

September 16, 2005

Mr. Ronnie Raum, Forest Supervisor
Mark Twain National Forest
401 Fairgrounds Road
Rolla, Missouri 65401

Dear Mr. Raum:

This document transmits the Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Programmatic Biological Opinion for the proposed 2005 Forest Plan for the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF), located in Barry, Bollinger, Boone, Butler, Callaway, Carter, Christian, Crawford, Dent, Douglas, Howell, Iron, Laclede, Madison, Oregon, Ozark, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, Saint Francois, Sainte Genevieve, Shannon, Stone, Taney, Texas, Washington, Wayne, and Wright Counties, Missouri. This programmatic opinion addresses the effects of the proposed action (Forest Plan) on Mead's Milkweed (*Asclepias meadii*) and Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.). Your June 14, 2005, request for formal consultation was received on June 17, 2005.

The MTNF provided the Service with a Programmatic Biological Assessment that assessed the effects of the Revised Forest Plan on the following federally listed species: Virginia sneezeweed (*Helenium virginicum*), running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), Hine's emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*), Tumbling Creek Cavesnail (*Antrobia culveri*), Pink mucket pearlymussel (*Lampsilis orbiculata*), Scaleshell mussel (*Leptodea leptodon*), Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*). In our initiation letter we concurred with your determinations that the proposed Revised Forest Plan will have no effect on the Virginia sneezeweed, running buffalo clover, and Topeka shiner. We also concurred with your determination that the proposed Forest Plan Revision may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Hine's emerald dragonfly, Tumbling Creek Cavesnail, Pink mucket pearlymussel, scaleshell mussel, bald eagle and gray bat.

This Programmatic Biological Opinion is based on information provided in the June 14, 2005 Programmatic Biological Assessment, the January 2005 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Revised Forest Plan, telephone and electronic mail conversations with Jody Eberly of your staff, field investigations, your September 14,

2005 comments on the Draft Programmatic Biological Opinion, and other sources of information. A complete administrative record of this consultation is on file at the Service's Columbia, Missouri Ecological Services Field Office

I appreciate your future efforts, as stated in your September 14, 2005 letter, to complete the procedures necessary to conduct prescribed burning in the Bell Mountain Wilderness to benefit the Mead's milkweed. Please let me know if you need any assistance in this important recovery effort.

I want to thank you and your staff for the exceptional cooperation during the development of this biological opinion. Furthermore, I appreciate your commitment to the recovery of federally listed species on MTNF. I believe the 2005 Forest Plan will benefit the conservation status of all federally listed species on the MTNF as well as other declining species.

If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please feel free to contact me or Theresa Davidson of this office at 417-683-4428.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Scott
Field Supervisor

Cc: Randy Moore, Forest Service Regional Office
Jennifer Szymanski, USFWS, Fort Snelling, MN
Scott Pruitt, USFWS, Bloomington Field Office
Theresa Davidson, USFWS, Ava, MO