



# WILD VIRGINIA

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## **Prescribed Burning Project Lee Ranger District, George Washington National Forest December, 2007**

In June of 2007, the U.S. Forest Service issued a Scoping Notice that proposed prescribed burns on four separate areas in the Lee Ranger District: three sites in Virginia and one in West Virginia. In September, the Forest Service decided to proceed with their plan to burn a total of 962 acres at the four sites. Long-time forest activist and former Wild Virginia Conservation Director, Steve Krichbaum, responded to the decision, noting that the 135-acre site in West Virginia is home to a population of wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*). Steve filed a formal appeal of the decision in November with Wild Virginia and Virginia Forest Watch joining him on the appeal. After discussions with Steve, the Forest Service agreed to drop the West Virginia site from the project. A formal resolution was finalized in December, 2007, and the appeal was dropped.

The decision to withdraw the West Virginia site from the project was certainly a good one for wood turtles. More work is needed to permanently protect the wood turtle population within the George Washington National Forest (GWNF) though. Greater awareness on the part of Forest Service staff is needed so that questionable management practices will not be proposed in the future. Wild Virginia will continue its efforts to have a Special Biological Area designated for long-term protection and management of the wood turtle in the GWNF.