



## **Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area (Proposed) Resolution in Support of Congressional Designation**

WHEREAS Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, a local broad-based coalition of organizations, businesses, faith groups, and individuals, has proposed Congressional designation of a 90,000-acre tract of George Washington National Forest (GWNF) land on Shenandoah Mountain between Rt. 33 and Rt. 250 as a National Scenic Area with four embedded Wilderness areas;

WHEREAS 43,137 acres of the Proposal lie within Augusta County, with 24,616 acres proposed for National Scenic Area designation and 18,521 acres proposed for Wilderness designation (Ramseys Draft Addition and Little River Wilderness);

WHEREAS the Board supports protection of high-quality water resources on the GWNF (March 25, 2009 resolution);

WHEREAS the Proposal area includes Staunton Dam and Elkhorn Lake which supply pure drinking water for Staunton and a portion of Augusta County;

WHEREAS Wilderness designation of a 12,490-acre tract of the Little River Roadless Area (the largest roadless area on National Forest land east of the Mississippi River) would provide the strongest protection for a unique and special area;

WHEREAS designation of the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area (SMNSA) would protect the headwaters of Ramseys Draft, Calfpasture River, Jennings Branch, North River, and Little River streams, which support native brook trout;

WHEREAS designation of the SMNSA would serve to maintain mature forests that would enhance flood protection;

WHEREAS the Board supports outdoor recreational activities in the National Forest, including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, mountain biking, scenic driving, nature study, rock climbing, and horseback riding;

WHEREAS the SMNSA area includes outstanding recreational trails, including Wild Oak Recreation Trail, Shenandoah Mountain Trail, and a portion of the Great Eastern Trail;

WHEREAS the SMNSA includes the scenic North River Gorge, which is eligible to be a National Scenic River;

WHEREAS the GWNF Land and Resources Management Plan recommends the SMNSA, Ramseys Draft Wilderness Addition, and Little River Wilderness for Congressional designation;

WHEREAS Augusta County is opposed to hydrofracking on National Forest land (Oct. 28, 2010 letter to GW & Jefferson NF);

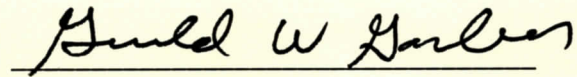
WHEREAS the Proposal would support the objectives of the county comprehensive plan;

WHEREAS the SMNSA Proposal has been endorsed by 400 businesses and organizations and by numerous farmers and neighboring landowners, many of which are in Augusta County;  
WHEREAS all current access roads would remain open within the Proposal area;  
WHEREAS the proposed boundaries of the SMNSA will be adjusted by 200 feet from roadway centerline to edge of National Scenic Area boundary;  
WHEREAS the National Scenic Area legislation will be written to support:

- maintenance of and improvements to existing dams and reservoirs within the proposal (Staunton Dam, Elkhorn Lake, and Todd Lake),
- tapping into existing reservoirs for municipal use, and
- establishment of new reservoirs, if needed, for the public good;

WHEREAS recreational facilities, such as North River Campground, Todd Lake Recreation Area, Staunton Dam Picnic Area, and the parking lot on Reddish Knob, could be maintained;  
WHEREAS trails may be maintained, and new trails constructed;  
WHEREAS prescribed fire may be conducted in the SMNSA;  
WHEREAS wildlife clearings in the SMNSA, such as those on Bald Mountain Road, may be maintained and some new clearings may be added;  
WHEREAS pests and non-native invasive species may be controlled, as determined necessary by the Forest Service;  
WHEREAS National Forest fire and rescue procedures and policies for both Wilderness and National Scenic Area would protect life and adjacent private property;  
WHEREAS members of the public may continue to gather firewood in the National Scenic Area with a National Forest permit;  
WHEREAS designation of the SMNSA pertains to National Forest land only and would in no way restrict private property rights of landowners adjacent to or within the area;  
WHEREAS designation of the SMNSA would support and enhance the local tourism economy and quality of life for county residents;  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Augusta County Board of Supervisors supports Congressional designation of the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area and embedded Wilderness areas.

Adopted  
6/26/19

  
Gerald Garber, Chairman  
Augusta County Board of Supervisors