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Contact: David Sligh 434-964-7455
Ernie Reed 434-971-1647

USFS Rejects Atlantic Coast Pipeline Route, Access and Analysis in National Forest

The United States Forest Service and the George Washington National Forest dealt a blow to Dominion's Proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) by rejecting numerous stream crossings in Bath County and expressing concern for wild brook trout streams in Augusta County.

In a September 1 letter addressed to Kimberly Bose at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Clyde Thompson, Forest Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest stated that the location of proposed access roads along Laurel Run, a wild brook trout stream, was "unacceptable." He further states that "The Forest Service requests that ACP re-evaluate its proposed stream crossings and proposed locations of access roads, while considering Forest Plan standards and Best Management Practices relating to soil and water."

This week the USFS submitted further comments to FERC regarding inaccuracies, misrepresentations and omissions on Dominion's Resource Reports on salamanders, macroinvertebrates, fish and mussels and soils in the National Forests. This follows a July 2015 letter which listed over 300 errors on earlier reports submitted by Dominion.

For example, in this week's August 28 letter, U.S. Forest Service called critical soil survey data submitted for the ACP "incomplete" and said that the agency cannot complete its review of the ACP permit request to route the pipeline through the Monongahela and George Washington National Forests until necessary information is provided in accordance with NFS protocols.

"Again, the USFS is standing up for Virginia's forests," said David Sligh, Conservation Director of Wild Virginia. "And again Dominion is attempting to violate forest standards by presenting an inaccurate and incomplete analysis of our valuable and irreplaceable forest resources."

“At the very least, this will push back Dominion’s timeline for release of its Draft Environmental Impact Statement which was previously set for December, 2016 release,” said Ernie Reed, Wild Virginia President. “Or it could be another nail in the coffin for this misguided and unnecessary project.”

“This stands as further evidence demonstrating why the USFS should not amend its forest plans to allow ACP construction,” Sligh continued. “And that could be its death knell.”

The referenced Forest Service Letters to FERC are available at:

Stream Crossings: <http://wildvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2016-09-01-5USFS-Stream-Crossings.pdf>

Macroinvertebrates: <http://wildvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2016-09-01-USFS-Macroinvertebrates.pdf>

Soils: <http://wildvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2016-08-29-USFS-DOM-Soil-Phone-Call.pdf>

Comments on Draft Resource Reports: <http://wildvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/USFS-Comments-on-the-ACP.pdf>

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