



United States Department of the Interior

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

May 8, 2007

Mr. James R. Rogers  
Gulf Coast Environmental Consultants, Inc.  
326 West Shore Drive  
Alexandria, LA 71303

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Please reference your May 7, 2007, letter requesting our review of the proposed town center development in Slidell, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. We have reviewed the information you provided, and offer 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 is located within areas that may be inhabited by the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW, *Picoides borealis*), federally listed as an endangered species. RCWs nests in open, park-like stands of mature (i.e., greater than 60 years of age) pine trees containing little hardwood understory or midstory. RCWs 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 pines) 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 nesting and/or foraging habitat as defined above, no further consultation with the Service for this project will be necessary. If suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat does exist, however, all suitable nesting habitat within a one-half mile radius from 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. 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, qualifications of personnel, size of survey area, and transect density;


2. pine stand characteristics including number of acres of suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat, tree species, basal area and number of pine stems 10 inches or greater per acre, percent cover of pine trees greater than 60 years of age, species of dominant vegetation within each canopy layer, understory conditions and species composition (several representative 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 nesting and/or foraging habitat, cluster sites, and cavity tree locations relative to proposed construction activities.

If no RCW clusters are found within a one-half mile radius of the project boundary, a request for our concurrence with your "not likely to adversely affect" determination, as well as the basis for your determination, should be included with the survey report. If we concur with that determination, no further consultation with this office will be necessary. If RCW clusters are found in the surveyed areas, however, then further consultation with this office will be required.

The proposed project may impact wetlands. For a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project, please contact Mr. John Bruza (504/862-1288) at the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If the Corps determines that the proposed project is within their regulatory 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 Joshua Marceaux (337/291-3110) of this office.

Sincerely,

  
James F. Boggs  
Acting Supervisor  
Louisiana Field Office

cc: Corps of Engineers, New Orleans, LA  
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.



Thanks,  
Kyle

Kyle F. Balkum  
Biologist Program Manager, Habitat Section  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Office: 225-765-2819  
Fax: 225-765-2818

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**From:** Baka, Eric J.  
**Sent:** Friday, June 27, 2008 11:07 AM  
**To:** Balkum, Kyle  
**Cc:** Trahan, Edward; Hagaman, Fred; Tuma, Tommy; Ribbeck, Kenny  
**Subject:** Harrison Law RCW site visit in Slidell

Kyle,  
This email contains my findings regarding a red-cockaded woodpecker survey report submitted to LDWF from Providence Engineering (Providence Project # 299-07) dated December 2007 (representing Harrison Law, LLC) for a proposed mixed use real estate development in Slidell along I-10 and between LA 433. Per the applicants request to your office an additional red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) concurrence letter was requested from LDWF to fulfill HUDs permitting process with regards to this development. I reviewed Providence's RCW survey report and conducted a site visit on 20 June 2008 with Charles E. Jones from Providence. During the site visit I found no evidence of RCWs on the property and no suitable contiguous RCW habitat large enough to sustain a group of RCWs. I concur with Providence's report that the project **is not likely to adversely effect the RCW.** The applicant should contact LDWF and USFWS if any evidence of RCW activity is discovered during construction and/or RCWs are detected within 0.5 miles of the project boundary.

Eric Baka  
Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Coordinator  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
1995 Shreveport Hwy.  
Pineville, LA 71360  
Office Phone: (318) 487-5890 Fax: (318) 487-5886  
LDWF Region 3: (318) 487-5885  
email: ebaka@wlf.louisiana.gov