



# United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
BHNH Resilient  
Landscapes Project

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE South Dakota Ecological Services

420 South Garfield Avenue, Suite 400  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5408

February 13, 2018

Mr. Mark E Van Every, Forest Supervisor  
Black Hills National Forest  
1019 North Fifth Street  
Custer, South Dakota 57730

Dear Mr. Van Every:

We have received your February 6, 2018 letter and project description for the Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project, Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the project information submitted on February 6, 2018 and your determination that the proposed action will not result in any prohibited incidental take. This project may affect the northern long-eared bat; however, there are no effects beyond those previously disclosed in the Service's programmatic biological opinion for the final 4(d) rule dated January 5, 2016. We concur with your determination and any taking that may occur incidental to this project is not prohibited under the final 4(d) rule (50 CFR §17.40(o)). This project is consistent with the description of the proposed action in the programmatic biological opinion, and the 4(d) rule does not prohibit incidental take of the northern long-eared bat that may occur as a result of this project. Therefore, the programmatic biological opinion satisfies the U.S. Forest Service's responsibilities under ESA section 7(a)(2) relative to the northern long-eared bat for this project.

Section 7(a)(1) of the ESA directs Federal agencies, in consultation with the Service, to utilize their authorities to further the purposes of the ESA by carrying out conservation programs for the benefit of endangered and threatened species. Conservation recommendations are discretionary activities to minimize or avoid adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or critical habitat, to help implement recovery plans, or to develop information for conservation of the species. The Service recommends the following conservation measure for actions that may affect the NLEB: conduct tree removal activities outside of the NLEB pup season (June 1 to July 31). This will minimize impacts to pups at roosts not yet identified.

Please keep in mind that you must report any departures from the plans submitted; results of any surveys conducted; or any dead, injured, or sick northern long-eared bats that are found to this office. If this project is not completed within one year of this letter, you must update your determination and resubmit the required information.

Recvd 2/16/18  
cc K. Burns  
B. Jackson  
E. Krueger  
A. Davy  
DRG M. Van Every

Mr. Mark Van Every

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If changes are made in the project plans or operating criteria, or if additional information becomes available, the Service should be informed so that the above comments can be reconsidered.

The Service appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Charlene Bessken of this office at (605) 224-8693, Extension 231.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott V. Larson".

Scott V. Larson  
Field Supervisor  
South Dakota Field Office

Cc: USFWS Wyoming Field Office