

June 6, 2018

DEQ
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

My name is Mary Alissa Wilson and my address is 980 Braley Pond Road, West Augusta, Virginia, 24485. My phone number is (434) 293-7471.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns about the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline crossing the Calfpasture River/Dowell's Draft and Braley Branch, near my home on Braley Pond Road as well as my business on Hankey Mountain Highway where the crossing is Stoutameyer Creek.

Eight years ago, my husband and I retired to the most beautiful mountain area we have ever explored. We are in the George Washington National Forest daily, appreciating its glory on a regular basis. We are bird watchers, nature photographers, hikers, wild mushroom foragers, consumers of the amazing mountain water, leaders for mushroom/lichen hikes for two non-profits (Wild Virginia and Friends of Shenandoah Mountain), hosts for folks living in DC who need a break from the city through Friends Committee for National Legislation, and so much more. Our daughter was married on our property here. My sisters have healed from devastating illnesses on our property here. The air and water quality is what has made that happen. We have worked hard to be good stewards of the land we have been blessed to care for.

When ACP subcontractors removed the trees on Braley Pond Road, the bird songs immediately changed, most remarkably the call of the owl. Clearly displaced and confused, it was not the normal call. That is just one small example of the things we risk losing if you allow the ACP to come through our pristine forests.

The Braley Pond area is heavily used for recreation. Many trails are available for horseback riding, biking (both on and off road), foot races, picnickers, fishermen, boaters, campers and more.

I feel that there is a direct link between the use of the streams that the ACP would cross and how that has already and will (if the pipeline receives your approval) affect the crossings. These high quality waters are a vital part of our use and enjoyment of the areas for all of the activities listed above. The reality is that our experiences will be harmed by the construction of a pipeline through the stream and riparian area. The removal of the forest in the vicinity of the stream and its replacement forever with shrubs and grass cannot provide for the same quality of experiences and uses of those waters. Even if all of the Corps of Engineers' permit requirements are met, my use will still be impaired or even eliminated in those particular areas—the Corps admits as much.

It's important to remember that the impacts of sediment released during construction are not prohibited by the Corps' permit, merely required to be minimized to some unknown degree. Those releases could matter to our use of streams, as well as the groundwater.

Also, under Virginia's water quality standards, antidegradation requirements prohibit degrading the conditions in high quality waters by any degree without justifying the lowering by showing economic or social necessity in the area where water quality would be affected—this they can't do.

It is hard to explain just how special this place is and I encourage you, from wherever you might be, to come yourself. I would be happy to provide your lodging and show you the area. If you could only see, I do think you would quickly realize how such construction would negatively impact our community.

I can make that offer because not only do we own property on Braley Pond Road but, a few miles east we own an old diner (White's Wayside – find us on Facebook) and bed & breakfast/event space (MillStone House). Thus, another crossing that impacts us is the ACP Stoutameyer Creek crossing. White's Wayside (formerly WhiteWay) was established in 1929 and is famous for its bread. We acquired these two properties about 6 years ago (clearly retirement failed!) and spent four years and a whole lot of money to bring back the community resource that had been abandoned for over two years. I was fortunate to learn the original bread recipe from a third generation White who was born and raised in this historic building. Our well is certified as a public well and the bread recipe's "secret" ingredient is the water. I have tried to make the bread in other locations and it has failed unless I used water from here. With ACP proposed to be right behind the ridge from the diner, that public water supply is threatened. Threatened not only if leaks happen (which they will and we all know it)—but threatened by the depletion of the water supply from over usage from the ACP construction. The diner is thriving, embraced by the local community and tourists alike. Please don't allow our business to be threatened. Not only the financial loss, the loss of jobs (we have 20 employees) but, more importantly would be the loss the community would feel as there are no nearby options for food and socialization.

Last year, we decided to install solar panels to power the diner and MillStone House. This was a huge project that required 12 trees to be removed. A bat survey was undertaken and we had endangered bats which delayed the project for six months. We waited for the bats to leave, despite the loss of generating our own power because we recognize the need to live in harmony with our environment.

I sincerely hope that the Department of Environmental Quality insures the environmental quality of the water that begins here and flows to so many of our citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Please keep in mind that this is our DRINKING water...and yours!

Thank you so much for reading this lengthy letter. Feel free to call me if you have questions or would like to schedule a visit to this pristine forest that I would very much like to leave as it is and preserve for future generations.

Sincerely,

Mary Alissa Wilson

Milepost and GPS coordinates of relevant crossings referenced above:

ACP crossing of Braley Branch, MP 116.5, GPS 38.28020, -79.29783

ACP crossing of wetland (1 of 2) adjacent to Braley Branch, MP 116.5, GPS 38.28048, -79.29778

ACP crossing of wetland (2 of 2) adjacent to Braley Branch, MP 116.5, GPS 38.28033, -79.29768

ACP Calfpasture River crossings:

MP 111.4, 112.2, 113.5, and 116.7

GPS 38.21516, -79.36678; 38.22731, -79.35349; 38.24814, -79.33632; and 38.28148, -79.29415

ACP crossings of Stoutameyer Branch and three unnamed tributaries:

MP 120.6, 120.7, 120.9, and 121.1

GPS 38.29128, -79.23179; 38.29160, -79.22941; 38.29047, -79.22640; and 38.28954, -79.22316

GPS coordinates for the diner are 38.283839,-79.229554. This shows how close our public well at the diner is to the pipeline route.