



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0435

ROBERT J. MARTINEAU, JR.  
COMMISSIONER

BILL HASLAM  
GOVERNOR

February 29, 2016

**Via First Class and Electronic Mail to comments-southern-chokeee-nolichucky-unaka@fs.fed.us**

Leslie Morgan  
District Ranger  
4900 Asheville Hwy SR70  
Greeneville, TN 37743

Dear Leslie Morgan:

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Unaka Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest *Rocky Top Trail Project* in Cocke County, Tennessee. The applicant, Unaka Ranger District, proposes to construct approximately a 1-mile trail that roughly parallels Rocky Top Road. The trail would be hand constructed and a foot travel trail only. This project is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to 36 C.F.R. 220.6(e)(1), which states construction and reconstruction of trails.

TDEC's **Division of Natural Areas (DNA)** has reviewed the proposal and, based on information in the rare species database, no listed species have been observed previously within one mile of the project. Within four miles of the project, the federally endangered Gray Bat (*Myotis grisescens*) and the state deemed in need of management Eastern Small-footed Bat (*Myotis leibii*) and Rafinesque's Big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*) have been previously observed. DNA recommends that the Unaka Ranger District contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office, Cookeville, Tennessee for comments regarding federally listed species.<sup>1</sup>

Staff representing TDEC's **Tennessee State Parks and Real Property Management** have reviewed the proposal and have no specific comments regarding the proposed action.

TDEC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposal. Please note that these comments are not indicative of approval or disapproval of the proposed action, nor should they be interpreted as an indication regarding future permitting decisions by TDEC. Please contact me should you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Albrowitz".

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office, Cookeville, Tennessee office phone number is 931-525-4970.

Dr. Kendra Abkowitz  
Director of Policy and Planning  
Phone: (615)-532-8689

cc: Bill Avant, TDEC, TSP  
Stephanie A. Williams, TDEC, DNA