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#08-40

**George Washington Forest Management Plan
Resolution for Drinking Water Resource Management**

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

WHEREAS, the U. S. Forest Service's agency-wide strategic plan seeks to achieve six goals, including "improve watershed condition",

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, approximately 44 percent of the land in the George Washington National Forest lies within watersheds that provide public drinking water to more than 260,000 Virginia residents in 22 adjacent communities, by means of reservoirs and surface waters,

WHEREAS, some surface water in the George Washington National Forest becomes ground water, especially when it reaches karst geology and whereas many Shenandoah Valley citizens rely on ground water for their drinking water,

WHEREAS, drinking water sources within the George Washington National Forest serve an estimated 20,124 residents in Augusta County and the City of Staunton, 52,635 residents in Rockingham County, the City of Harrisonburg and the towns of Bridgewater and Broadway, 8,452 residents in the Shenandoah County towns of Strasburg and Woodstock, 12,500 residents in Front Royal and 41,840 residents in Frederick County, the City of Winchester and Middletown,

WHEREAS, the watersheds of the five reservoirs in the George Washington National Forest provide drinking water for almost 100,000 people, including the Staunton and Elkhorn Lake Reservoirs, serving the City of Staunton and some Augusta County residents, and the Switzer Lake Reservoir, serving the City of Harrisonburg and some Rockingham County residents,

WHEREAS, the watersheds of surface waters that flow from the George Washington National Forest, such as the North River and the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River, provide drinking water to an additional 165,000 people in communities including Bridgewater, Broadway, Front Royal, Harrisonburg, Middletown, Strasburg, Winchester and the surrounding counties,

WHEREAS, the greatest threats to water quality within the George Washington National Forest are ground disturbing activities that result in erosion and sedimentation,

WHEREAS, under the 1993 George Washington National Forest Management Plan most of the land in drinking water reservoirs watersheds (72 percent) is managed without ground disturbing activities

and the U.S. Forest Service reports that water quality in the reservoir watersheds is substantially better than in surface watersheds in other parts of the George Washington National Forest,

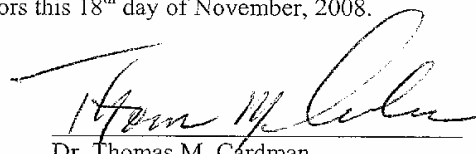
WHEREAS, the 1993 George Washington National Forest Management Plan permits ground disturbing activities on most of the land (64 percent) in surface watersheds that provide drinking water through river intakes,

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 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 the entire watershed, including impacts on drinking water quality in both surface and groundwater, in order to ensure that conditions within the watershed 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 condition, 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.

Adopted by the Page County Board of Supervisors this 18th day of November, 2008.


Tommy R. LaFrance, Chairman
Board of Supervisors


Dr. Thomas M. Cardman
Acting County Administrator