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Little Rock

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Springdale

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Keeping the Natural State natural.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Mike Knoedl
Director

Fred Brown
Corning

Steve Cook
Malvern

Ford Overton
Little Rock

Fred Spiegel, Ph.D., Ex-Officio
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville

June 28, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

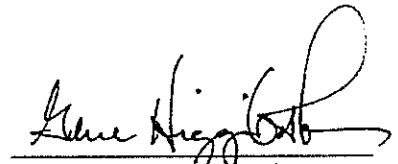
Dear Secretary Jewell:


Thank you for the recognition of our beautiful White River watershed as a National Blueway. While this is a great honor for the State of Arkansas, the conflicts and controversy surrounding the designation are such that we must respectfully request that you remove the National Blueway designation from the White River.

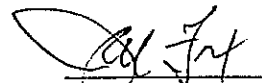
It is our hope that the strong partnerships among local citizens, private businesses, conservation groups, and state and federal agencies that resulted in this designation will continue to move forward in positive ways that benefit people throughout the watershed.

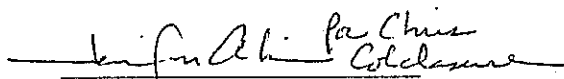
Sincerely,



Mike Knoedl, Director
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission


Gene Higginbotham, Director
Arkansas Waterways Commission


Randy Young, Director
Arkansas Natural Resources Commission


Joe Fox, Director
Arkansas Forestry Commission


Chris Colclasure, Director
Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission


Richard Davies, Director
Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism

Cc: Governor Mike Beebe
Honorable Senator John Boozman
Honorable Representative Tim Griffin
Honorable Representative Rick Crawford
Honorable Representative Steve Womack
Honorable State Senator Missy Irvin
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The mission of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission is to wisely manage all the fish and wildlife resources of Arkansas while providing maximum enjoyment for the people.

Withdrawal of the Designation of the White River National Blueway

Whereas: Secretarial Order 3321 established the National Blueways System as a program to recognize river systems conserved through diverse stakeholder partnerships that use a comprehensive watershed approach to resource stewardship.

Whereas: National Blueways are nationally and regionally significant rivers and their watersheds are highly valued recreational, social, economic, cultural, and ecological assets for the communities that depend on them.

Whereas: The National Blueways System is intended to help promote best practices, share information and resources, and encourage active and collaborative stewardship of rivers across the country.

Whereas: Secretarial Order 3321 states that nothing in the Order is intended to authorize or affect the use of private property, or to be the basis for the exercise of any new regulatory authority.

Whereas: On August 24, 2012, a wide array of state and local stakeholders involved with the White River Watershed in Arkansas and Missouri nominated their river system for recognition as a National Blueway and demonstrated their interests in the river, its watershed, and the accompanying recreational, natural, and economic resources.

Whereas: On October 23, 2012, the National Blueways Committee established by Secretarial Order 3321 met to review this nomination and recommend the designation of the White River Watershed in Arkansas and Missouri as the Nation's second National Blueway.

Whereas: On January 8, 2013, Secretary Ken Salazar designated the White River and its watershed as a National Blueway, finding that the White River meets the criteria required for designation and noting the efforts of many partner organizations that have benefitted the White River watershed residents and visitors through conservation and restoration of the river and its watershed; expanded environmental education and interpretive efforts; increased economic opportunities; and enhanced recreational access to the river, its tributaries, and public land in the watershed.

Whereas: In letters dated June 28, 2013, and July 2, 2013, State and local stakeholders involved with the nomination of the White River Watershed as a National Blueway requested that the National Blueway designation be withdrawn from the White River watershed.

Whereas: On July 2, 2013, the National Blueways Committee reviewed the State letter and, in recognition of the wishes of State and local partners, recommended that the designation be withdrawn.