

Stewart & Stapleford, LLC

Attorneys at Law

600 Market Street, Warren, Pennsylvania 16365

Arthur J. Stewart, Esquire
Andrea L. Stapleford, Esquire
Christopher M. Byham, Esquire

Telephone: (814) 723-3445
Facsimile: (814) 723-7950

*PETER
BOARD ACTION*

JUL 26 2006

July 25, 2006

To: All Municipalities and School Districts in Elk, Forest,
McKean and Warren Counties

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you may be aware, the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan for the Allegheny National Forest has been published. This Plan will determine how the Forest is managed in terms of timber production, recreation, development, etc. for the foreseeable future. The Plan presents four alternative management plans and identifies alternative C as the preferred alternative.

The Code of Federal Regulations requires that local government entities be provided early, meaningful, and frequent involvement in the planning process for the Allegheny National Forest. It is the opinion of many municipalities and school districts in the area that the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan was adopted without sufficient input from local government entities, which is unacceptable given the significant social and economic impacts that the Allegheny National Forest has on local communities.

Additionally, in 2005 a number of local government agencies passed a resolution outlining twelve points that they supported with regard to future planning for the Allegheny National Forest. To a great extent, these points were ignored by the planning team when the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan was being developed.

Due to the fact that local government entities were not provided with the type of involvement required by the Code of Federal Regulations, an ad hoc committee comprised of a number of local government officials has identified several shortcomings in the preferred alternative C. These shortcomings include, but are not necessarily limited to, alternative C's lack of adequately addressing the following issues: a departed harvest schedule for timber cutting; additional alternatives for shoreline management and developed recreation; an economic analysis considering the effect of divestiture of federally owned property within the Allegheny National Forest; the effect of oil, gas, and mineral development on the forest in general, and specifically on those areas designated

All Municipalities and School Districts in Elk, Forest,
McKean and Warren Counties
Page 2
July 25, 2006

as potential wilderness areas; and the potential for increased motorized recreation in the Allegheny National Forest.

We are currently in the comment period, during which time local government entities can submit input on the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan. The Allegheny National Forest is required to consider and respond to such comments. The deadline for the submission of comments is August 28, 2006.

The ad hoc committee discussed above is currently in the process of drafting detailed comments on the plan, and specifically on alternative C of the Plan. These comments will address the areas of concern enumerated above, as well as other areas of concern not specifically listed above.

If you are interested in submitting similar comments on the Plan, the ad hoc committee asks that you please pass the enclosed Resolution at your next meeting. The Resolution authorizes the Chairman (in the case of a municipality) or the Superintendent (in the case of a school district) to approve the submission of comments by the August 28 deadline.

Once the Resolution has been passed, the ad hoc committee will provide you with copies of its detailed comments on the Plan and alternative C. The Chairman or Superintendent could then (1) approve the submission of these comments in their entirety, (2) choose only those comments that are relevant and submit these comments, (3) create unique comments, or (4) submit a combination of comments provided by the ad hoc committee and unique comments.

Given the extraordinary social and economic impact that the Allegheny National Forest has on Elk, Forest, McKean, and Warren Counties, the ad hoc committee strongly encourages you to adopt the Resolution and submit comments on the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan. If a united front can be presented from a broad array of local government entities in the form of comments on the Plan, there is a greater likelihood that the Plan will have to be reformulated in order to be more consistent with the goals and objectives that local government agencies have for the Allegheny National Forest.

All Municipalities and School Districts in Elk, Forest,
McKean and Warren Counties

Page 3

July 25, 2006

In the event that you would like to submit comments, please pass the enclosed Resolution and contact me as soon as possible to ensure that you receive a copy of the comments drafted by the ad hoc committee. Also, please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding the Resolution or the process for submitting comments.

I hope that this information has been helpful, and the ad hoc committee sincerely hopes that you choose to participate in the public comment process.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Christopher M. Byham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher M. Byham, Esquire

Enclosure