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Could New Powerlines Knock The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area From “Top 10” List?

Bushkill, PA – The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has made national news by its designation as a Top 10 most-photogenic national park for fall foliage. According to the Delaware Riverkeeper, Maya van Rossum, “the scenic “Water Gap”, 40 miles of quiet river valley, and forested ridgelines all helped make this designation possible.”

Delaware Riverkeeper Network says that “many of those vistas are threatened by PSE&G and PPL’s proposed Susquehanna-Roseland power line, which will dissect the park at Walpack Bend. The new powerlines include the construction of towers 185-200 feet tall carrying 500-kilovolts of electricity through as many as 18 cables, widening and clear-cutting the area under them, as well as more access roads and utility transfer stations.”

A big concern is the viewshed that will be negatively impacted by the new, taller towers. “While there is a powerline there today, the existing towers just barely clear the tree-tops so are not very noticeable.” “The new power lines will stand 80-100 feet higher than the treeline so park visitors will be able to see them from miles away”, said Maya.

“On a recent canoe trip, we looked back up river a full 2 miles downstream of the powerlines and could just make them out along the ridgeline. When the new lines go in and are so much taller than the trees, the thousands of canoeists that come to the river every year will not see this beautiful forested ridge, but a ridge with a huge gash in it made to look small thanks to the towers.” said Fred Stine, Citizen Action Coordinator for the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

“The 5 million visitors that come to this Park every year bring with them tens of millions of dollars that supports the tourism economy of the Pocono Mountain region” said van Rossum. “Every new development project, whether it’s a new building, a new highway, gas lines or powerlines, slowly chips away at the health and natural beauty of this river valley and that may translate into fewer people wanting to come to the Poconos for fall foliage, tubing and canoeing” Maya van Rossum said.