



established 1866

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Division of Environmental Services  
450 Robinson Lane  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

October 15, 2008

**IN REPLY REFER TO  
SIR# 29622**

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
Engineering District 1-0  
Attn: Autumn Kelley  
255 Elm Street  
P.O. Box 398  
Oil City, PA 16301

**RE: Species Impact Review – Rare, Candidate, Threatened, and Endangered Species  
Update of PFBC-SIR# 17308  
PNDI Search ID Number: 2008-07-22-151431  
S.R. 0965, Section B00, Segment 0080, Offset 2964 – Bridge Replacement over Sandy Creek  
Mineral and French Creek Townships, Venango County**

Dear Ms. Kelley:

As indicated in my previous letters of December 27, 2004 and February 28, 2006, the following rare or protected species are known from the vicinity of the project site:

Common Name	Scientific Name	PA Status
Spotted darter	<i>Etheostoma maculatum</i>	Threatened
Ohio lamprey	<i>Ichthyomyzon bdellium</i>	Candidate
Queen snake	<i>Regina septemvittata</i>	Rare

We are concerned about the direct and indirect impacts of any in-stream demolition and construction activities (temporary or permanent) to the fish species of concern listed above. In addition, potential project impacts to state and federally listed mussel species were evaluated during a project field view and mussel survey that was completed on August 10, 2005. This interagency meeting at the project site included representatives of PennDOT, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and me (see the enclosed summary of the mussel survey results). Although live mussels from three species were found, and specimens of the spike (*Elliptio dilatata*) were abundant, no mussel species of concern were collected within the survey area. As indicated in the enclosed "Agency Comments on PennDOT Project" form, no additional surveys for mussels are requested. In addition, no specific impact avoidance measures are requested for the mussel species encountered; however, several of the impact minimization measures requested below in order to protect the aforementioned fish species will also benefit mussels in the project vicinity.

In consideration of the listing status and sensitivity of the spotted darter and Ohio lamprey, **we request that all in-stream activity be avoided from April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>** in order to avoid adverse impacts during the spawning season for these fish species. This restriction applies to the demolition of the existing bridge, pier construction, installation and removal of cofferdams, causeways, and any other temporary or permanent in-stream structures or activities. However, the demolition of the existing bridge and in-stream placement of various structures may be completed before or after this seasonal restriction period. Once causeways or cofferdams are placed during periods outside the seasonal restriction time frame period, construction work may proceed from these temporary structures as long as activity in the water is avoided.

**Our Mission:**

[www.fish.state.pa.gov](http://www.fish.state.pa.gov)

*To protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.*

SIR# 29622  
October 15, 2008  
Page 2

The queen snake primarily inhabits streams and stream banks, including rocky areas and riparian shrubs. In order to minimize adverse impacts to this non-venomous species, we request that the temporary and permanent impacts to the stream channel and banks be reduced to the smallest footprint possible during both demolition of the existing bridge and construction of the new bridge. All in-stream work should be performed in the period from June 16 through September 30 during the active season of the queen snake, so that they may move from the area of disturbance. Other time frames for in-stream construction activity may result in harm to these snakes, since they are likely to be hibernating and incapable of leaving the area of disturbance.

We also request that an approved Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control Plan be fully implemented and maintained during project construction to minimize adverse impacts from siltation. Any piers, cofferdams, causeways, or other in-stream structures associated with demolition of the existing bridge and construction of the replacement bridge should be the smallest possible size practicable in order to minimize destruction of fish spawning habitat. Any fill used to construct causeways or cofferdams must consist of "clean" rock (i.e., no fines or soil). In addition, debris from demolition of the existing bridge must be prevented from getting into Sandy Creek as much as practicable. We also request that any fuel storage tanks used for equipment re-fueling during construction be located a minimum of 100 feet away from any waterways and wetlands.

If all of the aforementioned impact avoidance/minimization measures are fully implemented, then no significant adverse impact to the species of special concern are likely to occur.

In any future correspondence with us regarding this specific project, please refer to the SIR tracking number indicated above. Please contact me at (814) 359-5236 if you have questions regarding this response. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to conservation of rare species.

Sincerely,



Jeff Schmid,  
Fisheries Biologist

c: Robert Anderson, USFWS  
Robert Dzurko, PA DEP NWRO

Enclosures (2)

### AGENCY COMMENTS ON PENNDOT PROJECT

PROJECT INFORMATION (to be completed by PENNDOT)

County: Venango  
USGS Quadrangle(s): Polk, PA  
River/Stream: Sandy Creek  
Tributary to:       
PENNDOT Dist#: 1-0  
MPMS No.: 2194

Bridge Name: 60-0965-0080-2964  
S.R. Number: 0965  
BMS Number: 60-0965-0080-2964  
Lat/Long of Bridge: 41-21-15/79-56-26  
Contact Person: William Koller  
Phone: 814-678-7106

AGENCY COMMENTS:

No mussel survey is required. This project is not likely to adversely affect:

federally listed or proposed mussel species

state-listed mussel species

No mussel survey is necessary, provided measures are implemented by PENNDOT to avoid and minimize impacts. Comments are attached.

Conduct a Phase I mussel survey in accordance with Appendix D.

Conduct a Phase II mussel survey in accordance with Appendix D.

Conduct Phase I and II mussel surveys in accordance with Appendix D.

Conduct mussel survey in accordance with agency recommendations. Guidance is attached.

Recommended Direct Impact Survey Limits \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended Indirect Impact Survey Limits \_\_\_\_\_

Project biologist: Jeff Schmid

Agency: (check one) USFWS  PFBC

Address: Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
Division of Environmental Services  
450 Robinson Lane  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Phone Number: (814) 359-5236

Jeff Schmid  
(agency official's signature)

10/15/2008  
(date)

Note: Mussel surveys must be conducted by qualified surveyors. Coordination with the USFWS or PFBC is required to obtain the most up to date list of qualified surveyors (See Appendix F). Contractors conducting surveys must obtain a PA Scientific Collectors Permit from the PFBC, and must comply with the conditions of that permit. Collectors Permit Applications are available online at [http://sites.state.pa.us/PA\\_Exec/Fish\\_Boat/images/pages/forms/plbc107.pdf](http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/images/pages/forms/plbc107.pdf)

**Summary Notes of Stream Survey of Sandy Creek on Wednesday, August 10, 2005  
for PennDOT Bridge Replacement Project on S.R. 0965, Section B00  
Mineral and French Creek Townships, Venango County**

**Participants:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Robert Anderson, Jennifer Dombroskie  
PennDOT – Tom Minnich, Autumn Kelley  
PA Fish & Boat Commission – Jeff Schmid

**Weather:** Sunny, warm (mid-80°F), no precipitation

**Survey Area:** stream section from 50 meters downstream to 100 meters upstream of existing bridge

**Survey Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (1.0 hour total)

**Search Methodology:** visual, including use of glass-bottom viewing buckets, while wading

**Aquatic Species Found:**

**MUSSELS:**

	Common Name	Scientific Name	# Found Alive	# Found Dead/Relict
1	Spike	<i>Elliptio dilatata</i>	75	numerous *
2	Wavy-rayed lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis fasciola</i>	1	0
3	Giant floater	<i>Pyganodon grandis</i>	0	1-weathered dead
4	Fluted shell	<i>Lasmigona costata</i>	1	0
5	Mucket	<i>Actinonaias ligamentina</i>	0	1-weathered dead
6	Pill clam	<i>Sphaeridae spp.</i>	0	numerous
7	Asian clam	<i>Corbicula fluminea</i>	0	numerous

\* **Note:** in addition to an abundance of relict shells within the stream, 2 muskrat middens were also found along the banks with approximately 30 to 50 dead shells of this species in each midden

**OTHER INVERTEBRATES:** numerous live crayfish throughout survey area

**FISH:** logperch (*Percina caprodes*), greenside darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*), northern hog sucker (*Hypentelium nigricans*), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*)