



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401
410/573-4575



June 12, 2008

Elizabeth Estes
Greenhome & O'Mara
6110 Frost Place
Laurel, MD 20707

RE: Proposed campus expansion to support the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consolidation at the Federal Research Center (FRC) at White Oak in Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Elizabeth Estes:

This responds to your letter, received May 28, 2008, requesting information on the presence of species which are federally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened within the vicinity of the above reference project area. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing comments in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Should project plans change, or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This response relates only to federally protected threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction. For information on the presence of other rare species, you should contact Lori Byrne of the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Division at (410) 260-8573.

An additional concern of the Service is wetlands protection. Federal and state partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program have adopted an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Basin's remaining wetlands, and the long term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Basin's wetlands resource base. Because of this policy and the functions and values wetlands perform, the Service recommends avoiding wetland impacts. All wetlands within the project area should be identified, and if construction in wetlands is proposed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, should be contacted for permit requirements. They can be reached at (410) 962-3670.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relative to fish and wildlife issues, and thank you for your interests in these resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Devin Ray at (410) 573-4531.

Sincerely,

Mary Ratnaswamy

Mary J. Ratnaswamy, Ph.D.
Program Supervisor, Threatened and Endangered Species



Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
John R. Griffin, Secretary
Eric Schwaab, Deputy Secretary

July 8, 2008

Ms. Elizabeth Estes
Greenhorne & O' Mara
6110 Frost Place
Laurel, MD 20707

RE: Environmental Review for Proposed Campus Expansion to Support The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Consolidation at the Federal Research Center (FRC) at White Oak, Silver Spring, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland.

Dear Ms. Estes:

The Wildlife and Heritage Service has determined that there are no State or Federal records for rare, threatened or endangered species within the boundaries of the project site as delineated. As a result, we have no specific comments or requirements pertaining to protection measures at this time. This statement should not be interpreted however as meaning that rare, threatened or endangered species are not in fact present. If appropriate habitat is available, certain species could be present without documentation because adequate surveys have not been conducted. It is also important to note that the utilization of state funds, or the need to obtain a state authorized permit may warrant additional evaluations that could lead to protection or survey recommendations by the Wildlife and Heritage Service. If this project falls into one of these categories, please contact us for further coordination.

We would like to bring to your attention that there is a remnant magnolia bog called "Powder Mill Bog" just off to the southeast of the project site, that is known to support several plant species listed as rare or endangered at the State level. Any activities on the project site that have potential to impact the hydrology of this nearby bog habitat should be avoided.

In addition, our analysis of the information provided also suggests that the forested area on the project site contains Forest Interior Dwelling Bird habitat. Populations of many Forest Interior Dwelling Bird species (FIDS) are declining in Maryland and throughout the eastern United States. The conservation of FIDS habitat is strongly encouraged by the Department of Natural Resources. In order to do so, the following guidelines could be incorporated into the site design to help minimize the project's impacts on FIDS and other native forest plants and wildlife:

1. Restrict development to nonforested areas.
2. If forest loss or disturbance is unavoidable, concentrate or restrict development to the following areas:
 - a. the perimeter of the forest (i.e., within 300 feet of existing forest edge)
 - b. thin strips of upland forest less than 300 feet wide

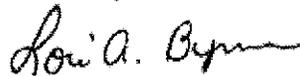
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- c. small, isolated forests less than 50 acres in size
- d. portions of the forest with low quality FIDS habitat, (i.e., areas that are already heavily fragmented, relatively young, exhibit low structural diversity, etc.)
3. Maximize the amount of forest "interior" (forest area >300 feet from the forest edge) within each forest tract (i.e., minimize the forest edge:area ratio). Circular forest tracts are ideal and square tracts are better than rectangular or long, linear forests.
4. Minimize forest isolation. Generally, forests that are adjacent, close to, or connected to other forests provide higher quality FIDS habitat than more isolated forests.
5. Limit forest removal to the "footprint" of houses and to that which is necessary for the placement of roads and driveways.
6. Minimize the number and length of driveways and roads.
7. Roads and driveways should be as narrow and as short as possible; preferably less than 25 and 15 feet, respectively
8. Maintain forest canopy closure over roads and driveways.
9. Maintain forest habitat up to the edges of roads and driveways; do not create or maintain mowed grassy berms.
10. Maintain or create wildlife corridors.
11. Do not remove or disturb forest habitat during April-August, the breeding season for most FIDS. This seasonal restriction may be expanded to February-August if certain early nesting FIDS (e.g., Barred Owl) are present.
12. Landscape homes with native trees, shrubs and other plants and/or encourage homeowners to do so.
13. Encourage homeowners to keep pet cats indoors or, if taken outside, kept on a leash or inside a fenced area.
14. In forested areas reserved from development, promote the development of a diverse forest understory by removing livestock from forested areas and controlling white-tailed deer populations. Do not mow the forest understory or remove woody debris and snags.
15. Afforestation efforts should target a) riparian or streamside areas that lack woody vegetative buffers, b) forested riparian areas less than 300 feet wide, and c) gaps or peninsulas of nonforested habitat within or adjacent to existing FIDS habitat.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to review this project. If you should have any further questions regarding this information, please contact me at (410) 260-8573.

Sincerely,



Lori A. Byrne
Environmental Review Coordinator
Wildlife and Heritage Service
MD Dept. of Natural Resources

ER # 2008.1119.mo/pg
Cc: K. McCarthy, DNR
D. Brinker, DNR