

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Programmatic Biological Evaluation (BE) is an analysis of the potential effects associated with the proposed Kerens to Parsons, West Virginia Corridor H project on 69 Regional Forester Sensitive Species (RFSS) fauna that occur on the Monongahela National Forest (MNF).

A Memorandum of Understanding between United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDAFS) and United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding the appropriation and transfer of National Forest system lands for highway purposes is the legal document identifying the FHWA as lead agency for Appalachian Corridor H, Kerens to Parsons Project. Therefore, **all federally listed Threatened, Endangered and Proposed species survey requirements, effects, determinations and Biological Assessments fall under the Federal Highway Administration for compliance as the lead agency.** These documents are referenced in this Biological Evaluation and can be found in the project file.

A Memorandum of Understanding between United States Department of Agriculture Monongahela National Forest, United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) was signed in 2003 to facilitate continued coordination among those agencies during development and implementation of the highway project. This document is referenced and can be found in the project file.

This BE was written utilizing the results of intensive project field surveys and reports completed by Skelly and Loy, Inc. during 2012-2014.

Documentation from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and West Virginia Department of Transportation Division of Highways were used in this document preparation.

Documents listed in the Reference Document section can be found in the electronic project file.

DETERMINATIONS

Endangered, Threatened and Proposed species on the Monongahela National Forest for the Kerens to Parsons Project area

The Federal Highway Administration is considered the lead agency on the Corridor H Kerens to Parsons Project. Federally listed Threatened, Endangered and Proposed species survey requirements, effects, determinations and Biological Assessments have been completed thru FHWA and USFWS and are not part of this document but can be found in the Project file. For the reader's convenience, a summary of TEP determinations is included here.

USFWS has determined that six federally listed species are within the Appalachian Corridor H, Kerens to Parsons Project location. The final listing and interim rule regarding Northern long-eared bat went into effect on May 4, 2015. A Biological Assessment nor further Section 7 consultation under the ESA is required for the proposed project unless additional species are discovered or USFWS deems it necessary. These determinations are documented in a 12/9/2014 letter to WVDOT from USFWS, Appendix 1.

Threatened, Endangered and Proposed species on the Monongahela National Forest

Species	Scientific Name	Federal Status	Within project range	Determination
Cheat Mountain salamander	<i>Plethodon nettingi</i>	Threatened	Y	Not Likely to adversely Affect
Indiana bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Endangered	Y	With season harvest restrictions*; Not Likely to adversely Affect
Virginia big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus</i>	Endangered	Y	Not Likely to adversely Affect
Northern long-eared bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Threatened	Y	With seasonal harvest restrictions**; Not Likely to jeopardize
Shale barren rock cress	<i>Arabis serotina</i>	Endangered	N	No Effect
Small-whorled pogonia	<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	Threatened	Y	With Alignment shift 3; May affect; Not Likely to adversely Affect
Virginia Spirea	<i>Spiraea virginiana</i>	Threatened	N	No Effect
Running Buffalo clover	<i>Trifolium stoloniferum</i>	Endangered	Y	Not Likely to adversely Affect

*Per 10/31/14 letter from WVDOT to USFWS areas falling within the 5 mile Indiana bat hibernacula buffer zones, will be cleared only between November 15 and March 31.

**A Northern long-eared bat Conservation Plan 2014 was completed by WVDOT and concurred by USFWS included commitment that trees throughout the entire project area will be cleared only between November 15 and March 31.

Sensitive species on the Monongahela National Forest

The following determination of effects to RFSS on the MNF has been made as a result of this Biological Evaluation.

USFS Regional Foresters Sensitive Species

	Species Common Name	Species Scientific Name	Results
1	Little Brown Bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
2	Tri-colored Bat	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
3	Southern Rock Vole	<i>Microtus chrotorrhinus carolinensis</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
4	Southern Water Shrew	<i>Sorex palustris punctulatus</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
5	Southern Bog Lemming	<i>Synaptomys cooperi</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
6	Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	No impact on denning habitat. Summer/transient habitat available throughout the project area. Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
7	Early Hairstreak	<i>Erora laeta</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
8	A Geometrid Moth	<i>Euchlaena milnei</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
9	Cobweb Skipper	<i>Hesperia metea</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
10	West Virginia White	<i>Pieris virginiensis</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.
11	Diana Fritillary	<i>Speyeria diana</i>	Potential habitat directly impacted. May impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability.