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August 9, 2005

Ms. Angela C. Trahan
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Louisiana Field Office
646 Cajundome Blvd., Suite 400
Lafayette, LA 70506

Re: STB Docket No. AB-103 (Sub-No. 18X)
*The Kansas City Southern Railway Company-- Abandonment Exemption
- Line In Winn Parish, LA*

Dear Ms. Trahan:

This letter is to confirm my conversation with you today about the attached letter from your office dated July 19. As we discussed, The Kansas City Southern Railway Company ("KCSR") intends to seek an exemption from the Surface Transportation Board in the captioned case to abandon 3.16 miles of track in Winn Parish, LA. (This proceeding is distinct from another KCSR abandonment proceeding that is occurring simultaneously. That other proceeding involves the proposed abandonment of about 1.12 miles of track in Springhill, Webster Parish, LA. Your office has already responded to that proposal.)

Upon receiving the exemption to abandon the Winn Parish line, KCSR intends to salvage the rail and track materials of the line. As indicated in the Environmental and Historic Report that apparently crossed in the mail with the attached letter, KCSR's salvage activities will be confined to the railroad's right-of-way. The right-of-way does not contain stands of trees such as the woodpecker habitats described in the attached letter. Therefore, the salvage activities will not disturb potential habitats.

As a result of the limited nature of KCSR's salvage activities, it is my understanding from our conversation today that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service does not anticipate any adverse effect on the red cockaded woodpecker or other species from KCSR's abandonment and salvage of the line.

Thank you for your time in following up and clarifying this issue.

Sincerely,



David C. Reeves

Enclosure

~~Victoria J. Ralston STE SEA~~

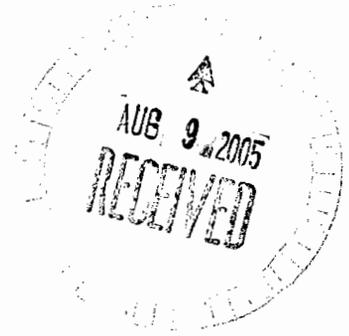


United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506

July 19, 2005



Mr. William A. Mullins
Baker & Miller, P.L.L.C.
2401 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Mullins:

Please reference your June 20, 2005, letter, on behalf of the Kansas City Southern Railway Company, requesting our review of a proposed railroad track abandonment project near Winnfield, Winn Parish, Louisiana. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the information you provided, and offers the following comments in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

The proposed project is located within an area that may be inhabited by the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW, *Picoides borealis*), federally listed as an endangered species. RCWs nest in open, park-like stands of mature (i.e., greater than 60 years of age) pine trees containing little hardwood understory or midstory. RCWs can tolerate small numbers of overstory hardwoods or large midstory hardwoods at low densities found naturally in many southern pine forests, but they are not tolerant of dense hardwood midstories resulting from fire suppression. RCWs excavate roost and nest cavities in large living pines (i.e., 10 inches or greater in diameter at breast height).

The cavity trees and the foraging area within 200 feet of those trees are known as a cluster. Foraging habitat is defined as pine and pine-hardwood (i.e., 50 percent or more of the dominant trees are pines) stands over 30 years of age that are located contiguous to and within one-half mile of the cluster.

If the proposed project area does not contain suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat as defined above, no further consultation with the Service for this project will be necessary. If suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat does exist, however, all suitable nesting habitat within a one-half mile radius from the project boundary should be carefully surveyed by a qualified biologist for the presence of RCW clusters in accordance with the RCW Recovery Plan (2003) survey protocol. We recommend that you provide this office with a copy of the survey report, which should include the following details:

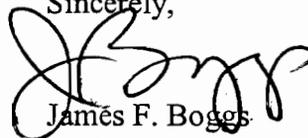
1. survey methodology including dates, qualifications of personnel, size of survey area, and transect density;
2. pine stand characteristics including number of acres of suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat, tree species, basal area and number of pine stems 10 inches or greater per acre, percent cover of pine trees greater than 60 years of age, species of dominant vegetation within each canopy layer, understory conditions and species composition (several representative photographs should be included);
3. number of active and inactive RCW cavity trees observed and the condition of the cavities (e.g., resin flow, shape of cavity, start-holes);
4. presence or absence of RCWs; and
5. topographic quadrangle maps which illustrate areas of adequate RCW nesting and/or foraging habitat, cluster sites, and cavity tree locations relative to proposed construction activities.

If no RCW clusters are found within a one-half mile radius of the project boundary, a request for our concurrence with your "not likely to adversely affect" determination, as well as the basis for your determination, should be included with the survey report. If we concur with that determination, no further consultation with this office will be necessary. If RCW clusters are found in the surveyed areas, however, then further consultation with this office will be required.

The proposed project may also impact wetlands. For a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project, please contact Mr. Ken Moseley (601/631-5289) at the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If the Corps determines that the proposed project is within their regulatory jurisdiction, official Service comments will be provided in response to the corresponding Public Notice.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in the planning stages of this proposed activity. If you need further assistance, please contact Angela C. Trahan (337/291-3137) of this office.

Sincerely,



James F. Boggs
Acting Supervisor
Louisiana Field Office

cc: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg, MS
LDWF, Natural Heritage Program, Baton Rouge, LA

Literature Cited

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Recovery plan for the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*): second revision. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, Georgia. 296 pp.