



*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Department of Game and Inland Fisheries*

**Matthew J. Strickler**  
*Secretary of Natural Resources*

**Gary F. Martel**  
*Acting Executive Director*

2206 South Main Street  
Suite C  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

June 18, 2019

Mr. Jeff Boxrucker  
Coordinator  
Friends of Reservoirs  
Re: Mossback/Friends of Reservoirs Small Projects Grant Program - Claytor Lake, Virginia


Dear Mr. Boxrucker:

I am writing in support of an application by Claytor Lake Extension for a Mossback/Friends of Reservoirs Small Projects grant. As the state fisheries biologist for Claytor Lake, I can attest to the need for additional fish habitat installation at this key southwest Virginia reservoir.

Since 2012, I have been engaged in fish habitat projects at Claytor Lake with Appalachian Power Company under their Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Habitat Management Plan (<http://www.claytorhydro.com/lib/docs/ClaytorHabitatJune2009approvedDec2011.pdf>). Under this Habitat Management Plan, annual work plans have addressed fish habitat needs using tree felling and cabling, Christmas tree fish attractors, repurposed concrete from deconstruction of a dam spillway, creating native aquatic plant enclosures, and adding Mossback fish attractors in key offshore locations. Claytor Lake anglers have particularly appreciated the Mossback fish attractors as reliable locations to catch fish. Multiple partners have participated in implementing previous fish attractor and plant projects, including Claytor Lake State Park, Friends of Claytor Lake, Virginia BASS Nation, our agency, Appalachian Power Company, Virginia Master Naturalists, and local anglers.

Accomplishing our annual fish habitat goals requires applying for outside grant funding to leverage a small annual funding amount from Appalachian Power Company. Therefore, I endorse the efforts of Claytor Lake Extension to obtain the Mossback/Friends of Reservoirs Small Projects grant for FY 2020. With the additional funds from this grant source, we will be able to accomplish more fish habitat work than we could without this funding. I will be fully involved in planning work under this grant with Claytor Lake Extension.

Sincerely,

  
John R. Copeland  
Fisheries Biologist III