

JOB PERFORMANCE REPORT

State: Maryland

Project Title: Endangered Species HCP Plan

Job Title: HCP Development for the Delmarva Fox Squirrel and Timber Harvesting on Maryland's Eastern Shore

Principal Investigator: Therres

Job Objective:

To develop a Habitat Conservation Plan in partnership with the timber industry in Maryland for Delmarva fox squirrels on both state and private lands.

Activities/Findings:

A technical workgroup developing this plan has been active since June 2006 with this effort. The workgroup includes representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, timber industry, and the USFWS. A consultant was hired in January 2007. A first draft of the HCP was been written and we are currently in the process of revising that draft. In addition, a draft of the HCP Implementation Agreement has also been written.

The consultant's contract was renewed in June 2008 to complete a final version of the HCP and Implementation Agreement, as well as prepare an Environmental Assessment document for this HCP. We anticipate that this will all be completed by May 2009, with formal submission of the HCP to the USFWS shortly thereafter.

Reasons for deviations (if any):

There are two major reasons for the delay in our progress toward a HCP. First, this is a large scale HCP that incorporates many state laws into the framework. There have been recent questions about the legal structure or relationship between the HCP and these state laws. The consultant has written an 8 page summary of these concerns and we are seeking advice from both our State Attorney General's Office and the USFWS on the most appropriate way to structure the relationship between the HCP and these state laws. Second, there has been a recent shift in thinking about the conservation measures. Discussions that were held in June have identified a different approach to minimization and mitigation of the potential take from harvesting smaller woodlots. We need additional time to work out these issues before finalizing the HCP.

Recommendations for the continuation of the job:

This job should be continued until the final HCP is submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.