

**Legal Notice-Opportunity to Comment
Gandy Creek Dispersed Group Site**

The Monongahela National Forest, accordance with 36 CFR 215, is conducting a 30-day comment period on its Gandy Creek Dispersed Group Site proposal. The Monongahela National Forest proposes to construct a group site in the Gandy Creek dispersed camping area intended for and accommodating group, recreational vehicle, and horse campers. The project area is located on the Cheat-Potomac Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia along State Road 29 northwest of Spruce Knob Lake campground. This action is needed to meet the growing demand for group, recreational vehicle, and horse campers in the Gandy Creek dispersed camping area. An interdisciplinary team of Monongahela National Forest resource specialists and managers analyzed suitable sites that could provide the desired recreation opportunities. In addition to input by Forest Service specialists, consideration of public input is a vital component of the analysis and decision making process.

Three alternatives are to be fully analyzed. Under Alternative A—the No Action Alternative—current plans and policies would guide management of the project area and no construction would occur. This alternative is analyzed and disclosed in order to serve as a baseline comparison for any action alternative. The two action alternatives—Alternative B, Lafe Hedrick Hollow site and Alternative C, Leading Ridge Trailhead site—both propose to construct a dispersed group site that would accommodate recreational vehicles, group campers, and horse trailers. With the new horse camping opportunities designed for both action alternatives, horse camping would be prohibited in the Johnny Meadows dispersed group site allowing more group camping opportunities there with less user conflict. The two action alternatives are differentiated by their location, site design, cost of implementation, and associated environmental impacts.

A complete environmental assessment (EA) has not been prepared at this time and no decision has been made. A complete EA will be prepared as permitted by our revised regulations for notice, comment and appeal (36 CFR 215, published in Federal Register Vol. 68, No. 107, pages 33581-33602). **There will be no further public comment period at the time of final publishing.** This comment period ends 30 calendar days following the date of publication of this legal notice in the official newspaper of record, the Grant County Press. Only those who submit timely and substantive comments will be accepted as appellants. To be eligible for appeal, each individual or organization representative submitting substantive comments must provide a name, address, and sign the comments or, for electronic submissions, verify their identity upon request.

This proposal will be available on our website at www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf under *Forest Planning*. To receive a paper copy and/or to submit your comments, please contact the responsible official: Jeff Hammes, Cheat-Potomac Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest, HC 59 Box 240, Petersburg, West Virginia, 26487. Send electronic comments to comments-eastern-monongahela-cheat@fs.fed.us and facsimile comments to (304) 257-2482. Acceptable formats for electronic comments are text and HTML e-mail, Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF), and Microsoft Office formats. Hand deliver comments between the hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, at the Ranger District Office in Petersburg, West Virginia. For additional information or to provide comments by phone, contact Garth Smelser at (304) 257-4488 ext. 24 during the same office hours.