



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L15(2240)

JUL 10 2012

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Secretary *Michael J. Bean*

THROUGH: Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

FROM: Director *Jonathan D. Jan*

SUBJECT: Request for Secretarial Designation and Signature for Four Nominees into the National Water Trails System

I. INTRODUCTION

The interagency team that reviews water trail applications for nominations to the National Water Trails System (NWTS) recommends that the Secretary designate the following water trails:

1. Mississippi River Water Trail - Great River Water Trail section provides the water trail users opportunities to explore one of the most scenic stretches of the Mississippi River. The water trail is lined with majestic bluffs, steeped in history, abundant with wildlife, and provides plenty of places to stop and relax whether it is a remote island or an exciting river town. The 121-mile water trail begins in Saverton, Missouri, at mile marker 301, and ends at the St. Louis, Missouri, riverfront at mile marker 180. The water trail is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
2. Okefenokee Wilderness Canoe Trail provides an opportunity for visitors to explore an area where natural beauty and wilderness character prevail. The 120-mile trail allows visitors to canoe past alligators, black bears, egrets, sandhill cranes, and many other species in the cypress swamps and open watery "prairies" of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The water trail is located in Georgia near the towns of Folkston, Waycross, and Fargo and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
3. The Alabama Scenic River Trail is a recreational and tourism destination for paddled and powered boats. It is a water trail that includes beautiful stretches of seven rivers, two creeks, and one bay. The water trail begins at the point where the Coosa River enters Alabama just northeast of Cedar Bluff, and continues down the Coosa River to its confluence with the Tallapoosa near Wetumpka.

From this conjunction, the trail follows the Alabama River to its junction with the Tombigbee/Warrior system just north of Mobile. The water trail then proceeds through the Mobile River and the Tensaw-Mobile delta, along the Tensaw River and its tributaries to Mobile Bay. The water trail is managed by the Alabama Scenic River Association.

4. The Kansas River Water Trail (known locally as the Kaw) begins at the confluence of the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers near Junction City. It flows 173 miles to Kansas City where it joins the Missouri River. Paddling the Kansas River offers views of the Flint Hills prairie, limestone hills, historical sites, and open pastures and farm fields. The river trail is managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism.

If designated, the National Water Trails System will include nine national water trails in the following states: New York, Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Alabama, and Kansas.

II. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Secretarial Order No. 3319 *Establishment of a National Water Trails System* each water trail is nominated through the process outlined in section 6 including a description of how the nominated trail will achieve the best management practices described in section 4. Upon designation, these waterways become national water trails and are incorporated into a National Water Trails System, as a class of National Recreation Trails.

The intention in establishing a National Water Trails System is to build a national network of exceptional water trails that can be sustained by an ever growing water trail community. Water trails are a catalyst for protecting and restoring the health of local waterways and surrounding lands. With each designation, we are strengthening a community that mentors and promotes the development of water trails and shares best management practices.

The National Water Trails System is premised on the belief that American quality of life is strengthened when more people are able to enjoy their local waterways. Water trail nominations come from local communities, government agencies, or private entities. Trail designation highlights the successful investments that are made to conserve our Nation's waterways and reconnect the public to these resources.

III. POSITION OF INTERESTED PARTIES

Mississippi River Water Trail - Great River Water Trail section

The major water trail stakeholders are the American Canoe Association, Mississippi River Water Trail Association, St. Louis Canoe and Kayak Club, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. There is no controversy for this designation.

Okefenokee Wilderness Canoe Trail

The refuge manages the water trail and engages volunteers in maintenance and stewardship activities. There is no controversy for this designation.

The Alabama Scenic River Trail

The major water trail stakeholders are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Alabama Power Company. Other stakeholders include the Alabama cities of Centre, Childersburg, Clanton, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Montgomery, Prattville, Rainbow City, Riverside, Selma, Southside, Wetumpka, Monroeville, Ohatchee and the counties of Calhoun, Clarke, Conecuh, Coosa, Dallas, Elmore, Monroe, Montgomery, St. Clair, Wilcox. There is no controversy for this designation.

The Kansas River Water Trail

The major water trail stakeholders are the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, Kansas Department of Transportation, Westar Energy Green Team, and Friends of the Kaw. Other stakeholders include the Kansas cities of Manhattan, Wamego, Belvue, DeSoto, Topeka, and Kansas City. There is no controversy for this designation.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend the four nominations to be designated for inclusion in the National Water Trails System. If the water trails are designated please sign the notification letters included in this packet.

V. SECRETARY'S DECISION

APPROVE

DISAPPROVE

COMMENTS



Ken Salazar

JUL 12 2012

Date