

AMENDMENT #5

GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST  
REVISED LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

December 1997

The following changes are made to the Forest Plan through this amendment.

1. Forest Plan table 2-2 (page 2-14) is updated to show the approximately 853 acres of Management Area 6 that shift to Management Area 21.

<u>Management Area</u>	<u>Thousands of Total Acres</u>	<u>Thousands of Unsuitable Acres</u>	<u>Thousands of Suitable Acres</u>
6	9	9	0
21	60	60	0

2. Forest Plan page 2-19, under Non-Motorized Trails, the fifth paragraph is updated to state the following:

Approximately 60 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail are within the boundary of the Pedlar Ranger District. Except for portions of the Trail in the Priest and Three Ridges Roadless Areas (allocated to Management Area 8), and in the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area (allocated to Management Area 21), the Appalachian Trail Foreground Zone has been allocated to Management Area 6. New standards have been incorporated as recommended by the Appalachian Trail Conference.

3. Forest Plan page 2-21, last paragraph, is updated to state the following:

Big Schloss, Laurel Fork, and Little River have been allocated to Management Area 21 ("Special Management Areas"). Mount Pleasant is allocated to Management Area 21 as a "National Scenic Area" as a result of the George Washington National Forest Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act of 1994 (PL 103-314). The majority of....(the rest of the paragraph remains the same).

4. Forest Plan table 2-3 (page 2-22) is updated to show the approximately 853 acres of Management Area 6 that shift to Management Area 21.

<u>Management Area</u>	<u>Thousands of Acres</u>
6	1
21	60 (Stays same number due to rounding)

5. Forest Plan table 2-4, page 2-23, the last line of the table is modified to state the following:

<u>Description of Area</u>	<u>Management Area</u>
Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area	21

6. Forest Plan page 2-24, under Important Scenic and Recreational Areas, the second paragraph is modified to state the following:

Except for portions of the Trail in the Priest and Three Ridges Roadless Areas (allocated to Management Area 8), and in the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area (allocated to Management Area 21), the foreground zone of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail has been allocated to Management Area 6. Additionally, (the rest of the paragraph remains the same.)

7. Forest Plan table 2-7 (page 2-33, as amended by Amendment #4 in January 1997) is updated to show the acres unavailable for oil and gas leasing due to Congressional action.

Table 2-7.

Thousands of Acres Available for Leasable Energy (Oil and Gas) Minerals (ftntl)

Leasing with Standard Stipulations	Leasing with Controlled Use/Timing Stipulations	Leasing with No Surface Occupancy Stipulations	Unavailable due to Congressional Action	Unavailable due to Administrative Action
145	825	41	40	10

8. Forest Plan table 2-8 (page 2-34) is updated to show the acres unavailable for non-energy leasable minerals due to Congressional action.

Table 2-8.

Thousands of Acres Available for Non-Energy Leasable Minerals (ftntl)

Leasing Generally Available	Leasing on Case-by-Case Basis	Unavailable due to Congressional Action	Unavailable due to Administrative Action
479	525	40	17

9. Forest Plan table 2-9 (page 2-34) is updated to show the acres unavailable for salable (Common variety) minerals due to Congressional action.

Table 2-9.

Thousands of Acres Available for Salable (Common Variety) Minerals (ftntl)

Mineral Material Sales Allowed	Mineral Material Sales on Case-by-Case Basis	Unavailable due to Congressional Action	Unavailable due to Administrative Action
141	847	40	47

10. The information on Forest Plan page 3-3, in Table 3-1, on the lines for Management Areas 6 and 21, is modified as follows:

6	The Appalachian Trail	9	1%	9
21	Special Mgt Areas, Nat. Scenic Areas	60	6%	60

11. On Forest Plan page 3-107, the general description of Management Area 21 is updated to reflect the new legal status of the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area. The first paragraph is now changed to the following:

<b>MANAGEMENT AREA 21 Special Management Areas</b>	This 60,000-acre management area contains three Special Management Areas: Big Schloss, Laurel Fork, and Little River. It also contains the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, so designated by the George Washington National Forest Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act of August 26, 1994 (Public Law 103-314). These four areas contain a variety of unique natural resources where a mixture of compatible management emphases is deemed the wisest management. Because of their unique features, complexity, and degree of interest, these areas are designated as Special Management Areas (SMA's), or as a National Scenic Area (NSA). Each SMA or NSA is described separately. The standards that apply to the entire management area are discussed at the end of the description and desired future condition for each of the four areas. All lands in the management area are classified as unsuitable for commercial timber production.
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12. On Forest Plan page 3-114, the general description of the Mount Pleasant area is updated to reflect its new legal status as the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area. The description is changed to the following:

<b>MOUNT PLEASANT NATIONAL SCENIC AREA</b>	The 7,695-acre Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area contains most of the Mount Pleasant Roadless Area described in greater detail in Appendix C of the FEIS. The Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area is well known for its prominent mountains, including Mount Pleasant, Pompey, and Cold Mountain, as well as the very popular Henry Lanum Memorial Trail, the Mount Pleasant Spur Trail, the Old Hotel Trail, and a portion of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Some of the best views on the Pedlar Ranger District are possible from Mount Pleasant and Cold Mountain. Other features include the small virgin groves of hardwood forest in Little Cove Creek, and wild trout streams.
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The Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area offers excellent opportunities for solitude and serenity. This area is very popular for various forms of dispersed recreation including hiking, hunting and fishing. The core of the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area appears relatively remote. There are no trails designated for licensed OHV or ATV use.

13. On Forest Plan page 3-114, the Desired Future of the Mount Pleasant area is updated to reflect its new legal status as the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area. The opportunity is also taken to eliminate some of the "Desired Future" section that is more appropriately addressed in the "Standards" section. An example is the harvesting of personal fuelwood along perimeter roads, which was described in both sections in the 1993 Forest Plan and in Amendment 4 in January 1997. The Desired Future is modified to state the following:

The Desired Future The purposes of the George Washington National Forest Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act are to:

- (1) Ensure appropriate protection and preservation of the area's scenic quality, water quality, natural characteristics, and water resources;
- (2) Protect and manage vegetation to provide wildlife and fish habitat consistent with paragraph (1);
- (3) Provide areas that may develop characteristics of old-growth forests; and
- (4) Provide a variety of recreation opportunities that are not inconsistent with the preceding purposes.

The Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area offers a variety of recreational experiences that are in harmony with protecting unique biological and primitive recreation opportunities.

Management practices could be described as gentle-on-the-land and not appreciably reducing the unfragmented habitat, roadless nature, or primitive appearance of the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area.

As the vegetation within the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area continues to age, there is natural mortality. Most of the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area develops characteristics of older ecosystems.

Visitors find that the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area offers excellent opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation such as fishing, hunting, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Most access is limited to non-motorized means.

14. On Forest Plan page 3-114 to page 3-116, the following standards for Management Area 21 are now updated to reflect the changes required by the Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act. Existing standards are updated and new standards are added to state the following (existing Standards that have not changed are not included below):

Standards for SMAs Adherence to the following standards is required when and Mount Pleasant implementing the Revised Plan in Special Management Areas NSA and the National Scenic Area. These standards are in addition to the applicable Common Standards listed at the end of this chapter.

Aesthetics

21-1. The Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas and the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area are managed to meet a visual quality objective of retention.

## Fire

21-2a. In Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas, prescribed fire may be used to provide animal or plant habitat management and species maintenance or to reduce fuel loading or fuel continuity in areas heavily defoliated by gypsy moth.

21-2b. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, prescribed fire may be used to manage the vegetation of existing wildlife clearings or open areas in association with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

## Minerals

21-4. Reserved/outstanding minerals are acquired when available and subject to availability of acquisition funds.

21-5. The Laurel Fork SMA, including its associated riparian areas, is administratively unavailable for oil and gas leasing. The Big Schloss and Little River SMA's are available for oil and gas leasing with surface occupancy highly restricted by using controlled surface use stipulations.

21-6a. The Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas are available for other leasable minerals and common variety minerals on a case-by-case basis.

21-6b. All federally-owned lands in the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area are withdrawn from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws of the United States, and from leasing claims under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws of the United States, including amendments to such laws.

## Recreation

21-7. The Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas and the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area are managed under four recreation opportunity classes. Lands inventoried as roaded natural remain roaded natural. Lands inventoried as semi-primitive motorized adopt a recreation opportunity class of semi-primitive motorized (subclass 1) or semi-primitive motorized (subclass 2). Lands inventoried as semi-primitive non-motorized remain semi-primitive non-motorized. See the Transportation Network and Recreational Opportunities map accompanying the Revised Plan.

## Roads

21-12a. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, no new permanent roads shall be constructed, except that this prohibition shall not be construed to deny access to private lands or interests therein in the Scenic Area.

21-12b. Motorized travel in the scenic area shall be allowed on State Route 635 and Forest Development Road 51. Except as listed above, motorized travel shall not be permitted within or on the boundary of the Scenic Area except as necessary for administrative use in furtherance of the purposes of the George Washington National Forest Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act of August 26, 1994 (PL 103-314).

21-12c. In Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas, no new road construction is permitted except (1) to access approved mineral activities and (2) where the new road is the only prudent alternative to serve resource needs in other management areas and will minimally impact this management area and (3) relocation of existing roads and (4) provide access to trailheads and (5) provide access to private land if no other route is feasible. Reconstruction is limited to protection of resource values. Existing system roads or those routes to access wildlife openings may continue to be used.

Soil and Water

21-14a. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, any abandoned or closed roads are revegetated for resource protection.

Timber and Other  
Vegetation  
Management

21-17a. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, harvesting of firewood for personal use is permitted along perimeter roads.

21-17b. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, vegetation manipulation may be practiced for the maintenance of existing wildlife clearings and visual quality.

21-17c. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, no timber harvest shall be allowed, except as may be necessary in the control of fire, insects, and diseases; or to provide for public safety and trail access.

21-17d. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, insect and disease outbreaks may be controlled to maintain scenic quality, prevent tree mortality, reduce hazards to visitors, or protect private lands.

Wildlife

21-18a. In the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, existing wildlife habitat clearings can be maintained.

21-18b. In Laurel Fork, Big Schloss, and Little River Special Management Areas, existing wildlife habitat improvements can be maintained. Additional improvements are permitted so long as they achieve overall wildlife objectives and do not require any additional road construction.

Appalachian Trail 21-19. For management of lands along the Appalachian Trail, follow the standards listed under Management Area 6 of this Revised Forest Plan. Where conflicts occur between management of the Appalachian Trail and provisions of the Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act, follow the provisions of the Act.