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# Town will oppose forest service plan

JEFF LESTER • NEWS EDITOR Jan 12, 2018

**COEBURN —** Town council will formally object to the U.S. Forest Service’s draft approval of the Nettle Patch “vegetation management” project.

Council agreed Monday to direct Town Manager Drew Mullins and town attorney Will Sturgill to draft and send an objection letter.

Mayor Jeff Kiser noted that former Clinch District ranger Barry Garten issued the draft approval decision in December, and that “the scope of work has changed.”



Garten tentatively approved a plan that scales back the previously proposed acreage of several types of timber harvests and other vegetation management practices.

However, Kiser said, he doesn’t think the size of the project has changed drastically. Meanwhile, the forest service still has not adequately addressed the town’s concerns about property it owns nearby in the Machine Creek area, he said.

Vice Mayor Sharon Still added that the town has consistently sent written comments of concern as the Nettle Patch project has developed, so Coeburn now has standing to make a formal objection.

Council agreed its objection will focus on its consistent theme: That its nearby property must be

protected both as a potential water source and a potential space for outdoor recreation and scenic beauty.

Garten's draft decision kicked off a 45-day objection period that ends Feb. 4. The decision will not become final until the objection period ends.



Objections will be accepted only from people “who have previously submitted specific written comments” regarding the project during the scoping process or other public comment opportunities, the decision letter notes. Objections must meet the requirements in the Code of Federal Regulation, section 218.8(b) and 218.8(d).

Written objections must be filed with: Reviewing Officer Joby P. Timm, Forest Supervisor, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, 5162 Valleypointe Parkway, Roanoke, Va., 24019-3050.

Electronic objections can be filed to [objections-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us](mailto:objections-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us). State “Nettle Patch Vegetation Project” in the subject line.

Anyone with questions may contact Interdisciplinary Team Leader Shelby Williams at 276/679-8370.

