

Why Wilderness?

Read what some supporters of the *Virginia Ridge and Valley Act 2007* have to say

The promise of increasing economic development in Virginia through tourism is vested in the preservation of our natural and scenic resources for recreation. Our tourists are starved for a wilderness experience as more and more seek outdoor recreation opportunities in their travels. The Virginia Tourism Corporation is committed to creating a sustainable economy through the proper use of our natural resources.

**Alisa Bailey, President & CEO
Virginia Tourism Corporation**

The County of Bland has identified tourism as a significant tool in stimulating retail and commercial developments, as well as entrepreneurial opportunities for our citizens. One aspect of this is to feature wilderness areas. Designation of the three proposed areas in Bland County would enhance our natural attributes, which include some 74,000 acres of National Forest, 56 miles of Appalachian Trail, the Big Walker Scenic Byway, and the overall scenic beauty of Bland County, Virginia.

Jonathan Sweet, Bland County Administrator

The Garden Club of Virginia strives for preservation and beautification of open spaces, historic areas and environmentally sensitive habitats by promoting responsible, effective land use planning. We consider these activities essential to the Commonwealth's long-term economic health. The Board of Directors of the Garden Club of Virginia has voted to endorse this wilderness legislation. This is a "first" for our organization, because it has been our custom to concentrate on environmental legislation at the state level. We feel strongly, however, that passage of this wilderness bill will have a positive and lasting effect on the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Jocelyn Connors, Lynchburg
Conservation Chairwoman
Garden Club of Virginia**

I offer my enthusiastic support of the Virginia wilderness initiative. As the owner of two outdoor stores in Southwest Virginia, I understand the value of this initiative in terms of its impact on travel and tourism across the Commonwealth. Most everyone I



know senses an increasing need to escape our busy and distracted lives, and we need wild places in which to do so. At Blue Ridge Outdoors, we like to say that what we sell is a lifestyle, not just products. By preserving more wilderness, we can be certain that this healthful way of living will remain available to all Virginians for generations to come.

**Bill Wilson, Owner
Blue Ridge Outdoors Outfitters
Roanoke and Blacksburg**

Since the 2000 passage of a wilderness bill for The Priest and Three Ridges, two majestic mountains in my backyard, Nelson County has benefited from increased eco-tourism as outdoor enthusiasts have traveled to the county, spending money at local businesses along the way. We here in Nelson County have benefited from protecting that which we cherish.

**Kim Cash, Montebello
Field Officer for Rural Nelson (nonprofit)
Volunteer and former Lieutenant with Montebello
Volunteer Fire and Rescue**

As a bear hunter I support the wilderness bill. Wilderness is essential for black bear habitat since they need these secluded areas in which to raise their young. Vehicular traffic, use of chain saws, and people, in general, disturb such a habitat. While I find some usefulness in small timber cuts to provide food for all wildlife these cuts should be restricted to the more developed areas of the forests.

**James H. Bradley, Paint Bank
Bradley Hunt Club (~65 members)**

I strongly support the wilderness bill and all attempts to protect the mountains of Virginia. I was born and raised on the north side of Potts Mountain, in sight of the Shawvers Run and Mountain Lake Wilderness Areas. My husband and I live on a 60-acre farm surrounded by national forest on three sides. For many years, the forests managed themselves and did a good job of it. I cringe at the thought of some of the 'management practices' that I have observed through the years.

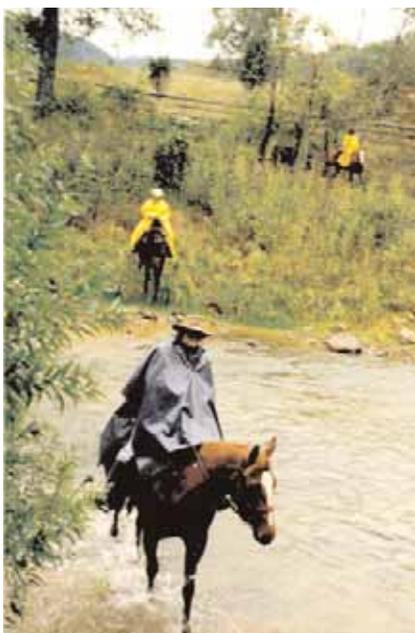
Carrie B. Crawford, New Castle

We have lived in Montgomery County for more than 40 years, and have hiked in many parts of the Jefferson National Forest. We believe that an important use of the national forests includes wilderness, preserving large tracts of undisturbed forests where natural processes take precedence over cutting trees. Logging on private lands maintains plenty of habitat for most game species and some non-game species.

David and Lindsay West, Blacksburg

**David is a retired Virginia Tech biology professor
Lindsay is former chairwoman of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors**

I began working to support this effort to expand Wilderness areas in Virginia to ensure the continued availability of clean drinking water for our community by protecting our intact, native forests, and enhance my small "bring your own horse" campground business. As a Christian, I am charged with protecting God's Creation. This bill holds no negatives as I try to live my life according to my faith.



Annie Malone, Sugar Grove

Owner of Kissing Rock Camp horse-riding camp

Virginia is a great place to watch and study birds, in part due to the varied regions and habitats, from the Eastern shore to the Blue Ridge mountains. As a boy, I was endlessly fascinated by birds, leading me to become a professional biologist. Many bird species, especially those that migrate to the tropics, have undergone serious declines in my lifetime. These species face many threats, including reduced breeding success in eastern forests fragmented by agricultural lands, urban areas, roads, and other human-induced changes. Wilderness designation is the best way I know to protect our remaining tracts of undisturbed forest and the species of birds that depend on them. I strongly support legislation to expand wilderness in Virginia.



Paul Cabe, Ph.D.

Biology Department

Washington & Lee University

Editor, *The Raven*, Journal of the Virginia Society of Ornithology

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) strongly supports the proposed *Virginia Ridge and Valley Act* because it protects pristine lands in the Jefferson National Forest while accommodating existing areas important to mountain bicyclists. Virginia wilderness advocates adjusted boundaries of the six proposed wilderness areas, where bicycling is prohibited, to avoid trails that are significant to bicyclists. In two areas where many bicycling trails exist, the coalition is proposing National Scenic Area designation to allow us to continue to enjoy these areas, while protecting them from roadbuilding, logging and structures. We urge Congress to speedily enact the *Virginia Ridge and Valley Act*.

Jenn Dice, Government Affairs Director

International Mountain Bicycling Association

**For further information, visit
www.VirginiaWilderness.org**