



VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

Resolution Opposing Construction of the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Natural Gas Pipelines

Background: Two major natural gas pipelines have been proposed to be built that will cut across hundreds of miles of Virginia. Both will be large, with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, proposed by Dominion, slated to be 42 inches in diameter, the largest natural gas pipe that is produced. It will enter Virginia in Highland County from fracking fields in West Virginia, and will exit the state to North Carolina through Greensville County. A 20 inch lateral pipeline would stretch from Greensville County to the Hampton Roads area.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline, announced by EQT and NextEra Energy, would be either 36 or 42 inches and run from West Virginia through Giles, Pulaski, Montgomery, Roanoke, Franklin and Henry counties before terminating at a facility in Chatham in Pittsylvania County.

Construction of these pipelines will require a temporary 125 foot right-of-way in order to dig a ten foot deep trench to lay the pipe, followed by a 75 foot permanent right-of-way.

While the exact route these two pipelines will finally take is not yet determined, as proposed they will threaten a number of natural areas in Virginia. Among them are:

- Elliot's Knob in Pastures, Virginia, a spectacular alpine meadow area with species like Painted Trillium, Canada Lily, Clintonia, and more
- Shale barrens in the whole mountain range around Elliot's Knob with occurrences such as the rare Kate's Mountain Clover
- Maple Flats with a warren of large sinkholes and the endemic species Virginia Sneezeweed
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Mill Creek Springs Natural Area Preserve which supports globally rare Red Cedar-Chinkapin Oak dolomite woodland community as well as rare invertebrate species
- Bald Knob-Rocky Mount conservation site
- Several conservation easements including the North Fork Roanoke River Nature Conservancy Preserve, a cave conservancy

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In addition, both pipelines will cut through the Monongahela and George Washington National Forests, cross the Blue Ridge Parkway, and intersect hundreds of creeks, rivers and wetlands, opening up a pathway for invasive species like *Microstegium vimineum* (Japanese Stiltgrass).

In sum, these two pipeline projects propose to pass through some of the most biodiverse regions that occur in the United States. They are recognized as “hotspots” by both the Nature Conservancy and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Natural Heritage.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Virginia Native Plant Society, in accordance with its mission to protect the natural areas of Virginia, **opposes** the construction of the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines.

October 30, 2014
Date



Nancy Vehrs
President