

August 14, 2008

Mr. Patrick Emory
Director, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware 19901

Re: Proposed Nanticoke Wildlife Area Land Exchange (ABC Woodlands Tract)

Dear Pat:

Thank you for meeting with Andy Manus and me to discuss your proposed land trade between the Division of Fish and Wildlife and Sussex County in the Nanticoke River area. I am writing you as promised to share The Nature Conservancy's position on the proposed exchange.

The Nature Conservancy does not support your trading Nanticoke Wildlife Area lands to Sussex County for use as a dredge disposal site. As I understand your proposal, you have been in negotiations with representatives from Sussex County since 2006, to trade 110 acres of the ABC Woodlands tract in the Nanticoke Wildlife Area to the County for use as a dredge disposal site. In exchange Sussex County will purchase the 163.49 acre Williamson tract and transfer a comparable valued portion of it to the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

My review of our project files confirms that the ABC Woodlands tract was purchased by the State of Delaware from The Nature Conservancy for use as conservation lands to be managed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. At the time of the transfer of this property the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control praised the acquisition and stated that it would help to protect and restore large tracts of habitat along the Nanticoke River. Secretary Hughes in accepting these lands was quoted as saying this acquisition is consistent with the "state's open space plan by protecting natural resources, increasing biodiversity, enhancing recreational opportunities and protecting water resources and ecosystems."

We believe that state conservation lands should not be traded or exchanged for the purpose you propose. As a long standing conservation partner of yours, we are concerned that such a land exchange will reflect poorly upon the reputation of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, as well as the Delaware Open Space Program. Should you desire to continue to move this project forward, we would request that you brief the Open Space Council during their September meeting regarding your intentions.

Sincerely,



Roger L. Jones, Jr.
State Director

cc: Governor Ruth Ann Minner
Mr. John Hughes, Secretary, Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control
Mr. David Baker, Sussex County Administrator
Delaware Board of Trustees