



Florida Department of Transportation

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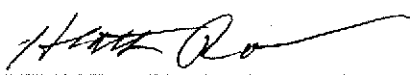
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FWS Log No. 2014-I-0233

The Proposed action is not likely to adversely affect resources protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) This finding fulfills the requirements of the Act.

Ms. Jane Monaghan
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
North Florida Ecological Services Office
7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200
Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7517


for Jay B. Herrington
Field Supervisor

8/12/14
Date

RE: **Endangered Species Act Section 7 Informal Listed Species Coordination**
Westshore Regional Multimodal Center
Hillsborough County, Florida
Work Program Item Segment No.: 415348-1-32-01
Federal Aid Project No.: N/A

Dear Ms. Monaghan:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Seven, is conducting a Project Development and Environment study to determine the configuration, benefits, costs, and impacts of developing and operating a Westshore Regional Multimodal Center (WRMC) within the Westshore Business District area of Tampa, Florida (Figure 1). The purpose of the study is to provide documented environmental and engineering analyses to assist the FDOT in reaching a decision on the location and conceptual design of the necessary improvements for the WRMC in order to accommodate future multimodal services in the Tampa Bay region. It is envisioned that the WRMC will provide seamless connections between local and regional transportation systems including airports, seaports, highways, and transit services, such as premium and intercity bus service and future rail systems. As a result, the center will enhance existing and planned transportation systems in the region. Specifically, the WRMC is intended to facilitate better transportation linkages between Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of transportation systems in the Tampa Bay region.

A State Environmental Impact Report will be completed for the WRMC. However, for the purposes of this coordination, the FDOT is following protocol for potential federal permit requirements.

Figure 1. Site C Project Location Map



Westshore Regional Multimodal Center
PD&E Study

Location Map

The Recommended Alternative, Site C, has been identified and is shown as the yellow cross-hatched area in **Figure 1**. The WRMC at this location would be part of a redevelopment of the existing strip of parcels north of I-275 between Trask Street and Manhattan Avenue. The WRMC and the future I-275 transit platform could be connected by an elevated pedestrian walkway at a later time. The Site C alternative is located within Township 29 S, Range 18 E, Section 20.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) North Florida Ecological Services website identifies seven federally-endangered species, five federally-threatened and one federal candidate species as occurring/potentially occurring within Hillsborough County. Based on a review of existing databases and on-site conditions, the FDOT has determined that suitable habitat exists for only one species, the federally-endangered wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). There is no designated critical habitat for any species in the vicinity of Site C.

Based on the history and extent of urban development (especially grading, paving and sodding activities), the possibility of any federally-listed wildlife species occurring within Site C is low. The Efficient Transportation Decision Making Environmental Screening Tool did not identify any natural wetlands within Site C. However, this site contains a wet ditch approximately 910 feet in total length, containing freshwater herbaceous vegetation. This ditch is relatively shallow, characterized by intermittent open and culverted sections (approximately 710 feet and 200 feet, respectively), and has an estimated average width of 16 feet. Although this ditch appears to have been constructed in disturbed, upland soils, it may have direct hydrologic connectivity to a tributary which outfalls into Tampa Bay near Cypress Point Park west of SR 589/Memorial Highway. The open portions of this wet ditch (approximately 0.26 acre) within Site C could serve as foraging habitat for the federally-endangered wood stork and other state-listed wading bird species. The Site C project area is within the USFWS 15-mile radii of four (4) wood stork Core Foraging Areas (615333, Sheldon Road, East Lake/Bellows Lake and Little Hillsborough River/Swamp).

Based on the wet ditch's connectivity to downstream waters, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may assert jurisdiction over this feature under the provisions of Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act and permit impacts under a Nationwide Permit. Based on current regulations, mitigation requirements are not anticipated for impacts to surface waters. However, if the USACE requires mitigation for functions associated with the wet ditch currently provided in Site C, mitigation may be provided through the in-kind replacement of the existing ditch, the purchase of mitigation bank credits or the FDOT Mitigation Program in accordance with Chapter 373.4137 Florida Statutes.

Summary

The FDOT has reviewed the impacts expected from project construction and has determined that the project is not likely to result in adverse impacts to species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Based on the project's location within a heavily urbanized area, minimal nature of potential impacts, and the availability of options to offset project impacts, the FDOT has determined that the proposed project *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the wood stork and will have *no effect* on other federally-listed species within Hillsborough County. There will be no impacts to designated critical habitat. Via the concurrence block at the end of this letter, the FDOT is seeking USFWS concurrence on these findings. The FDOT respectfully requests a response from the USFWS within 30 days.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (813) 975-6496 or email me at robin.rhinesmith@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,



Robin Rhinesmith
Environmental Administrator

RMR

cc: Scott Sanders, FWC
Kirk Bogen, FDOT

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service finds the attached project documentation complete and sufficient and _____ concurs/ _____ does not concur with the recommendations and findings provided herein.

USFWS Comments:

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Jane Monaghan
(or Designee)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
North Florida Ecological Services Office

Date