

Protected Species Report and Cultural Reconnaissance Survey

OCT 27 2008



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407



October 24, 2008

Mr. Eric J. McClanahan
S&ME, Inc.
620 Wando Park Boulevard
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Re: Protected Species Report
F-1 Tract
St. George, Dorchester County, South Carolina
S&ME Project No. 1131-08-602
FWS Log No. 2009-I-0017

Dear Mr. McClanahan:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your letter regarding the protected species survey of the above referenced project located in St. George, Dorchester County, South Carolina. The tract is bounded on the south by U.S. Highway 78 and on the east by Winding Wood road. The tract is approximately 650 acres, which is partially farmed and partially wooded, with no development present. The site is level with soils ranging from moderately well drained to very poorly drained. The following comments are provided in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

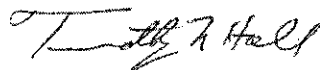
The protected species report provided addressed the potential occurrences of bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), and canby's dropwort (*Oxypolis canbyi*). Surveys and habitat assessments for bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, woodstork, and shortnose sturgeon indicated that these species and their habitats do not occur on the subject site. It is the Service's opinion that future development on the project site will not likely have reasonably foreseeable adverse effects on these particular resources under the jurisdiction of the Service that are currently protected by the Act.

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Based on the literature review, habitat assessment, and intensive pedestrian survey of the proposed site provided, there does appear to be suitable habitat for Canby's dropwort, an endangered species that has a possibility to occur in Dorchester County. This species' habitat includes coastal plain wet meadows, wet pineland savannas, ditches, sloughs, and around the edges of cypress-pond pine bays. The habitat assessment provided states that there are two such cypress ponds within the site located at the north end of the site. Also indicated is the occurrence of pond cypress trees (*Taxodium ascendens*), Virginia chain-fern (*Woodwardia virginica*), and sedges (*Carex spp.*) in the area, which have historically been common associates with Canby's dropwort. A soil survey of the two open cypress ponds using the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Soils website indicates that soils surrounding the area include a large amount of rains sandy loam soil type that is known to support populations of Canby's dropwort. Due to the possibility of there being suitable habitat in this area the Service suggests that a botanical survey be conducted to determine the possible presence Canby's dropwort, only in the areas included in the two cypress ponds, during the appropriate survey window which includes mid-August to September. If development is to occur without a survey individuals and/or populations of this federally listed species that are of aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the United States and its people could be destroyed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed project. In order to facilitate future consultation requests, please include project Latitude and Longitude coordinates in those requests. Failure to include this information in the project description may increase processing time beyond our normal 30-day review period. Thank you for your assistance. If you have questions pertaining to this project, please contact Melissa Bimbi at (843) 727-4707 ext. 217. In future correspondence concerning the project, please reference FWS Log No 2009-I-0017.

Sincerely,



Timothy N. Hall
Field Supervisor

TNH/MKB