

March 18, 2007

Dear Fellow Jordan River Riparian Landowner:

This letter is to let you know about the possibility of designating the Jordan River as a State Scenic River. Like you, I also own property on the Jordan, and believe it merits this honorary designation.

What is Scenic River Designation?

Scenic river designation constitutes official recognition by the Commonwealth of Virginia of the scenic, recreational and other values of some of Virginia's best resources. It provides certain protections for these rivers and gives riparian landowners and other local citizens a greater voice in any government actions that might adversely affect their river, such as dams, power lines, and the like.

Designation does not affect the way riparian landowners can use their property. Nor does it give the public any right to use privately owned land. The only legislative prohibition is that no dam or other structure "impeding the natural flow" shall be constructed without General Assembly authorization. The statute expressly prohibits State condemnation of land for recreational access. The legislation also provides for a local committee to manage the interests and issues relative to the river.

Designation is intended to recognize the scenic, natural and historic values of the river and to encourage present and future owners to continue to exercise good stewardship of the land and resources along the river. It also informs County officials about the special attributes of the river, so they can work with landowners to protect those attributes.

What is the Process for Scenic River Designation?

The process for obtaining State scenic river designation requires local support and approval as well as an evaluation of the river and its resources to determine if it qualifies. Factors evaluated include water quality, visual corridor, historic features, and quality of fisheries. This requires a survey of the river, which is conducted from the water to the extent possible.

RappFLOW volunteers and GIS students from the High School will do a preliminary, informal survey. If the supervisors decide to proceed, they will ask the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to conduct a formal survey. If it is desirable to access the Jordan River through your property, we will contact you for permission. We would especially welcome your assistance in identifying the historic, scenic and other special attributes of the Jordan.

We will hold a community meeting at the appropriate time with a representative of DCR to further explain scenic river designation and answer any questions. We will notify you in advance of that meeting. The final step is formal designation, achieved by the passage of legislation by the Virginia General Assembly.

Enclosed for your information are a fact sheet from DCR and a copy of the evaluation criteria. If you have questions or would like to help with the survey, call me at 364-3023 or send an email to harmany@earthlink.net.

Yours truly,

Joyce Harman, DVM, MRCVS

The following Jordan River landowners support this project:

Marc & Alaina Cugnon
Sally Cunningham
Bill & Linda Dietel
Lindsay & Heidi Eastham
Ann Harman
Joyce Harman
Cory Koral
Burks Lapham

Carl & Eileen Leighty
Barry Levine
George & Linda Paine
Marie Ridder
Julia Thieriot
Jim Warwick
Mr. & Mrs. S.H. Williams
Butch & Jan Zindel

Attachments:

DCR Fact Sheet
Evaluation Criteria