

Canoe Valley BDA

Description

Canoe Creek Core Habitat Area: This core area includes several old limestone mine shafts in Canoe Creek State Park used as habitat for three animal species of concern.

Canoe Valley Roost Site Core Habitat Area: The focus of this area is an abandoned church that is used as a maternity colony and roost site for the species of concern during the summer.

Supporting Natural Landscape: This area surrounds the core habitat and includes the areas the species of concern have been documented using as summer habitat through telemetry studies by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Riparian forests are especially valuable foraging habitat, while forests with mature trees are necessary for additional habitat, as many species roost under loose folds of bark or in hollows that occur more often on aged trees.

Threats and Stresses

Core Habitat Areas: The core habitat can be threatened by disturbance in the caves during the months of November through April. The most common form of disturbance is human traffic. Blasting or other activities that disrupt bedrock within the core areas may damage the structure of the cave, potentially making it unusable by the species of concern.

Supporting Natural Landscape: The habitat value of the supporting natural landscape surrounding the caves could be reduced through extensive forest removal or high-grading, as the species of concern depend on the forest habitat and especially upon older trees. Forest along riparian areas is especially important. Roads in the supporting natural landscape area also pose a threat to the species of concern, as they can be hit by moving cars when crossing roads.

Recommendations

Core Habitat Areas: Blasting and other activities that will affect the bedrock should be avoided within these areas so as not to damage the caves. The Pennsylvania Game Commission's biologists are monitoring these sites and helping to develop appropriate management strategies to ensure the health and safety of the habitat.

Supporting Natural Landscape: The Pennsylvania Game Commission's biologists monitor the species of concern population and its use of this area for summer habitat. They can provide the best and most current management recommendations. Considerations may include appropriate forest management to maintain contiguous forest that includes the older trees needed by the species of concern, avoiding the release of insecticides within the habitat area to maintain the food supply and prevent them being poisoned by toxic compounds in the food supply, and maintaining a tall forest buffer along roads to help prevent road kills.