

Matthew J. Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

Clyde E. Cristman
Director



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

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Deputy Director of
Administration and Finance

Russell W. Baxter
Deputy Director of
Dam Safety & Floodplain
Management and Soil & Water
Conservation

Thomas L. Smith
Deputy Director of Operations

January 10, 2020

Erik Taylor
USDA Forest Service
110 Southpark Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Re: 1950 Brush Mountain Trails Project

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage (DCR) has searched its Biotics Data System for occurrences of natural heritage resources from the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and the Clinch, Glenwood/Pedlar and Eastern Divide Ranger Districts. 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.

Biotics documents the presence of a natural heritage conservation site within the project boundary including a 100ft buffer. However, due to the scope of the activity and distance to the resources we do not anticipate that this project will adversely impact natural heritage resources.

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 project information and 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.

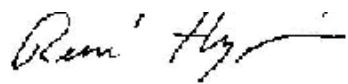
The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) maintains a database of wildlife locations, including threatened and endangered species, trout streams, and anadromous fish waters that may contain information not documented in this letter. Their database may be accessed from <http://vafwis.org/fwis/> or contact Ernie Aschenbach at 804-367-2733 or Ernie.Aschenbach@dgif.virginia.gov. There is potential for the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and /or the tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) to occur within the project area. Therefore, DCR recommends coordination with the VDGIF, Virginia's regulatory authority for the management and protection of these species to ensure compliance with the Virginia Endangered Species Act (VA ST §§ 29.1-563 – 570). Due to the legal status of the northern long-eared bat, DCR also recommends coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure compliance with protected species legislation.

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: Ernie Aschenbach, VDGIF
Troy Andersen, USFWS