



Re: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Project Submittal for review (IPAC #: 2025-0137317)

From Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>

Date Thu 8/21/2025 2:47 PM

To Hornstein, Antonio L <alhornstein@burnsmcd.com>

Cc Harrison, Brooke <bharrison@burnsmcd.com>; Peck, Gregory (Greg) <gapeck@burnsmcd.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>; Uloko Michael Adakole <muloko@nisource.com>; nmurdock@nisource.com <nmurdock@nisource.com>; Salupo, Benjamin R (Ben) <brsalupo@burnsmcd.com>; Culbertson, James R. <jrculbertson@burnsmcd.com>; Greim Adam <agreim@nisource.com>; White Janine <janinewhite@nisource.com>; Fuelling, Joshua <jfuelling@burnsmcd.com>

Hello Antonio,

Thank you for coordinating this project with us. Given the emergency nature of the project, the avoidance of all suitable bat roost trees, and the fact that we are past the most critical time of year for young bats (i.e., they can now fly on their own), I have no objection to removing these trees prior to October 1.

Jeromy Applegate
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ohio Ecological Services Field Office
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230
380-241-6230

From: Hornstein, Antonio L <alhornstein@burnsmcd.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 3:06 PM

To: Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>

Cc: Harrison, Brooke <bharrison@burnsmcd.com>; Peck, Gregory (Greg) <gapeck@burnsmcd.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>; Uloko Michael Adakole <muloko@nisource.com>; nmurdock@nisource.com <nmurdock@nisource.com>; Salupo, Benjamin R (Ben) <brsalupo@burnsmcd.com>; Culbertson, James R. <jrculbertson@burnsmcd.com>; Greim Adam <agreim@nisource.com>; White Janine <janinewhite@nisource.com>; Fuelling, Joshua <jfuelling@burnsmcd.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Project Submittal for review (IPAC #: 2025-0137317)

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Good afternoon Jeromy,

Thank you for stepping in to help with this. As you are aware from our conversations, due to the need for an emergency pipeline repair Burns & McDonnell, on behalf of NiSource, is requesting a project review for the proposed Big Walnut Creek Crossing project in Franklin County, Ohio. Please see the attached project review request letter, a figure identifying the Project survey area location and shapefiles of the survey area, and official IPAC species list for the project for further details.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or any additional informational needs. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Antonio Hornstein

Staff Environmental Scientist

[Burns & McDonnell](#)

530 W. Spring St, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215

alhornstein@burnsmcd.com



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8/20/2025

Attention: Jeromy Applegate
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4265 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, OH 43230

Re: Project Review Request, Big Walnut Creek Crossing
IPAC #: 2025-0137317
Franklin County, Ohio

Dear Mr. Applegate,

NiSource is formally requesting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) complete an environmental review for the proposed North Columbus High Pressure Pipeline (NCHP) Big Walnut Creek Crossing emergency dent repair located in Franklin County, Ohio (Figure 1). The Project is within the City of Columbus. The Big Walnut Creek Crossing project includes the emergency installation of a new section of pipeline under Big Walnut Creek to address an anomaly discovered during an in-line inspection of an existing pipeline. Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is the preferred method of installation to reduce potential impacts to Big Walnut Creek and the adjacent floodplain. In the event that HDD method cannot be utilized, the new section will be installed via open trench. In August 2025 a mussel survey and relocation was conducted in the affected portion of Big Walnut Creek (Permit Numbers ESPER0039255-1 (Schwegman) and ESPSR9968385-0 (Lawlis)). No known Threatened and Endangered species were detected within the survey or salvage areas. The environmental impact area was surveyed for potentially suitable bat habitat on August 19, 2025. Two trees were identified as having characteristics suitable for roosting such as cracks, crevices, and/or exfoliating bark. The two trees are to be shown in engineering drawings and avoided during construction. An estimated total of 1.26 acres of tree clearing is likely to be required. Although a species-specific survey was not conducted, no bats were observed while on-site. Landscape trees within road right of way and some forested areas are present within portions of the existing pipeline right of way.

Due to the emergency nature of this project, we are requesting that you please provide us with information on federally listed threatened and endangered species as soon as possible. For ease of review, we have included a project location map (Figure 1), shapefile of the project survey boundary, and IPaC official species list. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Project, please contact me at the phone number or email below. Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brooke Harrison".

Brooke Harrison
Project Manager
bharrison@burnsmcd.com
(380) 390-2516

Burns & McDonnell
Attn. Brooke Harrison



530 West Spring Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215

Cc:

Antonio Hornstein, Burns & McDonnell





8/20/2025

Attention: Mike Pettegrew
ODNR Office of Real Estate & Land Management
2045 Morse Road, Building E-2
Columbus, OH 43229

Via email: environmentalreviewrequest@dnr.state.oh.us

Re: Project Review Request
NCHP Big Walnut Creek Crossing
Franklin County, Ohio

Dear Mr. Pettegrew,

NiSource is formally requesting that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) complete an environmental review for the proposed North Columbus High Pressure Pipeline (NCHP) Big Walnut Creek Crossing emergency dent repair located in Franklin County, Ohio (Figure 1). The Project is within the City of Columbus. The Big Walnut Creek Crossing project includes the emergency installation of a new section of pipeline under Big Walnut Creek to address an anomaly discovered during an in-line inspection of an existing pipeline. Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is the preferred method of installation to reduce potential impacts to Big Walnut Creek and the adjacent floodplain. In the event that HDD method cannot be utilized, the new section will be installed via open trench. In August 2025 a mussel survey and relocation was conducted in the affected portion of Big Walnut Creek (USFWS Permit Numbers ESPER0039255-1 (Schwegman) and ESPSR9968385-0 (Lawlis)). No known Threatened and Endangered species were detected within the survey or salvage areas. The environmental impact area was surveyed for potentially suitable bat habitat on August 19, 2025. Two trees were identified as having characteristics suitable for roosting such as cracks, crevices, and/or exfoliating bark. The two trees are to be shown in engineering drawings and avoided during construction. An estimated total of 1.26 acres of tree clearing is likely to be required. Although a species-specific survey was not conducted, no bats were observed while on-site. Landscape trees within road right of way and some forested areas are present within portions of the existing pipeline right of way.

Due to the emergency nature of this project, we are requesting that you please provide us with the results of the ODNR's environmental review, including results of the ODNR Natural Heritage Database search, as soon as possible. For ease of review, we have included a project location map (Figure 1) and shapefile of the project survey boundary. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Project, please contact me at the phone number or email below. Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brooke Harrison".

Brooke Harrison
Project Manager
bharrison@burnsmcd.com
(380) 390-2516



Burns & McDonnell
Attn. Brooke Harrison
530 West Spring Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215

Cc:

Antonio Hornstein, Burns & McDonnell





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ohio Ecological Services Field Office

4625 Morse Road, Suite 104

Columbus, OH 43230-8355

Phone: (614) 416-8993 Fax: (614) 416-8994



In Reply Refer To:

08/18/2025 19:19:16 UTC

Project Code: 2025-0137317

Project Name: Big Walnut Creek Crossing

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological

evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf>

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts, see <https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit/what-we-do>.

It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures, see <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds>.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit <https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Requests for additional technical assistance or consultation from the Ohio Field Office should be submitted following guidance on the following page <https://www.fws.gov/office/ohio-ecological-services/request-project-review>. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Ohio Ecological Services Field Office

4625 Morse Road, Suite 104

Columbus, OH 43230-8355

(614) 416-8993

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2025-0137317
Project Name: Big Walnut Creek Crossing
Project Type: Pipeline - Onshore - Maintenance / Modification - Below Ground
Project Description: Emergency installation of a new section of pipeline under Big Walnut Creek via HDD to address an anomaly located under Big Walnut Creek. The anomaly was discovered during an in-line-inspection of one of our pipelines and requires immediate attention. HDD will reduce the impact to Big Walnut Creek and the adjacent floodway and floodplain but open trenching will be utilized if HDD is not possible.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@40.0778965,-82.89188550235696,14z>



Counties: Franklin County, Ohio

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 6 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

-
1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Indiana Bat <i>Myotis sodalis</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5949	Endangered
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered

CLAMS

NAME	STATUS
Rayed Bean <i>Villosa fabalis</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5862	Endangered
Round Hickorynut <i>Obovaria subrotunda</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9879	Threatened
Salamander Mussel <i>Simpsonaias ambigua</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6208	Proposed Endangered

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Proposed Threatened

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Private Entity
Name: Antonio Hornstein
Address: 530 W Spring St
Address Line 2: Ste 100
City: Columbus
State: OH
Zip: 43215
Email: alhornstein1@gmail.com
Phone: 3096425009



Outlook

FW: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

From Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>

Date Mon 8/11/2025 10:47 AM

To Hornstein, Antonio L <alhornstein@burnsmcd.com>; Keck, Katherine <kkeck@burnsmcd.com>; Salupo, Benjamin R (Ben) <brsalupo@burnsmcd.com>

From: Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 8:32 AM
To: Ryan Schwegman <Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.com>; John.Navarro@dnr.ohio.gov
Cc: Sarah Veselka <sarah@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Clarissa Lawlis <Clarissa@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Matthew Gilkay <Matthew@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

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Ryan,

I concur with the results of the survey and have no objection to completing the repair.

Jeromy Applegate
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ohio Ecological Services Field Office
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230
380-241-6230

From: Ryan Schwegman <Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.com>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 8:06 AM
To: Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>; John.Navarro@dnr.ohio.gov <john.navarro@dnr.ohio.gov>
Cc: Sarah Veselka <sarah@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Clarissa Lawlis <Clarissa@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Matthew Gilkay <Matthew@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

Good morning, Jeromy,

Clarissa Lawlis and her crew completed the mussel survey and relocation for the emergency Big Walnut Creek NiSource Project this past weekend. No T&E species were detected within the survey or salvage area; therefore, a mussel salvage was completed within the proposed ADI and buffers.

The survey and salvage area contained a moderate mussel density, comprised of six live species, dominated by *Lampsilis siliquoidea*. A small Phase 2 effort was triggered, but the two quadrats did not detect any additional mussels. A summary table of mussels collected is provided below. Attached you will also find a map showing the survey area, salvage area, and relocation site.

A full report will follow; however, based on the information provided and in regard to freshwater mussel resources, we request your concurrence to proceed with the repair.

Best regards,
RS

Big Walnut Creek Emergency Freshwater Mussel Survey						
Row Labels	Phase 1	Phase 2	Relocation	Relocation Area Search	SRC	Grand Total

Amblema plicata*					
Cambarunio iris	3				3
Eurynia dilatata	9		7		16
Fusconaia flava	2		7	1	10
Lampsilis ovata*					
Lampsilis siliquioidea	36		49	3	2
Lasmigona costata*					
Ptychobranchus fasciolaris	5		7	1	4
Pyganodon grandis			1		1
Grand Total	55	0	71	5	6
* Only detected as fresh dead or weathered dead					

Ryan Schwegman

COO | Senior Biologist

513.839.0123 | Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.comwww.BioSurveyGroup.com**From:** Ryan Schwegman**Sent:** Thursday, August 7, 2025 1:54 PM**To:** Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>; John.Navarro@dnr.ohio.gov**Cc:** Sarah Veselka <sarah@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Clarissa Lawlis <Clarissa@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Matthew Gilkey <Matthew@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

Jeromy,

Thank you for the rapid review and concurrence, that is very much appreciated.

RS

Ryan Schwegman

COO | Senior Biologist

513.839.0123 | Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.comwww.BioSurveyGroup.com**From:** Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>**Sent:** Thursday, August 7, 2025 1:31 PM**To:** Ryan Schwegman <Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.com>; John.Navarro@dnr.ohio.gov**Cc:** Sarah Veselka <sarah@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Clarissa Lawlis <Clarissa@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Matthew Gilkey <Matthew@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

Ryan,

This is in response to your August 7, 2025 request for an amendment to Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit Numbers ESPER0039255-1 (Schwegman) and ESPSR9968385-0 (Lawlis) to perform a mussel survey in Big Walnut Creek at the site of a proposed NiSource emergency natural gas line repair in Franklin County, Ohio.

This notification serves as written concurrence that Ryan Schwegman and Clarissa Lawlis are authorized to proceed with the survey as described in your request. As requested in your proposal, relocation of mussels in the salvage area is also authorized, if no federally listed species are detected during the survey. The survey should take place between May 1 and September 30, 2025. Upon completion of the survey, we request that you submit an electronic copy of the results to this office.

Please carry a copy of this site-specific authorization and your Federal permit while conducting the work. Please contact me if you have questions.

Jeromy Applegate
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ohio Ecological Services Field Office
4625 Morse Road, Suite 104
Columbus, Ohio 43230
380-241-6230

From: Ryan Schwegman <Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 1:05 PM
To: Applegate, Jeromy <jeromy_applegate@fws.gov>; John.Navarro@dnr.ohio.gov <john.navarro@dnr.ohio.gov>
Cc: Sarah Veselka <sarah@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Clarissa Lawlis <Clarissa@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Matthew Gilkey <Matthew@BioSurveyGroup.com>; Brown \ Scott <scottbrown@nisource.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Emergency Mussel Survey & Relocation on Big Walnut Creek

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Jeromy and John,

Please find the attached mussel survey plan for your review. Due to the emergency nature of this project, we are requesting approval for the mussel relocation to occur concurrently with the survey, assuming **no** federally listed (T&E) species are located. No mussels will be relocated until the survey is complete and the absence of T&E species has been confirmed. If any live or fresh-dead T&E species are detected, **no relocation will occur**, and we will immediately consult with USFWS on next steps.

We intend to initiate this work, with your approval, tomorrow August 8th.

We are requesting authorization for the following BioSurvey Group personnel: Ryan Schwegman and Clarissa Lawlis.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Best,
RS

Ryan Schwegman
COO | Senior Biologist



PO Box 61, Oxford, OH 45056
513.839.0123 | Ryan@BioSurveyGroup.com
www.BioSurveyGroup.com