

Conservation of Northern Long-eared Bat Habitat at an Aggregate Mine in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania¹

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Abstract: In April 2015, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) or NLEB, a small bat common to the eastern United States, was listed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as “Threatened with a 4(d) rule” under the Endangered Species Act. It is the opinion of USFWS that impact to habitats within a 0.25-mile buffer around any cave or mine known to be used by NLEB during the hibernation period can lead to “harm” of the NLEB, and an Incidental Take Permit should be sought by the project proponent. In August 2016, Lehigh Hanson proposed to expand its Wagner (limestone) Quarry, located in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. The expansion will require disturbance of the land surface in an area that overlaps with two known presence buffers for NLEB. As a result, Hanson contracted CEC to assist in their coordination with USFWS and the Pennsylvania Game Commission. While the project is ongoing, this presentation will discuss the measures taken to mitigate potential impacts to the NLEB, including minimization of the project’s footprint, seasonal restrictions to tree clearing, and the installation of artificial roosting structures within the buffers.

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