



COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE STAFF REPORT

Project Name: AFD202400008 Keswick District Review	Staff: James Van Vranken, Planner
Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee Meeting: January 23, 2025	
Planning Commission Public Hearing: February 11, 2025	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: April 2, 2025
Proposal: Periodic review of the Keswick AF District.	Comprehensive Plan Designation: Rural Areas

Periodic Review of Agricultural and Forestal Districts

As established in the Code of Virginia, a district may continue indefinitely, but it must be reviewed by the County not more than every 10 years to determine whether the district should be continued. Before being considered by the Board of Supervisors, a district is reviewed by the County's Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission. Both the Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission provide recommendations to the Board as to whether the district should be terminated, modified, or continued.

Once it has received the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission, the Board conducts a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Board may terminate, modify, or continue the district. If the Board continues the district, it may impose conditions on the district different from those imposed on the district when it was created or last reviewed. Landowners within a district receive notice of this process, including notice of any proposed different conditions.

When a district is reviewed, land within the district may be withdrawn at the owner's discretion by filing a written notice with the Board at any time before the Board acts to continue, modify, or terminate the district.

New Policy for District Reviews

In October 2016, the Board updated Section 3-201 of the County Code to clarify that AFD parcels without development rights should no longer be accepted into the districts.

District review standards require the County to use the criteria in 3-201 when conducting a review. This includes subsection (F)(7), which states that it is County policy not to include parcels without development rights in the districts. Based on this policy, all parcels without development rights will be recommended not to continue in the districts during review.

In November 2018, to avoid subjecting owners of such parcels to rollback taxes without warning, the Board directed staff to implement a plan to:

- Renew districts for a five-year period, rather than for 10 years (one time).
- Notify landowners of parcels in reviewed districts that are enrolled in open-space use valuation but that have no development rights that:
 - Their parcels may be removed at the end of the five-year review period; and that
 - They have the option to withdraw from the open-space use valuation now to avoid roll-back taxation and fees when the parcels are removed.

Some districts are now reaching the end of their five-year review period. Staff will therefore make five-year or ten-year renewal recommendations based on whether there are parcels in the district that are enrolled in open-space use valuation, have no development rights, and whose owners have not previously been notified that they will not remain in the district. If there are, staff will recommend a five-year review period and issue warnings; if there are not, staff will recommend the standard ten-year review period.

AFD 202400008 KESWICK DISTRICT REVIEW

The Albemarle County Code currently contains this description of the Keswick District:

Sec. 3-223 Keswick Agricultural and Forestal District.

The district known as the "Keswick Agricultural and Forestal District" was created and continues as follows:

A. Date created. The district was created on September 3, 1986.

B. Lands within the district. The district is composed of the following described lands, identified by parcel identification number:

- 1. Tax map 48: parcels 30, 30A, 30B, 30C, 30D, 30E, 45, 46.*
- 2. Tax map 63: parcels 39, 39A, 40, 42A.*
- 3. Tax map 64: parcels 5, 7, 7A, 8A, 9, 10, 10A, 10B, 10C, 10D, 11 12, 13, 13A, 14.*
- 4. Tax map 65: parcels 13, 14A, 14A1, 31C1, 31C3, 31D, 32.*
- 5. Tax map 79: parcel 46.*
- 6. Tax map 80: parcels 1, 2, 2A, 2C, 3A, 3A1, 3G, 3H, 3I, 4, 61D, 88, 114A, 115, 164, 169, 169A, 169C, 169C1, 174, 176, 176A, 182, 183A, 190, 192, 194.*
- 7. Tax map 81: parcels 1, 8A, 11H, 15A6, 15B, 63, 69, 72, 73, 74, 79.*

C. Review. The district is reviewed once every ten years and will next be reviewed prior to November 12, 2024.

The District is located north of Keswick, mostly to the west of Gordonsville Road (Rt. 22) (see Attachment A), and includes 73 parcels totaling 7,017 acres. No withdrawal requests have so far been received.

Agricultural and Forestal District Significance: Of the 7,017 acres in the Keswick District, 4,918 acres have soils listed as particularly important for agriculture and 6,380 acres have soils listed as particularly important for forestry in the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use other than Agriculture and Forestry: In addition to agricultural and forestal uses, the Keswick District includes approximately 116 addressable structures. (The majority of these structures are

dwellings, but any barns or other large structures with addresses may be included.)

Local Development Patterns: The District consists of a mix of open land and forest. There are 35 parcels in the District, totaling 5,336 acres, that are under conservation easements. A total of 1,677 acres in the District are in the County’s use-value taxation program, indicating that they are in agricultural, forestal, horticultural, or open-space use.

Comprehensive Plan Designation and Zoning Districts: The District is entirely designated as Rural Areas in the Comprehensive Plan, and the parcels included in the District are zoned RA Rural Areas.

Environmental Benefits: Conservation of this area will help maintain the environmental integrity of the County and aids in the protection of agricultural soils, mountain resources, critical slopes, and wildlife habitat.

Code Updates: The following changes will be made to the draft code section for this district to be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors:

- In 2018, Parcel 65-14A1 was fully incorporated into Parcel 65-14A.
- In 2019, Parcel 80-3I was fully incorporated into Parcel 80-3H.
- In 2024, Parcel 80-2 was divided into Parcels 80-2D and 80-2E.

Withdrawal: Landowners may withdraw their parcels from districts by right during a renewal at any time before the Board of Supervisors takes final action to continue, modify, or terminate the district. Landowners were notified of the renewal by mail on January 7, 2025.

We have so far received no withdrawal requests.

Development Potential: The District includes 17 parcels, totaling 330 acres, that have no remaining small-lot development rights.

Parcel	Landowner	Acreage	Tax Status
0480000003000	LANE, ANNA T, TRS OF THE ANNA T. LANE TR	21.01	Open Space
04800000030A0	LANE, ANNA T, TRS OF THE ANNA T. LANE TR	21.02	Open Space
06500000031C1	SPICER, THOMAS E JR & JANE S SPICER TRS	3.92	Open Space
06500000031D0	SPICER, THOMAS E JR & JANE S SPICER TRS	1.51	Open Space
0650000003200	SPICER, THOMAS E JR & JANE S SPICER TRS	3.00	Open Space
08000000002B0	MYERS, PAMELA & GERALD TAYLOR	21.00	Agriculture
08000000002D0	HARMAN, ROBERT F TRS & MARILYN M HARMAN TRS	36.09	Regular taxable
080000000061D0	DROST, WILLIAM T & CATHERINE H DROST	25.67	Regular taxable
08000000008800	ARNOLD, ERICH	4.65	Regular taxable
08000000011500	ELLIS, ROBIN & CRAIG ELLIS	0.93	Regular taxable
08000000017600	KUNDRUN, FRITZ R OR CLAUDINE	5.25	Regular taxable
08100000011H0	AIELLO, MICHAEL ANTHONY OR TRACY LYNN CORTEZ	48.41	Open Space
08100000006900	LITZENBERGER, IRINA, TRS	22.41	Open Space
08100000007200	BALL, CHRISTOPHER M & MICHELE D BALL	21.78	Regular taxable
08100000007300	COX, DOUGLAS M OR JAYNE A	36.48	Agriculture
08100000007400	MAHAN, ANN O, TRS OF THE ANN O MAHAN TR	21.06	Open Space
08100000007900	MAHAN, ANN O, TRS OF THE ANN O MAHAN TR	36.21	Open Space

Nine of the parcels (highlighted in blue) are in Open Space taxation. Since this is the District's first review since 2018, those nine parcels are recommended to continue in the District for five years; their owners will be notified of the new policy. All other parcels listed in the table are recommended not to continue in the District.

Remaining Parcels: After the recommended removals, the District would contain 65 parcels totaling 6,865 acres.

Recommendation: Staff recommended that the Agricultural-Forestal Districts Advisory Committee recommend renewal of the Keswick District, with the above-noted removals, for a 5-year period.

At its meeting on January 23, the Advisory Committee voted to recommend renewal of the District for 10 years, with any requested withdrawals but without the staff-recommended removals, for the purpose of allowing the Committee time to bring an alternative proposal that is consistent with the purposes of AFDs and balances the County's broader needs.

