

United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service



Bloomington Field Office (ES)
620 South Walker Street
Bloomington, IN 47403-2121
Phone: (812) 334-4261 Fax: (812) 334-4273



22 June 2006

Tom Cant
Please put w/ file for
Project.

Pickup

J. M. Hunsicker,
Environmental Site Manager
Naval Support Activity Crane
300 Highway 361
Crane, IN 47522-5001

RE: Proposed tree clearing to eliminate treats to proposed fencing around the Dye Burial Grounds at Naval Support Activity Crane (11015, Ser PRCR4/6081)

Dear Commander Hunsicker:

The Bloomington Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received your letter (dated 24 May 2006) detailing the proposed project referenced above and requesting informal consultation on possible impacts to the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). This letter serves as the Service's response for these ongoing actions. These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

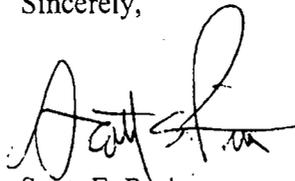
We have reviewed the proposed plans for the construction of a fence around the existing Dye Burial Grounds and the clearing of trees around the perimeter of the area that could pose a threat to the fence. A 100-foot buffer will be cleared, which would include approximately 2.85 acres of forested habitat needing to be cleared. Eleven snags would need to be removed, but these have little remaining bark. Most live trees are between 6 and 18 inches in diameter at breast height. Tree clearing would be done after 15 September 2006 and prior to 15 April 2007 and thus there would not be any potential for direct take of roosting Indiana bats to occur.

The Service concurs that the proposed tree clearing and construction of the fence at Crane is not likely to adversely affect Indiana bats and therefore may continue or proceed as planned. We grant our concurrence because 1) after base-wide mist net surveys were completed on Crane in the summer of 2005, there was no direct or indirect evidence of maternity colonies in the proposed project area, 2) loss of 2.85 acres of forest habitat would have an insignificant effect on any Indiana bats (most likely adult males in the project area) that may traditionally use that habitat for foraging or roosting, and 3) sufficient summer habitat will remain in the vicinity of this project site to sustain any bats returning to this area in the spring of 2007.

This precludes the need for further consultation for this proposed project as required under

section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. If, however, new information on endangered species within the proposed project area becomes available or if significant changes/additions are made to the proposed projects (e.g., other associated actions, or if additional tree clearing will occur or will need to occur before 15 September or after 15 April), then please contact Andy King at (812) 334-4261 ext. 216 or Andrew_King@fws.gov for further consultation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott E. Pruitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "P".

Scott E. Pruitt
Field Supervisor

cc: Steve Andrews, Crane NSWC - Natural Resources