

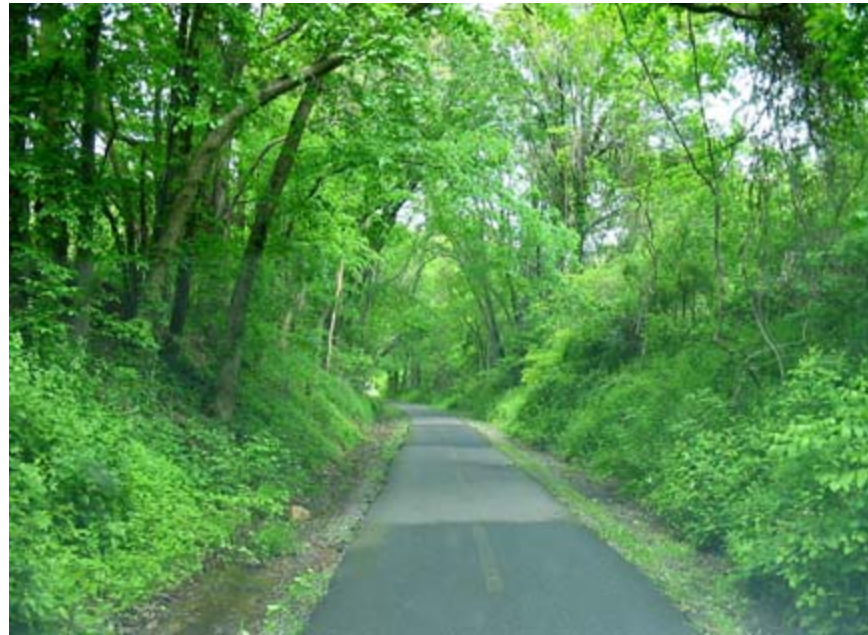


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Thousands of Additional Trees Coming under Immediate Threat

*Want to be kept abreast of the latest information concerning
Virginia Power's intention to deforest nearly the entire western quarter of the W&OD?
[Click here to send an e-mail message to the Friends](#); ask to be added to a new mailing list
that has been set up to provide just such news.*

The Dominion Virginia Power 230 kV Transmission Line Project, a group formed in response to VP's proposal, plans to hold its second meeting on Wednesday, July 7, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., at the Loudoun County Government Center in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room on the first floor. The public is welcome -- indeed, encouraged -- to attend this meeting.



Sweeping away the Trail's unruly, deciduous canopy...

Blowing harshly against Dominion Virginia Power's latticework of wires, last September's hurricane drove the company to reformulate its formerly rather mild policies of maintenance. Much of the costly tedium of periodic trimming was jettisoned in favor of the swift efficiency of felling. Thus, a thousand or so trees between Vienna and Reston begin to vanish. Unfortunately, this considerable loss proves to be but a minor prelude...

An Extension Proposed



Now the company is drawing up plans to erect a new transmission line in western Loudoun County. Cutting through the Town of Leesburg, this line will pass by the communities of Kincaid Forest, Foxridge, Shenstone, Clarks Gap and Paeonian Springs. And, the currently favored route, as the map above makes clear, uses the W&OD Trail itself -- *thus sweeping away some 11 miles of rustic woodland (along approximately 25% of the length of the entire Trail).*

Extending west from the east side of Leesburg to a location just to the east of Purcellville, the 230,000 volt line would link the existing Pleasant View substation, located off Cochran Mill Road, with a new substation -- that requires a special exception approval from Loudoun County -- to be built next to the W&OD between Ivandale Road and Route 287. Galvanized steel poles, 110 feet tall and, assuming a regular interval of approximately 450 feet, at least 127 in number, are to carry on one side only three wires, the lowest of which, attached to the pole 45 feet above the ground, may sag to as low as 25 feet between poles.

When, in 1978, it sold the property that now constitutes the W&OD Park and Trail to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Dominion Power did retain an easement on the former railbed of the W&OD Railroad. Despite this legal right to use the Trail in the manner under consideration, however, the company cannot proceed to erect a transmission line of such a large capacity without first obtaining the approval of the [Virginia State Corporation Commission](#). The commission, before it decides on what route the new line may take, must consider not only existing easements but also the impact that such a major project may have on every facet of the area through which it will run.

**"If the power line goes down the W&OD Trail,
we'll have to clear every tree
from the park property."**

Kathy McDaniel, Forester
Dominion Power

The impact on the Trail is obviously going to be tremendous. Most of its trees belong to larger species that, under Dominion Power's reformulated policy, would have to be destroyed. Only those whose mature height is 15-feet or less have even a chance of being allowed to remain, and only such smallish trees may be planted in the future. (In fact, some statements from the company indicate that *each and every tree would have to be removed; what sort, if any, would be permitted to grow in the future is quite unclear.*) What is absolutely certain, however, is that the splendid canopy looming over much of the Trail west of Leesburg will cease to exist -- forever.

The removal of the trees would risk the extensive erosion of the slopes along the Trail. Many of the hillsides lack significant, soil-fixing vegetation because the large trees have long provided a great deal of shade.

The construction of the line itself would likely cause extensive damage to the asphalt surface of the Trail which, in that area, is only 8-feet wide and generally lacking adequate shoulders. A project of the sort proposed will require the use of at least four very heavy vehicles, each moving along the Trail hundreds of times. A large auger truck must excavate each pole's site; a tractor trailer must haul each pole to its excavation; a concrete truck must pour the base of each; and, a large crane must set each in its final position. Any of these several vehicles is of a much greater weight than the asphalt can bear without sustaining considerable damage.

Finally, during the lengthy period of construction (approximately nine months), the Trail would need to be closed to all users. Although major detours could be put into place, these would effectively frustrate almost everyone from access to and enjoyment of the entire western quarter of the W&OD Park.

What can be done?

At the moment, the plan that has been outlined remains only the favored one. But, if it is not to become quite soon the final one, without question it is urgent that anyone who wishes to avoid the realization of this Trail vista --



...to provide a cozy corridor for humming, smoothly undulating wires
and a hundred or so big, round poles?

-- anyone who does not want to lose a large portion of the trees along the W&OD should contact immediately Pamela Gottfried and John Bailey at [Dominion Virginia Power](#) (click on the link to send a message to both individuals) and the appropriate state and local legislators (the "[Who's My Legislator](#)" web tool will allow you both to look up and to contact the appropriate legislators).

Please act now so that the plan -- and not the forest to the west -- dies.

Pamela Gottfried
External Affairs Manager