



## Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

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### Division of Environmental Services

Natural Gas Section  
450 Robinson Lane  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

October 26, 2015

**IN REPLY REFER TO**  
SIR# 41856

TETRA TECH  
Preston Smith  
661 Andersen Drive  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15220

**RE: Species Impact Review (SIR) – Rare, Candidate, Threatened and Endangered Species  
PNDI Search No.  
Sunoco Mariner East 2 Pipeline  
ALLEGHENY County: - BERKS County: - BLAIR County: - CAMBRIA County: -  
CHESTER County: - CUMBERLAND County: - DAUPHIN County: - DELAWARE  
County: - HUNTINGDON County: - INDIANA County: - JUNIATA County: -  
LANCASTER County: - LEBANON County: - PERRY County: - WASHINGTON  
County: - WESTMORELAND County: - YORK County:**

Dear Preston Smith:

This responds to your inquiry about a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Internet Database search “potential conflict” or a threatened and endangered species impact review. These projects are screened for potential conflicts with rare, candidate, threatened or endangered species under Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission jurisdiction (fish, reptiles, amphibians, aquatic invertebrates only) using the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) database and our own files. These species of special concern are listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Wild Resource Conservation Act, and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Code (Chapter 75), or the Wildlife Code.

### **Freshwater Mussels**

Rare freshwater mussel species are known from the vicinity of the project area in Aughwick Creek (Rainbow Mussel & Yellow Lampmussel), Tuscarora Creek (Rainbow Mussel), and Conodoguinet Creek (Elktoe, Rainbow Mussel, Triangle Floater, Yellow Lampmussel). Your October 9, 2015 letter stated that Sunoco plans to drill/bore Aughwick Creek, Tuscarora Creek, and Conodoguinet Creek and implement our contingency recommendations for drilling/boring operations as listed in our January 27, 2014 letter. Provided that drilling/boring is conducted on these three streams and our recommendations are followed, as well as best management practices and an approved strict erosion and sedimentation control plan is maintained, then we do not anticipate the proposed activity to have any significant adverse impacts to the freshwater mussel species of special concern.

### **Our Mission:**

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

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

## Fish

Rare or protected fish species are known from the vicinity of the project area in the Monongahela River (Ghost Shiner) and Little Conemaugh River (Brook Stickleback). Your October 9, 2015 letter stated that Sunoco plans to drill/bore the Monongahela River and Little Conemaugh River. Provided that directional boring is used for the Monongahela River and Little Conemaugh River crossings, in-stream work is avoided, strict E&S control measures are maintained, and best management practices are employed, we do not foresee any significant adverse impacts from the proposed activity to the fish species of special concern.

### Eastern redbelly turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*, PA threatened)

Per our request, an Eastern Redbelly Turtle habitat assessment survey was conducted by a qualified biologist and the habitat assessment report was provided to us. Based on the report, 34 properties were deemed as suitable RBT habitat (aquatic or nesting) within or adjacent to the pipeline ROW. Of the 34 properties that were suitable RBT habitat, only 2 areas identified as suitable nesting habitat and 1 area identified as suitable aquatic habitat would be disturbed by the construction of the project. All other suitable habitat areas would be outside the limit of disturbance or would be crossed via drilling/boring.

Based on our review of the habitat assessment report, the project site contains accessible potential redbelly turtle nesting habitat that would be disturbed by the construction of the project at the following locations: areas near Pond A4 (Habitat Assessment Report Attachment 4, Figure 2b) and Wetland I2 (Habitat Assessment Report Attachment 4, Figure 2i). The following measures will be necessary at areas near Pond A4 and Wetland I2 in order to avoid impacts to redbelly turtles during the construction of this project:

1) A silt fence barrier should be placed at the edge of the proposed area of disturbance, in between the waterway and the work area, to prevent turtles from accessing active work zones in the segments that were determined to be potential habitat. This fence should be installed during the inactive period of the redbelly turtle (October 15-April 15) so that active turtles or their nests do not get trapped in the work zone.

2) Any turtle found on site should be relocated to the nearest aquatic habitat. Additionally, the PFBC must be contacted within 48 hours of the find.

We are concerned that eastern redbelly turtles could be using the project area at Stream H52 near Wetland Q75 (Habitat Assessment Report Attachment 4, Figure 2d) for overwintering (brumation). Any dewatering or disturbance to the sediments during the brumation of the turtles could cause harm or even death to turtles that are in a dormant state and unable to move away. Therefore, we recommend that no construction be conducted in the water at Stream H52 near Wetland Q75 during the overwintering period of the redbelly turtle (October 15 through April 15). Any instream **construction activities should take place between April 15 and October 15 at Stream H52 near Wetland Q75 in order to allow turtles to avoid the project area while they are active.** Any turtles found within the staging area of the project should be safely moved outside the work zone in appropriate habitat.

Provided that the potential nesting habitat areas can be fenced and overwintering season can be avoided as recommended, best management practices are followed, and an approved strict erosion and sedimentation control plan is maintained, then I do not anticipate the proposed activity to have any significant adverse impacts to the eastern redbelly turtle.

This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data and our files and is valid for two (2) years from the date of this letter. An absence of recorded species information does not

necessarily imply species absence. Our data files and the PNDI system are continuously being updated with species occurrence information. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered, and consultation shall be re-initiated.

**If you have any questions regarding this review, please contact Gary Smith at 814-279-3080 and refer to the SIR # 41856.** Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this important matter of species conservation and habitat protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Smiles". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Heather A. Smiles, Chief  
Natural Gas Section

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