

DNR
West Virginia
Division of
Natural Resources

Wildlife Resources Section
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CECIL H. UNDERWOOD
Governor

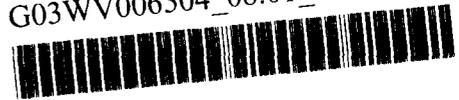
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August 22, 1997

Mr. James S. Everman
Chief, Planning Division
Huntington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
502 Eighth Street
Huntington, WV 25701-2070

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Dear Mr. Everman:

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) has reviewed the Dolly Sods North Ordnance Removal Project Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA). The DEA poses four alternatives: 1) Clearing Publicly Used Areas and Blackbird Knob Using Motorized Vehicles and Other Techniques; 2) Clearing Publicly Used Areas and Blackbird Knob Following Wilderness Techniques as Defined for Ordnance Removal at Dolly Sods Wilderness Area; 3) Clearing Old Roads, Travelways and Forest Service-designated Trails Only, Following Wilderness Techniques as Defined for Ordnance Removal at Dolly Sods Wilderness; and 4) No Action. Alternative 2 is designated the preferred alternative in the DEA.

The methods and techniques to be used to remove ordnance and the environmental and recreational safeguards associated with alternatives 1, 2 and 3 are acceptable to WVDNR. Alternative 4 (No Action) is unacceptable to WVDNR due to the current danger to public safety.

As stated in my April 24, 1997 correspondence to Ms. Vyas, the WVDNR endorses treatment of the upper reaches of Red Creek with limestone fines and prescribed burning of portions of the area to maintain its open character and to enhance ruffed grouse and snowshoe hare habitat. The WVDNR endorses Alternative 1 because it will result in ordnance removal over the maximum area in the shortest time. The area contains many roads and vehicle trails that have been historically used by motorized vehicles and are currently receiving limited use. Revegetation after project completion will likely result in a better, more natural situation than currently exists.

Sincerely,

Bernard F. Dowler, Chief
Wildlife Resources Section

BFD\jrk



West Virginia
Make It Shine