

Chapter 6 Consultation and Coordination

6.1 Consultation and Coordination

Public participation, agency consultation, and tribal outreach and involvement specific to the NiSource HCP EIS is summarized in this chapter. The Service used several media to notify the public and potentially interested parties to provide them with the opportunity to participate in the scoping process.

6.1.1 Agency Notification

On May 17, 2007, formal invitations were sent to both the FERC in Washington, DC, and to the USACE in Washington, DC, inviting them to become cooperating agencies as per regulations set forth in 40 CFR 1501.6. On September 17, 2008, formal invitations were sent to NPS and USFS, inviting them to cooperate on the EIS. On September 11, 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding was finalized, articulating the responsibilities of all five cooperating agencies, NiSource, and AMEC, relative to preparation of this EIS.

6.1.2 Notice of Intent

To solicit participation of responsible federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, and the public in determining the scope of this EIS, the Service's formal scoping process began on October 11, 2007, with the publication in the FR of a *Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, Announcement of Public Scoping Meetings, and Request for Comments* (FR Vol. 72, No. 196 [October 11, 2007]). The notice provided information about:

- The project and the EIS;
- Species proposed for inclusion in the NiSource HCP; and,
- The website link for specific locations, dates, and times of the 13 public scoping meetings; how comments could be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the Service until December 8, 2007; and contact information for two key Service representatives for further information (their names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers).

In addition, both the NOI and the public scoping/*Dear Interested Party* letter (see **Section 6.1.4**) sent to over 1,300 known interested parties, contained a paragraph that asked for “federal, state, tribal, and local agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to cooperate with [the Service] in the preparation of the EIS”.

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the scoping meetings were asked to contact the Service a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting such that appropriate arrangements could be made.

6.1.3 Local Newspaper Announcements

Both a legal notice and an open house/public scoping meeting notification were published in the following local newspapers one to two weeks prior to the public scoping meetings:

- *Binghamton Press* (Binghamton, NY);
- *Charleston Gazette* (legal notice only); *Charleston Daily Mail* (Open House/Public Scoping Meeting notification) (Charleston, WV);
- *Cleveland Sun* (Cleveland, OH);
- *All Around Cleveland* (Cleveland, OH);
- *The Daily Legal News* (Cleveland, OH);
- *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, OH);
- *Cleveland Free Times* (Cleveland, OH);
- *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, MS);
- *The Advertiser* (Lafayette, LA);
- *Lexington Herald-Leader* (Lexington, KY);
- *The Tennessean* (Nashville, TN);
- *The City Paper* (Nashville, TN);
- *Philadelphia Daily News* (Philadelphia, PA);

- *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* (Pittsburgh, PA);
- *New Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh, PA);
- *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* (Pittsburgh, PA);
- *Portsmouth Herald* (Portsmouth, NH);
- *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA);
- *The Hill* (Washington, DC);
- *The Examiner* (Washington, DC);
- *Washington City Paper* (Washington, DC); and
- *Washington Times* (Washington, DC).

6.1.4 Public Scoping/Interested Party Letter

On October 18, 2007, a public scoping/*Dear Interested Party* letter was sent to over 1,300 known interested parties. In addition, the public scoping letter was sent to federally recognized Native American Tribes in each of Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and New York. The letter provided information on the project and the EIS, and included the dates of the 13 scoping meetings with the times and locations of the scoping meetings provided on a separate enclosed “*Venues for Open Houses*” document. In addition, notification was given that written comments would be received until December 8, 2007 through either U.S. Postal Mail, facsimile or the Service website.

For those people requiring further information, the names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of two key Service representatives, along with a 1-800 number, were also provided.

6.1.5 Website

To support distribution of the NOI and notice of the public meetings, these documents and the meeting information was posted on the Service – Region 3 website at the following link:
http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/permits/hcp/hcp_nisource.html

6.1.6 Draft EIS Public Review

In accordance with NEPA, the Draft EIS is being circulated for public review and comment. The public review period was initiated with the publication of the NOA in the FR on **(Insert Date)**. The public comment period will extend for 90 days from the date of publication of the NOA in the FR.