

**LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL**  
**Agenda Item Summary**

MEETING DATE: June 9, 2009

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 2

CONSENT: X

REGULAR:

CLOSED SESSION:  
(Confidential)

ACTION: X

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: Drinking Water Resource Protection in the George Washington National Forest

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a resolution supporting revisions to the U.S. Forest Service's 1993 *Land and Resource Management Plan*, specifically related to the protection of the drinking water resources in the George Washington National Forest.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Forest Service is in the process of revising its 1993 Land and Resource Management Plan for the George Washington National Forest (GWNF). The GWNF is extremely important as a local and regional source of drinking water, providing water to over 260,000 residents of 22 localities. Drinking watersheds comprise over 44% of the GWNF. Currently, management of the GWNF differs little between drinking watersheds and the rest of the forest. The 1993 Plan does little to protect drinking water resources and is currently under revision so now is the optimal time to strengthen the management of drinking watersheds. The watersheds are primarily threatened by sedimentation related to timber production and roadways.

It is recommended that the Forest Service include the following in the Forest Plan revisions:

- Identify all local drinking watersheds in the GWNF and identify them in the Forest Plan
- Protect and manage drinking watersheds appropriately
- Forest management should address entire watershed not just riparian areas
- Impaired waters and their watersheds need special attention and should be a priority for restoration efforts
- The Forest Service should increase its efforts to monitor water quality, including sedimentation
- The Forest Service and local communities must develop strong working relationships

To date at least 25 entities have passed a similar resolution.

PRIOR ACTION(S): None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

CONTACT(S): Timothy Mitchell, Director of Utilities, 455-4252

ATTACHMENT(S): Attachment 1 - ENTITIES THAT HAVE PASSED A VERSION OF THE RESOLUTION Resolution

REVIEWED BY: lkp

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT REVISIONS TO THE GEORGE WASHINGTON FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THEREBY IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF DRINKING WATER RESOURCES**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service is in the process of revising its 1993 Land and Resource Management Plan for the George Washington National Forest.

WHEREAS, the provision of clean safe drinking water is one of the primary benefits that the George Washington National Forest provides to the communities that surround it.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service's agency-wide Strategic Plan for 2004 – 2008 seeks to achieve six goals, including "Improve watershed condition."

WHEREAS, approximately 44 percent of the land in the George Washington National Forest is within watersheds that provide public drinking water to more than 260,000 residents of western Virginia in 22 communities surrounding the national forest by means of reservoirs and surface waters.

WHEREAS, drinking water sources from the Pedlar Reservoir and watershed within the George Washington National Forest serve more than 100,000 residents in the City of Lynchburg, Amherst, Bedford, and Campbell Counties.

WHEREAS, degraded water quality in the George Washington National Forest has been documented in the 2006 Water Quality Assessment report by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which identified fifty (50) streams and six (6) reservoirs within the national forest that are impaired, including the Pedlar Reservoir.

WHEREAS, the greatest threats to water quality within the George Washington National Forest are ground disturbing activities, such as timber harvesting and road construction, which result in erosion and sedimentation.

WHEREAS, the 1993 George Washington National Forest Management Plan identifies drinking water reservoirs, but does not address the watersheds that surround these reservoirs or offer distinct management objectives to maintain or improve drinking water quality in these watersheds by controlling erosion and sedimentation.

WHEREAS, a 2008 report by the National Research Council (part of The National Academies) states that a sustainable supply of clean water is the most important product or commodity produced by our forests.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the undersigned hereby support the following revisions to the George Washington National Forest Management Plan to ensure the quality and quantity of drinking water sources within the national forest boundaries:

- The U.S. Forest Service shall formally identify all the drinking watersheds serving reservoir and surface water resources within the George Washington National Forest.
- The U.S. Forest Service shall establish management objectives that encompass the health of entire drinking watersheds, in order to ensure that conditions within the watersheds will maintain, protect and enhance drinking water quality.
- The U.S. Forest Service shall gather more information to describe and assess watershed conditions, develop a plan to systematically monitor water resource programs and obtain all data pertinent to water quality and watershed conditions, in cooperation with other agencies, organizations, local communities and volunteers.

- The U.S. Forest Service shall seek to communicate more effectively with the localities that obtain drinking water from sources within the George Washington National Forest in order to ensure that the drinking watersheds are managed effectively, appropriately and for the public good.
- The U.S. Forest Service shall work with local communities, agencies and the larger public to establish policies and develop management plans for the drinking watersheds to permanently maintain, protect and enhance drinking water quality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk is instructed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the U.S. Forest Service, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District, and Wild Virginia in order to advise each of this action and to request support on this issue.

Adopted: June 9, 2009

Certified: *Catherine W. Post*  
Clerk of Council

055L

~~cc:~~ T. Mitchell