



Friends of the Cheat

FRIENDS OF THE CHEAT

1343 North Preston Highway | Kingwood, WV 26537 | www.cheat.org

05/11/2023

To: Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy
Project Leader
Northern Research Station
PO Box 368
Parsons, WV 26287

On behalf of Friends of the Cheat, a non-profit watershed organization based in Kingwood, West Virginia, I would like to express our immense support for the Ellick Run Stream Restoration Project to draw down the Ellick Reservoir in the Fernow Experimental Forest. We support full removal of the dam that creates the reservoir as well as the stream restoration activities to restore Ellick Run to its pre-dam conditions.

Removal of the Ellick Reservoir and subsequent stream restoration activities would reconnect fish and wildlife passage upstream and downstream of the current dam location and allow sediment and woody material to move naturally throughout the system. The dam is deteriorating with visual structural erosion documented. Removing this obsolete dam would eliminate an unnecessary hazard to the public and downstream habitat if failure of the dam were to occur. The reservoir has not been used as a municipal water supply for over 25 years, been inspected in 25 years, nor has had maintenance performed in 40 years; these factors suggest it is time to remove the man-made feature and restore the stream to a more natural condition.

Friends of the Cheat has special interest in this project as the Ellick Reservoir is within the boundaries of the Cheat River Watershed. We value restoring critical habitat and connectivity of our streams as well as reducing potential risks to the public and downstream habitat. As such, our organization is in staunch support of the proposed restoration work and removal of the dam.

Sincerely,

Madison Ball
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