



October, 2019

Re: Supporting National Wild & Scenic Designation for the Nolichucky River

Dear Legislator:

On behalf of the American Canoe Association, the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, the Bluff City Canoe Club, the Chota Canoe Club, the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, and all of members, we are writing to ask for your support as we work together to have the Nolichucky River designated as a National Wild and Scenic River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

The Nolichucky was first noted as having remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, and/or historic value to make it eligible for Wild and Scenic designation in the mid-1990s. But in the last several years there has been a groundswell of support for designating the eight-mile stretch of river that flows from near Poplar, North Carolina, to the Unaka Springs community just south of Erwin, Tennessee as a recreational Wild and Scenic river. Efforts to have the Nolichucky designated as a National Wild and Scenic river have broad-based support from nearby residents, local businesses, regional outfitters, tourists from across the state and region, and conservation and recreation groups.

The undersigned represent the five largest paddlesports clubs in the state of Tennessee. All of us are members of the also undersigned American Canoe Association—a national nonprofit organization representing more than 30,000 paddlesport enthusiasts, which helps the public by providing education and stewardship support and by sanctioning programs and events to promote competition, exploration, and recreation, and which serves

as a member of the US Olympic Committee and as the National Governing Body for Olympic and Paralympic paddlesports. The undersigned clubs are also all affiliates of American Whitewater—a nonprofit focused on conserving and restoring America’s whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to enjoy them safely that not only has been involved with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act since its inception but also has a track record of helping advance conservation and access in Tennessee.

National Wild and Scenic designation would be a tremendous asset to the Nolichucky river ecosystem, the surrounding region, and the entire state. Designating the Nolichucky as a Wild and Scenic river will not only help recognize and protect one of the last major wild and free flowing rivers in the entire region but also double the number of Wild and Scenic watersheds in the state of Tennessee. And the increased name-recognition and tourism that Wild and Scenic rivers experience will be particularly advantageous to the burgeoning ecotourism and adventure tourism businesses that have already sprung up near the Nolichucky and will help further solidify Tennessee’s growing reputation as a rural tourism destination.

Fortunately, designating the Nolichucky as Wild and Scenic would not interfere with development or impede any private property rights because this portion of the river eligible for designation winds through the Cherokee and Pisgah National Forests, not private land. National Wild and Scenic designation would merely preserve the Nolichucky as it is now for future generations to enjoy and shield it from later being dammed or degraded.

We highly encourage you to visit <https://www.noliwildandscenic.org/> for more information about the many and varied ongoing efforts to designate the Nolichucky as a National Wild and Scenic river and for details about the benefits that this designation would provide to the river, region, state, and nation.

Because designating a new Wild and Scenic river requires an act of Congress, I hope that the American Canoe Association, the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, the Bluff City Canoe Club, the Chota Canoe Club, the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, all of our members, and the people of Tennessee can count on your support for the Nolichucky.

Sincerely,

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