

The Myth and Reality of Northern Pass's Preferred Route from Groveton to Deerfield

The "existing private easement [that] does not exist"

The Myth:

PSNH owns 140 miles of existing rights-of-way from Groveton to Deerfield.

- Northeast Utilities Q2-2012 Investor Call, July 31:

"You may recall that a 140 miles of the project would be **built along existing right-of-ways**. The other 40 miles in Northern New Hampshire is where we need to secure a new right-of-way." –Leon J. Olivier, CEO, PSNH.

From: <http://seekingalpha.com/article/765881-northeast-utilities-management-discusses-q2-2012-results-earnings-call-transcript?part=single>

- Northern Pass website:

Use of Existing Rights of Way

As currently proposed, the project's preferred route is located entirely in existing transmission rights of way, where transmission lines exist today, with the following exceptions: 1) the section of the route between Groveton, NH, and the Canadian border, where no transmission rights of way exist today; 2) new rights of way may also be needed for an eight- mile section of the route through Concord, Chichester, and Pembroke. . . adjacent to the Concord Municipal Airport.

From: <http://www.northernpass.us/project-overview/route-info>.

- DOE EIS Site:

Proposed Location

Northern Pass describes its preferred route for the Project in terms of three sections: the north, central and south.

- The central section would run south from [Bethlehem] utilizing existing ROW through the town of Sugar Hill and cross the White Mountain National Forest between the towns of Easton and North Woodstock. The line would cross the Appalachian Trail in the White Mountain National Forest utilizing existing ROW. The line would continue south utilizing existing ROW through the town of Thornton to the city of Franklin, where the southern converter terminal would be located.

From: <http://northernpasseis.us/overview/>

Northern Pass has repeated this myth so often that the press parrots it

The Northern Pass would use 140 miles of existing right of way owned by Public Service of New Hampshire from Groveton to Deerfield. The remaining 40 miles from Groveton to Pittsburg has to be acquired because there is no existing right of way. –Union Leader, Sept. 16, 2012.

Most of the high-voltage hydropower line would run along the 140 miles of existing rights of way PSNH already owns from Gorham [sic] to Deerfield. The course of the top 40 miles, from Groveton to the Canadian border, are still being determined. –Concord Monitor, Sept. 19, 2012.

The Reality:

Neither PSNH nor Northern Pass owns an existing right of way through the White Mountain National Forest

- Northern Pass’s Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Land (Special Use Permit application, June 28, 2011)

“Northern Pass Transmission LLC . . . applies for a Special Use Permit . . . from the . . . Forest Service . . . authorizing it to construct, own, operate, and maintain an electric power transmission line . . . crossing portions of the White Mountain National Forest . . . **for which an existing private easement does not exist**. . . . Within the WMNF, Northern Pass anticipates being able to locate the . . . transmission line within an **existing transmission corridor** that includes approximately [seven miles] of **permit area** held by Public Service Company of New Hampshire pursuant to an existing SUP. . . . Northern Pass requests a permit area for the life of the transmission line and thus requests a permit area for the maximum duration under Forest Service regulations. . . . Northern Pass anticipates that Public Service Company of New Hampshire will submit an amendment to its existing SUPs to accommodate the Proposed Use.”

From: http://northernpasseis.us/media/documents/SUP_Application_with_Cover_Letter_6-28-11.pdf

The Facts:

- PSNH does not own an “existing right of way” from Groveton to Deerfield. PSNH owns no land rights for ten miles in the WMNF. (Three miles of easement are “landlocked” within the permit area.) PSNH’s power line in the WMNF occupies a **permit area** within a **federal transmission corridor**.
- PSNH has been granted a revocable Special Use Permit to locate its transmission line in this federally-owned **corridor**. The permit expires in 2036.
- On June 28, 2011, Northern Pass filed a Special Use Permit application with the USFS to co-locate a second transmission line within PSNH’s **permit area**. Also within PSNH’s permit area in the WMNF is the National Scenic Appalachian Trail (A.T.), which extends .5 mile on either side of the treadway.
- PSNH would have to file an amended SUP application with the USFS for Northern Pass to co-locate its transmission line in PSNH’s **permit area**.
- If granted, an SUP is not a right of way. It is not a permanent land right. It is indeed “an existing private easement [that] does not exist.”

Big picture: Northern Pass has no through route from Pittsburg to Deerfield. It must acquire a revocable/renewable/ time-limited special use permit from the U. S. Forest Service.

