

Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation Form

Originating Person:

Telephone Number:

Date Submitted:

For assistance with Section 7 reviews, go to Region 3's Section 7 Technical Assistance website:

~~<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/section7/s7process/>~~

- I. Region: Great Lakes Region
- II. Service Activity (Program) and Geographic Area or Station Name:
- III. List Species (including proposed and candidate Species) or critical habitat (including proposed) found in action area:
- IV. Describe Location: County, State and Township, Section & Range or other specific location information (attach map)

V. Description of proposed action (*attach additional pages as needed*):

- VI. Description of effects (*attach additional pages as needed*):
Explain the anticipated effects of the action on species and critical habitats listed in item III. Beneficial and adverse effects, as well as actions to avoid or minimize adverse effects, should be identified.

VI. Description of Effects (cont.)

Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*); endangered

The piping plover relies on wetlands/open water for breeding and stopover habitat; these habitats only make up 2.9% of the project area (Section 3.4.2). No piping plovers were observed during baseline studies at the project and suitable breeding habitat is not present. However, due to the project's location along the species' migratory pathway, there is the possibility for rare occurrences during the migration season.

Apple Blossom is operational, and would continue to operate even if the eagle take permit were not issued. There are no proposed permit conditions that would result in habitat alteration, and any modifications to turbine operation for the purposes of minimizing risk to eagles (e.g. turbine curtailment) may reduce potential collision risk to piping plover.

We determine that issuing an eagle take permit "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" piping plover.

Pitcher's thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*); threatened

The majority of the project area consists of cultivated agricultural land (83.8%), followed by a smaller portion of hay/pasture (6.7%; Section 3.4.6 of the dEA). The Project area does not contain open sand dunes or suitable habitat for Pitcher's thistle.

We determine that issuing an eagle take permit will have no effect to Pitcher's thistle.

Rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*); threatened

The rufa red knot is only known to occur in coastal areas of Huron County between May 1 and September 30, during the rufa red knot migratory period. The rufa red knot relies on wetlands/open water with abundant food sources for stopover habitat during migration, and these habitats only make up 2.9% of the Project area (Section 3.4.3 of the dEA). No rufa red knots were observed during baseline studies at the Project. Based on known occurrences in Huron County and minimal suitable habitat in the Project area, rufa red knot has minimal potential to occur within the Project area. However, there is the possibility for rare occurrences during the migration season.

Apple Blossom is operational, and would continue to operate even if the eagle take permit were not issued. There are no proposed permit conditions that would result in habitat alteration, and any modifications to turbine operation for the purposes of minimizing risk to eagles (e.g. turbine curtailment) may reduce potential collision risk to rufa red knot.

We determine that issuing an eagle take permit "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" rufa red knot.

Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*); candidate, analyzed as proposed.

The eastern population of the monarch butterfly has potential to occur within the project boundary. While majority of the project consists of cultivated agricultural lands; there is the possibility for patchy areas of milkweed and nectar resources within the project area to support monarchs (e.g. roadsides, ditches, agricultural field margins, etc). However, there are no proposed project actions that would result in habitat alteration that would impact potential existing monarch resources. We do not anticipate the issuance of an eagle take permit (and associated conditions) to appreciably change the existing habitat available to monarch butterflies

We determine that issuing an eagle take permit would not jeopardize monarch.

B. Determination *(Select one and corresponding response if applicable)*

Determination	Response request from Ecological Services
No Effect on species/critical habitat (list species/critical habitat):	Concurrence <i>(optional)</i>
Not Likely to Adversely Affect species/critical habitat (list species/critical habitat):	Concurrence
Likely to Adversely Affect species/critical habitat (list species/critical habitat):	Formal Consultation
Likely to Jeopardize candidate or proposed species/critical habitat (list species/critical habitat):	Formal Conference
Not Likely to Jeopardize candidate or proposed species/critical habitat (list species/critical habitat):	Concurrence (optional for candidate species)

Signature
[Supervisor at originating station]

Date

Reviewing Ecological Services Office Evaluation (*check all that apply*):

A. Concurrence

Nonconcurrence

Explanation for nonconcurrence below:

B. Formal Consultation Required

List species or critical habitat unit below:

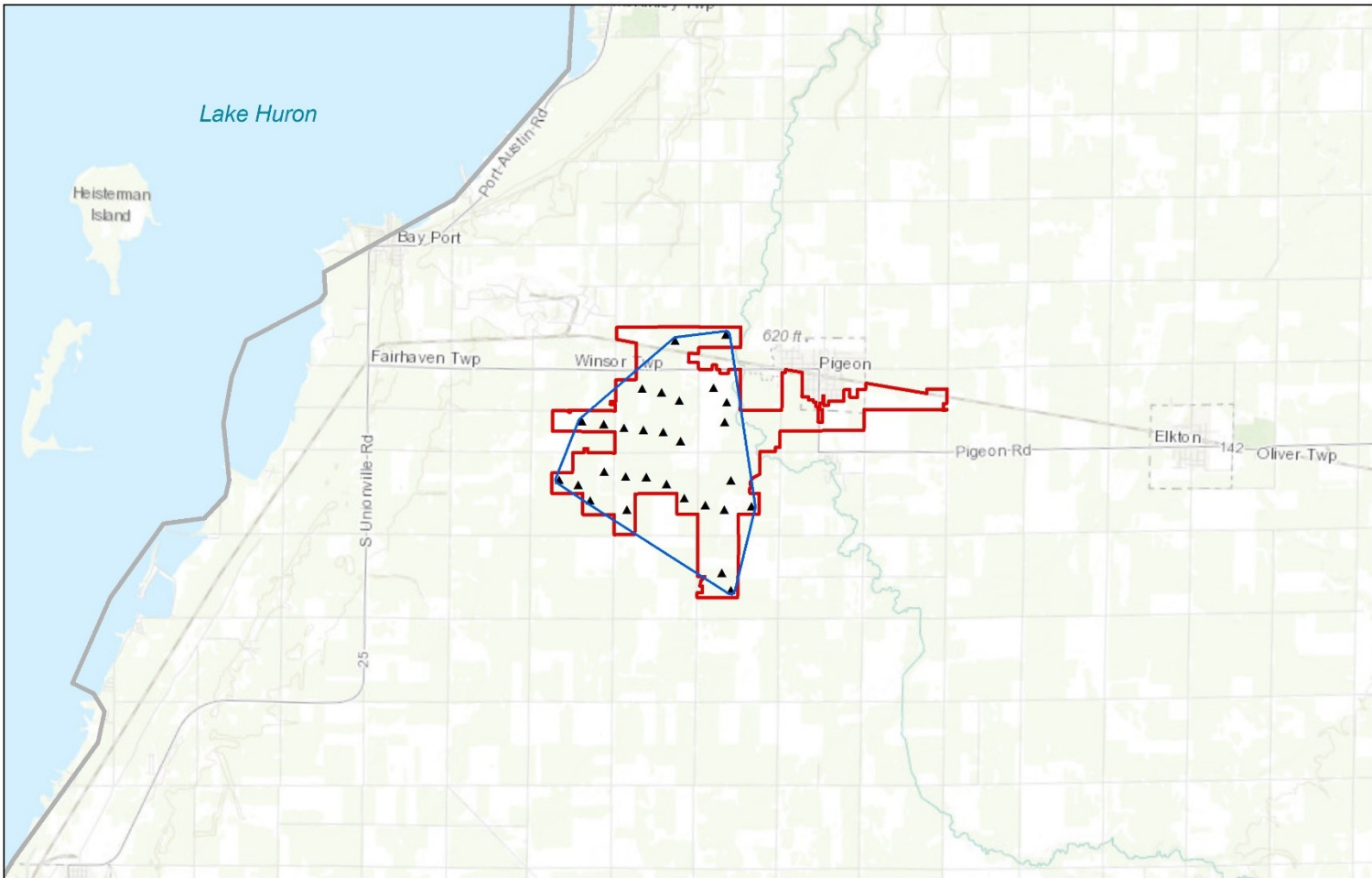
C. Conference Required

List species or critical habitat unit below:

Name of Reviewing ES Office:

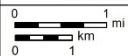
Signature:

Date:



Apple Blossom Wind Project Huron County, MI

Data Source: World Topo
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Date: 10/23/2020
Author: Valerie Woelfel



- ▭ Project Boundary
- ▭ Minimum Convex Polygon
- ▲ Turbine

Figure 1: Apple Blossom Wind Project Location

