

I. 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 61 Regional Forester Sensitive Species (RFSS) of plants that occur on the Monongahela National Forest (MNF).

A Memorandum of Understanding between United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA FS) 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 Biological Evaluation was written utilizing the results of intensive project field surveys and reports completed by Skelly and Loy, Inc. and AllStar Ecology during 2012-2013.

Documentation from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) 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

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.

Table 1. Determinations for Endangered, Threatened, and Proposed species on the MNF

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

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

Table 2. Determinations for USFS Regional Foresters Sensitive Plant Species on the MNF

Scientific Name	Common Name	Results
<i>Agrostis mertensii</i>	Arctic Bentgrass	No impacts.
<i>Allium allegheniense</i>	Allegheny Onion	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Allium oxyphilum</i>	Lillydale Onion	No impacts.
<i>Amelanchier bartramiana</i>	Bartram Shadbush	No impacts.
<i>Arabis patens</i>	Spreading Rockcress	No impacts.
<i>Astragalus neglectus</i>	Cooper's Milkvetch	No impacts.
<i>Baptisia australis</i> var. <i>australis</i>	Blue Wild Indigo	No impacts.
<i>Botrychium lanceolatum</i> var. <i>angustisegmentum</i>	Lanceleaf Grapefern	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Botrychium oneidense</i>	Bluntlobe Grapefern	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Carex roanensis</i>	Roan Mountain Sedge	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Clematis occidentalis</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>	Purple Clematis	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Corallorhiza bentleyi</i>	Bentley's Coralroot	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend

		toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Cornus rugosa</i>	Roundleaf Dogwood	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Cypripedium reginae</i>	Showy Lady's-slipper	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Delphinium exaltatum</i>	Tall Larkspur	No impacts.
<i>Eriogonum allenii</i>	Shalebarren Wild-buckwheat	No impacts.
<i>Euphorbia purpurea</i>	Darlington's Spurge	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Gaylussacia brachycera</i>	Box Huckleberry	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Gymnocarpium appalachianum</i>	Appalachian Oak Fern	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Hasteola suaveolens</i>	Sweet-scented Indian-plantain	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Heuchera alba</i>	White Alumroot	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Hexalectris spicata</i>	Crested Coralroot	No impacts.
<i>Hypericum mitchellianum</i>	Blue Ridge St. John's-wort	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Ilex collina</i>	Long-stalk Holly	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Butternut	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Juncus filiformis</i>	Thread Rush	No impacts.
<i>Juncus trifidus</i>	Highland Rush	No impacts.
<i>Liatris turgida</i>	Turgid Blazing Star	No impacts.
<i>Linum sulcatum</i>	Grooved Yellow Flax	No impacts.
<i>Listera cordata</i>	Heartleaf Twayblade	No impacts.
<i>Marshallia grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered Barbara's-buttons	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Bog Buckbean	No impacts.
<i>Monarda fistulosa ssp. brevis</i>	Smoke Hole Bergamot	No impacts.
<i>Ophioglossum engelmannii</i>	Limestone Adder's-tongue	No impacts.
<i>Paronychia argyrocoma</i>	Silvery Nailwort	No impacts.
<i>Paronychia virginica</i>	Yellow Nailwort	No impacts.
<i>Paxistima canbyi</i>	Canby's Mountain-lover	No impacts.
<i>Pedicularis lanceolata</i>	Swamp Lousewort	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Phlox buckleyi</i>	Swordleaf Phlox	No impacts.
<i>Piptatherum (=Oryzopsis) canadense</i>	Canada Mountain Ricegrass	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Platanthera shriveri</i>	Shriver's Frilly Orchid	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Poa paludigena</i>	Bog Bluegrass	No impacts.
<i>Polemonium vanbruntiae</i>	Bog Jacob's-ladder	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Potamogeton tennesseensis</i>	Tennessee Pondweed	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.

<i>Pycnanthemum beadlei</i>	Beadle's Mountainmint	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Ranunculus pensylvanicus</i>	Pennsylvania Buttercup	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Rhamnus lanceolata</i> ssp. <i>lanceolata</i>	Lanceleaf Buckthorn	No impacts.
<i>Ribes lacustre</i>	Bristly Black Currant	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Scutellaria saxatilis</i>	Rock Skullcap	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Silene virginica</i> var. <i>robusta</i>	Fire Pink	No impacts.
<i>Stellaria borealis</i> ssp. <i>borealis</i>	Boreal Starwort	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Taenidia montana</i>	Mountain Pimpernel	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Taxus canadensis</i>	Canada Yew	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Tortula ammonsiana</i>	Ammons' Tortula Moss	No impacts.
<i>Trichomanes boschianum</i>	Bristle-fern	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Trichostema setaceum</i>	Narrow-leaved Blue-curls	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Trifolium virginicum</i>	Kate's Mountain Clover	No impacts.
<i>Triphora trianthophora</i>	Nodding Pogonia	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Viola appalachiensis</i>	Appalachian Blue Violet	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Vitis rupestris</i>	Sand Grape	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.
<i>Woodwardia areolata</i>	Netted Chainfern	May impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.