



For Immediate Release

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Federal Documents and Proposed Pipelines: a “Clear and Present Danger”

On Friday, the United States Forest Service released the [Draft Record of Decision \(ROD\)](#) to amend the Land and Resource Management Plans for the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Contrary to its independent duty to ensure the environmental review is complete and sufficient to support its draft decision, the Forest Service settled for the seriously flawed information presented by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in its [Final Environmental Impact Statement for the ACP](#).

The documents fail to depict the true effects that the construction and maintenance of the ACP. Some biological evaluations, roads analysis and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are incomplete, a testament to the inadequacy of the content. Still the documents and the pipeline, present a clear and present danger to the forest in many ways that are documented.

- A total of 4,892 acres of interior forest habitat would be eliminated, creating 30,025 acres of new forest edge habitat and destroying 214 acres of National Forests
- ACP would cross 2.4 miles of porous and unstable karst areas on Forest Service lands and two cave systems of high significance: the Cocheran’s Cave Conservation Site and Burnsville Cove Cave Conservation Site.
- A total of 14 National Forest standards would be eliminated and circumvented as it applies to the pipeline, including impacts to soils, wetlands, old growth, the Appalachian Trail, and the endangered Indiana Bat.
- The cumulative impacts of both the ACP and the Mountain Valley Pipelines are not considered relevant to the Draft Decision, in clear violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

"FERC found the construction and operation of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline may affect and is likely to adversely affect seven Endangered Species (Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, Roanoke logperch, Madison Cave isopod, clubshell mussel, running buffalo clover, and small whorled pogonia)," said Misty Boos, Wild Virginia Executive Director. "It is outrageous that the Forest Service would sign off on a scheme like this with the full knowledge that it will harm endangered species."

The Forest Service draft decision determines that the ACP "can be implemented with limited adverse impacts." "It is interesting that this decision was made by the Regional Foresters in offices hundreds of miles away from these forests, said Ernie Reed, President of Wild Virginia. "No one who has stepped foot in these forests could ever come to such a delusional conclusion."

"The Final Environmental Impact Statement and this Record of Decision from the Forest Service make it clear that we cannot rely on the Federal Government to protect our forests and drinking water," Boos said. "Now, the State of Virginia must stand up and do their job. The Virginia DEQ has the authority to protect the citizens of Virginia. All eyes are on the DEQ in the coming weeks. They must do what the Feds have not and choose our safety over private profits."

Wild Virginia and others will be submitting formal objections to this draft decision. Litigation is certain to follow. "We and the many thousands of Virginians fighting to protect our public lands, our waters, and our communities will not accept the federal or state resource agencies' abdication of their duties. We will challenge every flawed process and decision every inch of the way," said David Sligh, Wild Virginia's Conservation Director.

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