



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

October 14, 2011

RE: Comments on Draft Forest Plan for the George Washington National Forest

George Washington Plan Revision  
George Washington & Jefferson National Forests  
5162 Valleypointe Parkway  
Roanoke, VA 24019  
Attn: Karen Overcash, Planning Team Leader, GWNF

Dear Ms. Overcash:

Enclosed is a CD of 36,485 comments submitted by NRDC online activists regarding the Draft Forest Plan for the George Washington National Forest.

We are sending this CD with the comments to avoid overloading your email system with the large volume of comments from our activists.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-513-6260.

Thank you,

Chrissy Zicarelli  
NRDC Online Advocacy Associate

Mr. Robert McFarland

Sep 10, 2011

Karen Overcash

Subject: Protect the GWNF from harmful gas drilling and logging

Dear Karen Overcash,

The George Washington National Forest (GWNF) is a vital natural resource in a region that is becoming increasingly developed. Only 100 miles from Washington, D.C., it provides incredible outdoor recreation opportunities to millions of Americans, including many living in urban communities. It is a well-used and well-loved national forest, home to many wildlife species including black bears, the endangered Indiana bat, and many wonderful bird species. Old growth forest stands still remain, and it is home to the headwaters of the Potomac and James Rivers, important sources of drinking water for millions of people.

The management plan for the GWNF should strive to protect these natural resources and preserve the forest's multiple use opportunities. Natural gas development, and the roads and traffic that come with it, are known to cause significant impacts on wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, forests, water quality and air quality.

I strongly support the Forest Service's proposal to prohibit horizontal drilling and its associated hydraulic fracturing, but I am concerned that your plan still makes hundreds of thousands of acres available for new natural gas wells created by vertical drilling. Due to the intense environmental impacts of new wells, including fragmentation and destruction of wildlife habitat, noise and light disturbance, and significant air, soil, and water quality threats, it is important that the most sensitive areas of the National Forest are protected from any surface disturbance or threats to surface waters or groundwater, including drinking water supply and other priority watersheds and sensitive natural, scenic and recreation areas, such as special biological and geological areas, old growth forest, the Shenandoah Mountain Crest, eligible Scenic and Recreational River Corridors, and the Blue Ridge Parkway Corridor.

I am also concerned that your preferred alternative does not protect all wilderness quality lands, old growth forest stands, or watersheds which supply drinking water, which should be completely protected from harmful industrial development. Please also ensure that all inventoried roadless areas and roadless areas identified in new inventories are protected consistent with the 2001 Roadless Rule.

The GWNF is a treasure for millions of Americans, and I hope you will do your utmost to preserve all of its important multiple uses. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mr. Robert McFarland