



VIRGINIA WILDERNESS COMMITTEE

A CITIZENS' GROUP DEDICATED
TO THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA'S NATURAL HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER May, 1989

ANNUAL MEETING SAT. JUNE 24, 10:30 am - 2:00 pm
IVY CREEK NATURAL AREA, NEAR CHARLOTTESVILLE

All members and any others interested in wilderness in Virginia are invited to our 1989 annual meeting. New threats and opportunities for the George Washington National Forest (GWNF) will be discussed. Emphasis will be on developing new strategies and electing officers to carry them out. Management of new wildernesses will be reviewed; possibilities for adding more will be analyzed; forest monitoring activities will be discussed. The proposed expansion of ATV trails in the GWNF and the budding alliance between the Forest Service and the American Motorcycle Association will be examined.

Shelter is available in a large barn so rain won't cancel us. Bring a bag lunch and a drink, and plan to walk the Watchable Wildlife trail at lunch to glimpse some of the 120 bird species listed for the area. Read Elizabeth Murray's story in the May issue of Virginia Wildlife to learn about the surprising diversity and unusual history of Ivy Creek Natural Area.

DIRECTIONS: Ivy Creek Nature Center is on Hydraulic Rd. (Rt. 743) 1.2 miles N of Albemarle High School. From Rt. 29 at the northern edge of Charlottesville, turn W onto Hydraulic Rd./Rt. 743 (there is a K Mart on the E side of the road at the turn). After about 3/4 mile pass Albemarle HS on the left; then, about 1/2 mile past the school, bear left at the light by a small general store to STAY on Rt. 743 and reach the Center.

FOREST MONITORING UPDATE

by Vernon Garber, VWC Forest Monitoring Chairman

Monitors have been active these past months, helping to formulate management documents for our two newest Wildernesses, Rich Hole & Rough Mountain (see inside for reports). Also demanding much attention is the continuing concern over ATV/ORV trails. We have met with both success and defeat in our efforts (see story below). ATV trails have been presented as a means to provide off-roaders with a pleasant forest experience. In most instances, I believe the focus of attention is on riding the machine as an end in itself, producing a mechanical intrusion in a natural setting and damaging the environment. The Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation District, based in Staunton, recently adopted a position statement opposing recreational use of ATV's in national forests. The Plan for the GWNF is currently being reanalyzed, including the section on ATV/ORV trails. So I urge all to express their concerns to Forest Supervisor George Kelley (GWNF, P.O. Box 233, Harrisonburg, VA 22801) and Congressman Jim Olin (1207 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515).

(To find out what it means to become that intrepid person known as a forest monitor, contact Vernon at 1508 Armstrong Ave., Staunton, VA 24401, 703-886-9218).

NEWSLETTER ED: CHRIS BOLGIANO
RT. 1, BOX 331, FULKS RUN, VA 22830 703-896-4407

RUMBLE IN THE LEE DISTRICT
by Charles Pierce, VWC President

Conservationists won a stunning victory recently when the Lee District of the GWNF agreed to close a scenic valley known as Vance's Cove to use by ATV's and motorcycles. However, ATV trails are being expanded elsewhere in the Lee as pressure from riders mounts.

In announcing his decision on Vance's Cove, District Ranger John Coleman also said he was reopening the Peters Mill Run Trail and expanding the Taskers Gap Trail for motorized vehicles.

Vance's Cove is a 7,000 acre scenic valley just south of Rt. 55 near the Va-WVa border. Peters Mill Run Trail is located in Fort Valley in Massanutten Mountain; Taskers Gap provides entry into Massanutten from Edinburg. Sarah Faulconer, a retired school teacher and member of VWC, spearheaded the drive to protect Vance's Cove. In addition to VWC, she was supported by many other forest users and environmental groups, including the Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter of National Audubon Society and the Citizens Task Force of Roanoke.

Opponents of ATV abuse in the Lee have relied heavily on documents obtained by James Loesel, VWC Conservation Chair, under Freedom of Information requests from Forest Service files. These documents included memos revealing that some Virginia and Lee District officials have been dismayed by the destruction and damage caused by outlaw ATV riders on the Peters Mill Run Trail. They also disclosed that an alliance is developing between the Forest Service and the American Motorcycle Association and that officials of a major motorcycle group in northern Virginia hope to introduce thousands of their members to the joys of riding in the GWNF. The Forest Service and AMA recently signed a National Trailrider Agreement.

An indication of the hopes of recreational vehicle riders for greatly expanded mileage in the GWNF can be seen in the following recent memo from George Lear of the Northern Virginia Trail Riders to GWNF headquarters: "Please consider us and those thousands of other ATV and trail bike riders who hope to enjoy the beautiful GWNF when you develop your supplemental plan for recreation use."

THE VITAL ROLE OF THE VWC
by James Loesel, VWC Conservation Chair

The VWC is a crucial component in Virginia's conservation community. We have always viewed our role as providing leadership in the political arena on wilderness issues. Many people are interested in wilderness and many conservation leaders support wilderness values. However, they depend on the VWC to keep up with current developments and to provide appropriate cues. Let's take an overall look at the programs VWC is now working on:

1. **Wilderness Management Plans.** Following our glorious victories for the designation of new wilderness areas in 1984 and 1988, some members have been hard at work crafting management plans for these areas. While it might seem like a contradiction to "manage" wilderness, there are many management decisions which need to be planned carefully. Where do trailhead parking lots go? Do we allow signs inside and/or outside boundaries? What should we do about overuse? Should we try to prevent wilderness fires from destroying adjacent private lands and homes? Should gypsy moths be suppressed in wildernesses? Wilderness plans have been written for all areas designated in 1984. Joint citizen-Forest Service committees are now working on Rich Hole and Rough Mountain (see reports below). Work will begin soon on Shawvers Run and Barbours Creek. These plans will become part of the Jefferson and the GWNF land management plans. We will, however, have an opportunity to review these plans annually and fine-tune them as necessary.

2. Jefferson and George Washington Land Management Plans. The VWC has long been fighting for reasonable management of all parts of our national forests, not just wilderness. Our efforts helped reform the Jefferson plan, and we have helped stop the GWNF plan through administrative appeal. Now we are working with the GWNF staff to come up with a plan which makes sense. Completion of the revised GWNF plan could stretch out to 1991.

3. Forest Monitoring. We are monitoring the individual timber sales, road building, and other projects by the George Washington and the Jefferson. The small but growing group of VWC monitors is part of a FORESTWATCH program carried out in cooperation with other conservation groups. The Forest Service must ask the public for comments on each project, and these comments often reshape or even end some proposed timber sales.

4. New Wilderness Areas. In both the 1984 and 1988 legislation, Congress said that no further inventory of wilderness areas would be done until the Forest Service conducts a second round of Land Resource Management Plans. This will happen in about 10 years. While this may stop the Forest Service from working on wilderness inventories until then, it does not stop us. We are constantly looking at wilderness demand, logical boundaries, unique resources, and potential support. This preliminary work is painfully slow, but vital to winning approval in the long run. Many people did not understand how we "suddenly" achieved legislation for Rich Hole, Rough Mountain, Barbours Creek, and Shawvers Run. It was years of hard background work with the Air Pollution Control Board, Congressional aides, and county officials which finally paid off. We are doing the same groundwork now.

The health of the VWC is not just measured by the programs which are underway, but also by the commitment of its leaders. Charles Pierce, President, has established himself as a statewide leader not only in the VWC, but also the Audubon and Potomac Appalachian Trail clubs. Ed Clark is VWC Vice-President while he directs the increasingly recognized Wildlife Center of Virginia and serves on the state Council on the Environment. Newsletter editor Chris Bolgiano was recently elected to the Soil and Water Conservation District in Rockingham County and continues her conservation writing (with major articles in the American Forestry Association magazine). Jo Anne Pierce is both VWC Treasurer and activist in the Lynchburg Sierra Club group. I continue to work as VWC Conservation Chair while helping to lead the Citizens Task Force of Roanoke on national forest concerns. Other VWC committee chairs are intensely active in local conservation groups.

To gain and maintain this working relationship with other conservation leaders takes a lot of time and energy. I believe relations with other groups has never been better. However, without the continued support of the rank and file VWC members, all this work will wither. We need volunteers for the various programs. We need your financial support to help pay for innumerable phone calls, periodic newsletters, and endless photocopy expenses. We need to know you will be there when it is time for another outpouring of letters from wilderness supporters. We need your continued interest in the important business of wilderness designation and preservation.

MANAGING THE ROUGH MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS by Ed Walters

The Forest Service was concerned about the limited access to the new Rough Mountain Wilderness Area. Its initial management draft, issued on Feb. 15, called for building a trail that would follow the spine of the six mile long mountain. The Rough Mountain Wilderness Committee, however, has a different idea. This 13 member panel, selected from those who had attended a public hearing in March, is recommending that no new trails be constructed within the

Wilderness, reflecting a strong local sentiment that Rough Mountain should be left the way it is. That's what neighbors thought Wilderness designation meant when 9,300 acres of the Bath County mountain (plus a small tip in Alleghany County) were included in the Virginia Wilderness Act of 1988.

Rough Mountain is not your typical (if there is such a thing) Wilderness Area. It is not isolated. It is flanked on the east by the CSX railway, on the west by Rt. 42. Its "wildness" has been preserved by steep slopes, shaley soils, poor quality timber, and lack of access. The only trail, Crane Trail, starts on the CSX right-of-way and ends on private property on the western side of the mountain. The Committee recommended that efforts be made to obtain permission for visitors to cross CSX property to reach Crane Trail. CSX is in the process of attempting to abandon its line, which opens the possibility of converting the railway into an access route. The Forest Service will also pursue the creation of another public access point on Rt. 42 to tie in with Crane Trail. In the meantime, most visitors will arrive from the north via Coffee Pot Road (FDR 462, exiting off Rt. 42) and a pleasant two mile hike.

ATV's are a continuing threat, and Committee member and Bath County supervisor Harper Wagner suggested that a \$1,000 rather than a \$50 fine be imposed for illegal use. Alleghany County logger Kevin Bennett thought a mandatory visit to the judge would also be appropriate as well as the confiscation of the culprit's ATV.

The Forest Service is not aware of any endangered species within the area, but the Committee accepted Brenda Vest's suggestion that since the Shale Barren Rock Cress (very rare) is found nearby, an inventory should be carried out for it and other rare plants such as Kate's mountain clover, mountain pimpernel, and the white hairial leather flower reportedly spotted on Rough Mountain.

An emerging problem is the precise definition of boundaries. Due to the unavailability of adequate information, the Committee misinterpreted the terms of the concessions that Congress had made to property owners on Rt. 42 concerned about losing their right to cut firewood on Rough Mountain. The Committee has now learned that the legislation states that at no point will the Wilderness Area be closer than 300 feet to the center of Rt. 42. Several Committee recommendations in the second management draft will have to be revised to accommodate this mandate.

Contact Warm Springs Ranger District, GWNF, Rt. 2, Box 30, Hot Springs, VA 24445 for a copy of the draft management plan.

MANAGING THE RICH HOLE WILDERNESS by Chuck Boggs

A draft management plan is being developed for the recently designated Rich Hole Wilderness Area. In two public meetings held earlier this year, 28 issues were identified. Although public participation was small, the discussions were lively. Nevertheless, a consensus was reached on policies addressing each of the major concerns, and a proposed management plan will be circulated for public review by mid-summer. The most serious problems facing the Wilderness are vehicular intrusions and fuelwood cutting. These problems are concentrated along Forest Development Road #108. This road is also the logical choice for a

parking area and information board since it is one terminus of the Rich Hole-North Branch Trail. An attempt will be made to deal with these problems through increased enforcement, additional signs, and user participation in assisting law enforcement. If these measures prove insufficient, it may be necessary to reserve FDR 108 for administrative use and relocate the trailhead and parking area. Parking and information will be provided on the northern end of the Wilderness along State Route 633. No trails exist here and visitors are invited to enjoy bush-whacking into an especially wild and remote portion of the Wilderness.

Contact James River District, GWNF, 313 South Monroe Avenue, Covington, VA 24426 for a copy of the draft management plan.

IN CELEBRATION OF A QUARTER CENTURY OF THE WILDERNESS ACT
by Ernie Dickerman*

On September 3, 1964, the Wilderness Act was signed into law by (then) President Johnson. It had been before the Congress since 1956, during which time innumerable hearings were held, numerous different bills were introduced, and twice the Senate, but not the House, passed a wilderness bill.

The first sentence of the Act is worth reading slowly and reflecting upon. Quote: "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

This statement plus the entire Act are extraordinary for it is considered to be the first time in the history of western civilization that any government officially determined to protect wilderness for its own sake, for its untamed natural values, not to be disturbed by the works of man. Consistent with this intention, the definition of wilderness in the Act contains such phrases as: "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man . . . generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature . . . has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation . . . may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value." A short, unofficial definition says wilderness is an area that is "wild, roadless and free of the works of man." Still shorter, the intent of the Act is to keep it like it is. (If you are wondering what the word untrammelled in the official definition means, a trammel is a hobble, as a device to restrict the ability of a horse to walk or run; hence, "untrammelled" here means not restricted, not interfered with by man.)

Strange as it may seem to most of us today, the Forest Service originated the practice of wilderness preservation on the nation's public lands when in 1924 by administrative action it set aside the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. Under the inspiration of Aldo Leopold (author of Sand County Almanac) and Robert Marshall (founder of The Wilderness Society), then employees of the Forest Service, wilderness was expanded to 14,000,000 acres of national forest. But after these two men left the Service in the early 1930's, expansion virtually ceased; indeed, after WWII, the agency began to withdraw acreage from wilderness under pressure from commercial interests.

From the middle 1930's, when The Wilderness Society was founded, the expectation was to persuade the principal federal land agencies to protect wilderness by administratively initiating or expanding their own wilderness systems. But by about 1950 or so it had become apparent that this method of gaining wilderness preservation was not going to work and that an appropriate law by Congress would be required. So in 1956 the first bills to establish a

wilderness system applicable to all suitable federally owned lands were introduced in Congress.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 was the final product; it established the National Wilderness Preservation System, gave guidelines on how areas shall be managed, and provided for the addition of areas to the System.

The Act has never been amended, Congress having steadfastly refused to do so. Persistent attempts have been made by mining interests to relax the prohibitions on mining. In the wake of the big wildfires of 1988, some people now want the Act amended to require that all wildfires in statutory wilderness be promptly extinguished (under the Act the agency having jurisdiction may control fire as it deems necessary). Initiated by Mr. Reagan's Department of the Interior, some western livestock grazers and municipal water districts are trying to deprive Wildernesses of the natural flow of water! So far, all such destructive efforts have been resisted. But they don't go away.

How big is the Wilderness System today, 25 years later? Initially nine million acres of the Forest Service's administrative wilderness were placed in the new System by the Act, with provision for adding the remaining five million acres later by a complex process. Today the System totals 90,760,106 acres, scattered from Maine to California, plus Hawaii and Alaska, all lying in national forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Land Management lands. Some other figures:

a) Alaska has by far the largest acreage of any state, thanks to the great Alaska Lands Act of 1980, with 56,484,686 acres -- leaving 34,275,420 acres in all other states.

b) By the 1964 Act just three small areas were in the east: Great Gulf in New Hampshire, and Linville Gorge and Shining Rock in North Carolina, all on national forests. No new areas on national forests were established in the east until 1975 when 16 areas totaling 206,988 acres in 13 states were added. The Forest Service had long insisted that no new areas in the east could qualify because of evidence of man's past works (old logging roads, fences, cabins, clearings, not to mention past logging). But Congress in 1975, agreeing with forceful citizen opinion, said this evidence was "substantially unnoticeable" and rejected the agency's purity argument; since which time numerous national forest areas in the east have been added.

c) Virginia gained its first Wilderness in the 1975 Act, the James River Face -- plus four Wilderness Study Areas. In 1976, 79,579 acres of Shenandoah National Park were given the protection of the Wilderness Act. Now with the national forest areas gained in 1984 and 1988, a total of 169,453 acres in Virginia are in the Wilderness System, of which 89,874 are on national forests. None are yet on national wildlife refuges in Virginia.

That we have a genuine National Wilderness Preservation System is a splendid tribute to the sensitivity and culture of American society. Overriding short term commercial concerns and recognizing the continuing material, scientific, and spiritual benefits of the wilderness resource, we continue to increase Congress after Congress the untamed, natural lands and water protected under the Wilderness Act. Few pieces of legislation during 200 years of the American Congress have been more popular and enthusiastically supported than the Wilderness Act. A quarter of a century after its enactment, Americans continue to work unceasingly to protect more unspoiled wildland -- with our most notable current goal being the 1.5 million acres of the coastal plain of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Forward!

*A charter member of The Wilderness Society (founded 1935), Ernie helped draft early texts of the Act and lobbied Congress. Later he joined The Wilderness Society staff, building grassroots support for wilderness designation and wrestling with the land managing agencies. He retired in 1976 to Virginia, where he is part of the backbone of the VWC and is constantly consulted on a variety of wilderness planning and strategy issues.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the VWC is open to anyone who believes in the need for preservation of wilderness. To join, send a copy of a recent letter supporting wilderness written to a public official, OR send \$2.00 or more per year to the VWC Treasurer, address below.

OFFICERS

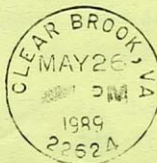
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NEWSLETTER November, 1989

TELL THE GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST WHAT YOU THINK SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN ITS FOREST PLAN

The GWNF must prepare a brand new Forest Plan, by order of Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. The first of several opportunities for public participation in the process is the solicitation by the GWNF of public comments concerning the scope of the Plan. Comments should be sent by Dec. 15 to:

Wayne Kelley, Supervisor, George Washington NF
P.O. Box 233
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

The VWC leadership is working on an agenda of issues that it intends to pursue in the new Plan. Because historically we have been an advocacy group for recreational, aesthetic, and wilderness-related values, we are concentrating on those kinds of issues. Other conservation groups are aiming at other aspects of the Plan. The Citizens Task Force (based in Roanoke), for example, is preparing one of the "alternatives" (the Plan will be structured through the presentation and analysis of several alternative courses of action) that it hopes will represent an acceptable compromise between conservation and logging interests. And the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club is drafting a statement that will include a focus on the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act as well as clearcutting.

Below are some of the major concerns that the VWC has identified for its agenda. We urge you to consider them carefully, add your own ideas, and write to the GWNF stating your opinion in clear, precise language. Please send us a copy (see address of Charles Pierce, President, on back) so that we may keep abreast with the opinions of our membership.

1. **Special Management Areas.** All areas identified during the RAREII process should become SMA's. These are areas of particular value for their roadless, wilderness quality, or for their particular ecological functioning. Prescriptions (i.e., guidelines for activities) should rigorously protect these qualities; no logging or mineral extraction should be allowed. All Special Interest Areas identified by Virginia's Natural Heritage Program should also be so designated, and all of the Forest's Research Natural Areas. Careful management of these areas is necessary to preserve biodiversity.
2. **Semi-primitive non-motorized areas** (one of the four categories in the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum). No logging should be allowed in SPNM areas.
3. **Roads.** There should be no net gain of open road mileage. In featured species areas where open road mileage already exceeds standards (as in some black bear areas), roads should be closed.
4. **Below-cost timber sales.** These should be substantially eliminated. If the governmental subsidy of timber is removed, much of the commercial impetus for logging (and attendant road-building) on national forest land will disappear.
5. **Black Bears and Cougars.** Although several studies have been done on bears in and around Shenandoah National Park, little if any data exists on bear populations west of the Park, in the Alleghenies. Surveys and research on black bears in the westernmost portions of the

Forest should be undertaken through cooperative efforts with state agencies. Cougars: Virtually nothing is being done to document the possible existence of cougars. The GWNF should undertake an analysis to identify suitable cougar habitat, and initiate a cooperative program with appropriate state agencies not only to record sightings but to field-check the most creditable sightings.

6. Old growth. During the life of the Plan, information should be gathered and definitions composed to identify old growth in the Forest, and standards adopted to permit development of old growth even within the timber base. Old growth on good growing sites is necessary to provide high quality habitat for species dependent on large living and downed trees.

7. Indicator species and ecosystems. "Indicator" species and ecosystems, when properly chosen and actively monitored, provide a means to identify and measure changes in the Forest. Suitable indicator species should be chosen and a program of monitoring developed to use indicator species as a wildlife management tool. In addition, during the life of the Plan, work should be undertaken to develop a method for using indicator ecosystems as a management tool to preserve biodiversity.

8. All Terrain Vehicles. All ATV trails should be designated only on the basis of compatibility with the environment, and documented demand by organized groups willing to take responsibility for maintenance and enforcement. All ATV trails must be routinely monitored, and closed if abuses persist.

JAMES LOESEL WINS TWO AWARDS

VWC Conservation Chair Jim Loesel has been twice honored this year for his extensive and intensive conservation work. In August Jim received the EPA Region 3's 1989 Environmental Educator of the Year Award for the Forest Service Monitoring Manual he compiled. The Manual is a two-inch thick guidebook to dealing with the Forest Service, and is in wide use by individuals concerned over activities proposed by the Forest Service. In October, the Virginia Wildlife Federation presented Jim with the 1989 Clean Air Conservationist of the Year Award. The award acknowledged Jim's work on a state ad hoc committee to reduce sulfur emission standards, and his follow-up on the 1984 Wilderness Act, which called for study on air quality questions relevant to the then-designated Wilderness Study Areas. Congratulations, Jim, and keep up the good work!

THE GWNF IN THE NEW DECADE Editorial by Charles D. Pierce, VWC President

The opening of the decade of the 1990's offers a rare and welcome opportunity for shaping the future of the George Washington National Forest.

Because of the objections of the VWC and several other conservation groups, aided by the skillful legal swordsmanship of the Natural Resources Defense Council, the chief of the Forest Service recently ordered the GWNF to replace its present long-range plan with a new one.

The conservation organizations had been contending that the plan developed by the GWNF was skewed heavily in favor of logging and gave too little emphasis to recreation.

As the planning effort starts again, friends of the GWNF may find it useful to recall the findings of a landmark study of our eastern forests by the prestigious Conservation Foundation in Washington, D.C. This report, titled "The Lands Nobody Wanted" and published in 1977, recognized the distinctive history and role of the fragmented national forests in the densely populated East as being quite different from the vast western forests which are rich in mature timber and huge roadless wilderness areas.

One of two basic principles recommended in the publication was that management of the eastern forests should be geared to providing public benefits not supplied by private lands, such as growing superior hardwood trees to peak maturity before harvesting. The other basic principle proposed was that "the forests and their products should be used only to the extent" that the process of restoring these woods as natural environments is not interrupted. William K. Reilly, then president of the Conservation Foundation and now Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in the foreword to this publication lauded the work done by the Forest Service in restoring these ravaged lands but also called on the F.S. to recognize a new role for the eastern forests:

"The national forests of the eastern United States are a Cinderella story. Plucked from dire straits, treated with care, they have blossomed beyond the imaginings of those who created them. But the coach is waiting, the clock is ticking, and it's time for action."

Unfortunately, it is now well past midnight and many of the Cinderella forests, such as the GWNF, now serve as timber drudges. Instead of fostering the growth of valuable hardwoods and other trees not readily available on private lands, the GWNF peddles most of its timber for cheap pulp and firewood. As a result, some forest students have raised the question, "If we're going to manage the eastern national forests just like all the other land, then might we perhaps as well sell them off?"

A fortunate opportunity for conservationists to help tell the story of the GWNF's plight will be provided by the celebration during the week of April 22-29 next year, of the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. National Celebration of the Outdoors, an organization comprised of representatives of the nation's leading conservation groups, has been formed to sponsor this week. It is calling on local groups across the country to celebrate this occasion by stimulating action for outdoor recreation.

Any such activities in Virginia should spotlight the extraordinary opportunities for hiking, camping, fishing and hunting in the state's two great national forests, the GW and the Jefferson. Earth Week could be an opportunity for conservation leaders to help publicize the need for the management of the GWNF to adopt a kinder, gentler approach to management of the forest.

Citizens who believe recreation should play a greater role in the GWNF can write to the F.S. now and comment at the F.S. hearings which will be held next year to help develop the new long-range forest plan. We need to remember that all that is necessary for the triumph of special interests in the forest plan is that good people do nothing. We believe that Gifford Pinchot, father of American forestry, was absolutely right when he wrote many years ago:

"National forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them to run."

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the VWC is open to anyone who believes in the need for preservation of wilderness and the protection of our national forests. To join, send \$5 or more per year in dues to the VWC treasurer (address below) to help cover the organization's costs for phone calls, postage, and printing. No dues are required from students and others of modest income who submit a copy of a recent letter supporting wilderness or national forest protection.

OFFICERS

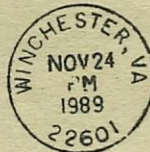
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