



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office
110 Radnor Road Suite 101
State College, PA 16801-7987
Phone: (814) 234-4090 Fax: (814) 234-0748



In Reply Refer To:
Project code: 2025-0148046
Project Name: Sharon Data Center

09/11/2025 15:15:38 UTC

Federal Nexus: no
Federal Action Agency (if applicable):

Subject: Technical assistance for 'Sharon Data Center'

Dear Josh Reffner:

This letter records your determination using the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on September 11, 2025, for "Sharon Data Center" (here forward, Project). This project has been assigned Project Code 2025-0148046 and all future correspondence should clearly reference this number.

The Service developed the IPaC system and associated species' determination keys in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and based on a standing analysis. All information submitted by the Project proponent into the IPaC must accurately represent the full scope and details of the Project. Failure to accurately represent or implement the Project as detailed in IPaC or the Northeast Determination Key (Dkey), invalidates this letter. **Answers to certain questions in the DKey commit the project proponent to implementation of conservation measures that must be followed for the ESA determination to remain valid.**

To make a no effect determination, the full scope of the proposed project implementation (action) should not have any effects (either positive or negative effect(s)), to a federally listed species or designated critical habitat. Effects of the action are all consequences to listed species or critical habitat that are caused by the proposed action, including the consequences of other activities that are caused by the proposed action. A consequence is caused by the proposed action if it would not occur but for the proposed action and it is reasonably certain to occur. Effects of the action may occur later in time and may include consequences occurring outside the immediate area involved in the action. (See § 402.17). Under Section 7 of the ESA, if a federal action agency makes a no effect determination, no further consultation with, or concurrence from, the Service is required (ESA §7). If a proposed Federal action may affect a listed species or designated critical habitat, formal consultation is required (except when the Service concurs, in writing, that a

proposed action "is not likely to adversely affect (NLAA)" listed species or designated critical habitat [50 CFR §402.02, 50 CFR§402.13]).

The IPaC results indicated the following species is (are) potentially present in your project area and, based on your responses to the Service's Northeast DKey, you determined the proposed Project will have the following effect determinations:

Species	Listing Status	Determination
Eastern Massasauga (=rattlesnake) (<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>)	Threatened	NLAA
Indiana Bat (<i>Myotis sodalis</i>)	Endangered	No effect

Conclusion

Coordination with the Service is complete. This letter serves as technical assistance. All conservation measures should be implemented as proposed. Thank you for considering federally listed species during your project planning.

If no changes occur with the Project or there are no updates on listed species, no further consultation/coordination for this project is required for the species identified above. However, the Service recommends that project proponents re-evaluate the Project in IPaC if: 1) the scope, timing, duration, or location of the Project changes (includes any project changes or amendments); 2) new information reveals the Project may impact (positively or negatively) federally listed species or designated critical habitat; or 3) a new species is listed, or critical habitat designated. If any of the above conditions occurs, additional consultation with the Service should take place before project implements any changes which are final or commits additional resources.

Other Species and Critical Habitat that May be Present in the Action Area

In addition to the species listed above, the following species and/or critical habitats may also occur in your project area and are not covered by this conclusion:

- Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* Proposed Threatened

Please Note: If the Action may impact bald or golden eagles, additional coordination with the Service under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (54 Stat. 250, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 668a-d) by the prospective permittee may be required. Please contact the Migratory Birds Permit Office, (413) 253-8643, or PermitsR5MB@fws.gov, with any questions regarding potential impacts to Eagles.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or need further assistance, please contact the Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office and reference the Project Code associated with this Project.

Action Description

You provided to IPaC the following name and description for the subject Action.

1. Name

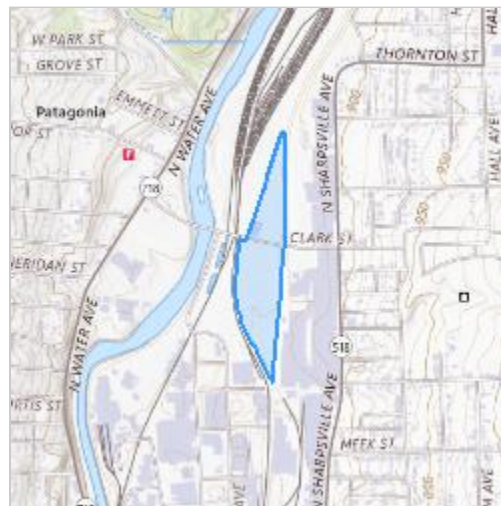
Sharon Data Center

2. Description

The following description was provided for the project 'Sharon Data Center':

Backbone Sharon, LLC is proposing the construction of two 50 MW data center buildings and two substations within the 17-acre area of interest (AOI). The AOI is within an abandoned industrial development; no water resources will be affected by the proposed project. The project area consists of a previously developed industrial area that consists mostly of existing concrete pads and gravel areas.

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@41.2439054,-80.50627466099536,14z>



QUALIFICATION INTERVIEW

1. As a representative of this project, do you agree that all items submitted represent the complete scope of the project details and you will answer questions truthfully?

Yes

2. Does the proposed project include, or is it reasonably certain to cause, intentional take of listed species?

Note: This question could refer to research, direct species management, surveys, and/or studies that include intentional handling/encountering, harassment, collection, or capturing of any individual of a federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species.

No

3. Is the action authorized, permitted, licensed, funded, or being carried out by a Federal agency in whole or in part?

Note: for projects in Pennsylvania: Projects requiring authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act would be considered as having a federal nexus. Since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has issued the Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit (PASPGP), which may be verified by the PA Department of Environmental Protection or certain Conservation Districts, the need to receive a Corps authorization to perform the work under the PASPGP serves as a federal nexus. As such, if proposing to use the PASPGP, you would answer 'yes' to this question.

No

4. Will the proposed project involve the use or storage of herbicide?

No

5. Will the proposed project involve herbaceous native vegetation removal (including prescribed fire that would result in burning of plants) or mowing?

No

6. Will all activities occur within an area that is currently paved, graveled, routinely maintained lawn, and/or inside a structure?

Yes

7. Will the proposed project involve demolition, rehabilitation, property elevation, renovation, and/or rebuilding of one or more existing buildings (e.g., residential, commercial and industrial buildings, or utilities)? Note: if project activities include modification of bridges and/or culverts, answer this question "No".

No

8. Does the project area intersect the boundary of VAFO?

Automatically answered

No

9. Does any component of the project associated with this action include activities or structures that may pose a collision risk to **birds** (e.g., plane-based surveys, land-based or offshore wind turbines, new or enlarged communication towers or broadcast towers, high voltage transmission lines, any type of towers with or without guy wires)?

No

10. Will the proposed project result in **permanent** changes to surface water or groundwater quantity, retention, quality or timing?

Note: Projects may affect stream flow, surface water, or groundwater through various activities such as; water withdrawal, water recharge, well drilling, infiltration impacts, stormwater outlets, hydropower production, water impoundments, intake structures, stream diversion, mining operations, dams, surface water drainage, or hydroelectric turbines.

If a project only involves temporary and limited reductions in water that will not displace listed species or significantly alter their water availability (meaning there are no changes to their feeding, breeding, or sheltering), you can answer "No" to this question.

This question specifically addresses the quantity of water in a stream. Other water quality issues, such as sedimentation and turbidity, will be covered in subsequent questions.

No

11. Does the project include activity in or within 300 feet of a freshwater wetland?

Note: This encompasses various project activities related to wetlands, including activities taking place within wetlands, activities occurring within 300 feet of wetlands that could impact them, and water withdrawals and/or discharge of contaminants, even if covered by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit

Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to; wetland draining, ditching, tilling, filling, excavation, stream diversion, impoundments, mowing, grazing vegetation, construction of access roads, creation of detention basins, installation of water or sewer lines, irrigation, increase of impervious surfaces, and application of pesticides, deicing agents, or fertilizers.

Yes

12. Will the proposed project involve earth moving or other ground disturbance that could cause erosion and sedimentation, and/or contamination within 300 feet of a freshwater wetland or along a stream?

Note: Answer "Yes" to this question if erosion and sediment control measures will be used.

Yes

13. Will the proposed project impact streams or tributaries of streams where listed species may be present through activities such as, but not limited to, valley fills, large-scale vegetation removal that could result in ground destabilization, and/or change in site topography?

No

14. Will the proposed project involve vegetation removal within 300 feet of a perennial stream bank where aquatic listed species may be present?

Yes

15. Will erosion and sedimentation control Best Management Practices (BMPs) associated with applicable state and/or Federal permits, be applied to the project?

Note: If BMPs have been provided by and/or coordinated with and approved by the appropriate Ecological Services Field Office, answer "Yes" to this question.

Yes

16. Is the project being funded, lead, or managed in whole or in part by U.S Fish and Wildlife Restoration and Recovery Program (e.g., Partners, Coastal, Fisheries, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration, Refuges)?

No

17. Does the proposed project involve construction or installation of a non-commercial boat dock on a stream?

No

18. Does any component of the project associated with this action include activities or structures that may pose a collision risk to **bats** (e.g., plane-based surveys, land-based or offshore wind)?

No

19. Will the proposed project affect wetlands in areas where **bats** may be present?

No

20. Will the proposed project involve blasting where bats may be present?

No

21. Does the project intersect the Indiana bat species list area?

Automatically answered

Yes

22. Are there any caves, mines, or mine features that are suitable for hibernating Indiana bats within the area expected to be impacted by the project?

No

23. Are trees present within the action area?

Note: If there are trees within the action area that are of a sufficient size to be potential roosts for bats (i.e., live trees and/or snags ≥ 5 inches dbh (12.7 centimeter)), answer "Yes". If you are unsure, answer "Yes." Or refer to Appendix A of the Range-wide Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines for definitions and an assessment form that will assist you in determining if suitable habitat is present within your project's action area. Suitable summer habitat for Indiana bat consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where they roost, forage, and travel and may also include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields and pastures. This includes forests and woodlots containing potential roosts (i.e., live trees and/or snags ≥ 5 inches dbh (12.7 centimeter) that have exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, and/or hollows), as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. These wooded areas may be dense or loose aggregates of trees with variable amounts of canopy closure. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet (305 meters) of other forested/wooded habitat.

No

24. Does the project intersect the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Species List Area?

Automatically answered

Yes

25. Do you have any other documents that you want to include with this submission?

No

PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Approximately how many acres of trees would the proposed project remove?
0
2. Approximately how many total acres of disturbance are within the disturbance/
construction limits of the proposed project?
17
3. Briefly describe the habitat within the construction/disturbance limits of the project site.
*Abandoned industrial development that consists mostly of existing concrete pads and
gravel areas.*

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Private Entity
Name: Josh Reffner
Address: 700 Cherrington Parkway
City: Moon Township
State: PA
Zip: 15108
Email: jreffner@cecinc.com
Phone: 4129837536