

Join us for the 2006 "Tour de Cut"

The Tour de Cut is a fun and educational hike highlighting the scenic wildlands of Virginia's George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. We will take a look at some unique areas in this 400,000 acre ranger district, which has some of the largest and most significant wildlands found in the southern Appalachian national forests. The hike also highlights the serious threats these lands face today.

Dates: July 15th & 16th

Location: Deerfield Ranger District near Staunton, Va (first day) and Glenwood Ranger District near Lexington, Va. (second day).

Day One - Saturday July 15 - Two Part Hike.

[See below for detailed information on directions, meeting places, and meeting times]

Our first stop will be the site of a recent timber sale just outside Elliott Knob, an inventoried roadless area. Extensive logging has taken place in a low-lying area with 120 year old trees very close to Montgomery Run. The hike to and from this area involves a road walk that is approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours long.

Lunch: We will break for lunch at the Augusta Springs Picnic Area and Wetlands Trail boardwalk (please bring your own bag lunch).

In the afternoon, we will hike the George Camp Trail in the Signal Corps Knob area, a beautiful area with mature forests, remote habitat for wildlife, and old growth forests south of Ramseys Draft Wilderness. Thanks to citizen efforts, this unique area was saved from a 230 acre timber sale in the Spring of 2006. This approx. 5 mi. hike [4 mi. of hiking on a trail with moderately steep climbs and 1 mi. of hiking on a closed road] is rated "moderate" difficulty by the National Geographic Trails Illustrated map series.

Evening - Day One - Saturday July 15 - Group Camping Following the hikes, those who wish to join us can travel to the Hopper Creek Group Camping area, near Thunder Ridge wilderness area. Facilities at this rustic group camping area include: large group tent pads, picnic tables, group campfire circle, and vault toilets. Please bring food and equipment to cook for yourself or to share with others, or locate a nearby restaurant, if you wish. For more information about the site, see http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/gp/recreation/camping/hopper_creek.shtml

Day Two - Sunday July 16 - Workshop on the Future of the G.Washington National Forest.

9:30AM. Today we are planning an important public workshop focusing on the **George Washington National Forest Plan Revision**, scheduled to begin this fall. The plan revision will set the direction for the one-million acre George Washington National Forest for the next 10-15 years. The George Washington National Forest is one of the largest national forests in the southern Appalachians. Unless we act together, the roadless areas, wildlife habitat, and watersheds of this national forest will not receive the protection they need. The workshop will take place at the picnic shelter and pavilion at Cave Mountain Lake recreation area, just east of Natural Bridge Station, in the Glenwood Ranger District.

Detailed Directions, Meeting Location, and Meeting Times:

To the meeting area for the Saturday Hike (Day One - July 15):

From the Southwest (on I-81)

Take I-81 to exit 191. This is I-64 West. Take I-64 west to exit 55. At the stop sign turn left. Proceed about 0.5 miles to a park and ride lot on the left. This lot is gravel and is located at a "T" intersection. **We will meet at this juncture at 9AM and carpool to the site of the hike.**

From the East (on I-64)

At the I-64/I-81 junction near Staunton, turn onto I-81 North. At Exit 225 (of I-81), turn left onto Rt 275 (going west). Follow Rt. 275. Turn right onto Rt. 250 (going west). At Churchville, turn left onto Rt. 42 (going south). You will pass through the town of Buffalo Gap. Remain on Rt. 42 (going right at the "Y" shaped intersection near Buffalo Gap). Approx. 7 mi. from Buffalo Gap on Rt. 42, look for Forest Service signs for the Augusta Springs picnic area and wetlands trail on your right (to the west). Park at the parking area and meet the group for the hike. **The hike will depart from this location at approx. 9:30-9:45AM.**

From the North (on I-81)

Take I-81 to Exit 225. At Exit 225 (on I-81), turn right onto Rt 275 (going west). Follow Rt. 275. Turn right onto Rt. 250 (going west). At Churchville, turn left onto Rt. 42 (going south). You will pass through the town of Buffalo Gap. Remain on Rt. 42 (going right at the "Y" shaped intersection near Buffalo Gap). Approx. 7 mi. from Buffalo Gap, look for Forest Service signs for the Augusta Springs picnic area and wetlands trail on your right (to the west). Park at the parking area and meet the group for the hike. **The hike will depart from this location at approx. 9:30-9:45AM.**

To the group camping area (Saturday evening - Day One - July 15):

Hopper Creek Group Camp

From I-81 take exit 175 or 180 to Natural Bridge. Once at Natural Bridge turn onto Va 130. Follow 130 for 3.2 miles and turn right onto Va 759. Follow 759 for 4.7 miles to the campground.

To the picnic pavilion (Workshop- Day Two - July 16):

Cave Mountain Lake Recreation Area

From I-81 take exit 175 or 180A to Natural Bridge. Once at Natural Brige, turn onto State Route 130 East approximately 3.2 miles then turn right on SR 759 for 3.2 miles. Turn right on SR 781, Cave Mountain Lake is approximately 1.6 miles on the left. We will meet at the picnic pavilion and surrounding area. Look for signs around the picnic pavilion. **The workshop will begin at 9:30AM.**

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For further details, check the websites for the following organizations for future updates:

Sierra Club	www.virginia.sierraclub.org
Virginia Forest Watch	www.virginiaforestwatch.org
Wild Virginia	www.wildvirginia.org

If are interested in joining us in this "Tour de Cut" or have questions, please contact Sherman Bamford at bamford@rev.net, (540) 343-6359 or Dave Muhly (Sierra Club) at (276) 688-2190.

Other groups and individuals are encouraged to arrange their own carpools to the meeting sites.