

Public Notice

Buried Electric supply Construction on Patuxent Research Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is evaluating a proposed utility construction project to address power reliability issues at the United States Secret Service J. J. Rowley Training Center (JJRTC). The construction activities will be on Patuxent Research Refuge, on the edge of Powder Mill Road from Scarlet Tanager loop to MD 197 and along MD 197 from east of Snowden pond Road to Powder Mill Road, and will necessitate establishment of a perpetual easement to the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) for its continued operations and maintenance.

If approved, the construction would occur in Winter 2012. The project will include the following activities:

BGE Work Management System # 1945376. This phase of the project involves new construction of buried electrical cable along the northern pavement edge of Powder Mill Road from East Gate Road (the eastern entrance into the JJRTC, west of Patuxent's property) to MD 197. Work within refuge lands includes: 4,481 feet of cable and 9 splice boxes will be installed using horizontal directional boring technology. Ground disturbance is expected to occur only at splice box locations which will be the sites where directional boring and cable feed occurs.

BGE Work Management System # 1955410 is Phase 1 of the Montpelier 7298 re-conductor project. This project involves replacement of existing poles and cable along MD 197. Work within refuge lands includes: 6204 feet of overhead cable will be replaced on 43 poles, 2 poles will be reused, 20 new poles will be installed and 21 poles will be renewed.

The project will use standard power line construction equipment for projects of this type. Horizontal Boring Machines, Aerial bucket and pole setting trucks.

Prior to allowing this use on the refuge, Federal law requires that the Service first determine that the proposed activity is a compatible use. A compatible use is a proposed or existing wildlife-dependant recreational use or any other use of a National Wildlife Refuge that, based on sound professional judgment, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the purposes for which the refuge was established and the National Wildlife Refuge System mission. The Service develops a compatibility determination to facilitate evaluation of proposed uses, including anticipated impacts and stipulations necessary to ensure compatibility. A draft compatibility determination is currently available for public review and comment.

The Service would like to know what you think of this proposed refuge use. All comments received within 14 days following the date of this notice will be considered in finalizing this compatibility determination. We hope to make a final decision on this proposed use within 15 days following closure of the public comment period.

To request a copy of the draft compatibility determination, learn the final decision regarding these proposed uses, or for more information, contact the Patuxent Research Refuge office at 301-497-5584 or find it on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent/>

Comments should be received no later than 14 days following the date of this notice. Letters should be addressed to: Martin Brockman, Facility Manager, Patuxent Research Refuge, 12311 Beech Forest Road, Laurel, MD 20708; by email at Martin_Brockman@fws.gov.

The National Wildlife Refuge System mission is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. The purposes for establishing the Patuxent Research Refuge are provided on the first page of the draft compatibility determination.