

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/16/2019 6:57:13 PM

First name: Seth

Last name: Thompson

Organization: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Title: District Wildlife Biologist

Comments: The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) wishes to express full support for the High Knob Viewshed and Habitat Improvement project at High Knob Tower, Clinch Ranger District of the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest. Early successional habitat, the direct result of this project, provides essential foraging and nesting habitat for multiple game and non-game species. Pollinators will greatly benefit from this project. Pollinators and other insect species will provide foraging opportunities for bats (including T and E species) and insectivorous birds. Early successional habitat would also provide habitat for declining bird species, such as Brown Thrasher, Golden Winged Warbler, Cerulean Warblers, Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock. DGIF trusts the US Forest Service to perform and provide oversight of this project which aligns with DGIF goals and values. The use of timber treatments, prescribed fire, and herbicide as needed, area all supported by DGIF with deference to the US Forest Service as to what tools are most appropriate to meet the need of this important project.

DGIF also understands the importance of wildlife-related recreation, which includes wildlife viewing at High Knob Tower and the Clinch Ranger District. This project aligns with DGIF's and wildlife's role in the local economy.

Sincerely,