

July 19, 2009

Steven W. Koehn  
State Forester  
Maryland Dept of Natural Resources  
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Steve,

During the comment period for the Green Ridge Annual Work Plan, our organization urged DNR to halt commercial logging in this particular forest. We have not received a response to our comment.

We pointed out that DNR logs 200+ acres per year, but has a gross annual revenue of only \$160,000. DNR does not keep track of costs on a per sale basis, as the Federal forest management agencies do. However, given the time (18+ months) to prepare for and conduct a sale and to monitor post-sale execution, we observed that DNR was likely losing money on these sales.

We pointed out that public forests are the only large tracts of forestland remaining in the State, because private forest are becoming increasingly fragmented and parcelized. Because demand for forest products is decreasing and mills are closing down, we questioned whether continued logging on public forests is even necessary. We pointed out that Green Ridge would be more valuable if it were not logged, providing ecosystem services and fostering the development of additional old-growth forests, a rarely seen phenomenon in this state.

We noted that the DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service has recently recommended that acreage approximating 25 percent of the Green Ridge general management area be set aside as an ecologically sensitive area.

We noted that logging opens up the canopy and permits the growth of invasive species. Garlic mustard is prevalent in Green Ridge. This particular species is able to trick the West Virginia white butterfly into depositing its eggs. When hatched, the larvae get no nutrition from the garlic mustard and die. Logging has other environmental consequences as well. It requires the construction of roads and trails, which causes additional fragmentation and erosion. And when large logging trucks enter the forest, they bring in additional invasive species on their tires.

Finally, our comment pointed out that logging increases the release of greenhouse gases, adding to global warming. This is occurring at a time when our Governor and legislature want to reduce the release of greenhouse gasses. Cutting down 200+ acres of trees in Green Ridge clearly falls under the category of unnecessary release of greenhouse gases.

For all these reasons, we urge DNR to seriously consider our comment and halt commercial logging in Green Ridge.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Lipson  
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Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement  
& Conservation  
Wheaton, MD  
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