

## **News Release**

For Immediate Release: January 23, 2015

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## **Sierra Club, Wild Virginia Urge Forest Service to Deny Gas Pipeline Survey through the George Washington National Forest**

On February 12th, Sierra Club volunteers Kirk Bowers, Pipeline Committee Chair, Virginia Chapter and Dan Crawford, Roanoke Group President, met with forest service officials at the George Washington & Jefferson National Forest office in Roanoke, VA to present signatures on a petition opposing the Mountain Valley Pipeline Special Use Permit through the Jefferson National Forest.

“The Sierra Club has grave concerns that this pipeline will cause serious permanent damage and fragmentation of forests in the Jefferson and even the surveying process with the use of heavy vehicles could damage the forest,” said Bowers. The mature, undeveloped forests in these areas make it fundamentally incompatible with major industrial infrastructure development.

“We expressed our concerns that the pipeline would incentivize more fracking across the region, continue to promote the use of fossil fuels and contribute significantly to environmental damage during construction,” said Bowers. Forest Service officials advised Sierra Club that they had received thousands of emails and letters concerning the Special Use Permit from the public.

“Officials assured us that granting permission for the survey didn’t imply any likelihood of approval of construction, and that the survey would yield the specific information needed to accurately assess the true nature of the threats to the Jefferson”, said Dan Crawford. “However, we stand by our opposition to the survey through these sensitive areas of the forest.”

Ernie Reed, President, Wild Virginia, added that "the proposed route passes dangerously close to Peter's Mountain Wilderness. It crosses the Appalachian Trail and passes through what the Jefferson National Forest recognizes as the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Corridor. These national treasures warrant protection, not desecration."

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*The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.4 million members and supporters nationwide. In addition to creating opportunities for people of all ages, levels and locations to have meaningful outdoor experiences, the Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation. For more information, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org>.*

*Wild Virginia is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Virginia's national forests through education and advocacy.*