

August 31, 2009

David K. Baker
US Army Corps of Engineers
151 Patton Avenue, Room 208
Asheville, NC 28801-5006

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING TIP A9, Sections B and C
(Stecoah to Robbinsville section)

Dear Mr. Baker:

My husband and I own property on the trout stream Stecoah Creek in Graham County, NC. As I am sure you know, this creek, which drains the watershed around Stecoah, rambles and meanders through beautiful farmland on its way to Fontana Lake and the rivers, lakes, and lands beyond.

We are concerned about the waters of our country and particularly about the waters of this area that we, along with so many, love and cherish. We appreciate all that you and the Corps of Engineers have done to protect the Tuckasegee, the Nantahala, the Cheoah and the Little Tennessee Rivers.

We beg of you to do all within your power to stop this proposed four-lane roadway which would be so destructive to the Stecoah area and its waters and most surely cause extensive stream pollution in Stecoah Creek. This pollution would, of course, wind up in the Little Tennessee and Tennessee Rivers.

Please consider the slope instability of the rock formations and the likelihood of extensive stream pollution from the acidic release from pyritic rock. **Please** consider the people and fish and cattle and deer and turkey and bear and other animals that drink from and use the waters that will be compromised.

Why? Why should such chances be taken to build this road? I just do not understand.

Why should these chances not be taken?

In 1972, Graham County published the Centennial Book. Several quotes are of interest here. In the chapter entitled "Wildlife and Forest Resources in Graham County," it is stated that "Graham County has, since its conception, been known as a land teeming with wildlife of considerable variety. Its citizens have ever been eager to defend and promote its wildlife status against those who would trample and destroy its game yet ever eager to enjoy hunting and fishing to the fullest."

In the discussion of the dedication of Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest on July 30, 1936, it is stated that **“Notice was served to the world that the exploitation and desecration of our forestlands had come to an end.”**

The long chapter ends with two interesting paragraphs:

“Recreation is now a major activity. Boat launching sites have been developed on lakeshores. Backpackers from distant parts use the Appalachian Trail. Improved campgrounds at Horse Cove, Cable Cove, Cheoah Point, and Tsali attract many people. The European wild boar has brought in hunters. **Trout fishing ranks with the best in the east.** New roads offer more scenery to the motorist. Fontana is a major resort.”

“As the resources and facilities of the Cheoah Ranger District became better known and available, they attracted more people. Each group wanted preference and priority for its favored activity. Some conflicts developed. **Controversies are indicative of national interest in Graham County attractions.** In time, they may be viewed as fortunate since they should lead to the best possible solutions for the benefits of most people. **Good management and wise use of National Forest resources will provide Graham County with a sound economic base for the future. May its citizens always be happy with freedom, space, clean air, clean water, and a respect for nature.**”

I do not believe that the NCDOT has adequately considered alternatives to this proposed environmentally destructive road project. **There are alternatives** but evidence is lacking that NCDOT has really examined them as they are required by law to do.

Mr. Baker, please remember as you study this issue that once this damage is done, it cannot be undone. Remember the desires expressed above that the citizens of Graham County might always have clean air and clean water.

This Graham County property owner asks you to please record my strongest possible opposition to the building of the destructive, wasteful, and polluting Stecoah to Robbinsville section of the Corridor K roadway project.

Thank you for all that you are doing to protect our waters and us.

Sarah H. Lassiter
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