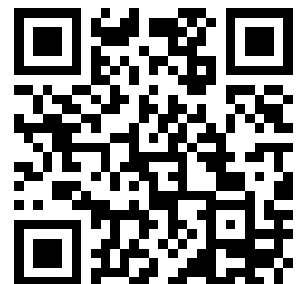

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Forest and
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Forest



Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River

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**WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY REPORT
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
ON THE
NOLICHUCKY RIVER**

Mitchell and Yancey Counties, North Carolina
Pisgah National Forest
and
Unicoi County, Tennessee
Cherokee National Forest

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

Responsible Official: Clayton Yeutter
Secretary of Agriculture

Type of Environmental
Impact Statement: Legislative

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ABSTRACT

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This Final Wild and Scenic River Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents the results of analyzing three alternatives for future management of the Nolichucky Gorge segment of the Nolichucky River. The study area is located in Unicoi County, Tennessee, and Mitchell and Yancey Counties, North Carolina. The alternatives considered are: No designation with continuation of present management in the river corridor, no action (Alternative A); designation of a 7.2-mile segment of the river with a scenic classification (Alternative B); and designation of an 8.0-mile segment of the river with a scenic and recreational classification (Alternative C). The preferred alternative is Alternative B. The total area recommended for

designation encompasses 5,525 acres; of these, 5,210 acres are in the National Forest System and 315 are privately owned. This recommendation is consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plans for the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests.

Comments received from the public review of the Draft Study and Environmental Impact Statement are analyzed and presented in Appendix A.



SUMMARY

This final study report and environmental impact statement (EIS) addresses the eligibility and suitability of the Nolichucky River Gorge between Poplar, North Carolina, and Unaka Springs, Tennessee, for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The gorge is located within the Pisgah National Forest in Mitchell and Yancey Counties, North Carolina, and within the Cherokee National Forest in Unicoi County, Tennessee.

The National Park Service (NPS) completed a study report in 1980 for 110 miles of the Nolichucky River as authorized by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, P.L. 90-542 (amended by P.L. 93-621, January 3, 1975). The study report recommended against including the entire 110 miles of the main stem of the river in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This determination was based on the lack of the required outstandingly remarkable values, water quality problems, and development facilities within the river corridor.

An 8-mile segment of the river through the Nolichucky Gorge was found to possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, and geologic values, but was not determined suitable for designation because of occasional water quality problems and infringement on the river channel by the rail line of CSX Transportation. After the original NPS study report was completed, the criteria for evaluating eligibility for designation as a Wild and Scenic River were modified, and the water quality problems upstream were improved. This study report reevaluates the Nolichucky Gorge for its potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The EIS is prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, and the Forest Service's procedures for implementing NEPA.

The 8-mile segment of river passes through a steep, spectacular scenic gorge where forest-covered slopes rise to more than 2,000 feet adjacent to the river. The gorge is a popular attraction for whitewater river users, including commercial outfitters. Fishing in the gorge is limited because of the lack of access. The river is free-flowing with no manmade dams, river channel diversions, or other flow regulation structures within the study area. CSX Transportation has an active rail line through the gorge, operating about four to eight trains per day. In the area considered for designation under Alternative B (preferred), approximately 94 percent of the land along the river corridor is in National Forest ownership. The remaining land consists of small privately owned farms.

The major issues identified by the public and the Forest Service throughout the study process can be briefly summarized as follows:

- The need for the future protection of the outstanding recreation, scenic, and geologic values in the river corridor.
- Protection for threatened and endangered plants and endangered wildlife species.

- Additional Federal restrictions on landowners and users if the river is designated as a Wild and Scenic River, including use of the railroad grade.
- Maintenance or improvement of water quality in the Nolichucky River.

Other issues raised during the study process are addressed in this study report. These issues are identified in Appendix A.

Three alternatives are considered in this study. Alternative A (no action) addresses a finding of nonsuitability. Alternative B (preferred) considers a 7.2-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Alternative C addresses designation of the entire 8-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Table 1 summarizes the environmental consequences of the alternatives.

This study finds that the Nolichucky Gorge meets the eligibility criteria for a Wild and Scenic River based on its outstandingly remarkable geologic, scenic, and recreational values. This segment of the river can be classified as scenic because it has limited accessibility and shows very little evidence of human activity (other than the railroad).

This study also finds that a 7.2-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge is suitable for designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Designation will give recognition and protection to the outstanding values of the gorge. Public support for the designation is generally favorable. The additional cost to the Forest Service of managing the area as a Wild and Scenic River should be minimal. The impact on other Forest Service resources or programs would be negligible. Acquisition of private lands in the river corridor by the Federal Government would not be necessary.

The recommendations in this report are consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plans for the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests.

Table 1

Summary of Environmental Consequences

Factors Considered	Alternative A (No Action) Nonsuitability	Alternative B (Preferred) National Designation	Alternative C National Designation Including Additional River Channel
Recreational Development and Use	No significant change from present trends.	Use will increase appreciably due to publicity of Wild and Scenic River status; increased use will result in more intensive management demands; existing boat access sites at Poplar (NC) and Chestoa (TN) are adequate.	Same as B.
Economic	Some economic stimulus because of recreational use.	Increase in recreational use and tourism would accelerate economic growth adjacent to river.	Same as B.
Mining	New mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations allowed to continue.	New mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations allowed to continue. However, mineral activity would be subject to regulations that would minimize surface disturbances, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment. Surface coal mining operations would be prohibited, subject to valid existing rights.	Same as B.
Effects on Private Land	No effect on private land. Railroad activities may continue to degrade scenic values.	The Forest Service would be encouraged to develop a management relationship with CSX Transportation to address issues such as fire control, debris from management activities, and revegetation in selected areas.	Same as B, except management relationships with CSX Transportation may include additional area. No impacts on private residential areas are expected.

Table 1 (continued)

Factors Considered	Alternative A (No Action) Nonsuitability	Alternative B (Preferred) National Designation	Alternative C National Designation Including Additional River Channel
Access	Railroad use would continue. Trail in Tennessee on north side of river would remain open. Secondary road access to Lost Cove would remain open.	Same as A.	Same as B, except the Forest Service would be encouraged to have debris removed from roads paralleling the additional segment.
Threatened and Endangered Species	Water projects or other resource activities and development could have a significant impact on wildlife and plant species.	Development activities which could affect wildlife and plant species would not be allowed.	Same as B, but extended to the entire 8-mile river corridor.
Water Resource Project	Water resource projects affecting values of the gorge could be built, although they are unlikely.	Development of water resource projects that affect the outstandingly remarkable values of the gorge would be prohibited.	Same as B, with additional segment of the river channel protected from downstream projects.
Water Quality	No effect. State in-stream criteria would apply.	Although State in-stream criteria would still apply, North Carolina has indicated that rivers given national designation will be given higher priority for water quality improvement efforts.	Same as B.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Summary	iii
Chapter I. Purpose of and Need for Action	1
Consultation With Others	3
Chapter II. Description of the Area (Affected Environment)	5
Location	5
Watershed Area	5
Physiography and Geology	5
Soils	7
Minerals	7
Streamflow	7
Water Quality	8
Fish and Wildlife	9
Vegetation	11
Manmade Features	13
Access	13
Recreational Activities	13
Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Region	15
Navigability and Riparian Rights	17
Landownership and Land Use	17
Potential Hydropower Use and Flood Control	19
Historic and Cultural Resources	19
Chapter III. Findings of Eligibility and Classification	21
Eligibility	21
Classification	22
Chapter IV. Alternatives Including the Proposed Action	23
Alternatives Eliminated From Detailed Study	23
Alternatives Considered	24
Alternative A (No Action)--Finding of Nonsuitability	24
Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)-- Wild and Scenic River Designation	24
Alternative C--Wild and Scenic River Designation, Additional River Channel	26
Chapter V. Environmental Consequences	29
Alternative A (No Action)--Finding of Nonsuitability	29
Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)-- Wild and Scenic River Designation	30
Alternative C--Wild and Scenic River Designation, Additional River Channel	32
Other Environmental Consequences	33

	<u>Page</u>
Adverse Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided	33
Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity	33
Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources	33
Other Effects	33
Chapter VI. List of Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals to Whom Copies of the Study Report/EIS Are Sent	35
Chapter VII. List of Preparers	39
Index	41
Appendix A. Public Involvement Data Summary	A-1

Figures

Figure I-1--Location Map for the Nolichucky River	2
Figure II-1--Main Stem of the Nolichucky River With the Gorge Highlighted	6
Figure II-2--Access Routes in the Gorge Area	14
Figure II-3--Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Region	16
Figure II-4--Landownership in the Nolichucky Gorge	18
Figure IV-1--Study Area Alternatives	25

Tables

Table 1. Summary of Environmental Consequences	v
Table II-1. Flow Rates of the Nolichucky River Recorded at U.S. Geological Survey Gauging Station at Poplar, North Carolina	8
Table II-2. Water Quality Criteria and Field Data	10
Table IV-1. Summary of Environmental Consequences	27

Chapter I

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of this Study Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to document the results of the analysis conducted to determine eligibility, classification, and suitability of the Nolichucky River between Poplar, North Carolina, and Unaka Springs, Tennessee, as a potential component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. (See Figure I-1.)

To be eligible for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a river must be free-flowing and possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other values, including ecological values.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides for three classifications of rivers and river segments: wild, scenic, and recreational. Classification is based on the condition of the river and adjacent lands at the time of the study.

The determination of suitability provides the basis for the decision to recommend designation or nondesignation of the river. Factors that are considered in the determination of suitability include the amount of private land involved and uses of the land, cost of acquiring the land or an interest in the land if necessary, public and State and local government interest, and the values foregone if the river is designated.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended (P.L. 93-621), specified that the entire main stem of the Nolichucky River in North Carolina and Tennessee be studied and that a report be prepared and submitted to Congress on the river's characteristics. A recommendation regarding the suitability of the river for designation as a part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was to be included in the report. The National Park Service (NPS) completed a Wild and Scenic River Study Report and EIS in 1980 for 110 miles of the Nolichucky River. That report recommended nondesignation for the entire length of the river. Except for the 8-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge, the study river was found to be ineligible because it lacked outstandingly remarkable values. The report, however, acknowledged that the Nolichucky Gorge did have outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, and geologic values; yet, it was not considered eligible because of the impact of the railroad through the area and poor water quality conditions at the time of the study.

The 1980 National Park Service study evaluated the river according to criteria in the Guidelines for Evaluating Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Areas Proposed for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System Under Section 2, Public Law 90-542, which were jointly adopted by the Department of Interior (DOI) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1970. After the NPS study was completed, DOI and USDA jointly issued Final Revised Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification, and Management of River Areas. (See 47 Federal Register 34457, September 7, 1982.)

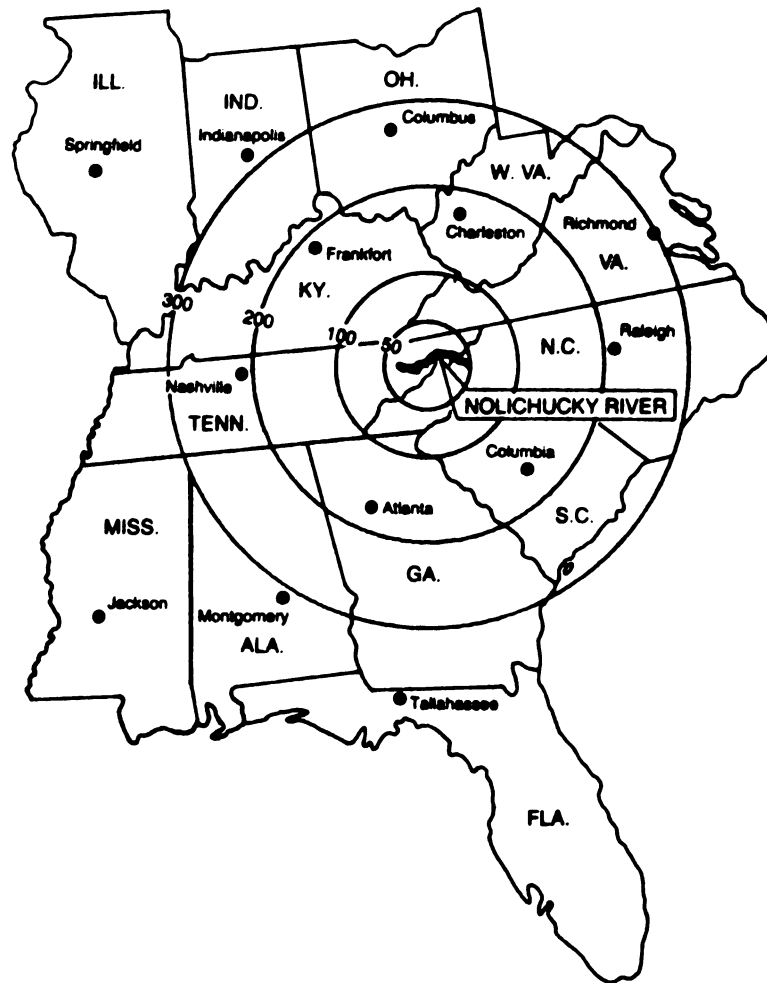


Figure I-1--Location Map for the Nolichucky River

These revisions modified the eligibility guidelines in two ways that are important to this study. First, the guidelines now state that rivers will not be excluded from scenic and recreational classification because of poor water quality at the time of the study, provided a water quality improvement plan exists or is being developed. Second, the revised guidelines allow short stretches of conspicuous roads or railroads or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads or railroads for a scenic classification.

This study report is a followup to the NPS study report. The Nolichucky Gorge, which lies within the length of river studied by the NPS, has been reevaluated in a manner that is consistent with the revised guidelines. This document is also an EIS prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, and the Forest Service's guidelines for implementing NEPA.

CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS

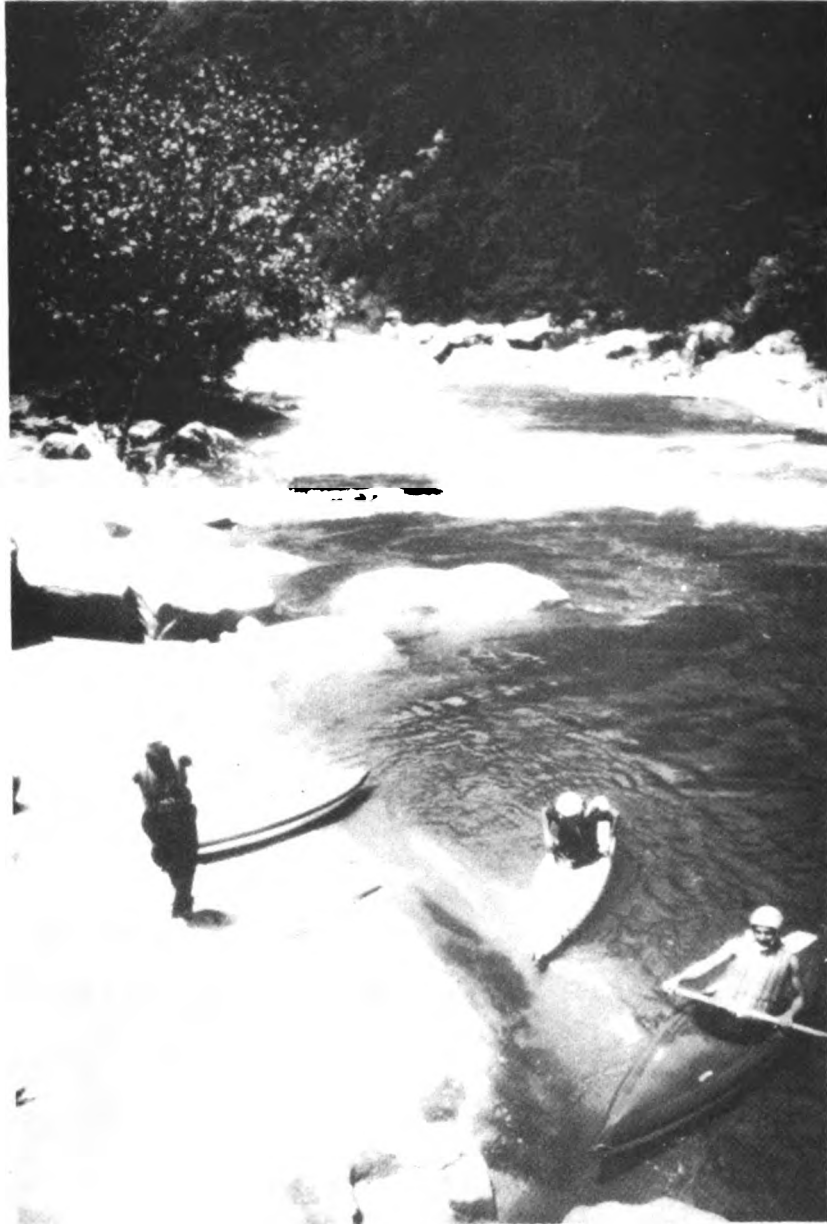
Much of the basis for this report was provided by the 1980 study by the National Park Service for the 110-mile section of the Nolichucky River. Public meetings were held in Greeneville, Tennessee, and at Burnsville, North Carolina, during the early stages of the NPS study. In general, public comments were in favor of protecting the Nolichucky River Gorge. Since 1980 and because of recent growth in recreation on the river, support for continued protection of the river has grown.

The Final Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the Cherokee National Forest was distributed to the public on April 1, 1986. This plan recommended that the 7.2-mile section of the gorge of the Nolichucky River be studied as a Wild and Scenic River. Public response was favorable to this recommendation. The Final Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the Pisgah-Nantahala Forest was released to the public on April 16, 1987. The plan contains a similar recommendation regarding the Nolichucky River. The analysis is consistent with the direction outlined in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plans.

Issues identified by the public and the Forest Service throughout the study process and particularly during review of the draft study report were used in revising the content of this final report. The responses are printed and discussed in Appendix A. The issues are briefly summarized as follows:

- The need for future protection of the outstanding recreation, scenic, and geologic values in the river corridor.
- Protection for threatened and endangered plants and endangered wildlife species.
- Additional Federal restrictions on landowners and users if the river is designated as a Wild and Scenic River, including use of the railroad grade.
- Maintenance or improvement of water quality in the Nolichucky River.

Other issues raised during the study process are addressed in this study report. These issues are identified in Appendix A.



Chapter II DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA (AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT)

LOCATION

The Nolichucky River begins at the confluence of the Cane and North Toe Rivers on the western North Carolina border and flows 110.6 miles to its confluence with the French Broad River at the Douglas Reservoir in Tennessee. Except for the 8-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge, the river follows a gradual gradient course between mountain ranges. Small farms and villages are located along these areas of the river corridor.

The segment of the Nolichucky River that is the subject of this study begins in Poplar, North Carolina, and flows west through the Nolichucky Gorge to Unaka Springs, Tennessee. (See Figure II-1.) In North Carolina, the river segment forms the boundary between Mitchell and Yancey Counties and lies within the Pisgah National Forest. In Tennessee, the river segment runs through the Cherokee National Forest in Unicoi County.

WATERSHED AREA

The Nolichucky River watershed drains approximately 1,756 square miles--626 square miles in western North Carolina and 1,130 square miles in eastern Tennessee.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

At the North Carolina-Tennessee State line, the Nolichucky River flows past the Unaka Mountains to the north and the Bald Mountains to the south. These mountains project 1,000 to 2,500 feet above the river and are underlain primarily by quartzite and other clastic rocks of Cambrian and pre-Cambrian age.

Two features of special geologic importance give regional significance to the bedrock outcroppings in and around the Nolichucky River Gorge. The first is the extensive sequence of exposures along the left bank southeast from Unaka Springs. These outcrops are designated as the type section¹ of the Unicoi and Erwin formations. The second regionally important feature is the geologic structure revealed by the strata in and around the gorge area. Faulting, folding, and subsequent erosion have formed the complex Mountain City window, a major tectonic feature of the southern Appalachians. The exposure of this geologic feature provides important insight into the history of deformation and the geomechanics of the Appalachians.

¹A type section is a reference standard used to formally establish and define a rock-stratigraphic unit and is of continuing importance because it provides a clearly defined base for future reference and restudy.

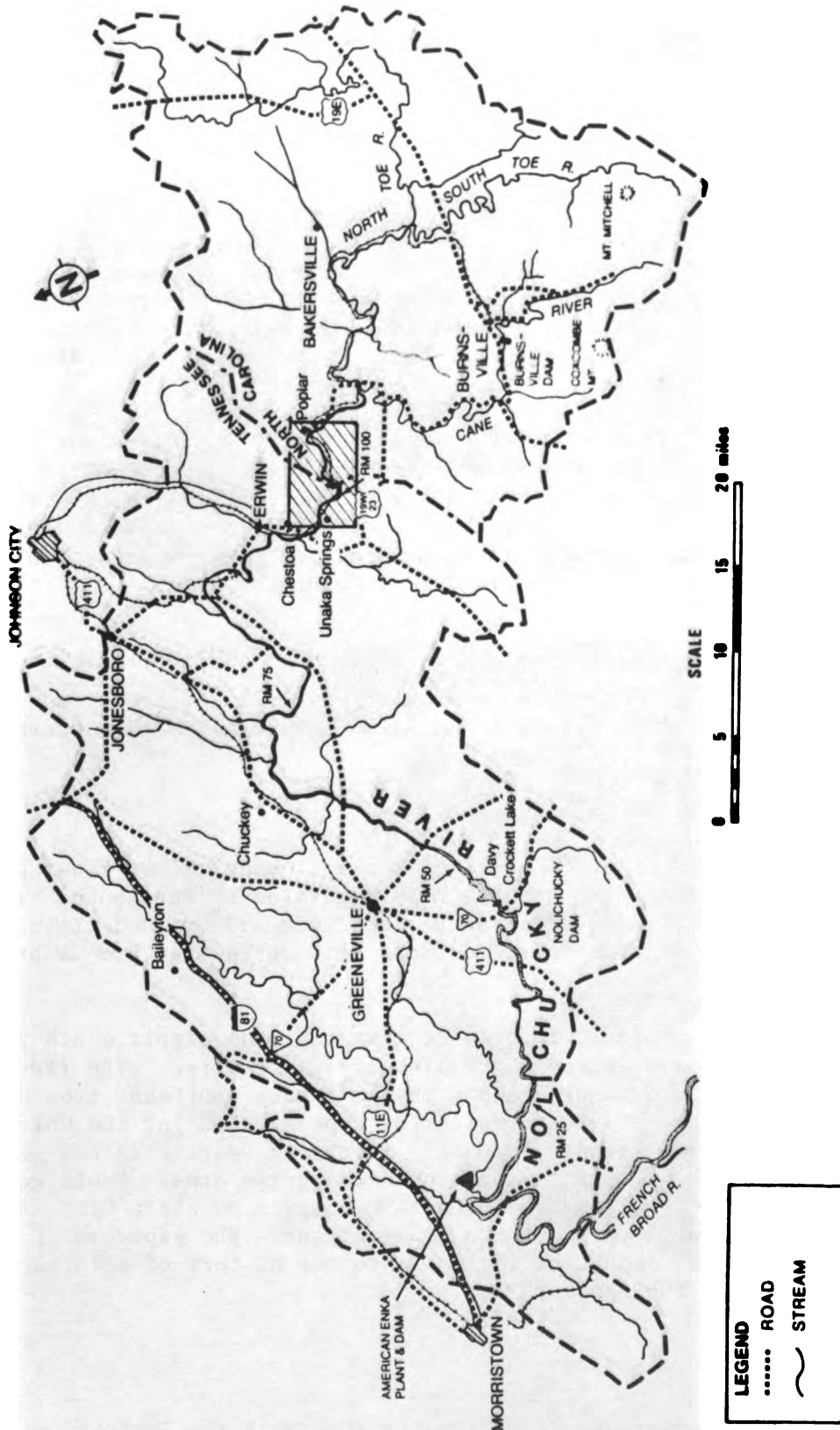


Figure II-1-1--Main Stem of the Nolichucky River With the Gorge Highlighted

In addition to these two regionally important features, the effects of many natural geologic processes may be readily observed in and along the course of the Nolichucky River. Some of the more prominent features along the river include the following:

1. A deep, rocky gorge in resistant Cambrian and Precambrian siliceous sediments and granitic rocks that has been cut by the river action.
2. Abundant rock cliffs, walls, and ledges.
3. Extensive talus slopes of boulders below outcropping ledges of massive quartzite beds.
4. Evidence of landslides involving slow to very rapid downslope movement of colluvial masses.
5. Small falls and numerous rapids, generally most common and pronounced where the strong, resistant beds of quartzite cross the river.

SOILS

The Stony Steep Land Association occurs on both sides of the Nolichucky River, from Poplar downstream to the end of the gorge at Unaka Springs. The Stony Steep phases have rock, varying in size from small stones to large boulders, occurring on the surface throughout the soil profile and in outcrops of rock in some places. The steep slopes are very susceptible to erosion and the land is generally unsuited for agriculture or other uses except forestland and watershed cover.

MINERALS

There are presently no mining or quarrying activities taking place along the Nolichucky River between Poplar and Unaka Springs. Remnant shallow depressions indicating abandoned sand and gravel pits are found upstream from the gorge area, and other sand and gravel deposits undoubtedly exist. However, the absence of nearby markets makes their exploration uneconomical. A small manganese prospect is located within a mile of boundary, but may be too small and too distant to be negatively affected.

With the possible exception of barite, it is unlikely that commercially significant mineral deposits occur along the gorge segment of the river.

STREAMFLOW

The river is free-flowing with no manmade dams, river channel diversions, or other flow regulation structures located either in or upstream from the study area. Because the river is free-flowing, there are large seasonal variations in flow. Data collected by the U.S. Geological Survey at a gauging station in Poplar, North Carolina, from 1926 until 1955 were used to determine the mean monthly flow rates presented in Table II-1. More recent flow data from the station is not available.

Table II-1

Flow Rates of the Nolichucky River
Recorded at U.S. Geological Survey Gauging Station
at Poplar, North Carolina^a
(cubic feet per second)

Month	Lowest Monthly Mean	Mean	Highest Monthly Mean
October	206	685	2,201
November	265	768	2,058
December	293	941	1,985
January	305	1,262	2,943
February	470	1,417	2,421
March	686	1,621	3,336
April	643	1,385	2,957
May	437	1,080	2,103
June	335	770	1,804
July	303	762	2,236
August	149	810	4,327
September	140	659	2,022

^aBased on data collected from 1926-1955.

WATER QUALITY

The water quality in the gorge depends on upstream activities occurring in North Carolina. Before the passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, its later amendments (P.L. 92-560), and the subsequent application of stricter environmental standards by North Carolina, sedimentation from feldspar and mica mining operations seriously degraded the water quality of the Nolichucky River. These mining operations were centered around Spruce Pine and Micaville in North Carolina (located 25 to 30 miles from the study area).

Although North Carolina does not have a formal water quality improvement plan for this river pursuant to Section 208 of the Clean Water Act, the water

quality of the river has substantially improved in recent years. Active mining interests have refined their processes, although runoff from previously stripmined areas and sedimentation that is resuspended during periods of heavy flow continue to cause turbidity. Since environmental standards have been enforced, water quality has improved and turbidity has declined appreciably. This trend is expected to continue.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the Soil Conservation Service, and the State and local governments began in 1979 a cooperative effort to reclaim abandoned mines in the Nolichucky River Basin. A comprehensive inventory was done to identify abandoned mines in the basin and to assign priorities for reclamation. From 1980 through 1985, all 590 acres of abandoned mines in the basin were reclaimed under the cooperative reclamation project. Total costs were \$487,000. It is expected that this reclamation effort will eventually be reflected in reduced sediment levels in basin rivers. This should result in improved water quality and enhanced biota in the river subject to the impact of other point and nonpoint sources.

North Carolina has established a stream classification system that is based on existing or contemplated best usage of the water. The State classifications and water quality standards are given in the North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 15, Chapter 2, Subchapter 2B, Section .0200. The Nolichucky is ranked WS-III as a water supply segment with no categorical restrictions on watershed development or discharges. Class WS-III waters are suitable for fish and wildlife propagation, secondary recreation, agriculture, and drinking water supply. Instream water quality standards for selected parameters for class WS-III waters are shown and compared with sampling data in Table II-2.

The report "Water Quality Progress in North Carolina, 1984-1985" (June 1986) by the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, cited the Nolichucky River as an example of a river with a general trend of improved water quality. A Use Impairment Index was used to prove quantitative comparisons of water quality. The index for the Nolichucky River at Poplar was 3.40 (partially supporting) in 1980, 1.64 (supporting) in 1984, and 0.67 (supporting) in 1985.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Forest Service, with the cooperation of the State Wildlife Commissions of North Carolina and Tennessee, manages lands in the gorge for wildlife. Both habitat and populations of animal communities are at a sustaining level, with the principal species encountered being deer, turkey, grouse, and small game such as squirrels and rabbits. Little hunting actually takes place because of the rugged terrain in the gorge, but big and small game hunting as well as upland bird hunting are popular in the surrounding area.

The gorge is also part of a State of North Carolina designated black bear sanctuary. It supports a small bear population and serves as an important travel corridor for bear movements along the Tennessee-North Carolina state line between limited areas of bear habitat.

Although an occasional smallmouth bass, trout, or catfish is taken from the river in the gorge area, fishing is minimal because of the rugged terrain, limited accessibility, and rapid streamflow that makes fishing from a boat difficult. Fishing from the bank is gradually increasing along the river at Poplar and Unaka Springs. The continued use of sedimentation control in mining and other regional land use practices has had a favorable effect on the river's quality and ultimately could result in its restoration as a productive smallmouth bass stream. North Carolina recently began to stock largemouth bass and muskellunge in the river above the gorge.

Table II-2
Water Quality Criteria and Field Data

Criteria	North Carolina Standard For WS-III Water Classification	Field Data ^a		
		Min.	Mean	Max.
Fecal Coliform ^b (ml ⁻¹) May-September	1,000/100 max.	80	450	1,800
Temperature (°C)	29 ° max.	1	14.0	23
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)	5.0 min.	7.5	10.2	12.9
4pH	6.0-8.5	6.8	7.3	8.1
Turbidity (NTU)	50 max.	1.1	17.8	160

^aBased on monthly samples taken from the Nolichucky River at RM 107 between 1/11/84 and 12/14/84.

^bThe standard for coliform levels for Class WS-III waters is given in North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 15, Chapter 2, Subchapter 2B, Section .0211(b)(3)(E). The standard is met if fecal coliforms do not exceed a geometric mean of 1,000/100 ml based on at least five consecutive samples examined during any 30-day period or exceed 2,000/100 ml in more than 20 percent of the samples examined during such period. The regulations further provide that standards are not applicable during or immediately following periods of rainfall.

Note: The data analyzed for this report consisted of five samples taken over a 125-day period from 5/23/84 to 9/25/84. One sample was excluded because of rain on the day the sample was taken.

Source: EPA STORET data file.

Special Federal or State status has been assigned to a number of wildlife species which occur or potentially may occur within the Nolichucky River corridor:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Federal Status</u>	<u>State Status</u>
Peregrine Falcon (<u>Falco peregrinus</u>)	E	E
Osprey (<u>Pandion haliaetus</u>)		E
Common Raven (<u>Corvus corax</u>)		E
Eastern Woodrat (<u>Neotoma floridana</u>)	C2	D
Sharphead Darter (<u>Etheostoma acuticeps</u>)	C3C	D
Hellbender (<u>Cryptobranchus alleganiensis</u>)	C2	D
Six-lined Racerunner (<u>Cnemidophorus sexlineatus</u>)		D
Blue Sucker (<u>Cycleptus elongatus</u>)		T
Highfin Carpsucker (<u>Carpiodes velifer</u>)		D

Status: E--endangered, T--threatened; D--deemed in need of management; S--special concern; C2--taxa for which information is lacking but should be identified for special status until subsequent studies prove otherwise; C3C--taxa proven to be more abundant than previously thought

The sharphead darter has been collected in the gorge area. The hellbender has been collected downstream from the study area and very likely occurs in the gorge. Peregrine falcons historically have nested on the cliffs in the gorge. Hacking projects were conducted in 1987 and 1988 at nearby Big Bald, with the gorge area as the target nest site. The black bear, although having no State or Federal classification, is on the Regional Forester's List of Sensitive Species, which affords this species special management consideration.

VEGETATION

Vegetation in the river corridor consists of an overstory of oak, hemlock, yellow poplar, beech, birch, hickory, black walnut, sourwood, buckeye, and related species typical of southern Appalachian hardwood forests. Beneath the tree canopy is an undergrowth of shrubs and other small plants consisting chiefly of dogwood, rhododendron, mountain laurel, huckleberry, and buckberry.

Stream bank vegetation is generally sparse or consists of small brush that does not obstruct the spectacular view of the gorge. The vegetation to the north of the river consists of old growth stands. The railroad conducted some timber harvests on the south side of the river at the turn of the century. In

recent years, occasional fires, which started at the railroad tracks, burned areas up the side of the gorge; these areas have grown over with smaller shrubs.

The following list of plants which occur in the Nolichucky gorge area have been given special Federal, or State status. State classification, unless otherwise noted, refers to Tennessee. Other plant species which are candidates for special status have been identified elsewhere in North Carolina and Tennessee but not in the Nolichucky gorge area. Therefore, they have not been included on this list.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Federal Status</u>	<u>State Status</u>
Climbing Fumatory (<u>Adlumia fungosa</u>)		T
White Heath Aster (<u>Aster ericoides</u>)		T
Sapsuck or Piratebush (<u>Buckleya distichophylla</u>)	C2	T
Fraser Sedge (<u>Cymophyllus fraseri</u>)	C3C	T
Bleeding Heart (<u>Dicentra eximia</u>)		S
Bush Honeysuckle (<u>Diervilla sessilifolia rivularis</u>)		T
White-leaved Sunflower (<u>Helianthus glaucophyllus</u>)	C2	E
Swamp Loosestrife (<u>Lysimachia terrestris</u>)		E
Carey's Saxifrage (<u>Saxifraga careyana</u>)	C2	S
Virginia Spiraea (<u>Spiraea virginiana</u>)	C2	(a)
A Moss (<u>Dichodontium pellucidum</u>)		(a)
Carolina Hemlock (<u>Tsuga caroliniana</u>)		S
Allegheny Cliff Fern (<u>Woodsia scopulian</u>)		S
Blue Ridge Goldenrod (<u>Solidago spithamea</u>) (b)	T	E
Heller's Blazing Star (<u>Liatris helleri</u>) (b)	T	E
Tubercled-blossom Pearly Mussel (<u>Epioblasma torulosa</u>)	E	E

Status: E--endangered, T--threatened; S--special concern, C2--taxa for which information is lacking but should be identified for special status until subsequent studies prove otherwise; C3C--taxa proven to be more abundant than previously thought

(a) Species recently discovered. Neither Tennessee nor North Carolina has designated an official classification at this time.

(b) May possibly occur in area but highly unlikely because of elevation.

MANMADE FEATURES

Railroad crossings are found at both ends of the 8-mile river segment. Railroad tracks and a set of utility lines parallel the river throughout the gorge. Concrete retaining walls can be found at isolated spots within the gorge. Railroad signals, discarded railroad ties, and other debris can be found at scattered locations. The 0.8-mile river segment between Mine Branch and Unaka Springs has been affected by manmade activities to a greater extent than the rest of the gorge. In this segment, an outfitter operation can be seen on the north bank of the river. A 0.8-mile section of road parallels the river and railroad track on the south bank. There also are areas where local residents have dumped debris onto National Forest lands. Unaka Springs is a small rural community that is visible from the river within the 0.8-mile segment.

ACCESS

Access by water is limited to watercraft that are capable of negotiating whitewater. Access by foot is limited to a developed trail that runs for 2 miles on the north side of the river in Tennessee. The trail connects to the Appalachian Trail near the river's confluence with Jones Branch. Fishermen can walk along the river in low water with difficulty. There is a secondary road leading to Lost Cove from Poplar that allows limited four-wheel drive access. Access in the gorge is shown in Figure II-2. Locations for entrance and exit of the river by whitewater enthusiasts are respectively designated as "put in" and "take out" in Figure II-2.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Nolichucky River cascades through almost continuous rapids for the first 4 miles of the study segment, through one of the deepest, most spectacular gorges in the eastern United States. Recreational use consists primarily of canoeing, rafting, and kayaking. There is also some limited hiking and hunting.

Whitewater floating visits are increasing. The estimated recreational use in the gorge was 500 visits in 1975 and 8,000 visits in 1984. These visits are about 90 percent whitewater floaters. Commercial recreation is provided by eight outfitters who offer floating services under permit with the Forest Service and Unicoi County. The current estimated use of the gorge is between 8,000 and 11,000 recreational visitor days per year. The county limits commercial use of the river segment to eight outfitters and/or a maximum of 480 persons per day. A management directive of the Pisgah National Forest suggests a limit for nonoutfitted use at 160 visitors per day. Current use of the river seldom, if ever, reaches the 640-person daily limit. There is a public (National Forest) boat access area on the river at Poplar and private and public takeout sites at Chestoa, Tennessee. The river provides opportunities for floating on an excellent whitewater river with Class II to Class V rapids. The natural fluctuation in water levels and the skill level required to paddle the river serve as natural controls on use levels.

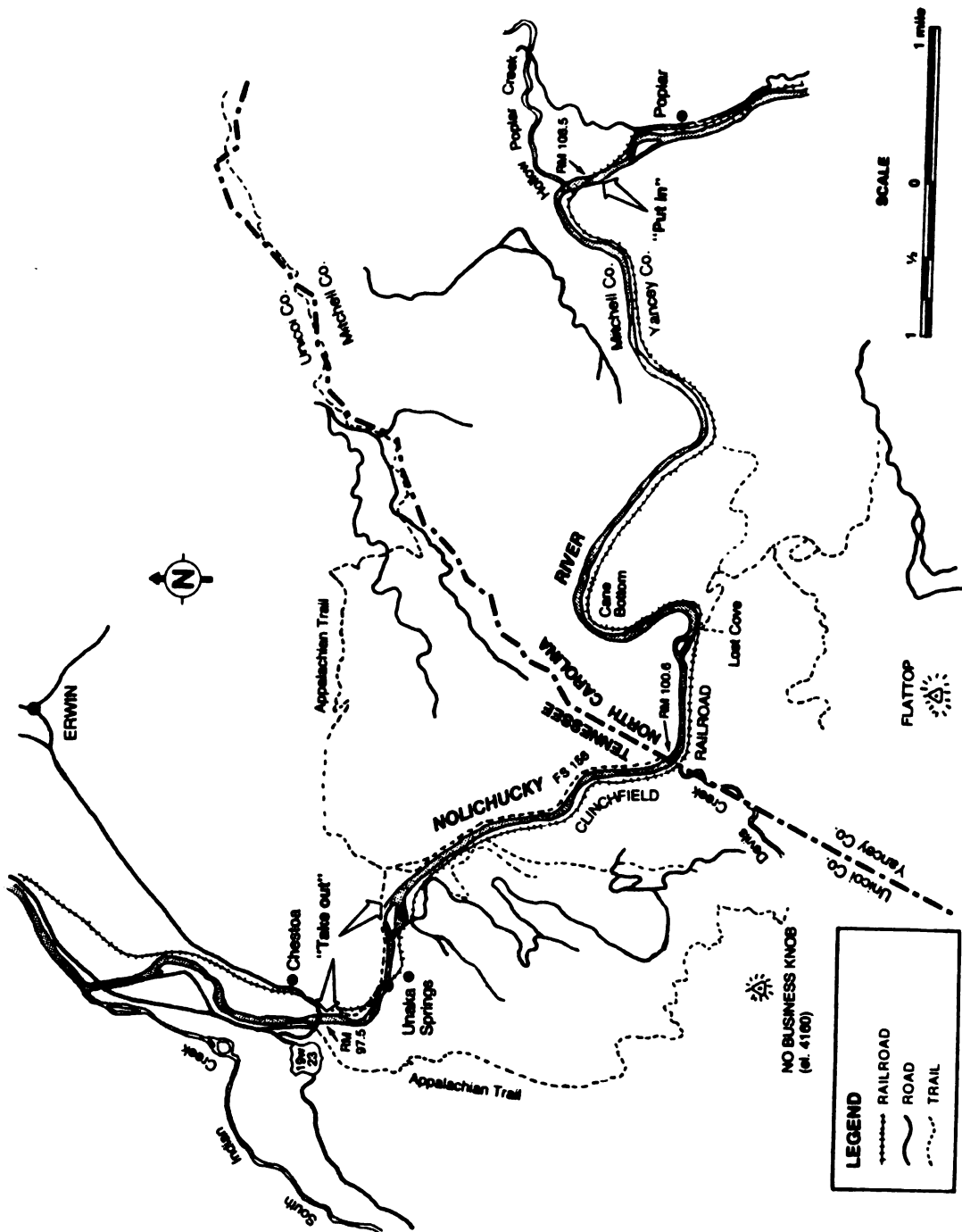


Figure II-2--Access Routes in the Gorge Area

Sufficient volumes of water are considered essential if the recreation potential generally associated with free-flowing rivers is to be realized. The Nolichucky River usually has sufficient volumes of water to be "floatable" throughout the year. However, there are fluctuations in the streamflow that can limit or affect the quality of the floating experience in the Nolichucky Gorge.

Whitewater enthusiasts who use the Nolichucky Gorge consider 500 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.) (measured at the Poplar U.S. Geological Survey gauging station) to be the lowest water level for a safe and enjoyable experience. Water levels above 2,300 c.f.s. create dangerous conditions for even the most experienced floaters. The best times for whitewater floating generally occur in the spring and summer.

Whitewater recreation in the region is very popular, attracting considerable numbers of out-of-State visitors from Atlanta, Asheville, and parts of Georgia. Commercial whitewater facilities in the region are located primarily on six rivers—the Ocoee, Chattooga, Nantahala, Hiwassee, French Broad, and Nolichucky Rivers. Class IV and V rapids, which are comparable to those found on the Nolichucky, are found on both the Ocoee and Chattooga Rivers. Of these three rivers, the Ocoee is the most heavily used for whitewater recreation, and the Chattooga receives significantly more whitewater use than the Nolichucky.

The Chattooga has been designated a wild river under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The terrain surrounding the Chattooga is not as steep as that surrounding the Nolichucky, resulting in the river user being less aware of the surrounding mountains and having less opportunity to see the top of the surrounding gorge. Because of a highway that runs parallel to the river and the high number of visitors, the Ocoee does not have the same degree of remoteness as either the Nolichucky or the Chattooga. Thus, the Nolichucky provides a unique combination of remoteness and scenic appeal.

The Nantahala, Hiwassee, and French Broad Rivers are characterized by Class II and III rapids. They do not have the same degree of remoteness and do not present the same degree of challenge as the Nolichucky and Chattooga.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS IN THE REGION

Figure II-3 shows rivers in the region that have been given wild, scenic, or recreation designations under either the Federal program or a State program.

Although no rivers in the Cherokee National Forest have been designated to the National Wild and Scenic River System, three rivers have been designated as State scenic rivers: the French Broad, Conasauga, and Hiwassee.

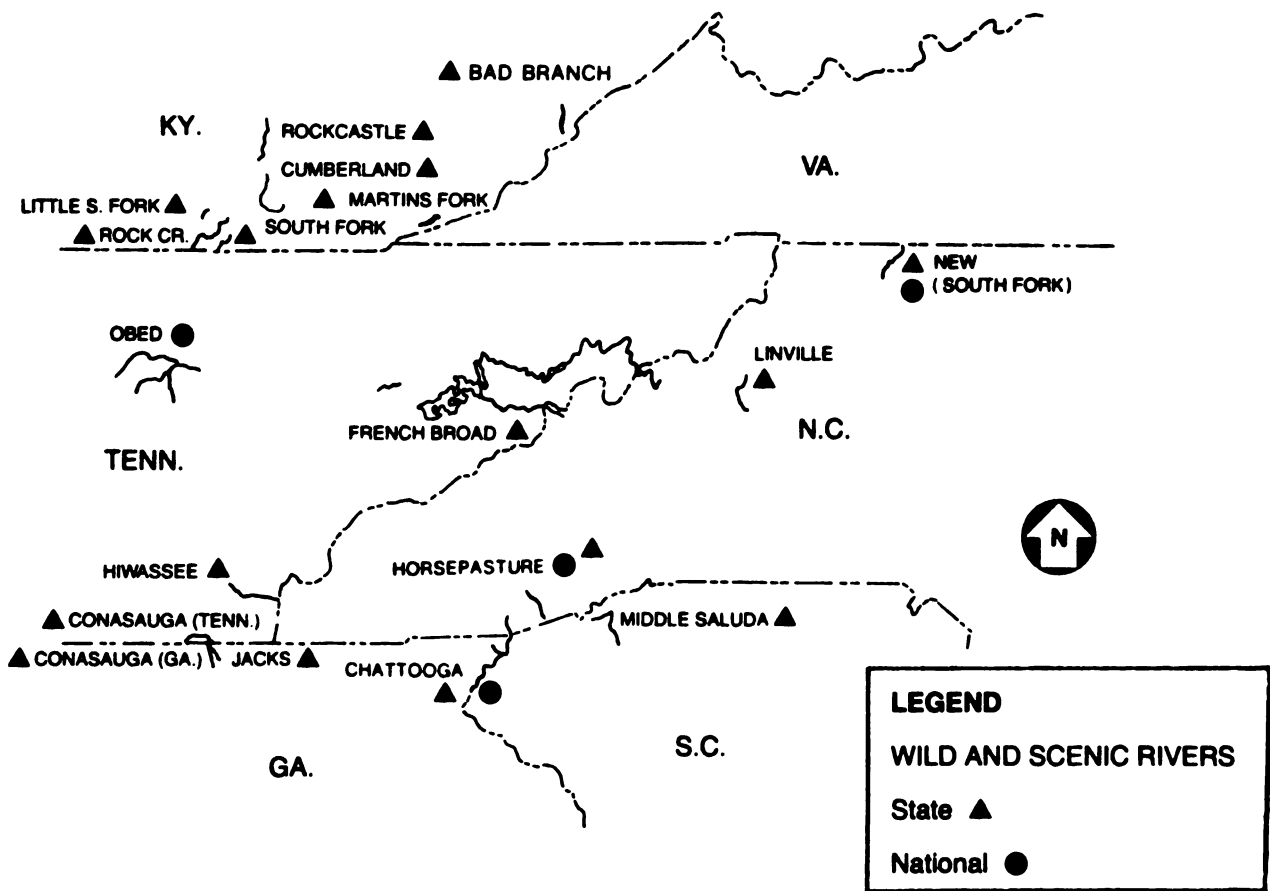


Figure II-3--Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Region

Eight rivers that pass through the Cherokee Forest have already been analyzed and identified as eligible for study for possible Federal classification as wild, scenic, or recreational rivers. Seven of the rivers were listed in the Nationwide Inventory of Rivers by the former Historic Conservation and Recreation Service. They are the Conasauga, Ocoee, Hiwassee, Tellico, French Broad, Doe, and Watauga. (The Nolichucky was listed for study in the original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.)

Fourteen river segments in the Pisgah and Nantahala Forests are identified on the Nationwide Inventory of Rivers. The land and resource management plans for these forests indicate that 11 of these river segments are eligible for further study.

NAVIGABILITY AND RIPARIAN RIGHTS

On October 15, 1974, the District Engineer, Nashville Corps of Engineers District, issued a public notice stating that "the Nolichucky River, from its mouth to the confluence of the Cane and North Toe Rivers at river mile 110.6 has been determined navigable waters of the United States." This means that the public's right to the use of the river for travel and other nonconsumptive instream activities is much the same as its right to the use of any public road. The public's right, however, applies to the river channel or bed, not the banks.

LANDOWNERSHIP AND LAND USE

About 94 percent of the land in the 7.2-mile river corridor of Alternative B is publicly owned under the administration of the Forest Service (see Figure II-4). Approximately 6.5 river miles of the studied segment are located in the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina. The remaining length of the river segment lies in the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee. Excluding the railroad, there are seven private landowners with holdings totaling about 225 acres at Lost Cove. Private land at Lost Cove until recently has been managed for agricultural uses such as grazing and hay production. Currently, no one lives in this area on a permanent basis. Additional private land is located in the 0.8-mile river segment described in Alternative C.

CSX Transportation owns a right-of-way, averaging 106 feet wide, along the left bank of the river when facing downstream. The track is used by about four to eight trains per day. A small set of utility lines runs parallel to the tracks.

Publicly owned lands in the gorge are managed under two forest land management plans. The land and resource management plans for the Cherokee and the Pisgah National Forests both establish management prescriptions for Wild and Scenic River study areas. These areas are managed to achieve the visual quality objective of retention. To protect the land in these areas under study, they are classified as not suitable for timber production.

The small community of Unaka Springs, composed of approximately 8-10 structures, is located in the study area near the downstream end. Erwin, Tennessee, the closest urban area near the river (located 5 miles from the study area), has a population of approximately 4,800.

Landownership in the study river is shown below:

Forest Service, Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina	4,370 acres
Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest, Tennessee	840 acres
Private ownership tracts	225 acres
Clinchfield Railroad	90 acres
Total	<u>5,525 acres</u>

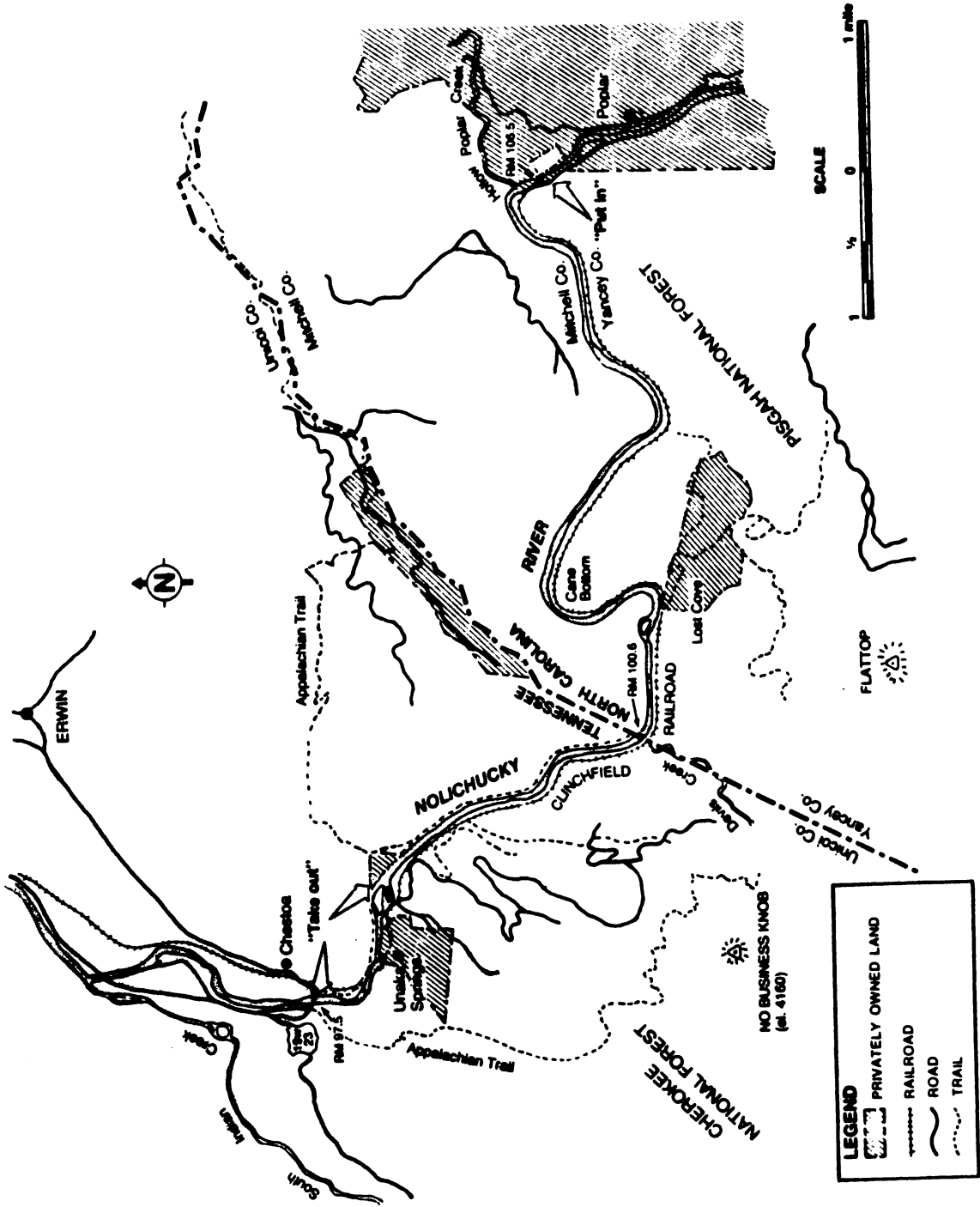


Figure II-4--Landownership in the Nolichucky Gorge

POTENTIAL HYDROPOWER USE AND FLOOD CONTROL

The Tennessee Valley Authority has identified a number of sites on the Nolichucky River where dams might be built, should national needs make this necessary. Two of the sites identified are considered superior to the others and were included in the 1975 National Assessment of Water and Related Lands.

The first site is located near Erwin--river mile 82.8. The purpose of this dam would be flood control and power generation. The structure would be an earthen dam. The area of the impoundment at elevation 1,628 feet would be approximately 7,000 acres and would provide 400,000 acre-feet of flood storage capacity during a typical January. Power production average annual storage capacity would be 235 million kilowatt-hours (kWh). Although the dam would not be within the Nolichucky Gorge, the impoundment would affect water levels in the gorge.

The second site is near Poplar--river mile 105.6. This single-purpose hydropower project would be a concrete gravity dam and diversion (that is, through a flume or pipe to a remote power generator). The impoundment would have a flood storage capacity of 70,000 acre-feet at an elevation of 1,970 feet and an average annual power storage capacity of 168 million kWh. This project would be within the gorge area. There are no feasibility studies underway or planned for this project.

TVA has identified other potential sites for impoundments on the Nolichucky River, but they are not as economically feasible as the two described above. Recent communication with TVA has indicated that initiation of the two projects is very unlikely and they will not be under consideration in the foreseeable future (personal communication, Tom Faulkner, TVA, Fossil and Hydroelectric Branch, 11/13/86).

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Nolichucky River valley was inhabited by Indians of the Woodland Culture from about 1000 B.C. to A.D. 300. The Cherokee Indians have influenced this region as indicated by many places with names of Cherokee origin. Pioneers began settling the area in 1770. Several historic figures also are associated with this region. For example, Davy Crockett was born in a log cabin at the point where Big Limestone Creek enters the Nolichucky River. John Sevier, the first Governor of Tennessee, owned a plantation along the river. Andrew Jackson lived in the region as a young man.

There are presently no sites in the Nolichucky Gorge on the National Register of Historic Places.



Chapter III FINDINGS OF ELIGIBILITY AND CLASSIFICATION

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Final Revised Interagency Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification, and Management of River Areas (47 Federal Register 39454, September 7, 1982) provide direction for determining the eligibility and classification of study rivers.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a river must be free flowing and possess one or more of the following as outstandingly remarkable values: (1) scenic, (2) recreational, (3) geological, (4) fish and wildlife, (5) historic, (6) cultural, or (7) other values, including ecological. The values of the Nolichucky Gorge are described in detail in Chapter II and are briefly summarized below.

1. Scenic. The gorge is one of the deepest and most spectacular in the eastern United States, with mountains towering up to 2,500 feet above the river. Bedrock outcroppings and other geological features add to the scenic beauty. Scenic values are outstanding.
2. Recreational. Whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking are the primary forms of recreation. The Nolichucky Gorge is an excellent whitewater river with Class II to Class V rapids. Recreational values are outstanding.
3. Geological. The gorge is regionally significant for its exposed bedrock outcroppings, which provide insight into the deformation and geomechanics of the Appalachian Mountains. The deep, rocky gorge; the rock cliffs, walls, and ledges; the talus slopes of boulders; and the landslides are all unique features. Geological values are outstanding.
4. Fish and Wildlife. Fish populations are increasing with the improvement of water quality and aquatic habitat. The river corridor contains the habitat and various populations of big and small game animals.
5. Historic and Cultural. The Nolichucky valley is rich in archeology of the Indians of the Woodland Culture, and later the Cherokee Indians. Early American historical names associated with the valley include Davy Crockett, John Sevier, and Andrew Jackson. Most of the early settlement took place above or below the gorge segment.

The Nolichucky Gorge segment is eligible for designation based on its outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, and geological values, and its free-flowing condition. The findings regarding these values are consistent

with the National Park Service findings in their 1980 study report for the Nolichucky River.

CLASSIFICATION

There are three classifications of rivers, or river segments, in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System--wild, scenic, and recreational. Classification is based on the condition of the river and the adjacent lands at the time of the study. The act defines these classifications as follows:

1. Wild River. "Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America."
2. Scenic River. "Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads."
3. Recreational River. "Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past."

The Nolichucky Gorge is recommended to be classified scenic based on its esthetic appeal, the lack of impoundments, the lack of substantial evidence of human activity, and limited accessibility in the gorge. The vegetation in the river corridor appears natural from the river with the exception of the railroad. The railroad is well-screened (approximately 70 percent is hidden) from river users by vegetation during the growing season. Although one railroad trestle crosses the river at the edge of the study area, this crossing does not detract appreciably from the river's outstandingly remarkable values. The agricultural operations in the Lost Cove area are not visible from the river.

Chapter IV ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Three alternatives regarding the suitability or unsuitability of including the 8-mile Nolichucky Gorge in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System have been developed and analyzed. Implementation of Alternative A (no action) would mean that the area would be found not suitable for designation and current Forest Service management activities would continue. The preferred alternative, Alternative B, would mean that a 7.2-mile segment of the gorge would be designated suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Alternative C would result in the entire 8-mile segment under study being designated suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Figure IV-1, shown later in the chapter, illustrates the study areas considered under Alternatives B and C. The three alternatives are described in the following sections. Table IV, located at the end of this chapter, summarizes the environmental consequences of the three alternatives based on the analysis presented in Chapter V.

Factors that were considered in determining the river's suitability include the following: (1) the amount of private land involved and uses of the land; (2) cost of acquisition and administration of the area should it be added to the system, including the need to acquire private lands in order for the area to be administered as a Wild and Scenic River; (3) public, State, and local interest in designation; (4) values foregone if the river is designated; and (5) need for legal protection afforded by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

The following two alternatives were eliminated from detailed study.

1. State Management--In the preferred alternative, the river corridor is 94 percent National Forest land and lies within two States. Although the Nolichucky River has been considered for study for designation to the North Carolina Natural and Scenic Rivers System, the State has no plans to conduct a river study in the foreseeable future. If designated to the State system, North Carolina would only exercise minimal management of the high percentage of National Forest Land. Management by the States of North Carolina and Tennessee was not considered a viable alternative.
2. Alternative Classification--Alternative classifications were analyzed. A "wild river" classification cannot be met because of the railroad immediately adjacent to the river for its entire length. A "recreational river" classification was considered, but it would not afford appropriate protection for the relatively natural and undeveloped river corridor.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative A (No Action)—Finding of Nonsuitability

Under this alternative, a finding of nonsuitability would be made. This finding eventually would result in removal of the protected status afforded to areas studied for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Forest Service probably would continue existing management practices for Management Area 5, as described in the applicable land and resource management plan for each National Forest.

Timber harvest would not be allowed, but certain timber activities such as wildlife habitat enhancement could occur, provided that such practices are consistent with the appropriate land and resource management plan.

Although unlikely, development of hydroelectric power and flood control facilities could be allowed in the gorge if adequate environmental standards were followed.

Private land use would continue as presently managed with possible emphasis on agriculture.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)—Wild and Scenic River Designation

Under this alternative, 7.2 miles of river corridor between Poplar, North Carolina, and Unaka Springs, Tennessee, would be suitable for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The river study boundaries for this alternative are shown in Figure IV-1. The study area begins at the railway bridge at Poplar, North Carolina, and ends at the point where the Mine Branch flows into the Nolichucky. In this alternative, the segment length extends from river mile 106.5 to 99.3 (7.2 miles).

The width of the study area extends beyond the minimum width of one-quarter mile from the riverbank (recommended in the 1970 guidelines) to facilitate better management of the resources of the area. The river segment is located in a gorge with steep walls and a wide riverbed resulting in an extended visual corridor. The upper portions of the gorge walls can be seen from the river. The topography of the gorge makes it highly inaccessible, and possible development of the area is highly unlikely. Therefore, extending the lateral boundaries does not create unnecessary limitations on resource development. The proposed lateral boundaries have been chosen in a manner that is consistent with the protection of the geological, scenic, and recreational values of the gorge.

The river would be classified scenic. Under this classification, the river would be kept free of any impoundments. Shorelines or watersheds would remain largely primitive, and shorelines would remain largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads, such as the road leading into private land at Lost Cove.

With this classification, management on National Forest lands would be similar to present management with protection of the watershed and maintenance

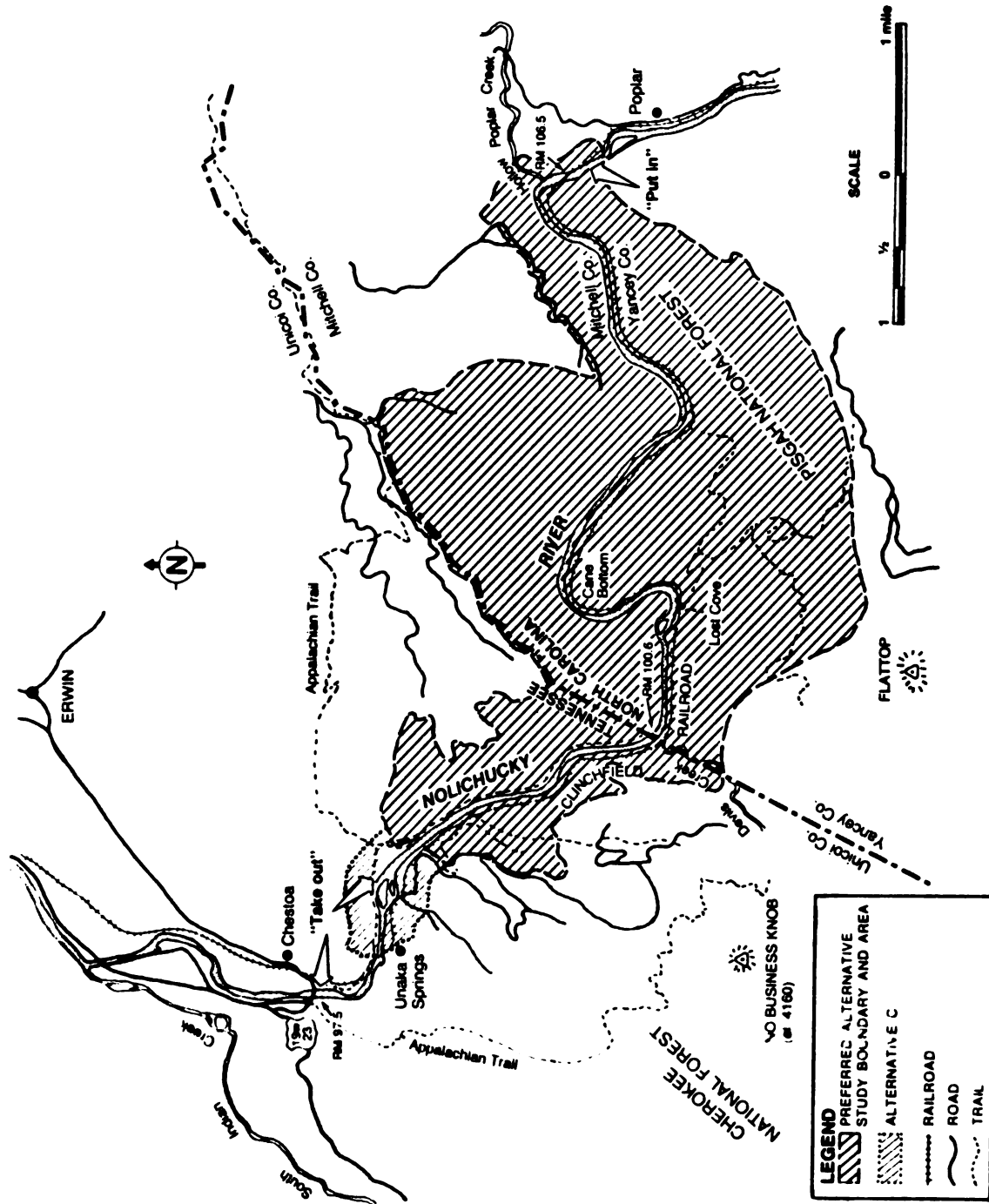


Figure IV-1.--Study Area Alternatives

of the scenic values in the gorge as the primary management objectives. A management plan would be developed at an estimated cost to the Federal Government of \$30,000 to \$40,000. The Forest Service may provide information, educational brochures, maps, and signs at an estimated cost of \$17,000.

Agricultural uses and related supporting activities on private land would continue. No land purchase is required for designation, but the Forest Service will consider land exchange and fee acquisition on a willing seller basis.

The railroad and utility right-of-way would be within the protected river corridor. The river designation would not have a quantitative effect on railroad transportation through the right-of-way. Arrangements regarding vegetation management, maintenance, and debris control in the railroad right-of-way would have to be made to ensure compatibility with a scenic designation. Either a cooperative agreement or a scenic easement could be used to establish a management relationship between the Forest Service and CSX Transportation. Use of a cooperative agreement is preferred by the Forest Service because it would allow more flexible management and would be established at a lower cost. However, if a scenic easement were required to manage the railroad corridor, it is estimated that a Federal expenditure of \$90,000 (\$1,000/acre) would be required.

Designation as a scenic river will result in an increased number of white-water floaters using the gorge. Designation as a scenic river will preclude water development projects in the gorge or projects that would have a direct or adverse effect on recreational, geological, and scenic values.

Alternative C—Wild and Scenic River Designation, Additional River Channel

The study area under this alternative would be the same as under Alternative B except that the boundary is extended to the railroad bridge at Unaka Springs. Using this boundary would add approximately eight-tenths of a river mile to the designated segment.

This expansion would incorporate additional private lands into the river system. The private lands include a snack bar, rental facilities, camping area, cabins, and launch area on the northern shore and several private residences on the southern bank at Unaka Springs. A short segment of the Appalachian Trail would be included.

The purchase of private lands would not be required under this alternative. Designation would not affect current residential land uses.

The Forest Service would encourage efforts to remove trash along the access road leading to Unaka Springs. If the trash removal is not accomplished by volunteers, then estimated costs to the organization conducting the removal activities would be \$15,000 to \$20,000.

By extending the study area boundary downstream, this alternative would provide additional protection to Unaka Springs and existing boating sites from potential (but unlikely) downstream water resource projects. However, this stretch of river does not have the scenic qualities of the rest of the river, and includes additional private land and development.

Table IV-1

Summary of Environmental Consequences

Factors Considered	Alternative A (No Action) Nonsuitability	Alternative B (Preferred) National Designation	Alternative C National Designation Including Additional River Channel
Recreational Development and Use	No significant change from present trends.	Use will increase appreciably due to publicity of Wild and Scenic River status; increased use will result in more intensive management demands; existing boat access sites at Poplar (NC) and Chestoa (TN) are adequate.	Same as B.
Economic	Some economic stimulus because of recreational use.	Increase in recreational use and tourism would accelerate economic growth adjacent to river.	Same as B.
Mining	New mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations allowed to continue.	New mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations allowed to continue. However, mineral activity would be subject to regulations that would minimize surface disturbances, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment. Surface coal mining operations would be prohibited, subject to valid existing rights.	Same as B.
Effects on Private Land	No effect on private land. Railroad activities may continue to degrade scenic values.	The Forest Service would be encouraged to develop a management relationship with C&S Transportation to address issues such as fire control, debris from management activities, and revegetation in selected areas.	Same as B, except management relationships with CSX Transportation may include additional areas. No impacts on private residential areas are expected.

Table IV-1 (continued)

Factors Considered	Alternative A (No Action) Nonsuitability	Alternative B (Preferred) National Designation	Alternative C National Designation Including Additional River Channel
Access	Railroad use would continue. Trail in Tennessee on north side of river would remain open. Secondary road access to Lost Cove would remain open.	Same as A.	Same as B, except the Forest Service would be encouraged to have debris removed from roads paralleling the additional segment.
Threatened and Endangered Species	Water projects or other resource activities and development could have a significant impact on wildlife and plant species.	Development activities which could affect wildlife and plant species would not be allowed.	Same as B, but extended to the entire 8-mile river corridor.
Water Resource Project	Water resource projects affecting values of the gorge could be built, although they are unlikely.	Development of water resource projects that affect the outstandingly remarkable values of the gorge would be prohibited.	Same as B, with additional segment of the river channel protected from downstream projects.
Water Quality	No effect. State in-stream criteria would apply.	Although State in-stream criteria would still apply, North Carolina has indicated that rivers given national designation will be given higher priority for water quality improvement efforts.	Same as B.

Chapter V ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter describes the environmental impacts of the three alternatives considered in this study report. The environmental consequences are summarized in Table IV-1 at the end of Chapter IV.

Management of the recreation in the river corridor would be coordinated with the counties in Tennessee and North Carolina. Fishery and wildlife habitat management is coordinated between the States and the Forest Service.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)—FINDING OF NONSUITABILITY

A finding of nonsuitability would remove the protected status afforded to areas that are studied for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The gorge would then be managed under the appropriate Forest Management Plan. Current recreation management practices of Unicoi County and the Forest Service would continue.

Current railroad management activities would continue. Past management practice has resulted in fires in the gorge and dumping debris in the river, which has altered flow in several rapids. Additional railroad operational and maintenance activities may impact scenic values.

Timber activities would be conducted in accordance with forest management standards and guidelines approved for the Pisgah-Nantahala and Cherokee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans. The land is classified as unsuitable for timber production. However, certain timber activities may be allowed to enhance recreation opportunities, scenic values, and wildlife habitat, and to maintain healthy conditions. Disturbances to water quality would be minimal.

New mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations would be allowed to continue. Mineral activities would be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment.

The major potential impact of removing protective status from a river studied for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System would be that water resource development projects that affect the outstandingly remarkable values of the gorge could be built. However, it is very unlikely that a project affecting the Nolichucky Gorge would be built.

If a water resource project were built at the site identified by TVA at river mile 105.6, the upper portion of the gorge would be covered by the impoundment. Existing outstandingly remarkable geological, scenic, and recreational values in this area of the gorge would be lost. The ecosystem would be transformed. Whitewater recreation activities would be foregone and replaced with lake-oriented activities.

Areas downstream from the impoundment would be affected. Water leaving the impoundment would be cooler and oxygen content in the water could change based on the design of the dam. Silt would be removed from the water in the impoundment. Flow rates would depend on power production and other artificial factors. The remoteness of the gorge would be lessened.

If a water resource project were built at river mile 82.8 at Erwin, the resulting impoundment could affect water levels in the gorge. The magnitude of the effect would depend on the design and operating conditions of the impoundment. Rapids would disappear and the corresponding river banks could be covered.

ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)—WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION

Alternative B finds 7.2 miles of river corridor between Poplar, North Carolina, and Unaka Springs, Tennessee, suitable for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

If the gorge is designated to the National River System under Alternative B, the visual quality objective of "retention" would be met for the gorge. Forest Service management would provide for protection of the watershed and maintenance of scenic values as the primary management objectives. Commercial floating on the river would be regulated by Unicoi County and Forest Service special use permits. The lands would be managed for semiprimitive nonmotorized, semiprimitive motorized, and roaded natural recreation opportunities and would provide dispersed recreation within suitable road corridors and near developed sites. Overnight use will not be allowed between roads and the river channel when they are less than 1/4 of a mile apart, unless the use occurs within a developed recreation site or as otherwise authorized. Modest and unobtrusive river access facilities would be allowed.

National designation of the river would create more public interest, and recreational use would be expected to increase. This would aid tourism development in North Carolina and Tennessee and would help stimulate depressed local economies.

The limit currently set by Tennessee and the Forest Service of 640 recreational visits per day is considered to be the maximum use acceptable for the desired experience on the river. However, limits on use could be adjusted if necessary. Increased use could require increased management of one or more boating sites to control adverse effects such as increased amounts of litter.

Large-scale public use facilities, such as moderate size campgrounds, public information centers, and administrative headquarters would be allowed if such structures are screened from the river. Modest and unobtrusive marinas also could be allowed.

The corridor lands would remain classified as not suitable for timber production. Timber activities would be allowed to enhance recreation opportunities, scenic values, and wildlife habitat, and to maintain healthy conditions. Timber volumes would be nonchargeable yields.

Changes in habitat diversity would be accomplished through visual quality management by striving to provide frequent wildlife sightings, diversity of vegetative cover, and wildlife trees. Late successional featured species would be favored.

Designation to the National River System would not affect the amount of rail traffic through the gorge. The proximity of the railroad to the river would require CSX Transportation to take an active role in managing the railroad land in a manner consistent with the scenic designation. The appropriate management relationship between the railroad and the Forest Service could be established by either a cooperative agreement or by obtaining a scenic easement. Future railroad maintenance activities to be considered would include removal of discarded railroad ties and other debris from along the tracks, possible revegetation of certain portions of the banks of the river to create a buffer, and restrictions on dumping debris into the river. Fire control measures, such as controlled burns and vegetation control, could be implemented. Increased recreational use of the gorge may require the Forest Service to intensify safety efforts to keep people away from the railroad tracks, such as increasing the signing of the Forest Service Boundary. The Forest Service is currently discussing management options with CSX Transportation.

Designation to the National River System would legislatively prohibit the development of water resource projects that will affect the outstandingly remarkable values of the gorge. Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides protection for the free-flowing, scenic, and natural values of rivers designated as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System from the effects of federally assisted construction of any water resources project.¹

Any federally assisted water supply, hydroelectric power, or flood control project that would have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which the river is included in the national system or on the scenic, recreational, and fish wildlife values of the designated segment is prohibited.

Under this alternative, designation to the National River System may result in additional regulation of mining activities. Section 9 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that for Federal lands within wild, scenic, and recreational river areas, all prospecting, mining, and other activities on claims not perfected prior to inclusion of the river in the system are subject to regulation by the administering Secretary. For scenic river designations, mining activities will be controlled, within legal limits, so that they do not conflict with the provision of high scenic and recreational values. These activities must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation and pollution, and visual impairment. Section 522(e)(1) of the

¹Forest Service regulations (36 CFR 296) define water resource projects to include any dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, transmission line, or other project under the Federal Power Act or other construction of developments that affect the free-flowing characteristics of the designated river segment. Federal assistance includes licenses, permits, or authorization by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, or any Federal agency.

Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act prohibits, subject to valid existing rights, surface coal mining operations within the boundaries of units in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Roads would be allowed for access to special uses and developments, for mining activities, or to provide access to other management areas. These roads must maintain the established visual quality objective. Access roads would be maintained commensurate with management objectives and traffic volumes.

New transmission lines, gas lines, water lines, and the like are discouraged. Where no reasonable alternative exists, additional or new facilities should be restricted to existing rights-of-way. Where new rights-of-way are needed, the scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife values must be evaluated in the selection of the site.

Existing agricultural uses would be permitted to continue. New uses and facilities may be permitted as long as they conform to the "natural" appearance of the river corridor.

Periodic meetings between CSX Transportation, the Forest Service, and commercial recreation users would occur to discuss areas of mutual management concerns in the gorge, such as maintenance, safety, and fire prevention.

ALTERNATIVE C—WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION, ADDITIONAL RIVER CHANNEL

Alternative C finds an 8-mile segment of the Nolichucky River suitable for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Alternative C differs from Alternative B in that an additional segment of the river would be included as a Wild and Scenic River. Management of wildlife, minerals, timber, and other resources on National Forest land would be the same as described for Alternative B.

The designation of the additional segment would not affect national recognition of the Nolichucky River. Recreational use would increase in the same manner and with the same effects as in Alternative B.

Alternative C would offer slightly more protection from any potential downstream water development projects than would Alternative B because of the inclusion of the additional downstream segment.

An additional segment of railroad tracks would be included in the designation to the National River System. Management agreements between the Forest Service and CSX Transportation discussed under Alternative B would be extended to address the additional segment. Other existing private land uses would not be influenced by the designation.

Management of the road parallel to the river would not change. Additional use of the road may result from increased recreation activities in the gorge.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Adverse Environmental Effects That Cannot Be Avoided

Given the forest management standards and guidelines that would apply under Alternative A and the statutory protection that would apply under Alternatives B and C, there should be no unavoidable adverse effects resulting from any of the alternatives considered.

Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

As none of the alternatives commit the Forest to the production of short-term resource yields, long-term productivity should not be affected. Congressional designation would enhance long-term recreational opportunities.

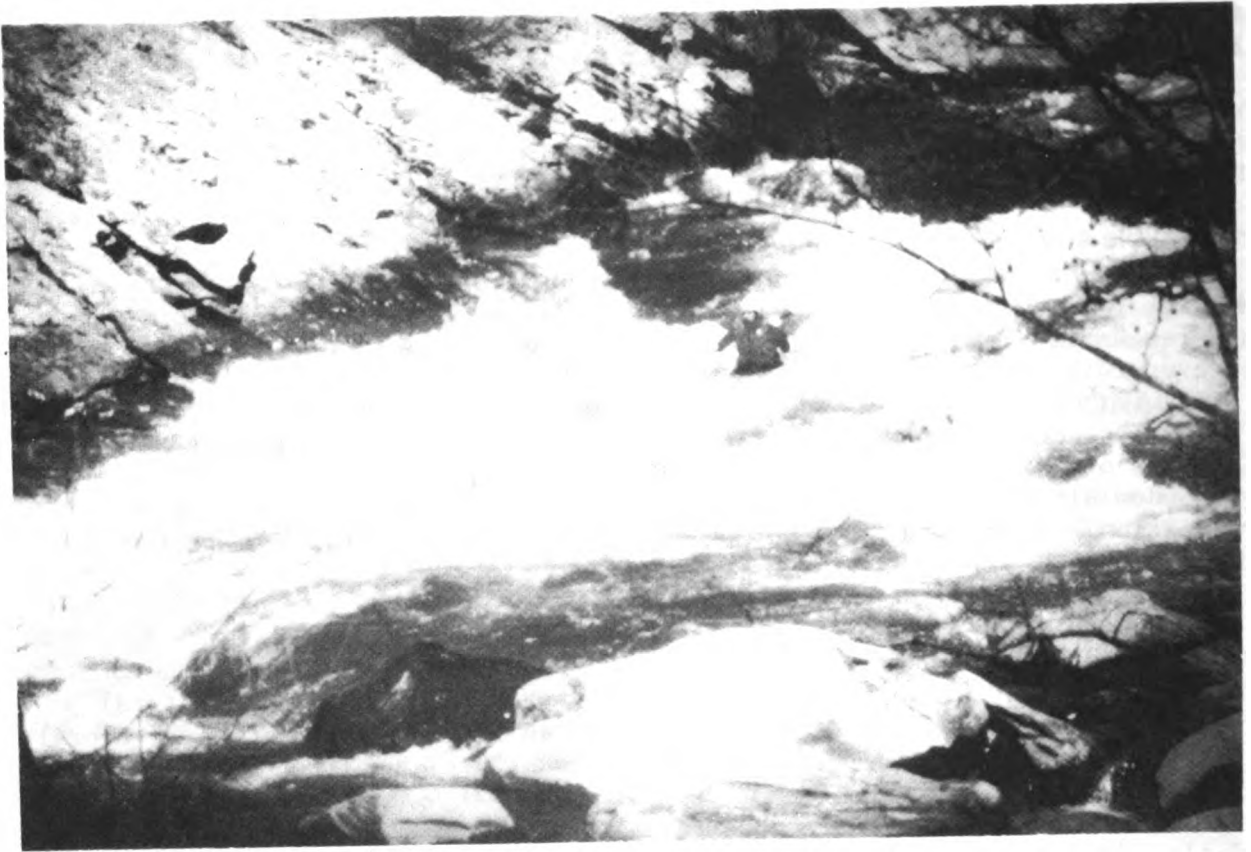
Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

None of the alternatives result in a decision to use or modify resources that are renewable over a long period of time. Thus, there would be no irreversible commitment of resources.

The difference between output levels under alternatives varies predominantly in terms of recreation visitor days. The fewer opportunities for recreational use under Alternative A represent an irretrievable commitment of the recreation resource as long as the river is not designated into the system.

Other Effects

None of the alternatives result in significant effects in terms of energy requirements, conservation potential, urban quality, historic or cultural resources, or the design of the built environment. No conflicts with Federal, regional, State, and local land use plans have been identified. A biological evaluation (on file in the Forest Supervisor's Office) concluded that none of the alternatives would impact sensitive wildlife and plant species. Selection of Alternative B or C would affect the potential for future water impoundments, hydropower, and flood control.



Chapter VI

LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM COPIES OF THE STUDY REPORT/EIS ARE SENT

Copies of the draft study report and EIS have been sent to, and comments have been requested from, the following:

FEDERAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS

Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Federal Activities,
Washington, DC
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington, DC
ACTION, Washington, DC
Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Washington, DC
Department of Agriculture, Rural Electrification Administration
Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, Washington, DC
Department of Defense, Washington, DC
Department of Commerce, Washington, DC
Department of Justice, Washington, DC
Department of Labor, Washington, DC
Department of Energy, Washington, DC
Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC
Department of Interior, Environmental Project Review, Washington, DC
Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, DC
Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration,
Washington, DC
Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC
Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, GA
Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, DC
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC
Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, DC
National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC
Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, DC
Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, TN
Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC
Water Resources Council, Washington, DC
Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC
National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC
Honorable Terry Sanford, U.S. Senator from North Carolina
Honorable Jesse A. Helms, Jr., U.S. Senator from North Carolina
Honorable Jim Sasser, U.S. Senator from Tennessee
Honorable Albert Gore, Jr., U.S. Senator from Tennessee
Honorable James H. Quillen, U.S. Representative from Tennessee
Honorable James McClure Clarke, U.S. Representative from North Carolina

STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS

Honorable Ned McWherter, Governor of Tennessee
Honorable James G. Martin, Governor of North Carolina
Honorable Ronnie Greer, Tennessee State Senator

Honorable Zane Witson, Tennessee State Representative
 Honorable Charles F. Buchanan, North Carolina State Representative
 Honorable James F. Hughes, North Carolina State Representative
 Honorable Edgar Vance Starnes, North Carolina State Representative
 Honorable Robert C. Hunter, North Carolina State Representative
 Honorable Daniel Reid Simpson, North Carolina State Senator
 Honorable Donald R. Kincaid, North Carolina State Senator
 Honorable Robert S. Swain, North Carolina State Senator
 Honorable Dennis Winner, North Carolina State Senator
 North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development

- Natural Heritage Program
- Parks and Recreation Division

 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
 North Carolina Division on Forest Resources
 North Carolina Trails Committee
 Tennessee Division of Forestry
 Tennessee Department of Transportation
 Tennessee Department of Conservation
 Tennessee State Planning Office
 Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
 Tennessee Department of Health and Environment
 Mitchell County Board of Commissioners
 Mitchell County Economic Development Commission
 Yancey County Board of Commissioners
 Unicoi County Executive
 Community Rural Development
 First Tennessee Development District

ORGANIZATIONS

American Rivers Incorporated
 National Sierra Club
 Sierra Club (Joseph LeConte Chapter)
 Sierra Club (WENOCA Chapter)
 The Wilderness Society (Washington, DC office)
 Friends of the Horsepasture River
 Appalachian Trail Conference
 Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council
 Western Carolina Tomorrow
 Carolina Canoe Club
 Carolina Outdoors and Wildlife Society
 Conservation Council of North Carolina
 National Parks and Conservation Association
 Save America Club
 Southeastern Lumberman's Association
 Yancey County Rod and Gun Club
 Sierra Club
 Tennessee Conservation League
 Unicoi County Rod and Gun Club
 Audubon Society
 Unicoi County Riding Club
 Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning
 Tennessee Environmental Council

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc.
CSX Transportation, Inc.
Nolichucky Expeditions
Cherokee Adventures
Mountain Quest
Carolina Wilderness Adventures
Nantahala Outdoor Center
Rolling Thunder
Wahoo Wild Waters

SCHOOLS/INSTITUTIONS

Appalachian Consortium
Carolina Wilderness Institute
East Tennessee State University

INDIVIDUALS

Mr. & Mrs. George A. Ammann, Erwin, TN
James Brooks, Jonesborough, TN
Gregory W. Church, Christiansburg, VA
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Dunlop, Erwin, TN
Dana Eglinton, Bristol, TN
L. Powell Foster, Kingsport, TN
Craig Haire, Johnson City, TN
Betty Harvell, Bakersville, NC
Kenneth Haynes, Chuckey, TN
Dennis D. Horn, Tullahoma, TN
Ray Hunt, Kingsport, TN
Richard & Gloria Knight, Jonesborough, TN
Dan Lady, Bristol, TN
Eddie Lesueur II, Gray, TN
Johnny Lynch, Unicoi, TN
David McPeak, Bristol, TN
Margaret Orren, Johnson City, TN
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Rippee, Erwin, TN
Todd Saddler, Bristol, TN
Mr. & Mrs. Ned Schaffer, Erwin, TN
Edward Schell, Johnson City, TN
Donald Shaffer, Johnson City, TN
Don Sipes, Johnson City, TN
Ron Stewart, Chattanooga, TN
David Stirling, Piney Flats, TN
John M. Vann, Bristol, TN



Chapter VII LIST OF PREPARERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Project Responsibility</u>	<u>Education</u>
USDA, Forest Service		
Deen Lundeen	Project Officer, Policy and Technical Guidance Washington Office, Land Management Planning Staff	PhD, Civil Engineering, Stanford University; M.S., Hydrology, University of Minnesota; B.S., Forest Management, University of Montana
F. Norman Heintz	Regional Office Coordinator Region 8, Atlanta Recreation Management Staff	B.S., Landscape Architecture, Iowa State University
Charles Huppuch	Regional Office Coordinator Region 8, Atlanta Recreation Management Staff (after October 1988)	B.S., Forestry New York State College of Forestry
David Hammond	Recreation Staff Officer National Forests in North Carolina	B.S., Forestry, Arkansas A&M College
Melinda Waldrep	Dispersed Recreation National Forests in North Carolina	BIA, Landscape Architecture, University of Georgia
Russ Griffith	Former Recreation Staff Officer, Cherokee National Forest	B.S., Forestry, University of Idaho
Reese Scull	Current Recreation Staff Officer, Cherokee National Forest (after May 22, 1988)	B.S., Forest Management North Carolina State University
LABAT-ANDERSON Incorporated		
Andrea Myslicki	Project Manager	M.P.A., Public Administration; B.S., Environmental Science, Indiana University
Anne Vor der Bruegge	Team Leader	M.P., Urban and Environmental Planning; B.A., Environmental Psychology and Anthropology, University of Virginia

<u>Name</u>	<u>Project Responsibility</u>	<u>Education</u>
Kevin Weiss	Development of the Study Report, Identification of Issues	M.S., Chemical Engineering, Carnegie-Mellon University; B.S., Chemical Engineering, University of Pittsburgh
Marie Kerr	Editor	M.A., English, Indiana University; B.A., English, University of Hawaii
William L. Hess	Subcontractor Preparation of Initial Draft	B.S., Forestry, Pennsylvania State University

INDEX

Access	iii, 13, 14, 22, 27
Alternative 1	i, iv, v, vi, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33
Alternative 2 ..	i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33
Alternative 3	i, iv, v, vi, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33
Classification	ii, 1, 2, 22, 23, 24, 26, 30
CSX Railroad	iii, iv, 13, 17, 22, 26, 29, 30, 32, A-3
Cultural and Historic Resources	19, 21, 33
Costs for Management	iv, 26
Economic Values	iv, 27
Eligibility	iii, iv, 1, 2, 21
Fish and Wildlife	iii, 9, 21, 29, A-3
Forest Plans	iv, 3, 17, 24
Geologic	iii, 3, 5, 7, 21, A-3
Issues	iii, 3, A-2, A-3
Land Acquisition	iv, 26, A-2
Landownership	ii, iv, 3, 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 32, A-3
Location	2, 5, 6
Minerals and Mining	7, 9, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32
Navigation and Riparian Rights	17
National Environmental Policy Act	iii, 2, 33
National Park Service Report	iii, 1, 22
Outstandingly Remarkable Values	iv, 1, 7, 21
Recreation Activities	iii, iv, 3, 13, 15, 21, 27, 29, 30, 33, A-3
Recreation - Developed Sites	iv, 13, 27, 30, A-3
Roads	13, 24, 30, 32

Scenic Values	21, 30
Soils	7
Structures	13, 17, 19, 24
Suitability	1, 24
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species	iii, 3, 11, 12, 27
Timber Production	11, 17, 24, 29, 30, 32, A-3
Trails	13
Water - Flow	5, 7, 13, 15
Water - Impoundments	v, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33
Water - Quality	iv, v, 8, 9, 10, 28, 30, A-3
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	1
Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Region	15, 16

Appendix A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DATA SUMMARY

Forty-eight responses, including one resolution, were received from public review of the Draft copy of the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Environmental Impact Statement. No form letters or petitions were included.

Comments were received from the following:

Comment No. Federal Agencies and Officials

- 1 Department of Interior, Office of Environmental Project Review
- 2 Department of Transportation
- 3 Department of the Army
- 4 Department of Housing and Urban Development
- 5 Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service
- 6 Tennessee Valley Authority
- 7 Environmental Protection Agency

Comment No. State and Local Agencies and Officials

- 8 Honorable Ned McWherter, Governor of Tennessee
- 9 Honorable Albert Gore, Jr., U.S. Senator from Tennessee
- 10 Honorable James H. Quillen, U.S. Representative from Tennessee
- 11 Tennessee State Planning Office
- 12 Tennessee Department of Conservation
- 13 Tennessee Department of Conservation, Division of Forestry
- 14 Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- 15 North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development
- 16 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- 17 Unicoi County Commission, Tennessee

Comment No. Organization and Business/Industry

- 18 Chota Canoe Club, Tennessee
- 19 Cherokee Adventures, Tennessee
- 20 Georgia Canoe Association
- 21 Sierra Club, Tennessee Chapter
- 22 Sierra Club, State of Franklin Group, Tennessee Chapter
- 23 Sierra Club, North Carolina Chapter
- 24 Nolichucky Indian Princess Tribe of the Arapahoe Y Indian Nation
- 25 Conservation Council of North Carolina
- 26 Nantahala Outdoor Center, North Carolina
- 27 Tysinger, Hampton & Partners, Inc.

Comment No. Individuals

- 28 Dennis D. Horn, Tullahoma, TN
- 29 Dana Eglinton, Bristol, TN

30 L. Powell Foster, Kingsport, TN
 31 Donald Shaffer, Johnson City, TN
 32 Edward Schell, Johnson City, TN
 33 Dan Lady, Bristol, TN
 34 John M. Vann, Bristol, TN
 35 Mr. & Mrs. George A. Ammann, Erwin, TN
 36 Mr. & Mrs. Ned Schaffer, Erwin, TN
 37 Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Dunlop, Erwin, TN
 38 Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Rippee, Erwin, TN
 39 Todd Saddler, Bristol, TN
 40 Gregory W. Church, Christiansburg, VA
 41 David McPeak, Bristol, TN
 42 David Stirling, Piney Flats, TN
 43 James Brooks, Joneborough, TN
 44 Betty Harvell, Bakersville, NC
 45 Richard & Gloria Knight, Jonesborough, TN
 46 Kenneth Haynes, Chuckey, TN
 47 Margaret Orren, Johnson City, TN
 48 Craig Haire, Johnson City, TN

All letters were read and substantive comments were identified and grouped for further consideration. Although the letters have not been responded to individually, every attempt has been made to consider each substantive comment and suggestion in the final report.

An analysis of these comments received on the Study Report and draft Environmental Impact Statement indicated support for each of the three alternative.

- 15 respondents (32%) favor the Forest Service recommended Alternative B.
- 19 respondents (40%) favor Alternative C, and 14 of these respondents recommended Forest Service study of two additional downstream segments.
- 3 respondents (6%) oppose Wild and Scenic River designation (Alternative A).
- 10 respondents (22%) had no recommendation.

The most prominent concern that was addressed in the responses was the need for future protection of the outstanding recreation, scenic, and geologic values in the river corridor (Letters 5, 6, 12, 20, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34, 40, and 48). None of the respondents disagreed with this concern. Protection of the high quality recreation experience was also stressed by almost all of the respondents (Letters 29, 31, 34, 40, and 46). Protection of these outstanding values in the Nolichucky River corridor is the primary objective of this study. Wild and Scenic River designation appears to be a desirable mechanism for attaining that objective.

Some of the respondents extended their concern for protection of the river corridor downstream beyond the limits of the current study to a segment of the river between river mile 97.5 and State Route 81, which is referred to as the Devil's Looking Glass (Letters 9, 21, 22, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35-38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45, and 47). The recommendation to study the additional segments of the river is beyond the scope of this Study Report but may be considered in future analyses.

Protection for threatened and endangered plants and endangered wildlife species were also described as concerns (Letters 1, 6, 14, 15, and 32). The list of plants and wildlife species with special State or Federal status has been revised to include those species identified by the respondents (pages 11-12). Protection for species with special status is generally compatible with Wild and Scenic River designation. If the river is designated, the management plan for the river will address this subject in more detail.

Two main issues supported opposition to the Wild and Scenic River designation. First of all, the understanding or feeling that designation would impose more federal restrictions on landowners and river users, which are not necessary or desirable (Letters 10, 12, 17, and 33). Chapter V (pages 30-32) has been revised to address this concern. The existing limitations on recreational use of the river have been established by the State of Tennessee and the Forest Service, and would not be affected by Wild and Scenic River designation. Landowners in the designated river corridor may continue existing uses of their land at the time Congress designates the river (as specified in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Future uses and developments would be acceptable as long as they do not affect the freeflowing nature of the river or detract from the outstanding values of the river corridor.

The second opposing issue was that the railroad grade which is currently used as a source of foot access to the canyon, would be restricted from use by recreationists (Letters 2, 10, 19, 27). The Forest Service has no authority to restrict access to the CSX railroad grade. As stated on page 31, the Forest Service may provide safety precautions (signs) and discuss management options with the railroad company, but this action is not related to Wild and Scenic River designation.

Water quality was also mentioned as a concern. Upstream mining activities and agricultural practices have been the cause of water quality degradation in the past. Reclamation efforts have alleviated this problem to the point that it is not a limiting factor to recreational use of the river. Wild and Scenic River designation may influence additional regulation on upstream mining activities, water quality monitoring, and further reclamation efforts (page 31).

Other specific issues raised by the reviewers have been addressed in this final report:

- Timber harvesting (pages 29 and 30). There are no suitable lands for timber production in the river corridor (letter 16).

- Roads and recreation development (pages 13-15, 30). Some access and recreational facilities would be permitted at the upper and lower ends of the Gorge. The visual quality objective of "retention" would continue (Letter 16).
- Habitat diversity (page 31). This subject is addressed in more detail in the Forest plans (Letter 16).
- Black bear habitat (page 11). Potential conflicts with river floaters and other recreation activities would be addressed in the river management plan (Letter 16).
- Boater-fisherman conflicts. This has not been identified as a problem on the Nolichucky (study segment). Future problems would be addressed in the river management plan (Letters 16 and 19).
- Unique geologic values (page 5, 7, 29, 31). These values would be protected with Wild and Scenic River designation by prohibiting water developments in the Gorge (Letters 5 and 12).
- Historic Lost Cove Area (page 17). Lost Cove is primarily private land and is not on the Register of Historic Places. Wild and Scenic River designation would include the Lost Cove area (Letters 43 and 44).

The above issues are addressed in this report as they relate to the study recommendations, and where they are specific to the river corridor. They are described in general in the Forest plans, and would be further addressed in the river management plan if the river is designated.

The Forest Service chose to retain Alternative B as its preferred alternative. Alternative C, which includes an additional 0.8 miles from the confluence with Mine Branch downstream to the railroad bridge was recommended by some of the reviewers. The high percentage of private land was a major factor in deciding not to include this segment in the Forest Service Recommendation.



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT REVIEW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ER 87/1226

JAN 2 2 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
2800 North Ocoee Road
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

Dear Sir:

In response to your request for comments concerning the draft wild and scenic river report and environmental impact statement for the Nolichucky River, the following remarks are provided.

In the discussion of mineral resources in the Affected Environment Chapter, we concur with the remark that the absence of nearby markets make sand and gravel exploration and development unlikely and uneconomical. Also, the barite prospects mentioned that occur approximately 3 miles south of Unaka Springs are too small and too far from the project area to be affected. Not noted in the discussion, however, is a small manganese prospect located one mile outside the proposed wild and scenic study area. Although the prospect may be too small and too distant to be negatively affected, it is suggested that the manganese occurrence be mentioned in the final document.

In addition, since the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) permits Federal mineral activities in both North Carolina and Tennessee, it is requested that the BLM be kept informed as to the progress of the designation process. If the proposed area is classified as scenic, the BLM should be involved in the review of proposed stipulations and/or operating requirements that would be placed on any BLM permitted activities. Potential lessees should be made aware of operating requirements prior to a lease offering or prospecting permit.

Two Federally-listed threatened species of plants, the Blue Ridge goldenrod (*Solidago spithamea*) and Heller's blazing star (*Liatris helleri*) may occur in the impact area of the proposed project. The Service should follow procedures for Section 7 consultation contained in the Endangered Species Act and 50 CFR Part 402. A request for section 7 activities should be addressed to the Field Supervisor, Asheville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 100 Otis Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina 28801.

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In addition, in order to make the discussion of threatened and endangered species more complete, it is suggested that the following information be included in the final report/ EIS. According to records of the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Cookeville, Tennessee, Field Office, the American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) historically nested in the Nolichucky Gorge. Although no nests have been reported recently, offspring of birds reintroduced in western North Carolina may begin to nest in the area again. Also, the following candidate plants species may occur in the gorge:

- Cliff-green - *Paxistima canbyi*
- Bent avens - *Geum geniculatum*
- Roan false goat's beard - *Astilbe crenatiloba*
- Broadleaf coreopsis - *Coreopsis latifolia*
- Piratebush - *Busklelya distichophylla*
- Carey's saxifrage - *Saxifraga careyana*
- White-leaved sunflower - *Helianthus glaucophyllus*
- Spreading avens - *Geum radiatum*
- Gray's lily - *Lilium gravi*
- Mountain purple blueet - *Hedyotis purpurea* var. montana
- Roseroot - *Sedum rosea* var. roanensis
- Gray's saxifrage - *Saxifraga caroliniana*

These species are not protected by the Endangered Species Act, but they are being considered for listing in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the document.

Sincerely,

Bruce Blanchard, Director
Office of Environmental Project Review



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Assistant Secretary

400 Seventh St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

88 FEB 5 P1:04

JAN 29 1988

The Honorable Douglas W. MacCleery
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Natural Resources and Environment
Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. MacCleery:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Wild and Scenic River Study Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Nolichucky River in Tennessee and North Carolina. The preferred alternative is designation of a 7.2-mile segment of the Nolichucky Gorge as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The segment of the river proposed for designation is located within the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests.

We note from the draft report that the proposed scenic river corridor includes an active railroad owned by CSX Transportation. Rail operations would not be affected, but CSX Transportation would be required to manage the railroad land in a manner consistent with the scenic designation, and the Forest Service would intensify its efforts to keep people away from the railroad tracks as recreational use of the Gorge increases.

The Department of Transportation has no comments to offer on the proposal.

Sincerely,

Matthew V. Scoppa
Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE SUPPORT CENTER
FORT BELLEVILLE, ILL. 62205-4000

11 FEB 1988

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
CEHSC-ER

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LMP
06 S04421

Honorable George S. Dunlop
Assistant Secretary Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is in response to your letter of November 6, 1987 to the Secretary of the Army regarding the draft Wild and Scenic River Study Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Nolichucky River. We have no comments to offer on this issue as it relates to the Army's military activities. A separate response is being provided regarding the Army's civil works interests.

Sincerely

RONALD G. KEEFEY
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Chief, Army Environmental Office

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

874705

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NOV 30 1987

Honorable George S. Dunlop
Assistant Secretary of
Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Dunlop:

This is in response to your letter of November 6, 1987 to Secretary Pierce, requesting review and comments on the Draft Wild and Scenic River Study Report/Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River in North Carolina and Tennessee. The report is being sent to our Atlanta Regional Environmental field staff having responsibility for that project area.

The Regional Environmental Clearance Officer will coordinate the review and consolidate appropriate comments in a response directly to you. Thank you for the opportunity to review the Study Report.

Sincerely,

Janice S. Colec
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Program Development

JAN 21 1963

SUBJECT: BAP - OAR - Wild and Scenic Rivers, Nolichucky River, FILE CODE: 150-7
North Carolina & Tennessee

TO: Everett Towle, Director, Land Management Planning,
Forest Service

We appreciate the opportunity to review the "Wild and Scenic River Study
Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River."

We agree with your recommendation to include the 7.2 mile segment of the river
in the National Wild and Scenic River System with a scenic classification.
This designation would be appropriate considering the outstanding geologic and
scenic qualities of the Nolichucky River gorge, the opportunity for an
excellent whitewater river experience in the area, and the favorable public
response to this proposal.

Several comments and suggestions are attached for your consideration during
preparation of the final report.

Clair H. Walker

EDWARD G. RIEKERT
Director, Basin and Area
Planning Division

Enclosure

Enclosure

1. The "Water Quality" section (pages 9-9) needs to be edited to include
Tennessee data in paragraphs 4 and 5. Information is available in "Status of
Water Quality in Tennessee, 305 (b) Report," dated August 1966. A copy of the
publication can be obtained from the Tennessee Department of Health and
Environment, Office of Water Management, 150 Ninth Avenue, Murth, Nashville,
TN 37219-5405. Their telephone number is (615)741-6610.

2. The Environmental Protection Agency's water quality criteria need to be
used in Table II-2 (page 10) since both North Carolina and Tennessee waters
are involved.

3. It should probably be noted in Table II-2 (page 10) that the average and
maximum levels of fecal coliform bacteria shown are excessive for
water-contact recreation. In addition, it may be appropriate in this section
to discuss what management practices may be necessary for water-contact
recreation if they will be affected by these excessive levels of fecal
coliforms.

4. The Tennessee Department of Health and Environment should be added to the
list of agencies in Chapter VI.

14-und... —

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37908 FEB 17 AM 8 58

DFP

FEB 16 1968

Mr. Donald L. Rollens
Forest Supervisor
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37320

Dear Mr. Rollens:

Thank you for your letter of October 30, 1967, and the opportunity to comment on your Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Mollchucky River in Tennessee and North Carolina. The statement is well prepared and covers all aspects of designation thoroughly.

We support this designation because of the outstanding quality of recreation, scenic, and geologic resources of the Mollchucky River gorge. The proposed management approach appears appropriate to protect these resources. No ongoing or planned TVA project or activity will be affected by designating this segment of the river for inclusion in the national system. The following specific comments are provided for your consideration in preparing the final report.

The statements on page 11 that no threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species are present in the area are correct only in relation to federally listed species. Several species listed by the State of Tennessee have been identified in the study area. These include climbing fumatory (*Adlumia fungosa*) and Fraser sedge (*Cymophyllus fraseri*), both listed as threatened in Tennessee, and swamp loosestrife (*Lythimachia ferretalis*), listed as of special concern in Tennessee. The latter species typically occur on sandbars. Other species occur in the additional area included in alternative C. These are sapsuck (*Buckleya distichophylla*) and a saxifrage (*Saxifraga caryophylla*), both category 2 candidate species for Federal listing, as well as a bush honeysuckle (*Diervillea sessilifolia* var. *rivularis*), listed as threatened in Tennessee. Since these species may also occur further upstream in the gorge, we agree that additional studies in the gorge are desirable. The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), federally listed as endangered, formerly nested within the gorge.

In regard to alternatives considered (pages 21-26), TVA recommends selection of alternative C over the preferred one (alternative B), because alternative C provides greater protection for the lower part of the Mollchucky gorge. Another benefit offered by alternative C is the

-2-

Mr. Donald L. Rollens

FEB 16 1968

proposed removal of trash and debris between the road and the river. This will be of benefit to those who view the river from its banks while fishing or from the water while floating.

If you have questions concerning our comments, please feel free to contact Roosevelt T. Allen of the Division of Land and Economic Resources at telephone number (615) 632-3189. Please send us two copies of the final report when it is available.

Sincerely,

Betty Bond, Manager
Office of Natural Resources
and Economic Development



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IV
348 COURTLAND STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30388

JAN 12 1988

4PM-EA/RJM

Mr. George A. Olson, Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
Post Office Building
P.O. Box 2750
Asheville, North Carolina 28802

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact for Nolichucky River Designation
EPA Log No.: D-AFS-E61065-00

Dear Mr. Olson:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Nolichucky River, Mitchell and Yancey Counties, NC and Unicoi County, TN. We agree with the study's conclusions regarding the eligibility and suitability of this segment of the Nolichucky River for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Such National designation will provide important focus for the protection of this unique natural resource. In addition to the specific protection provided under the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, we would also encourage the close cooperation of federal, state and local agencies to ensure compatible land management practices outside the designated boundaries in order to protect the River's water quality. Management practices within the designated area should emphasize protection of the natural qualities of the gorge. Incompatible activities, to the greatest extent possible, should be phased out and/or prohibited.

Based on our review of the DEIS, we rate the proposed action as "LO" (Lack of Objections).

We appreciate the opportunity of commenting on this DEIS. If you have any questions regarding our comments please call Heinz J. Mueller at FTS 257-3776.

Sincerely,
Shepard N. Moore
Shepard N. Moore, Chief
EPA Review Staff
Environmental Assessment Branch

120
LMP



State of Tennessee

VED MANHETER
DATE

November 18, 1987

Mr. George S. Dunlop
Assistant Secretary
Natural Resources and Environment
Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Dunlop:

On behalf of Governor McWhorter, let me acknowledge and thank you for your letter dated November 6 and the enclosed copy of the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River.

Mr. Dunlop, Governor McWhorter appreciates your making this information available to his office and I am taking the liberty of sharing a copy with Commissioner Elbert Gill of the Tennessee Department of Conservation for his review and consideration.

Again, thank you for your courtesy.

Sincerely,

Betty S. Hayne
Betty S. Hayne
Executive Assistant

CSF

cc: Commissioner Elbert Gill 40:2d 2/20/87

NOV 23 1987

ID

Rec'd Forest Service
Chief's Office

W.C.

916 Scenic Ct.
Kingsport, TN 37664
December 29, 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37320

Lectori Salutem:

I would urge Forest Service support of DEIS Alternative C on the Nolichucky River, with added mileage to the vehicular bridge near mile 97.5. This additional mileage is needed to protect the entrance to the gorge from adverse development, and coordinate management of it with the Forest Service campgrounds and take-out point, and should be designated Scenic.

I further urge the Forest Service to recommend classification of the portion of the river from the aforementioned bridge to the TN 81 bridge near Crossroads Grocery as Recreational. This section is heavily used for tubing, canoeing, fishing, swimming, rafting, kayaking, picnicing, and recreational viewing from adjacent roads. It is threatened by adverse development. To protect recreational values and maintain current use patterns of the land, scenic easements might be necessary. Devil's Den Glass is widely recognized as a unique geological phenomenon in this stretch. Big Rock and Sandy Beach are heavily used by people in Upper East Tennessee, and in need of management to maintain recreational values.

Both of the above suggested additions meet the requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. I recreate in and along them frequently.

Sincerely,

L. Powell Foster
L. Powell Foster

RECEIVED
DEC 30 1988

303 Russell Senate Office Building
Phone 202-224-6044

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

ALBERT GORE, JR.
WASHINGTON

88/1/8
AW

January 30, 1988

Donald L. Rollens
Cherokee National Forest
2800 North Ocoee Road
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

Dear Mr. Rollens:

Enclosed are two letters I received concerning the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River. Please include this material in your decision making process.

I am interested in the Nolichucky River, and would appreciate learning of developments on this project as they occur.

Thank you for your time and attention to this request. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Albert Gore, Jr.
Albert Gore, Jr.
U.S. Senator

Sincerely,

AG/wem
enclosure



UNICOI COUNTY

Post Office Box 169 • Erwin, Tennessee 37630 • (615) 743-0391, 743-3712

1988 JAN 27 PM 5 23

COUNTY EXECUTIVE
FRED E. LONGDON
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
JAN 11, 1988
FOR COUNCIL STAFF

January 21, 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

RE: Wild and Scenic River Study
Report and Environmental Impact
Statement on the Nolichucky River
P.L. 90-542, P.L. 93-621

Dear Sir:

The Unicoi County Commission meeting in regular session January 16, 1988 voted to oppose the proposal to designate the 7.2 to 8 mile portion of the Nolichucky River between Poplar, N.C. and Erwin, TN for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as recommended in the above captioned study.

It was the general consensus of the Commission that the recommendations of this study would impose too many federal restrictions on the area which would have a negative effect on commercial rafting. Also that access to fishing and hiking in the area would be hampered.

Your consideration of the action of this body on this issue is respectfully requested.

Yours very truly,
Fred E. Longdon
Fred E. Longdon
County Executive

cc: Congressman James H. Quillen
Senator James R. Sasser
Senator Albert Gore, Jr.

1/28/88

JAMES H. QUILLEN
Forest District, Tennessee
COMMITTEE
RULES
Nominations Member

Congress of the United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 1988

Dear Chief Rollens:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Forest Service's recommendation regarding the Nolichucky River. I wish to state that I do not support the recommendation that a 7.2 mile segment of the Nolichucky River be included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System with a scenic classification for a number of reasons.

As you may be aware, I introduced H. R. 10771 providing for a comprehensive study of the entire main stem of the Nolichucky River for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System on October 4, 1973. The bill was incorporated into an omnibus bill which was passed just prior to the congressional adjournment in 1974 and was signed into law on January 3, 1975 (P. L. 93-621).

The purpose of the bill was to ascertain the feasibility and desirability of including any part of the river in the protective regime of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This was accomplished by the study completed in 1980, which rejected any part of the river for such inclusion in the federal system. I believe the conclusions of the 1980 study remain valid.

During the time my bill was before the Congress, and thereafter, there was very little interest expressed by my constituents in placing any part of the river into the system, and I do not recall any organized environmental or conservation groups supporting such a step. As far as I am aware, this remains the situation today. On the other hand, others have expressed opposition to the Forest Service's current recommendation, including the Unicoi County Commission, and I consider such opposition.

I believe that designation of the 7.2 mile river segment would increase government regulation and restrict local use. It may also affect adversely the existing whitewater rafting activities along the gorge as well as the traditional access afforded to hunters, anglers and fishermen. There are only a few of the reasons why I do not agree with the recommendation and feel there is no compelling reason to go forward with any management changes along the river.

Sincerely,

James H. Quillen
James H. Quillen

Mr. Donald L. Rollens
Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
Post Office Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
101
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICE
Room 117-Joint House
Hearing Room
Clerks' Office
W. Morris Aksh
S. Handrich

FAH

1/20/88
8MA

Handwritten signature



TENNESSEE STATE PLANNING OFFICE
407 JOHN SEVIER STATE OFFICE BUILDING
900 CHARLOTTE AVENUE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37242
(615) 253-3402

W. D. McHESTER
Governor

JIM HALL
Executive Director

88-0526

January 19, 1988

Mr. Donald Rollens
Department of Agriculture
P. O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37320

SUBJECT: CHTN122287-011 Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Holchucky River

Dear Mr. Rollens:

In accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12172 and 12416 and with gubernatorial Executive Order 58, this office serves as the designated State Clearinghouse for federal activities and grants review.

We are hereby notifying you that this office is rescinding the condition contained in our letter for the above mentioned project dated December 22, 1987 and are substituting the conditions listed below. We are recommending approval if these conditions are met:

1. Portions of the proposed project are located in a flood hazard area. Any construction should be in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.
2. See the attached letters for comments from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the Department of Conservation.

This letter should be attached to the application and become a permanent part of the project file. Any involved federal agency should respond in writing to this office if there are problems complying with our comments. The above State Clearinghouse Identification Number should be placed in the appropriate block on the federal application form.

The appropriate funding agency will now be reviewing our recommendation. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Brown
Charles W. Brown
Director, State Clearinghouse

CWB:ocp

cc: First Tennessee Development District
Congressman James Quillen
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture

Mr. Brown
January 6, 1988
Page 2

If you have any question, please feel free to contact Rob Allen (742-6685) for further assistance. I thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this excellent report.

Sincerely,

Elbert T. Gill, Jr.
ELBERT T. GILL, JR.
Commissioner

ETC: baa

cc Governor McWhorter (Attn: Betty S. Haynes)
Don Rollens, Cherokee National Forest
Bob Pack, Tennessee Department of Transportation, Office of
 Rails and Waterways
Billy Stair
Ruth Neff

JAN 13 1988

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

701 BROADWAY
NASHVILLE
37219-5237

ELBERT T. GILL, JR.
Commissioner

January 6, 1988

Mr. Charles Brown, Director
State Clearinghouse
307 John Sevier State Office Building
Nashville, TN 37219-5082

RE: Draft Wild and Scenic River Study/EIS: Nolichucky River
CH# 88-0526

Dear Mr. Brown:

My staff has reviewed the Draft Wild and Scenic River Study/Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River and agrees with the preferred alternative (Alternative B). This alternative would allow present agriculture and related uses on private land to continue and would require no land purchase except on a willing seller basis. This should ease any concern of the adjacent landowners. This flexibility is possible since most of the gorge is already under management of the U.S. Forest Service.

Federal management of the proposed area is most appropriate in this case. The scenic classification is best for protection of this relatively natural, pastoral and undeveloped river corridor. The Nolichucky Gorge has outstanding and remarkable scenic, recreational and geological values of national significance. Alternative B will best promote this recreational resource while protecting its scenic and geological values in a free flowing state.

12/9/87
RFE
Rum



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF FORESTRY

701 BROADWAY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219-5237

December 8, 1987

Mr. Donald L. Seliens
Forest Supervisor
USDA, Forest Service
Purke National Forest
P. O. Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37320

Dear Don:

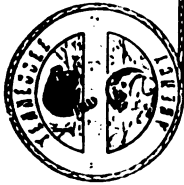
We have reviewed the Wild and Scenic Study Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Nolichucky River and conclude that Alternative B, which designates 7.2 miles of the river between Poplar, North Carolina and a point where Mine Branch flows into the Nolichucky, is the preferred alternative for consideration of the River as a wild and scenic river.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Hart W. Applegate
Assistant State Forester

HWA:h7



TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY

ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER
P. O. BOX 40747
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37204

January 8, 1988

JAN 13 1988

Mr. Charles Brown, Director
State Review Process
State Planning Office
1800 James K. Polk Building
Nashville, TN 37203

re: CH 88-0526
Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft
EIS on Nolichucky River, U. S. Forest Service

Dear Charles:

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency supports the proposed designation of 7.2 miles of the Nolichucky River as Wild and Scenic River as proposed in Alternative B of the Forest Service report. We foresee increasing developmental pressures in the future which would have made Alternative C more preferable to us. Alternative C would have added about 0.8 miles of downstream river corridor to the designation.

Three fish species are found in the Nolichucky River which are considered rare in Tennessee:

- blue sucker (*Cypleptus elongatus*) - State threatened
- sharphead darter (*Etheostoma acuticeps*) - State endangered
- highfin carpaucker (*Carpoides velifer*) - State deemed "In Need of Management"

We hope that the Forest Service considers these rare species as well as the many attributes of the Nolichucky River recognized in the EIS when assigning the most protective and inclusive status possible to this fine aquatic system.

Thank you for coordinating our comments.

Sincerely,

Dan Sherry
Fish & Wildlife Environmentalist

DS/bjs
cc: Bill Yambert
Bob Ripley
Roberta Hylton, USFWS.

The State of Tennessee

McLinda

You need to keep
a file on this so
we can incorporate in
the final plan



State of North Carolina
Department of Natural Resources and Community Development

Division of Parks and Recreation

512 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

James C. Mann, Governor
S. Thomas Rhodes, Secretary

December 14, 1987

Dr. William W. Davis
Director

Mr. David Hammond
National Forests in North Carolina
Post and Otis Streets
P. O. Box 2750
Asheville, North Carolina 28802

Subject: Nolichucky River Wild and Scenic River Study and Draft EIS.

Dear Mr. Hammond:

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation has reviewed the Forest Service study report and environmental impact statement for the proposed Nolichucky Wild and Scenic River. Members of the staff have made the following suggestions in regard to the study report.

It would be more informative for the final study report to include a general map of forest types and age classes represented in the preferred alternative boundary area (5,525 acres). That data should be available from existing forest stand maps. This information on the forests associated with the gorge will supplement the brief characterization of vegetation in the study report.

The Natural Heritage Program reports that no threatened or endangered plant species are known from the North Carolina section of the gorge, but several significantly rare plant species are reported. Those plants include:

Species	Reported Location
Climbing Funatory (<u>Adlumia fungosa</u>)	"On rocky cliff blasted out to make the railroad."
Bleeding heart (<u>Siberia eximia</u>)	"On cliffs west of railroad trestle."
A Moss (<u>Dichodontium pellucidum</u>)	"crevice, vertical cliff, one mile west of Poplar."

Thorough biological surveys have not been conducted in the gorge.

Wildlife Division, North Carolina Department of Natural Resources
512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Mr. David Hammond
December 14, 1987
Page two

The figure on page 14 of the study report should be corrected to show that the Horsepasture River, extending from N.C. 281 to Lake Jocassee, is a component of the North Carolina Natural and Scenic Rivers System. Additionally, the North Carolina Rivers Program should be referred to as the Natural and Scenic Rivers System (p. 21).

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this study report.

Sincerely,


William W. Davis, Ph.D.

WWD/cr/emc

C/3



North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

511 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1133
Charles P. Fullbrook, Director

December 28, 1987

Mr. Bob Wilson, Acting Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
Box 2750
Asheville, North Carolina 28802

Dear Bob:

We have reviewed the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Nolichucky River. Our comments are enclosed.

Sincerely,

George E. Smith, Section Manager
Division of Wildlife Management

GES/lyd

Enclosure

cc: Charles E. Hill

NOLICHUCKY RIVER STUDY DIVISION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND COMMENTS December 28, 1987

Page 9, Line 35 indicates "little hunting actually takes place...in the gorge". This is true; however, there is a great deal of hunting in the study area, especially in that portion in Yancey County that has long been a popular hunting area for deer. This area was designated a bear sanctuary about 1971, supports a small bear population, and functions as an important travel corridor for bear movements along the Tennessee-North Carolina state line between highly limited areas of bear habitat.

The preferred alternative will be more restrictive of timber harvesting in the study area resulting in less habitat diversity.

Page 29, Lines 1-3, read "Changes in habitat diversity would be accomplished through visual quality management by striving to provide frequent wildlife sightings, diversity of vegetative cover and wildlife trees". This appears to be inadequate provision for habitat diversity.

All indications are that increased development including access roads, public facilities (page 26, Paragraphs 6 and 8) are planned.

Page 30, 2nd Paragraph reads, "Roads would be allowed for access to special uses and developments....." This is further evidence that plans are being prepared to promote increased public use, especially river traffic, road construction, picnicking, and camping.

Exploitation of this river resource through the promotion of river traffic and development of related facilities will likely have an unfavorable impact on this bear sanctuary, denying the quiet and solitude required by the black bear. This increased public use may very well further fragment the diminishing bear range.

A public input meeting in Bakersville showed numerous public complaints by fishermen whose fishing has been ruined for the day by groups of river rafters and/or canoists. Even with the current level of usage of the river, consideration should be given to possibly scheduling alternate days of fishing and wastewater use to minimize conflicts.

While we concur with the Wild and Scenic Status being proposed, we disagree with promotion of river traffic and all the related "development".

Prepared by:

Charles E. Hill December 7, 1987
Supervising Wildlife Biologist
Morganton, N.C.



UNICOI COUNTY

JAN 25 AM 9 07

Post Office Box 169 • Erwin, Tennessee 37650 • (615) 742-9391, 742-3112

UNICOI COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
ERWIN, TENNESSEE 37650

January 21, 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

RE: Wild and Scenic River Study
Report and Environmental Impact
Statement on the Nolichucky River
P.L. 90-542, P.L. 93-621

Dear Sir:

The Unicoi County Commission meeting in regular session January 19, 1988 voted to oppose the proposal to designate the 7.2 to 8 mile portion of the Nolichucky River between Poplar, N.C. and Erwin, TN for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as recommended in the above captioned study.

It was the general consensus of the Commission that the recommendations of this study would impose to many federal restrictions on the area which would have a negative effect on commercial rafting. Also that access to fishing and hiking in the area would be hampered.

Your consideration of the action of this body on this issue is respectfully requested.

Yours very truly,

Paul E. Longdon
Paul E. Longdon
County Executive

cc: Congressman James H. Gullien
Senator James R. Sasser
Senator Albert Gore, Jr.



Chota Canoe Club

P.O. Box 8270-University Station-Knoxville, TN 37996

0-

January 14, 1988

Donald L. Rollens
Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
2800 North Ocoee Road
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

Re: Nolichucky River Wild and Scenic River Study Report and EIS

Dear Mr. Rollens:

Chota Canoe Club read with interest the above study and EIS, and fully supports the idea of including the Nolichucky as a National Wild and Scenic River. We strongly favor Alternative C which includes the entire 8-mile stretch.

If the main disadvantage of Alternative C is that the Forest Service would have to keep the lower portion free of trash, we suggest that local groups could be persuaded to do the actual pick-up for the Forest Service, if organized to work a particular day and provided with trash bags and vehicle pick-up of bags. Different boy and girl scout troops and church young people's groups would be a good place to start. Utilization of local groups would have the added benefit of making local people aware of the problem and certainly discouraging participants and their family members from contributing to it.

The new take-out and picnic area constructed by the Forest Service a few years ago is appreciated by paddlers and further discourages them from using the old take-out which caused traffic congestion on the road.

The advantages of protecting the entire 8-mile stretch from poor water quality and from construction of second homes or other buildings should be clear to all groups using the river, boaters, fishermen, and picnickers and swimmers. This last group probably consists mainly of local residents that people from outside, so that should be an additional source of local support.

Let us know if we can help in any way toward inclusion of the Nolichucky among the National Scenic Rivers.

Anne C. Phillips
Anne C. Phillips
Environmental Concerns Chairman
Chota Canoe Club

Recreation -

JAN 19 1988



CHEROKEE ADVENTURES

Whitewater Rafting On The French Broad, Nolichucky & Ocoee Rivers

January 16, 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
P.O. Box 2010
Chattanooga, TN 37311

Dear Forest Supervisor

I'm contacting you in reference to the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and the Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River. As previously written, I am opposed to the draft.

One of the main reasons is that is the only way for the public to view the river. Having done the gorge contains this draft and leave the public only two ways of viewing the gorge - by rafting or by seeing the dam, which is the only way to see the river.

Office: 615743-8686 • If No Answer: 615743-7733 • P.O. Box 779, Erwin, TN 37650-0779



CHEROKEE ADVENTURES

Whitewater Rafting On The French Broad, Nolichucky & Ocoee Rivers

I have been in the past that the railroad has not presented the public with the matter. It seems in the statements made on pages 24, 25, and 29 this will change. Out of my questions is. Do what degree will the Forest Service intensify its efforts to keep people away from the railroads tracks? Will the Forest Service be allowed to sue litigation? Do what degree does the U.S. Forest Service plan to control rafting companies' permit limits in the future with additional crowd conditions created by this act?

What control measures will the U.S. Forest Service take to control "Plan-mack" land from up-stream residents of the Joe and Lane with Federal expenditures of \$90,000? What are your plans to do with these expenditures periodically?

Sincerely,
[Signature]

Director, National Park Service
Office: 615743-8686 • If No Answer: 615743-7733 • P.O. Box 779, Erwin, TN 37650-0779

*Melinda —
for the file
Roff*

4424 Jett Rd., N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30327
January 19, 1988

Mr. David Hammond,
Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
Post and Otis Streets
P.O. Box 2750
Asheville, N.C. 28802

Dear Mr. Hammond:

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia Canoe Association to enthusiastically support the proposed inclusion of 7.2 miles of the Nolichucky River Gorge in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This lovely river is one of the treasures of the Southeastern United States. We are grateful to the Forest Service for their support in protecting this natural resource for us and future generations.

Sincerely yours,



Evelyn H. Hopkins,
Conservation Chair
Georgia Canoe Association



SIERRA CLUB - Tennessee Chapter

502 Dunallie Drive
Nashville, TN 37217

Mr. Donald Rollens, Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
P. O. Box 2010
2800 North Ocoee Road
Cleveland, TN 37311

Dear Mr. Rollens:

This is in regard to the recently released Wild and Scenic River Study Report of the Forest Service. Comments from the public as to the suitability of the Nolichucky Gorge for designation as a National Scenic River have been requested.

The Forest Service is asking the public to choose between three alternatives:

- Alternative A is no designation.
- Alternative B (the Forest Service preference) recommends designation of a 7.2 mile section of the gorge.
- Alternative C recommends the designation of an 8 mile section of the gorge.

The Sierra Club requests that the Forest Service consider additional segments of the river for designation as follows:

1. We urge the Forest Service to change the recommendation to Alternative C, but with the continuation of the scenic corridor to the highway bridge at river mile 97.5. This short addition protects the river to the Forest Service take out, which is also the put in for the lower section run past Devil's Looking Glass.
2. We urge the Forest Service to study the river between the highway bridge at river mile 97.5 and State Route 81 for designation as a National Recreation River. This is the "lower Nolichucky run", which passes Devil's Looking Glass and Big Rock, widely recognized



as unique geological features, heavily used by the public, and in need of management.

3. We urge the Forest Service to recommend purchase of land in fee or the purchase of scenic easements to maintain recreational and scenic values where such values are threatened by incompatible development.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely:

Bill Terry
Bill Terry
Chair

cc: Representative Jimmy Quillen



SIERRA CLUB · Tennessee Chapter

Handwritten initials

JAN 0 6 1968

Dear Forest Supervisor,

The State of Franklin Group of the Sierra Club urges the Forest Service to adopt alternative C in respect to the consideration of the Nolichucky river in the Wild and Scenic River Act with the following addition. We would suggest extending the corridor designated as scenic to the vehicular bridge crossing the river at mile marker 97.5 . This would include an official Forest Service take-out point, a Forest Service campground, and provide management and protection of the gorge from adverse development.

This additional section meets the eligibility requirements for designation of scenic river as described on page 19 of the D.E.I.S. . The purchase of private lands would not be required under this alternative. Designation would not effect current land use practices. Acquisition of scenic easements may be required to perpetuate current land use and maintain scenic values.

The Forest Service is urged to recommend designation as recreational an additional section of the river extending from the previously mentioned vehicular bridge to the bridge at State Rt. 81 at the Crossroads Country Store. This section meets the requirements on page 20 of the D.E.I.S. for designation as recreational river under the Wild and Scenic River Act.

This section currently is under heavy use for kayaking, canoeing, tubing,rafting, picnicing, fishing and swimming. The Devils Looking Glass is widely recognized as a unique geological formation. The big rock at Chucky beach is a focal point of recreational



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress.



SIERRA CLUB · Tennessee Chapter

activities for the surrounding area. Heavy usage and adverse development are threatening the quality of recreational activity in this area. Acquisition of scenic easements may be required to maintain current land use and recreational quality.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Senter Jackeon, Chairman, Committee on Nolichucky

Senter Jackeon

Dana Eglinton, Conservation Chair

Dana Eglinton

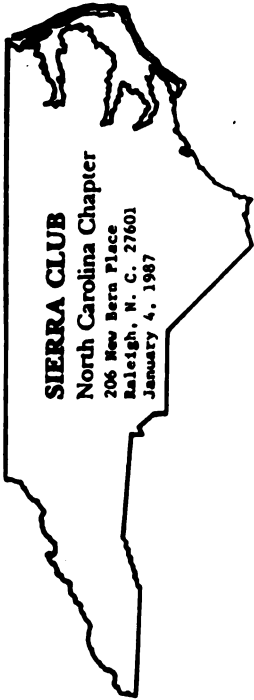
Powell Foster, Chairman, S.O.F.G. Sierra Club

Powell Foster



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress.





SIERRA CLUB
 North Carolina Chapter
 206 New Bern Place
 Raleigh, N. C. 27601
 January 4, 1987

**Regional Groups
 in North Carolina**

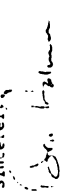
- BILE WHEAT GROUP
Burrhead
- BROAD RIVER GROUP
Nashville
- CAMP STAR GROUP
Wilmington
- CAPITAL GROUP
Raleigh
- CENTRAL
Charlotte
- FILMONT GROUP
Charlotte
- COASTAL GROUP
New Bern
- CYPRESS GROUP
Greenville
- Foothills Group
Winston Salem
- HEADWATERS GROUP
Durham
- HORACE NEPIHART
GROUP
Fayetteville
- PIEDMONT PLATAU
GROUP
Greensboro
- RESEARCH TRIANGLE
GROUP
Charlotte
- SANDHILLS GROUP
Southern Pines
- SOUTH MOUNTAINS
GROUP
Morganton
- WENOA GROUP
Asheville

Mr. Dave Hammond
 National Forests in North Carolina
 Box 2750
 Asheville, North Carolina 28807
 Dear Dave,

Thanks for sending a copy of the "Wild & Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River" to me. I believe that you did have your bases covered. I generally work only on state government issues and leave the Forest Service issues to the WENOA Group and the Chapter Conservation Chair.

We commend the Forest Service for taking the initiative on the Nolichucky, and we hope to have some comments to you by January 28, 1988.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

 Bill Holman, Lobbyist
 Sierra Club, N. C. Chapter

Western North Carolina Environmental Summit is March 5 at Warren Wilson College.
 CONSERVATION'88 is March 26 in Raleigh.

In response to your request, we have provided the following information for the purpose of providing you with the information you need to make a decision on whether to support the Nolichucky River Study.

A RESOLUTION URGING THE DESIGNATION OF 7.2 MILES OF THE MOLLICBUCKY GORGE SCENIC OF THE MOLLICBUCKY RIVER AS A NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER.

WHEREAS, The Mollichucky Gorge has been found to possess outstanding scenic, recreational, and geologic values, and;

WHEREAS, The water quality of the Mollichucky has been improved in recent years, and;

WHEREAS, The Mollichucky Gorge is a popular attraction for whitewater river users, and;

WHEREAS, The river is free flowing with no manmade dams, river channel diversions, or other flow regulational structures within the gorge area, and;

WHEREAS, much of the land area around the gorge is already in National Forest ownership, and;

WHEREAS, The USDA Forest Service has studied the gorge area and determined that it meets eligibility criteria for a Wild and Scenic River, and;

WHEREAS, The gorge has limited accessibility and shows, other than a railroad, very little evidence of human activity, and;

WHEREAS, designation will give recognition and protection to the outstanding values of the gorge, and;

WHEREAS, The additional cost to the Forest Service of managing the area as a Wild and Scenic River should be minimal, and;

WHEREAS, designation is consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Mollichucky Indian Princess Tribe of The Arapahoe Y Indian Nation, under authorization granted at tribal conference on December 17, 1987, hereby urges that the Mollichucky River be designated a National Wild and Scenic River.

Signed this twenty seventh day of January 1988.

Emily Hubard
 Quinn James
 Sarah Bolton
 Emily Stott
 Hannah Medford
 Shelley Smith
 Nathleery Brothers
 Micky Speltz
 Robert James
 Stephen Smith
 Mollie Hubard
 Al Brothers

value (scenic and otherwise), and excellent water quality ratings are eligible for Outstanding Resource Water classification. Such classification would assure State maintenance of high water quality standards for the river. National Wild and Scenic designation of the Nolichucky would increase its potential as a candidate for this special State protection.

It is the belief of the Conservation Council that only through firm legislative policy can we assure the future protection of North Carolina's natural treasures. For this reason we strongly support National Wild and Scenic River designation for the Nolichucky gorge. We also hope you will seriously consider the above recommendations.

Sincerely,

Russell Norburn
Russell Norburn
CCNC Director

cc. Karl S. Taveler
Mary Beth Edelman
John Runkle
Bill Holman

Conservation Council Of North Carolina



307 Gamelle Road
Chapel Hill
North Carolina 27514
(919) 942 7935

January 25, 1988

Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
Post and Otis Streets
P.O. Box 2750
Asheville, N.C. 28802

Dear Sir or Madam:

We appreciate your sending the Conservation Council a copy of the draft environmental impact statement on the Nolichucky River. We have carefully reviewed the recommendations made in the report. The Conservation Council is encouraged that reconsideration of this beautiful stretch of river has been made, and that the report strongly recommends scenic designation for the upper stretch of the gorge. We are concerned, however, that the lower stretch, from the Mine Branch confluence down past Unaka Springs, has been ruled out from scenic designation.

The 0.8 mile stretch of river included in Alternative C, but left out of the preferred Alternative B, has significant resource value for recreation and should be included in the scenic designation. This stretch near the community of Unaka Springs is already a popular takeout for river floaters. The presence of an outfitter in this stretch is actually an increased incentive for the recreational realization of the river, and should not be considered merely as a scenic obstruction. Inclusion of this section would ensure maintenance of scenic qualities through the floater's full run of the gorge and improve the recreational potential of the entire gorge. This measure would benefit Unaka Springs, as they would have a 'Scenic River' flowing through their community, attracting visitors from throughout the region.

Inclusion of the gorge in the National Wild and Scenic River system is a positive step toward the preservation of a priceless scenic treasure. This move will increase citizen awareness of the river's natural beauty and increase recreational usage of this resource. Allen Clark, with the North Carolina Division of Water Resources, has assured us that scenic designation and the expected increase in river use will affect an increase in state monitoring of the river's water quality, and may result in a cutback of upstream discharge permits to mining operations.

The improvement to water quality that scenic designation projects for the Nolichucky is an important step toward a guarantee of future protection of the River. Under a pilot project of the North Carolina Division of Environmental Management, waters with outstanding resource

Dedicated to a healthy and beautiful North Carolina



Nantahala Outdoor Center

U.S. 19W Box 41 Bryson City, North Carolina 28715 (704) 465-3776

January 28, 1988

Forest Supervisor
National Forests in North Carolina
PO Box 2750
Asheville, NC 28802

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for sending the Wild and Scenic River Study and Economic Impact Statement for the Nolichucky River. I have two comments to make.

First, it seems there is little additional substantive protection to the river by inclusion as a National Scenic River. Even so, I would favor Alternative B for whatever small additional protection it might give the Nolichucky. It is one of the beautiful gorges in the east and should be preserved in its natural state as much as possible.

Second, inclusion as a National Scenic River of itself probably will not significantly increase recreational boating use of the river unless the Forest Service plans to do a lot of promotion of the area. Local and regional hard boaters already know of the Nolichucky through their clubs and other publications. The recreational use of the Nolichucky by private boaters is more dependent on water flow than on becoming a Scenic River.

Commercial rafting companies do their own promotions and commercial rafting numbers will probably continue to increase due to these marketing efforts. However, commercial use of the river is heavily influenced by water flow. The point here is that management by the Forest Service should heavily involve those who use the river (commercial and private) and those who are affected by that use (counties).

We look forward to working with you in trying to balance the protection and utilization of this unique resource.

Sincerely,

Bunny Johns

Bunny Johns
Vice President

Leaders in Outdoor Adventures for Over a Decade

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
Page 2

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.
Very truly yours,

TYTSINGER, HAMPTON AND PARTNERS, INC. (INCORPORATED)

Gary L. Tsinger

Gary L. Tsinger, P.E.
President

GL17ab1

1/24/88

TYTSINGER, HAMPTON & PARTNERS, INC.

ENGINEERS • SURVEYORS • PLANNERS
COMMERCE PARK, 3300 BROWN'S MILL ROAD

P.O. BOX 982

KOHNSWIM CITY, TN 37601

(615) 929-8144 • 743-6330 • 543-2578



Nendrich

January 18, 1988

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
2300 North Dooce Road
Post Office Box 2010
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

RE: Nolichucky River Gorge
National Wild and Scenic River - Designation
Unicoi County, Tennessee

Gentlemen:

having lived in Unicoi County for the past twenty years and having worked with the old Clinchfield and CSX Corporation for over fifteen years, I have the following comments concerning the captioned designation.

1. The Nolichucky is a flood prone river having major floods in 1901, 1917, 1940, and 1977.
2. Waste mine tailings from the mica, feldspar operations in Spruce Pine have choked the river with silt and debris.
3. The railroad constructed a temporary line in the early 1900's and extended to the river. The line was abandoned by the government in the 1960's.
4. Raving down the river became a popular past time and has become a commercial enterprise.

I think the gorge area is a natural for the Scenic River designation, but I do not think that the railroad, which helped develop the area, should be specialized or limited operation consideration because of the silt.

In the past, Clinchfield has cooperated with State and Federal officials on the locations of raving access ramps in the river water quality. The river and development along the river.

During the floods mentioned above, the railroad roadbed and bridges were damaged causing repairs to be made.

The railroad has two major bridges over the river at Unicoi Springs and Spruce Pine. A crossing track at Cave Bottom, retaining walls, miscellaneous bridges and 12 miles of main track in the gorge. These items have to be maintained and repaired.

Other major considerations are fuel spills from engines and spills from raving stock.

I would like to see the river protected with this designation and with the silt problem corrected upstream, but also allow the USA to designate a responsible partner in this area.

12/29/87

Please send me a copy
 of the Draft Environmental
 Impact Statement for the
 Nolichucky River. I believe
 this river should become a
 part of the National Wild and
 Scenic Rivers System.

Sincerely,
 Dennis D. Horn

MR. DENNIS D. HORN
 222 CRESTWOOD DR.
 TULLAHOMA, TN. 37388

'88 JUN 25 AM 8 52

January 22, 1988
Rt. 5, Box 336
Bristol, Tn. 37620

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest,
Comments on the Wild and Scenic Study Report for the
Nolichucky River.

I have already submitted comments to your office on this Study Report in the SOFG Sierra Club comments. I would like to also submit some personal comments.
As a user of the Nolichucky River (kayaking and hiking) I am an enthusiastic supporter of its protection from adverse development. There are very few river segments in our part of the country that are not heavily impacted by human development. We need to do all that we can to protect those that are left. The Nolichucky gorge is one of the most scenic and enjoyable rivers in east Tennessee. Its rapids, rock formations, and rugged mountains set it apart as a unique and beautiful white water run and back country experience. I am very pleased to see that the Forest Service is seeking its protection.

I am in agreement with your study that the Nolichucky meets the eligibility requirements for a Wild and Scenic River. The river's scenic and recreational values are second to none.

I am also in agreement that the river should be classified as Scenic due to the regrettable intrusion of the railroad.

I also agree that the river is suitable for designation, as the gorge is used primarily for recreational and scenic purposes. Due to the outstanding nature of the recreational and scenic opportunities this is obviously the highest calling for this river segment.
I feel that the best alternative proposed is alternative "C" as it protects the longest section of the gorge and because it protects the lower end of the gorge which is the most susceptible to damaging development. I would however recommend extending the downstream boundary all the way to the bridge at river mile 97.5. This would protect the river to the Forest Service take out, which is the one issue. It would appear to me that as the Forest Service owns the land on both sides of the river below Unala Springs that this should not be much of a problem.

✓
✓
212

I would also like the Forest Service to study the river from the Bridge at River mile 97.5 to the Bridge at State Route 81 for designation as a National Wild and Scenic River under the recreational designation. I frequently canoe this section of river and find it to be more heavily used for recreation than the gorge. This river segment is much more in need of protection than the gorge because it is much more accessible.

This section of the river meets the eligibility requirements for a recreational river. It has outstanding scenic value, with a particularly beautiful rock outcropping at Devil's Looking Glass. It contains many scenic rapids and pools and its shoreline is a mix of pastoral and wooded.
This river segment is very heavily used for recreation. Canoeing, kayaking, tubing, swimming, fishing, picnicing, and camping are very popular in and along the river.

Fish and wildlife are abundant along this segment of the Nolichucky, including both game and nongame species. The Forest Service owns a good deal of land along both banks of the river that would be compatible with recreational designation.

There are however some potential problems including potential water pollution from the town and industries of Erwin and pollution from the dump at Bumpas Cove. There is also a significant amount of private land although its present use would be generally compatible with a recreational river. The Forest Service owns a good deal of land along both banks of the river that would also be compatible with recreational designation.

Thank you,

Mr. Dana Eglinton

Revised

JAN 04 1988

916 Scenic Ct.
Kingsport, TN 37663
December 29, 1987

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37320

Lectori Salutem:

I would urge Forest Service support of DEIS Alternative C on the Nolichucky River, with added mileage to the vehicular bridge near mile 97.5. This additional mileage is needed to protect the entrance to the gorge from adverse development, and coordinate management of it with the Forest Service campground and take-out point, and should be designated Scenic.

I further urge the Forest Service to recommend classification of the portion of the river from the aforementioned bridge to the TN 81 bridge near Crossroads Grocery as Recreational. This section is heavily used for tubing, canoeing, fishing, swimming, rafting, kayaking, picnicing, and recreational viewing from adjacent roads. It is threatened by adverse development. To protect recreational values and maintain current use patterns of the land, scenic easements might be necessary. Devil's Looking Glass is widely recognized as a unique geological phenomena along this stretch. Big Rock and Sandy Beach are heavily used by people in Upper East Tennessee, and in need of management to maintain recreational values.

Both of the above suggested additions meet the requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. I recreate in and along them frequently.

Sincerely,

L. Powell Foster

L. Powell Foster

Rt. 5, Box 236-C
Johnson City, TN 37601

Mr. Russ Griffith
Cherokee National Forest
2800 North Ocoee Road
Cleveland, TN 37311

Dear Mr. Griffith:

The Nolichucky River near us here is one of our most prized scenic and recreational assets in Upper East Tennessee. Above the Tennessee Route 81 bridge, it serves many of us and many visitors to our area with exceptionally fine river recreation experiences, and the largely unspoiled Nolichucky Gorge between Poplar, North Carolina, and Erwin, Tennessee, is one of our favorite scenic treasures here. We hope they will never be developed any further, but will always be kept as they are now.

I'm pleased that the Forest Service is recommending most of the gorge as a National Scenic River. But I wish it would choose Alternative C instead, and would extend the scenic corridor of the river even beyond that 8 mile segment as far as the highway bridge at mile 97.5 of the river.

In addition, I hope the Forest Service will study the suitability of designating the segment of the river from that point on to the highway 81 bridge a National Recreational River. It seems to me that that segment deserves such a status.

Respectfully yours,

Donald Shaffer

Donald Shaffer

Edward Schell, Photographer

Jan. 22, 1988



Lee Griffith
Schubert National Trust
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

Dear Mr. Griffith:

The following are my comments on the Polk-Chuckey Wild & Scenic River Study:
1. I support alternatives C, but I would like to see it extended to the highway bridge at mile 97.5 on the river.

2. I also want you to study the river between mile 97.5 and state highway 81 for designation as a National Recreational River. This section contains some of the most scenic areas of the river and provides a very fine gentle stretch for canoists and rafters who do not enjoy the danger of whitewater.

3. The entire area is quite scenic and should be protected for this reason alone.
4. These areas contain the only population of *Menziesia punctata* - Horsemint - a species under consideration as an endangered plant in Tennessee. Other rare plants include the following which (over)

2514 Brant's Mill Road • Johnson City, Tennessee 37601 • Telephone 615 262 6125

All given special status in the state of Tennessee's list of endangered plants.

Small-flowered Evening Primrose (*Oenothera purpurea*)

Virginia spirea (*Spiraea Virginiana*)

Canada anemone (*Anemone Canadensis*), only known location south of West Virginia

Shining Punston or Allegheny Iris (*Adonis pungens*)

Caroline hunchback (*Fungus Caroliniana*)

Autumn Noddy Trillium (*Trillium Angellii*)

Arisee sedge (*Synophyllum Traceni*) ^(altitude)

Rare twisted-stalk (*Streptopus roseus*), lowest known population

Pricklynut (*Cuscuta distichophylla*)

Mountain bird-hempseed (*Sisymbrium sessilifolium*, var. *virginicum*)

Anything you can do to protect this scenic and scientifically valuable river valley will be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Edward Schell

Dear Sir -

I would like to urge the forest service to designate the richburg gorge as a scenic river with the additional very scenic river mile 97.5 and state STS1 as national recreation river. This area is a national treasure that provides a sense of beauty clear water to our area. It also provides alot of recreational benefits and brings related movies into our area. Please support the scenic river designation. The private lands in the area should remain in a private hands with out condemnation except when need to preserve the areas quality.

Don Grody
P.O. Box 1213
Bristol, TN 37620

1109 INDIAN HILL DRIVE
BRISTOL, TENNESSEE 37620

January 25, 1988

To Whom it may concern:

With regard to designation of the Nolichucky River Gorge as a National Scenic River, I support Alternative "C" but with the continuation of the scenic corridor to the highway bridge at river mile 97.5.

I would like to recommend that the Forest Service study the river between the highway bridge at river mile 97.5 and State Route 81 for designation as a National Recreational River.

The Nolichucky is a beautiful river providing our residents and visitors from around the world with unique recreational experience. Its scenic beauty is breathtaking and must be preserved.

I am grateful to you for your
sincere consideration in this
matter

Sincerely,
John M. Vann

Rt. 2, Box 380 A
Erwin, TN 37650
Jan 27, '88

Mr Russ Griffith
C-erokee National Forest
Cleveland, TN 37311

Dear Mr Griffith,

We have reviewed the Nolichucky River Wild and Scenic River Study Report wherein proposals are made to designate the Nolichucky River gorge to be included in the National Wild and Scenic River systems. It's quite interesting and very well done.

We are in favor of Alternative C, designating an 8 mile section as a National Scenic River. We suggest, however, that you consider adding a scenic corridor to the highway bridge at River Mile 97.5 as this short section protects the river to the Forest Service "takeout".

We also would suggest that a study be made of the section of the river between mile 97.5 and State Highway 81 for its suitability as a National Recreational River.

We have also discussed the Nolichucky River proposals with 3 other couples who are local residents, and who wished to be in notice as favoring Proposal C, as well as the additional recommendations we made above. Below are their names and addresses.

Very truly yours,

George A. Ammann
Mr & Mrs George A. Ammann

Mr & Mrs Ned Schaffer, Rt 2, Solvay Mt., Erwin, TN 37650
" " Hugh Dunlop " " "
" " Jerry Rippee " " "

PS: Please give our very best regards to Joe Dabney

Mr. Griffith,

I am writing in response to your Wild and Scenic River Study Report for the Nolichucky River. Of the 3 options proposed, I support Alternative C recommending the designation of an 8 mile stretch of the Nolichucky gorge as a National Scenic River. However, I would urge you to extend the scenic corridor to the highway bridge at river mile 97.5 in order to protect the Forest Service take-out point.

I also would like to recommend that you study the lower Nolichucky run, which stretches from the above mentioned point to State Route 81 for designation as a National Recreational River.

Thank you for your concern in protecting our scarce natural resources.

Todd Saddler

Mr. Ross Griffith
Cherokee National Forest
2700 North Cove Road
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

January 26, 1988

Dear Mr. Griffith:

I am writing in response to consideration of designating the section of the Nolichucky River which flows through the gorge as a National Scenic River. I strongly endorse this designation as I can think of no other river in upper East Tennessee or Northwestern North Carolina which has the whitewater recreation potential of the Nolichucky River. Whitewater rafting and canoeing has become quite popular, and such a resource as the Nolichucky Gorge is both an asset to the economy of the region as well as a natural treasure on which monetary value cannot be placed. Any development along this section of the river cannot help but reduce both its appeal to the tourist and outdoorsman and its integrity as wild land. This section of the river flows through 5,000' mountains which rise steeply from the river. These slopes are covered with coal forest encompassing a variety of plant communities. These steep forested slopes are frequently punctuated by massive cliffs and outcrops, some of which also significance to the Indians of the region (i.e. Devil's Looking Glass). The internationally famous Appalachian Trail follows and crosses the river at the mouth of the gorge, further enhancing this section of the Cherokee National Forest. This unique region offers an unparalleled recreational resource for a diversity of outdoor pursuits to an area of growing population and diminishing unspoiled natural areas.

For the above reasons, as well as others, I endorse adoption of Alternative C which recommends designation of an 8 mile section of the gorge as a National Scenic River. I trust that you will take care not

river mile 77.5. I also feel that the first survey should consider studying this river between the Highway bridge at K.M. 77.5 between to the State Park bridge. This section in Lower Devils Looking Glass and passes the lower Lower section and includes many notable rapids. For a crossing view of this section, one should see Interstate, Canada Pass, and Capping.

Probably the best way to assess the value of this river is to travel along it through the mountains. Therefore, I urge you or members of your staff to visit the gorge, and assess the lower run. This spring to judge for yourself the wilderness beauty of this fine flowing river, which in my opinion is a true National Treasure worth protecting. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Gregory W. Church
Democratic Nation

JANUARY 20, 1988

RUSS GRIFFITH
CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST
2800 NORTH OCOEE ROAD
P.O. BOX 2010
CLEVELAND, TN. 37311

REFERENCE: NOLICHUCKY SCENIC RIVER STUDY

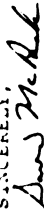
DEAR MR. GRIFFITH:

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN REGARDS TO THE NOLICHUCKY SCENIC RIVER STUDY:

1. I AM VERY PLEASED TO SEE THE NOLICHUCKY RIVER CONSIDERED FOR SCENIC RIVER STATUS.
2. I WOULD SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE C, BUT WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE SCENIC CORRIDOR EXTENDED AT LEAST TO THE HIGHWAY BRIDGE AT RIVER MILE 97.5. THIS SHORT ADDITION WILL PROTECT THE RIVER TO THE TAKE OUT NOW PROVIDED BY THE FOREST SERVICE.
3. PLEASE CONSIDER FOR INCLUSION INTO THE SCENIC RIVER AREA THE PORTION OF THE RIVER FROM THE BRIDGE AT RIVER MILE 97.5 TO STATE ROUTE 81. THIS SECTION OF THE RIVER IS GOOD CANOEING WATER AND PASSES SOME VERY BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY WORTHY OF PROTECTION INCLUDING DEVIL'S LOOKING GLASS AND BIG ROCK.

THE NOLICHUCKY RIVER GORGE AND LOWER NOLICHUCKY TO BIG ROCK ARE USED BY CANOEIST AND KAYAKERS NOW AND WILL BE COME MORE VALUABLE IN TIME. ONE OF THE LAST KNOWN NESTING SIGHTS OF THE PEREGRINE FALCON IN TENNESSEE WAS AT DEVIL'S LOOKING GLASS. MAYBE WITH SOME PROTECTION THIS BIRD MIGHT BE REINTRODUCED.

SINCERELY,



DAVID MCPEAK
RT 5, BOX 32
BRISTOL, TN 37620

Dear Russ,

After reading the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Nolichucky River (a well done study), I felt it necessary to make a few comments. As a biologist, conservationist & concerned resident, I strongly support Alternative C. The value of this study with river is immeasurable. The public should have the opportunity to enjoy nature at its best for all times.

According to the table titled "Summary of Environmental Consequences", there is little difference between Alternatives B & C, only more to gain if the entire 8 mile section is given Scenic Status. In order to protect this section, a buffer zone, both upstream and downstream, should be placed in Recreational Status at the very least.

The most accessible region of the gorge is downstream from the section Alternative B compares. Even though the road & railroad are visible, they can be made less obtrusive with proper planning and management. The forest can be cleared up. And with scenic status, this area can become an even more enjoyable experience & remain so for future generations. The protection of this entire region is even more important because it is accessible to more people & development is ~~possible~~ likely.

In addition to assigning the 8 mile section mentioned in the report a Scenic Status, I believe that the area down to the highway bridge (mile 97.5) should also be assigned Scenic Status. Recreational Status should be assigned to the section from mile 97.5 to State Road 21. This region has many outstanding

qualities & need protection to insure preservation. Let us set aside areas of easy access for people to enjoy the natural beauty as well as the outstanding areas in Alternative C. Recreational Status should also be assigned to the region from where the Cane River converges to Poplar, North Carolina to control the water quality.

I urge the Forest Service to re-evaluate these areas mentioned above to insure preservation of the 8 mile section and stop any further development that may endanger this natural resource. How can we protect the Nolichucky Gorge without any control of surrounding areas?

I am very interested in future developments, please keep me informed. Truly with scenic areas are dwindling with our ever increasing population.

Sincerely,

David Stirling

David Stirling
244 Lisa Lane
Piney Flats, TN 37886

Appalachian

JAMES BROOKS/Route 11, Box 33/Jonesborough, TN 37659
Home 615/753-5288, Office 615/753-5141
6 January 1987

Forest Supervisor
Cherokee National Forest
2600 N. Dcoose Road
PO Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

Gentlemen:

I support the designation of the 7.2-mile stretch of the Nolichucky Borge as a Wild and Scenic River, but I do so with some reservation. I would oppose any road building or vehicular activity in the area. The thing that makes the area unique is that it can only be reached by foot or by rail. That uniqueness is rapidly giving way to access by All-Terrain Vehicles and I believe the Wild and Scenic designation should act to preserve the wildest area of the Appalachians from such incursions.

The jewel of the Nolichucky Borge is the Lost Cove area, and I strongly encourage the inclusion of this 315 acre area of private property into the Wild and Scenic Area. The Lost Cove is a genuine turn of the century ghost town. Again, due to access by ATV vehicles we are rapidly losing the Lost Cove to vandalism. I hiked into the area in October and did the enclosed feature for "The Johnson City Press". The article received letters of complaint that we should even mention the Lost Cove (a photographer did a study in 1983 for the same paper) because such mention would only encourage further vandalism. While I agree with the sentiment, it was my feeling that attention should be called to the plight of that unique settlement. The Audubon Society and other naturalist groups have purchase funds for such areas, and I feel that local sentiment is so strong that a fund drive for outright purchase could be negotiated if the owners are not amenable to a land swap.

I would be willing to assist with the public relations aspect of putting together such a local fund drive if needed.

The question is then how to preserve and restore the area once it is included in the Wild and Scenic River area. I would propose the following: up to seven families of two or more persons each be selected from applications who would actually live and farm in the Lost Cove. Their salary would be placed in an interest bearing account which they could draw from for their needs in the Cove. Those needs which would be suitable to the period up to the mid-1950's would be provided free or at near cost. More modern needs could be purchased at regular price, including cost of delivery.

Two concessions would be made to modern times: a short wave radio for outside communication, and those living there would be given first aid training and modern medical supplies. Should a medical emergency arise, modern Medivac helicopters could easily go into the cove, using the pasture as a landing pad.

The colony would be allowed to set up a tent camping area for hikers and hunters who hike into the cove, and to charge fees for use of that space. That could also build a commissary where they could sell their food, produce and/or handicrafts to visitors. But electricity, running water, television and other such modern amenities would be not allowed. The Lost Cove would thus become a demonstration area or how people lived in that time and place. The incentive to become as self-sufficient as the original Lost Covers would be in the amount of money in the bank that would await whenever one of the settlers decided to leave. A bonus would be added to that bank account for each full year a settler stayed.

Such a program would be a minimal cost way to preserve and protect this unique settlement, and to demonstrate the hardy mountain heritage of this region.

Sincerely,

James Brooks
James Brooks

Knoxville —

'88 JAN 11 PM 2 55

Route 1 Box 253

Bakersville, N.C. 28705

January 7, 1988

Forest Supervisor
 Cherokee National Forest
 Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

Dear Sir:

Regarding the recent article in the Johnson City Press Chronicle re designating a National Wild and Scenic River.

1. I approve the above one hundred per cent.
2. I would like to see the entire area removed from housing and population.
3. In a recent trip to 'Lost Cove'. I was appalled at the destruction already occurring - motorcycles - 4-wheelers etc. - trash everywhere -
4. Many of us in Mitchell County are very concerned over the Holchuckey.

Sincerely
 Betty S. Harwell

Knoxville —

'88 JAN 11 PM 3 00
 January 7, 1988

TO: Forest Supervisor
 Cherokee National Forest

Dear Sir:

We are interested and concerned about all efforts to preserve the natural beauty of our state and our country.

We hope that your recommendation about the Nolichucky River portion becoming designated a National Wild and Scenic River will be honored and become a reality.

We continue to hope that more of the Nolichucky will be included as possible.

Respectfully,

Richard & Gloria Knight
 1010 Shamrock Drive
 Jonesborough, TN 37659

1-19-88

Russ Griffith

R

As a property owner on the lower Nolichucky River I feel it my duty to help the forest service to preserve as much of the river as possible.

My children, friends & I use the river quite often for recreation and find it very enjoyable on such a scenic river. We float from N.C. down thru Erwin, past The Devil's Looking Glass on to Saileys Bridge on highway #107. I regret that some undesirable things have not been prevented but hope that you can help prevent this in the coming years.

over

I feel that we need to preserve what we can for the generations to come before anything else is lost.

Thank You

Kenneth Haynes
Rt. 4 Box 479-1
Chucky, Tenn
37641

January 29, 1988

To Whom it May Concern

I am interested in seeing the Nolichucky Gorge designated as a wild and scenic river. I support alternative C along with the continuation of the scenic corridor to the highway bridge at river mile 97.5.

I would support a Forest Service study of the area between the highway bridge at river mile 97.5 and State Route 81 for designation as a National Recreational River.

I am a retired teacher who has always tried to inspire students to be aware of our vanishing heritage and be involved in the protection of such. Not one of us, young or old, can afford to leave the preservation of nature and its benefits in the hands of the uncaring.

Respectfully,
Margaret Dixon
Retired Teacher



CRAIG HAIRE, PH.D. Recreation

508 LAMONT STREET, #2
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE 37604
14 JANUARY 1988

FOREST SUPERVISOR,
Cherokee National Forest
2800 North Ocoee Road
Cleveland, TN 37311

JAN 19 1988

Dear Sir,

It has come to my attention recently that there are efforts to have parts of the Nolichucky River designated as a National Scenic River. As a three-year citizen of Johnson City, a lifetime citizen of Tennessee, and an Appalachian Trail end-to-end (1972-74), I fully support such a designation to whatever extent is possible, so that generations to come can enjoy the beauties of this region as much as I have.

Cordially yours,

Craig Haire
Craig Haire



