

# Exhibit 17 - US Fish and Wildlife Endangered Species Findings

United States Department of the Interior

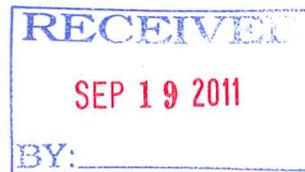


FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
646 Cajundome Blvd.  
Suite 400  
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



September 14, 2011

Mr. John B. French  
Vice President  
Engineering Services Manager  
Alliance Incorporated  
1111 Hawn Avenue  
Shreveport, La 71107



Dear Ms. Walton-Green:

Please reference your August 22, 2011, letter regarding the proposed Caddo Ward II Industrial Development Corporation improvements to an industrial park facility located in Caddo Parish, Louisiana. The Service has reviewed the information provided and offers the following comments in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

The proposed project area is located within areas that may be inhabited by the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW, *Picoides borealis*), federally listed as an endangered species. RCWs inhabit open, park-like stands of mature (i.e., greater than 60 years of age) pine trees containing little hardwood understory or midstory. They can tolerate small numbers of overstory hardwoods, or large midstory hardwoods at low densities found naturally in many southern pine forests, but they are not tolerant of dense hardwood midstories resulting from fire suppression. RCWs excavate roost and nest cavities in large living pines (i.e., 10 inches or greater in diameter at breast height).

The cavity trees and the foraging area within 200 feet of those trees are known as a cluster. Foraging habitat is defined as pine and pine-hardwood (i.e., 50 percent or more of the dominant trees are pine trees) stands over 30 years of age that are located contiguous to and within one-half mile of the cluster.

If the proposed project area does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat, further coordination with the Service for the RCW will not be necessary. However, if RCW foraging and/or nesting habitat does exist within the proposed project boundary, all suitable nesting habitat within a one-half mile radius of this habitat within the project boundary should be carefully surveyed by a qualified biologist for the presence of RCW clusters in accordance with the RCW Recovery Plan (2003) survey protocol. If RCW clusters are found within the area

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surveyed, further coordination with this office is recommended. We recommend that you provide this office with a copy of the survey report, which should include the following details:

1. survey methodology including dates, size of survey area, and transect length and density;
2. pine stand characteristics including acreage of suitable nesting habitat, species, basal area, percent cover of pine trees greater than 60 years of age, species of dominant vegetation within each canopy layer, and understory conditions and species composition (photographs should be included);
3. number of active and inactive RCW cavity trees observed, and the condition of the cavities (e.g., resin flow, shape of cavity, start-holes);
4. presence or absence of RCWs; and
5. topographic quadrangle maps which illustrate areas of adequate RCW habitat, cluster sites, and cavity tree locations relative to the proposed construction activities.

The proposed project may impact wetlands. For a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project, please contact Mr. Charles Allred (601/631-5546) at the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If the Corps determines that the proposed project is within their jurisdiction, official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comments will be provided in response to the corresponding Public Notice.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in the planning stages of this proposed activity. If you need further assistance, please contact Amy Trahan of this office at 337/291-3126.

Sincerely,



David Walther  
Acting Field Supervisor  
Louisiana Ecological Services Office

cc: USACE, Vicksburg, MS  
LDWF, Natural Heritage Program, Baton Rouge, LA

### **Literature Cited**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Recovery plan for the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*): second revision. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, GA. 296 pp.