

- 19. In the response to question 32, MDE notes and appreciates AES's utilization of HDD at Wildcat Branch, a Nontidal Wetland of Special State Concern.**

**Response:**

As stated in the Response to Comment 32 of MDE's May 7, 2007 Data Request, AES has performed a preliminary HDD feasibility assessment of the referenced area and has determined, based on the information available at this time, that it is technically feasible to utilize HDD for crossing of the NTWSSC between milepost 22.22 and 22.23 on Wild Cat Branch. Following certification of the Project by FERC, AES will perform a more detailed impact assessment of the area that will include site reconnaissance for identification of potential test boring locations, mapping rock outcrops (if present) and consideration to HDD equipment access. Based upon the results of the additional site investigation, AES will determine, in consultation with MDE, if HDD is the least impact crossing method for the NTWSSC.

The use of HDD is one of the many means by which AES has attempted to avoid or to minimize to the maximum extent practicable construction-related impacts to the environment, landowners, and other stakeholders, taking into consideration the technical and economic feasibility of constructing the Pipeline.