

Dalton Expansion Project:

Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC

**Mitigation
Implementation:**
Endangered
Species Act

Partner: U.S. Fish
and Wildlife Service

The Challenge

Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) designed the approximately 115-mile Dalton Expansion Project to transport natural gas from Transco's existing pipeline in Coweta County, Georgia to markets in north Georgia. Through consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, it was determined that the project could impact habitat for federally listed Indiana, northern long-eared, and gray bats, as well as state and federally listed plant species including large-flowered skullcap, Georgia aster, and Piedmont barren strawberry. Although Transco endeavored to avoid and minimize impacts to listed species to the maximum extent practicable, the project could not completely avoid impacts to habitat for these species. Transco then agreed to offset the impacts by establishing a fund that would be used to protect bats and listed plants within the vicinity of the Dalton Expansion Project.

**The Conservation Solution**

Following an agreement between USFWS and Transco, The Conservation Fund was engaged to administer the funds provided by Transco, and established the Georgia Bat Account. This account funds conservation projects to offset impacts to listed bat and plant species through: (1) acquisition and permanent protection of lands suitable as bat habitat; (2) white-nose syndrome research and treatments at bat winter roosts; and (3) plant safeguarding measures and plant salvage plans.

**Outcome Highlights**

Conservation outcomes associated with the Georgia Bat Account include:

Bat Habitat Protection: With support from the Georgia Bat Account, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has acquired and permanently protected three critical properties totaling approximately 1,100 acres, including habitat for the three affected bat species in north Georgia.

Plant Salvage Plan: Through a grant from the Georgia Bat Account, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia worked with Transco to relocate from the construction corridor multiple occurrences of large-flowered skullcap, Georgia aster, and Piedmont barren strawberry.

White-nose Syndrome Research: A Georgia Bat Account grant to Georgia State University Research Foundation and Kennesaw State Research and Service Foundation is supporting development and implementation of a multi-year integrated disease management system for the life-threatening white-nose syndrome for bats in north Georgia. This three-year project will conclude in early 2019.

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Outcome Highlights (continued)

Economic: Once in service, the Dalton Expansion Project will transport approximately 448,000 dekatherms of natural gas per day, enough natural gas to meet the daily needs of about 2 million homes.

While established initially through the Dalton Expansion Project, the Georgia Bat Account continues to operate and is available as a mitigation option for use by other project developers, as directed by USFWS. To date, the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Georgia Department of Transportation have contributed funds to offset impacts to bat habitat from their projects. The aggregation of funds from multiple impacts offers the opportunity to provide landscape-scale mitigation for projects with smaller impacts.