

At our Annual State Convention, held at Morgantown, W.Va. June 10-11, 1967, Resolution #8 was adopted unanimously, which called for the preservation of Scenic Rivers in the mountain state. In July, 1967 we supported Resolution #2 at our National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin calling for the establishment of a National and State System of Scenic Rivers.

Then in January, 1968 we drafted and supported a resolution calling for a financed interim committee study by the West Virginia Legislature of Scenic Rivers in West Virginia. This resolution passed the West Virginia Legislature on February 3, 1968. This study has begun, and the committee will report back to the next general session of the Legislature in January, 1969 with its findings, conclusions, and recommendations and policy statements, together with drafts of any proposed legislation to carry its recommendations into effect.

The League believes our rivers should be classified into two classes. Class I, remote wild river areas which are on the verge of extinction in West Virginia. Class II, naturally wooded or pastoral river environment generally paralleled by a roadway.

Segments of some of our rivers such as the South Branch and its tributaries from Petersburg to the headwaters, the Shavers Fork from Parsons to the headwaters, the Greenbrier from Marlinton to Caldwell, and the Cranberry, totally from its mouth to its source, are in the boundaries of the Monongahela National Forest and should be considered for immediate action in a federal bill since there is no controversy existing concerning property rights. We feel the above named rivers in the National Forest should be in the "instant category" and consideration given them now for admittance to the National Scenic River System.

Other rivers which should be considered for classification and study are in the Cacapon, Shenandoah, Back Fork of Elk, Williams, the South Branch below Petersburg, Blackwater, Elk, Gauley, and Little Kanawha.

The League is aware of a minority opposed to Scenic Rivers in a small segment or area of West Virginia. We are in hopes that some arrangement or spirit of cooperation can be forthcoming in the Cacapon and Shenandoah Areas of West Virginia, and that the majority of land owners will support a workable plan. The League in West Virginia does not advocate the seizure of private lands but does feel the public should have access to public waters. When we hear someone voice opposition to a Scenic Rivers System, we wonder whose interest he or she represents. They are certainly not representing the public interest.

We know this does not represent the thinking and desires of the State of West Virginia, and we wonder if this truly represents the thinking in the Second District.

I have letters addressed to the chairman of this committee from mayors of our largest cities supporting a plan for Scenic Rivers, which I wish to enter into the record.

I also have a letter addressed to the chairman of this committee from State Senator Carl E. Gainer, Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in the West Virginia State Senate, and from Thomas Goodwin, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Natural Resources in the West Virginia House of Delegates, which supports the study and development of Scenic Rivers in West Virginia. Please make these a part of the record also.

May I say that the letters of support for Scenic Rivers in West Virginia and the Monongahela National Forest comes from all over the State of West Virginia—from the Greenbrier Valley to the Highlands from the coal fields in the southern part of the state to the population centers of the Kanawha and Ohio Valleys. We do not feel that a small, sparsely populated segment in Eastern West Virginia speaks for the State of West Virginia, but due to the nearness to our nation's Capitol, it is easier for many of them to be heard.

We want this committee to consider the wishes of all the people in the State of West Virginia.

The West Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League pledges all the support they can muster to establish a Scenic Rivers System in West Virginia. We will lend all the help and support we can to the West Virginia Legislative Interim Committee studying Scenic Rivers in West Virginia, and will aid in any way we can the committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

After years of participation and study into our river problems of this nation, the League concludes that only by classification, and protection can some of our few remaining streams be saved from total destruction. We whole-heartedly support a Scenic Rivers System in America, as well as West Virginia.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman for letting us appear here.