



Current Problems, Inc.
PO Box 357098
Gainesville, FL 32635
September 20, 2016

Ms. Liz Sparks, Paddling Trail Coordinator
Office of Greenways & Trails
Division of Recreation & Parks
Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 795
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

RE: Letter of Support for Designation of Suwannee River as National Water Trail

Dear Ms. Sparks,

I am contacting you on behalf of Current Problems, a non-profit organization with over two decades of experience in cleaning up North Central Florida waterways. Current Problems enthusiastically supports your efforts to have the Suwannee River designated as a National Water Trail.

One of our organization's largest ongoing projects is the Great Suwannee River Basin Cleanup, which occurs from September through November each year. Since the project's launch in 2010, 2,023 volunteers have contributed 8,132 hours of their time to remove 94,490 pounds of trash from the Suwannee River from the Georgia state line to the Gulf of Mexico. Many of those volunteers are folks who live along the river and people who enjoy boating, paddling, fishing the Suwannee, as well as swimming, snorkeling, and diving in its many beautiful springs. The annual cleanup efforts of these volunteers speak to their commitment to preserving this iconic waterway. With their help again this fall, we should reach the 100,000-pound mark for cumulative trash removed.

Abundant natural resources, rich history, and cultural heritage combined with endless recreation opportunities make the Suwannee River an outstanding candidate for this prestigious designation. National Water Trail status will increase awareness of the river and heighten economic benefits to the small rural communities through which it flows. The designation also gives our organization one more tool to educate the public about the significance of supporting natural resource conservation for the benefit of people and wildlife.

We strongly support designation of the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fritzi Olson", written in a cursive style.

Fritzi Olson
Executive Director



September 6, 2016

Liz Sparks, Paddling Trail Coordinator
Office of Greenways & Trails
Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

RE: Letter of Support for Designation of Suwannee River as National Water Trail

Dear Ms. Sparks,

I am contacting you on behalf of the Florida Paddling Trails Association (FPTA) with enthusiastic support for your efforts to designate the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

FPTA formed as a non-profit organization in 2007 with an initial focus on supporting Florida's 1,515-mile Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail around the state. Our group quickly realized that paddlers enjoy a myriad of beautiful inland waterways around Florida, too. In dividing up the state into 15 regions to organize informational resources for paddlers, we devoted one of those regions to the Suwannee River basin.

With the dozens of crystal clear springs that feed the river and the riverside camps and state parks that line its banks, the Suwannee River provides an unparalleled paddling experience for both day-trips and multi-day expedition alike. In an effort to highlight riverside resources for paddlers and promote water-based ecotourism, FPTA has also reached out to several small communities along the Suwannee to become partners in our Blueway Communities Program. The towns of Branford, White Springs, Suwannee, Fanning Springs, Live Oak, Suwannee, Dowling Park, and Dixie County are current FPTA Blueway Communities, which demonstrates broad support for this beloved waterway among the citizens of the region it runs through.

Abundant natural resources, rich history, and cultural heritage combined with endless recreation opportunities make the Suwannee River an outstanding candidate for this prestigious designation. National Water Trail designation will increase awareness of the river, provide economic benefits to local communities and provide an opportunity to educate the public about the significance of supporting conservation of natural resource.

For all the reasons stated above, FPTA strongly supports designation of the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Lingard", written over a white background.

Jill Lingard, President
Florida Paddling Trails Association



Paddle Florida, Inc.
PO Box 5953
Gainesville, FL 32627
August 30, 2016

Liz Sparks, Paddling Coordinator
Office of Greenways & Trails
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard M.S. 49
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Sparks,

Paddle Florida enthusiastically supports your office's efforts to secure National Water Trail designation for the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail. With its dozens of pristine springs and conveniently located state parks and river camps, the Suwannee River is a mecca for paddlers in North Florida.

In March 2008, Paddle Florida hosted its first multi-day paddling/camping trip on the Suwannee. It was an overwhelming success. Over 160 paddlers joined us for a week to explore 123 miles of the river from Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park to Manatee Springs State Park. Since then, we have staged 14 more events along the Suwannee, ranging from weekend festivals to paddling trips of five or more days. As a result of the supportive relationship with state park partners and the excellent feedback from our paddlers, we didn't hesitate to add another two Suwannee events to our 2016-17 season of paddling adventures. We are committed to featuring the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail as part of our annual outings well into the future.

Both in terms of branding and economic impact, we believe that the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail is a major asset to the rural counties through which it flows. We at Paddle Florida wholeheartedly support OGT's application for National Water Trail designation for this iconic river.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Kind regards,

Bill Richards, Executive Director
Paddle Florida, Inc.