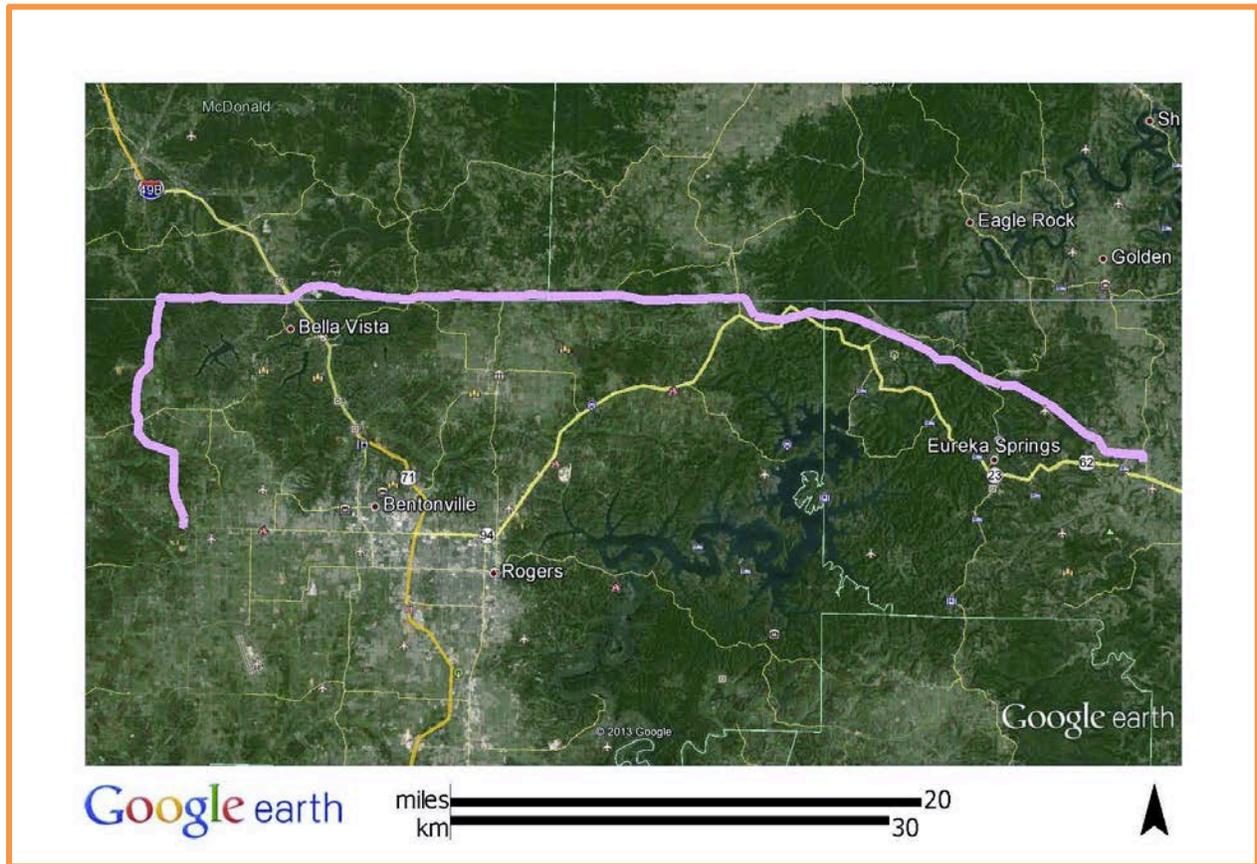


A Closer Look at AEP/SWEPCO's Route 109 Part 1



The Arkansas Public Service Commission approved the plan by Southwestern Power Company (SWEPCO), a subsidiary of American Electric Power (AEP) to build a 345 kV transmission line on SWEPCO's Route 109 on Feb. 18, 2014. Using measurements made on Google Earth, the path for Route 109 can be broken down into five main sections:

- ~11 miles of right-of-way in western Benton County -- from SWEPCO's Shipe Road Station north to the Missouri state line;
- ~14 miles across the southern edge of McDonald County, Missouri;
- ~8 miles across the southern edge of Barry County, Missouri;
- ~ 4 miles southward from the Missouri stateline across the northeast corner of Benton County, Arkansas; and
- ~ 15 miles from the Carroll County line east-southeast to the King River Station. In Carroll County, Route 109 follows exactly the same path as SWEPCO's originally preferred Route 33. It crosses the White River (the headwaters of Table Rock Lake) a half-mile upstream from Beaver's historic suspension bridge -- "Golden Gate of the Ozarks," passes a half-mile north of the city limits of Eureka

Springs -- a tourist mecca, nearly all of which is on the National Historic Registry, and runs right alongside the Kings River for two miles before crossing the Kings near its confluence with Osage Creek.

The right-of-way is ...

- at least 150 feet wide (as wide as a 12-lane freeway -- half the length of a standard football field), and
- the towers will be ~150 feet tall (as tall as a 15-story building -- roughly twice the height of the tallest trees in Arkansas).

To erect the towers, giant augurs and/or explosives will be used to excavate holes 6-10 feet wide and 30-40 feet deep, the holes will be filled with concrete, and the towers will be bolted to the concrete. A tower will be erected in the right-of-way about every 800 feet, leading to a total of some 330 towers on the 50-mile right-of-way.

Commenting on SWEPCO's proposal, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources pointed out that three large sinkholes and 49 springs are in the area traversed by Route 109. The Missouri Department of Conservation cautioned that Route 109 traverses an area that is the breeding ground for the endangered Indiana bat.

In 2009 Entergy proposed constructing a 161 kV transmission line in the immediate vicinity of the Kings River - in the same area as the easternmost portion of SWEPCO's Route 109. Entergy's environmental assessment for the project rejected on route, Option A, that followed much of the same path followed by the easternmost portion of SWEPCO's Route 109. Entergy concluded, *Option A has a high potential for numerous adverse environmental factors; the high potential for karst topography that could support the federally listed gray bat in combination with a high potential for the presence of cultural resources issues could result in adverse impacts to both schedule and budget,* and rejected Option A.

Commenting on this same Entergy project, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality pointed out, *"The King's River is an extraordinary resource water (ERW), based on APC&EC Regulation 2 Water Quality Standards. This designation connotes very high water quality and aesthetics."* ADEQ added that *"... ADEQ prefers that stream crossings be avoided when possible."*

ADEQ also addressed the use of herbicides: *"Another issue of concern is right of way maintenance. This is a major concern to many of the Carroll County residents, as evidenced by the number of environmental complaints ADEQ has received. The herbicide management of a right of way must observe provisions for buffer zones near waterways and land owners' property. Due to the adverse impacts observed elsewhere arising from the failure to observe the required buffer zones, ADEQ prefers as little new right of way in the King's River and Osage Creek watersheds as possible."* In closing, ADEQ described the route that was *"most environmentally compatible"* as having *"no stream crossings and the transmission line would be the farthest away from the King's River."*

