



Smith, Kimberly <kimberly_smith@fws.gov>

Re: ESSLog 35246; Mountain Valley Pipeline Project RLP Review

1 message

Smith, Kimberly <kimberly_smith@fws.gov>

Fri, Jan 15, 2016 at 10:52 AM

To: "Pinder, Mike (DGIF)" <Mike.Pinder@dgif.virginia.gov>

Cc: "ProjectReview (DGIF)" <ProjectReview@dgif.virginia.gov>

Ernie,

Here is a summary of what our comments will be and BTW - we did not approve the fish study plan. It was lost in the shuffle but the surveyor is on our qualified list.

If a desktop review indicates that suitable habitat may be present, habitat assessments are typically 200 meters upstream and 800 meters downstream of each site on any stream that may be impacted by the proposed project either directly or through sedimentation and erosion. Abbreviated surveys (100 meters upstream and 400 meters downstream) can be conducted on sites where suitable habitat is not anticipated such as first and second order streams. We will probably add some language about future assessments and expanding assessments beyond the 50 meters.

Based on the report, the following stream crossings contain suitable habitat and/or a known occurrence for Roanoke logperch:

Known

North Fork Roanoke River1
North Fork Roanoke River AR1
Roanoke River
Pigg River

Suitable habitat

Bradshaw Creek1
North Fork Blackwater River
Blackwater River 2
Magoddee Creek1
Blackwater River3
Harpen Creek1

We will be writing a biological opinion.

Kim

On Thu, Jan 14, 2016 at 3:51 PM, Pinder, Mike (DGIF) <Mike.Pinder@dgif.virginia.gov> wrote:

Ernie,

Per our conversation, the following pertains to my review of the "HABITAT ASSESSMENTS FOR ROANOKE LOGPERCH (*PERCINA REX*) ALONG THE PROPOSED MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE IN VIRGINIA" report dated 13 November 2015 by Environmental Innovations and Solutions, Inc., Cincinnati, OH.

Pages 6-7. Section 3.0 Desktop Review and Analysis

“Given that the habitat unsuitable to Roanoke logperch is also likely unsuitable for orangefin madtom, desktop and field assessments focused on identifying habitat suitable for Roanoke logperch and therefore, the two species are singly referred to as Roanoke logperch, hereafter.”

I would agree that where logperch or their habitat are found, it could be considered suitable habitat or possible occurrence for orangefin madtom. I would disagree that unsuitable streams for Roanoke logperch are by default also unsuitable to orangefin madtom. As stated on Page 6 Section 2.4.2, orangefin madtom can inhabit smaller streams than are known for logperch. Therefore, I would recommend that the two species are not referred to as one, but rather are assessed separately for suitable habitat.

Page 9 Section 4.1 Habitat Assessments

Consultants provide no references on the methodology used to assess Roanoke logperch habitat. Furthermore, they use a distance of 100 m with the project footprint being the center of this length. This distance is barely adequate for smaller streams (< 7.5 m mean channel width) and useless for larger rivers. For instance, in rivers that are 20 m wide, a single pool may be 100 m long, which would under represent the available habitat. I would recommend that the assessment covers one meander wavelength of the river or stream, which is based on 20 times the mean wetted channel width (Leopold et al., 1964). This would assure that several habitat units are represented in the sample. A minimum of 150 m and maximum of 300 m would be suitable for wadeable streams. For nonwadeable streams, the minimum and maximum would be 500 m and 1000 m, respectively (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998).

In the same section, the consultant indicated they will visually observe for Roanoke logperch along with other organisms. I would find it very doubtful that they could properly observe and identify logperch using this technique. I would appreciate an expanded explanation on how this would be conducted.

In several sections of the report, the consultants indicate that the habitat is suitable for Roanoke Logperch but consider the river unlikely to support the species (e.g., Blackwater River, Maggodee Creek) and list in Table 2 as no available habitat. In

these cases, they should list the habitat as suitable. Further sampling specifically targeting logperch can be used to determine presence.

Fitzpatrick, F.A., Wiate, I.R., D'Arconte, P.J., Meador, M.R. Meador, Maupin, M.A., and M.E. Gurtz. 1998.

Revised Methods for Characterizing Stream Habitat in the National Water-Quality Assessment Program. U.S. Geological Survey. Water-Resources Investigations Report 98-4052. Raleigh, North Carolina.

Leopold, L.B., Wolman, M.G., and Miller, J.P., 1964. Fluvial processes in geomorphology: San Fransico, W.H. Freeman, 522 p.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions or comments regarding my review.

Mike

Mike Pinder

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12/8/2016

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