

Our organization has been working diligently ever since its inception for maintaining the free-flowing character of several of our rivers and for protecting their natural environment. We had a major part in the introduction, this year, of a Tennessee scenic rivers bill now pending in the State legislature. It is noteworthy that 50 out of 99 representatives cosigned this State bill and we have been gratified by the tremendous popular support it has had throughout the State of Tennessee. For instance, in the last 3 days alone over 600 names have been turned in on a petition on behalf of one specific river, the Obed.

Many organizations have endorsed the bill including the Tennessee Conservation League with 20,000 members.

Our written testimony is in two sections, one taking up general considerations for national scenic river systems, and the second referring to Tennessee rivers in particular. If I might, I would like in my oral testimony to take these up in reverse order and make our recommendations concerning Tennessee rivers.

We believe that Tennessee is blessed with some of the most beautiful rivers in the Eastern United States. Notable among these are the sandstone gorge rivers of the Cumberland Plateau, which cut sheer canyons up to 500 feet deep; and the pastoral rivers flowing through rich farmland and beside lushly wooded hills. Some of these rivers are located in the most sparsely populated areas of the East; yet they are within driving distance of the big population centers. For these various reasons, we strongly urge the inclusion of several Tennessee rivers in a national scenic rivers system, and particularly the following three: Buffalo, entire river; Obed, including Clear Creek and Daddys Creek; south fork of the Cumberland, including Clear Fork River.

1. The Buffalo, in middle Tennessee, is a favorite pastoral float stream. This river is designated for national scenic river status in Mr. Anderson's H.R. 6588 and in Mr. Fulton's recent bill, and is listed to be studied within 3 years in Mr. Saylor's H.R. 90. It is listed in the study categories of H.R. 6166 and of the Senate-passed bill S. 119. A survey of the river has been made by the Federal wild rivers study team and a favorable recommendation resulted. In 1965, the 84th General Assembly of Tennessee passed Senate Joint Resolution 24, which urged the Department of the Interior and Congress to include the Buffalo as a national wild river and offered State assistance in carrying out the program. The Tennessee Game and Fish Commission has also endorsed the Buffalo as worthy of inclusion in a national system. The TVA has expressed its intention to assist the State of Tennessee in developing the Buffalo as a scenic river.

2. The Obed River, and may I pass some pictures around of this river, the Obed River system including the Obed and its major tributaries should be included in their entirety. These are sandstone gorge rivers of outstanding beauty, flowing through dramatic, lushly vegetated canyons topped by sheer cliff faces. The Obed system is completely undeveloped, no human habitations are visible from the rivers, and access is limited. About one-third of the shoreline is in public ownership, lying in the Catoosa wildlife management area of 80,000 acres, owned and managed by the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission. The Obed system contains about 100 river-miles of magnificent wild scenery, outstanding recreation value, and crystal-clear