What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

George Washington Plan Revision Public Workshops
March 5-13, 2007
Small Group Discussions

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What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

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Hot Springs, Virginia Meeting March 5, 2007

Attendance: 56

Group 1

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Unmanaged blocks of land provide Water quality/ Clean Water, Wildlife undisturbed, Spiritual quality
- Wilderness Areas - Hiking Trails, Remote area
- Aesthetics/scenery
- Non usage of ATV's - Restricted to specific areas only (i.e. handicap atv trails) Concerned about noise and terrain damage
- Management Areas, Special areas, Management divided to provide variation
- Prescribed Burning -Concern about staffing – appropriate number to control, Support not using dozers in roadless areas, Support not disturbing existing trails
- Forest Service Public Relations – Open, Consultation with public, Public involvement on site specific decisions
- Managed Trail System - Specific trails opened and maintained
- Water Quality Management Practices - BMP's are strengthened and maintained, Water sampling and monitoring
- Public Servants vs. Contractors - People that are employed by the Forest Service are public servants rather than contractors
- Educational Programs
- Hunting - (Back Country) Large areas that provide solitude
- Monitoring of Songbirds - database available, collected from various sources, e.g. clearcuts, deep woods
- Shared usage of trails, Mountain bikes, horses, hikers
- Food plots for Game
- No gas leases in Laurel Fork
- Vegetation Management, Dispersed, Improvement on size and dispersion of vegetation management sites

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Future Desired Conditions -- Current not achieved, Continuous inventory of stand condition, Need to clearly define the Future Desired Condition as to amounts of old growth, early successional, etc., More habitat based / oriented, Supports having Old Growth, but the Forest needs more young / early successional forest, If the new plan is going to combine management areas (e.g., MA 14, 15, 16, 17), then there is a need to know quantities that will be in early successional forest, old growth forest, etc.
- Plan Revision Process -- Draft Plan vs. Final Plan – disappointed to see some recommendations were dropped between the draft and the final. Would like to see those recommendations revisited.

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- Special Areas --- "Gems of the Forest"- Laurel Fork, Little River, Ramsey Draft addition, Skidmore Fork, These areas are a resource for conservation and recreation. Special attention. Do not manage with a heavy hand.
- Early Successional Habitat --Perform early successional habitat management in areas that have been previously entered / managed. No new roads to create young habitat.
- Trails -- Revisit number of users allowed on a trail at a given time (e.g., bicycles and horses). Both should be allowed. Referred to the Jefferson Plan, Mountain bikes in wilderness – some in the group were for bikes, some against, Need connector trails for already established trails so there are fewer "one way in and out" trails, More emphasis on trails as a resource. More support for trails and recreation, money allocated ;More short loops for families or light walkers that just want a 3-5 mile hike, The corridor and viewshed of the Great Eastern Trail will be protected where it crosses through the GWJEFF.
- Roads and Gates -- Roads gated for longer periods of time – keep roads in good condition, Encourage more non-motorized recreation, Stronger protection of roadless areas. No road building or logging.
- ATV's -- Would like to see areas designated for ATVs (example: Big Island ATV trail) – may cut down illegal use if trails are provided, Maintain ATV areas in ways that will keep them on the trails. Concerned about resource issues, Don't create more ATV trails until current situation is controlled, More enforcement
- Accountability -- Show that you achieved the goal that you said you were trying to achieve. For example, if you said you were going to regenerate oaks – provide data that shows that you did, Let the public know what is happening post-management, Wildlife habitat desired condition is not being implemented under the Forest Plan. Make changes – setting and reaching Desired Future Conditions
- Recreation -- Better enforcement of fee collection, Increase fees to support forest programs
- Invasive Species -- Don't allow management of the forest to create a situation for introduction / establishment, Allow use of herbicides to control invasive species.
- Old Growth Forests -- Evaluated regardless of forest type, Looked at on a landscape level, Patches connected into a network, Region 8 old growth guidelines adhered to
- Uneven Aged vs. Even Aged Management -- Would like to see the local Forest Service engaged in uneven-aged management at some scale – even if experimental, Would like to see more of a relationship with areas of the forest through re-visits to logging areas., Relationships carry over to local forest product companies, Single Tree selection on low productive sites, Good Water Quality, Stable and Sustainable Forest Product Community, Maintain the Oak-Hickory Forest that we have – Even aged forest management practices.
- Best Management Practices - Need to be enforced, Monitoring reports (upper Pedlar example) – If you can't maintain the landscape, don't do it. Employees – efficient use of time. , Possibly offer incentives for following BMP's. (Bonds) would: reduce administration costs, maintain resource, and provide $$ to repair resource damages. Increase protection (ex. Water quality)

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Group 2

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- The way FS protects streams
- Good riparian protection - no silt in the streams
- The way FS involves different user groups (ex. maintaining trails)
- Ability to get involved in multiple projects on more than 1 Ranger District
- Good cooperation
- Good riparian protection
- Emphasis on shared-use trails, which increases volunteer involvement
- Appreciate the current "trigger" number for special use permits
- Like using the Forest for a variety of activities - hunting, fishing, camping, scenic views, passability (access)
- Good water quality
- Good cooperation with Virginia Trout Stream Sensitivity Study
- Scoping notices with maps and long timeframe for schedule of proposed actions
- Good job managing for biodiversity and protecting a variety of habitats
- Good job with scoping notices – enough detail to envision project and excellent maps (ex. Allegheny Trail proposal)

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Do not like areas designated for a single use
- Not enough protection of high-use-trail viewsheds (such as National Recreation Trails and the AT)
- Do not like directives and mandates from above the local Forest level
- Burn program completely out of line with science, the magnitude and frequency is too high. FS is burning too much, too often.
- Irritating that FS budgets keep getting cut
- Damage to and destruction of trails from wildfire suppression activities. There is more damage to trails from fire suppression activities than from erosion
- Need to adopt Wildland Fire Use in Wilderness and designated Roadless Areas
- Improper and inadequate rehabilitation of firelines is causing soil loss and sedimentation
- Inadequate precautions taken to prevent the spread of invasive weed seeds during fire suppression activities
- Not enough done to improve hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing (need more active management)
- Diversify timber harvesting (use more conventional ground-based logging system in addition to helicopter logging) to increase benefits to wildlife
- Concern over how wind energy issue was treated in the Comprehensive Evaluation Report. There was no explanation about why Option 1 was chosen as preferred.
- Need a more comprehensive and analytical approach to wind energy issue. We can identify unsuitable areas, but do not have enough information to identify suitable areas.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Inappropriate bird species used for monitoring as reported in the Comprehensive Evaluation Report (the birds being monitored are found everywhere in Virginia in fragmented habitat)
- Incorrect information used for basis of decisions to create early successional habitat (ex. numbers of quail are decreasing because of the use of fescue, not because of the lack of early successional forest, as stated in the Comprehensive Evaluation Report)
- Need more mature forest and migratory byways, and appropriate birds to monitor mature forest conditions (recommend cerulean warbler and blackburnian warbler)
- Neotropical migratory birds do not need early successional habitat before they migrate south
- There are plenty of early successional habitats on private land, the FS does not need to create more for neotropical migratory birds
- Current plan does not do a good job of addressing intermittent and ephemeral streams. Need additional standards and protection for those stream types.
- Should apply the Jefferson National Forest riparian standards or even wider buffer distances to the George Washington National Forest
- More recommended Wilderness (particularly in Allegheny Mountain area)
- Need to do more to control invasive species
- Need to be more proactive in invasive species prevention
- More Wilderness
- Need more restoration logging to grow stands of appropriate native tree species (according to soil, aspect, and slope). For example: pure stands of white pine are not appropriate; or cherry or tulip poplar growing where there should be oak.
- Need to do more pre-commercial thinning to restore stands to appropriate stem density
- Use of culverts at road crossings that do not have a natural stream bottom
- Need to increase the use of scenic areas as a way to increase land protection
- Choose areas suitable for timber harvest and intensively enhance/manage those areas to provide better high quality timber (grow valuable tree species on that land)
- Need to be able to harvest storm/insect damaged timber in a more timely fashion
- Put qualified Roadless Areas into the official inventory
- More Wilderness
- Not enough loop trails
- Not enough easy trails for the novice hiker

Group 3

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Info on a broad range of possibilities
- Learn from last plan what worked or not
- Plan good but wasn't applied to ground correctly
- Specific about what could or couldn't do (Like accountability

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Good plan but implementation – policies, rules change

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Flexibility to change (plan allows)
- Didn't correct mistakes (kept doing the same thing)
- New plan not specific enough (worried about accountability)
- Not cutting enough timber
- Need to balance timber/wildlife/recreation/tourism to maintain forest
- Last resort to put wind turbines on Forest Service ridges. Exhaust other options first, (plan vague)
- Make sure archaeological site protected in all actions
- Not opposed to wind power, but not on National Forest
- Cutting less timber
- Balanced healthy forest
- Current plan is not cutting enough - numbers show reduced cut per year
- Trails are by-product damage without much consideration. Trails are valuable resource for community
- During harvest operations (protect other resources soil/water), protect Forest for recreation during site specific analysis
- Invasive species follow disturbance (less disturbance less unwanted plants)
- Want bigger trees (healthy trees) harvest more ecological sensitive logging.
- Didn't address economic benefit of forest (1993 Plan)
- National Forest belongs to everyone – manage for best for Forest- be careful.. manage for everyone's interests
- Address wildfire for resource benefit (set parameters)
- Woody biomass, (energy) use instead of burn
- Want wilderness recommendations
- Ecological services of healthy forest, clean water down streams – take into account in the plan
- Healthy benefits of clean water & carbon sequestration account for in forest plan
- Change in climate causing change in forest species composition – north/south corridor for trees and wildlife
- Improve trail maintenance – more people & improve use
- Help Forest Service set priorities - manage budget
- Small logger endanger – use small loggers to construct trails

Group 4

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Prescribed burns provides habitat for many wildlife species.
- Forest Service receives public comment/input for management ideas (local favored over central location).
- Likes multiple use concept of management so many users are satisfied. Use of the forest is for all the citizens of the United States.
- Current Plan recognizes Special Biological Area and did a good job.
- USFS is always open to publics' interest.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Old Plan spelled out and recognized different Management Areas and each ere governed by specified guidelines.
- Old Plan had an ASQ (Allowable Sale Quantity).
- 1993 Plan had different alternatives for the public to consider which they thought was the best.
- Endangered Species were identified and were monitored.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Needs to do a better monitoring job to see if management goals were achieved.
- Does not want to see the entire forest managed towards an old growth forest (OGF).
- Need more harvesting to create early success ional habitat to benefit a host of wildlife species.
- Mortality rate of timber is 90 million feet and the estimated harvest is 17 million. Thought this is unacceptable.
- Harvesting timber in inappropriate areas, such as steep slopes, causes loss f soils. Biggest concern is soil erosion.
- The forest should initiate re-planting of harvested areas to prevent soil erosion.
- Cutting units that do not look good should be kept as early succession by re-cutting them.
- The Forest is becoming littered by various things; beer cans, deer carcasses, ATV damage. More law enforcement needed. Ruins the forest experiences for many forest users.
- Hiking trails are overgrown with vegetation and many are not easily located. Trails need re-established and opened to the public.
- Suggest organizing adopt-a trial groups to maintain trails. Figure out an easier way for volunteers to get the work done. Many times we have to be trained by the FS way to use chain saws…this is a problem.
- There should be legal public access to USFS trails.
- Maintaining trails will benefit firefighting efforts.
- More loop trails. More accessible trails (easy to get to).
- UFFS should impose a Forest User Fee on hiking, bird watching, non-consumptive uses.
- Provide trash cans at parking areas.
- Would like to see the Forest Service put up small volume sales. 500,000 feet sales. <4,000,000 feet. Limit helicopter logging. Terrible waste of the tree resource. A lot of merchantable product lay to waste.
- Desire a whole lot less logging. Favor a whole lot more of natural forests. End road construction on the Forest and take out some roads. Turn roads into trails. Get rid of deer feed lot mentality. Have fewer deer by not cutting timber.
- Present wilderness is at 4% and would like to see more balance, maybe 500,000 acres of wilderness. Not enough wilderness areas.
- Protect all roadless areas.
- Desires to stop all cutting on National Forest.
- Desires and is in favor of cutting in appropriate areas.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- 60% of Bath County is Forest Service owned and is not taxable. Therefore taxpayers have the burden to keep county solvent; schools, roads, snow removal.
- Tourism is important to the county.
- Needs more balance of wilderness and active logging. Needs to more that 4% in wilderness.
- Active management of Roadless Area as it is written.
- Do not want to see any more wilderness areas – forest users are aging.

Group 5

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Love the staff
- Plenty of wilderness
- Restriction of ATV's
- Beautiful horse trails
- Restriction of motorized vehicles
- Biologists are great
- Protection of backcountry, riparian, Special Biological Areas
- Multiple use, hunter and fisherman access, trails, good staff
- Bird nest boxes – Hidden Valley
- Flying squirrel nest boxes – Laurel Fork
- Warm season grasses
- Prescribed burning
- Staff does a good job educating public about invasive species
- Hidden Valley – habitat improvement projects, openings. Recreation – dispersed trails are great
- Involvement of schools, children and others with the Capitol Christmas tree. Teachers and Forest Service personnel provided environmental education opportunity
- Cooperation between Forest Service and other agencies and organizations such as TNC, VDGIF, and others.
- Forest is not a private enterprise – open for all to enjoy
- Forest maps were good. They are less available now
- Monitoring of streams, large woody debris, trout, caves and other resources to insure Forest is well managed
- Forest Service updates at county supervisor's board meetings
- Local Forest Service folks are caring and dedicated about forest management and people
- Timber sales benefit many wildlife species

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Concern that politics at higher levels are influencing local forest management
- Concerned about wind energy impacts
- Wind energy – option C4 preferable (p. 120 CER) – nowhere is suitable. Remove reference to Highland County (Board of Supervisors and wind energy development?)

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Old growth forest protection. Better identification of old growth. Need old growth buffers and connectivity between old growth areas
- Need more diversity of timber harvest methods- shelterwood, group selection, etc., for wildlife benefit
- Need more emphasis on cooperation between VDGIF and Forest Service
- Opposed to wind energy development on the Forest – it is incompatible with other ecological objectives. Causes impacts to ridgetops, habitat fragmentation
- Identify and protect wildlife corridors for amphibians, birds, etc.
- Concerned about wind energy impacts to bats, birds, noise
- Technology may make wind energy obsolete
- Need more prescribed burns, timber sales (below what is needed for forest health), wildlife openings for wildlife diversity
- Invasive species are negatively affecting the Forest
- Below cost timber sales shouldn't happen
- More funding and staff
- No clearcutting
- Maintain large forest blocks
- More funding for forest management, more staff
- Commitment by Forest Service to abide by 2000 roadless rule
- More wilderness study areas, Laurel Fork in particular
- More educational programs for visitors, children – Forest Service used to do more
- Maple Flats protection – key area of biological diversity. Expand SBA. Sinkhole pond amphibian populations need protecting, terrestrial as well as aquatic
- Protect headwater streams to prevent runoff and provide groundwater recharge
- Conduct a full roads analysis including environmental and economic costs. Include impacts of temporary roads on invasive species, streams, and other resources
- Forest Service is not maintaining wildlife openings – they are valuable for wildlife
- Log shelter at Locust Spring is/was a nice feature, restore or rebuild
- Meeting formats: continue small local meetings

Lexington, Virginia Meeting March 6, 2007

Attendance: 112

Group 1

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Likes the people who work on the forest, easy to talk to.
- The 1993 Plan was done by following a very good NEPA process (led by Ron Lindenboom). Now that the Planning Rule has changed (and no EIS is required), how will we ensure that we follow a good enough NEPA process that makes decisions that will carry forward without having to back up and redo later?
- Crabtree Falls and St. Mary's Wilderness are very special areas.
- Likes the forest.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Good that the Plan is multiple use and good that we will be taking public input.
- Likes the shooting ranges, however they can become abused without proper oversight.
- Likes multiple uses.
- Likes trails that provide access into areas where there are no roads.
- Likes the public participation process.
- Enjoys the many beautiful areas there are to discover and preserve.
- Likes that there is still a fragment of old growth left to protect.
- Likes the mountain biking opportunities that have been shared with several generations in his family. The plan provides for volunteer opportunities to maintain these trails.
- Enjoys the large backcountry areas for mountain bike access into remote areas – like the 12C areas in the Jefferson Plan.
- Likes that Forest Service roads have gates so that non-motorized users behind that gates are not disturbed by vehicles.
- Like multiple uses and the 'tiered' levels of wilderness protection, such as the 12A, 12B and 12C areas in the Jefferson Plan. Likes the opportunities for volunteers to participate.
- Appreciates that we offer free chainsaw and cross-cut saw certifications for volunteers.
- Likes that volunteer agreements provide coverage for potential injuries (workmen's comp).
- Likes that the current Plan has standards and desired conditions for individual management areas with areas designated on a map for timber harvesting and other specific uses (bear habitat, wilderness, municipal watersheds, etc).
- Likes the seasonal closure of roads to reduce erosion.
- Appreciates the fact that there are five recreation/tourism (cycling, hiking, etc) businesses that can exist because of the North River area.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Need more available information on national forest opportunities and public involvement.
- Need more wilderness due to heavy use of existing wilderness on the forest.
- Too much damage to trails done during fire suppression without any follow-up rehabilitation or restoration.
- Need to include the cost of rehabilitation of trails damaged during fire suppression into the cost analysis of fire management.
- Need to keep main roads maintained properly and there appears to be too many small secondary roads or old logging roads.
- Need more public education on resource management activities and their effects (both good and bad) and 'why' we are doing them.
- Need to know the effects of management activities.
- Dislike that hunting and fishing users are the only ones who have to pay fees (stamps) because maintenance issues are because of a lack of funding.
- Need user fees for all forest users. No more wilderness needed because there is not enough use and most recreationists prefer more amenities (such as electricity).

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Harvest more timber because we have stated that current mortality is five times the amount of timber harvested.
- Dislikes clearcutting but harvesting timber in other ways is ok when the timber is mature enough to be cut.
- Need to provide economic benefits to counties through timber harvesting revenues, especially in counties where the land base has a lot of national forest lands.
- Don't lock up areas in wilderness designation, we need multiple uses.
- Need to be very clear where areas are suitable for timber harvesting – on a map.
- Roadless areas should be managed according to the 2001 Roadless Rule.
- Need more wilderness to provide a different type of hunting experience.
- Concern for lack of decision-making and area designations (such as management areas) in the current draft plan under the new planning rule.
- Need more wilderness and is wondering how the process for creating additional wilderness would work.
- Concern on how the management of isolated tracts would be addressed in the plan, given the current possibility of selling those tracts.
- Needs to be community involvement in the fire suppression on forest lands next to urban interface areas.
- Need to consider budget realities.
- Why even cut any old growth? There are plenty of other areas to cut. This is just dumb and unnecessary. Need to change the decision to cut forest community type 21 old growth since there is more of it than other forest types. Use the old growth direction in the Jefferson plan.
- The Comprehensive Evaluation Report needs to consider more of the Southern Appalachian Assessment findings like the Jefferson plan did.
- The Comprehensive Evaluation Report is more off-target in the recommendations to change that it is on-target.
- The GW plan needs to be more consistent with the Jefferson plan; the current CER and preliminary Plan are going in a different direction.
- The plan needs to make some site-specific decisions.
- Don't develop infrastructure in new (or undisturbed) areas of the forest without being able to maintain and manage that areas – for example Slate Lick.
- Add large tracts of roadless to the roadless inventory and put the boundary actually to the road.
- Budget equities need to be considered with the amount of investment compared to the amount of revenues, especially for tourism and 'front-country' recreation development.
- The area between US 250 and 33 is the largest roadless area and should have permanent protection with a 12C management prescription. Keep adjacent front country trails but have loop opportunities with different levels of experience.
- No more below-cost logging.
- Broaden the view and consideration of economic benefits of national forests to communities, not just the money derived from commodities.
- We already have enough front-country.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Need more habitat for wildlife diversity through management activities like harvest, burning, planting, etc).
- Need special designation and protection for municipal watersheds.
- Need more areas for management for timber and wildlife, no more wilderness.
- Need more development of 4WD trails for front-country recreation. Off-road users can contribute help in maintaining trails and bring revenue to local communities.
- Harvesting can help reduce the effects of wildfire.
- No more front-country development since better roads bring in more people and more amenities and the 'forest' is lost to a more urban experience.
- Need more early successional habitat for wildlife and to reduce the potential for insect and disease outbreaks.
- Roadless areas should be included in the suitable timber harvest areas since existing roads and helicopters can be used.
- Need timber harvesting to be designed in a more cost-efficient and beneficial manner.
- Don't plant pine seedlings in areas where oak is being cut, we need the oaks back.
- Recognize the protection and scientific value that the watershed resources provide.
- It was good to see the Maple Flats biological area expanded but need to communicate with the experts who have knowledge of that area.
- Need specific plan direction on certain wildlife species, such as deer, bear, turkey, grouse.
- Recognize wildlife species (includes humans) that need large tracts of undisturbed land and consult with experts of that species.
- The generally suitable maps are nonsense because the plan should identify areas where uses cannot occur to minimize user conflicts. Example – the suitable for wind development map shows areas that are incompatible with this use.
- The plan should identify compatible and noncompatible uses; not leave it to a project-by-project basis.
- Don't need a large amount of early successional habitat since the private lands also have early successional habitat. The national forest is not an island.
- We have no control over the habitat conditions on private land and the future use of those lands.
- Adopt the Great Eastern Trail and make it a shared use trail.

Group 2

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Restoration after logging has been better than expected—good replanting and establishment of wildlife habitat. This is especially true on the Jefferson NF. Hopefully the GW will do the same.
- The Forest Service and the Appalachian Trail Clubs have a good working relationship/ partnership. There is good communication between them. The FS regulations are appropriate and (we) want the FS to enforce them.
- The last Forest Plan was specific, easy to interpret and a legal process. Projects were accountable to the Forest Plan.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- It is commendable that the public is included in the planning process
- Keep / return the forest to the natural state.
- Management of forest is becoming more sensible than in the past. There is no longer as much of an "us vs. them" mentality. Things are not over-regulated and not one-sided. The Forest Service is doing great.
- Love the wilderness and forest beauty. Keep it that way.
- There is good management of multiple uses. (Including various recreational users)
- Writing Environmental Impact Statements is an important part of the process.
- I appreciate the forest for contributing to our quality of life. I appreciate the protection of water quality. The Forest Service is very responsive to the public.
- I appreciate that there is public involvement in the planning process.
- The Forest Service listens to all viewpoints.
- The Forest Service is doing a good job of managing for increased recreational use. The forests are our last large tracts of open, public land. The forests meet the needs of lots of people.
- Seeding and planting of clear-cuts and roads for wildlife is a good thing—continue it.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Hunting on National Forest is not as good as it use to be. There is not as much game due to less habitat management.
- Logging and select cuttings don't seem to be in correct places. They should be near front roads, not in remote back country. Clear cutting, especially, should be in wilderness/back country.
- I would like to see the Forest Service reach a middle ground among recreation, timber, environmentalists, hunters. I would like to see more management for wildlife. Clear cutting should be done in remote areas.
- There is not enough budget to maintain infra-structures (roads, trails, recreation areas)
- A use fee should be implemented for recreationists. Hunters pay, so should hikers.
- There are some fees for recreation. And fees are okay as long as they go to the site, not to the federal treasury.
- All users contribute to the local economy, even if they don't pay a fee.
- Dislikes timber cuts because they often result in erosion/ flooding. The new plan needs to address water and air quality concerns.
- Water quality and sedimentation is a concern. Activities that pollute water should be restricted. More streams should be healthy enough to support more native trout.
- Would like it if there was no disturbance to the forest and no extractions, unless it affects people's livelihood. (Hunting is okay but not timber cutting). Let the forests get back to natural.
- Formulate a process to facilitate the adding of new trails to the trail inventory.
- Make trails sustainable. Use volunteers and user groups in trail design and maintenance.
- Be sensible about use in Wilderness Areas. Don't exclude users such as horsemen and hunters.
- Be firm about multi-use. Make sure all users can use the national forest.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Horse users pick up after some hunters. More policing is necessary. Can't hunters self-police? If not, we need more (and more visible) Game Wardens
- Do not clear-cut. Select cutting is acceptable if adequate cover is left for turkey and wildlife.
- Prescribed burns shouldn't be done if it impacts nesting turkeys
- It's upsetting that the new forest plan may be exempt from EIS.
- Water and air pollution is a global problem but local Forest Service districts need to be concerned and do what they can.
- Use the best timber cutting practices.
- Use clear cuts and prescribed burns with discretion. Use environmental constraints in timber cutting.
- Cultural and historical sites need to be protected more.
- Address whole habitat—flora and fauna. Don't sacrifice vegetation concerns for wildlife concerns.
- Use common sense in Wilderness Areas. FS is too restrictive with the "emergency use" definition in order to use mechanized tools. We should do what it takes (mechanized tools) if communities are in danger of flooding.
- We don't educate the public as to what proper timber management is. Forestry practices are essential to keep forests healthy.
- Against clear-cutting. It's really hard to walk through and it takes too long for the trees to grow back. Eighty years is too long to have to wait for an area to grow back after clear-cutting. Selective cutting should be done but the selective cutting we have been doing recently cuts too many trees. Our cuts don't generate oak re-growth and don't benefit wildlife.
- Flooding is prevalent and it's due to clear-cuts.
- If we allow cutting of timber, we should be making a profit on it.
- Clear cut areas don't have good wildlife populations for many years. Clear-cuts are not beneficial to health of forest.
- Against clear-cuts. We should just take out mature trees and let light in. FS doesn't reseed after cuts and flooding and erosion result. Cuts done in the late 70's still only have twigs growing. Pines locust and maple will grow some but not oaks.
- Loggers should be made to replant timber sales with grass to prevent erosion. Forest Service needs to tighten up on loggers and make sure they do what they're supposed to.
- Forest need more handicap accessible facilities and address the needs of people who can't currently experience the national forest.
- There should be more Wilderness in the national forest. There should be more support for roadless areas.
- There should be more trees and fewer disturbances to improve air quality.

Group 3

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Recreation opportunities and wildlife management
- Opportunities for escape and solitude

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Quality timber production in concentrated acreage
- Management/oversight of timber sales
- Trails, and the fact that we have a variety of trails
- High quality watershed management (clear streams)
- Wilderness/roadless areas with no vehicles allowed
- Hunting opportunities, due to high quality forest management practices
- Management programs that focus on non-game species (edge species)
- Varied habitat
- Water management for quantity as well as quality (clean water supply sources)
- Air quality: the positive effects of forest acreage upon the carbon cycle
- Air cooling through transpiration of trees
- Travel ways for wildlife
- Visuals (visual buffers)
- Firewood permit program
- Mountain balds (mowed and/or managed)
- Acreage simultaneously managed for timber production and wildlife improvement
- Acreage protected form commercial development for perpetuity
- Policy decisions made after interacting with the public and listening to the public
- Policy decisions supported by research

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Timber production is not as high or efficient dollar-wise as it should be. Need more timber production from NF lands
- Don't particularly like the wilderness policies – not as much access to the land for fire suppression, etc.
- Need more small clearings: need a mosaic of land patterns that include old growth areas as well as maintained clearings
- Need more statistics put out for the public: would like to know the data. Would like to know what we are doing, to enable to give feedback to the FS at meetings, etc. Put these data into the media.
- FS clear cutting is causing erosion. Need more hardwood regeneration after cuts
- Logging operations on NF lands are leaving a mess
- Would like to see more and larger areas of unbroken canopy
- More environmental education and involvement and pro-active interaction with the public. Want intensive anti-litter or leave-no-trace type programs
- Establish user fees for all types of users – they need to pay their own way
- Need to harvest more mature trees (potential timber production is wasted)
- Would like the FS to sponsor or provide field trips into the forest – youth, adults
- Motorized vehicles (all types) cause a mess – need more enforcement
- Need more law enforcement in general
- Infrastructure maintenance is below par (realize shortage of dollars). If FS would do the heavy stuff (culverts), we would like to volunteer with lighter trail maintenance
- Parts of the Glenwood trail need more loops

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Would like more volunteer opportunities, and less red tape
- Want special protection for Shenandoah Mountain (did not elaborate further)
- Communication/interaction with the public needs to improve
- FS should allow more commercial logging on NF land, to meet the needs for construction and other industries (timber sources on private land are pretty much exhausted in this area)
- The FS does a good job of land management, except that we don't cut enough timber
- The FS should manage for more older-age classes beyond 100 or 120 (old growth)
- The FS should provide more small timber sales (referred to as "boundaries" of timber), that provide several cords of wood
- Need better non-native species management (mentioned release of beetles)
- Need more environmental education sponsored by the FS that is science based, to counter all the misinformation out there that is politically oriented
- FS should assume a leadership role in conservation and land management

Group 4

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Plan flexible/diverse
- Primitive back country experience
- Areas left alone – toward a natural "old growth"
- Allowing groups to maintain trails – trust in relationship
- Able to hunt a couple miles from a used road
- Liked as a forest – "light" management
- Liked the way "Peavine" was managed
- Plenty of room for each use timber and wilderness
- Undisturbed areas for wildlife and birds
- FS land was created to protect watershed and produce timber
- Understand it is hard to get a "perfect" prescribed burn
- Large biological areas are recognized
- Like that there are lots of old roads and trials that hikers, bikers and horses can access – shared use ok
- Protect the dead and down permits – keep the cost as low as it is – broaden this

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Be careful of overuse
- Don't cut old growth
- Danger of "old" trees – partly dead and falling on folks
- Cutting trees partly dying from gypsy moth would help with regeneration
- Careful of bulldozing a fire break and not restoring it
- Use natural breaks to stop fires rather than constructing line
- Manage in a natural way without manmade fires or clear cuts
- Use for down timber?

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Proactive against exotic species
- Need man's intervention to create soft mass areas for when there is mass failure
- Cut back on NF logging
- Don't like the erosion that ATV users cause and litter
- Enforcement of ATV regulations. Educate public on this
- Need to use prescribed fire more for habitat enhancement can't depend only on natural fires for rare plants and some animals
- Use "lighter" machinery when possible – less impact on trail corridor – do restore
- Some prescribed burns are too hot – kill species
- Create loop trails for users that could be used as fire breaks and access
- Larger budget for rec. and smaller for logging
- Money comes to the community from recreation users
- More trail heads (larger) for horseback riders – utilize for horse trailers
- Tie FS land together to have contiguous corridor for animals
- Maintain trade lists – keep them to trade for parcels not sold to fund other government functions
- Partner with other land holding agencies to create the contiguous natural land areas
- These agencies need to have similar interests
- GW is short on wilderness – they are overused – would like to see it doubled
- See inventoried roadless areas protected
- Concerned the proposed wilderness designation would limit mountain bike access – open to other designations like a "scenic area"
- Large biological areas need to be formally designated a such
- Natural heritage sites formally protected
- Plan be more flexible to see if natural occurrences produced the results that you would desire through manmade intervention
- Eliminate categorical exclusions
- Build trails that are sustainable – not a maintenance headache with little disturbances as possible
- Against opening public land for mining/drilling
- Against using FS land for large wind farms – eye sore and destructive to migrating birds and bats

Group 5

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- I have no dislikes
- Forests can be managed in a sustainable way (not mined to meet everyone's needs)
- Road-less areas, backcountry, and scenic beauty for hiking
- People and staff working for the National Forest, remembers good interactions.
- The Forest for its natural beauty
- Remote, back country nature of road-less areas for mountain biking
- Partnerships with user groups to rehabilitate trails

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Chainsaw training for volunteers
- Past experience of using private timber company lands for recreation use
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries strong partnership with the Forest Service
- Remote back country, planned ATV use, to developed camping
- Biodiversity and the introduction of fire as a management tool in the ecosystem
- One million acres of public land
- The historic foresight to purchase this green space for resource and watershed protection
- Backcountry and wilderness areas for use by the feet of horses, mules, and people
- Diverse recreation opportunities
- Specific uses in wilderness areas
- Management Zones that indicate to timber industry where harvest could occur and how much (ASQ) would be cut
- Positive memories of hiking on National Forest trails....used to hike a lot and enjoyed it Prefers areas to hike that have not been managed for timber harvest
- (Concerned over whether or not clear cutting will be planned, prefers no clear cutting)
- Ramseys Draft Wilderness Area, wilderness areas in general (would like to see more wilderness)
- Great deal of foresight setting aside public land for future generations
- Roadless Areas for mountain biking and hiking
- Volunteer opportunities that promote user groups maintaining the resource
- This planning process- from someone new to the planning process
- Forest resources for the therapy they provide
- Forest land versus subdivisions or other development
- Public land available to all (Some of the public are not aware of this)
- (Sawmill businessman- the public lacks understanding about clearcuts to provide paper, wood products, opportunities for horseback, hunting and logging operations)
- Personal enjoyment of all uses
- Multiple use and space for all
- Born here and loves the mountains
- The rewards of partnering
- The involvement and caring for something you own
- Deer hunting because of the lack of natural predators for deer
- Clear-cutting mimics catastrophic fires by opening forest floor to early successional vegetation
- Sustainability for the future (Retain it)
- Timber management and Prescribed Burning can be tools to protect sensitive species
- Watershed Protection: Harrisonburg city water comes from a wilderness area: Skidmore Fork..... enjoys being able to drink clean, fresh water while at work
- Bringing Church Groups out to explore the life of the (f)Forest and the love of nature
- Fire-use plan on other forests from a hot shot crew member working on this and other National Forests

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Forest Service's management of forest with Best Management Practices
- Timber receipts (25%) go to counties to support local schools
- Clear cuts as a tool
- Timber provides roads used by all- hunters, recreation, horseback riders, and fire fighters
- Public ownership provides hiking opportunities
- Access for large numbers of people
- Allowance for special events on trails: biking, running etc.
- 75 person limit on Special Use Permits for special events
- FS working with user groups to promote recreational use of trails
- Multiple use forest meeting different needs: timber, fire, recreation, wildlife, air and water- several tools in the toolbox
- Best Management Practices to protect water quality
- Roadless as well as early successional management
- Forest zoned in management areas that limit road miles and activities (sometimes just a wish list)
- Science used instead of emotions in decision making,
- 27 years in forestry and loves clear cuts
- Hiking trails and woodlands for families to visit considering rapid population growth
- Hiking trails and woodlands for families FOREVER

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Question to understand the Governor's comment regarding the road-less policy quoted in a newspaper
- Curious about access for fire-fighting in newly designated road-less area
- Road-less Areas need better protection: Over the last decade, habitat management projects conducted in road-less areas have resulted in fragmentation of these areas.
- Difficult to get more than three miles from a road
- More resources for trail maintenance and management
- Lee RD has more volunteers and as a result, better trails.
- Maintain the trails or cut back to a system the FS can manage.
- Less Fire suppression- let natural fires burn within road-less, let lightening strikes burn within wilderness areas, take fire management to the next level
- Forest resources destroyed in the act of suppressing fires….example: bulldozing hiking trails
- Better age-class distribution: young and old forests, currently more species in decline…we need younger forests
- Flexibility to manage site specifically….for instance, the golden winged warbler
- Reference and incorporate existing Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries documents: Deer Management Plan, Bear Management Plan
- Increase use of fire, increase timber harvest, and protect old forests
- Re-cut existing regeneration areas to create grass/forb habitat instead of creating them in older forest areas

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Protect suitably large blocks to promote natural processes to create the forest like windthrow, ice storms.....How Large? -existing large blocks, as large as possible
- Not enough acres set aside for timber, need more harvest to balance age classes, moving toward an old growth forest
- Rural communities are dependent on logging
- Help reduce or stop imports on timber from other countries by cutting more timber here,
- Resource falling down and rotting, decline is exceeding harvest
- Research needed to understand detritus and nutrient cycling within the forest.....
- More time and effort put into when and how management tools are used
- Base decision making on Stewardship and Sustainability rather than on budget
- Deal with pests and invasive species, example: Hemlock woolly adelgid.....hemlock are not considered as important as oak.....gypsy moth
- Mark timber when tree is growing, dead trees bring less $$
- Base management on use studies for recreation, hunting, logging : JMU study showed no recreation use in a wilderness area
- More emphasis on recreation rather than extraction
- More personnel working on trails
- Inmate crews have made mistakes and caused damage to trails due to no supervision
- Easier Loop Trails for families
- Site specific request for Special Recreation Area: Shenandoah Mt. 333 to Rt. 250 > pass on to ranger
- Enlarge Ramsey's Draft Wilderness
- Outreach and Education on management vs. preservation....the understanding of age-class distribution, Example: Golden winged warblers need early successional vegetation
- Private timber industry interests on public lands
- More timber harvest on National Forest because the operations are heavily regulated
- Demonstration Areas for public education to allow people to visualize multi-age and multi-use forests.....deer exclosures to point out impacts of deer browse
- Cannot mine the Forest to meet everyone's needs
- Concerned over whether or not clear cutting will be planned, prefers no clear cutting
- More wilderness
- Some of the public are not aware that National Forest Land is there for them
- Sawmill businessman- the public lacks understanding about clearcuts to provide paper, wood products, opportunities for horseback, hunting and logging operations
- Retain Sustainability into the future
- Management Area limitations often seem to be just a wish list

Group 6

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Wilderness areas, esp. St. Mary's. The liming of the river has been good and was done in the least intrusive manner.
- Current forest condition is good – keep it that way.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Hunting and fishing opportunities.
- Open roads, more 4 wheel drive roads should be open.
- Large expanse of land.
- Hunt, fish, camp hike.
- Keep forest accessible by road.
- Rural development program.
- Wilderness – Ramsey's Draft.
- Multiple use – healthy forest through management.
- Wilderness – taking family trips to Ramsey's Draft.
- Large expanses of roadless areas.
- Recreational opportunities – trails.
- Mountain biking, hiking, hunting.
- Partnership between Forest Service and Shenandoah Mt. Bike Club.
- Primitive trail experience – foot or bike.
- Recreation has economic benefit.
- Hiking in Wilderness and roadless areas – protect those areas.
- Old growth areas – retain.
- Hiking, camping, big trees, old growth forest.
- Mountain biking multiple use access – esp. Sherando, Whetstone.
- Wildlife management for hunting and fishing.
- Water quality has improved under Forest Service management.
- Recreation – hunting and fishing.
- Multiple use, shared use, handicapped hunter access.
- Controlled ATV use.
- Brook trout streams are good – protect them.
- Biological diversity is impressive.
- Volunteer opportunities for trail work.
- Chain saw certification by Forest Service for volunteers – allows them to do trail work.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Not enough Wilderness compared to other national forests across the nation.
- If Wilderness impacts mountain bike opportunities, create new trails outside Wilderness, esp. loop trails.
- Too much clearcutting and cutting blocks are too close together.
- Cumulative effects of clearcuts.
- Clearcuts hurt game and cause soil erosion.
- No new road construction – reopen closed roads, esp. for 4 wheel drive.
- Need more open roads for hunting and recreation.
- Need a healthy, diverse forest. Need a mix of management and multiple age classes. Even aged forest is not good.
- Wildlife need forest diversity.
- Timber management produces economic benefits (wildlife and recreation) for local economy.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Need more old growth as a component of forest health.
- Need more Wilderness to promote old growth.
- Need to focus more on the economic benefits of recreation.
- Allocate more Forest Service resources for non-motorized recreation.
- Logging activities damage roads and are costly to fix.
- Timber harvest for wildlife/hunting uses tax dollars to support a specific user group. This isn't fair or equitable.
- Trails shouldn't be altered/destroyed for use as firelines (example Hones Quarry prescribed burn).
- Use handlines to construct firelines on trails.
- Budget $15,000 to $30,000 per mile for trail rehabilitation following fire suppression or prescribed fire.
- Have a plan to protect trails during fire suppression.
- Need more funding for recreation opportunities. Better distribution of Forest Service budget to reflect the recreational user groups.
- Temporary roads can cause sediment delivery to streams causing negative resource effects (water quality, fish, etc.).
- Protect roadless areas.
- Forest restoration – allow natural processes to proceed, let nature produce ecological sustainability.
- Look at economic benefits of recreation, i.e., hiking, Wilderness, backcountry.
- Increase Wilderness to 18% of forest.
- Clearcutting and highgrading hurt the forest. Use responsible single tree selection. This will provide economic benefits.
- Pay loggers more.
- Wind power OK, but not on National Forest. Too many negative ecological impacts.
- Old growth can be protected through different designations such as scenic areas.
- Prescribed burning is a waste of money and is based on dubious science. Burn blocks are too large and the burn frequency is too high.
- Timber harvest has negative impact on the state. Wildlife populations decline.
- Categorical ban of an existing user group (mountain biking) through legislation is bad.
- User fees could be used for recreation and road maintenance or other activities.
- There is increased litter when roads are opened seasonally.
- Enforce the law, ATVs, etc.

Group 7

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Old growth forests and that they contribute to multiple use in recreation, watershed protection and wildlife habitat.
- Reduced clearcutting and size of cuts, resulting in healthier watersheds.
- The management of our AT corridor and the maintenance of the viewsheds from it.
- Multiple use trails and special use permits allowing special events for people to recreate.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- The wide variety of recreation uses and that some areas of the forest are not suitable for all users.
- The clean water for drinking.
- That the Forest is our neighbor for viewing, firewood and is memorable for visitors to the area.
- The Forest is the reason I live in this area.
- The managed viewsheds of different stages of vegetative growth and health of the forest. A dispersion of openings.
- It is a source of wood.
- The special areas identified on the Forest, SBA's.
- Roadless areas as places to go to see and hear things like no other places around this area. Solitude in the wildest places we have.
- The environment is considered before we implement projects on the Forest.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Age classes of trees out of balance. Deer, grouse struggle due to lack of early seral habitat. 0-20 age class is lacking and a habitat concern.
- Decrease in deer and hunting on Forest affects local economies.
- Less acres treated in proposed new plan.
- Not enough for deer to eat.
- Too many deer impacts forest vegetation and biodiversity.
- Decrease in biodiversity due to over browsing.
- Early growth habitat can be created by natural events.
- Lack of coordination with state on wildlife populations and habitat needs.
- Too much emphasis on deer needs, other species important too. Amphibians, neotropical birds.
- Wildlife habitats are not balanced on the Forest.
- Habitats are being fragmented with roads and treatment areas. Edge effects are negative to habitat.
- Forest Service fails to take a long term view of management plans. 500-1000 years needed.
- Poor invasive species control. Inadequate funding to do the job.
- Reduce existing trails and new trail construction. Limited maintenance funds need to be used on what is being used and existing.
- Reduce roads that were built for timber removal and are now dead-end system roads with limited usage. Still on system to be maintained. Lack of people and funds to maintain all miles of road.

Woodstock, Virginia Meeting March 7, 2007

Attendance: 250+

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

Group 1

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Mountain Bikers Can Use Backcountry Trails. Not Much Traffic.
- Primary Use Of GWNF Is Recreation. Should Be Continued.
- Hunters And Other Outdoorsmen Help Keep The Trails Open
- Good Access To N.F. Timber Management Helps Wildlife.
- Multi-Use Concept Is GOOD. Room For All.
- Forest Service Has Invested A Lot Of $$ In Taskers Gap ATV Trails. New Parking Lot And Signs Are A Big Help.
- Trails Are Well-Marked. Trail Signage Is Good.
- Rangers Care About The Land And Will Work With People.
- GWNF Is Well-Maintained. Not A Lot Of People (Not Overcrowded) Nor Too Many Structures.
- N.F. Does A Good Job On Water Quality Protection And Riparian Buffers.
- Forest Service Cooperates Well With State Agencies (VA DOF, VDGIF).
- Forest Service Has Good Relationship With Cooperators, I.e. PATC.
- Having The Forest Provides Economic Opportunities Within Communities I.e. Selling Guns, Hunting & Fishing Gear, Etc.
- Each Of The Users Groups Respects The Other Users-Will Not Use NF During Certain Times, I.e. Hikers On Trails During Hunting Season.
- Law Enforcement Has Been Helpful When Needed.
- VDGIF And WVDNR Work Well With FS. Continue Agreements.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Like To See Forest Cleaned Up More. Talking About Fuels On The Forest Floor.
- Like To See Game Clearings Maintained More.
- All Users Should Have To Buy A NF Stamp Not Just Hunters And Fishermen.
- Construct More Trail Loops, Especially In The Elizabeth Furnace Area. This Helps Relieve Pressure.
- Leave Roads Open As Long As There Is A Hunting Season. Do Not Close Roads Indiscriminately.
- User Fees Should Come Back To Where The Use Occurred. Is $3.00 For The Stamp A Realistic Fee??
- Each State VA And WV Should Recognize And Honor Each Others NF Stamp.
- Need More Organized Trail Maintenance Trips. Have More Organized Days Both From NF And Volunteer Groups.
- Do Less Logging.
- No Wilderness On The Lee RD.
- Want Wilderness On The Lee RD.
- The Multi-Use Balance Should Be Improved. Should Have Flexibility In The Way Logging Is Done. Need More Revenue Returned To Counties. More Emphasis On Returning Money To The County As Right Now There Is A Deficit.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- See Logging Trends.
- Want To See More Money To Go To The NF. User Groups Need To Go To Elected Officials.
- Support User Fees. Want Roads Open During Hunting Seasons, Smaller Harvest Cuts, More Selection Cuts And More Prescribed Burns.
- Plan Should Say, "Do No Harm, Especially To Forest Neighbors" (Adjacent Landowners).
- We Have A Problem With ATV Trails Near Adjacent Landowners.
- Why Did The Lee RD Close Gap Creek Trail With Boulders?? It Looks Very Ugly.
- Increase More OHV Access. More Trails.
- Decrease OHV Access. Less Trails.
- OHV Trail Users Should Pay To Use Trails.
- Lack Of Law Enforcement Presence Re OHV/ATV Being Off Trails.
- Law Enforcement Positions Should Be FULLY Staffed.
- I Am Concerned On How Wilderness Will Be Managed And Staffed.
- Don't Close Recreation Areas And Toilets. Use Porta-Johns. Need More Employees.
- Management Practices Lead To Larger Run-Off, Which Leads To Flooding.
- Need A Clear Statement In The Plan Telling How User Groups Can Support The Need Of The NF-Where Do I Go, What Do I Do, How Can I Help Get More Funding.
- Wind Power Issue-Adverse Impact On Land And Aesthetics, Migrating Bird, Hawks, And Bats. Should Not Push For Wind Power In New Plan.
- Do Not Close Roads And Stop Maintaining Them. Handicapped Folks Need Access, Also.
- Do Not Close Roads That Front Wilderness Areas.
- The GWNF Has Proposed 3 Areas For Wilderness; Massanutten , Big Schloss, And Cub Run. DO NOT Close Roads.
- Set Aside Land For A Shooting Range Near Woodstock.
- NO Shooting Ranges On GW, Especially Near Kennedy Peak.
- Get The Work Out Re Volunteer Opportunities.
- Appreciate The Ongoing Maintenance Effort On The ATV Trails. There Should Be An Easier Way To Volunteer To Help-There Are Too Many Roadblocks For The Volunteers (National Forest Policy Is Too Restrictive) I.e. Volunteers Cannot Carry Tools And Supplies On Their Personal Atvs.
- Need To Do More Re Elimination Of Invasive Species. When They Have Been Killed Need To Replace Them With Native Species To Prevent Invasive species From Coming Back In.
- State Should Take Lead Re Invasive Control-Inform The Public, Especially Private Landowners. All Agencies Should Work Together.
- Mile-A-Minute Plants Need To Be Controlled. Need To Make People Aware Of Control Needs-Feds, State, County And Local.
- Do Something About Coyotes. Coyotes Cause 30-70% Of The Fawn Mortality.
- Do Something About Illegal 4-Wheelers And Any Other Illegal Use.
- Need Wide Flexibility In How The Wildlife Habitat Is Managed. Keep A Broad Array Of Tools Available.
- Need More Water Impoundments In Shenandoah County-For Recreation, Flood Control, Livestock Watering, Etc.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Bring Back The Older Americans.
- Groups Should Lobby To Get More $$$ For The NF.
- Need More Emphasis On Eco-System Health And Monitoring In New Plan.

Group 2

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Like People That Their Working With On National Forest
- Appropriate Access – Parking, Roads
- Enjoy/Appreciate Trail Access – Mountain Biking
- Maintaining Watershed Quality
- Good Cooperation Between User Groups Related To Trails – Result Of Good Network
- Availability Of Roads And Trails
- Current Road Management And Atv Management
- Keeping Roads Open
- Keep National Forest What It Is
- Multiple Uses On National Forest
- Deny Wilderness Areas
- Multiple Use National Forest – No Road Closures
- If It Ain't Broke Don't Fix It
- Other User Fees
- No Sale Of Land
- Bicycle, Hiking, Remote Roadless, Special Use Events
- Continued Backcountry Camping Recreation
- Continued Reduction Of New Road Building
- Exploring New User Fees To Be Used For Trail Maintenance
- See Fuelwood Permits Continued
- Established Camping – Developed And Dispersed
- Keeping Access For Hunting, Fishing, Camping, Hiking, Horseback Riding (Forest Use)
- Trail System As Is
- Like Existing Wilderness – St. Mary's Overused
- National Forest Proactive In Brining Groups Together

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Better Trail Maintenance
- Trail Maintenance In Addition To Volunteers
- Encroachment Of Control Burns, Timber Harvest, And Herbicide Use Within Watershed Or Too Close To Other Water Sources
- Communication Among All User Groups
- Gates Open – See Roads Open – Would Like Explanation Of Closures
- Other User Fees Taking Into Account Multi Uses By One User
- More Road Access For Handicapped Hunters

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Facilitate More Chainsaw Certification Of Volunteers
- Increasing Timber Harvesting For Wildlife Habitat Needs
- Keep Gates Open
- Prescribed Burning Following Timber Harvest
- Leave Roads Open Through All Hunting Seasons
- National Forest And Game Department Work Together To Improve Game Management On National Forest
- Feeding Programs Supplemented For Wildlife
- Stop/Fewer Coyotes Being Introduced
- Stop Giving Up Access Through Private Areas To National Forest
- User Fees Contributing To Keeping Access Year Round For All Users
- Road Closure Information Available To Public
- Fire Management Practices For Trails
- Consider Allowing Fires To Burn Naturally
- Shorter Loop Trails
- Protection Of Backcountry Roadless Areas
- New Wilderness Areas Considered In Response To Backcountry Use
- More Motorized Recreation Access And Consider Use Of Existing Trails For Permitted Motorized Use – Plus Future Use
- Being Able To Use Wheel Capability To Remove Game In Wilderness
- Quality Deer Management
- Better Accommodations For Atv Use (Useable Areas)
- More Law Enforcement
- Establishment Of Shooting Range – Specifically On The Lee Ranger District
- Day lighting Mature Timber To Establish Regeneration
- Open Coyote Hunting In National Forest Year Round
- Pre-Establish Wildlife Plots – Needs To Be Re-Established
- Bring Back YCC (Youth Conservation Corp) Program (To Help Maintain Trails, Openings)

Group 3

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Select Cutting Over Clear Cutting
- Scenery And Remote Areas
- Varied Opportunities For Recreation
- Employees Cooperative And Helpful
- Good Notification On Burns, Need To Do More Notification
- Purpose Of Wilderness

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Forest Use Fee To Enter The Forest
- Not Enough Funding For Management And Enforcement
- Curtail Clear Cutting

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- User Fees For Everyone
- Wildlife Management – More Food Plots/Sources
- No Changes To Access: Good Access To Use And Trails
- Gate Access
- More Parking Areas
- Seeding After Clear Cutting
- Better Maps And Information For Recreation Users
- Bridges On Atv/OHVs Trails Appreciated
- Maintain Long-Term Horseback Trails
- Ti Maps Are Good, Need Better Trail Marking And Signs
- Appreciate Multiple Use Access
- Need To Address Litter And Trash
- Keep Wilderness – Wilderness
- Well Planned Management Activities
- Enhance Cut Over And Burn Over Areas
- Shooting Range
- Publicize Any Proposals Of Wilderness
- Maintain Access To All Current Activities
- Concern For Roadless Areas
- Pro-Wilderness
- Concern For Activities That Degrade Watershed
- Hiker Safety During Hunting Season
- Appreciates Fs Gathering Input
- Selective Cutting More Economic
- Opposed To Selling National Forest Land
- More Wilderness
- Wilderness: Keep Wild Places Wild
- Atv/Dirt Bikes Inappropriate On National Forest
- More Developed Campgrounds
- Better Economic Management Of Timber Resources Like Private
- Improve Communications And Notifications
- Forest Service Needs To Be More Careful With Fossils And Artifacts
- New Plan To Vague - Old Plan More Specific
- Question The Use Of National Forest Stamp Funds

Group 4

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- What Are The New Scientific Changes Supporting The Plan Revision?
- Likes Multiple Use Trails – Wants More Connector Trails And Loop Trails.
- Likes The Public Participation Afforded By These Plan Meetings.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Wants User Fees For Everything, Especially Trail & Atv Users.
- More Hard Mast Left In Cutting Units.
- Wants To See #'S On Various Groups On N.F. Before Next Plan. I.E. Who Is Using What Resources On Forest.
- More Wilderness – None On Lee Rd. Need More Places Of Solitude.
- Wants No More Wilderness – Not Using What Is Already Designated On Forest.
- Wants Less Wilderness.
- Upgrade/Rehab Wildlife Clearings For Better Forage.
- Wants More Access – Too Many Road Closures.
- Wants More Explanations Of Road Closures – Especially On Fs Web Sites.
- Wants Less Access – Not Enough Closures.
- Increase In Ohv Roads.
- Increase In Recreation Funding.
- Revenues Lost To Wilderness Designation – Lack Of Users Of Area And Monies Brought In To Local Businesses.
- Revenues Gained By Wilderness Designation – Users That Purchase From Local Businesses That Use Wilderness.
- Erosion Is A Problem From Horses And Bikes On Trails, Especially In Wilderness Areas.
- Designate Areas For Quality Deer Management.
- Don't Want Any Change From Last Plan. Manage Forest The Way It Is Presently Being Managed.
- More Law Enforcement, Especially On Atv/Ohv Use.
- More Training For Public/Volunteers For Chainsaw Use, Cpr, 1st Aid.
- More Interpretive Services Such As Field Trips, Especially For Youth.
- Wants Better Trail Marking And Maps.
- Interpretative Services/Signs For Civil War Sites Like Signal Knob. Partnership With Civil War Battlefield Commission.
- Wants More Funding Across The Board For Forest Service.
- More Pull Offs For Parking Along Forest Service Roads.
- Duncan Hollow Trail/Burner's Gap Needs To Be Refurbished – Mess Following Use As Firebreak For Catback Burn.
- Wants People Put First And Animals Second With Regards To Road Access. This Came Up Over Vance's Cove Wood Turtle Issue.
- Forest Service Needs To Do More To Protect Rare Species.
- Hunters Have Different Interest, Especially With Regards To Access. Not All Hunters Want Vehicle Access And Prefer Road Closures.
- Increase In Partnerships For Projects/Work On National Forests.
- Does Not Want Shooting Ranges.
- Does Not Want Mixing Of Private/Public Commercial Interests Such As Concessions.
- No Wind Towers.
- Wants More Atv Trails.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Wants Fire Extinguisher In All Vehicles/Atv's. Enforcement Of Properly Functioning Spark Arrestors On All Internal Combustion Engines.
- Segregate Atv's From OHVs – Too Dangerous – Peter's Mill Run Was Cited As An Example.
- Dislikes Forest Service Land Sales, Boundary Adjustments, Land Swaps.
- Likes The Public Participation Afforded By These Plan Meetings.
- Wants Riparian Area Protection Strengthened.

Group 5

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Likes that roads are open.
- Likes that the Forest is managed.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Charge everyone for use to allow road maintenance to keep roads open.
- Keep roads open through hunting season (Feb. 28).
- Do not want any new wilderness – would impact hunting and fishing.
- Need road pull-offs.
- Do not close roads – needed for recreation access.
- Enforce regulations.
- Need more handicap access for hunting, recreation, etc.
- Need a uniform access fee.
- Provide more money to the ground.
- Have a Forest stamp for all uses.
- Open gates for handicapped with special use permit.
- No additional land classified as unsuitable for timber harvest.
- Meet desired conditions for wildlife prescriptions in Management Areas 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 22.
- Likes that we work with adjacent landowners, especially with regard to clearcutting.
- Need more enforcement – Taskers Gap ATV trails.
- Concerned about erosion from ATV trails.
- No more ATV trails.
- Likes mountain bike trails – no wilderness.
- Likes multi-use access.
- Need more wilderness.
- If user fees are implemented, have more equitable expenditure of money.
- Set aside some areas without active (designated) wilderness.
- Multiple use doesn't mean every use in every spot.
- Employees should get out in the field – do trail maintenance.
- Need more timber management – more early successional habitat to benefit wildlife.
- Concern that wilderness will make fire-fighting difficult.
- Manage dead timber.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- More food plots for wildlife.
- Update and maintain wildlife plots and ponds.
- Maintain roads.
- Clean up logged areas.
- Plant hardwoods in harvested areas.
- Need erosion control on harvests.
- Need more short loop trails for families.
- Need accountability for loggers – Best Management Practices.
- Need protection for clean water.
- Likes closing Forest Road 88 after hunting season – keeps road in good condition.
- Likes even and uneven-age harvesting – provides diversity for wildlife.
- Need more timber harvest.
- Maintain current clean up of harvest areas.
- No more roads – maintain what we have.
- Need more surveillance on closed roads.
- Consider a shooting range.
- Likes how Blacksburg Ranger District managed shooting range.
- Need enough money to carry out the plan.
- Keep trails for horses open.
- If wilderness is established, provide access.
- Mark the Forest boundary so people know where private land is.
- Build more roads to access timber.
- Provide for pest control (gypsy moth, etc.)
- Keep 1993 roadless areas out of wilderness or restrictive prescriptions that prevent active management.
- Lands that might meet roadless criteria and are not presently in roadless should stay as is (Comprehensive Evaluation Report, p. 78).
- No more roads for timber access.
- No more cutting from Cub Run to Runkles Gap.
- Need a salvage plan to utilize timber before it becomes useless.
- Designate horse trails like ATV trails are designated.
- Manage for diversity for flora and fauna.
- Areas that meet roadless criteria should be inventoried as roadless.
- Those who harvest need to be required to replant with diverse species.
- Trash management – need to pick up trash.
- Charge loggers more.
- Fee payments should come back to the Forest.
- Provide dumpsters for disposal of carcasses (from hunting).
- The National Forests are not for special interests.

Group 6 (A)

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Good Open Vehicle and trail access within easy walking distance
- Use Accommodates Most People That Pay Fee, License, etc.
- Appreciate FS Relationship w/ Trail Groups
- Watershed Protection, such as Cedar Creek
- Viewshed Protection
- Good at Providing Dispersed and Developed Camping Facilities
- Huge Variety of Uses
- FS Manages Wildlife Habitat While leaving VDGIF to manage Wildlife Populations (Hunting Regulations)
- Good Views to and From Signal Knob
- Appreciate Vast Amount of Hunting and Fishing Area
- Choice of Areas and Liberty to Go There
- Forest Roads in Decent Shape (Fewer Potholes than DC)
- Like Mountain Biking in Big Schloss
- Appreciate Kindness of People (all users) Meet on Trails
- FS Use is Economic Boom to Local Area
- Nice Sense of Space, Not overcrowded

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Too Many Clearcuts, Not enough Selective Logging, Clearcuts leave scare and erosion, Bad for flooding, Hard to walk through, But good for Wildlife Cover
- Harvest 120 to 170 year old trees Versus 70 to 80 year old trees
- Harvest Areas More Dispersed Versus Concentrated
- Forest is Not Conducive to Habitat for Bear, Turkey, etc.
- Wide Spread Diversity
- Not Active Enough in Managing Habitat, Need 10-15% in early successional habitat
- Let the Forest Grow yet w/ large grass areas
- Need to Get Light on Forest Floor
- Active Management and Access is Too Linear, Need access off these linear access
- Fee for All Users, Same fee for all users
- Remove Fuelwood Fee Because helping to clean the woods up
- Trail Impact From Rx Burning
- No Limit on Use of Trails
- No Increase of Wilderness Areas, Burden on county, Plays to a small minority
- Illegal ATV and OHV Use, Raise the fine
- More ATV and OHV Trails within Taskers Gap ATV Area
- Meeting More and Better Advertised
- Historical Agricultural and Industrial Sites Managed
- Losing Battle w/ Woolly Adelgid and Gypsy Moth
- Unexpected Road Closures
- Too Much Road Closure
- Manage Big Schloss as 12C Area as in Jefferson Plan

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Keep Existing Use on Roads as are now

Group 6 (B)

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Different uses (recreational)
- Mountain biking
- Shooting ranges
- Forest Service personnel
- Family friendly
- Accessible roads
- Usable trails and roads for horseback riding
- Trails for horseback riding
- I like it the way it is
- Selective harvest for timber
- Water quality
- I like the trails as they are mainly for mountain biking and hiking
- Multi-purpose trails
- Wilderness areas
- Bike riding in the back country
- Multi-use areas
- Historic areas
- Forest Service stewardship of watershed management
- Unmanaged part of the Forest
- Free chainsaw certification and Forest Service working w/ volunteer groups
- Forest Service employees great at public relationships
- The Lee District has the best Trail signage system on the Forest
- Endurance trails
- Camping opportunities
- Appreciate the Forest Service staff efforts in working w/ less funding yet maintaining good service

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Need more ATV or 4 wheeler access for disabled hunters
- Need more access for horse trailers
- Need more interpretation of historic resources
- Provide funding for the Forest Service needs
- Stop the spin put on monitoring to favor logging
- Stop unfunded mandates
- Lack of funding for historic interpretations
- Insufficient funding for recreation
- Recreation needs to be recognized as a funding source benefit

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Require a user fee for any/all uses except hunting
- Need to open more roads for access to firewood permits
- Need to manage for more multi-purpose trails
- Only 5.4% of the GW is wilderness acres while other forests have around 9 – 11% in wilderness.
- Need to manage more acres to be on the level of other Forests.
- There is no wilderness on the Lee District
- Prescribed burns uses up funding w/ no economic benefits. The frequency of the burns is too high. The size in acres of the burns is too large. The justification for having prescribed burns is based on dubious science.
- Not enough wilderness areas
- Need to manage more special areas (protected areas), areas protected from logging but dispersed recreation is OK.
- Need user fees for any use
- Need to have gates open during hunting and fishing seasons
- Allow mountain biking in wilderness areas
- There is insufficient timber harvesting. Need more harvesting to obtain a healthy forest. 85% of forest is mature timber that will not provide as much exchange of carbon dioxide to oxygen as a young forested area will. More timber harvesting would help reduce the greenhouse effect.
- Need to manage for more timber mast.
- Manage resource to gain carbonic
- Need to manage to obtain more acorn mast.
- Need more roads
- Need more gates opened or have wilder paths around the gates for horse access
- Banning timber harvesting
- Older trees are insect haven
- Need more OHV high clearance road access and management
- Maintain thru user fees and partnerships
- Need user fee for OHV use
- Need a shooting range in the Shenandoah County area
- Need to connect more trails to make large loop trail systems
- No additional wilderness – it restricts different uses
- Need to balance user fees w/ the potential negative impact of decreased use
- User fee should be linked to motor vehicles
- Need fewer roads and more wilderness areas
- Adopt GE Trail as a shared use trunk trail system
- Need to change appeal process for timber sales to make is harder to stop or delay timber sales

Covington, Virginia Meeting March 8, 2007

Attendance: 35

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

Groups 1, 2, and 3

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Management area concept is good.
- Good that the old plan was specific.
- Liked information generated.
- Liked environmental analysis.
- Liked protection of back country habitat and recreation offered.
- Liked scoping notices, specifically timeframes and maps.
- Like the fact that it is multiple-use.
- Good volunteer cooperation and partnerships.
- Like having various recreation opportunities (both back country and developed).
- Like protection of unique communities/habitats.
- Liked the planning process for the 1993 plan. 'NEPA to perfection' by then Forest Supervisor Ron Lindenbloom. Collaboration and mentoring with previous participants.
- Combining the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is good. The result was a good staff and Forest Supervisors.
- Like management by government and not outsourced. Service oriented model vs. a business oriented model.
- Good songbird monitoring across habitats.
- Good job of protecting bear habitat, especially Shenandoah Mountain.
- Good access for mountain biking and hiking in general forested areas and wilderness/back country. It is important to maintain a good balance for dispersed recreation in wilderness and back country areas.
- Need to look at the wilderness act as it pertains to the use of bicycles.
- Like that some timber harvesting is allowed.
- Like designated wilderness because of the solitude and no mountain bikes.
- Like relationship between Old Dominion Power and District staffs. This relationship should be maintained especially with the current trends in downsizing.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Need to increase road maintenance.
- Timeframe for feedback responding to the various comment periods is too short. The public needs to read the Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER) and provide feedback quickly.
- Need to improve communications. Not everyone has a computer / internet access and not all information on the Forest Service internet is current.
- Need stronger protection for all headwaters and watersheds.
- Decrease activities that will produce sediment and other negative effects to water. The most precious resource from all the Forest is water.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Support multiple-use, but need to increase protection of special areas including make core areas wilderness and make protected areas outside core back country, still allowing dispersed recreation.
- Wilderness area designation would include the land between Hwy 33 and US 250 to Shenandoah Mountain. This would include Little River, Skidmore Fork (Harrisonburg watershed), and Ramsey's Draft Addition.
- The current plan does not do enough for wildlife habitat. There has been a decrease of all species of wildlife and we did not meet the allowable sale quantity for timber harvest from previous plan.
- Management areas have been eliminated. To still have meaningful desired future conditions for these areas we need to re-specify these management areas.
- Deal with aging forest conditions in a controlled fashion. Set goals that are measurable (such as age-class distribution).
- Need a better dispersion of early successional habitat for songbirds. (Past monitoring for songbirds from the previous GW plan supports this)
- Change songbirds used for monitoring to neotropical migrants that do not require early successional habitat.
- Manage the forest in the context of the surrounding forested areas.
- Set specific goals for things like age class to better balance early, mid and late successional habitat.
- Address the goals of how you get to or to meet ASQ…better way to assess goals might be acres treated. DEFINE the DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION.
- Allow timber harvest on unsuitable areas if species require it. Black bear is found in a variety of habitats.
- See more even-aged management with larger sized cuts.
- Balance between suitable vs. unsuitable land.
- Change management to meet predicted allocations of budgeting.
- Manage all roadless areas based on the 2001 roadless rule. Also, follow the Southern Appalachian Assessment standards to meet 1% of the land base in wilderness.
- Change to a 'design and build' process for land management activities.
- Why are user fees only for hunters and fishermen? Collect fees for other dispersed recreation uses.
- User Fees: Some want, some do not want, why not trade volunteer work for fees?
- Timber sale program needs to work more efficiently.
- The Plan needs to be more in tune with the needs of the county in which it is located. Do more with the lands in the county to bring income – multiple-use.
- Do better at managing the resource for county receipts (Payment in Lieu of Taxes)
- Use CE's as much as possible provided for in law and by directive.
- Close all designated trails in wilderness areas.
- Let burn policy in wilderness.
- Designate more wilderness because existing wilderness is 'loved to death'.
- Plot and use natural mortality rates as an indicator of future management.
- Manage populations (wildlife) to not negatively impact existing habitat.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Identify what is unique about the National Forest, which is the availability of special areas and amenities only available on National Forest lands. Protect these values.
- Special management areas need to be focused on the special areas.
- Do not re-invent the wheel. Use the Jefferson and other Southern Appalachian plans as a model.
- Gypsy moth management and public relations is bad.

Groups 4 and 5

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Unmanaged parts of forest –nature do what it does – recreation provided – clean water – spiritual connection
- Timber harvesting can be done on National Forest and harvest management with water standards (BMP's) – insect and disease control management
- Solitude to hike and camp away from civilization
- Improved scoping notices including better maps, better clarity too.
- Managed for multiple uses from timber to recreation opportunities and provide opportunity for public input (+ 6 dittos)
- USFS personnel helpful and willing to spend time doing presentations and diversity of opportunities
- Personal use firewood and forest product permits are available to the public
- Potential of the forest for tax base, eco-tourism, demonstration of improved natural resource management, meaning of bio-diversity
- Great trails, eligible wild and scenic rivers, opportunity to protect corridors and viewsheds – rare in eastern US
- Provide forest opportunities not available elsewhere – to use science especially with regard to high elevation watersheds and clean water
- USFS think of self as public service model rather than business model
- Most biologically temperate forest in world per "World Heritage Foundation" and maintaining this
- Kudos for agency staff for doing more work with less people – need for funding to accomplish jobs – present specific jobs with additional funding

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Now 4% of forest in wilderness – want additional (double 4%) wilderness for future generations
- Include good sample of back country area protected in wilderness
- Don't want wind development on forest ridges – disturbs forest continuity (+ 7 dittos)
- Take proactive role with restoration as dynamic role in forest management to help reestablish priorities to spend money where best suited- - don't force natural processes, i.e. road system analysis – more comprehensive evaluation – suitability of what roads is really needed
- In revision of GWNF plan improve protection of all special interest areas – biologic as proposed by Natural Heritage

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Don't want additional wilderness (+ 1 ditto) because it is a waste of tax payer money to fight fire by hand in a wilderness since can't use mechanical equipment (+ 1 ditto) and waste of forest resources destroyed by fire (+ 1 ditto)
- Lands nobody wanted – now everybody wants because of management including timber cutting (+ 1 ditto)
- More high clearance vehicle roads (OMH-2) full size trucks 4x4 in concentrated / designated front country area with 4WD trails – fee area (stamp or permit) – partner with 4 WD clubs for maintenance
- Shorter loop (2-5) miles shared use trails from front country trailheads – non-motorized (hike/ bike/ horse)
- No more wilderness (+ 1 ditto)
- Everyone that uses forest should pay a use fee (+ 1 ditto)
- More sound management practices and implementation of – increase in timber would help increase wildlife and improve road – resources and economics – all over –not just localized areas – more diverse
- Increase/ improve public education, i.e. along AT – showcase benefits of clearcuts and corridor timber management practices
- Do the management practices you (USFS) know how to do.
- Since 50% of National Forest land in Alleghany County – need to contribute to local economy – increase timber harvest
- No more wilderness – harbors insect and disease – don't want land locked for no management – release roadless areas back to managed land
- Need an Allowable Sale Quantity established for forest – capability is greater than 17 mbf – currently mortality rate is 90 mbf – harvest more timber and reduce mortality
- More early successional habitat
- Old growth is 70% now – forest not being managed – it is growing old and dying
- More wilderness (+ 1 ditto) – George Washington NF has less % wilderness than Jefferson Forest and less than surrounding forest (Cherokee, North Carolina..). % wilderness in GWNF is woefully inadequate – space is available for wilderness – provide protection for old growth
- Serious consideration of areas to roadless status – more thorough, efficient, and open minded consideration than Jefferson NF (+ 1 ditto)
- Prescribed burn program is problematic (+ 1 ditto) – too frequent – too big – don't match what naturally occurs – and science used can't be substantiated / dubious
- More financial resources – do a serious economical analysis and what forest provides to eastern US – valuable resources – clean water, clean air, recreation opportunities – ecological services of forest – save the ecosystems – economic value to ecological services forest provides – tell the politicians
- Don't over high-grade, log out invasive species – take out less desirable – allow old growth to grow – pay loggers more money and perform improved services
- Willing to pay more money for wood products
- Modified shelterwood practices won't make high quality veneer logs in current soil conditions –need to study soil productivity issue

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Users fees great idea – should be based on destruction potential of users – increase ATV use fee 100%
- Motorized system should be property managed to be sustainable
- Educate more public on timber harvesting – uses of money from timber sales, how much is used for specific improvements - display economic aspects of timber harvesting, provides money for insect and disease ….
- Investigate wind turbines for clean energy source and balanced with negative impacts – solve problems before rush to build wind turbines
- Revisit suitability and monitoring on other than extraction – never shows that we shouldn't manage
- Soil productivity should be better addressed.

Brandywine, West Virginia Meeting March 9, 2007

Attendance: About 15

Group 1

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Non-profits can get special use permits at low cost
- Forest is open to horse use
- Pleased with management prescriptions for wildlife
- Pleased with good relationship between Forest and West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
- Don't make wilderness decisions based on lack of funding
- Manage forest for generations
- Public access to Forest – Multiple use
- Public access
- Accessibility to Forest – Scenic beauty
- Access for firefighting
- Cooperation on projects – Trails
- Harvesting activities – Good for local economy; do conventional logging for local loggers
- Multiple use on every acre
- Wilderness is part of multiple use
- Make decisions based on budgets – move to custodial management
- Special Biologic Areas – Identified well on GW in Virginia; need to find them in West Virginia
- Likes so little wilderness - Can't use chain saws for trail maintenance
- Like wilderness and roadless areas
- Like to "Get away from it all" in wilderness – no cost to manage wilderness
- Lot of opportunity for volunteer work
- Good working Forest – Implementing the Current Plan
- Very workable Plan – Good personnel to work with

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Belongs to the people; all people, not just local
- Multiple use, wilderness and roadless
- Good to see wilderness – economic benefits from wilderness
- Fuelwood permits are available
- Timber cutting
- WV Division of Natural Resources – Wildlife Division doing good job

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Why do hunters and anglers pay a fee and other users don't?
- Have user fees for all uses
- It's public Forest, user fees not appropriate
- Loggers should pay fees to maintain roads
- Huge expense to maintain road system; Need to reduce road system
- Many roads used as linear wildlife openings
- Use roads as sites for chestnut re-introduction
- Logging on Forests costs more than the timber sells for
- Forests only provide 2-3% of timber harvested
- Forest is within several hours' drive of 60% of population on east coast – wilderness is important
- People come from other countries for our wilderness
- Want more wilderness – only have 4% of Forest
- Can achieve same experience as wilderness in areas not designated as wilderness and have more flexibility in management
- Wilderness allows flexibilities for emergencies
- More suitable acres in new plan – don't like this change
- Look at corridors of habitat, not just pockets
- After logging, can't even walk through the area, animals can't get through it
- Burning too much in areas that don't need it; in some places vegetation is too thick and need burning
- Brook trout as a key indicator of Forest health
- Importance of hunting and fishing to the local economy
- Take out patches of dead trees – for scenic quality
- More synergy between timbering and trails – slash; wide spots for turning horse trailers; have equestrians work with Forest in timber planning
- Combat hemlock wooly adelgid – make it a high priority
- Dead trees are valuable part of the Forest – educate on forest ecology
- Have better justification for prescribed fire – have ecological reasons for burning
- Invasive species management – address in Plan
- Logging creates habitat so maintain or increase levels of logging
- Logging also creates local jobs
- Somehow (maybe survey) get thoughts from all the public, not just those that attend the meetings
- Do less logging – It's a money loser. It's an ecological loser

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Manage for ecological, not financial objectives
- Need better discussion of fragmentation and edge effects from recent cutting
- Be more aggressive in management of sensitive species, threatened and endangered species
- Bad decision not to do EIS

Harrisonburg, Virginia Meeting March 10, 2007

Attendance: 135+

Group 1

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Opportunities for cycling/mountain biking and the partnerships for maintaining the routes.
- Fairly large percentage of land that has been determined to be unsuitable for timber management.
- The number of streams that support native trout.
- Concept of multiple use and protection of T&E species.
- The fact that we still have old growth communities.
- Opening access for persons with disabilities.
- Opportunities for hiking and camping and day use.
- Four wheel drive access and interaction with the Forest Service.
- Rock climbing access
- Access provide to find hunting dogs.
- The amount of national forest land and the access.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Management of old pine stands that were never thinned.
- Manage forests for native species
- Continue to involve VDGIF in Forest management issues
- More shooting ranges
- More enforcement of unauthorized ATV use – it also affects private land
- More funds allocated to recreation
- Provide connector and links to existing trails.
- Create more loop trail that are close to the forest edge, making them easier to get to
- Save money on below cost timber sales and redirect money to recreation
- Identify and recommend areas that can be Wilderness
- Identify and recommend areas that can be designated scenic areas
- Emphasize water quality protection for anglers and domestic water supplies
- Less of a burn program to protect wildlife/nesting because the heat is more intense than the Native American burning.
- Have a multi purpose stamp for Forest use, like the hunting and fishing stamps.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Review the fairness of fees for forest use.
- More interest in backcountry recreation and better funding for its management.
- More roads open for access.
- Seasonally open roads are closed before some hunting seasons end. If the more dollars are needed to keep the roads open, increase the hunting stamp cost.
- Stop under cutting the timber market which affects private forest owners.
- Provide for protection of old growth.
- Close forest roads that go thru private land to decrease private land road maintenance costs (this was a specific comment about a specific forest road that goes through a subdivision).
- Plan to establish new hardwood growth.
- Close and restore some roads and do not build additional roads until they can be properly maintained to prevent invasive species and erosion.
- Balance the timber age classes and do not have old growth everywhere.
- Open up the forest canopy to increase the under growth for wildlife.
- Rehabilitate routes constructed for fire lines and do not use existing trails for fire lines.
- Protect existing roadless areas if they are already protected from mining and timber management.
- If roadless areas are protected, allow mountain biking.
- Quality management program for deer and turkey and accomplish the program with partnerships with sportsman organizations.
- Maintain the existing wildlife clearings.
- Develop an invasive species program that involves the biology of the species.
- Provide and expand disabled access throughout the year.
- Protect areas in other ways than Wilderness to allow more uses, such as mountain biking.
- Develop more parking access to decrease erosion, primarily in dispersed areas where increasing use is causing resource damage.
- Maintain road closure where needed to protect wildlife and prevent erosion.
- Educate the public about why roads are closed by providing signing about nesting seasons, etc.
- Restoration logging is needed where clearcuts do not have the desired regrowth, such as too many poorly formed stump sprouts.
- Keep clearcutting in the same areas where wildlife management is occurring.

Group 2

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Forest is accessible for all ages
- Timber harvest creates diverse habitat
- Multiple-use of forest
- Accessible management staff
- Protection of old growth

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Free use of campgrounds and trails
- Mountain biking trails
- Multiple-use trails that allow mountain bikes
- Protection of roadless areas
- Campgrounds and trails
- Timbering that promotes new growth
- Trail system with diversity of lengths and difficulty
- Management based on science
- Protecting watersheds and streams during timber sales
- Plan based on EIS as in 1993
- Range of habitat provided by roadless and wilderness areas
- Clean and neat campgrounds with helpful hosts
- FS promotes volunteer program and encourages participation
- Recognition that some areas are unsuitable for timber production
- FS staff meetings with rock climbers
- Forest is accessible year around

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Increase silvicultural management of forest
- Increase funding for road maintenance
- Increase early successional habitat for wildlife
- More GIS mapping accessible to public
- More GIS analysis to support management
- More management and suppression of invasive species
- More flexible special use fee structure as in outfitter guide book and on other forests
- More precise mapping of roads and gates
- Build new multiple-use trails to create loops with existing trails
- Strict enforcement of illegal atv and ohv use
- Landscape management with emphasis on protecting resources unique to the GW
- Protect large undeveloped areas, unique biological areas, and drinking water sources
- Manage mountain biking use separately from motorized use
- Mountain biking should be managed with hiking and equestrian use
- Preserve trails during timber sales and other projects
- Provide more diverse food sources for wildlife
- All forest users share in financial burdens/user fees
- User fees should stay on the forest
- More grouped timber harvest to promote wildlife
- More targeted public outreach with local user communities
- More educational and interpretive programs for children
- Map and fully protect all roadless areas
- Manage for non-game species
- Improve financial reporting and accountability

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Improve public responsibility for trash in forest
- Emphasize pack it in – pack it out
- More campsites/facilities north of US Route 33, Slate Lick area
- Increase fuel reduction to prevent wildfires

Group 3

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Likes wilderness.
- Virginia is lucky to have so much National Forest.
- Likes that the Forest offers many outdoor activities.
- Likes access to leadership and public involvement for volunteer trail work.
- Likes public access to the Forest and the size of the Forest.
- Likes shared use trails and user specific trails.
- Likes access to remote areas from trails – Deerfield and Shenandoah Mountain shared use trails.
- Likes conservation efforts – old growth.
- Likes the Shenandoah Mountain area between Routes 250 and 33 – keep the roadless areas.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Only an elite group can use trails – need open roads for disabled and older people.
- Dislikes closing of Shenandoah Mountain Picnic Area.
- Reroute the road where the public crosses private land on Second Mountain.
- Wants to see less politics in management and more science.
- Need more management.
- Do controlled burns right.
- Need more food plots.
- Hunters should be allowed to establish food plots for wildlife and to help maintain food plots.
- Forest lacks diversity – no understory because of cool fires and fewer prescribed burns.
- Few food sources for deer and grouse.
- Need better fire suppression methods – don't use existing trails as fire breaks – use of trails as breaks damages them. Would like to rehabilitate trails after burns (example, Big Hollow).
- Enforce current laws and establish more laws (example, blaze orange for hunting).
- Law Enforcement Officers and Rangers should be more aware of laws and hunting seasons.
- Establish specific areas for specific uses (e.g., highly hunted areas).
- Increase conservation.
- Need restoration logging of white pine stands.
- Establish scenic areas, especially on Shenandoah Mountain.
- Wants wilderness in the Skidmore area.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Preserve as much wilderness as possible.
- Would like to see more wilderness areas to allow for natural processes.
- Attempt to save hemlocks.
- Protect watersheds; e.g., watershed of Harrisonburg water supply.
- Definitions of areas (wilderness, scenic areas, etc.) should be more clear.
- Current trails are difficult – would like to see loops and trails for more limited abilities.
- Hunters feel they are being taxed too much.
- Forest Service should do more wildlife management.
- Public access should be taxed as well.
- Take away hunting and fishing fees for National Forests.
- Add user fees for other users – recreational user fees.
- User fee may be tied to the cost of the use.
- The Forest Service should support the Great Eastern Trail corridor.
- Keep Forest Service personnel open to the public.
- Open roads early for scouting (for hunting).
- The public should know why roads are being closed – provide better explanation (signage).
- Forest tracts should be connected by trails.
- Gates are closed too early in the season and that limits hunter access.
- The Forest should be managed for natural forest health, not just for special uses (e.g., game, bikes).
- Avoid fragmentation of Forests by roads.
- Logging should absorb its own costs.
- Log along existing roads – don't build new roads or move into roadless areas.
- Logging should bring some benefit back to the Forest, beyond the removal of trees.
- Need more trash pickup by the Forest Service.
- Work closer with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to assist with wildlife management – use their studies.
- Would like to see areas set aside for wind energy.
- Use wind energy to generate money to manage the Forest.
- Need more backcountry ethics education.
- Target elementary and middle schools for ethics classes and use public service announcements for TV and radio.
- Allow more person to person contact between the Forest Service and the public.
- Protect watersheds.
- Promote the AD (Administratively Determined) firefighter program.
- Provide more opportunity for volunteer service.

Group 4

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Public Access – Adequate As Is
- Appreciates Public Lands For Use By The Public

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Mountain Bikes Can Use Fs Lands
- Likes Primitive Areas For Bike Use
- Free Access And No User Fees By And Large

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Forest Development Road (FDR) 502 – North River Rd/Rawley Springs Area – Prefers It To Be Closed. Atv's Through Subdivision Is A Nuisance/Rawley Springs Retreat Estates. Encourage Access Through Fs Land Instead Of Through Subdivision
- Expanded/Improved Recreation Opportunities With Emphasis On Atv's/Motorcycles
- Designated Atv Trails/Areas Funded Out Non-Appropriated Funds. Family Oriented To Include Youth
- Repair Rock Run Atv Trail – Flood Damage
- Dumping/Trash – Law Enforcement And Clean Up. Concerned With Water Quality
- Illegal Atv Use – Blocking Access To Illegal Use
- Public Participation In Wilderness Area Study Recommendations And Inventory Process
- Shenandoah Mountain – Large Area Of Multiple Use Recreation That Supports A Viable Economic Base In Shenandoah Valley. Wants More Recreation Opportunities. Consider Recommendation As National Scenic Area Designation
- Adopt Great Eastern Trail As A Shared Use "Truck" Trail
- Maps At These Meetings
- Three Sisters Area In Wilderness Area Study
- Merger Of Two Plans (GW and Jeff) To Be As Similar As Possible
- Likes Scoping Process – Projects
- Wants 12c Option Considered In Jeff Plan For Gw Plan
- Management Areas Retain In Old Plan Consist With Jeff
- Hunters Have Different Interests With Regards To Access. Some Want Access, Some Want A More Primitive Experience
- Consider All Trails In Plan With Regards To Proper Maintenance, Erosion Control And Trails For A Wide Variety Of User Abilities
- Old Growth Management Consistent With Jeff Plan/Southern Appalachian Assessment
- Increase Rx Burning Proposed Is Excessive Relative To Funding. Plan Relative To Funding Expected
- Trails Considered A Recreational Facility. Problems With Using Hiking Trails Used By Fire Operations. Insure Fire Management Pays To Properly Restore Funds.
- Unroaded Areas That Meet Criteria For Roadless Areas Added In Plan To Roadless Inventory
- Increase In Lead Time For Public To Participate In Plan Meetings

Group 5

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Trail Patrol Program Being Carried Out By 4wd Groups. Info Collected Is Given To Fs Folks

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Current Plan Allows For Multiple-Use Mgt. Management Is Delineated By Different Management Prescriptions
- Current Plan Recognized Special Biological Areas. Forest Service Has Worked At Protecting Them
- Current Plan Recognizes That Shenandoah Mtn Is A Special Place With A Roadless Area, Old Growth Forest, Special Biological Sites And Ramsey's Draft Wilderness
- Forest Service Responds Well To Concerns Of Native Plant Assoc.
- Like The Fact That The National Forest Stamp Helps To Pay For Fish And Wildlife Habitat
- The Forest Service Is The Only Source For Horse Trails In Frederick County
- The Forest Service is willing to listen to all sides and bring people together.
- Local Districts partnership with local trail organizations for trail maintenance issues.
- Current Forest Plan has binding standards for Project implementation.
- The Agency is becoming more interested in Forest restoration and learning what that means.
- Volunteer groups are heavily involved in trail maintenance.
- Good cooperation concerning stream restoration and improvements for trout habitat.
- Cyclists can enjoy primitive background and trail experience as can horse enthusiasts.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Need Programs To Target Users Who Are Committing Offenses And Not Punish Users Who Are Not. 4 Wd Folks Pick Up Trash And Clean-Up Trails.
- Improve Efforts To Control Invasive Species. I.e. The Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Has Made Ramsey's Draft A Depressing Area. What Can Be Done After The Hemlock Is Gone??
- Forest Service Facilities Are Not Maintained And Kept Clean. Bring Back The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) Or Have A Similar Program. Involve Community Folks.
- There Is Only One Wilderness Area On The North River Rd. Want More. Any Trails Lost To The Mountain Bikers Due To Added Wilderness Should Be Replaced Elsewhere.
- Public Lands Are The Only Place We Can Get Old Growth.
- Forest Service Has Been At The Bergton Fair Since The 50's. Need To Continue This Important Presence
- Need More Trail Loops. Need More Trails That Are Easily Accessed For Less Experienced Users (Close To Forest Edge).
- Need To Inventory And Protect Old Growth Forest.
- Forest Service Is Still Advocating Goals And Objectives That Cost A Lot Of Tax Dollars To Put Into Affect. Need To Develop And Adhere To Road Density Standard. Need To Be Realistic And Spend Tax Dollars Wisely. Need To Do More Custodial Management-Timber And Road Programs Should Be Reduced. Forest Service Should Take Care Of And Not Take Away From The Forest. National Forests Are More Than Trees. Do A Better Job Of Stream And Riparian Area Protection
- Special Biological Areas And Roadless Areas Need Protection. Especially Those Areas That Have Been Proposed By The Va. Heritage Program.
- Maintain What Roads We Have
- More Law Enforcement
- Need To Listen To Biologists From The VDGIF

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- The Age-Class Diversity Percentages Need To Change. Early Successional Areas Are Continually Being Created Naturally. Need To Look At Forest Fragmentation And Edge Affects From Logging Road Building (Both Past And Future)
- Does The GWNF's And The VDGIF Still Cooperate??
- Prescribed Burn Program Is Driven By Funding And Not By Science
- Public Announcements Are Not Directed At General Public-Only Special-Interest Groups.
- Need To Heed What Professional Wildlife Folks Recommended Re Habitat Management In Jeff Plan
- Deer On The National Forest Are Decreasing. They Are Increasing On The Cutover Areas And On Private Land
- The VDGIF says The Deer Population On The National Forest Is Stable. This Comes From A 2006 Report
- Need More Time For Dialog With Other Attendees At These Meetings
- Need to recognize timber as the valuable resource it is – site indexes of 65+ should be managed for timber.
- Move back towards balanced program in timber management and all resources – especially timber/deer/wildlife.
- All users purchase NF use stamp, not just hunters/fishermen.
- Need diversity of vegetative stages: 3-5% herbaceous grass for habitat, 10-15% early successional forest, 15-20% young growth (10-40 yr.), 60-70% mast production habitat (40-120 yr.), 10-15% old growth (120+ yr.)
- Need to do prescribe burning.
- Reinforce concept of diversity as above and divert resources into education regarding benefits of biodiversity.
- Emphasize educating the public that best management practices employed in timber production is not destructive.
- Increase timber harvest to plan limits to increase age class diversity.
- Utilize the renewable timber resource.
- Make it easier to use herbicides to control invasive species.
- Need to consider private land activities in Forest management-Forest is not an “island.”
- Deer are doing very well. Deer harvests are up. Hunting regulations make more difference in deer numbers than timber management. Don’t continue to rotate cuts, quality of hunting experience is more important, especially in the backcountry.
- Creation of early successional habitat needs to consider private land activity.
- As Forest recovers naturally, natural openings should be considered.
- Protect roadless areas consistent with the 2001 rule/SBAs.
- Do EIS for this Plan revision.
- Use sound silviculture practices and utilize education to inform the public of the benefits.
- Create more early successional habitat due to several species in decline specifically as a result of the loss of early successional habitat.
- Need to allow burning – Forest has to be managed, can’t just leave alone.
- Increase timber harvest where allowed to at least 5,000 acres/year. Don’t just manage for old growth.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Use prescribed burning.
- Consider opening new roads to manage inaccessible areas of the Forest.
- Provide opportunities for better parking for horse access (aimed primarily at North end – Frederick County).
- Create process for volunteers to help with project costs.
- Other users (besides hunters/fishermen) purchase FS use stamps.
- Acknowledge that the Forest Service is about something different than Park Service.
- Pay attention to Forest health, insects, and disease.
- Prescribed burning – too much being done. Science used to justify is faulty. Not done in the same way as used by native Americans.
- Draft Plan proposes increase in prescribed burning – this is funding driven, not needs driven.
- Need plan to address reintroduction of chestnut blight resistant trees.
- Shenandoah Mtn. Rescue group needs better access (site specific).
- Include ATC and other volunteers for maintaining trails (continue and increase).
- Too many deer on the Forest – management should not increase deer numbers.
- Do timber stand improvement to increase harvest species.

Group 6

* means an additional person(s) voiced same statement

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Likes access for all to use/enjoy forest **
- Likes greater input/participation of public in projects
- Likes to hike, quiet peaceful
- Likes ability to comment on projects (scooping) *
- Likes lack of recent timber harvests in certain areas of the forest *
- Likes current maintenance of roads
- Likes wilderness *
- Likes wildlife and diversity of wildlife
- Likes primitive areas for recreation
- Likes seasonal locked gates
- Likes MA 18 for trout
- Likes non-hunting recreational opportunities in developed and dispersed recreation areas
- Likes protection and education of cultural heritage resources
- Likes current timber program and likes areas set aside for non-timber
- Likes abundant and easy access to national forest
- Likes diversity of forest types on forest ***
- Likes sustainable, multiple uses seen on forest ******
- Likes increased upkeep/maintenance of recreation areas on North River **
- Likes large, remote areas, gates, and wide open spaces *****
- Likes protection of old-growth *

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Likes reasonable balance given to opportunities with a state-wide perspective, especially considering private lands
- Likes access to roads ***
- Likes the fact that we have a National Forest
- Likes access to forest for low-impact activities, including low-impact management, recreation, education *
- Likes preservation of unique areas and key watersheds
- Likes multiple recreation opportunities **

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Needs to avoid turkey nesting season in burning and concerned for way forest is burned
- Needs recreation fee for all recreation use, similar to Virginia Forest Stamp for those hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- Needs more access for senior citizens *
- Needs more permanent open roads
- Needs better correlation with trail markings and available maps
- Dislikes use of herbicides for road maintenance *
- Needs higher priority for watershed protection; expanded riparian zones similar to Jefferson Plan *
- Needs more wilderness areas on Allegheny side of GW
- Needs more non-game wildlife protection
- Needs a more permanent protection of roadless areas
- Needs more emphasis on addressing fish passage issues – including fixing design of culverts
- Needs a better structure for repeat users of developed recreation areas – seasonal pass?
- District and S.O. are understaffed *
- National Forest does not need to be for sale ***
- National Forest under funded *
- Concern of attempts to decrease public input in revision process **
- Does not like below cost timber sales
- Does not like lack of state-wide perspective in developing priorities on opportunities on national forest (timber, wildlife management, recreation, etc)
- Needs more controlled burns for wildlife *
- Needs more wildlife habitat improvement *
- Needs more food plots and wildlife openings and maintenance **
- Want more seasonal access to roads
- Does not like level of autonomy shown by district rangers
- Wants stronger emphasis on low-impact recreation
- Wants more preservation of key special areas such as Skidmore Fork and Shenandoah Mtn watershed
- More sustainable mixed-aged forests
- Does not like closed/dense forest canopy (forest too old) *

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Needs more emphasis on logging
- Does not like inconsistent administration policies
- Does not like lack of notice for public meetings and there are too few locations *
- Need to look at American chestnut restoration including research on how existing trees in harvest units are responding to increased light, etc.
- Need more access to roads for other hunting and hunting-related seasons
- Needs more connector loop trails *
- Forest needs more funding, less consolidation *
- Needs fire use in wilderness
- Needs more OHV designated trails
- Needs more planting in regeneration areas, not just relying on natural regeneration
- Needs more amount and opportunity for public comment on Forest management
- Does not like lack of EIS for this round of Forest Plans

Group 7

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- There is a broad usage of National Forest land, multi use, shared use trails
- The National Forest has diverse habitats
- Access to public lands, active use on forest land
- Management of stand diversity, ability to use, stands and age class diversity for wildlife
- Opportunity to visit National Forest lands
- The forest maintains road less areas.
- Logging on existing roads
- Wildlife openings
- Biological diversity
- Trails for biking into remote areas
- Special biological areas, taking care of threatened and endangered species
- Appreciation of road less areas
- National Forest use's partners on trails, protects sensitive areas
- National Forest is a great outdoor class room
- Appreciate the old growth areas that are left
- National Forest openness and willingness to meet with users
- Clean water

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Not destroy trails with mechanical equipment, during fire suppression, use more hand line.
- Improve forest trail signage currently not adequate or maintained
- Have more loop trails
- Not enough vegetation management on forest
- Do not like new road building and the impacts to the land, erosion and impacts to water quality and quality of life

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Recreation should be preferred over logging as an economic benefit
- Great Eastern trail adopted as a shared use trail to promote economic benefit
- Shorter trails and loop trails and easier trails
- User fees are not fair across the board hikers and bikers should pay a fee like hunters or fishing
- From highway 33 to highway 250 the track of land between the two highways should be a special management area with blocks of wilderness study areas
- IRA should be managed according to the 2001 road less rules
- Do not like shared use trails
- Do not like clear cutting the preference is select cutting
- Very little money for law enforcement, need more law enforcement
- Select cutting does not create success ional forests; need more diversity in age class
- More gates open after deer season for small game hunters, gates are closed soon after deer season
- Uncertainty and anxiety associated to change in the national forest and the future of the forest and how it will look in the future do not know how the forest will look tomorrow do not always know what is happening and that affects the public
- No less active wildlife and timber management
- Balance between recreation and timber that looks at economics
- Not enough handicap access on forest –look at future- like veterans that are coming back from war that are injured
- 0 to 20 year age class is lacking would like to see increase up to 15% in this age class
- Maintain diverse management of forest
- Wildfire Use to manage vegetation and decedent fuels
- Use more prescribe fire and continue to use prescribe fire to manage wildlife and silviculture
- Forest health, age class diversity not enough, no protection for old growth from insect and disease

Group 8

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Remote trail experience
- Large unmanaged wildland
- Potential to preserve the physical and cultural benefits of large areas.
- General outdoor experiences and hunting
- Management prescriptions in the current Forest Plan
- Presence of the forest and the current and future opportunities it provides.
- Presence of motorized trails and roads
- Large amount of mountain bike trails
- Vastness of remote areas, especially the Shenandoah Mtn. range
- Availability of multiple uses
- Timber harvesting and the wildlife benefits from that harvesting

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Multiple uses and products
- Vastness and remoteness. Preserved habitat
- Managed by Forest Service personnel.
- Use of volunteer groups in management activities
- Management's desire to preserve remoteness
- Blend of dispersed hiking and camping opportunities
- Emergency management opportunities within the "Wilderness" regulations.
- Remote Experience
- Beauty and Quietness
- Clean Water Resources
- The Forest is there
- Multiple Uses – Wilderness
- Horseback riding opportunities and serene environment
- Mountain Bike trail riding – miles and miles of Loop Trails
- Solitude and natural environment
- Opportunities to hunt, Fish and Camp
- Protection of Natural Resources
- Remote areas, hunting, fishing, and roadless areas
- Like to get out in the Forest to do hunting and fishing
- Cooperation among User Groups
- Like specifics of the Forest Plan

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- More congressional funding
- More presence of Forest employees
- Lack of appreciation and respect by some users
- More special areas, as identified by Natural Heritage, protected
- More mature forest areas for neo-tropical migratory birds
- Maintain flexible management of remote areas
- Better enforcement of forest road usage rules & regulations to avoid degradation
- More horse riding trails and better equestrian access
- More motorized road and trail opportunities
- Better enforcement of existing laws/rules. More game wardens
- More wildlife
- Maintain and possibly increase timber harvesting in sustainable manner
- More law enforcement on forest. Area too large for current workforce
- More handicap accessible roads and trails for hunting access.
- Open all existing accessible roads
- More connectivity of multi-user trails. More trails rated novice to intermediate
- More control of invasive plants, especially those introduced by the Game Commission
- Allow more supplemental feeding of wildlife in off hunting seasons by the public
- Resist temptations to privatize any forest services

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- List Camp Roosevelt and Elizabeth Furnace as historical areas in the new Plan.
- More land protection through special designated Natural Recreation Areas.
- More novice trail opportunities.
- More protection of special areas, Route 33 to Route 250
- Shenandoah Mountain scenic area with core wilderness area.
- Biological principles of timber logging.
- No new roads. Keep and maintain existing roads.
- Explore Jefferson Plan 12c (noticeable absent from CER).
- Emphasize and maintain old growth and biodiversity.
- Blocks of wilderness in Shenandoah Mountain area.
- Novices horse back riders Users. New user's education.
- Trails with lower elevation. More mountain bike trails for novice riders and shorter trails. Protect existing back country trails and roadless areas for existing use.
- User fees for all recreation/forest use and funds used locally.
- More discretion on timber sales, horse logging and emphasize on natural logging.
- Equal user fee. Lack of timber harvest for wildlife benefit. Want more management for wildlife.
- More active management for wildlife.
- Need to maintain and manage growth of National Forest lands. Mosaic timber ages and variety of timber types. (Increase sales program to get younger age for wildlife purposes).
- More education and outreach on Forest regulations.
- Do not close Historical Access.
- Do not use existing trails for fire suppression without restoring it.
- Emphasize conservation and recreation over logging.
- Great Eastern trail for multiple uses.
- No industry wind towers on National Forest lands.
- Need a Friend of Forest Service Group.

Baker, West Virginia Meeting March 13, 2007

Attendance:

Groups 1 and 2

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Likes the multiple use trail system.
- Enjoys the horse use opportunities on the forest.
- Likes the fact that there is very little wilderness, especially on the Lee RD. It's hard to maintain trails in wilderness.
- Enjoys the large number of hiking trails and the connectivity of connector trails for loops.
- Loop trails are the best because you don't have the same trip back.
- The Lee RD has good access roads.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Likes that the Forest Service is sensitive to threatened and endangered species during management activities; appreciates the opportunity to become more aware of those species.
- Likes the fact that most trails are in pretty good shape, there is a lot of community involvement with volunteers helping to maintain trails.
- Enjoys the diversity of wildlife management that addresses both game and non-game species. The national forest can provide islands of habitat that cannot be found on private lands.
- Better Trail Maintenance
- Volunteer Trail Maintenance Friendly
- Access To Hunting And Trails
- Maintain Forest In The Interest Of All Users
- Current Forest Plan Is Good
- Atv Management In The Forest

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- The placement of logging slash can be a problem for recreation users (for example, horse riders).
- Involve the horse users in timber harvest planning. Access roads can be managed to be more compatible with other users, such as providing turn-arounds and placement of slash.
- Would like to see a better geographic distribution of open habitat areas since they tend to be clustered on the landscape.
- Some trails are virtually unusable and need maintenance (for example Squirrel Gap).
- Need to coordinate with the research side of the Forest Service to better control and prevent the introduction of non-native invasive species during management activities.
- Need better control of the hemlock wooly adelgid.
- Increase the amount of timber sales to provide more early successional habitat and a better age class distribution of trees.
- As urban development increases in West Virginia and there continues to be a loss of forested land, the national forest should provide what private land is losing or can't provide (for example old growth, wilderness, and natural forest succession). The national forest should not compete with private landowners in the selling of wood products, no more timber sales.
- Would like to see designated wilderness in West Virginia, where the George Washington NF has 100,000 acres and no wilderness.
- One of the disadvantages of designated wilderness is the inability to use motorized equipment (chainsaws) for trail maintenance. Would like to see more areas that can still provide a wilderness experience but that would allow for easier trail maintenance.
- However, administrative protection of areas is not always a permanent protection so more areas should be Congressionally designated, rather than set up as a remote backcountry recreation use.
- If wilderness use is too high, then the Forest Service should regulate use and recommend more areas for designation.

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- Good maps are needed to help people know of different areas to visit, especially if we want to disperse use away from heavier use areas.
- Need to consider the national forest as a destination opportunity for eco-tourism (for example, Hardy County is currently a destination source for excellent bird-watching).
- Should recognize opportunities to restore historical biodiversity of plant species that we could do after management activities have occurred (such as planting species that used to be native to the area but for various reasons are losing).
- Need to manage long-term for future generations, considering the loss of mature hard-mast producers we have and will have due to an aging forest, the gypsy moth and the loss of the American chestnut.
- What are the objectives of our aggressive prescribed burning program? The need for fuels reduction in the east is not as great as in the west; however, it is a good tool for the silvicultural objective of regeneration.
- Need to find ways to combat the hemlock wooly adelgid and the widespread loss of hemlocks.
- Increase The Number Of Younger Age Cuts (Even Age Cuts Across The Forest)
- Landline Maintenance (Better Maintenance And Marking Unmarked Areas)
- Cut More Trees (Increase Wildlife Habitat, More Clear Cuts)
- More Law Enforcement Presence
- Forest Service Needs To Cut More Trees (Acres)
- Increase Wildlife Habitat Through Timber Sales
- More Use Of Herbicides
- Forest Service Needs To Do A Better Job At Promoting The "Forest Experience"
- Forest Service Needs To Do A Better Job Of Explaining The Different Types Of Management Provided
- Gypsy Moth Monitoring And Recovery
- 0% Wilderness in WV, Would Like To See 18% In Wilderness

Groups 3 and 4

#1: What do you like about the current management of the GWNF?

- Easy Access To Fs Folks On The Lee Rd. Also, The Multiple-Use Concept Of Trail Management
- Get Good Service From Lee Rd People. They Are Open And Willing To Listen.
- Availability Of Maps And Access To Rd Folks
- The Network Of Hiking Trails On The Lee, Especially Signal Knob. Like The Ohv Trails.
- Elwood Has Done A Great Job.
- Like The Availability Of The Dead & Down Permits-Several Agreed.
- Likes Tree Harvesting
- Likes Hunting And Fishing Privileges
- Diversity Of Uses And Protection Of Special Areas
- In Favor Of The Use Of Prescribed Fire

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- VDGIF And Forest Service Work Well Together. Also WVDNR And Forest Service. The Coop Agreements Between These Agencies Are The 1st (Va) And 3rd (Wv) In The Nation.
- More Volunteers W/State For W/L Mgt Work
- Due To Less Access For The General Public Onto Private Lands The GWNF's Lands Have Become More Important For Wildlife And Wildlife Mgt.
- Fs Does A Good Job On Road Maintenance.-, Also Construction.
- Road Closures During Freeze And Thaw Periods Is A Good Thing-But Maybe Not As Long A Time.
- Ample Trailhead Parking. Parking Lots Are Well-Maintained. Lee Rd Does A Good Job With As Few Folks As We've Got.
- Like Emphasis On Multi-Use Trails. The Annual Trail Users Meeting On The Lee Is Great. Lots Of Networking. Puts A Faces To Those With Opposing Ideas; Leads To Working Out Problems As Well A Preventing Them.
- Lee Rd Puts On Chain Saw Class For Volunteers.
- Wv Div Of Forestry Has Chain Saw Classes Also.

#2: What do you think needs to change in how the GWNF is managed?

- Age Class Distribution Percentages On Existing Plan Were Not Met. Active Forest And Wildlife Mgt Is Needed To Achieve Desired Wildlife Populations. Forest Is Shifting To Older Age-Class – Need A Balance.
- Need To Keep Atvs Out Of General Forest Area
- When Timber Sales Are Sold Heavy Equipment Is Used To Build Roads And Landings-Need To Consider Making Roads And Landings A Little Larger To Give Opportunities For Horse Trailer Parking. Could Also Connect Skid Trails Roads And Existing Trails To Create More Trails.
- Could Horse Folks Go In And Clean-Up Closed Skid Trails-Pick Up Chunks Of Wood To Create A Safer Trail. Work Together With Loggers And Trail Users.
- Horse People Are Under-Utilized As Volunteers.
- Age-Class Curve Is Skewed Toward Older Ages. Need To Bring It Back To A More Balanced Distribution. Need To Plan More Trail Maintenance In New Growth Age Classes.
- Need More Invasive Plant Control; Ailanthus, Mile-A-Minute, Etc. Use Herbicides For Control Of Non-Native Invasive Species.
- Use More Money From Timber Sales To Do The Work Within Sales Area Re Invasive Species Control, Trail Maintenance, Etc.
- Skewed Age-Class Curve Detrimental To Wildlife Species That Need Younger Age-Classes.
- Need More Places To Fly-Fish. Streams That Are Flies Only Or Artificial Lures
- National Forest Should Harvest More Timber In A Well-Managed Way. Promote Phrase "Trees Are A Renewable Resource."
- Trees Need To Be Utilized But Do It Neatly
- Need To Recognize User-Built Trails. Forest Service Only Maintains System Trails. Will Have Less Off Trail Use If User-Built Trails Are Maintained. I F It Is A Used Trail Embrace It!!

What the Forest Service Heard at the First Round of Public Meetings

- I Am In Favor Of Wilderness But Not If It Interrupts Continuity. If An Established, Organized Competitive Ride Existed Prior To Wilderness It Should Be Continued.
- Accept Overtures Of Local Sportsmen Groups To Help Maintain Wildlife Food Plots (Openings)
- Wilderness Is Not A Nice Place-It Can Be Drab-I.e. Ramseys Draft With All The Dead Hemlocks. No More Wilderness.
- Commercial Timber Harvesting Should Be Examined/Increased For Biodiversity As A Counter To "Hands-Off" Approach
- Age-Class Distribution Should Be: 3-5% Herbaceous Habitat, 10-15% Early Successional Habitat, 10-15% 15-40 Years Old, 60-70% Mast Producing 40-120 Years Old, and 10-15% Old Growth 120+ Years Old
- Use Prescribed Burning More
- Need To Use Prescribed Burning In Combination With Oak Regeneration
- Wants To Have Even-Aged Management