



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



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IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

**MAY 08 2015**

FWS/R3/ES

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Subject: Third Amendment to the Consultation Document for the NiSource's Multi-Species  
Habitat Conservation Plan

This memo constitutes the third amendment to the 13 September 2013, Consultation Document (Biological Opinion, Incidental State Statement, and Informal Consultation) for the implementation of the NiSource Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). On April 2, 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) as threatened. The NLEB was not included in NiSource's MSHCP or the consultation document. In January 2015, NiSource, Inc. requested that their section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit (ITP) and associated MSHCP be amended to include the NLEB. This amended consultation document responds to the requirement for intra-Service and inter-agency consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), for multiple federal actions associated with the MSHCP and its effects on the NLEB.

The amended consultation document addresses the action of amending the ITP to include the NLEB and also adopts the formal conference opinion as the final biological opinion for the rabbitsfoot, which was proposed as threatened when the original biological opinion was completed. There have been no significant changes in the proposed action or the information used in the consultation for all other species addressed; therefore, there are no additional changes in this amendment. The new version of the consultation document that incorporates these changes is posted to to our NiSource MSHCP website:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/permits/hcp/nisource/index.html>

We appreciate the efforts of your staff in preparing this document. Please direct any questions to Karen Herrington of this office at (612) 713-5315.

Sincerely,



Lynn Lewis  
Assistant Regional Director  
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cc: USFWS, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 4  
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