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To: Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

Public Input Session, March 17, 2008

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Position on the proposal to realign the Woods Road through Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve

We are opposed to the realignment of the Woods Road. If The Woods Road is realigned to run through the Preserve it will:

- Destroy a Mountain/Piedmont Basic Seepage Swamp, a rare natural habitat of which there are only 12 examples known in Virginia.
- Seriously impair the integrity of the entire nature preserve which is a mix of various different kinds of habitats including a large, relatively intact upland forest, wetlands, meadows, succession forest, and extensive forested riparian buffers along the Goose Creek.
- Destroy a road that has existed for almost two hundred years that linked the Carolina Road with Oatlands Plantation as well as other archaeological treasures.
- Violate an existing Virginia Outdoor Foundation conservation easement, which sets the precedent for other such violations.
- Undermine our County's Revised General Plan which states that the "County will require the applicant to conduct a species assessment and develop a plan for impact avoidance in cases where the presence of the species is identified."
- Take money from other more pressing transportation priorities.

We ask that the Board of Supervisors take the following steps:

1. Defer The Woods Road project until the issues can be resolved.
2. Create a task force to fully discuss the different issues and options and arrive at a consensus regarding existing conflicts.
3. Resolve that Loudoun road projects not involve the destruction of rare natural habitats.
4. Resolve to avoid or minimize to the greatest extent possible any incursions across existing Virginia Outdoor Foundation conservation easements, recognizing that Virginia's Open Space Land Act requires that any incursion must be "replaced with land having greater conservation value than the land lost for the realignment."
5. Follow the guidance set forth in the County's Revised General Plan.

PO Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20134
Phone: (540) 882-9638, Email: nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org