



For Immediate Release
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West Virginia Sportsmen Support Birthplace of Rivers National Monument

(Charleston, September 23, 2013) – Today, the West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited and the Sportsmen Alliance for Marcellus Conservation expressed their support for the proposal to designate the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument in West Virginia. The full proposal can be found at www.birthplaceofrivers.org/proposal.html.

“This area is one of West Virginia’s greatest assets for trout, particularly for our state fish, the native brook trout. A national monument designation would provide needed protection from degradation activities for this important resource and symbol of our sporting heritage,” said Philip Smith, Chair, West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited. “Sportsmen have played a key role in defining the proposal in such a way that further protects iconic resources and maintains important access for hunting, trapping, fishing and management by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.”

With six trout-heavy watersheds located within its potential boundaries, the area within the proposal provides world-class experiences for sportsmen. It is the most popular fishing destination in the Mountain State and is home to healthy populations of bear, deer, turkey and most other West Virginia game species.

“With an increasing number of industrial threats to the public lands and waters in our region, it is essential that we create stronger protections for high-priority areas to ensure we have clean water and critical habitat for fish and wildlife,” said Kip Adams from Quality Deer Management Association. The Sportsmen Alliance for Marcellus Conservation – comprised of hunters, anglers and habitat managers – has named the Monongahela National Forest a priority area in need of additional protection. “We simply feel this special area is too important *not* to set it aside and protect sporting access for future generations.”

The monument proposal would have the United States Forest Service continue to manage the area. The area would continue to be managed for fish and game resources under the direction of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR).

As monument designation would permanently protect the area from potential industrial activities and new road construction that could damage the area’s watershed or wildlife habitat.

“This proposal ensures that our thriving recreation-based economy will continue to create jobs for Pocahontas County and bring positive attention to what West Virginia has to offer visitors,” commented Gil Willis, flyfishing outfitter and owner of the Elk River Inn and Restaurant in Slatyfork, WV. “In addition, a national monument guarantees that future generations of hunters and fishermen will always have truly wild places to visit in the Mountain State.”

“As a sportsmen’s organization it was important to be involved in the proposal discussion in order to make this historic conservation designation suits our access and management needs,” Smith said.

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The West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited is a sportsman's network of more than 1,600 volunteers and seven local chapters committed to the TU mission of conserving, protecting and restoring our coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. www.WVTU.org