

----- Forwarded by William Hester/R5/FWS/DOI on 09/11/2012 01:47 PM -----

**William  
Hester/R5/  
FWS/DOI**

To John Simkins

09/11/2012  
08:39 AM

cc Kimberly Smith/R5/FWS/DOI@FWS, Cindy  
Schulz/R5/FWS/DOI@FWS

Subject Coalfields Expressway Environmental  
Assessment

Mr. Simkins:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the referenced Environmental Assessment. The following comments are provided under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, 87 Stat. 884), as amended, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, 83 Stat. 852), as amended, and section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344, 86 Stat. 816).

Due to the revisions in the preferred project alternative and the length of time since publication of the 2001 Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Service recommended in our August 21, 2012 email that the Virginia Department of Transportation complete the online project review process found on our website at: [http://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/endspecies/Project\\_Reviews\\_Introduction.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/endspecies/Project_Reviews_Introduction.html). We have not received the requested information.

Surveys for the federally listed endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Virginia big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*), and federally listed threatened small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) were completed for Coalfields Expressway in 2001 (Little and Brack 2001, Bradley 2001). Based on the length of time since these surveys were conducted, changes in the project alignment due to a revision in the preferred project alternative, and the amount of forested habitat that will be impacted by this project, additional bat and pogonia surveys may be necessary. The Service will provide recommendations following review of the online project review information.

Due to the scope of this project, the length of time since publication of the 2001 Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the change in the preferred project alternative, the Service recommends that the Federal Highway Administration complete a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for this project.

Regarding wetland and stream impacts associated with this project, the Service recommends a compensation ratio of 1.5 to 1 for unavoidable losses of emergent wetlands and 2 to 1 for unavoidable losses of scrub/shrub and forested wetlands. We recommend that all stream impacts be compensated using the Unified Stream Methodology for Virginia.

If you have questions, please contact me at [\(804\) 693-6694, extension 127](tel:8046936694), or via email at [william\\_hester@fws.gov](mailto:william_hester@fws.gov).

William Hester

Literature Cited

Little, M. and V. Brack. 2001. A spring staging survey for endangered bats at mine portals in Wise, Dickenson, and Buchanan Counties, Virginia. Environmental Solutions and Innovations, LLC. Cincinnati, Ohio.

Bradley, T. 2001. Survey for federally endangered small whorled pogonia and other endangered or threatened plant species along six sites on the Coalfields Expressway VDOT Project: R000-961-101, PE-101; PPMS 14810. Report to Virginia Department of Transportation, Richmond, Virginia.

Note: Our phone lines are not working properly. Please dial [\(804\) 824-9720](tel:8048249720) or 9740 if you cannot reach me at [\(804\) 693-6694](tel:8046936694). My extension is 127.

~~~~~  
William M. Hester  
Virginia Field Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
6669 Short Lane  
Gloucester, Virginia 23061  
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/>  
Phone [\(804\) 693-6694](tel:8046936694), ext. 127; Fax [\(804\) 693-9032](tel:8046939032)  
EMail: [william\\_hester@fws.gov](mailto:william_hester@fws.gov)  
~~~~~