



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5087

<https://www.fws.gov/office/new-england-ecological-services>

February 5, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) New England Field Office determined that specific activities associated with maintenance and upgrade of existing trails categorically would have no effect on, are not likely to adversely affect, or would not cause take of species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). This letter is valid for projects in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. We are submitting these comments in accordance with sections 7 and 10 of the ESA.

For projects that require trimming, cutting, or removal of trees, the determination above is only valid if the tree work occurs from November 1 to April 14.¹ The determination above is not valid (1) for creating new trails; or (2) if the bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*), northern red-bellied cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*), or other listed or proposed turtle species may occur in the project area as indicated on a species list from our Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website (<https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov>).

We reviewed activities frequently conducted by the state trail agencies and determined that project-specific correspondence with this office is not required for these types of actions on existing trails:

1. resurfacing projects including grading, graveling, and erosion control and runoff mitigation;
2. ditch line clearing needed to support the existing trail surface;
3. routine maintenance of existing drainage infrastructure and installation of underdrains;
4. minor routine bridge maintenance including repair of bridge approach slabs and railings; spot painting; joint cleaning, repair, sealing and replacement; and deck repairs that do not impact the bridge below the deck;
5. replacement and installation of trail gates within the existing trail surface;

¹ This determination is not valid if the activity requires tree trimming, cutting, or removal from April 15 to October 31, except as specifically allowed in the list of activities, and additional coordination may be necessary. In this case, please visit <https://www.fws.gov/office/new-england-ecological-services/endangered-species-project-review>.

6. sign replacements, new sign or kiosk installations, and sign installations on existing trail infrastructure; and
7. trimming vegetation that is obscuring signs, markers, notices, or other structures that act as safety and navigational aids to trail users, at any time of year.

Project proponents may conclude there are additional activities that would have no effect on listed species by using IPaC and evaluating the potential presence of, and effects on, listed species and/or their habitat. No further coordination with our office is required for these projects.

If a proposed activity not listed above may affect a listed species, or your species list includes a turtle species, please first visit the available determination keys in IPaC, as you may be able to complete a streamlined review using these tools. If the review cannot be completed in IPaC, please visit our project review webpage (<https://www.fws.gov/office/new-england-ecological-services/endangered-species-project-review>) for updated consultation letters and additional project review guidance before contacting our office.

The activities listed above, particularly those requiring mechanized equipment to move soil and leaf litter have the potential to incidentally impact plant and animal species not listed under the federal ESA. Please consider measures to avoid or minimize effects on these species, and contact us or your state wildlife agency if you need assistance.

We recommend retaining a copy of this letter in your file as a record of your coordination with the Service regarding project effects on listed species. The letter remains valid until January 31, 2026.

Thank you for your cooperation, and please contact us at 603-223-2541 or newengland@fws.gov for further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Acting for Audrey Mayer
Supervisor
New England Field Office