



We work with the people who work the land.

Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District
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September 20, 2011

Maureen Hyzer, Forest Supervisor
George Washington & Jefferson National Forest
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019

Dear Supervisor Hyzer:

It seems appropriate at this time that we are reviewing the future management of the George Washington National Forest in the revised land and resource management plan. It is 100 years since wise men of vision saw the deplorable conditions of the Appalachian watersheds and established the Weeks Law (the law that has now provided us the George Washington National Forest with all of its valuable resources from which we today benefit and now plan for its future).

Here are our comments on the draft plan:

1. The restoration of watersheds to improve the quality of water from our headwater streams has always been the highest priority for the national forests under the Weeks Law. We believe the preferred alternative (G) does an excellent job of using scientific methods to protect water quality and riparian resources in these headwater streams. The plan, we believe, adequately provides effective Best Management Practices to both prevent erosion and restore watersheds that do not meet the standards. We especially commend you for selecting those watersheds as priority that store public drinking water such as North River. These watersheds will be recognized for their value by emphasis toward restoration and effective management activities.
2. The plan does not recognize the flood control dams (PL566) located on the national forest that are the responsibility of the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District and under permit to the forest for their operation and maintenance. The impoundments provide:
 - Reduced flood damage to downstream structures, forest and farmland.
 - Recreation for swimming, fishing and camping.
 - Domestic drinking water such as Elkhorn Lake.

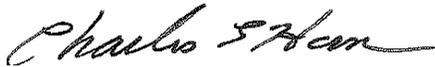
We will continue to cooperate with the national forest in the operation of these impoundments including:

- Conducting annual inspections for safety and maintenance.

- Seeking funding to meet required changes for certification, including the federal certification program.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of dams as they age.
3. Oil & Gas Leasing- We realize the national importance of reducing our dependence on foreign oil and that the national forest can provide some types of fuel products including biofuels. We believe the plan is correct not to allow horizontal drilling in the Marcellus Shale Formation that could jeopardize the water sources in our fragile karst formations. Much more experience toward safely reducing the risk of contamination must be demonstrated before this method should be permitted.

We know that the George Washington National Forest has provided many valuable resources to both the local population and the nation. Providing management for these resources in a reasonable mix is complicated. We commend you for your work and understand the importance of this plan for the future. Headwaters SWCD will continue to cooperate with the forest and welcome ways that we can support our mutual goals as we have in the past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles E. Horn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Horn, Chairman