

October 23, 2012

V6175, "Paleoliquefaction Studies in Moderate Seismicity Regions with a History of Large Events"

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION WITH USFWS REGARDING PALEOLIQUEFACTION RIVER  
RECONNAISSANCE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission intends to conduct research to identify paleoliquefaction features along eroded river cutbanks and drainage ditches in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia. In planning for these activities, the NRC held informal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to obtain feedback regarding the impact our proposed activities would have on threatened, endangered, protected and essential fish habitat.

Informal consultation between the NRC and the USFWS was initiated with a phone meeting on June 28, 2012. Meeting participants included Dr. Thomas Weaver, NRC, Mr. Kenneth Graham, USFWS, Ms. Tara O'Neil, Pacific Northwest National Lab (PNNL) and Ms. Amanda Stegen, PNNL. The meeting consisted of providing Mr. Graham with a description of the project and obtaining some initial feedback. Meeting notes are attached with this letter.

As a follow up to our June 28, 2012 meeting, Ms. O'Neil from PNNL on behalf of the NRC sent Mr. Graham via email a written description of our proposed activities for the paleoliquefaction river reconnaissance work (see enclosures). Mr. Graham then obtained input from other USFWS staff in the regions where the paleoliquefaction work will be conducted. Based on USFWS staff input, Mr. Graham provided an email response dated August 13, 2012 stating that USFWS staff had not identified any concerns regarding our proposed activities for Federally listed species designated critical habitats (email is attached).

Due to the limited scope and minor disturbance of this reconnaissance field work, the NRC concludes that fish and wildlife species and habitat will not be impacted by the proposed action. The NRC concludes this project will have "no effect" on Federally threatened or endangered species. This conclusion is consistent with informal consultation with the USFWS.

Sincerely,

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Thomas. J. Weaver, PhD, PE  
Project Manager  
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

Enclosures (4)