



# Roadless Area Conservation Rule: High Stakes for Harrisonburg

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# Bill Clinton announced the Roadless Rule on Reddish Knob on Oct. 13, 1999

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Protects national forest  
roadless areas from:

- Road building
- Logging
- Development



# Forest Service has proposed to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule

Deadline for comments:  
**Oct. 6, 2026**

Local governments are weighing in:

- Shenandoah County
- Staunton
- Augusta County
- Rockingham County
- Harrisonburg?



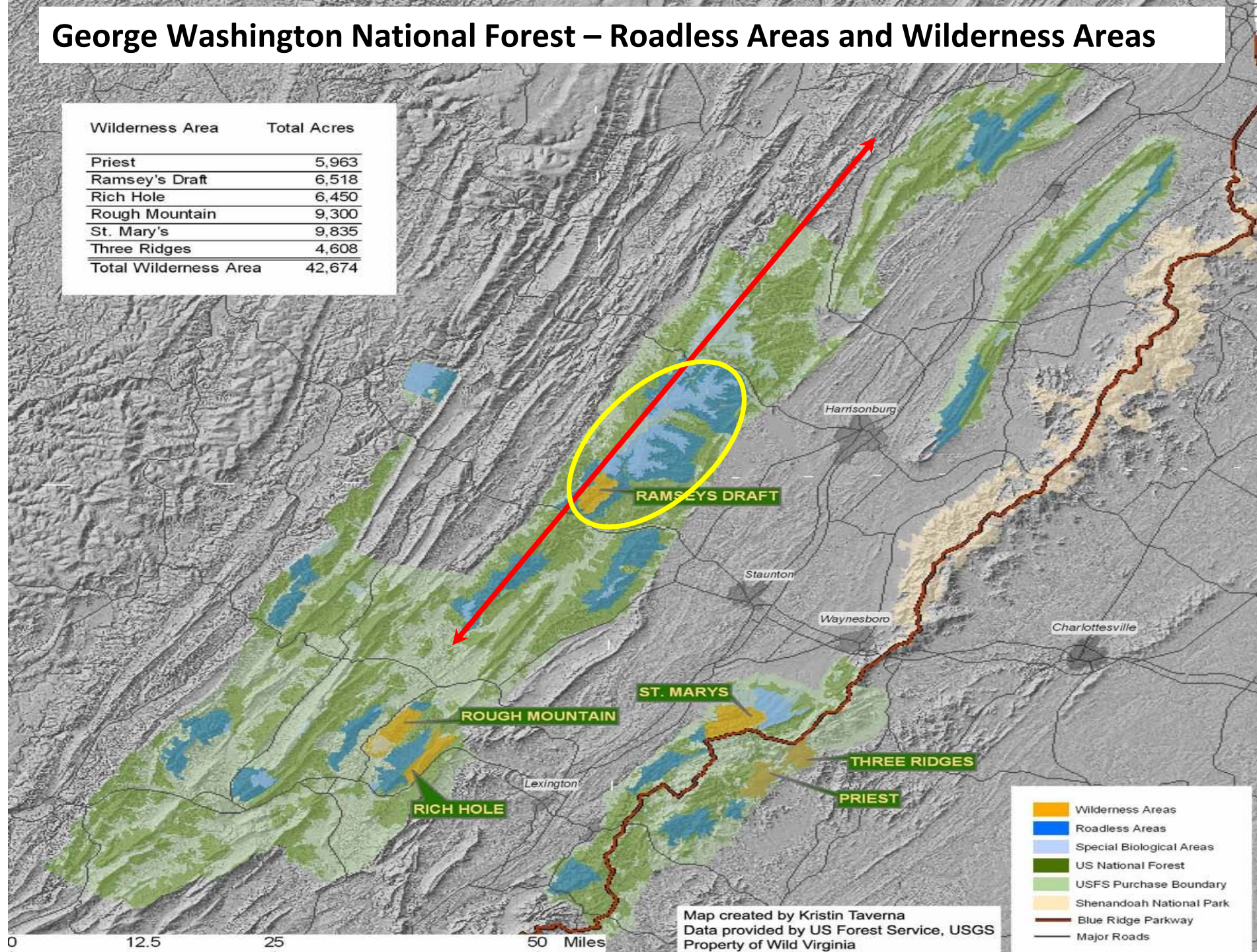


## Benefits of National Forest Roadless Areas

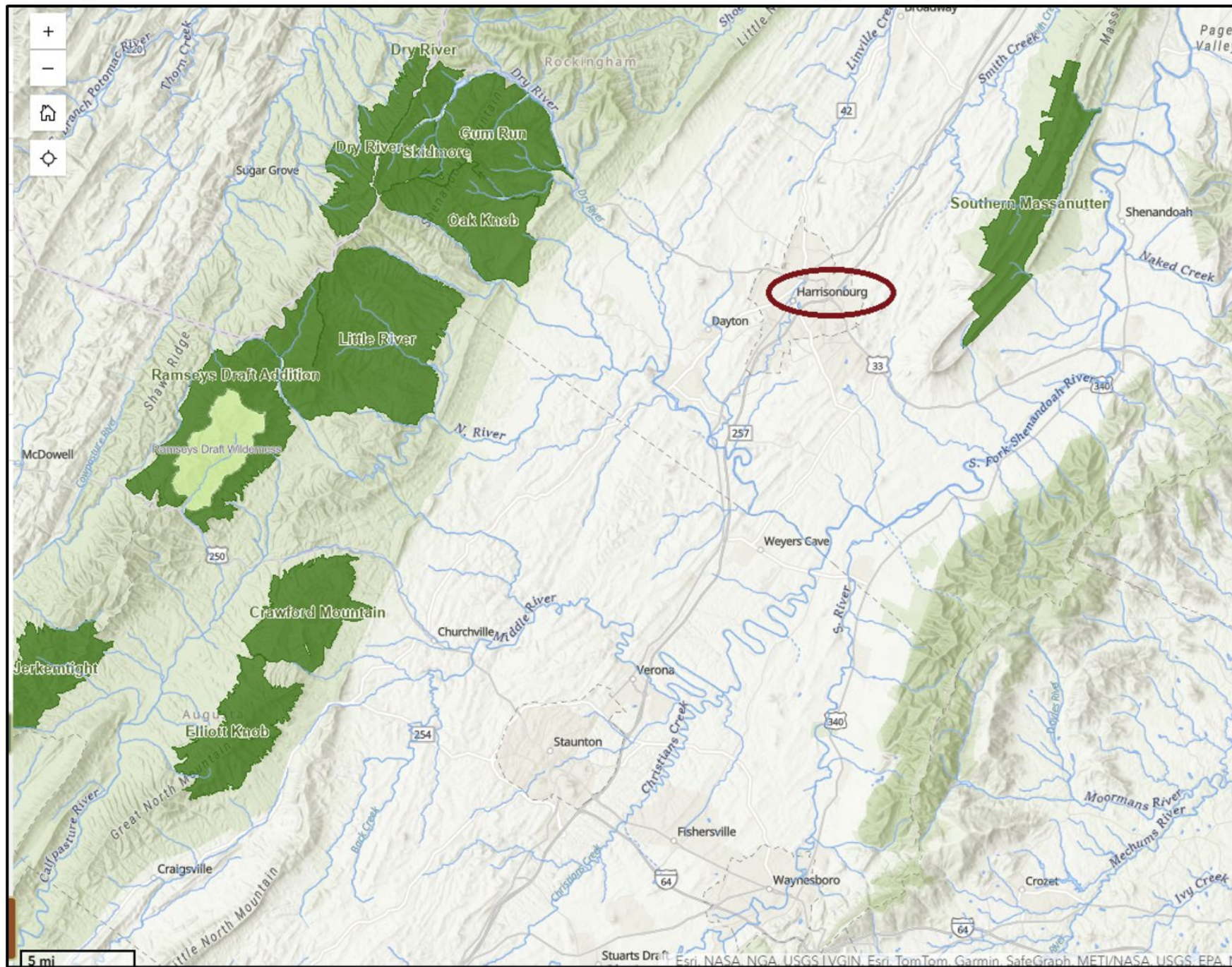
- Clean water
- Outdoor recreation
- Wildlife and plant habitat
- Economy/Tourism
- Flood protection

# George Washington National Forest – Roadless Areas and Wilderness Areas

| Wilderness Area       | Total Acres |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Priest                | 5,963       |
| Ramsey's Draft        | 6,518       |
| Rich Hole             | 6,450       |
| Rough Mountain        | 9,300       |
| St. Mary's            | 9,835       |
| Three Ridges          | 4,608       |
| Total Wilderness Area | 42,674      |



# Map: Roadless Area Watersheds that Protect Harrisonburg's Drinking Water Sources

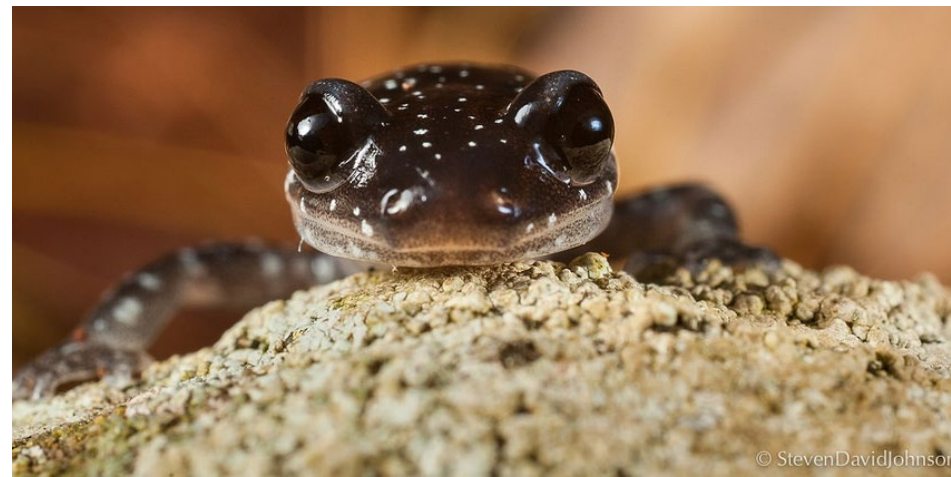




## Skidmore Fork Roadless Area

5,640 acres

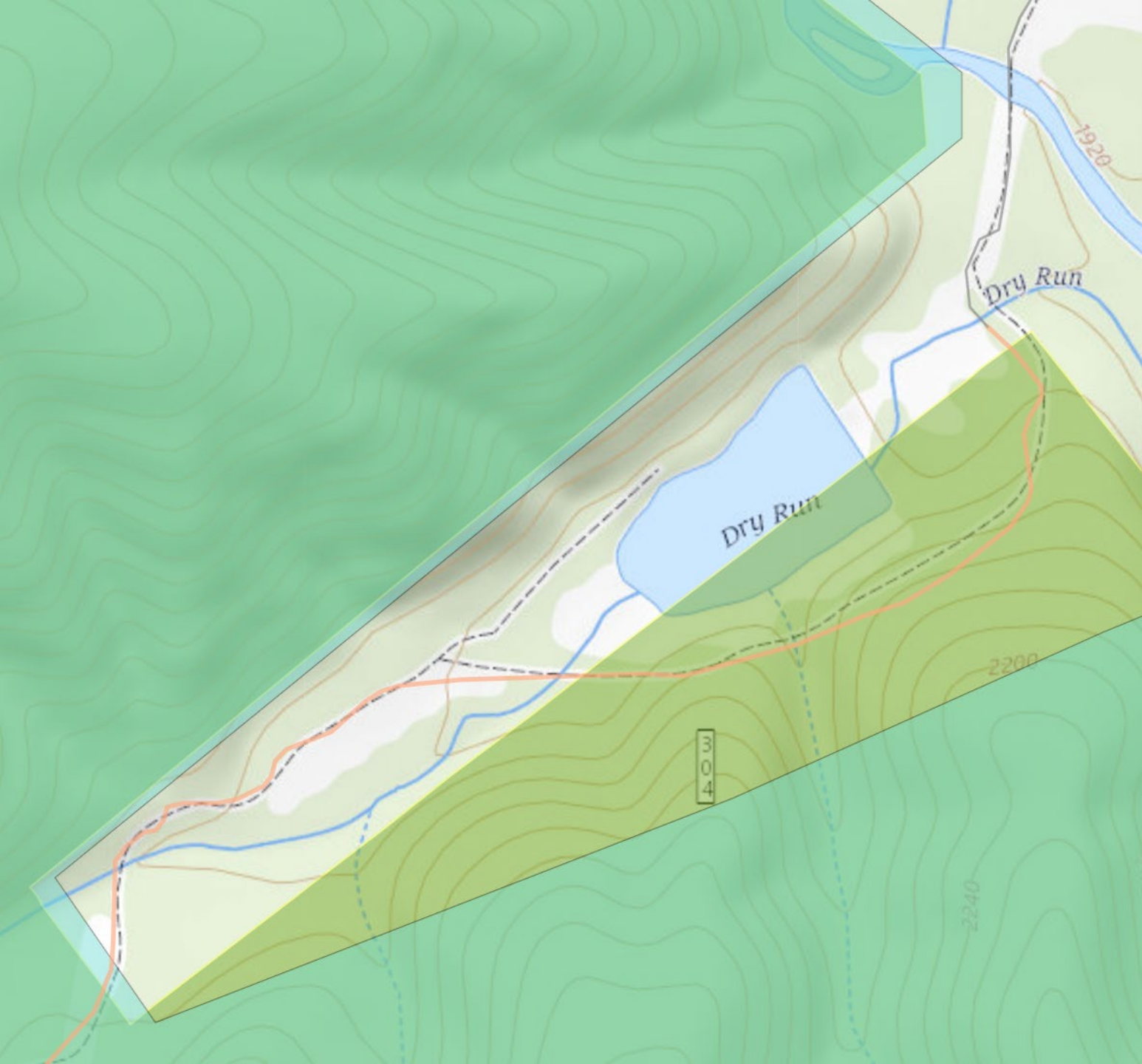
- Native trout stream
- 1,400-acre virgin forest
- Special species
- 7 Natural Heritage Conservation Sites





## Benefits of Roadless Area Rule to Switzer Reservoir

- Protection for Harrisonburg's municipal water supply (Skidmore Fork and Gum Run Roadless Areas)
- Prevents erosion and siltation
- Keeps water treatment costs down



# Dry Run Reservoir

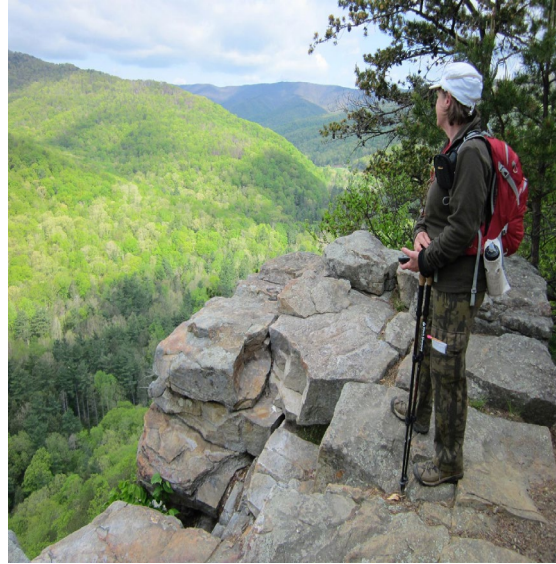
The Gum Run Roadless Area is the watershed for Dry Run Reservoir.

## Dry River: “Regional stronghold for brook trout”



# Recreation in Roadless Areas

- Around 250 miles of trails
- Fishing in native trout streams and reservoirs
- Hiking
- Mountain biking
- Hunting
- Swimming
- Nature study
- Canoeing
- Horseback riding
- Scenic driving



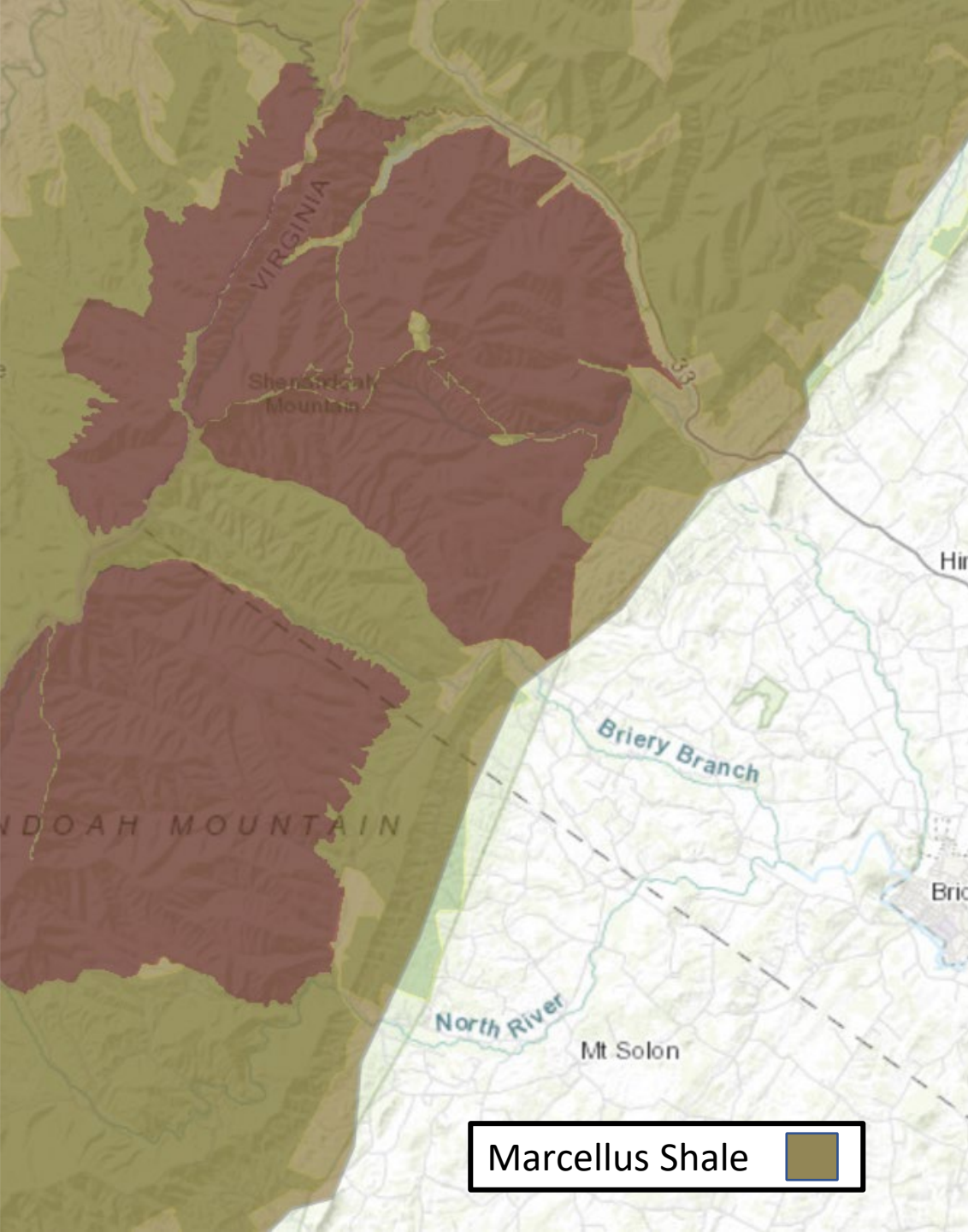
# Yearly economic value to the local area

Annual Measured Valuations: 13.7 million dollars/year

- Direct water supply: \$7,446,000
- Direct energy savings: \$333,936
- Carbon dioxide offsets from GWNF: \$4,441,000
- Recreation use in adjacent areas: \$624,700
- GWNF VA Recreation Site Fee Revenue (2014) = \$415,667
- NFS Payment to Virginia's Rockingham County = \$27,334 + \$424,106 in Lieu of taxes

From a study on ecosystem services provided by the Dry River area. (Brad Striebig, Dan Downey, and students. 2018)

# Shenandoah Mountain at Risk



- Underlain by Marcellus shale
- Rescission of the Roadless Rule could open up roadless areas for
  - New roads
  - Commercial logging
  - Gas development (fracking)
  - Other development

# SHENANDOAH MOUNTAIN

National Scenic Area

A proposal before Congress

photograph by Brad Striebig

Friends of Shenandoah Mountain

## Shenandoah Mountain Act Update

- Senators Kaine and Warner introduced Senate Bill
  - March 2022
  - July 2023
  - May 2025
- Included in 2026 Senate Farm Bill