

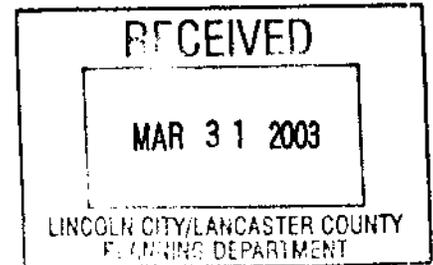


# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services  
Nebraska Field Office  
203 West Second Street  
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

March 28, 2003



Mr. Stephen Henrichsen  
Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department  
555 South 10<sup>th</sup>, Room 213  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**RE: Annual Review of the Comprehensive Plan, Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska**

Dear Mr. Henrichsen

This is in response to your March 14, 2003, request for comments regarding amendments #10 and #16 in the Comprehensive Plan as proposed by private developers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed its review of the proposed amendments based on details provided to this office, a March 27, 2003, letter from Mr. Bruce Sackett of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), and discussions regarding the affected project areas with Ms. Julie Godberson of the NGPC.

The Service concurs with the comments provided by the NGPC in its March 27 letter with regard to the impacts of proposed amendments #10 and #16, and fully supports NGPC's recommendation that no zoning changes be made to the Comprehensive Plan as described in the proposed amendments. We also share NGPC's concerns for the loss of the existing buffer that would result from the zoning changes to saline wetlands and Little Salt Creek south of Arbor Road, including the creek segment located south of Interstate 80 that provides habitat for one of only two viable populations of Salt Creek tiger beetles (*Cicindela nevadica lincolniiana*), a Federal candidate species for listing as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Loss of these important buffers at both sites may result in excess inputs of sediment, contaminants from roads and urban runoff, pesticides, and freshwater that would dilute saline systems into associated wetlands and streams.

In addition, the two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) letters regarding authorization of construction activities under the Clean Water Act are no longer valid. Use of Nationwide Permit (NP) 26 expired on June 7, 2000, and is no longer in existence. The Corps' April 18, 2000, letter verifying the use of NP 14 expired on April 18, 2002. Unless the project proponent has received a renewal from the Corps, the April 18 letter is no longer valid. We recommend that the project proponent contact the Corps for verification that proposed activities in wetlands and waters of the United States are authorized.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the proposed amendments and work cooperatively with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department in assuming a shared responsibility for the protection of the unique plants and wildlife of the eastern Nebraska saline wetland complex. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Mr. Robert Harms within our office at (308) 382-6468, extension 17.

Sincerely,

Steve Anschutz  
Nebraska Field Supervisor