



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Chesapeake Bay Field Office  
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 573-4575



March 13, 2009

Jon F. Hall  
State Conservationist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
339 Busch's Frontage Rd., Suite 301  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. Hall:

Over the past year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office has been assisting the Maryland Natural Resources Conservation Service Office with developing a procedure that NRCS personnel in Maryland can use to ensure that activities they fund or oversee are in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This cooperative process has resulted in the three guidance documents which were enclosed with your letter of March 4, 2009:

- 1) *Guidance for Endangered Species Act Compliance and Threatened and Endangered Species Conservation in Maryland.*
- 2) *Maryland NRCS Practice Effects on Threatened and Endangered Species.*
- 3) *Decision Diagram for Maryland NRCS Practice Effects on Threatened and Endangered Species.*

We reviewed these documents and recommended some relatively minor changes in the first two of them. Based on these recommendations, NRCS State Biologist Steve Strano developed revised documents which he forwarded to us via a March 11, 2009 email. With these revisions, we concur that the process and procedures established by these documents will facilitate NRCS's compliance with the ESA in Maryland. With the full implementation of these procedures, we expect that NRCS practices will be unlikely to adversely affect threatened and endangered species, and, in addition, will result in beneficial effects on the species from the implementation of some of the practices.

We appreciate the dedication of Steve Strano of your staff in developing the guidance necessary to carry this process forward. Although labor intensive for both our agencies, we believe this programmatic approach demonstrates true interagency cooperation that will prove beneficial in the near future. If you have further questions regarding this response, please contact Andy Moser of my Endangered Species staff at (410) 573-4537.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leopoldo Miranda".

Leopoldo Miranda  
Field Supervisor

Cc: Al Rizzo



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Chesapeake Bay Field Office  
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
<http://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay>

Steve Strano  
State Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
339 Busch's Frontage Road, Suite 301  
Annapolis, MD 21409

November 3, 2009

Dear Mr. Strano:

This responds to your letter of October 28, 2009, requesting our review of your revised *NRCS Practice Effects* document. The revisions you have made are technical in nature, but they definitely improve the consistency and clarity of the document. This should help those individuals implementing NRCS practices in understanding the conservation needs of the affected threatened and endangered species.

We concur with the changes you have made and believe they will further the conservation of Federally listed threatened and endangered species in Maryland. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to review these changes. Should you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Andy Moser of my Endangered Species staff at (410) 573-4537.

Sincerely,

*Julie A. Slacum*  
Julie A. Slacum  
Field Supervisor

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