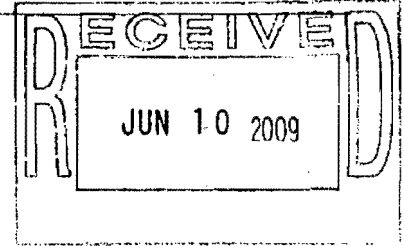


EI-17781



Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Bureau of Forestry

June 8, 2009

Sandra Basehore
Skelly and Loy, Inc.
449 Eisenhower Boulevard, Suite 300
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory Review, PNDI Number 020163

RJ Corman Railroad Co., Beech Creek Branch Line
Clearfield and Centre Counties

Dear Ms. Basehore,

This responds to your request about a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) ER Tool "Potential Impact" or species of special concern impact review. We screened this project for potential impacts to species and resources of special concern under Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' responsibility, which includes plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features only.

☒ **POTENTIAL IMPACT ANTICIPATED**

Based on our PNDI map review we determined potential impacts to species and/or resources of special concern. Therefore, further coordination with this office is necessary to avoid potential impacts to the above listed resources.

☒ **SURVEY**

A survey for the following species should be conducted by a qualified botanist. The survey should be performed at the appropriate time of year.

Please see attached sheet.

If the land type(s) does not exist on site, a survey may not be necessary. If the land type listed above is not on site, please submit a habitat assessment report which describes why a survey may not be necessary including the current land cover, habitat types and species found on site. If the habitat is present, please have the botanist fill out the field survey form while performing their survey: <http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/InternetFieldSurveyForm.pdf>. The botanist may contact us prior to the survey for detailed information about the species above. All PA state-listed species should be searched for during the site visit and occurrences reported to our office. Survey results should be submitted to our office for review and comment. Mitigation measures and monitoring may be requested if species or communities of special concern are found on or adjacent to site. For a list of qualified surveyors, please contact our office.

☒ **CONSERVATION MEASURE—VOLUNTARY ACTION**

The following species is not currently Proposed for state-listing and therefore, is not a target species for a survey. However, because of its ecological significance, a survey is suggested to identify and avoid potential impacts to this species.

Stellaria borealis (Mountain Starwort) Proposed PA Tentatively Undetermined: springy wooded slopes, sphagnous swamps and streams; flowering time – May-August

COMMENTS: Please survey the alternative route (Philipsburg-Munson) for the species listed on the attached sheet. Additionally, please address the concerns from Rebecca Bowen's 12/2/08 letter (also attached) for the previous survey conducted in 2008 for the previous rail line proposal (project 19648).

This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data files and is good for one (1) year from the date of this letter. An absence of recorded information does not necessarily imply actual conditions on-site. A field survey of any site may reveal previously unreported populations. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered.

To complete your review of state and federally-listed species of special concern (those NOT under DCNR's responsibility), please be sure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the PA Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission have been contacted regarding this project either directly or by performing a search with the online PNDI ER Tool found at www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us.

Andrew Rohrbaugh for Chris Firestone, Wild Plant Program Manager

DCNR/BOF/PNDI, PO Box 8552, Harrisburg, PA 17105 ~ Ph: 717-705-2823 ~ F: 717-772-0271 ~ c-arohrbau@state.pa.us

Stewardship

Partnership

Service

PNDI # 20163

Please conduct a survey for the following species during an appropriate time of year:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Current Status	Proposed Status	Habitat	Flowering time
<i>Sparganium angrocladum</i>	Branching Bur-reed	PA Endangered	PA Endangered	wet meadows, swales, stream banks and shallow water	fruit July-Sept
<i>Prunus alleghaniensis</i>	Alleghany Plum	Not Protected	PA Threatened	rocky bluffs, shale barrens, roadsides and floodplains	flower April-early June, frt. Aug.
<i>Polygonum careyi</i>	Pinkweed, Carey's smartweed	PA Endangered	PA Endangered	sandy, open woodlands and disturbed places, particularly after fire	summer and early fall
<i>Gaultheria hispidula</i>	Creeping Snowberry	PA Rare	PA Rare	wet woods and bogs	flower June, fruit Sept
<i>Lonicera villosa</i>	Mountain fly honeysuckle	PA Endangered	PA Endangered	bogs, swamps and wet thickets	flowers May, fruits July



Bureau of Forestry

December 2, 2008

Ms. Sandy Basehore
Skelly & Loy, Inc.
2601 North Front St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory Review, PNDI Number	19648
RJ Corman Railroad Co., Proposed Beech Creek Branch Line Construction and Operation between Wallacetown & Gorton PA (Finance Docket No. 35116)	
Clearfield & Centre Counties	

Dear Ms. Basehore,

This responds to your request about a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) ER Tool "Potential Impact" or a species of special concern impact review. We screened this project for potential impacts to species and resources of special concern under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' responsibility, which includes plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features only.

Our office received this project in April of 2008 and responded in June providing information on species known to be found in the vicinity including *Sparganium angrocladum*, *Prunus alleghaniensis*, *Polygonum careyi*, *Stellaria borealis*, *Gaultheria hispida* and *Lonicera villosa*. A survey was performed by Skelly & Loy for the species listed above on July 16 and September 24, 2008. The results of this survey were received in our office November 12, 2008.

The following summarizes DCNR's understanding of the outcome of the investigations, as well as our concerns. Also, the survey information did not include the botanical field survey forms for each species and maps showing areas surveyed. Please submit these forms (<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/InternetFieldSurveyForm.pdf>, reminder one species per form) and maps to our office for the follow-up surveys as well as the previous surveys.

Sparganium angrocladum (Branching Bur-reed)

Potential habitat was surveyed, including wetlands, swales and streams. Wetland 012 was found to have a specimen of *Sparganium* present, however it was not possible to identify to the species level. In the survey report, Skelly & Loy recommend that this wetland be revisited next field season to confirm the identity of the species. Some disturbance is planned to this species' habitat. Please verify the identity of this *Sparganium* specimen to the species level. Please include botanical field survey forms, maps showing areas surveyed for this species and photos of diagnostic characteristics.

Prunus alleghaniensis (Allegheny Plum)

Potential habitat was identified in the project right of way, however no individuals of *Prunus alleghaniensis* were found. No impact anticipated to *Prunus alleghaniensis*, pending receipt of botanical survey form and map showing area surveyed for this species.

Polygonum careyi (Pinkweed)

A few *Polygonum* species were found associated with wetlands and stream edges, but were not identified to species level. However, *Polygonum careyi* is a FACW species, and may potentially be in this type of habitat. Please confirm the identity of the *Polygonum* specimens to the species level. Please include botanical field survey forms, maps showing areas surveyed for this species and photos of diagnostic characteristics.



Stellaria borealis (Mountain Starwort)

A few areas of potential habitat were found in project area, however, no Mountain starwort plants were found in any of those areas. No impact anticipated to *Stellaria borealis*, pending receipt of botanical survey form and map showing area surveyed for this species.

Gaultheria hispidula (Creeping Snowberry)

A few areas of potential habitat were found in project area, however, no Creeping Snowberry plants were found in any of those areas. No impact anticipated to *Gaultheria hispidula*, pending receipt of botanical survey form and map showing area surveyed for this species.

Lonicera villosa (Mountain Fly Honeysuckle)

A few areas of marginal habitat were found in project area, however, no Mountain fly honeysuckle plants were found in any of those areas. No impact anticipated to *Lonicera villosa*, pending receipt of botanical survey form and map showing area surveyed for this species.

Our office will complete the environmental review for this project upon receipt of the requested information.

This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data files and is good for one (1) year from the date of this letter. An absence of recorded information does not necessarily imply actual conditions on-site. A field survey of any site may reveal previously unreported populations. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This finding applies to impacts to plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features only. To complete your review of state and federally-listed species of special concern, please be sure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the PA Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission has been contacted regarding this project either directly or by performing a search with the online PNDI ER Tool found at www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us.

Thank you,

Rebecca H. Bowen, Environmental Review Specialist

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