Appendix G – Response to 30-Day Comments

Introduction

The 30-day comment period for this project ended September 10, 2009. Comments were received from 23 respondents. The following is a list of individuals and organizations that provided comments.

Table 1. Respondent and Corresponding Comment Number

	Respondent
1	Mary Kowaluk
2	Ruth Schurr
3	Gary Swindell
4	Greg Schmitt
5	Dan Smrekar
6	Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy
7	Brenda Adams-Weyant
8	Michael Butler
9	Ridgway Twp Board of Supervisors
10	Claire Zimmerman
11	Nancy R. Nail, Cherie R. Roddy
12	Jane Schautz
13	Clarion County Commissioners
14	Millcreek Township
15	Mary Hosmer
16	Kim Miller
17	Richard Maxwell
18	William L. Wesner
19	Richard Frost
20	Karen R. and Richard D. Hulings (two letters with same comments)
21	PA Game Commission
22	Mark Banker, Ruffed Grouse Society

Comment 1
The respondent expressed concern over canoeists using her river frontage.

Response: *The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Clarion River Comprehensive River Management Plan applies only to National Forest System (NFS) lands. The Clarion River Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) applies to publicly owned lands in accordance with the laws and regulations pertinent to the managing agency of those lands. Privately owned lands are managed by the private landowner in accordance with state and local laws. Private landowners may take any legal actions to manage the use of their property. Guidelines posted on public lands and included on maps will advise visitors of the presence of private land and recommend that they know where they are, respect the rights of private property owners, and limit their activities to public lands.*

Comment 2A
No new trails on the south side of the river.

Response: *The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Clarion River Comprehensive River Management Plan applies only to National Forest System (NFS) lands. This comment is beyond the scope of this analysis because there are no NFS lands south of the Clarion River. The Clarion River Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) applies to publicly owned lands in accordance with the laws and regulations pertinent to the managing agency of those lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor. Hiking, equestrian and biking trails are options that can be considered in future management decisions affecting these other public lands; but any decision on any trails which can be considered on the south side of the river is beyond the scope of this analysis because there are no National Forest System (NFS) lands south of the Clarion River. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 2B
No timbering should be allowed for at least 1/4-mile back from the river and certainly none on steep slopes.

Response: *This decision defines the vegetation management direction for the Clarion Wild and Scenic River (WSR) corridor by amending the ANF LRMP to establish Management Area 8.1.1, adding standards and guidelines specific to the Clarion WSR corridor. Vegetation management within the corridor may occur on NFS lands for only a few specific objectives, including habitat improvement and cleanup efforts (including salvaging damaged timber) after natural events like windstorms or insect infestations, and would require additional environmental analysis. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those for vegetation management. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 2C
Some limits should be set for use by horses and never should they be on the river banks.

Response: *The standards and guidelines for MA 8.1.1 would restrict horse travel to designated trails on NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing horse trails. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 3A
I think the document should acknowledge how the present owners – both private and government – have taken good care of the valley and river.

Response: *The improvement of water quality is noted in the EA on page 6.*

Comment 3B
Allowing commercial timber harvesting in the corridor is favorable to the valley, not a detriment.

Response: *See response to comment 2B.*

Comment 3C
It is unclear what the position is on horseback riding.

Response: *The standards and guidelines for MA 8.1.1 would restrict horse travel to designated trails on NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. Trail location would have additional restrictions dependent on whether it is proposed in the recreation or scenic segment of the river corridor. Currently, there are no designated horse trails on the NFS within the Clarion WSR corridor. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities or trails on the NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing horse trails. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions. Within Scenic Segment 1 (Portland Mills to Irwin Run), no new river access trails may be constructed. Within Scenic Segment 2 (below Cooksburg), new river access trails may be considered.*

Comment 3D
I don't see how requiring canoe permits from schools and churches is enforceable from a practical standpoint.

Response: *Comment noted. Regulations require permits for group and commercial use of NFS lands. This will have its greatest effect on groups wishing to camp in dispersed canoe sites along the river. Due to the limitations on number of watercraft and number of people per campsite, as well as the number of campsites themselves, larger groups will need a permit to allow one-time use of designated sites, and to assure the availability of the campsites.*

Comment 4

How can I learn of all the proposed plans for development?

Response*: Proposed projects on NFS lands are shared with interested individuals by letter to those parties on the ANF mailing lists and through news releases, legal notices, and postings on the ANF website at www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny/projects/. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 5
It must be made clear that the plan does not claim the river to be pristine or have pristine beginnings.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 6
American Rivers supports Option 1 as it best addresses the protection and preservation of the Clarion River as a Wild and Scenic Resource.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 7A
I do not believe that using the River Road as the corridor boundary between Dark Hollow Road and State Route 36 is adequate to protect the scenic ORV. I understand that the Forest Service cannot regulate activities on private lands, but the Forest Service still has an obligation to work with private landowners to develop effective strategies for protection within the designated corridor. Private landowners cannot be expected to understand how to protect the scenic resources of the river corridor. Private land, more than any public land agency, needs the guidance that the management plan provides. It is here that the scenic resources have the greatest potential to be compromised.

Response: *The designation of River Road in the body of the EA as the corridor boundary between Dark Hollow Road and State Route 36 was in error. The map for Alterative 1 showed the correct boundary as 660-feet from the normal high-water mark. This correction is noted in the Errata. The Forest Service is available to work with private landowners and local governments upon request to protect the river values.*

Comment 7B
I support the standards and guidelines developed for Alternatives 1 and 3 and request these be applied to the quarter mile corridor alternative.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 8A
While I recognize there is a need to provide access to enable the public the opportunity to enjoy the Scenic Corridor, I would ask that the solitude which can be found in this area, [sic] be recognized as the greatest concern when we allow for the development of access into the corridor.

Response: *Comment noted. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities or trails on the NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 8B
The inclusion of some tributaries such as Cathers Run, Maxwell Run, and Blyson Run could limit the measure of the corridor by restricting the acreage which is allowed within a mile of corridor.

Response: *Comment noted. The acreage included in the corridor for Alternative 1 is within the limit required by the enabling Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.*

Comment 8C
Respondent expresses concern about Farmington Township plans to develop a water treatment facility at Gravel Lick and states that this needs to be brought into a public forum to address adverse impacts to the Wild and Scenic River.

Response: *The Forest Service has not yet been formally contacted about this potential project. The agency will advise about design elements, if requested, and analyze the project under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) when consulted by the Army Corps of Engineers during the permitting process required under Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. WSRA Section 7 analyses are not subject to the National Environmental Policy Act and are not addressed in a public forum.*

Comment 8D

The respondent expresses concern that officials from Farmington and Highland townships in Clarion County appear to not be participating in the discussions of the project.

Response: *The Forest Service has invited all federal, state, and local agencies and officials with an interest in the Clarion Wild and Scenic River to participate and comment on the Clarion River CRMP. This includes Farmington and Highland Townships. The Clarion River Municipal Partnership, which includes 2 municipalities and 8 townships along the Clarion River from its headwaters to Piney Dam reservoir, has been a key partner with the Forest Service and the state agencies and commissions in the CRMP planning process. Farmington and Highland Townships are not members of the Clarion River Municipal Partnership. The Forest Service also consulted with the Clarion County Commissioners and the Clarion County Conservation District during the CRMP planning process.*

Comment 8E
The respondent expresses the hope that with help from local governments, private landowners' fears of federal or state government infringements on property rights will be allayed and agreements for maintaining the viewshed without impacting existing scenic values can be found.

Response: *Comment noted. The Forest Service shares this hope.*

Comment 9A
The language in the "Wildlands Project" or "Wild and Scenic River" Project is a concern to us and our residents. We would like you to ensure that there is language included in the final draft of your

management plan that prohibits any state or federal agency from turning the proposed area into "wilds" or "wildlands".

Response: *The term "Wild and Scenic Rivers" is the name of the federal program designated by Congress when it passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The Forest Service is not in control of the name of the system to which the Clarion River belongs; however, there is no intent by the agency to turn the river corridor into anything other than what Congress has designated it to be: four segments of a 51.7 mile reach of the Clarion River, two of which have a scenic designation and two of which have a recreational designation. These designations were determined by the amount of development along the river at the time of designation (October 1996). The Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) of the river, in this case recreation and scenery, are what is protected within the river corridor within the context of their development designations. It takes an Act of Congress to change development designations and ORVs, and neither would happen without public input.*

Comment 9B

We strongly urge that eminent domain is not used to obtain properties that are private to enhance this government project.

Response: *Eminent domain to acquire property is not legal where over 50 percent of the river corridor is in government (federal, state, and local, combined) according to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Section 6(b). Public ownership of lands within the corridor is well in excess of 50 percent. Section 6(c) also protects private land from acquisition under eminent domain if a local city, village, or borough adopts valid zoning ordinances that are consistent with the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions*

Comment 10A
Not in favor of anything in the plan, particularly DCNR taking over Game Commission land.

Response: *Comment noted. The Clarion WSR Comprehensive Management Plan designates a corridor and establishes standards and guidelines for management of public lands within the corridor; it does not propose any exchange of lands between the DCNR and PA Game Commission. This is a separate decision involving those two entities and is beyond the scope of this analysis. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions*

Comment 10B
Disapproves of level of horse traffic and them making trails.

Response: *Comment noted. See response to comment 3C. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions*

Comment 11A
How will forest fires be monitored? Who will perform this safety measure?

Response: *Publicly posted information will include fire safety tips. Forest Service employees and other public agency employees patrol public lands for unsafe conditions and contact visitors about safety issues. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has responsibility for responding to wildfire within the commonwealth. The Forest Service works with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in suppressing wildfires on National Forest System (NFS) lands and would respond to any wildfire on or threatening NFS lands.*

Comment 11B
Who will pay for the increased need for police and emergency response teams in the event of an accident, fire, or fracas?

Response: *Each land management agency or commission, including the Forest Service, has law enforcement officers who regularly coordinate and cooperate with each other, as well as with the state police and county sheriffs' departments. Emergency response services are generally provided by local volunteer fire departments, working in conjunction with the aforementioned law enforcement. In some instances rescue squads are reimbursed by personal insurance. In some instances people are ticketed, fined, and/or prosecuted for causing accidents, fires, or disturbances.*

Comment 11C
How will private property boundaries bordering the CRMP [sic] be marked? If you allow campsites on state land bordering our property, how will campers know and recognize the boundary lines between our private property and CRMP land [sic]?

Response: *The corridor boundary itself will not be marked on the ground. National Forest boundaries are marked with red paint and signs. State agencies and commissions have their own boundary marking protocols. Private landowners may mark their own boundaries. Public and private land will be differentiated on maps posted at public facilities. See Response to Comment 11D.*

Comment 11D
We would recommend a buffer zone between private property boundaries and CRMP [sic], whatever is established as the river corridor boundary, but at least a minimum of 660 feet before any campsite would be established.

Response: *Comment noted. Standards and guidelines have been added to the CRMP to establish a setback from private property of 300 feet for any trail or facility constructed on public lands within the corridor, and to assure that no trail will dead-end at a property boundary unless at an established trailhead or with the written consent of the adjacent property owner. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities on the NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 11E
We strongly urge that no campsite or commercial entities (canoe livery, etc) be established directly across the river from any private property owner and that a buffer zone be used when establishing campsites or other entities.

Response: *See response to Comment 11D. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 11F
We would recommend disallowing dogs with campers. Their noise and presence will disturb the wildlife and our solitude and sanctuary.

Response: *Comment noted. Campers on the ANF with dogs are required to keep their animals leashed. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own requirements.*

Comment 12A
…the extensive report is based on assumptions that no longer apply, e.g., that we must prepare for increased usage and heavier demands in the area.

Response: *The EA is based on the current management situation, including past use of the area, impacts that are occurring now, and events that could occur in the reasonably foreseeable future. The standards and guidelines are written to protect designated river resources from degradation below 1996 levels and to manage impacts from the use and enjoyment of federal lands within the river corridor so that these uses can be sustained into the future.*

Comment 12B
Respondent expresses concern about the level of state budgeting and asks where the money will come from for the "expanded activities".

Response: *The state budget is outside the scope of this analysis. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 12C
Extensive tree removal and other disturbances to the corridor boundary are highly undesirable.

Response: *See response to comment 2B.*

Comment 12D
Minerals development should not be allowed in the WSR corridor. The corridor should be preserved.

Response: *NFS lands within the corridor will be managed according to the standards and guidelines of the ANF LRMP, including the standards and guidelines for MA 8.1.1, which restrict surface occupancy within the corridor for state and federally owned minerals, and restrict the use of setback waivers for privately owned minerals on public lands.*

Comment 13A
Any plan should repeatedly state that no standard or guideline will apply or regulate private property. All boundary areas in the field and on maps should clearly stop at private property lines. Anything less we consider as being a taking of PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Response: *Comment noted. See response to Comment 1. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 13B
The management area should be restricted to the bank-to-bank high water mark to minimize the invasive overlapping of regulations.

Response: *This alternative was considered but was not analyzed in detail because it failed to "provide protection for the Clarion River's water quality or ORVs of recreation and scenery, or compliance with laws and regulations." (EA, page 17)*

Comment 13C
The section of the Clarion River identified in Clarion County should be designated as Recreational rather than Scenic. The taxpayers of Pennsylvania and Clarion County bear the majority of the cost and burden of these public lands and should be granted higher degree of access than is provided under the Scenic designation.

Response: *The Scenic designation is based on the amount of development along the river at the time of designation (October 1996). Little has changed since then. Only an Act of Congress can change this designation (see response to comment 9A).*

Comment 13D
Recreation: Primitive Camping – Increase campsites per river mile to 10.

Response: *Comment noted. The CRMP standard for primitive campsites is 5 per river mile,* ***on average.*** *This allows for some variation on specific river segments. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede designation, rehabilitation, construction, deletion, or addition of primitive campsites on the ANF. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 13E
Recreation: Trails – add at least one ATV/OHM and/or snowmobile trail leading to and from the Gravel Lick Bridge and increase trail densities to 10 miles of trails per square mile.

Response: *Comment noted. The decision prohibits ATV/OHM and/or snowmobile use on public lands within the corridor. Trail densities should not exceed 2 miles per square mile in scenic segments. There are no trail density limitations in recreation segments. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 14A
There is no objective or compelling need to include any privately held land within a designated corridor that extends beyond the high water mark as determined by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The imposition upon private landowners of subjective regulatory requirements including the potential acquisition via eminent domain is unwarranted, unnecessary and not in the best interest of the Township or its affected property owners.

Response: *See response to Comment 13B. A corridor that includes only the normal high-water mark on either bank of the river is not compliant with laws and regulations. See response to comment 9B. Eminent domain is not a legal option. The default corridor has been 1/4-mile from the normal high-water mark since 1996. This decision sets the corridor boundary downstream of Cooksburg at the 1,400-foot elevation line, which is as much as 1/8-mile closer to the normal high-water mark than the default boundary.*

Comment 14B

The CRMP, as proposed, constitutes an overlay zone of land use management and regulation that asserts regulatory jurisdiction over the designated corridor. Millcreek Township's Conservation District Zoning Ordinance established land use management criteria and regulations that are, to a degree, complemented by the proposed regulation within the CRMP.

Response: *The CRMP standards and guidelines apply only to NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. State agencies and commissions have agreed to adopt the CRMP standards and guidelines on state land where they apply. There is no change to Millcreek Township's Conservation District Zoning Ordinance as a result of the CRMP, the ordinance will apply to private lands within Millcreek Township and can be incorporated by reference into the CRMP. Also see response to Comment 9B. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 14C

The CRMP proposal constitutes a change in the Township Zoning Ordinance and as such requires that the USDA Forest Service proposes a curative amendment to the ordinance via the due process procedures therein.

Response: *See response to comment 14B.*

Comment 15A

Supports salvage harvest and habitat management for wildlife concerns in both segments in an effort to retain hunting opportunities in the upland areas of small streams such as Connellsville Run, Gillis Run, and Little Bear Creek.

Response: *Comment noted. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 15B

Cannot support construction of new recreation facilities in the upstream recreational segment because it is only 8.6 miles long and people will float out of it before they need facilities, and is afraid it will create additional conflicts with hunting use.

Response: *The ability to create new facilities in the first recreational segment is essentially to retain the options for the boat access in Portland Mills, particularly if the DCNR acquires a portion of the State Gamelands in the river bend around Portland Mills. The current launch is in a poor location both off the highway and off the river. The access is steep, parking is limited, and the concrete planks of the launch are continually being undermined by the river because of the location and angle of entry into the water. If this land exchange occurs, the project and alternatives will be analyzed on a site-specific basis and the public will have an opportunity to comment. Any facilities on the ANF side of this segment would be limited to trails and designated primitive canoe-in campsites since there is no motor vehicle access to the river on the north side. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede any decision to add new facilities on NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 15C

Fully support no new recreational facilities within the first scenic segment.

Response: *Comment noted. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede any decision to add new facilities on NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 15D
Fully support primitive camping in designated sites only. Would prefer 6 people per site and 3 watercraft in scenic segments to reduce rowdiness and noise; supports 10 people per site and 5 watercraft in second recreational segment. More than these seems like a burden to a site from a resource standpoint of noise, soil and vegetation trampling, and littering.

Response: *Comment noted. The CRMP standards and guidelines list campsite restrictions per river mile, on average and adopt David Cole's Wilderness Campsite Parameters and Ratings as the primary tool for monitoring campsite condition and guiding operation, protection and restoration. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 15E
Do not support equestrian or bicycle trails, in particular, in either upstream segments, or any trails at all. Believes there are enough existing trails and more would destroy hunting opportunities.

Response: *Comment noted. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities on the NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have their own public notification and involvement processes. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 15F
An outside-the-scope-suggestion for extending the MA 1.0 around Owls Nest to the river corridor.

Response: *This is beyond the scope of this analysis; however, we will keep it in mind. Thanks.*

Comment 16A
The most affected private property owners have been kept out of the decision-making part of the process.

Response: *The Forest Service developed and implemented a communication plan that included a concerted effort to directly contact all private landowners in the corridor area through mailings and local government to assure that these landowners were aware of the process, the public meetings, and other means of providing comment and feedback. Public meetings and comment opportunities were published in the* ***Warren Times Observer****, posted on the ANF website, and posted at local businesses. Through the participation of the Clarion River Municipal Partnership, local governments assisted this effort by providing names and addresses of river area residents. News releases announcing the availability of planning documents for public review, and upcoming public meetings were published in most local newspapers (Ridgway, Clarion, etc.) within or adjacent to the river corridor. Local media also provided coverage of public meetings with calendar notifications and articles reporting on the content of the meetings.*

Comment 16B
Special interest groups and business groups appear to me to be the driving force in this plan. Example, the scenic section of the river below the Cooksburg bridge is the area targeted for development.

Response: *The purpose and need for this project are described on pages 3–9 of the EA and include the need to define the river corridor and complete a Comprehensive River Management Plan as directed in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The reason the scenic section below Cooksburg has some exceptions is to allow flexibility in the site-specific planning process to account for the potential change in managing agency from the Pennsylvanian Game Commission, which does not allow camping, to the Pennsylvania DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, which does allow camping. In addition, public comments during scoping noted resource and access concerns associated with the Gravel Lick access and other areas. These exceptions do not make a decision regarding site-specific projects, but they do allow options to be considered. These options will still need to be consistent with the CRMP standards and guidelines, protect the scenic ORVs, and implement Recreation Opportunity Spectrum guidelines for semi-primitive motorized recreation. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment will have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 16C
The landswap was done behind closed doors… (*The rest of this sentence was cut off of the facsimile received.)*

Response: *Comment noted. The Clarion W&S River Comprehensive Management Plan designates a corridor and establishes standards and guidelines for management of public lands within the corridor; it does not propose any exchange of lands between the DCNR and PA Game Commission. This is a separate decision involving those two entities and is beyond the scope of this analysis. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 16D
Farmington Township threatened to eminent domain private property and build a water treatment plant at Gravel Lick.

Response: *See responses to comments 8C and 9B.*

Comment 16E
Disappearance of natural areas. Example – development of a multiuse trail between Clear Creek and Cooksburg on the undeveloped south river bank. Many of the problems upstream from the Cooksburg bridge will need to be dealt with as plans to develop the scenic section move forward.

Response: *See response to Comment 2A. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor. Hiking, equestrian and biking trails are options that can be considered in future management decisions affecting these other public lands; but any decision on any trails which can be considered on the south side of the river between Clear Creek and Cooksburg is beyond the scope of this analysis because there are no National Forest System (NFS) lands south of the Clarion River. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 16F
Wildfires should be of concern since we have one of the most recognized old growth forest in the east.

Response: *See response to comment 11A.*

Comment 16G
Water safety issues – July 3, 1993 – 5 people drowned just below the Gravel Lick Bridge.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 16H
Does not make economic sense.

Response: *The purpose of this analysis is to define the corridor and approve a CRMP for the Clarion WSR as directed in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Neither the EA nor the CRMP plan or approve the expenditure of any funds.*

Comment 16I
The main focus should be on the free-flowing aspects and water quality of the river.

Response: *Comment noted. Please refer to pages 5–6 and 27 of the EA.*

Comment 16J
With management remaining in the hands of the U.S. Forest Service.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 17A
Information released to the public must be absolutely correct. There is still private land between Cooksburg and Millcreek that may not be available for use by the public.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 17B
Maps distributed to the public need to be very accurate. The brochure "Fishing and Boating Map," copyrighted in 1996 shows a proposed location of the North Country Trail crossing our private property and I had never been approached about permission for a trail right-of-way.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 18A
Would it be possible to designate the section down stream from Gravel Lick as wild?

Response: *See response to comment 9A.*

Comment 18B
Would it be possible for some (Clarion Chapter of the North Country Scenic Trail) members to be issued guide permits for day hikes yearly rather than for each event?

Response: *There is nothing in the CRMP standards and guidelines that prohibit this request, but it does not approve it either. Issuing guidelines for outfitter/guide permits are generally subject to the rules and regulations of the issuing agency and whatever discretion is afforded the person-in-charge who approves the permit. These are generally considered on a case-by-case basis. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 19A
All of the Federal and State officials at the meetings indicated that permits would be required for overnight camping and to have a fire.

Response: *The CRMP standards and guidelines for Primitive Camping limit this use to designated sites only. To provide a reliable means of assuring that campers can know a campsite will be available, a permit or reservation system may need to be implemented. This was discussed in the August public meetings. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede designation of dispersed campsites on the NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing primitive camping. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment will have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions. Camp fires do not require a permit on the ANF, unless a burn ban is in effect during a dry spell or drought.*

Comment 19B
Most of the officials present stated that nothing would be developed prior to the completion of public meetings and comment periods. Why then, is the PA DCNR-Forestry working full time to develop and mark a trail system inside of the WSR corridor without first allowing the WSR management plan to be finalized?

Response: *The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing trails. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 19C
The national standard for horse trails is two miles of trails per one square mile of land. The trail system being set up appears to greatly exceed that. These trails cross streams and wet areas in several locations. Including Maxwell Creek which is home to native Brook Trout. All of which flow into the Clarion River, within the scenic corridor.

Response: *The CRMP limits trail densities to 2 miles per square mile in the scenic segments. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing trails. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river*

segment have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with the state agencies and commissions.

Comment 19D
If horseback riding is to be permitted within the corridor, every horse/rider should be required to have a permit to limit the number of horses in the corridor and the impact from the horse use. It would also prevent overcrowding. This is consistent with your statement that "low density visitation is emphasized." Trails open to horse traffic should stay well away from camping areas, streams, wetlands and other sensitive areas. Horses should not be ridden in this area during hunting seasons.

Response: *See Response to Comments 2C and 3C. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new trails on the NFS lands within the Clarion WSR corridor. The state agencies and commissions managing the other publicly owned lands within the corridor have agreed to adopt the standards and guidelines for management of the WSR corridor, including those governing horse trails. Layout of a horse trail network and management of the trail use and condition should be consistent with the CRMP standards and guidelines, protect the scenic and recreation ORVs, and implement Recreation Opportunity Spectrum guidelines for the particular river segment. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment will have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 19E
One of the marked trails passes precariously close to a living American Chestnut tree. Root damage caused by erosion and/or soil compaction from horse hooves could easily kill this rare tree.

Response: *This comment will be shared with the Bureau of Forestry.*

Comment 20A
No restrictive ordinances should be placed on private landowners' rights.

Response: *See responses to comment 1, 9B, 14A, and 14B.*

Comment 20B
The value of private land and improvements should be protected from government takeover.

Response: *See responses to comment 1, 9B, 14A, and 14B.*

Comment 21
We support Design Criteria that facilitate habitat management while precluding development of new access trails, facilities, or access sites.

Response: *Comment noted. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities on the NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment will have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

Comment 22A
The Ruffed Grouse Society supports the Proposed Action of Alternative 1 for the Clarion River Comprehensive River Management Plan. Please consider the following comments as they relate to the Plan:

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 22B
We support salvage harvest and habitat management for wildlife in both the recreational and scenic river segments. Hunting is a primary recreational use of the river corridor and it is important that the oak regeneration and the creation of early successional habitats continue to be part of the long-term management plan.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 22C
We do not support the construction of new recreation facilities in the upstream recreational segment. This is only a several hour float trip to cover 8.6 miles; for people putting in at Love's Canoe, the only upstream access point, they will float out of this section without needing new facilities. The uplands of this section of river provide a unique hunting experience with remoteness. Waterfowl hunting is popular along the river corridor. No new recreational facilities should be constructed within the upstream scenic river segment.

Response: *Comment noted. See Response to Comment 15B.*

Comment 22D
We support primitive camping at designated sites only.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment 22E
We do not support equestrian or bicycle trails in the upstream recreational segment or the upstream scenic segment. The uniqueness of this recreation opportunity for quietness and an unparalleled hunting experience should be protected in these upstream sections.

Response: *Comment noted. Public involvement and appropriate environmental analysis would precede construction of any new facilities on the NFS lands. The state agencies and commissions managing the public lands within the corridor of this river segment will have a public notification and involvement process for their specific project proposals. This comment will be shared with those state agencies and commissions.*

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