

# BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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Sept. 5, 2002  
1828 Brandon Ave. SW  
Roanoke, VA 24015

Mr. Bill Damon, Forest Supervisor  
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests  
5162 Valley Pointe Parkway  
Roanoke, VA 24019-3050

Dear Mr. Damon:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL). BREDL has been interested in the management of our National Forests since the mid-1980's. BREDL is a regional, community-based, non-profit environmental organization. Our founding principles are earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice, and community empowerment. BREDL has chapters throughout the southeastern United States, including five chapters in Virginia. Our members rely on the recreational use, scientific attributes and life-sustaining benefits of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests.

We have been following the lengthy planning process on the Jefferson. This has included the multi-governmental agencies' Southern Appalachian Assessment as well as the development of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. As the time has finally come for final comments and decisions, we urgently request you to provide management prescriptions for all of the inventoried roadless areas that will ensure that they remain roadless. The Roadless Rule garnered record-breaking support across the United States with over 98 percent of Virginia respondents expressing support and protection of our roadless areas.

In particular, BREDL requests you to recommend the following roadless areas for wilderness study status: 1. Hunting Camp Creek/Little Wolf Creek; 2. Garden Mountain; 3. Brush Mt.; 4. Brush Mt. East; 5. Brushy Mt.; 6. Crawfish Valley; 7. Long Spur; 8. Little Walker Mt.; 9. Panther Knob (Little Dry Run addition); 10. Raccoon Branch; 11. Horse Heaven; 12. Seng Mt. BREDL further requests that all additions to existing wilderness areas be recommended for wilderness study status.

These designations would offer the most effective way to maintain the integrity of these areas from the onslaught of increasing land-use demands, especially from outside forces. Some of these areas are or have recently been threatened by permanent impacts from highways and power lines. Roadless area and wilderness study status designations would help the Forest Service meet the goal of managing lands for multiple uses and,

more important, meet the mandate of the American people who overwhelmingly want these areas protected.

We thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the planning process for the Jefferson National Forest.

Yours sincerely,

Mark E. Barker  
SW Virginia VP  
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