



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

#EI-1633
Dw

FILE

August 11, 2005

Mr. Herman Kirven
Greenville County Economic Development Corporation
c/o Patricia Haskell-Robinson, Secretary
610 North Main Street
Greenville, SC 29601

Re: Railroad abandonment, Travelers Rest
Protected species assessment
Greenville County, South Carolina
FWS Log No: 4-6-05-1-438

Dear Mr. Kirven:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your July 12, 2005, letter and offers comments regarding the above referenced project. The proposed project involves abandonment of approximately 11.8 miles of rail line. Abandonment activities include clearing of vegetation from the rail corridor, removal of rails and ties, rail bed grooming, and potentially paving of the rail bed for recreational access. The proposed project is to take place in Travelers Rest, Greenville County, South Carolina. The following comments are provided in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

According to botanical surveys submitted to the Service on 25 July, 2005 by The Environmental Edge, LLC, no populations or suitable habitat for Dwarf-flowered Heartleaf (*Hexastylis naniflora*) occur in the rail corridor. Two populations of Bunched Arrowhead (*Sagittaria fasciculata*) were observed during the field survey. According to the report by Drs. Pollard and Newberry, both populations are located on the fringe of the railroad corridor and should not be impacted by the rail bed activities.

For the protection of listed species we recommend the following conservation measures:

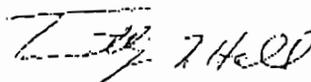
1. All rail line improvements should be contained to the current road bed, especially in the vicinity of Watkins Bridge Road, where bunched arrowhead has been documented.

2. Prior to opening the trail for recreation, fencing and/or signage should be posted to restrict trail users and their pets from destroying listed plants or their habitat.
3. Herbicide use should be restricted within 50 feet of all bunched arrowhead populations, and applied following all label instructions. These restrictions should be clearly marked on site and individuals responsible for maintaining the corridor need to be personally instructed.
4. Landowners adjacent to the railway with bunched arrowhead on their property should be provided information and guidance for preserving their rare resource, including recommendations for proper herbicide use.

Based on surveys conducted by Drs. Gillian Newberry and Joseph Pollard and proposed conservation measures, it is our opinion that the proposed action will have no significant effect on resources under the jurisdiction of the Service that are currently protected by the Act. In view of this, the Service believes that the requirements of Section 7 of the Act have been fulfilled relative to the proposed action, and no further consultation is necessary at this time. However, obligations under Section 7 of the Act must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals that the proposed project may affect listed species in a manner or to an extent not previously considered, (2) the proposed project is subsequently modified to include activities which were not considered during this consultation; or (3) new species are listed or critical habitat designated that might be affected by the proposed project.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on your project. If you have further questions or require additional information, please contact Lora Zimmerman of this office at (843) 727-4707 ext. 226. In future correspondence concerning this project, please reference FWS Log No. 4-6-05-I-438.

Sincerely,



Timothy N. Hall
Field Supervisor

Cc: Dr. Gillian Newberry and Dr. Joseph Pollard; The Environmental Edge, LLC
Mr. William Mullins; Baker & Miller PLLC