



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**  
**COMMISSIONER ADAM H. PUTNAM**

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September 12, 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, Florida 32399-3000

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

Dear Ms. Sparks:

I am contacting you as Director of the Florida Forest Service to enthusiastically support the efforts of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails applying to the Department of the Interior for designation of the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

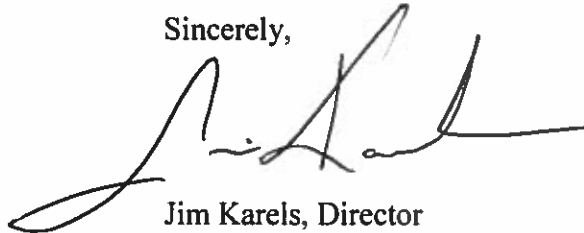
The original Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT) was established in 2003 and has been an exemplary alliance of private and public partners coordinating innovative management practices to protect natural, historic and cultural resources. The SRWT begins at the town of White Springs and flows 171 miles through eight riparian counties to end at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf of Mexico. Extension of the river's designation northward to include the headwaters of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Georgia will increase the distance of the trail for a total of 235 miles. Public partners in the state of Georgia are wholeheartedly supportive of this endeavor.

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.

Ms. Liz Sparks  
September 12, 2016  
Page Two

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Karels". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim Karels, Director  
Florida Forest Service

JRK/kbvr

cc: Jeff Vowell, Assistant Director  
Erin Albury, Field Operations Chief  
Brad Ellis, Forest Management Chief  
Sam Leneave, Region 2 Deputy Chief  
Todd Knapp, State Lands Supervisor  
Keith Bettcher, State Recreation Coordinator



September 21, 2016

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

Dear Ms. Sparks,

I am happy to provide a letter of support for designating the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails is submitting this application to the Department of the Interior.

The original Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT) established in 2003 allied private and public partners to provide an outstanding trail experience and conserve the river's natural, historic and cultural resources. The SRWT begins at the town of White Springs and flows 171 miles through eight counties to end at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf of Mexico. Extending the river's designation northward to include the headwaters of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Georgia will increase the trail distance to a total of 235 miles.

The Suwannee River has rich natural and cultural resources. The combination of its unique fish and wildlife, history, geology and abundant recreational opportunities make the Suwannee River an outstanding candidate for designation. National Water Trail designation will increase awareness of its significance, support visitation and resulting economic benefits to local communities and promote resource conservation.

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) oversees the Andrews Wildlife Management Area fronting the Suwannee River. It is one of Florida's largest remaining contiguous hardwood hammock forests. The FWC also maintains multiple boat access sites in the eight riparian counties. This letter of support gives approval of these sites being included in the designation application.

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

Sincerely,

**Jerrie Lindsey**  
Director

Office of Public Access and  
Wildlife Viewing Services  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



# United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges  
16450 NW 31<sup>st</sup> Place, Chiefland, Florida 32626  
Telephone 352.493.0238 Extension 224  
Mobile 703.622.3896 | Fax 352.493.1935



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: 25 August 2016

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

FROM: Andrew G. Gude, Refuge Manager

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

The Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge very much supports the efforts of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails application to the Department of the Interior for designating the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

We are blessed to have abundant natural resources, a rich history, and a diverse cultural heritage combined with endless recreation opportunities which 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. The Refuge is enthusiastic about this project and looks forward to its success!



# SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

October 25, 2016

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Executive Director

Ms. Liz Sparks  
Paddling Trail Coordinator  
Office of Greenways & Trails  
Division of Recreation & Parks  
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,

As Executive Director of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District), it is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the efforts of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails applying to the Department of the Interior for designation of the Suwannee River as a National Water Trail.

The original Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT) was established in 2003 and has been an exemplary alliance of private and public partners coordinating innovative management practices to protect natural, historic and cultural resources. The SRWT begins at the town of White Springs and flows 171 miles through eight riparian counties to end at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf of Mexico. Extension of the river's designation northward to include the headwaters of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Georgia will increase the distance of the trail for a total of 235 miles. Public partners in the state of Georgia are wholeheartedly supportive of this endeavor.

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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noah B. Valenstein".

Noah B. Valenstein  
Executive Director