



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Indiana Dunes National Park
1100 N. Mineral Springs Road
Porter, Indiana 46304-1299

September 3, 2020

Ms. Nicole Barker
Director of Capital Investment and Implementation
NICTD - South Shore Line
33 E. US Highway 12
Chesterton, IN 46304

Dear Ms. Barker,

We are writing regarding the proposed improvements as part of NICTD's Double Track NWI project. The project will require the temporary occupancy of property contained within the Indiana Dunes National Park (INDU) in order to accommodate extended culverts and drainage, as well as to accommodate roadway profile grade changes at Mineral Springs Road and Central Avenue north of the NICTD tracks.

The work being proposed by NICTD is consistent with the plans that have been in development since 2016 when NICTD started working on this project. As you know, INDU has participated in agency meetings and agreed to continue working with NICTD on strategies to mitigate wetland and resource impacts from the Double Track NWI project within the National Park. While no suitable site was found within the National Park for wetland mitigation, we recognize that there is still a need to work together regarding the drainage and other improvements that need to be completed.

We have indicated previously that the work NICTD needs to do would require a Special Use Permit (SUP) from INDU, just as we require from other contractors. Our understanding is that no permanent NICTD assets (i.e. culvert wing walls, catenary poles, etc.) would be placed on National Park property. The work that would be performed on National Park property would be only that which is necessary during construction to extend and improve culverts, regrade stream banks associated with those culverts, place riprap, and reprofile Mineral Springs Road and Central Avenue north of the grade crossing.

With regards to the work described above, we understand that:

- 1) it is temporary and of short duration, and there is no change in ownership of the land;

2) it is minor in terms of its nature and magnitude of change to the Indiana Dunes National Park;

3) there are no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts to or interference with the Indiana Dunes National Park; nor would it interfere with the activities, features, or attributes of the Park; and

4) the land that will be used will be fully restored to a condition which is at least as good as that which existed prior to the Double Track NWI project.

Sincerely,

Paul Labovitz
Superintendent