



United States Department of the Interior



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MAY - 8 2014

Ms. Genevieve LaRouche
Field Supervisor
Chesapeake Bay Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Proposed Rehabilitation of Constitution Gardens, National Mall, Washington D.C.

Dear Ms. LaRouche:

The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with The Trust for the National Mall (the Trust), is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 for the rehabilitation of Constitution Gardens on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This project grew out of the 2010 National Mall Plan, a general management and visioning plan for a sustainable National Mall. The project team was selected through a national design competition in 2012.

Situated between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, Constitution Gardens was designed as pastoral landscape with a natural lake, a quiet oasis removed from the bustle of the capital. This 52-acre park was officially dedicated in 1976, with the island in the center dedicated to the 56 Signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1982. Sadly, within just a few years of its opening, the conditions of the lake and the trees began to be of concern. Poor soil conditions have kept some of the trees from reaching full maturity to this day. Subsequently, many of the walkways have deteriorated and the visitor services facility once imagined at the eastern end of the lake was never realized.

The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate Constitution Gardens to improve the ecology, accessibility, cultural and recreational opportunities, and visitor services of the area. It conforms to the National Mall Plan which calls for the rehabilitation of Constitution Gardens to improve resource conditions and circulation, relocate the canal lockkeeper's house, provide flexible opportunities for relaxation, entertainment, and recreation, as well as improved visitor service facilities.

The purpose of this initial correspondence is to request a list of any federal listed species or habitats that may occur on the proposed project site and to solicit any early input or concerns that you may have regarding this proposed action. Because of its location in a highly urbanized environment in downtown Washington, DC, it is unlikely that the proposed rehabilitation would affect any federally listed or locally sensitive species. However, NPS would appreciate written confirmation from your office.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact James Perry by phone at (202) 245-4711, by fax at (202) 426-9309, or by email at james_perry@nps.gov. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Robert Vogel
Superintendent,
National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service

Enclosure