

Quoting 'The Lorax,' Court Pulls Permit For Pipeline Crossing Appalachian Trail

Posted by Joan Russow

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Downed trees mark the route of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Deerfield, Va., in February. A federal appeals court has blocked development of portions of the pipeline.

Steve Helber/AP <https://www.npr.org/2018/12/14/676950106/quoting-the-lorax-court-pulls-permit-for-pipeline-crossing-appalachian-trail?>

A federal appeals court has thrown out company's permit to build a natural gas pipeline across two national forests and the Appalachian Trail – and slammed the U.S. Forest Service for granting the approvals in the first place.

In [a decision](#) filed Thursday by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., a three-judge panel declared the U.S. Forest Service "abdicated its responsibility to preserve national forest resources" when it issued permits for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to build through parts of the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests and a right of way across the Appalachian Trail.

"This conclusion," they wrote in a unanimous judgment, "is particularly informed by the Forest Service's serious environmental concerns that were suddenly, and mysteriously, assuaged in time to meet a private pipeline company's deadlines."

The judges cited Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*: "We trust the United States Forest Service to 'speak

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for the trees, for the trees have no tongues."

The court concluded that the Forest Service's decisions violated both the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and found the Forest Service lacked the authority to grant the pipeline a right of way across the Appalachian Trail.