

EI-847



# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Rock Island Field Office  
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Rock Island, Illinois 61201  
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IN REPLY REFER  
TO:

FWS/RIFO

September 10, 2003

Hanson Professional Services Inc.  
Attn: Kevin M. Seals  
1525 South Sixth Street  
Springfield, IL 62703

Dear Mr. Seals:

This is in response to your letter of September 5, 2003, requesting our comments regarding federally listed threatened and endangered species for the proposed Hanson Project No. 02P2007, rail line construction and abandonment in the City of Peoria, Illinois.

With respect to any federally listed threatened or endangered species, we are furnishing you the following list of species known to occur or potentially occur in Peoria County.

| <u>Classification</u> | <u>Common Name (Scientific Name)</u>                                | <u>Habitat</u>            |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Threatened            | Bald eagle<br>( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> )                   | Wintering                 |
| Threatened            | Decurrent false aster<br>( <i>Boltonia decurrens</i> )              | Illinois River floodplain |
| Threatened            | Prairie bush clover<br>( <i>Lespedeza leptostachya</i> )            | Dry to mesic prairies     |
| Threatened            | Eastern prairie fringed orchid<br>( <i>Platanthera leucophaea</i> ) | Wet grassland             |

The threatened **bald eagle** is listed as wintering in Peoria County, Illinois. During the winter, this species feeds on fish in the open water areas created by dam tailwaters, the warm water effluents of power plants and municipal and industrial discharges, or in power plant cooling ponds. The more severe the winter, the greater the ice coverage and the more concentrated the eagles become. They roost at night in groups in large trees adjacent to the river in areas that are

protected from the harsh winter elements. They perch in large shoreline trees to rest or feed on fish. There is no critical habitat designated for this species. The eagle may not be harassed, harmed, or disturbed when present nor may nest trees be cleared.

The **decurrent false aster** is listed as threatened and is known to occur in the Illinois River floodplain in Peoria County. It is also considered to potentially occur in any county bordering the Illinois River and the counties bordering the Mississippi River between the mouths of the Missouri River and the Ohio River. It occupies disturbed alluvial soils in the floodplains of these rivers. There is no critical habitat listed for this species in Illinois.

The threatened **eastern prairie fringed orchid** occupies wet grassland habitats and potentially occurs throughout the State of Illinois. Federal regulations prohibit any commercial activity involving this species or the destruction, malicious damage or removal of this species from Federal land or any other lands in knowing violation of State law or regulation, including State criminal trespass law. This species should be searched for whenever wet prairie remnants are encountered.

The threatened **prairie bush clover** occupies dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soil and also potentially occurs throughout the State of Illinois. Federal regulations prohibit any commercial activity involving this species or the destruction, malicious damage or removal of this species from Federal land or any other lands in knowing violation of State law or regulation, including State criminal trespass law. This species should be searched for whenever prairie remnants are encountered.

These comments provide technical assistance only and do not constitute a report of the Secretary of the Interior on a project within the meaning of Section 2(b) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, do not fulfill the requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, nor do they represent the review comments of the U.S. Department of the Interior on any forthcoming environmental statement.

If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Ginger Molitor of my staff at (309) 793-5800 ext. 212.

Sincerely,

  
for Richard C. Nelson  
Supervisor