



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them since 1940."

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Resolution No. 8F, 2018

SUBJECT: LWF REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR THE LOUISIANA NATURAL AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System was created in 1970 by the Louisiana Legislature in order to preserve the natural and scenic values of qualifying rivers and the System has been expanded since its creation by inclusion of additional waterways;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System now contains eighty rivers, bays, and creeks scattered throughout the state;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has administrative responsibilities for the System, including reviewing and approving permits requested for activities that include clearing, snagging, channelization and harvesting of trees within 100 feet of banks that could affect the natural and scenic values of the rivers;

WHEREAS, clearing and snagging and channelization of a river can cause bank destabilization that leads to increased sediment in streams and results in higher energy and erosion; loss of fisheries habitat and loss of habitat for important plants, insects, and invertebrates; and decreased oxygenation and water quality;

WHEREAS, dredging a river inhibits its natural function and has undesirable consequences, including bank destabilization that leads to local erosion and increased sediment transport during high flows while increasing sediment deposition in the dredged location during low flow, yet dredging has minimal impact on flood magnitude during high flows;

WHEREAS, river floodplains, correctly delineated and protected from development, actually reduce flooding by slowing and absorbing high water flows that occur during unusual rain events;

WHEREAS, the network of trees and vegetation bordering scenic rivers provide flood protection and provides room for absorbing flood waters;

WHEREAS, the flood of 2016 in the Amite River Basin Watershed was caused by a rain event that has been estimated as having a once in five hundred years frequency, and the regulations of the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System did not cause or contribute to the severe flooding that resulted in the area;

WHEREAS, suspension of rivers from the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System could lead to permitted activities that would result in worse flooding when similar rain events occur in the future since floodwaters come up faster and reach higher levels when channels are

straightened;

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Comite River was suspended from Scenic Rivers designation for three years and will not receive the same protections from clearing, snagging, and channelization activities; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation was an early supporter of the Scenic Rivers System and has encouraged management consistent with laws and regulations in place to limit clearing, snagging, channelization and dredging to preserve scenic rivers while protecting the public's rights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) reaffirms its support for the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System and the many benefits to people and wildlife that a designated scenic river provides, including flood prevention in addition to natural, scenic, habitat, and recreational values;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that LWF urges the State and local governments to refrain from damaging the natural and scenic values of rivers by approving projects that could worsen downstream flooding in future abnormal rain events;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that LWF urges the State and local governments to base flood control improvements on a watershed-based perspective and comprehensive hydrologic studies of drainage basins for project proposals and decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that LWF urges local governments or other entities that propose drainage improvement activities on a river that has been suspended from the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System to publicize their plans and hold public hearings on any such plans so that citizens upstream and downstream can monitor the status and results of any clearing, snagging, dredging, or straightening of that scenic stream.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, August 18, 2018 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.