

Forest Service changes land use along the South Fork

By Tom Bailey 3/4/03

Located adjacent to the South Fork of the Shenandoah River in Warren County, Cullers grazing allotment has been grazed for decades and when the U.S. Forest Service obtained the land it continued to be grazed by permit to keep an open pastoral setting. It contains 64 acres and about half of the area is in the 100-year floodplain, according to recent FEMA maps. Fencing has been difficult to maintain, due to flooding. Cattle have access to the river and to the overflow channels where stream bank slopes allow them entry. Very few trees are established along the river for the entire length of the allotment.



Last fall the Lee Ranger District on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests decided to change the use of this land from grazing to haying, with a 100 foot riparian buffer along the South Fork. This change in land use will help woody vegetation become established in the riparian buffers, help stabilize eroding river banks and eliminate cattle from the river- all positive impacts for water quality in the watershed.

