

Specific comments on the revised study plan:

Page 4 – Per page B5 of the NLEB Interim Conference and Planning Guidance, revise the description as follows, “a field survey, where access can be obtained, of all land within one-half mile of the edge of the project footprint and documentation (i.e., literature search) of all known caves and abandoned mine portals within 3 miles of the outside edge of the project footprint should be conducted.”

Page 5 – Per page B6 of the NLEB Interim Conference and Planning Guidance, if you plan to conduct Spring portal/cave surveys they must be conducted between April 1 and April 21 and prior to any tree clearing. A minimum of three nights of sampling per week for three weeks (i.e., 9 nights of sampling) is required at each suitable entrance as determined by the Phase 1 Habitat Assessment. Your study plan proposes two evenings of sampling. Fall portal/cave surveys can be conducted rather than Spring surveys. Per page B5 of the NLEB Guidance, surveys must be conducted between September 1 and October 31 and prior to any tree clearing. A minimum of two nights of sampling is required at each suitable entrance as determined by the Phase 1 Habitat Assessment.

Page 5 - Per page B6 of the NLEB Interim Conference and Planning Guidance, harp traps and/or mist nets should be monitored for captured bats on 10-minute intervals. Your study plan states “traps are check at least once per hour or continuously if the catch rate is greater than 25 bats per hour.” Change your plan to reflect the NLEB Interim Guidance.

Incorporate the previous comments the Service provided on November 26, 2014. Specifically comments: SH10, SH11, SH12, and SH13.