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Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Division of Environmental Services
 Natural Diversity Section
 450 Robinson Lane
 Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620
 (814) 359-5237 Fax: (814) 359-5175
 May 13, 2008

IN REPLY REFER TO
 SIR# 28421

SANDY BASEHORE
 SKELLY AND LOY
 2601 N FRONT STREET
 HARRISBURG, PA 17110

RE: **Species Impact Review (SIR) – Rare, Candidate, Threatened and Endangered Species
 BEECH CREEK RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION
 RUSH Township, CENTRE County, Pennsylvania**

Dear Ms. BASEHORE:

I have examined the map accompanying your recent correspondence, which shows the location for the proposed above-referenced project. Based on records maintained in the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) database and our own files, the following rare or protected species are known from the vicinity of the project site:

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>PA Status</u>
Timber rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	candidate

Timber rattlesnakes occur in the forested, mountainous regions of the Commonwealth. They prefer forested areas to forage for small mammals (e.g., mice and chipmunks) and talus, south to southeastern facing rocky slopes for hibernating and other thermoregulatory activities. The timber rattlesnake is threatened by over hunting, poaching and habitat alteration.

In consideration of the status and sensitivity of the timber rattlesnake, please provide additional information to allow a more in-depth evaluation of the potential adverse impacts of this project on the timber rattlesnake. Color and aerial photographs of the project area (keyed to a site map or diagram), basic site plans and maps with a description of the proposed work (including access roads), project impacts, alternatives and general habitat descriptions of the project area and surroundings would expedite our review. Pending the review of this information, a timber rattlesnake survey may be requested.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Tina Walther at 814-359-5186 and refer to the SIR number at the top of this letter. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this matter of endangered species conservation and habitat protection.

Sincerely,

 Christopher A. Urban, Chief
 Natural Diversity Section

CAU/TW/mr

Our Mission:

www.fish.state.pa.us

To protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.