

Thanks, Adam.

Sorry for any delay. As you can imagine, it's been a little chaotic in Asheville.

I'll also send your update to our folks in SC.

Happy Holidays,

Rebekah Reid

Consultation Biologist and Section 7 Team Lead
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Asheville Ecological Services Field Office
160 Zillicoa St., Suite B
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

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From: Assenza, Adam <Adam.Assenza@stb.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 12:38 PM
To: Reid, Rebekah N <rebekah_reid@fws.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Norfolk Southern Zirconia to Inman Abandonment in Henderson and Polk Co in NC and Spartanburg Co in SC (Log No. 25-306)

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Hello Rebekah,

I received your comments from Oct. 16 from NS's counsel in their Oct. 31 filing in docket AB-290-415-X and incorporated your substantive feedback into our NEPA process and documentation. In our Draft EA served Nov. 25, we determined that the proposed abandonment would have no impact on federally-listed threatened and endangered species, and sent Asheville ESFO the Draft EA for review. Receiving no additional comment, the Final EA was served this Monday, and the Board issued its decision incorporating OEA's recommended condition today. These documents can all be found on our website at www.stb.gov by searching for the docket number; OEA added Asheville ESFO to the service list as a non-party so you'd receive our agency determination and any updates about this project.

Thank you for following up and closing the loop. As always, we appreciate USFWS's input in our environmental review process, especially with the rapid turnover requirements applicable in rail abandonment proceedings.

Have a safe and happy holiday season,

Adam Assenza

Environmental Protection Specialist (he/him)
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Surface Transportation Board
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From: Reid, Rebekah N <rebekah_reid@fws.gov>

Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 12:18 PM

To: Assenza, Adam <Adam.Assenza@stb.gov>

Subject: Fw: Norfolk Southern Zirconia to Inman Abandonment in Henderson and Polk Co in NC and Spartanburg Co in SC (Log No. 25-306)

You don't often get email from rebekah_reid@fws.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Project received: September 25, 2024

Authorities: National Environmental Policy Act and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended

Project Description: According to the information provided, the Norfolk Southern Railway Company is proposing to abandon an existing rail line from Milepost W 26.0 near Zirconia, NC to Milepost W 57.3 near Inman, SC. The rail line has not been used in approximately 20 years and all existing infrastructure will remain in place.

Federally Listed Species: According to our records and a review of the information you provided, suitable habitat is not present within the proposed action area for any federally listed species. We believe the requirements under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act are fulfilled. However, obligations under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of the identified action may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered, (2) the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that was not considered in this review, or (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat is determined that may be affected by the identified action.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. In any future correspondence concerning this project, please reference our Log Number 25-306.

Rebekah Reid

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US Fish and Wildlife Service
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