



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Mall & Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024-2000

JUN 2 2010



D66 (NCR-NAMA)

Mr. John Wolflin
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Wolflin:

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, on the National Mall Turf and Soil Reconstruction Project. The project area is within the National Mall in Washington, D.C., specifically the center grass panels of the Mall, which are bounded by pedestrian walkways north and south, 14th Street NW on the west and 3rd Street, NW on the east. Immediately adjacent are the Smithsonian Institution museums, the National Gallery of Art, the Washington Monument grounds, and the U.S. Capitol Building.

As one of the most popular national tourist destinations, the project area is one of the most used public areas in the District of Columbia for national celebrations, First Amendment demonstrations, special events, and recreation with an annual visitorship of nearly 25 million. However, due to intense use, the turf panels on the Mall have deteriorated. Action is needed to address the management of this civic space to alleviate the intense soil compaction and enable proper air, water and nutrient infiltration. Reducing soil compaction will also improve site drainage, stormwater management, and the condition of turf. To support the new turf system, the current irrigation system needs to be replaced because it has been compromised by the intense use and does not adequately service the project area.

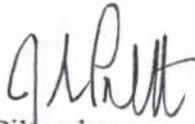
The EA presents a range of alternatives to improve the vegetation and soils on the Mall by removing and replacing the existing soil on the center grass panels, better defining the edges of the grass panels, and replacing the irrigation system.

We are writing you to request a list of federally listed species that may be impacted by this proposed project, and to initiate informal Section 7 consultation. Because of its location in a highly urbanized environment in downtown Washington, DC, it is unlikely that the proposed improvements will affect any federally listed or locally sensitive species. However, we would appreciate written confirmation from your office. A letter is also being sent to the D.C. Department of the Environment to solicit their input.

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If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me or Mark Isaksen, Chief of Resource Management, National Mall and Memorial Parks at (202) 245-4711 or by e-mail at mark_isaksen@nps.gov. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Piltzecker". The signature is stylized and cursive.

John Piltzecker
Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks

Enclosure

cc. Jill Cavanaugh, The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

National Mall Turf and Soil Reconstruction Project Area

