



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Friends of Blackwater Canyon

February 16, 2007

Tom Chapman
WV Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
649 Beverly Pike
Elkins WV, 26241

EXTENSION REQUEST LETTER WITH SIGNATURES

Dear Mr. Chapman,

Many organizations and individuals have been following with great interest the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's intention to delist the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel. We, the undersigned are among that group. All of us intend to submit comments on the proposed delisting of the squirrel.

However, we have identified a problem in being able to provide substantive comments. We have learned that the fundamental agency document that embodies and underlies the agency's basis for the proposed delisting, *The Five Year Review Summary and Evaluation for the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, *Glaucomys sabrinus fuscus**, is still in the process of being reviewed and modified by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The modified version has not yet been issued or posted on the Fish and Wildlife Service website. The currently posted version is not an accurate statement of the agency's basis for its proposed action. Citizens and affected parties have a right to a full comment period on the final and accurate agency proposal, including the documents that embody the agency's rationale. Until a final version of this fundamental document is issued, the Rule Announcement on the delisting proposal should be delayed. The comment process should begin after the correct information, including an accurate listing of all supporting research, is posted on the Fish and Wildlife Service website.

Without waiving any rights to object to the agency going forward with a comment period based on inaccurate documentation and public disclosure, we also request an extension of the current comment period from the current 60 days to 120 days. We understand that the comment period is now scheduled to begin on December 19th. Since June 2006 we have been diligently

seeking information from the Service on the process and research used in the 5 Year Review and delisting proposal. This information is critical to the submission of substantive comments. Agency delay in providing this crucial information has put all those interested in the future of the squirrel at a serious disadvantage in being able to comment on this very unusual proposal. An additional 60-day period is necessary so we can have access to all relevant information in the agency's hands, obtain evaluation by appropriate experts, and submit comments.

Thank you for reviewing this request. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



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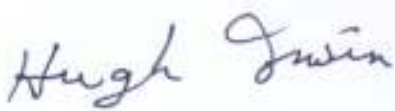
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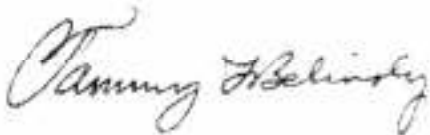
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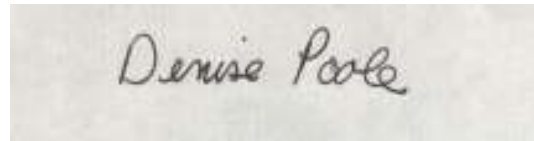
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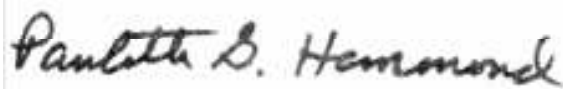


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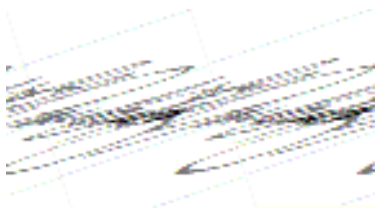


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