

which will do much to publicize this spectacular but little known section.

The most exciting scenery in the Big Bend country is the canyons of the Rio Grande, and these are best seen from the river. It is a happy coincidence that this section is one of the finest canoeing streams in the United States. It is only recently that knowledge of this recreational resource is spreading. Articles on boating in the Big Bend appeared in the spring 1966, winter 1966, and summer 1967 issues of American White Water. Now boaters other than the regulars from Texas and New Mexico are eager to try these runs. In fact, one couple came from Germany to boat the Big Bend this year.

The Big Bend section of the Rio Grande is more than wild and scenic. It is unique in this country. It certainly deserves serious consideration as a national scenic and wild river.

Most questions have been about landownership and I would like to cover that more specifically concerning the Rio Grande. In northern New Mexico section of the Rio Grande, the river has cut a deep canyons through the rock, frequently with steep walls; these steep walls and steep cliffs have prevented roads and even trails in many places within these canyons.

Mr. TAYLOR. You have 1 additional minute. I have asked our staff man to maybe sound a warning.

Mr. FRETWELL. Fine, I will listen for him to say 1 additional minute.

This fact has preserved the wilderness aspect, by acting as a natural barrier to the intrusion of man. Since there is no room for roads or trails, there is no room for fields to grow crops, or the need for water to irrigate them, for this reason the vast majority of all land along this section of the Rio Grande has never been homesteaded and is already in Federal or State land ownership. This makes the transfer of land an administrative matter, rather than one of payment to private ownership. For this section of the Rio Grande there would be no loss of taxes to the local county because of Federal land being transferred to wild river status.

The Rio Grande at 1,885 miles is the fifth longest river in North America, and provides much of the boundary between the United States and Mexico. At present approximately 70 miles in New Mexico are proposed for immediate inclusion within the national scenic river system. In Texas, a larger portion should be studied for future designation as a wild river. The least we can do for future Explorer Scouts, fishermen, picnickers, and boatmen is to let them discover for themselves a stretch of the river as our forefathers have.

(Statement of Mr. Fretwell follows:)

STATEMENT OF JAMES H. FRETWELL, EXPLORER POST 20, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Mr. Chairman: It is a privilege to come before this house committee to present opinions favorable to a National Scenic River System, and particularly one including designated portions of the Rio Grande.

My name is James H. Fretwell, committee chairman of Explorer Post 20, Boy Scouts of America, Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Since volunteer leaders of Boy Scout units usually have more friends than they have funds, support for my trip, here, has been received from the Los Alamos Chapter of the Isaak Walton League of America, The Los Alamos Mountaineers, The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Los Alamos Kiwanis Club, Explorer Post 20 of The Kit Carson Council Boy Scouts of America and the Los Alamos Outdoor Association, Inc.