



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

April 29, 2020

VIA EMAIL: Cassidy.lang@sierraclub.org

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/Region 5/FOIA FWS-2020-00399

Cassidy Lang
Sierra Club
1650 38th Street, Suite 102W
Boulder, Colorado 80301

Dear Cassidy Lang:

The Department of the Interior (Department), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Hadley, Massachusetts Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office received your FOIA request dated December 17, 2019, and assigned it control number FWS-2020-00399. Please cite this number in any future communications with our office regarding your request. You requested the following:

1. *All documents or other records in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's project file for the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project (FERC Docket No. CP16-10; Project #05E2VA00-2016-F-0880 and #05E2WV00-2015-F-0046)*
2. *All documents and records related to the USFWS's obligations under the Endangered Species Act, including but not limited to:*
 - a. *Documents and records related to the Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement issued on November 21, 2017, for the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project;*
 - b. *Documents and records related to the email and attached comments sent by Dr. Paul Angermeier to Cindy Schulz, Troy Andersen, and Sumalee Hoskin on October 23, 2018;*
 - c. *Documents and records related to the USFWS's April 12, 2019 letter to FERC regarding the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project, including but not limited to information/data received in response to that letter;*
 - d. *Documents and records related to USFWS's decision, on September 11, 2019, to accept FERC's request for reinitiation of consultation;*
 - e. *Documents and records related to the subsequent reinitiation of consultation, including but not limited to responses to USFWS's October 16, 2019 letter to FERC requesting additional data and information; to the November 27, 2019 technical meeting between USFWS, Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC, and FERC; and to the decision to extend the re-consultation period by 60 days.*
3. *To the extent not captured above, this request includes all correspondence related to the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project.*

On February 14, 2020, Ms. Amanda Bossie contacted you via email to determine if you were willing to exclude sensitive species location information, conference call/WebEx dial-in information, links to ftp sites, google

document links, and other hyperlinks or passwords from your FOIA request. On February 20, 2020, you replied that Sierra Club agreed to that information being withheld understanding that:

1. Records containing specific species location information will otherwise be released with only the specific location information redacted, unless the specific location information is not separable. For example, files that consist entirely of shapefile data containing specific species location information will be withheld in their entirety.
2. Relevant documents that are linked to/in other documents (e.g., Google documents or documents housed at ftp sites) will be released (subject to other applicable privileges) to the extent those documents were downloaded or are still available and in FWS files.

RESPONSE

In accordance with the Department's regulations (43 CFR 2.12(b)), in order for a record to be considered subject to a FOIA request, it must be in the possession and control of the Department at the time it begins its search.

This letter is to notify you that a search was conducted in offices believed to be most likely to have records responsive to your request; this included the Service's Virginia Field Office, West Virginia Field Office, and the Northeast Regional Ecological Services Offices.

This is the Service's first interim response to your request. We are providing a Fileshare link to the records responsive to your request, which includes 35 pdf files consisting of 412 pages and 16 GIS files which are being released to you in full. The Fileshare link can be found in the email transmitting this correspondence. The Fileshare link is only valid for 20 days so please download these files as soon as possible.

We are continuing to review additional records that are responsive to your request. We anticipate our next release to you on or about May 18, 2020.

Because this is an interim response to your request, we will provide notice of your appeal rights in our final response letter.

CONCLUSION

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of FOIA. *See* 5 U.S.C. 552(c). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

If you have any questions about our response to your request, you may contact me by phone at (413) 253-8629 or by email at Eleanor_McVey@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Eleanor McVey
Regional FOIA Coordinator

cc: Amanda Bossie (Solicitor)