



**North Carolina
Wildlife Federation**

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation
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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:

It is my understanding that for the US Army Corps of Engineers to even consider granting authorization for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) proposal to build a massive, four-lane highway between Stecoah and Robbinsville, NCDOT must show that it has adequately considered alternatives to such an environmentally-destructive project, yet I find no such references to those requirements.

The proposed, new, four-lane roadway would be massively degrading to the waters of the United States in this pristine areas, as well as to the valuable natural and historic assets of the region which generate millions of dollars in annual recreational revenue to the mountain region, including scenic trails, trout streams, hunting habitat, campgrounds, recreational businesses and historic sites.

The current level of examination by NCDOT of the impact of altering the geology of the area, by moving these mountains to build this road, is at best minimal if not largely lacking. Of major concern are the slope instability of the rock formations and the likelihood of extensive stream pollution from the acidic release from the pyritic rock.

Why have alternatives to this environmental destruction not been addressed, such as the improvement of existing roads between the two points (US 129 and NC 143)?

It is the opinion of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation that the NCDOT proposal is not only environmentally and fiscally flawed, but that it doesn't even meet the USACOE requirements for its consideration. Such a large and destructive project necessitates much further review of possible alternatives.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Respectfully,

Tim Gestwicki
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Executive Director