



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF PREVENTION, PESTICIDES
AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES

August 29, 2007

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Effects Determinations for Atrazine Relative to the Pallid Sturgeon

FROM: Anita Pease, Senior Biologist /original signed 8/29/07/
ERB IV
Environmental Fate and Effects Division

TO: Arthur-Jean B. Williams, Acting Division Director
Environmental Fate and Effects Division

Attached is the assessment of potential direct and indirect effects to the pallid sturgeon from uses of the herbicide atrazine. While the Endangered Species Act requires we assess uses of pesticides relative to any potentially affected listed species, this assessment focuses only on the pallid sturgeon, addressing provisions of a settlement agreement entered into by the federal government to resolve claims made by plaintiffs against EPA in a court case (NRDC v. EPA¹).

The attached assessment was conducted consistent with the Agency's Overview Document². Effects determinations for this assessment are summarized below:

- Atrazine is not likely to adversely affect the pallid sturgeon by direct toxic effects or by indirect effects resulting from effects to aquatic plants and aquatic animals.
- A likely to adversely affect ("LAA") determination was concluded for the pallid sturgeon based on potential indirect effects to spawning habitat via sedimentation resulting from direct effects to herbaceous/grassy riparian vegetation. However, atrazine is not likely to adversely affect the pallid sturgeon in watersheds with predominantly forested riparian areas because woody shrubs and trees are generally not sensitive to environmentally-relevant concentrations of atrazine.

¹ Settlement agreement of March 28, 2006: Natural Resources Defense Council v. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Civ. No: 03-CV-02444 RDB.

² Overview of the Ecological Risk Assessment: Process in the Office of Pesticide Programs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Endangered and Threatened Species Effects Determinations: January 23, 2004.

As required by the Alternative Consultation Agreement EPA entered into with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Services), I have been trained by the Services to make such determinations. Additionally, this assessment was subjected to internal Agency peer review throughout its development. The review panel included two other scientists who have been trained by the Services to make such determinations (Dr. Edward Odenkirchen and Megan Thyng).

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this assessment and effects determination for atrazine relative to the pallid sturgeon.

cc: Steven Bradbury
Debbie Edwards

Attachments