
Conclusions

An opportunity is at hand to preserve some of the last remaining wild places in Virginia's George Washington National Forest. In the near future, the U.S. Forest Service plans to issue a draft forest plan for public comment and, after review of those comments, to adopt a long-range forest plan that will guide its management for 10 to 15 years. Protection of the areas described in Virginia's Mountain Treasures must be a cornerstone of this upcoming plan.

The 1,061,000-acre George Washington National Forest is a part of the Southern Appalachians. The forest is mountainous, with much steep, rugged, and remote terrain. It features clean mountain streams, scenic waterfalls, popular byways, miles of hiking trails, rich biological diversity, and many other attractions.

This proposal would protect the wildest and most natural of these lands, totaling about 602,000 acres. As noted in the summary table, 362,451 acres, or about 60 percent, of these wildlands are at risk of logging and road building that would damage their natural values.

Protection of these wildlands would yield many benefits, including:

Clean Water. These forested areas contain important watersheds. Streams in the George Washington National Forest form the headwaters of numerous streams that feed the James, Shenandoah, and Potomac Rivers. Keeping these wildlands in an undisturbed condition would help maintain our outstanding water quality and high-priority fisheries.

Recreation and Visual Beauty. Because there are so few wild areas left, the rugged mountain forests of the George Washington, with their pristine streams, spectacular waterfalls, scenic hiking trails, and rich biological diversity, must be protected if future demand is to be met. These areas also provide valuable opportunities for hunting and fishing in remote, backcountry settings.

Biological Diversity. Many native plants and animals, including neotropical migrating songbirds, Black Bear, and many wildflowers, will benefit from the protection of the large tracts of contiguous forests these areas provide. Old-growth forests are especially important for maintaining diverse wildlife populations. Since several of the areas listed in this book link together to form natural wildlife corridors and sizable blocks of contiguous forest, their combined protection would reduce forest fragmentation.

Jobs and Income. The natural attractions of the George Washington National Forest generate millions of dollars annually in benefits from the many recreation opportunities. Economic health in the mountain counties and the state itself is supported by the beauty of these forested areas. The removal of these wildlands from the timber base would have only a minor effect on the timber supply and little, if any, impact on timber-related jobs. At the same time, it would save taxpayers millions of dollars. The rugged terrain found in these areas is not well suited for timber production, and the costs to log them, including the expense of building roads, exceed revenues received. Moreover, the costs in silted streams, scarred vistas, fragmented wildlife habitats, and lost backcountry recreation opportunities are considerable.

In the Southern Appalachian region, only 10 percent of the timber comes from national forests; the rest is from private lands. Less than 1 percent of the timber cut in Virginia comes from the national forest. Payments to the counties would continue with little change under this proposal. By law, the annual payments to counties in lieu of taxes are based on the number of acres of land in national forest ownership, not on receipts from logging. Therefore, the federal payments which make up only a small share of each county budget, would not be reduced by decreased logging levels.



A hiker on the AT in Three Sisters

Photo by Mark Miller

Someone – I think it was Aldo Leopold – said a wilderness should be big enough to absorb a two week's pack trip. He would have written that in the 1940s, since he died in 1948. In today's work-whipped world, I can't imagine anybody with two weeks of guiltless free time, let alone a string of pack horses. The concept of roadless and wilderness areas in the east has been criticized because these areas tend to be smaller than their western counterparts. Smaller, yes; unimportant? No. As the BosNYWash metro area washes over the Mid-Atlantic region, the Appalachians will serve as a refuge, just as they did during the great continental glaciations. Only this time, the refugees will be those urbanites seeking a wilderness experience, if only for a day or a weekend.

For those who will never lace up a pair of hiking boots to visit these areas, there's this: you couldn't design a better system for collecting and distributing water than the Appalachians. They lie right across the path of the westerly storms and comb water from the clouds. As long as these mountains are clothed in unbroken plant cover, they will continue to deliver clean water to those hard-flushing metro citizens downstream.

With roadless and wilderness protection for areas on the George Washington National Forest, everybody wins: the recreational users – hunters, fishers, hikers, horseback riders - and the metropolitan developers with their thirst for clean water.

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President, Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter PATC
National Forest wilderness trail maintainer

Summary Table

Area	Total Acreage For Each Area (Estimate)	Portion of Each Area in Current Roadless Inventory(%)
Big Schloss Cluster		
Jonnies Knob	2,499	0
Big Schloss	31,204	20,755 (67)
Great North Mountain	6,681	0
Long Mountain	10,508	0
Falls Ridge	7,738	0
Cove Mountain	2,560	0
Church Mountain	12,506	0
Northern Shenandoah Mountain Cluster		
Beech Lick Knob	17,152	0
Little Cow Knob	5,335	0
Hogpen Mountain	9,229	0
Kretchie Mountain	6,677	0
Feedstone Mountain	4,057	0
Wildcat Ridge	8,522	0
Dunkle Knob	8,398	0
Central Shenandoah Mountain Cluster		
Gum Run	14,665	12,585 (86)
Oak Knob	10,866	10,866 (100)
Skidmore Fork	5,703	5,635 (99)
Dry River	12,939	7,313 (57)
Little River	29,342	27,248 (93)
Broad Run	5,047	0
Hankey Mountain	11,281	0
Bald Ridge/Lynn Hollow	17,933	12,771 (71)
Shaws Ridge	7,263	0
Southern Shenandoah Mountain Cluster		
Signal Corps Knob	4,044	0
Jerkentight/Benson Run	31,988	16,668 (52)

Summary Table

Area	Total Acreage For Each Area (Estimate)	Portion of Each Area in Current Roadless Inventory(%)
Great North Mountain Cluster		
Crawford Mountain	15,000	9,868 (66)
Elliott Knob	16,657	9,376 (56)
Archer Knob	7,220	0
Sideling Hill	7,155	0
Walker Mountain	5,596	0
Allegheny Mountain Cluster		
Laurel Fork	10,324	9,983 (94)
Scaffold Run	6,611	0
Paddy Lick	5,444	0
Back Creek Mountain	5,713	0
West Back Creek Mountain	7,959	0
Little Allegheny Mountain	15,991	10,109 (63)
Warm Springs Mountain Cluster		
Warm Springs Mountain	7,832	0
Little Mare Mountain	12,587	0
Beards Mountain	11,721	7,457 (64)
Fore Mountain	4,590	0
Dolly Ann	9,613	7,804 (81)
Rich Hole/Rough Mountain Cluster		
Mill Mountain	12,498	10,826 (87)
Short Mountain	4,647	0
Rough Mountain Wilderness Addition	2,196	1,131 (52)
Longdale	4,396	0

Summary Table

Area	Total Acreage For Each Area (Estimate)	Portion of Each Area in Current Roadless Inventory(%)
Southern Allegheny Cluster		
Mud Run Mountain	4,303	0
Toms Knob	7,879	0
Oliver Mountain	13,081	13,081(100)
Panther Knob	4,231	0
Jerrys Run	4,777	0
Snake Run Ridge	8,166	0
Slaty Mountain	4,043	0
Massanutten Mountain Cluster		
Signal Knob	5,471	0
Northern Massanutten Mountain	17,770	9,410(51)
Catback Mountain	6,386	0
Short Horse Mountain	7,243	0
Southern Massanutten Mountain	11,919	11,919(100)
Pedlar Cluster		
Kelley Mountain	12,895	7,632(59)
Saint Marys Wilderness Additions	4,793	1,441(30)
The Friar	3,977	2020(51)
Adams Peak	9,969	7,076(71)
Whites Peak	4,614	0
Three Sisters	13,028	8,150(63)

Summary Table

Total estimated acreage for all 63 wild areas:	602,432
Estimated acreage in the 63 wild areas that are included in the current roadless inventory:	240,124
Estimated acreage in the 63 wild areas that are not included in the current roadless inventory:	363,584
Estimated percentage of the acreage of the 63 wild areas included in the current roadless inventory:	40%



A view from The Friar

Photo by Mark Miller

These groups and businesses are co-sponsors of this report and support protection for these areas.

Albemarle Garden Club
Charlottesville, VA

Bygones Antiques
Strasburg, VA

Appalachian Voices
Boone, NC

Cally's Restaurant and Brewing Company
Harrisonburg, VA

Art Images, Inc.
Fincastle, VA

Clementine Café
Harrisonburg, VA

Belle Grae Inn
Staunton, VA

Cherry Hill Bed and Breakfast
Monterey, VA

Big Dog Bikes
Staunton, VA

Cocoa Mill Chocolate Shop
Lexington, VA

Blue Mountain Coffees
Staunton, VA

Crossroads Inn Bed and Breakfast
New Market, VA

Blue Ridge Eco Shop
Charlottesville, VA

Daily Grind of Harrisonburg
Harrisonburg, VA

Blue Ridge Mountain Sports
Charlottesville, VA
Glen Allen, VA
Richmond, VA
Warrenton, VA
Williamsburg, VA
Wintergreen, VA
Virginia Beach, VA

Daily Grind of Lexington
Lexington, VA

East Coasters Bicycles
Roanoke, VA
Blacksburg, VA

First Ascent Sales
Staunton, VA

Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine
Charlottesville, VA

Francescas Antiques
Lexington, VA

Blue Sky Bakery
Lexington, VA

Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
Woodstock, VA

Blue Sky e-Solutions
Harrisonburg, VA

Function 4 Sports
Harrisonburg, VA

The Bookery
Lexington, VA

Gallery 108
Roanoke, VA

Books and Company
Lexington, VA

Gallery of Mountain Secrets
Monterey, VA

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Hank's Smokehouse
McGaheysville, VA

Lexington Coffee Shop
Lexington, VA

Harrisonburg Fellowship of Reconciliation
Harrisonburg, VA

Local Roots Cafe
Roanoke, VA

Heartwood
Alton, IL

Main Street Monterey, LLC
Monterey, VA

Highland Retreat
Bergton, VA

Market Gallery
Roanoke, VA

Home Remedy
Harrisonburg, VA

Mark's Bike Shop
Harrisonburg, VA

Icon Development
Roanoke, VA

Midtowne Market
Harrisonburg, VA

International Mountain Bicycling Association
Boulder, CO

Mill Alley Art and Frame
Monterey, VA

Ivy Creek Foundation
Charlottesville, VA

Monticello Bird Club
Charlottesville, VA

Jennings Gap Partnership
Staunton, VA

Mossy Creek Fly Fishing
Harrisonburg, VA

J.F. Brown Real Estate Services
Lexington, VA

Mountain Valley KOA
Broadway, VA

Joshua Wilton House
Harrisonburg, VA

The Natural Garden
Harrisonburg, VA

JMU Lifelong Learning Institute Hiking Club
Harrisonburg, VA

New Vision
Floyd, VA

Kate's Natural Products
Harrisonburg, VA

North Mountain Vineyards
Maurertown, VA

Kiwanis Club of Harrisonburg
Penn Laird, VA

Outdoor Adventure Social Club
www.outdoorsocial.com

Lexington Art Gallery
Lexington, VA

Outdoor Trails
Daleville, VA
Lynchburg, VA

Lexington Bike Shop
Lexington, VA

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Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Vienna, VA

Shenandoah Riverkeepers
Boyce, VA

The Purple Foot
Waynesboro, VA

Shenandoah River Outfitters
Luray, VA

R&S Valley Antiques

Shenandoah Valley Chapter of PATC
Mt Sidney, VA

Ragtime Fabrics
Harrisonburg, VA

Sherwood Garden Club
Harrisonburg, VA

Remax Real Estate
Lexington, VA

Silver Lake Mill
Dayton, VA

Rio Software, LLC
Harrisonburg, VA

Sole Source
Harrisonburg, VA

River'd Inn
Woodstock, VA

Southern Environmental Law Center
Charlottesville, VA

Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op
Roanoke, VA

Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project
Asheville, NC

Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Lexington, VA

Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
Asheville, NC

Rockingham Bird Club
Bridgewater, VA

Southwings
Asheville, NC

Rupert Cutler
Roanoke, VA
Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and
Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1977-
1980; Roanoke City Council 2002-2006

Stone Works
Lexington, VA

Sweet Treats Bakery
Lexington, VA

Ruth's Books and Cards
Bridgewater, VA

The Clinch Coalition
Wise VA

Seeds of Light
Roanoke, VA

The Wilderness Society
Washington, DC

Shenandoah Bicycle Company
Harrisonburg, VA

Thunderbird Diner
McGaheyville, VA

Shenandoah Forum
Mount Jackson, VA

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Trinity Presbyterian Restoring Creation House Church
Harrisonburg, VA

Virginia Wilderness Committee
Charlottesville, VA

Upper James River Chapter of the
Virginia Native Plant Society
Buena Vista, VA

Wayfinder Gifts LLC
Woodstock, VA

Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited
Upperville, VA

Wilderness Adventure
Staunton, VA

Virginia Native Plants Society
Boyce, Virginia

Wilderness Support Center
Durango, CO

Virginia Forest Watch
Nickelsville, Va.

Wilderness Voyagers
Harrisonburg, VA

The Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club
Richmond, VA

Wild Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

You Made It
Harrisonburg, VA

Blue Ridge Group
Chesapeake Bay Group
Falls of the James Group
Great Falls Group
Mount Vernon Group
New River Group
Piedmont Group
Rappahannock Group
Roanoke Group
Shenandoah Group
Thunder Ridge Group
York River Group

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FSC is a stakeholder owned system for promoting responsible management of the world's forests.

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It accredits independent third party organizations who can certify forest managers and forest product producers to FSC standards.

Its trademark provides international recognition to organizations who support the growth of responsible forest management.

Its product label allows consumers worldwide to recognize products that support the growth of responsible forest management worldwide.

FSC undertakes marketing programs and information services that contribute to the mission of promoting responsible forestry worldwide.

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