

The Suwannee River is completely unique and as such merits special consideration by your Committee. We ask that the Suwannee River and its tributaries be removed from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislation for the following reasons:

1. The staggering majority of people in the Suwannee River Valley do not want the Suwannee and its tributaries in such a system. This includes not only home owners along the Suwannee and Ichetucknee, but motel and restaurant people, farmers, ranchers, timber owners, industrial developers, local organizations, and governments.

2. As we stated above, Florida is capable of developing its own recreational areas and has already taken the initiative to do so.

3. As diversified as the development is along the Suwannee, it does not lend itself to Scenic or Wild Rivers concepts. To create such a river would entail expenditures of capital that would be impractical.

4. The people of Florida and Georgia, and more specifically the people in the Suwannee River Basin are not going to let any person or corporation pollute the Suwannee River. Florida, in fact, was the first State to have a pollution control program acceptable to the Federal Government. The Suwannee River Authority and we in Florida and Georgia will not let the Suwannee River or its tributaries be misused. An active program of control is under way.

5. At present we have periodic flooding of the River Basin. A system of check dams is needed to prevent this waste. To put the Suwannee River in a wild or scenic river system would prevent the building of such dams, thereby subjecting owners of property along the River and the State to future losses caused by flooding.

Some of the proponents of the wild or scenic river legislation, namely, the Park Service, will tell you that such a program will bring unheard of prosperity to North Central Florida. They base their argument on a report, which is erroneously labeled as a study by the University of Florida. This report contains outdated material and unfounded statements. It is not worthy of consideration.

Another point made by the Park Service is that the United States Government will acquire very little fee land, but rather will use scenic easements for most of the system. They extol the virtues of the scenic easement but fail to tell you of the loss of value to the fee tract. An article in the January, 1968, issue of the *Appraisal Journal* points out the loss of value on the fee land on scenic easements along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Examples: 70 per cent loss in value of land for building sites and yards, 75 to 84 per cent value loss in woods and brush land. Such losses have an adverse effect upon local tax structures, as well as other areas of the economy.

Gentlemen, we ask that you consider our presentation and that you study the statements and reports filed with you. We feel that you will then assist us in having the Suwannee River and its tributaries removed from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you very much for your individual statement. I crossed this river on several occasions, and noticed its famous name. It certainly is not a wild river, but it is a beautiful river.

The proposal is to leave it in a study stage. How would this leaving it in the study stage interfere with the present use of it?

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Chairman, I think that would take away a lot of the county and State park planning that is going on at this time. If the Chairman would like to answer that further.

Mr. BROWN. I think so, sir. Excuse me, if you could limit that study to at least 6 months or a year. If it is a long, drawn-out period you are going to stifle the development of the river.

Mr. TAYLOR. You understand it will take further legislation to take it out of the study stage into the instant stage?

Mr. BROWN. Well, if the findings of the study as far as the establishments of maybe national parks and so forth, we don't believe we have a wild river. In other words, we feel like that some national parks may be along the river would be, certain areas would be, probably feasible.