



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Pennsylvania Field Office
110 Radnor Road, Suite 101
State College, Pennsylvania 16801-4850

October 15, 2020

Donald Knorr
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
2 East Main Street
Norristown, PA 19401

RE: USFWS Project #2020-0037
PNDI Receipt # 708155

Dear Mr. Knorr:

This responds to your email of October 5, 2020, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) requesting information about federally listed and proposed endangered and threatened species within the area affected by the proposed DEP Emergency Permit for the ME2 PPP HDD S3-0290 project located in Upper Uwchlan Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. The proposed project is within the known range of the bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*), a species that is federally listed as threatened. The following comments are provided pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) to ensure the protection of endangered and threatened species.

Our office has reviewed your email and an email of October 2, 2020 from Ben Berra (a Qualified Bog Turtle Surveyor) regarding this project, which explained that Sunoco had an inadvertent return (IR) when conducting a horizontal direction drilling (HDD) at this site. This line is collocated with another pipeline. In order to protect the integrity of the existing line, Sunoco proposes to grout the failed pilot hole from entry point to exit point, which is approximately 1,575 feet.

Sunoco will know the grouting has completely filled the failed hole when the grout returns to the surface. They are prepared for this to happen and will have vacuum trucks and a containment structure in place to minimize impacts. Due to the more solid nature of this substance, the grouting is not expected to go offsite or have significant environmental impacts.

The HDD was conducted in order to avoid impacts to wetlands. Phase 1 surveys were conducted in 2014 at wetland H17, the wetland that is being impacted by the IR and grouting project, and adjacent wetlands (C48, C47, C46 and C 44). All of these wetlands were determined to contain potential bog turtle habitat. Therefore, Phase 2 surveys occurred in all of these wetlands in 2014. The Phase 2 surveys concluded probable absence, except for wetland C44, which the Service

determined to be hydrologically connected to a known bog turtle site discovered by Skelly and Loy in the early 2000s.

Although 6 years have lapsed since Phase 2 surveys were conducted at these wetlands, due to the low population density at the wetland which is connected to C44, the inferred absence of bog turtles in all of the other wetlands from the 2014 phase 2 surveys, and the fact that the grout will be contained within a limited area, we conclude that grouting of the line will not cause negative effects to the bog turtle. This letter does not address the HDD, IR, alternatives, potential reroutes, clean up, or subsequent restoration that may need to occur at this site due to the IR. This letter solely addresses the filling of the pilot hole with grout in order to insure the integrity of the existing line.

This response relates only to endangered and threatened species under our jurisdiction, based on an office review of the proposed project's location. No field inspection of the project area has been conducted by this office.

To avoid potential delays in reviewing your project, please use the above-referenced USFWS project tracking number in any future correspondence regarding this project.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Pamela Shellenberger of my staff at 814-234-4090 x7459.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonja Jahrsdoerfer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonja Jahrsdoerfer
Project Leader

Brad.Schaeffer@tetrattech.com
bberra@skellyloy.com