

Matthew J. Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

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Dam Safety & Floodplain
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*Deputy Director of
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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

November 12, 2020

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
Attn: Beth LeMaster
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019

Re: Forestwide Oak and Woodland Restoration Project

Dear Ms. LeMaster:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage (DCR) has searched its Biotics Data System for occurrences of natural heritage resources based on the forestwide proposal. Natural heritage resources are defined as the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, unique or exemplary natural communities, and significant geologic formations.

Based on the scoping information for the Forestwide Oak and Woodland Restoration Project, DCR may have concerns with the treatment category "natural stands over 50 years old." There may be some older stands of Acidic Cove Forest or White Pine - Hardwood Forest that DCR considers natural heritage resources because of their age, floristic diversity, overall stand quality, landscape position in which natural fires would be uncommon, or other attributes. If these significant natural communities are identified in the treatment areas, DCR would recommend their exclusion from the proposed activities. Once specific treatment areas are identified on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, DCR will provide additional comments and recommendations.

Under a Memorandum of Agreement established between the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and the DCR, DCR represents VDACS in comments regarding potential impacts on state-listed threatened and endangered plant and insect species.

New and updated information is continually added to Biotics. Please re-submit a completed order form and project map for an update on this natural heritage information if the scope of the project changes and/or six months has passed before it is utilized.

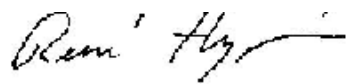
The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) maintains a database of wildlife locations, including threatened and endangered species, trout streams, and anadromous fish waters that may contain information not documented in this letter. Their database may be accessed from <http://vafwis.org/fwis/> or contact Ernie Aschenbach at 804-367-2733 or Ernie.Aschenbach@dwr.virginia.gov.

Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 804-371-2708. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor | Richmond, Virginia 23219 | 804-786-6124

*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "René Hypes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

S. René Hypes
Natural Heritage Project Review Coordinator

Cc: DEQ-OEIR