

## Bald Eagle Project Screening Form

Bald eagles are unlikely to be disturbed by routine use of roads, homes or other facilities where such use occurred prior to or during the successful breeding of an eagle pair. This guidance is specific to new or intermittent activities in Pennsylvania, and is based on the **National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines**. The *Guidelines*, along with other eagle information, are available at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/EcologicalServices/eagle.html>.

The *Guidelines* will help you determine which specific measures are needed to avoid disturbing breeding and nesting bald eagles, based on the type and scope of your proposed project or activity, and its distance from a bald eagle nest. Before you begin, determine exactly where your proposed project occurs with respect to known bald eagle breeding territories (see **Bald Eagle Nest Sites in Pennsylvania** ([http://www.fws.gov/northeast/pafo/bald\\_eagle.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/pafo/bald_eagle.html))). Note that this form does not address the potential for a project or activity to disturb foraging or roosting bald eagles, especially when foraging or roosting takes place outside of nesting territories.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

State: Pennsylvania County: \_\_\_\_\_ PNDI # \_\_\_\_\_

Lat/long (decimal degrees): \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_ acres/miles

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT ACTIVITY CATEGORY(S)

Place a check next to all of the activities that are proposed. Activities are grouped based on the nature and magnitude of impacts to bald eagle nests.

- Construction and Development Activities → go to pages 2 and 3
- Maintenance and Restoration Activities → go to pages 4 and 5
- Timber Operation and Forestry Practices → go to page 6
- Use of Helicopters or Fixed-wing Aircraft → go to page 7
- Blasting or Other Loud, Intermittent Noises (including Fireworks) → go to page 8
- Recreational Activities → go to page 9

## Construction and Development Activities

Which construction or development activities will be carried out? (check all that apply)

- Building construction
- Construction of roads, trails, canals, power lines, pipelines and other linear utilities
- Agriculture or aquaculture – new or expanded operations
- Alteration of shorelines or wetlands
- Installation of docks or moorings
- Water impoundment or withdrawal
- Mining
- Oil and natural gas drilling and refining
- Installation or expansion of marinas with a capacity of 6 or more boats

**Are any bald eagle nests visible from the project or activity area?** Before going on site to determine nest visibility with the naked eye and with 4X binoculars, determine the location of the breeding territory (see map of **Bald Eagle Nest Sites in Pennsylvania**). The breeding territory may include multiple eagle nests.

- Yes → Stop. Implement Avoidance Measures **(AM) 2 and 5** (see page 3)
- No → Go to the next question

Which category(s) most closely fits your proposed project or activity? (check all that apply)

- Building construction, 1 or 2 story, with a project footprint of ½ acre or less
- Construction of roads, trails, canals, power lines, or other linear utilities
- Agriculture or aquaculture – new or expanded operations
- Alteration of shorelines or wetlands
- Installation of docks or moorings
- Water impoundment or withdrawal

→ Implement **AM 3, 4 and 5** (p. 3)

- Building construction or expansion, 3 or more stories
- Building construction or expansion, 1 or 2 story, with project footprint more than ½ acre
- Mining
- Oil and natural gas drilling and refining
- Installation or expansion of marinas with a capacity of 6 or more boats

→ Go to the next question

Is there a similar activity within 1 mile of the nest?

- Yes → Stop. Implement **AM 3, 4 and 5** (see page 3)
- No → Implement **AM 1 and 5** (see page 3)

**AVOIDANCE MEASURES (AM)** – Based on your responses to the questions posed for Construction and Development Activities, specific measures were recommended to avoid disturbing bald eagles and their young. **Place a check mark next each avoidance measure (AM) that was recommended above and will be implemented.**

- AM 1 – A distance **buffer of at least 660 feet** (200 meters) will be maintained between all project activities and the nest (including alternate<sup>1</sup> nests).
- AM 2 – A distance **buffer of at least 660 feet** (200 meters) will be maintained between all project activities and the nest (including alternate nests). If a similar activity (i.e., similar in kind and size) is closer than 660 feet and has been tolerated by eagles, 1) the distance buffer will be the same or greater than that of the existing tolerated activity, and 2) between the modified distance buffer and 660 feet, all activities that may disturb bald eagles will be avoided from January 1 to July 31. These activities include, but are not limited to: construction, excavation, use of heavy equipment, use of loud equipment or machinery, vegetation clearing, earth disturbance, planting, and landscaping.
- AM 3 – A distance **buffer of at least 330 feet** (100 meters) will be maintained year-round between all project activities and the nest (including alternate nests). If a similar activity (i.e., similar in kind and size) is closer than 330 feet and has been tolerated by eagles, the distance buffer will be the same or greater than that of the existing tolerated activity.
- AM 4 – Within **660 feet** of the nest<sup>2</sup>, all activities that may disturb bald eagles will be avoided from **January 1 to July 31**. These activities include, but are not limited to: construction, excavation, use of heavy equipment, use of loud equipment or machinery, vegetation clearing, earth disturbance, planting, and landscaping.
- AM 5 – Established landscape buffers that screen the activity from the nest will be maintained.

**Will the proposed activity include ALL of the recommended measures to avoid disturbance of bald eagles and their young for a project of this type?**

- YES – All recommended avoidance measures will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_

(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Determination: Disturbance of bald eagles is unlikely to occur. You may print pages 1-3, then sign and date it for your records. This will serve as documentation that you are following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recommendations for avoiding disturbance of bald eagles.*

- NO – One or more recommended avoidance measures will not be followed.

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Determination: Your action may disturb bald eagles. If you would like further assistance in determining whether bald eagles may be disturbed, contact the Service's Northeast Regional Bald and Golden Eagle Coordinator at 413-253-8592 or Sarah\_Nystrom@fws.gov.*

<sup>1</sup> An alternate nest is a nest that is built or maintained by eagles, but not used for nesting in a given year.

<sup>2</sup> This seasonal restriction applies to activities outside the distance buffer identified in AM 3 (e.g., in the zone from 330 feet to 660 feet from the nest).

## Maintenance and Restoration Activities

This category includes outdoor maintenance of existing structures or infrastructure, where the maintenance activity is temporary and obtrusive (e.g., requires use of heavy equipment or loud machinery). It assumes maintenance activities will occur within the previously-disturbed footprint of the structure or infrastructure. If maintenance is proposed outside the previously-disturbed footprint, see **Construction and Development Activities** (pages 2 and 3). This category does not include routine, ongoing activities to which bald eagles have already exhibited a tolerance (e.g., lawn mowing; plowing, planting or harvesting of agricultural fields; etc.).

This category also includes the maintenance and restoration of natural habitats (e.g., wetlands, streams, rivers, non-forested uplands), as human activities associated with habitat restoration or maintenance may disturb eagles if carried out during the breeding season.

**Which maintenance or restoration activities will be carried out?** (check all that apply)

- Maintenance of linear utilities (e.g., power lines, pipelines, water and sewer lines)
- Road, bridge or culvert maintenance
- Trail, campground or recreational area maintenance
- Maintenance of oil and gas wells, well pads, and storage tanks
- Maintenance of dams, levees, berms, canals and other water-control structures
- Pond, lake or reservoir maintenance (draw downs, dredging)
- Stream or stream bank maintenance /restoration (e.g., stream bank fencing, stream bank stabilization, livestock crossings, in-stream habitat improvements, channel maintenance, dredging)
- Wetland maintenance / restoration (e.g., invasive plant control, restoration of hydrology)
- Upland habitat maintenance / restoration (e.g., planting or cutting of vegetation, invasive plant control, trash cleanup, abandoned mine lands restoration). This does not include activities in forests/woodlands (see **Timber Operation and Forestry Practices**) or in agricultural fields.

**The following measures are necessary to avoid disturbing bald eagles and their young. Place a check mark next to each measure that will be implemented.**

- From **January 1 to July 31** (the breeding season), all activities that may disturb bald eagles will be avoided within **660 feet** (200 meters) of the nest. This includes, but is not limited to the following: construction, excavation, use of heavy equipment, use of loud equipment or machinery, vegetation clearing, earth disturbance, planting, landscaping, and habitat restoration activities.
- Established landscape buffers that screen the activity from the nest will be maintained.
- If prescribed burning is necessary during the breeding season (January 1 to July 31), burns will only be conducted when adult eagles and young are absent from the nest tree (i.e., at the beginning of, or end of, the breeding season, either before the particular nest is active or after the young have fledged from that nest). Leaves and woody debris will be raked from around the nest tree to prevent crown fire or fire climbing the nest tree.

**Will the proposed activity include ALL of the avoidance measures listed above?**

- YES – All recommended avoidance measures will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_

(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

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- NO – One or more recommended avoidance measures will not be followed.

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## Timber Operation and Forestry Practices

The following measures are necessary to avoid disturbing bald eagles and their young. Place a check mark next to each measure that will be implemented.

- No clear-cutting or overstory tree removal will occur within 330 feet (100 meters) of the nest at any time of the year.
- From January 1 to July 31 (the breeding season), no timber harvest operations, road construction, chain saw use or yarding operations will occur within 660 feet (200 meters) of the nest. Around alternate nests (including nests that were attended during the current breeding season but not used to raise young), this distance may be decreased to 330 feet, provided the eggs laid in another nest within the territory have hatched.
- Log transfer facilities and in-water log storage areas will not be constructed or operated within 330 feet (100 meters) of nests at any time of the year.
- Selective thinning and other silviculture management practices designed to conserve or enhance habitat, including prescribed burning close to the nest tree, will only be carried out from August 1 to December 31 (outside the breeding season).
- If prescribed burning is necessary during the breeding season (January 1 to July 31), burns will only be conducted when adult eagles and young are absent from the nest tree (i.e., at the beginning of, or end of, the breeding season, either before the particular nest is active or after the young have fledged from that nest). Leaves and woody debris will be raked from around the nest tree to prevent crown fire or fire climbing the nest tree.

Will the proposed timber operation or forestry practice include ALL of the avoidance measures listed above?

- YES – All avoidance measures will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_

(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

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- NO – One of more avoidance measures will not be followed.

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## Use of a Helicopter or Fixed-wing Aircraft

The following measure is necessary to avoid disturbing bald eagles and their young. Place a check mark next to this measure if it will be implemented.

- From January 1 to July 31 (the breeding season), no aircraft will be flown within 1000 feet (305 meters) of bald eagle nests, except where eagles have demonstrated tolerance for such activity.

Will the proposed operation of a helicopter(s) or fixed-wing aircraft include the avoidance measure listed above?

- YES – This avoidance measure will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

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- NO – This avoidance measure will not be followed.

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## Blasting and Other Loud, Intermittent Noises (including Fireworks)

The following measure is necessary to avoid disturbing bald eagles and their young. Place a check mark next to this measure if it will be implemented.

- From January 1 to July 31 (the breeding season), blasting and other activities that produce extremely loud noises will not occur within 1/2 mile of active nests, unless greater tolerance to the activity (or similar activity) has been demonstrated by the eagles in the breeding area. This measure also applies to the use of fireworks classified by the Federal Department of Transportation as Class B explosives, which includes the larger fireworks that are intended for licensed public display.

Will the proposed activity include the avoidance measure listed above?

- YES – This avoidance measure will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

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- NO – This avoidance measure will not be followed.

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## Recreational Activities

Recreational activities will not disturb eagles if conducted during the non-breeding season. The following avoidance measures only pertain to the breeding season (January 1 to July 31).

### Non-motorized recreation and human entry (including hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, canoeing)

- Stay at least 330 feet (100 meters) from the nest if you walk, bike, canoe, camp, fish, or hunt near an eagle nest during the breeding season and your activity will be visible or can be heard from the nest.

### Off-road vehicle use (including snowmobiles)

- Stay at least 330 feet (100 meters) from the nest. In open areas, where there is increased visibility and exposure to noise, stay at least 660 feet (200 meters) from the nest.

### Motorized watercraft use (including jet skis/personal watercraft)

- Do not operate jet skis (personal watercraft) or airboats within 330 feet (100 meters) of the nest.
- Avoid concentrations of noisy vessels (e.g. commercial fishing boats and tour boats) within 330 feet (100 meters) of the nest, except where eagles have demonstrated tolerance for such activity.
- For all motorized boat traffic within 330 feet (100 meters) of the nest, minimize trips and avoid stopping in the area, particularly where eagles are unaccustomed to boat traffic.

### Will the proposed activity(s) include the avoidance measures listed above?

- YES – These avoidance measures will be followed.

\_\_\_\_\_

(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Determination: Disturbance of bald eagles is unlikely to occur. You may print this page for future reference.*

- NO – One or more avoidance measures will not be followed.

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