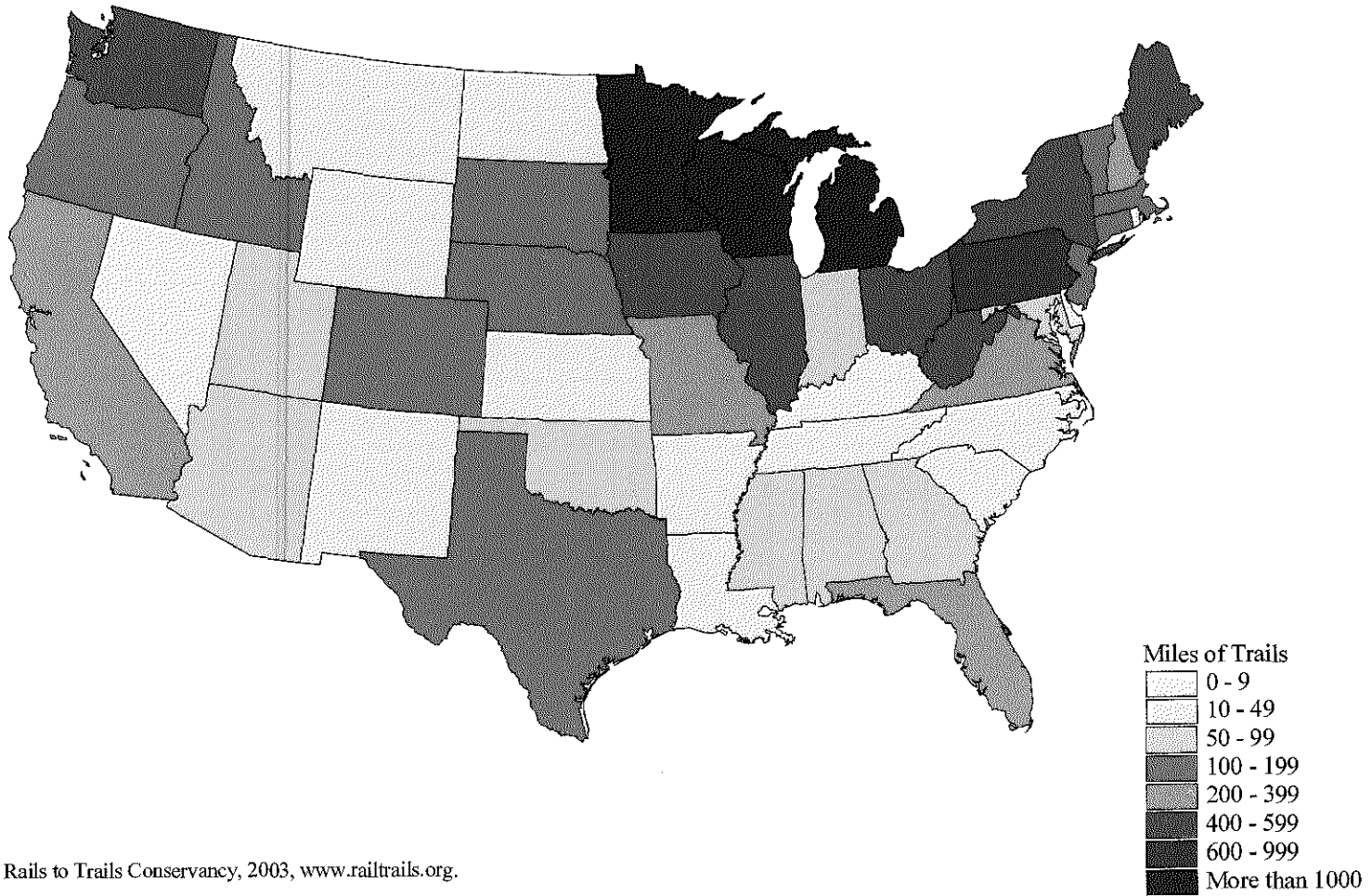
1. Minnesota	1301
2. Wisconsin	1294
3. Michigan	1176
4. Pennsylvania	941
5. New York	553
6. Iowa	546
7. Washington	529
8. Illinois	496
9. Ohio	441
10. Maine	438

Table 3: States with the Least Rail Trail Mileage

49. Delaware	1.75
48. Kentucky	4
47. Nevada	6
46. Alaska	8
45. Arkansas	12.9
44. New Mexico	17.8
43. North Dakota	21
42. Wyoming	22
41. Louisiana	25
40. Rhode Island	31.9





(For these tables we used the rail trail mileage from Rails to Trails Conservancy, which is out of date, but at least it is consistent nationwide. Hawaii has no known rail trail mileage.)

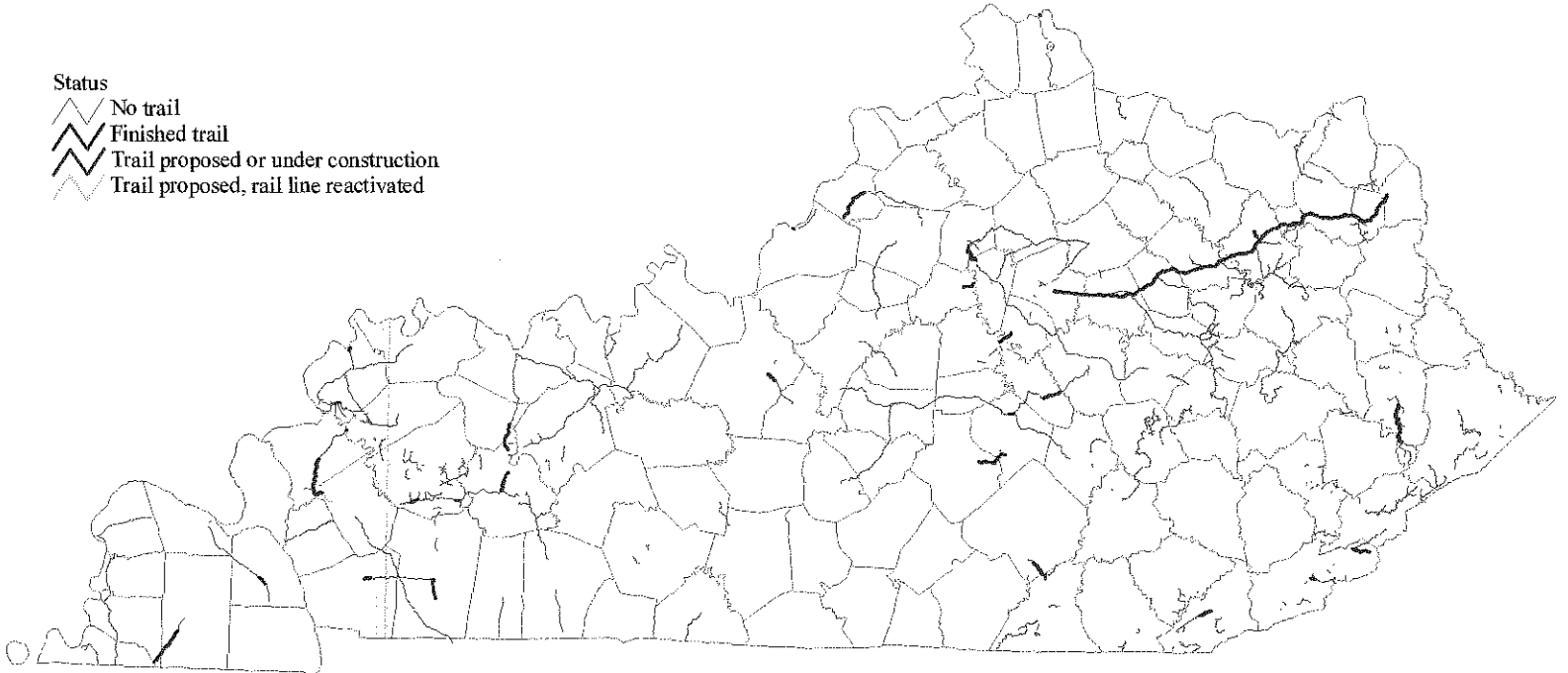
Map 2.6: Miles of Rail Trails, by State



Source: Rails to Trails Conservancy, 2003, www.railtrails.org.

Map 2.7: Rail Trails in Kentucky: Finished and Proposed Projects

- Status
-  No trail
 -  Finished trail
 -  Trail proposed or under construction
 -  Trail proposed, rail line reactivated



0 30 60 Miles



Kentucky's first rail trail was the Cadiz Trail in Trigg County. When the Cadiz Railroad was abandoned in 1988 the right of way was donated to the city and the trail opened in 1989. Local residents formed a committee that helped see the trail through the development process. The City of Cadiz took over trail maintenance from the trail committee during the mid-1990s and the committee was dissolved at that time. The trail sees excellent usage and acceptance by the public and strong support from the city, which recently added an extension so that the trail now reaches a shopping center.

At the time of the first state rail plan in 1978, a section of abandoned line in far western Kentucky (between Winford Junction and Columbus) was under negotiations for conversion to a recreational trail and the consultants made a recommendation that this action be pursued based on the proximity of a current bikeway, Belmont State Park at Columbus, and Reelfoot Lake National Wildlife Refuge. It states that local citizen groups were interested in acquiring the right of way and that the Commonwealth was helping to conduct a survey and to determine clear title requirements. The line is not a trail today, but we have no information on what happened to this project. The first state rail plan also mentions the idea of railbanking abandoned lines for future road, railroad, utility or recreational use - five years before the federal legislation instituted an official act relating to railbanking.

We computed a conversion rate that shows what percent of each state's rail network has been reused for rail trails. This rate is based on the states' 1920 rail mileage (near the peak year of 1916) and their current trail miles. Kentucky ranks among the lowest states in terms of miles of the original peak railroads converted to rail trails. Using the data from the Rails to Trails Conservancy, it ranks the lowest of all states that have

any trail mileage, but that data shows that Kentucky only has 4 miles of trails; it now has about 12 miles. It would have been problematic to have updated Kentucky’s mileage without also being able to update the other states, so we used the data as it was given. States that have the highest rail mileage also have some of the highest conversion rates.

It is difficult to determine why Kentucky has so few miles of rail trails in comparison with other states. Some have hypothesized that this is related to a general mistrust of planning and zoning efforts and strong private property rights sentiments. But these sentiments are complex and impossible to quantify or correlate without further survey and study. The opinion of many who have worked on rails to trails efforts in the state point to a lack of coordination between the various agencies, sources of funding, interested citizens, and local and state leaders as the primary obstacle to trail success. It is a goal of House Bill 221, through the creation of the State Rail Trail Development Office, to help to coordinate and encourage these efforts state-wide.

Table 4: States with the Highest Percentage of Peak Rail Miles Converted to Trails

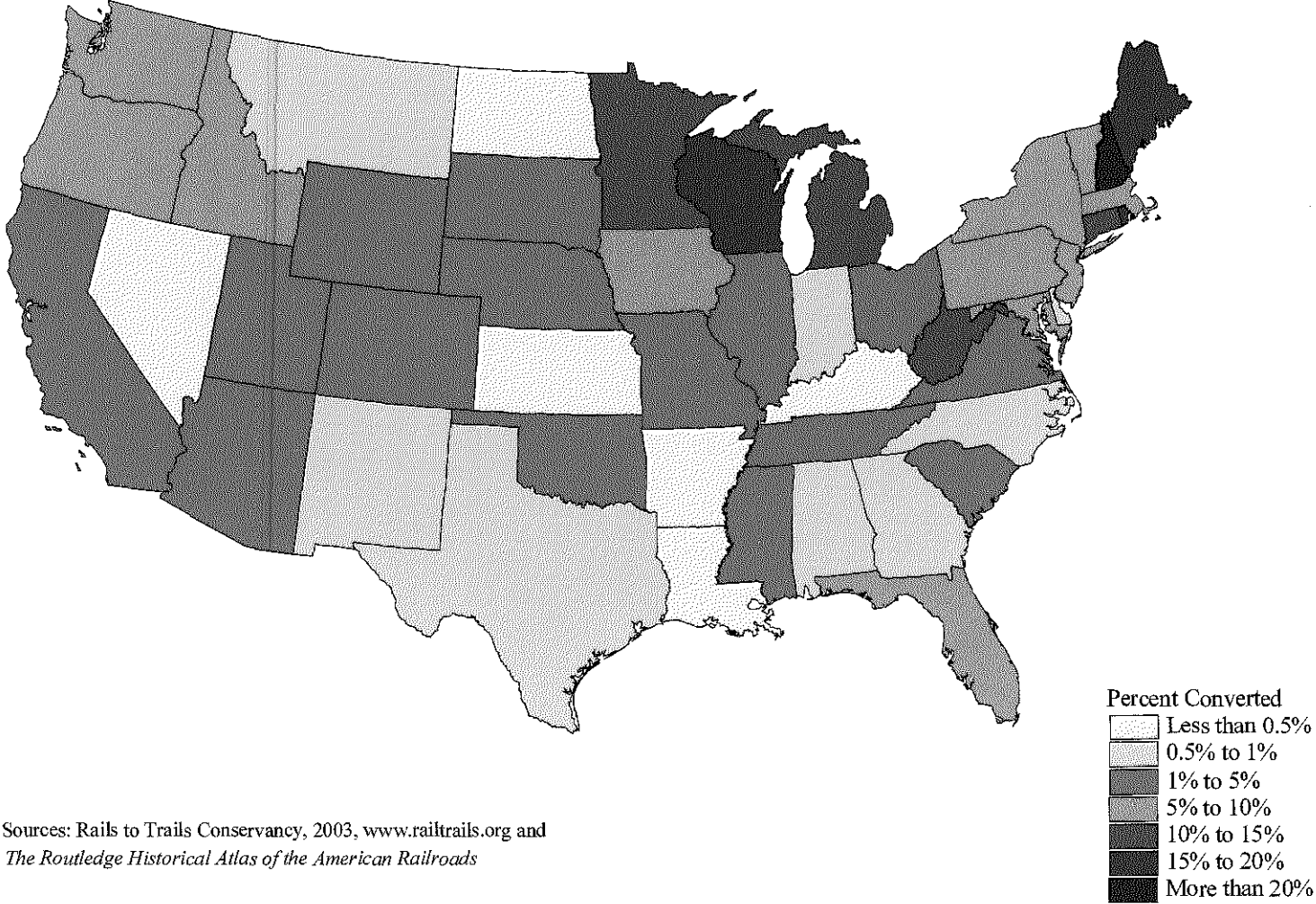
1. New Hampshire	22.96%
2. Maine	19.08%
3. Wisconsin	17.13%
4. Rhode Island	15.12%
5. Minnesota	14.27%
6. Michigan	13.46%
7. Connecticut	12.99%
8. West Virginia	10.56%
9. Vermont	9.47%
10. Washington	9.47%

Table 5: States with the Lowest Percentage of Peak Rail Miles Converted to Trails

48. Kentucky	0.10%
47. Arkansas	0.26%
46. Nevada	0.28%
45. North Dakota	0.40%
44. Kansas	0.42%
43. Louisiana	0.48%
42. Delaware	0.52%
41. New Mexico	0.60%
40. North Carolina	0.68%
39. Montana	0.77%

(For these tables we used the rail trail mileage from Rails to Trails Conservancy, which is out of date, but at least it is consistent nationwide, and rail mileage from 1920, closest year’s data available to the peak US rail mileage in 1916, from *The Routledge Historical Atlas of the American Railroads*).

Map 2.8: Percent of 1920 Rail Mileage Converted to Trails



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY



Hiking the Lexington & Eastern in Clark County



Rails on the ground near Princeton



Flying above the Chesapeake & Ohio RR east of Lexington

When we began our project we naively assumed that we would hike every mile of abandoned right of way and do a complete field survey of the state. About five hours in to our first day in the woods, after we lost the logging rail bed somewhere in a tangle of briars, we discovered that we would not be hiking all 1,500 miles of rail bed in two years! We spent several months of trial and error as we re-evaluated our methods before we settled into an effective combination of archival research, selective field checking, and GIS database building.

Archival research

Half of the work of this project has been the archival research – figuring out where the lines once ran before we went out into the field to try to see what shape they are in today. Our primary source for lines abandoned before 1967 was Elmer Sulzer's book *Ghost Railroads of Kentucky* (1967). He had information on some lines which we found mention of nowhere else, so we relied heavily on his research. His maps are more schematic than accurate, so we had to rely on topographic and other maps to determine the exact route of lines, but once we had the endpoints and some points along the way from Sulzer we were able to map the routes quite accurately. Some of his historic information was not accurate, but unless we could find another source to correct it, we used what he wrote.

For more recently abandoned lines, Steam Powered Video's *Comprehensive Railroad Atlas for Appalachia and Piedmont* (1997) was a valuable source. These maps were even more schematic, but provided endpoints and company names for most lines abandoned before the mid 1990s.

Robert Vaughn, an amateur railroad and coal mining historian who has written detailed essays about rail lines and mining-related rail facilities in Southeastern and South Central Kentucky. Other local experts and amateur historians also shared information on internet websites, bulletin boards, and list serves that helped us to fill in some important missing links.

We were able to obtain alignment information for logging railroads in the Red River Gorge area from Ed Vasser, but for most areas we were only able to learn names of logging companies and not the routes of their railways. Because of this the maps are incomplete. One can imagine a pattern of logging rail lines in most areas of Southeastern Kentucky that would have been similar to the Red River Gorge area. The routes of interurban railways were also omitted from our database. Interurbans were electric commuter railways that connected urban areas. There were extensive networks centered on Lexington and Louisville and radiated to area towns such as Georgetown, Versailles, Paris, Nicholasville, and Shelbyville. Most of the routes of these interurbans shared a right of way with an auto road so they are not represented on our maps. One notable exception is the line that ran from Pewee Valley to LaGrange. This interurban shared a right of way with the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (this line is still active) and it is slated for development as a rail trail.

Most of the archival information was found in the University of Kentucky Library, Special Collections, and Map Library. Some was found in the Kentucky Historical Society Special Collections and some was accessed online.

Records from the Interstate Commerce Commission, the federal agency responsible for regulating abandonments from 1920 to 1995 (its duties were taken over

by the Surface Transportation Board in 1996), are in the National Archives in Maryland. All of the decisions and notices from every abandonment proceeding are available there – these would show the exact mile points for the sections abandoned, names of the abandoning railroad companies, and dates of abandonment. Unfortunately, because of time and staff limitations, we were not able to access these records.

Field Work

We had to limit our field work to those lines that had not clearly been remade into roads, had significant intact stretches (that were not built over in urban areas or by new

How to tell if a railroad is abandoned



road construction), that seemed to have trail potential, and were in places where it was relatively safe and easy to hike. This excluded lines that were on guarded coal company property or were over a fence that held back big dogs, for example. We

considered lines that connected places (as opposed to dead ended spurs), had significant contiguous stretches, had intact infrastructure or buildings, or had interesting natural features to have more trail potential. These attributes were determined from maps and text sources and also from over-flights. While we are unable to fly every line (and many hilly, treed lines are invisible from the air), flying was a very good way to narrow down the search, determine the condition on longer stretches of line, and find interesting point features that we could go back and check out on the ground.

GPS, handheld computer, and topographic maps



Alignment information, as we found it in the archives and verified it in the field, was digitized into a GIS on top of digital versions of topographic quadrangles. We used these digitized maps in turn when we did aerial surveys by downloading them to a hand held computer which was connected to a global positioning device. This allowed us to follow our digitized route lines exactly. We occasionally used this combination of hardware on the ground, but since it required two hands and good sight lines for satellite readings, it was usually not as effective or as easy to use as paper maps while we were hiking.

One of our objectives, as outlined in the project scope, was to generate alignments that are no more than 500 feet from the true alignment. Based on subsequent field checking with GPS devices we have determined that virtually all of the rail lines that have been digitized are significantly more accurate than 500 feet. Because of the availability of recent and historic topographic maps to use as reference maps we were able to digitize with great accuracy. This accuracy is also a result of the way that we digitized the lines using 7.5 minute topographic maps as our base layer. This allowed us to follow exactly the route lines or topographic features that defined the abandoned corridor. In fewer than ten instances we were forced to guess on alignments based only on endpoint information. These cases involved short lived logging lines from before 1920 and in one case a coal company line that was abandoned more than 100 years ago.

Building the GIS Database

The information we collected in the field and the archival information were entered into a GIS database that helped us make the trail suitability assessment of each line. The challenge was to develop sensible rating criteria that would express each line's condition, current use, and potential for redevelopment. We had to design descriptive ratings that would be useful to trail planners and local rails to trails advocates. Each line is rated through accessibility, proximity, and connectivity criteria.

The accessibility code refers to a line's ease of access to public amenities like schools, residential areas, recreation, parks, historic sites, and commercial areas. Through a combination of maps and field observation we noted what was adjacent or very close to each segment of abandoned line. It is important to remember though that some intangible qualities like pleasant vistas are not captured in this code.

Proximity means its nearness to population centers. We divided this into three ratings. One is for segments that pass through or are adjacent to urban areas of 10,000 or more people (using 1998 US Census population estimates). The next is for segments that pass through or are adjacent to towns or villages of less than 10,000 people. The last rating refers to segments that are in rural areas.

Connectivity refers to the line's intersection with other existing trails. We divided this code into those lines that do not intersect with other trails, those that intersect with the Sheltopee Trace in the Daniel Boone National Forest, and those that intersect with other developed trails.

These criteria were developed based on input from rails to trails project planners and advocates. Especially important to trail advocates were the accessibility of lines for

paved, gravel, or dirt. Category 2 is a pathway that is clear, but used for non-car traffic. This can include ATV, foot, bike, or equestrian use. Category 3 is a right of way that is unused, either formally or informally (this type is often overgrown). Category 4 is a right of way that has been obliterated and 5 is one where the rails and ties are still in place.

Map 2.5 on page 21 combines and summarizes, on a statewide scale, the basic use and condition information contained in the database categories outlined above. Additional information on all abandoned lines is presented in tabular form in Chapter 4. Selected “high value” lines are described in further detail in Chapter 5. Subject to the availability of funds, plans are for the complete GIS database from which this information is drawn to be kept current and made available to the public through the Department for Local Government’s website.



Example of 1A: reuse as auto road



Example of 2A: clear path, non car use



Example of 2B: overgrown path



Example of 3C: detectable road bed but extremely obstructed

CHAPTER 4

STATE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS



Tunnel south of Burnside on former CNO&TP



Bridge on Chesapeake & Ohio line, Carter County



Bridge supports on former Lebanon Branch near Crab Orchard



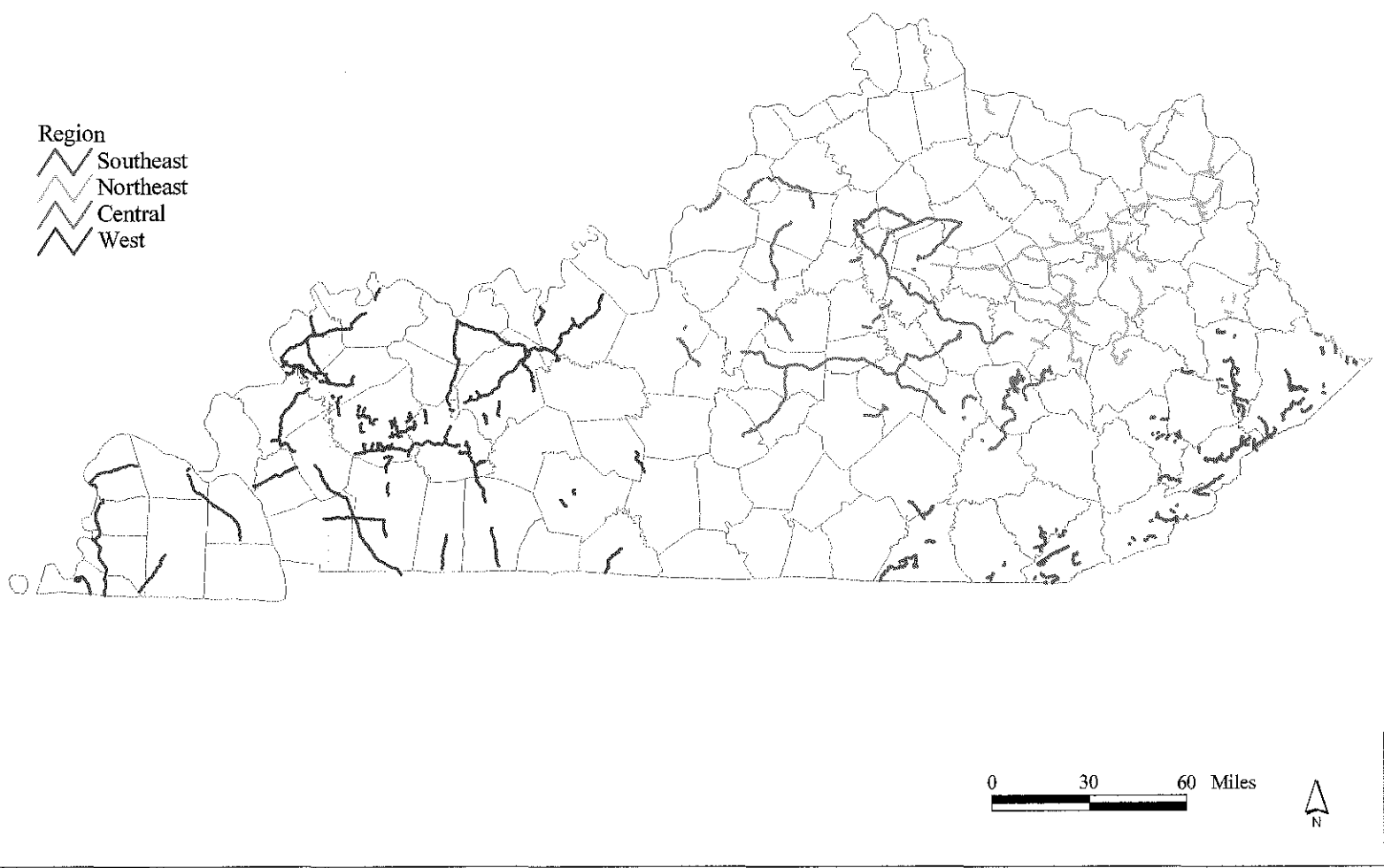
Remains of bridge near Madisonville

The following table is the inventory of all known abandoned railroad corridors in Kentucky. A few very short spurs have been omitted from the table because of a lack of information about them and their small potential for reuse. Those spurs do appear in the GIS maps and database. The matrix is divided into four geographic area sections: Northeastern Kentucky, Southeastern Kentucky, Central Kentucky, and Western Kentucky. Map 4.1 shows these divisions. The divisions were not based on traditional Kentucky regions but instead were based on where there were logical geographic separations in abandoned railroad routes.

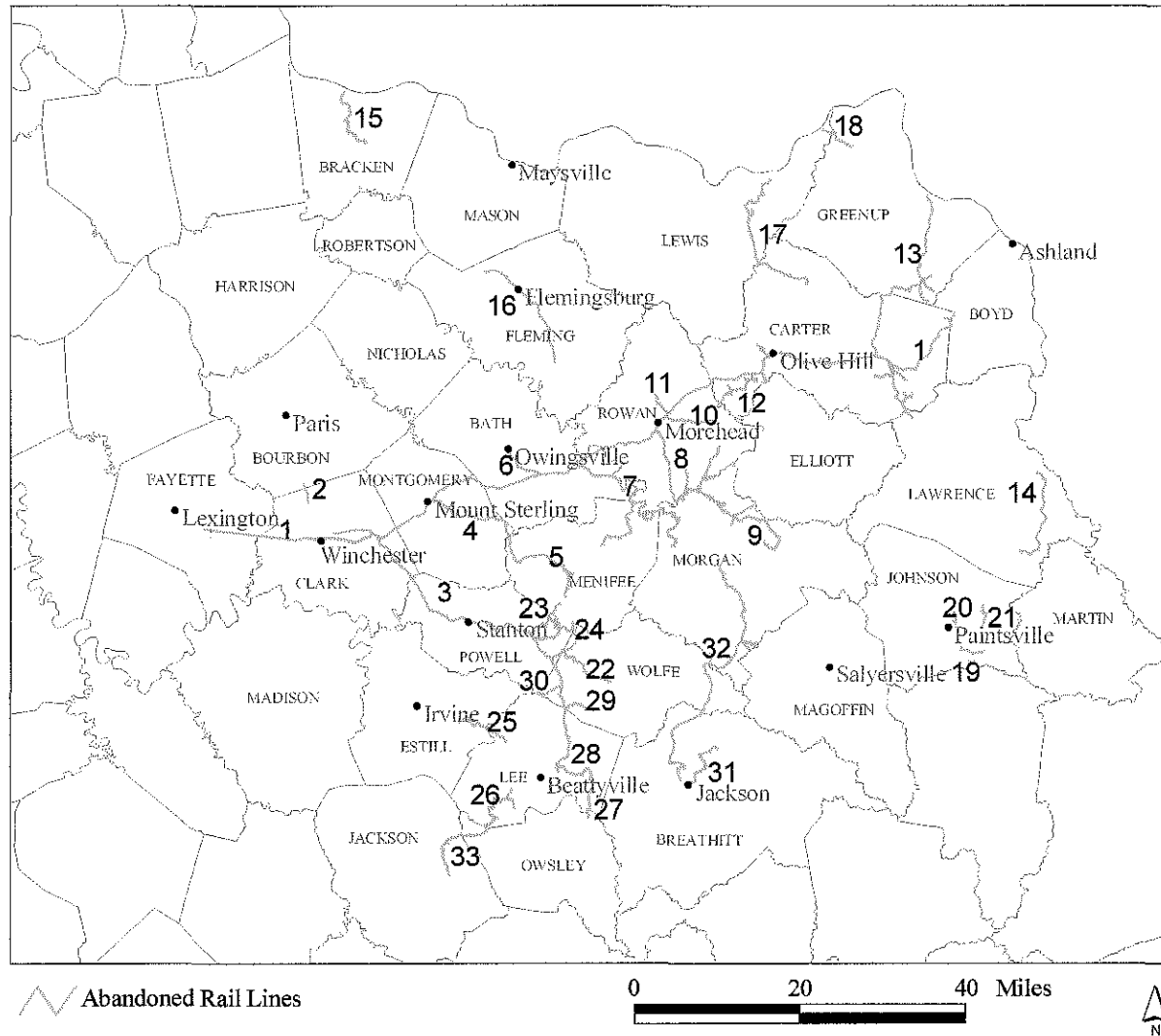
The matrix numbers each line and these numbers can be used to find the lines on the corresponding maps. Their endpoints – usually towns but sometimes streams or other locations – are noted as is the county or counties that the line passes through and the length of the line in miles. The name of the line at abandonment is listed first with other previous names in parentheses and in chronological order when known. The dates of construction and abandonment are noted. Where there is a dash it means that the line was constructed or abandoned over those years; where there is a slash it means that the line was constructed or abandoned during multiple occasions during different years. The two comment fields explain the current use and condition of each line as it is known and any highlights such as railroad artifacts, connections to amenities, or outstanding natural features.

Since our focus was to complete an inventory and map for the entire state, the historical information had to be of secondary importance. As a result there are some incomplete records and probably some inaccuracies, especially in railroad names and dates. Any corrections or additions are welcome.

Map 4.1: Regions of Kentucky



Map 4.2: Northeastern Kentucky Abandoned Rail Lines



CHAPTER 5

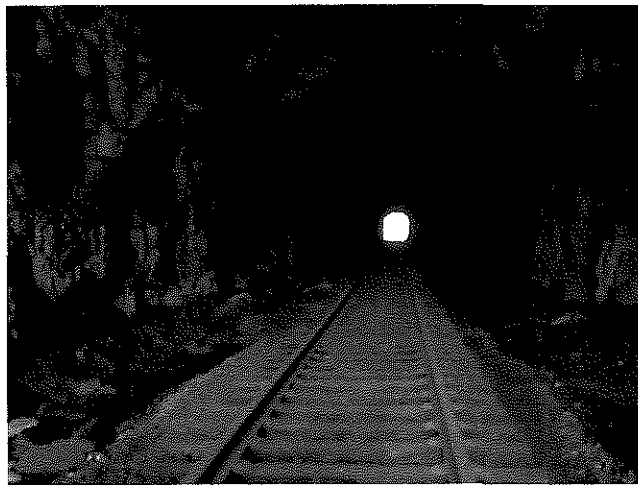
HIGH VALUE LINES



Right of way near Hartford, Ohio County

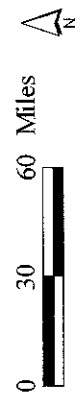
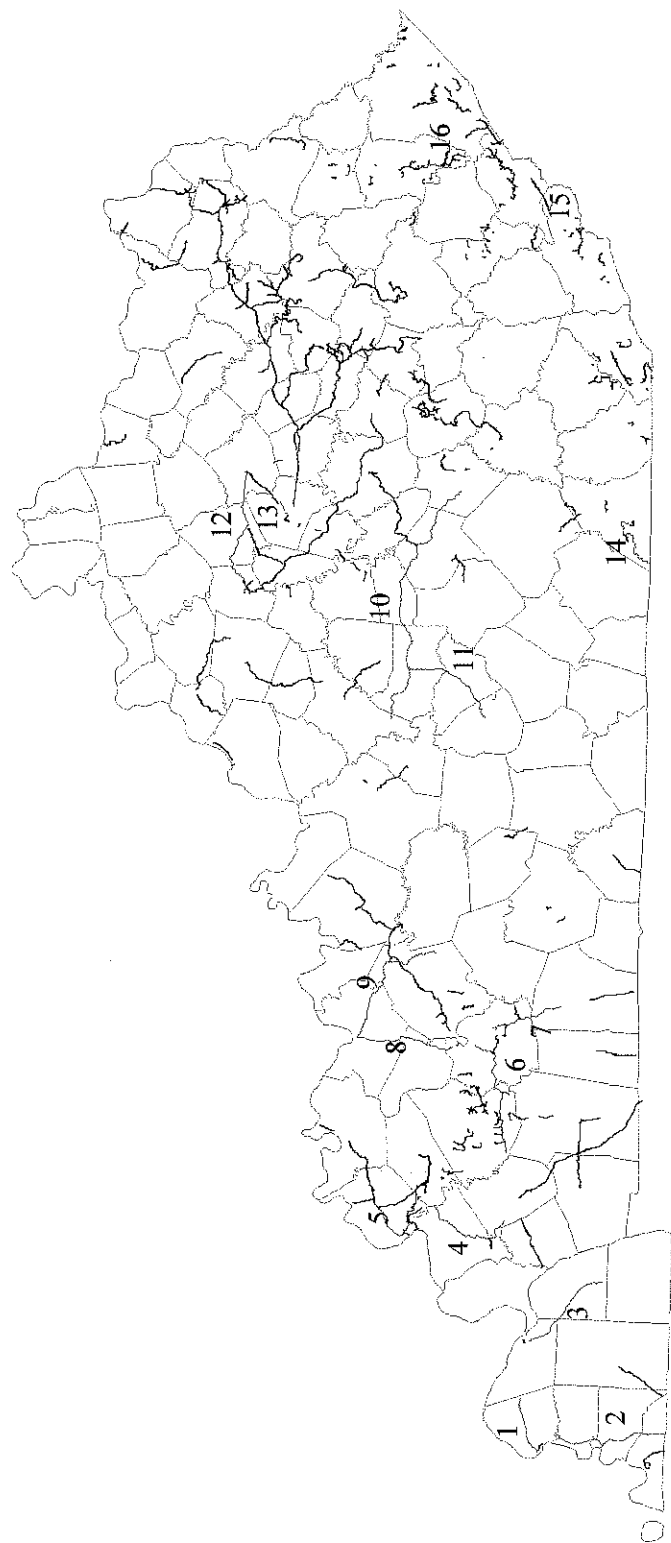


RR phone booth near Dekoven, Union County

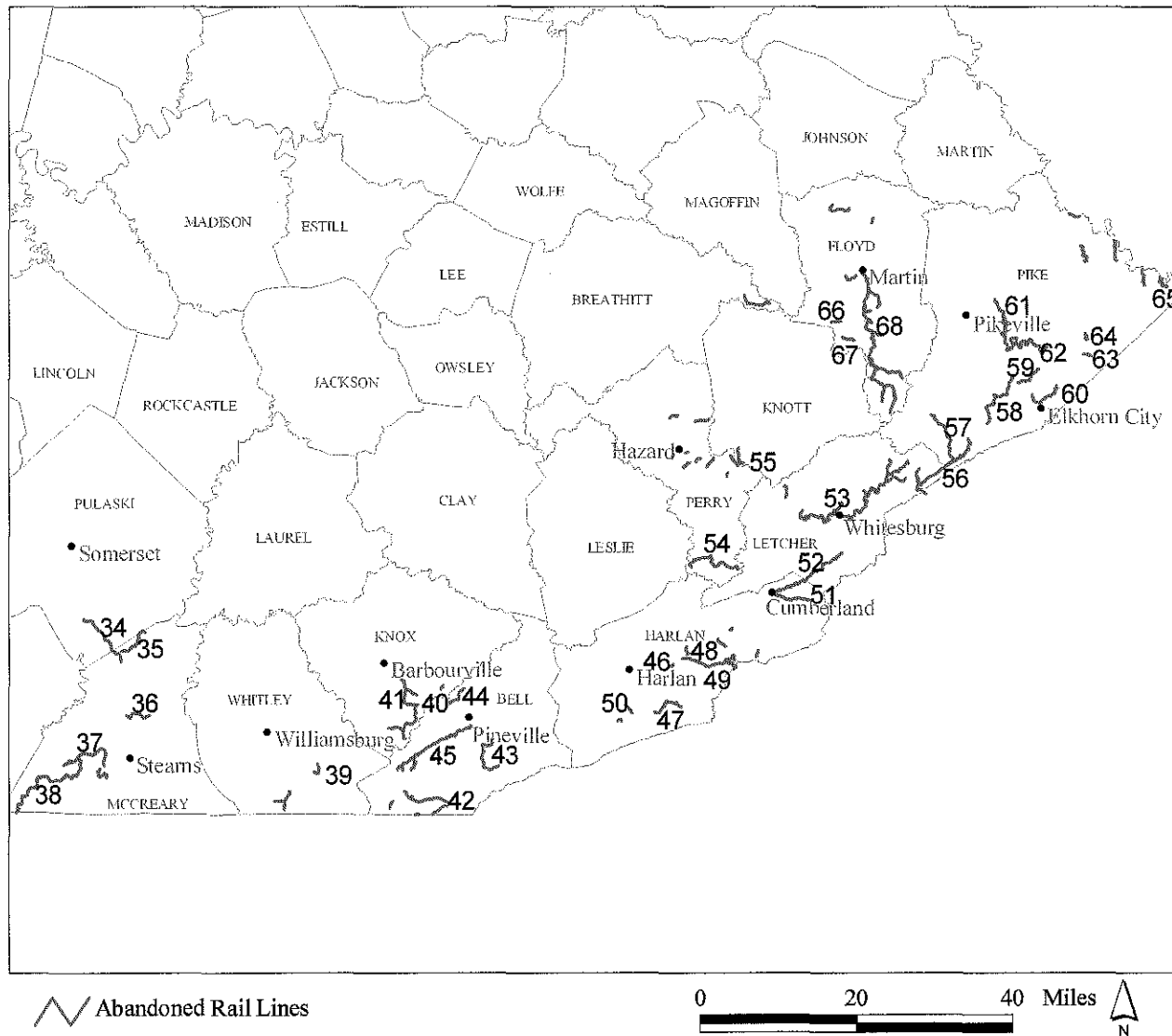


Orkney Tunnel, Floyd County

Map 5.1:
Abandoned Rail Lines with High Trail Potential



Map 4.3: Southeastern Kentucky Abandoned Rail Lines



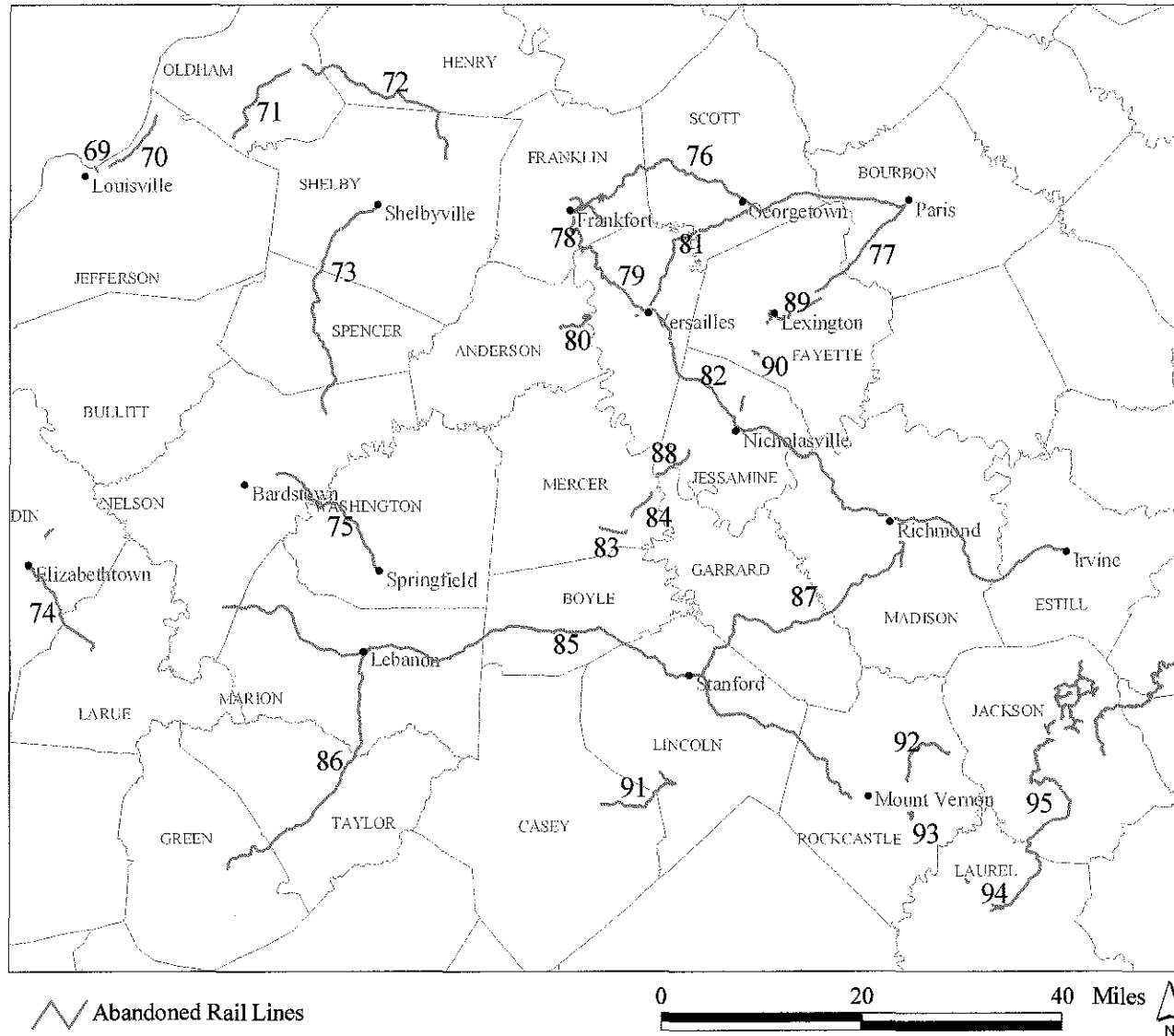
Number	End points and length	Counties	Railroad Name(s)	Year Built	Year Abandoned	Condition	Highlights
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SOUTHEASTERN KENTUCKY

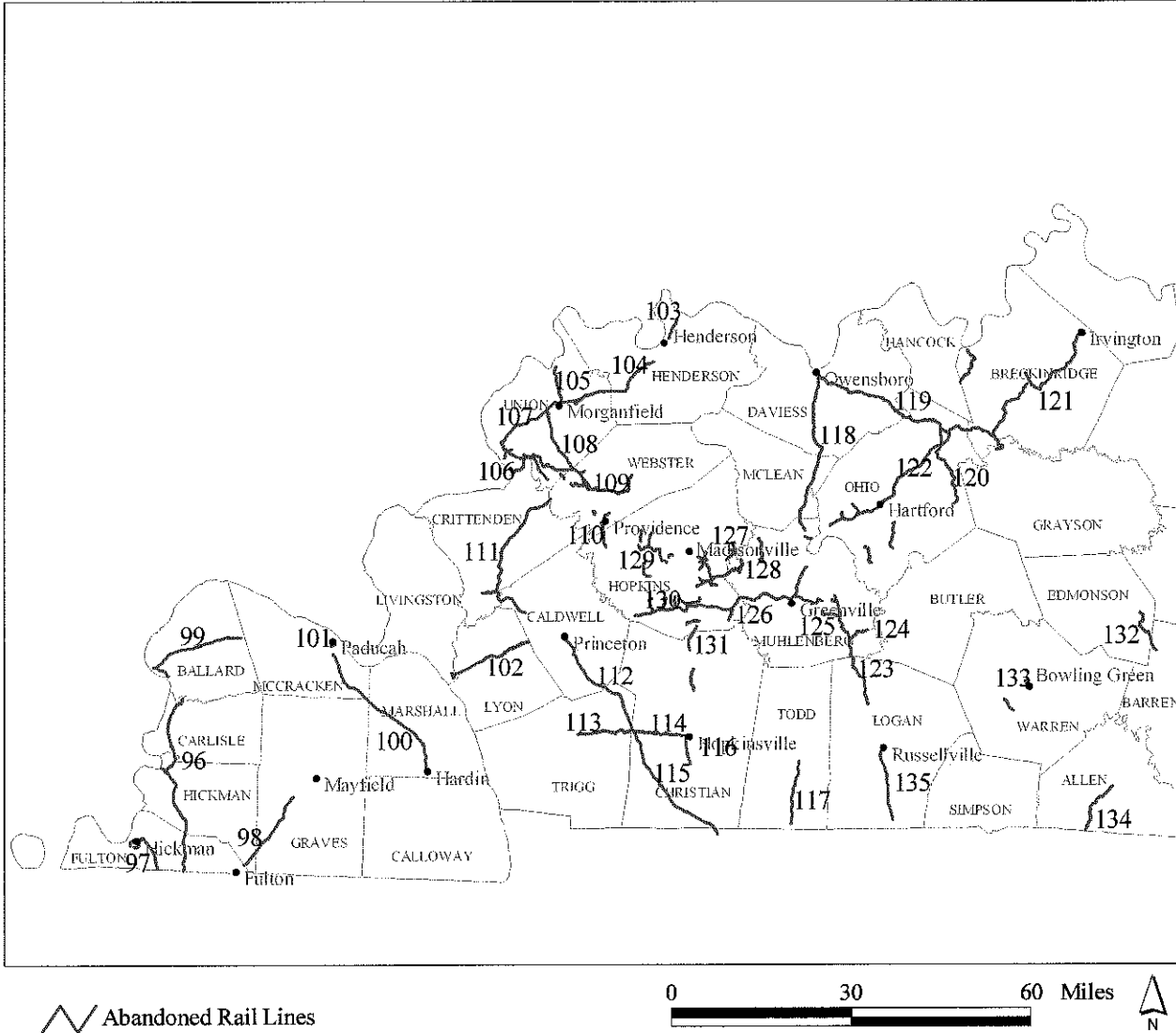
34	Burnside to Greenwood 8.2 miles	Pulaski, McCreary	Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific RR (Southern RY)	1870s-1880s	1963	Rail bed is in good condition. 1.5 miles are developed trail. A few big trestles/bridges are missing.	Reroute of Southern's "Rathole Division" – 3 tunnels, unsealed, in good condition. Partially on Nat'l Forest property.
35	5.1 miles	McCreary	Greenwood RY and Coal Co.	1895	1910	unknown	
36	US 27 to former mines 4 miles	McCreary	Barren Fork Coal Company RR	1905	1935	Part of ROW is now auto road, other is unknown.	In Nat'l Forest, close to horse camp, former coal camp area is Nat'l Register of Historic Places archeological district.
37	Worley to Bell Farm 14.2 miles	McCreary	Kentucky & Tennessee RY	1906-1921	1949-1953/1980s (to Oz)	Mostly intact. Eastern portion has rails on the ground, then just ties, then clear railbed as one travels west. Yamacraw bridge intact and sound. Western portions more overgrown in some areas, but intact.	Yamacraw Bridge, ruins of mining facilities, in Big South Fork NRRA, connects to Big South Fork Scenic Railway from Stearns to Blue Heron, connections to other Nat'l Forest hiking trails.
38	Bell Farm to Tennessee 8 miles	McCreary	Stearns Coal and Lumber Co. RR		1948	Auto road for entire length.	Low traffic road in National Forest would be suitable for hiking and biking. Connects with Sheltoewe Trace and to NF campgrounds.

Number	End points and length	Counties	Railroad Name(s)	Year Built	Year Abandoned	Condition	Highlights
65	Cedar to Majestic	Pike	Norfolk Southern (Norfolk & Western RY)		2001	unknown	
66	Alphoretta to Manton (Mars Station)	Floyd	CSXT (Chesapeake & Ohio RY)			unknown	
67	Wayland 1.8 miles	Floyd	CSXT (Chesapeake & Ohio RY)		1914	unknown	
68 high value line	Martin to Wheelwright and Weeksbury 27 miles	Floyd	CSXT/Chessie System (Chesapeake & Ohio RY, Long Fork RY)	1916/?	2003/ 1970s- 1980s	Wide range of conditions: some sections still have rails on the ground, just recently "officially" abandoned, other sections gone for longer time, obliterated or hard to detect.	An unsealed tunnel and several bridges remain; goes to Wheelwright, once a model company town, several buildings remain.

Map 4.4: Central Kentucky Abandoned Rail Lines



Map 4.5: Western Kentucky Abandoned Rail Lines



Number	End points and length	Counties	Railroad Name(s)	Year Built	Year Abandoned	Condition	Highlights
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WESTERN KENTUCKY

96 high value line	Winford Jct. to TN border 37.5 miles	Carlisle, Hickman, Fulton	Illinois Central Gulf RR (Illinois Central RR, Mobile & Ohio RR)	1861/1880	1976/1980s	Much of line is intact, some as dirt roads, some overgrown, unused. Portions are obliterated for homesites.	Intersects Mississippi River Trail bike route (on auto roads), goes through Cayce, home of Casey Jones. Passes near state park, wildlife management areas, and archeological sites.
97	Hickman to TN border 9 miles	Fulton	Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis RY	1860	1951	unknown	
98	Fulton to Clayburn (near Mayfield) 14.5 miles	Hickman, Graves	Illinois Central Gulf RR/Paducah & Louisville RR (New Orleans & Ohio RR, Illinois Central RR)	1858	1980s/?	Mostly intact, though some use of railbed by neighbors for storage. Section starting in Wingo is completed trail, proposed to extend along entire route.	Finished trail in Wingo, RR artifacts including signal towers
99 high value line	Kevil to Mississippi River 16.7 miles	Ballard	Illinois Central RR/ Illinois Central Gulf RR (Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans RR)	1903	1943/1978	Most rural areas are intact, built over in places in towns. Some ROW is clear and free of vegetation; other areas are more overgrown, but still intact. At least one bridge remains.	Passes near and through Wildlife Management Area, flood plain natural areas of MS river, near schools and stores, and through towns.