

Appendix C. Threatened & Endangered Species

FINAL REPORT
RUNWAY 8-26 – OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL
PITT-GREENVILLE AIRPORT (PGV)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FEBRUARY 5, 2018
Revised April 27, 2018

Environmental Professionals, Inc. has completed the Environmental Assessment of the proposed Obstruction Removal to Runway 8-26 at the Pitt-Greenville Airport (PGV). This report is provided as a collection of information to be included in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and as described in the Scope of Services of May 19, 2016.

FEDERAL & STATE-LISTED SPECIES
IMPACT REVIEW

3.5 FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS

To determine the potential for impacts on endangered or threatened species and on critical habitats in the Area of Potential Effect, Environmental Professionals, Inc. performed the following tasks:

- Consulted with Federal and State agencies (including U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and N.C. Natural Heritage Program) to obtain a list of State and Federally-listed species with known occurrence or habitat in Pitt County.
- Reviewed habitat requirements for each species prior to a field site visit to rule out species whose habitats are not in the project area and not in close enough proximity to be potentially impacted by the proposed project.
- Performed two field site visits during appropriate seasons/times to define existing habitat/biotic communities present and identify the presence/evidence of listed species.

The results of the review are summarized in this section and were provided to U.S Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the EA scoping review request (see Appendix A).

3.5.1 BIOTIC COMMUNITIES

Environmental Professionals, Inc. performed a field investigation and mapped the biotic communities in the Area of Potential Effect on July 10, 2017 and September 14, 2017, and the assessment was performed in two phases. The first phase involved a review of available resource information, and the second phase involved two site reconnaissances of the study area.

Resource information reviewed included the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly the Soil Conservation Service) Soil Survey of Pitt County (1974), the U.S. Geologic Service (USGS) topographic maps Greenville SW quadrangle (1982) and Greenville NW quadrangle (1981), list of protected species known to occur in Pitt County, and the State Protection Status as determined by the Plant Conservation Program (NC Department of Agriculture), the Natural Heritage Program (NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources), and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The review also included the assessment of species subject to Federal Protection Status designated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service in accordance with the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended).

These documents were used in part to establish biotic communities as classified by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program's publication, "Classification of the Natural Communities of North Carolina" (Schafale and Weakley, 1990). Although these classifications categorize communities determined by natural processes, it should be noted that some biotic communities within the study area have been impacted by man-induced alterations. These alterations will be noted in the description of communities.

Biotic communities in the study area include Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (Coastal Plain Subtype), Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood (Brownwater Subtype), Cypress-Gum Swamp (Brownwater Subtype), and Sand and Mud Bar.

The biotic communities in the study area are described below.

Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (Coastal Plain Subtype)

The Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest is the biotic community extending to the east end of Runway 26. This area has been highly disturbed, and no remnant of the natural community exhibits species associated with the typical vegetation. The entire area of proposed impact is cleared and maintained and is a mixture of annual and perennial grasses such as bahia, bermuda, centipede, and crabgrass.

This community exists in the middle riverine terraces of the study area and is predominantly composed of Lakeland Sand. This soil ranges from well to moderately well drained soils.

Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood (Brownwater Subtype)

The Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood is the biotic community on the western end at the edge of Runway 8. The majority of this area is cleared and maintained and is a mixture of annual and perennial grasses such as centipede and crabgrass. The lower areas support red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) saplings. This biotic community is generally upgradient of the Cypress-Gum Swamp and downgradient of the Mesic Mixed Hardwood forest. This portion of the study area has been highly modified and is supported by Bibb Complex Soils and Udorthents. The Bibb Series are poorly drained soils on flood plains and lower terraces. The filled areas (Udorthents) contain a variety of soil combinations which include sand and gravel. Although this biotic community is palustrine, it is rarely flooded; however, the watertable remains high.

Cypress-Gum Swamp (Brownwater Subtype)

The Cypress-Gum Swamp biotic community spans both sides of the Tar River and is the lower floodplain of the river. The biotic community is dominated by water tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*) and cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). The most common understory species is water ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*), and there are hardly any species in the herb stratum. This biotic community exists between the Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood biotic community and the riverine system on the lowest and wettest part of the floodplain. The soils are *Typic fluvaquents* and are identified as "swamp." The soils are blocky to fine-textured mucky soils and generally are flooded.

Sand and Mud Bar

The sand and mud biotic community is in and adjacent to the Tar River which is too wet and severely flooded to support a forest canopy. The soils are coarse or fine-grained alluvial deposits, lacking any soil development.

Sand and mud bars are a part of the Riverine System as defined by the Natural Heritage Operations Manual (The Nature Conservancy 1981). They range from intermittently exposed to intermittently flooded. Due to frequent flooding and high water velocities, the area is largely void of any persistent vegetation type.

Therefore, those species which are listed as utilizing this biotic community will not be directly impacted by tree removal and thus not discussed even though they are possibly in this habitat within the project area.

Endangered and Threatened Species

A list of all Federally- and State-listed species for Pitt County and the potential for suitable habitat in the study area is shown in the table below. Species with potential habitat in the area of Potential Effect are discussed in detail following the table.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS		HABITAT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL HABITAT IN STUDY AREA
		FEDERAL	STATE		
Shortnose Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>	FSC	E	intolerant of fast currents but does exist in the Tar River Basin	None
Atlantic Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>	E	E	bay & estuarine waters but returns to brackish/freshwater to spawn	None
Triangle Floater	<i>Alasmidonta undulate</i>	FSC	T	freshwater mussels found in streams & rivers	None
American Alligator	<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	T	T	freshwater & within range	None
Roanoke Bass	<i>Ambloplites cavifrons</i>	FSC	SR	non-native but could exist	None
Reversed Roadside-Skipper	<i>Amblyscirtes reversa</i>		SR	very common to the coastal plains and prefers wet areas with pine adjacent to switch cane	Possible
Eastern Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii susurrans</i>	FSC	SC	shrubby wet fields	Possible
Golden Banded-Skipper	<i>Autochton cellus</i>		SR	prefers rich, open bottomlands near creeks and streams and around hog peanut (<i>amphicarpa bracteata</i>) as its larval host plant	None
Mayfly	<i>Baetisca obesa</i>		SR	Common in wide sandy rivers such as the Tar River	Possible
Crowfoot Sedge	<i>Carex crus-corvi</i>		SR-P	swamps & bottomland forest	Possible
Star-Nosed Mole	<i>Condylura cristata</i>		SC	rare to coastal plain lowland meadows and woodlands that abut swamp & flowing streams	Possible
Beadle's Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis helianthoides</i>		SR-P	swampy forest sites	Possible
Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>		SC	swampy area	Possible
Cape Fear Spike	<i>Elliptio marsupiobesa</i>		SC	found in muddy bottoms in small streams	Possible
Northern Lance	<i>Elliptio fisheriana</i>		SR	associated with unconsolidated beds of coarse sand and gravel in fast-flowing water	None
Roanoke Slabshell	<i>Elliptio roanokensis</i>	FSC	T	found associated with deeper channels in the Tar River	None
Tar River Spiny mussel	<i>Elliptio steinstansana</i>	E	E	associated with unconsolidated beds of coarse sand and gravel in fast-flowing water	None

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS		HABITAT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL HABITAT IN STUDY AREA
		FEDERAL	STATE		
Banded Sunfish	<i>Enneacanthus obesus</i>		SR	wide sandy rivers such as Tar River	None
Two-Spotted Skipper	<i>Euphyes bimacula</i>		SR	very common to the coastal plains and prefers wet areas with pine adjacent to switch cane	Possible
Showy Aster	<i>Eurybia spectabilis</i>		SR-O	dry sandy soil	Possible
Rainbow Snake	<i>Farancia erythrogramma</i>		SR	burrows in wet debris at water's edge to swamp or creeks	Possible
Atlantic Pigtoe	<i>Fusconaia Masoni</i>	FSC	E	prefers fast-flowing streams with stable	None
American Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>		T		Possible
Southern Hognose Snake	<i>Heterodon simus</i>	FSC	SC	dry river flood plains (terraces)	Possible
Least Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra aepyptera</i>		T		None
Yellow Lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis cariosa</i>	FSC	E	prefers larger rivers and shifting sand	None
Eastern Lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis radiata</i>		T	only found in Yadkin Pee Dee and Neuse River Basins	None
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	FSC	SC	Open grassland – deciduous forest to coniferous	Possible
Green Floater	<i>Lasmigona subviridis</i>	FSC	E	intolerant of fast currents but does exist in the Tar River Basin	None
Tidewater Mucket	<i>Leptodea ochracea</i>		T	prefers slow-moving water	None
Eastern Pondmussel	<i>Liquimia nasuta</i>		T	prefers silts & sands with limited currents	None
Neuse River Waterdog	<i>Necturus lewisi</i>	FSC	SC	fully aquatic streams & rivers	None
Helica Satyr	<i>Neonympha helicta</i>		SR	boggy habitats in pine lands	None
Ironcolor Shiner	<i>Notropis chalybaeus</i>		SR	fresh water streams	None
Mimic Shiner	<i>Notropis volucellus</i>		SR	fresh water streams	None
Carolina Madtom	<i>Noturus furiosus</i>	FSC	T	Gravelly riffles – Medium rivers	None
Slender Glass Lizard	<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i>		SR	woodland areas adjacent to sandy fields	None
North Carolina Spiny Crayfish	<i>Orconectes Carolinensis</i>		SC	small to large streams under rocks	None
Red-Cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	E	E	Pine trees (foraging)	Possible
A Liverwort	<i>Plagochila virginica</i>		SR-L	moist bottomlands	Possible
Southern Chorus Frog	<i>Pseudacris nigrita</i>		SR	ponds within pine or hardwood bottom flats	None
Pigmy Rattlesnake	<i>Sistrurus miliarius</i>		SC	pine flat woods – scrub oak	None

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS		HABITAT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL HABITAT IN STUDY AREA
		FEDERAL	STATE		
Dragonfly	<i>Somatochlora georgiana</i>		SR	clearing at forest edge near swamp and/or streams	Possible
Creepers	<i>Strophitus undulates</i>		T	in small streams to large rivers	None
West Indian Manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	E	E	warm tropical to sub-tropical	None
Small Flower Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium virgatum</i>		SR-P	sandy soils at edges of wetlands	Possible

T *Threatened*
E *Endangered*
SR *Significantly Rare*
SR-L *Limited*
SR-P *Peripheral*
SR-O *Other*
SC *Special Concern*
FSC *Federal Species of Concern*

Federally-Listed Species

There are four Federally-listed Endangered Species, one Federally-listed Threatened Species, and 12 Federal Species of Concern in Pitt County. Only one Endangered Species – the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker – and three Federal Species of Concern – the Southern Hognose Snake, the Loggerhead Shrike, and the Eastern Henslow’s Sparrow – have potential habitat in the study area.

Federally-Listed Endangered Species

Picoides borealis (Red-Cockaded Woodpecker)

Although there is potential habitat for the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker based on the biotic communities review, this species requires forested areas dominated by mature pine trees in which to build nests and forage for food. The habitat must be open-pine forests frequently maintained by fire or other methods to remove dense undergrowth. Though the project site has the potential for habitat, no large stands of old growth pines were observed. No evidence of Red-Cockaded Woodpecker was observed, and the study area does not currently contain suitable habitat.

Federal Species of Concern

Heterodon simus (Southern Hognose Snake)

The Southern Hognose Snake is recognized as a Federal Species of Concern. Both the State and Federal agencies find that there is insufficient information to support conservation status of the species and recommend continued monitoring. This species occurs in dry and open sandy areas and open fields with grasses where it hunts for toads, lizards, and rodents. This species was not observed during the visit.

Lanius ludovicianus (Loggerhead Shrike)

The Loggerhead Shrike is recognized as a Federal Species of Concern. Both State and Federal agencies find that there is insufficient information to support conservation status of the species and recommend continued monitoring. This species prefers open habitat with an area of short vegetation to forage. Regular mowing of the area maintains a short vegetation; however, no examples of this species was observed during the site visit.

Ammodramus henslowii susurrans (Eastern Henslow's Sparrow)

The Eastern Henslow's Sparrow prefers shrubby wet fields such as that found in the Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood biotic community. No examples of this species was observed during the site visit, and no trees that will be removed exist in the project area.

State-Listed Species

There are eight State-listed Endangered Species, ten Threatened Species, nine Species of Special Concern, and nineteen species listed by the State as Significantly Rare in Pitt County. The Red-Cockaded Woodpecker is the only State-listed Endangered Species which has the potential for suitable habitat in the study area. Only one Threatened Species – the American Bald Eagle – has possible suitable habitat. Three Species of Special Concern have the potential for suitable habitat in the study area: Star-Nosed Mole, Southern Hognose Snake, and the Loggerhead Shrike. State-listed Significantly Rare Species with potential for suitable habitat in the study area are the Reversed Roadside Skipper, Two-spotted Skipper, Showy Aster, Rainbow Snake, a Liverwort, and the Small Flower Blueberry.

State-Listed Endangered Species

Picoides borealis (Red-cockaded Woodpecker)

Although there is potential habitat for the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker based on the biotic communities review, this species requires forested areas dominated by mature pine trees in which to build nests and forage for food. The habitat must be open-pine forests frequently maintained by fire or other methods to remove dense undergrowth. Though the project site has the potential for habitat, continued maintenance of the area does not allow the growth of large stands of old growth pines. No evidence of Red-Cockaded Woodpecker was observed, and the study area does not currently contain suitable habitat.

State-Listed Threatened Species

Haliaeetus leucocephalus (American Bald Eagle)

The American Bald Eagle was delisted from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species as of August 8, 2007. The current status prohibits disturbance of Bald and Golden Eagles pursuant to the Bald and Gold Eagle Protection Act (16 USC 668-668d). Evidence of the presence of the Bald Eagle foraging within the boundaries of PGV Airport property is documented in the 2009-2010 "Wildlife Hazard Assessment, Pitt-Greenville Airport" performed by the USDA/APHIS/WS. American Bald Eagles were observed during the site visit; however, no existing nesting sites were observed within the study area.

An additional reconnaissance of the study area was accomplished on September 14, 2017 from the Tar River. No bald eagle nests were observed within the riverine corridor of the study area.

State-Listed Species of Concern

A State-listed Species of Concern is not listed as Endangered or Threatened and may be collected from the wild and sold under specific regulations (GS 19B 106:202.12).

Condylura cristata (Star-Nosed Mole)

The Star-Nosed Mole is a species native to North Carolina and determined by the Wildlife Resources Commission to require monitoring. The species is found in wet low areas but are rare in the coastal plain. This species was not observed during the site visit.

Heterodon simus (Southern Hognose Snake)

The Southern Hognose Snake is also recognized as a Federal Species of Concern; however, both the State and Federal agencies find that there is insufficient information to support conservation status of the species and recommend continued monitoring. This species occurs in dry and open sandy areas and open fields with grasses where it hunts for toads, lizards, and rodents. This species was not observed during the site visit.

Crotalus horridus (Timber Rattlesnake)

The Timber Rattlesnake prefers swampy areas; however, limited tree removal will not significantly affect their habitat.

Elliptio marsupiobesa (Cape Fear Spike)

The Cape Fear Spike is found in muddy bottoms in small streams which meander through the Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood Biotic Community. Limited tree removal will not affect this species' habitat.

Lanius ludovicianus (Loggerhead Shrike)

The Loggerhead Shrike is a striking species with a hooked bill, grey back and head with white underparts. The species prefers open grassland next to deciduous forests where it can capture large insects and lizards and then impales its prey on thorns or barbwire before eating it. This species migrates in the spring and usually breeds from April to July. This species was not observed during the site visit.

State-Listed Significantly Rare Species

A State-Listed species as Significantly Rare is any species which has not been listed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission as an Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern but exists in the State in small numbers and is Significantly Rare warranting monitoring.

Amblyscirtes reversa (Reversed Roadside-Skipper)

The Reversed Roadside-Skipper prefers wet areas with pine near switch cane (*Arundinaria*) which is the species larval host plant. The flight period of the adults is from early April until mid-September. The lack of the assemblage of pine habitat near switch cane diminishes the possibility of this species in the study area, and none were observed during the site visit.

Euphyes bimacula (Two-Spotted Skipper)

The Two-Spotted Skipper is very common to the coastal plains and prefers wet areas with adjacent pines and/or switch cane. The lack of assemblages of pine habitat near switch cane diminishes the possibility of this species in the study area. None were observed during the site visit.

Eurybia spectabilis (Eastern Showy Aster)

This aster is sporadic and cannot be described by other Significantly Rare categories. Known as the Eastern Showy Aster, it is most often found in sandy soils associated with oak-pine assemblages. The flowers appear in the fall as violet-purple and yellow disks. *Eurybia spectabilis* was not observed during the site visit, and their distribution favors pine-barrens which are a habitat not present at the site.

Farancia erytrogramma (Rainbow Snake)

The Rainbow Snake burrows in wet debris at water's edge to a swamp or creek. Although Section 404 wetlands occur within the project area. The border of the wetlands is mowed and devoid of accumulated debris. No examples of this species were observed during the site visit.

Plagiochila virginica (Liverwort)

This non-vascular species' range is limited to North Carolina and adjacent states. This species may have 20-50 populations in North Carolina. The species prefers moist bottomlands of the shady confines of pine forests. *Plagiochila virginica* was not observed during the site visit, and the database indicates that observed occurrences of this species are in the mountain regions of North Carolina.

Vaccinium virgatum (Small Flower Blueberry)

The Small Flower Blueberry frequently exists at the edge of wetlands in sandy soils. Although this habitat exists, maintenance of the area has removed any possibility of existence of this species. No examples of this species were observed during the site visit.

Baetisca obesa (Mayfly)

This Mayfly is common in wide, sandy rivers such as the Tar River. Tree removal will not significantly affect their habitat.

Carex crus-corvi (Crowfoot Sedge)

The Crowfoot Sedge species prefers swamps and bottomland forest. Limited tree removal will not significantly affect their habitat.

Coreoopsis helianthoides (Beadle's Coreopsis)

Beadles Coreopsis prefers swampy forest sites such as that found in the Cypress-Gum Swamp Biotic Community. Limited tree removal will not significantly affect their habitat.

Somatochlora georgiana (Dragonfly)

Dragonflies frequent the clearing at the forest edge near swamps or streams. Limited tree clearing will not significantly impact their habitat.

Alternative Analysis

No Action Alternative

This alternative does not eliminate penetrations of the approach and departure surface which pose a safety hazard to aircraft. **This alternative results in no direct or indirect impact to endangered or threatened species.**

Preferred Alternative

To eliminate penetrations of approach surfaces which pose a safety hazard to aircraft, clear all trees in the Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood, and Cypress-Gum Swamp west of Runway 8. Trees are proposed to be clear cut to avoid repeated clearing in the next 20 years or longer. No grubbing of stumps will be performed. **This alternative will impact natural biotic communities by clearing of trees, though the impact is not appreciable, and the clearing will not impact Endangered or Threatened species. It is recommended that the grouping of trees within the Cypress-Gum Swamp be inspected to assure that nesting eagles have not recruited since the time of this study.**

Selective Tree Clearing Alternative

To eliminate penetrations of approach surfaces which pose a safety hazard to aircraft, selectively clear trees in the Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwood, and Cypress-Gum Swamp west of Runway 8. Trees that currently penetrate or are within 10' of penetrating the surfaces, and trees required to be removed for

access would be cut. No grubbing of stumps will be performed. This alternative is not preferred since it would require continuing tree cutting over the years as trees continue to grow into and penetrate the approach surfaces. **This alternative will impact natural biotic communities by clearing of trees, though the impact is not appreciable, and the clearing will not impact Endangered or Threatened species. It is recommended that the grouping of trees within the Cypress-Gum Swamp be inspected to assure that nesting eagles have not recruited since the time of this study.**

EPI has reviewed the project to determine if the activity is consistent with the policies and regulations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Of primary importance in the review is to assess the habitat conservation for migratory birds, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection, endangered species review, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. This compliance is documented in the biotic communities and Federal and State-Listed Species Impact review. The proposed project is consistent with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The US Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, among many other requirements not pertinent to the proposed project, requires consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to prevent loss of and damages to wildlife resources when bodies of water are proposed to be modified. The proposed activity was coordinated with the Raleigh Office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service on December 12, 2017. The activity was also coordinated with the North Carolina Division of Water Resources and designed for compliance with CWA Section 404 (33 CFR Part 323.4 and 40 CFR Part 232.3, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' REGAL 86-03 under Section 404(f)(1), 33 CFR Part 323.4(a)(6). The proposed project complies with the Coordination Act, and final construction documents will reflect the provisions for exemption pursuant to Section 404(f) of the Clean Water Act.

The proposed project was reviewed to determine compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act most notably Section 102. Highly migratory species, including potential impacts to anadromous species. The proposed project complies with the policies and spirit of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The proposed project has been coordinated with the North Carolina Division of Water Resources and a submittal of an application for Buffer Authorization has been made pursuant to 15A NCAC 02B .0233(8)(b), .0243(8)(b), .0250(11)(b), .0259(8)(b), .0267(11)(C), .607(e)(2) – see attached. The NCDWR has requested that the application be placed on “Client Hold” until the review of the Draft Environmental Assessment document has been accomplished. The purpose of the “Client Hold” request is so the Division may incorporate any special conditions that may arise from the draft Environmental Assessment review to be incorporated into the final Buffer Compliance Authorization.

Professional Wetland Scientist (Certification Number 001006) identified the location of wetlands or waters of the US utilizing desktop review and field confirmation to assist in the preparation of the “Wetland Map.” The impacts to wetlands from the tree clearing will be performed in compliance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Silviculture Exemption and Best Management Practices to ensure minimal long-term impacts from tree removal.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Raleigh ES Field Office

Post Office Box 33726

Raleigh, North Carolina 27636-3726

February 14, 2018

George Wood
Environmental Professionals, Inc.
PO Box 3368
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Re: Pitt-Greenville Airport Obstruction Removal for Runway 8-26 – Pitt County, NC

Dear Mr. Wood:

This letter is to inform you that the Service has established an on-line project planning and consultation process which assists developers and consultants in determining whether a federally-listed species or designated critical habitat may be affected by a proposed project. For future projects, please visit the Raleigh Field Office's project planning website at <https://www.fws.gov/raleigh/pp.html>. If you are only searching for a list of species that may be present in the project's Action Area, then you may use the Service's Information, Planning, and Consultation System (IPaC) website to determine if any listed, proposed, or candidate species may be present in the Action Area and generate a species list. The IPaC website may be viewed at <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>. The IPaC web site contains a complete and frequently updated list of all endangered and threatened species protected by the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)(Act), a list of federal species of concern¹ that are known to occur in each county in North Carolina, and other resources.

Section 7 of the Act requires that all federal agencies (or their designated non-federal representative), in consultation with the Service, insure that any action federally authorized, funded, or carried out by such agencies is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any federally-listed endangered or threatened species. A biological assessment or evaluation may be prepared to fulfill that requirement and in determining whether additional consultation with the Service is necessary. In addition to the federally-protected species list, information on the species' life histories and habitats and information on completing a biological assessment or

¹ The term "federal species of concern" refers to those species which the Service believes might be in need of concentrated conservation actions. Federal species of concern receive no legal protection and their designation does not necessarily imply that the species will eventually be proposed for listing as a federally endangered or threatened species. However, we recommend that all practicable measures be taken to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to federal species of concern.

evaluation and can be found on our web page at <http://www.fws.gov/raleigh>. Please check the web site often for updated information or changes.

If your project contains suitable habitat for any of the federally-listed species known to be present within the county where your project occurs, the proposed action has the potential to adversely affect those species. As such, we recommend that surveys be conducted to determine the species' presence or absence within the project area. The use of North Carolina Natural Heritage program data should not be substituted for actual field surveys.

If you determine that the proposed action may affect (i.e., likely to adversely affect or not likely to adversely affect) a federally-protected species, you should notify this office with your determination, the results of your surveys, survey methodologies, and an analysis of the effects of the action on listed species, including consideration of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, before conducting any activities that might affect the species. If you determine that the proposed action will have no effect (i.e., no beneficial or adverse, direct or indirect effect) on federally listed species, then you are not required to contact our office for concurrence (unless an Environmental Impact Statement is prepared). However, you should maintain a complete record of the assessment, including steps leading to your determination of effect, the qualified personnel conducting the assessment, habitat conditions, site photographs, and any other related articles.

With regard to the above-referenced project, we offer the following remarks. Our comments are submitted pursuant to, and in accordance with, provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Based on the information provided and other information available, it appears that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any federally-listed endangered or threatened species, their formally designated critical habitat, or species currently proposed for listing under the Act at these sites. We believe that the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Act have been satisfied for your project. Please remember that obligations under section 7 consultation must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of this identified action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered; (2) this action is subsequently modified in a manner that was not considered in this review; or, (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat determined that may be affected by the identified action.

However, the Service is concerned about the potential impacts the proposed action might have on aquatic species. Aquatic resources are highly susceptible to sedimentation. Therefore, we recommend that all practicable measures be taken to avoid adverse impacts to aquatic species, including implementing directional boring methods and stringent sediment and erosion control measures. An erosion and sedimentation control plan should be submitted to and approved by the North Carolina Division of Land Resources, Land Quality Section prior to construction. Erosion and sedimentation controls should be installed and maintained between the construction site and any nearby down-gradient surface waters. In addition, we recommend maintaining natural, vegetated buffers on all streams and creeks adjacent to the project site.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has developed a Guidance Memorandum (a copy can be found on our website at (<http://www.fws.gov/raleigh>) to address and mitigate secondary and cumulative impacts to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife resources and water quality.

We recommend that you consider this document in the development of your projects and in completing an initiation package for consultation (if necessary). We hope you find our web page useful and informative and that following the process described above will reduce the time required, and eliminate the need, for general correspondence for species' lists. If you have any questions or comments, please contact John Ellis of this office at (919) 856-4520 ext. 26.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pete Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Pete Benjamin
Field Supervisor



December 12, 2017

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services
Attn: Mr. Pete Benjamin
P.O. Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27636-3726

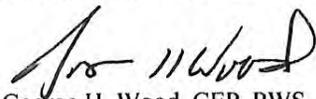
Dear Mr. Benjamin,

The Pitt-Greenville Airport is in the process of performing an environmental assessment for an Obstruction Removal Project for Runway 8-26. As a part of that preparation, coordination with the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is advised.

I have attached documents which address the proposed tree clearing project which includes a Riparian Buffer Authorization concurrence request, identification of natural features in the project and surrounding area, review of Threatened or Endangered Species' Critical Habitats, and direct or indirect impacts to State-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species or designated habitats.

I appreciate your review and comments regarding this coordination with your office.

Sincerely,
Environmental Professionals, Inc.



George H. Wood, CEP, PWS

cc: Talbert & Bright/Attn: Mr. Brian Ensign

Attachments: a/s