**Preserve Giles County**

P.O. Box 302
Newport, VA 24128

 February 20, 2023

Dr. Homer Wilkes, Under Secretary,

U.S. Department of Agriculture.

George Washington & Jefferson National Forests,

MVP Project,

5162 Valleypointe Parkway,

Roanoke, VA 24019

I write on behalf of Preserve Giles County, a citizen-led organization formed to prevent the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline LLC (MVP) through our forests, streams and wetlands. Preserve Giles County asks that you **decide not to amend your Forest Management Plan, thereby rejecting** MVP’s application for passage through the Jefferson National Forest. During the past eight years we have witnessed and documented the continuing harm caused by MVP to our streams, our wetlands, and our spring-fed drinking water. We here on the ground are witness to its destruction of our forests, our viewsheds, our very communities. We place great value on our proximity to the Jefferson National Forest and avail ourselves of its many restorative features: its pristine streams, it’s old growth and wilderness areas, its peace and quiet. We are hikers, foragers, water monitors, wildlife protectors and bird watchers.

Our citizens live on and next to property that borders Sinking Creek, Stoney Creek, Little Stoney Creek, Kimbalton Branch, Craig Creek and Greenbriar Branch and have submitted many reports on the harm to these streams caused by the upland construction activities of MVP and its unsuccessful attempts at mitigating the erosion and sedimentation to the streams and wetlands both near and far from its Right of Way. After many weather events we have documented sediment flowing off the ROW and into the above named streams by photographic as well as hydrotesting methods. Permanent sedimentation has already been recorded and documented. MVP has a documented record proving that it is incapable of mitigating both temporary and permanent damage to these waterways. The supplemental information it has submitted does nothing to belie evidence that it will cause lasting, irreversible damage to the forest and water resources and endangered species of the Jefferson National Forest.

I have studied both the previous Amendment attempt by the Forest Service to amend its Forest Plan and this new attempt, and I am appalled by the spurious manner in which each amendment is handled.

In this new attempt to grant MVP carte blanche to trench its way through the JNF, each proposed amendment change waves a green flag to MVP with the introductory phrase “*with the exception of the MVP construction zone and right-of-way…..”* thereby providing that carte blanche, only curtailed by the mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs) MVP says will work. Our communities’ on-the-ground observations are that MVP’s BMPs are incapable of mitigating damage.

Regarding the five endangered species documented in the JNF, FS staff agree that there is no way that these species can be avoided and construction “is likely” to adversely affect them. That is unacceptable and is sufficient reason to not amend the Forest Plan in regards to endangered species.

 The fact that MVP still lacks permits to cross hundreds of streams, creeks and wetlands is proof that the damage it has and will cause cannot be mitigated. Even the Environmental Protection Agency has gone on record as having multiple concerns over its construction and its effect on endangered species in the waterways yet to be crossed, including those in the JNF. I urge the Forest Service to take no Action on this permit.

Respectfully,



Donna S. Pitt

Coordinator,

Preserve Giles County

Respectfully yours,



Donna S. Pitt

Coordinator, Preserve Giles County