



ARKANSAS SCENIC RIVERS LANDOWNER ASSOCIATION

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October 24, 1993

CHAIRMAN

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LOCAL COORDINATORS

Big Piney Creek (Lower)
Don Casey
Dover 331-2835

Big Piney Creek (Middle)
Nolan B. & Louise Hughes
Ft. Douglas

Big Piney Creek (Upper)
Ira Spradley
Limestone 428-5885

Cossatot R./Little Missouri R.
Patti Oates
Mena 384-1111

Hurricane Creek
Robert & Dolores Myers
Palsar 294-5237

Mulberry River (Lower)
Tom White
Ozark 867-3965

Mulberry River (Middle)
George Mc Ilroy, Jr.
Ozark 867-2875

Mulberry River (Upper)
Ruel & Kathy McGuire
Oark 292-3700

North Sylamore Creek
J.W. Dobbins
Mt. View 585-2533

Richland Creek
James W. Harris
Russellville 988-8066

Dear Landowner:

The Ozark National Forest is now drawing the boundaries for its National Rivers (Big Piney Creek, Buffalo River, Hurricane Creek, Mulberry River, North Sylamore Creek, and Richland Creek).

If you are a landowner along one of these National Rivers who wants more information and/or does not want your property included inside the unit boundaries you must give your opinion as soon as possible. We have enclosed two *Landowner Responses* for your convenience.

We are a group of landowners who became concerned earlier this year because the Forest Service was going to include all lands within 1/4 mile of the rivers by publishing the boundaries in the Federal Register (a government legal newspaper) on April 23, 1993. No one appeared to be speaking out for your interests as landowners. We felt that the Forest Service had not properly notified us of our options in this matter nor had it given us complete information on the potential problems with the inclusion of our land inside the National Scenic Rivers area boundaries.

We decided it was essential to organize a landowner association to review the issues on an emergency basis. We asked the Ozark National Forest to 1) delay the April 23, 1993 deadline, 2) provide landowners with more information so that we all would be better able to make this important decision that will permanently affect our property, 3) consider the alternative of excluding private lands from the National River boundaries when requested by landowners, and 4) send each owner a detailed map of our property with the proposed river corridor boundaries clearly shown.

The initial response from the Forest Service was very disappointing. After orders from Forest Service headquarters in Washington they refused to provide us with a list of the affected landowners. For two months we were unable to organize and contact you. Meanwhile the April 23 deadline was quickly approaching. We sent out information to all landowners known to us on May 22, 1993. We are trying to inform others (like you) as we discover additional landowners.

I am pleased to report that, after persistence and an extensive exchange of viewpoints, lines of communication with the Forest Service have been opened. We have been successful in persuading the Forest Supervisor to delay the process six months. He has agreed with our position that private land need not be included in the river corridors if landowners speak out with their concerns.

If you haven't already done so, you now have this one last chance to become informed and actively make your own decision whether you want your land included in the National River corridor.

If you are concerned about these matters or require more information, you must act immediately to protect your property rights. You should:

- 1) Review the enclosed *Fact Sheet for Arkansas Scenic Rivers Private Property Owners.* If you want the boundary to exclude (or include) your land or just want more time and information before you make a decision, fill out and mail the two enclosed River Corridor Determination Landowner Responses.
- 2) Please give us any additional comments, concerns and suggestions on the Arkansas Scenic Rivers Landowner Association Response Form.
- 3) We need volunteers to help out and give us input on your area.
- 4) Please make a donation to help with the costs the association has had a) defending your ownership rights, b) preparing this mailing (and others in the future), c) doing research, and d) paying phone bills. We are all volunteering our time. Funds received will be used only for out-of-pocket costs.

In closing, we emphasize that: Even though Forest Supervisor Lynn Neff's May 4, 1993 letter states that private lands (not underwater) need not be included inside the corridors, there is no guarantee that this will be the final result after the end of the six month public decision process. We all as landowners must become actively involved. It is important that the Arkansas Scenic Rivers Landowner Association be strongly organized after receiving your input and support so that we can work together to help protect our rights while at the same time encourage *reasonable and fair* environmental protection for the rivers.

Sincerely Yours,

ARKANSAS SCENIC RIVERS LANDOWNER ASSOCIATION



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