



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Raleigh, North Carolina 27686-8726

August 24, 2001

Mr. Scott A. Brewer  
Director, Environmental Management Division  
Marine Corps Base  
PSC 20004  
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28542-0004

Dear Mr. Brewer:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your letter of August 8, 2001 regarding the proposed introduction of Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP) training into range operations on Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, Onslow County, North Carolina. Your letter evaluates potential impacts of the proposed SFCP training on the federally-listed red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*; RCW) and rough-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia asperulaefolia*; RLL). Our comments concerning the proposed project are provided in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (Act).

According to your August 8, 2001 letter, Camp Lejeune proposes to train the Marine SFCP to direct live-fire Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS). Naval vessels positioned in Onslow Bay will fire upon targets on land within Camp Lejeune. The training specifically calls for the engagement of targets within the G-10 Impact Area.

The proposed SFCP/NSFS training calls for the firing of the five-inch 54 caliber and five-inch 62 caliber rounds. Both of these projectiles are smaller than the projectile fired from the M198 howitzer (155 mm), which is commonly used in the G-10 Impact Area. The five-inch rounds travel at a greater velocity than the 155mm. This has been accounted for in determining the location and size of the target area for the NSFS. This target area and accompanying buffer zone are illustrated in your August 8, 2001 letter as being almost wholly contained within the existing G-10 Impact Area target area. Few, if any mis-ranged rounds would fall outside of the actual G-10 Impact Area target area. The likelihood that a round fired from a warship would fall outside of the G-10 Impact Area buffer zone is remote.

Another element considered when evaluating impacts is the potential for ordnance fired into the target area to skip. Skipping occurs when a projectile is shot at a low angle (less than 10 degrees elevation from the horizon) and continues on a trajectory beyond the intended target.

To minimize the potential for projectiles entering the target area from skipping, warships firing into the G-10 Impact Area will be required to shoot from a distance exceeding 8.1 nautical miles (15 kilometers) from the identified target.

NSFS is expected to be conducted on average 25 to 30 times annually. The duration of live-fire associated with each event is estimated to be four to six hours. A typical event involves the positioning of the SFCP at existing observation posts overlooking the G-10 Impact Area. The SFCP will identify the targets within the designated target area and communicate target coordinates to NSFS ship batteries. As the batteries engage the targets, the SFCP reports on accuracy and provides direction to increase accuracy. Based on telephone conversations between Mr. John Hammond of this office and Ms. Karen Ogden of Camp Lejeune's Fish and Wildlife Branch, NSFS training will only be conducted on Camp Lejeune in conjunction with SFCP training.

Your August 8, 2001 letter indicates that 14 RCW clusters are contained within the G-10 Impact Area buffer zone. The ½ mile radius foraging partitions for many of these extend into the G-10 Impact Area target area. Of the 14 clusters, only two foraging partitions contain suitable foraging habitat within the proposed NSFS target area. The closest cluster is 4,265 feet (1,300 meters) from the proposed NSFS target area. Approximately 30 acres of suitable foraging habitat for Cluster 27 and five acres for Cluster 37 fall within the proposed NSFS target area buffer zone. Both of these parcels are subject to impacts since they are located within the G-10 Impact Area target area.

The RCW groups residing in the G-10 Impact Area have demonstrated high productivity even as the G-10 Impact Area has been regularly used for live fire artillery training. Camp Lejeune believes the proposed NSFS/SFCP training is not likely to adversely affect the RCW for the following reasons: (1) noise impacts are not expected to alter reproductive behavior or success since noise associated with NSFS will be comparable to or lower than discharges associated with the currently employed M198 howitzer; (2) there will be no additional loss of foraging habitat since the impacts related to NSFS are contained within an area already frequently receiving live fire; (3) the frequency of NSFS/SFCP training will be significantly less than the near-daily artillery fire into the G-10 Impact Area.

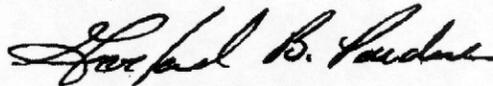
Two concentrations (groups) of RLL occur within 1,970 feet (600 meters) of the proposed NSFS target area. Both of these fall within the G-10 Impact Area target area and are already subject to impacts. According to previous correspondence provided by Camp Lejeune, it appears that the NSFS target area is in a portion of the G-10 Impact Area that is already heavily impacted or otherwise poorly suited for rough-leaved loosestrife. Due to the soil disturbance associated with live fire training the likelihood that RLL plants exist here is remote. The combined NSFS/SFCP training would not introduce new impacts to known RLL groups in the G-10 Impact Area.

Based on the information contained in your letter dated August 8, 2001 and discussions with Ms. Karen Ogden of your staff, the Service concurs that the proposed SFCP/NSFS is not likely to adversely affect the RCW, RLL or any other federally-listed species, their formally designated critical habitat, or species currently proposed for Federal listing under the Act.

We believe that the requirements of section 7 (a)(2) of the Act have been satisfied for the project. We remind you that obligations under section 7 consultation must be reconsidered if: (1) new information reveals impacts of this identified action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered; (2) this action is subsequently modified in a manner that was not considered in this review; or (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat determined that may be affected by the identified action.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. John Hammond at 919-856-4520 (Ext. 28). Thank you for your continued cooperation with our agency.

Sincerely,



Dr. Garland B. Pardue  
Ecological Services Supervisor

cc: Ralph Costa, FWS

FWD/R4:Hammond;jh:3-13-01:919-856-4520:WPWIN6.1/SFCP.wpd