

## TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 53, February 5, 1973\*

We depart from our usual Newsletter format to concentrate on two issues that require your attention -- the Big South Fork (item 2) and Eastern Wilderness (item 3). We hope this limited assignment will encourage many of you to ACT. In addition, note the announcement of our next meeting.

### 1. HEAD OF WATER POLLUTION AGENCY TO ADDRESS TCWP

Time: Wednesday, February 28, 8:00 p.m.

Place: Oak Ridge Civic Center, Social Room,


Oak Ridge Turnpike (2 blocks east of Highway #62 intersection)

Speaker: Mr. S. Leary Jones, Executive Secretary, Tennessee Water Quality Control Board

Mr. Jones will talk about the workings of the Tennessee Water Quality Control Act of 1971 (considered by many to be a model law), and about new federal water pollution legislation. Many of us are particularly concerned about stripmine discharges, and Mr. Jones has promised to devote time to this topic. BRING YOUR INTERESTED FRIENDS!

### 2. BIG SOUTH FORK NATIONAL RIVER & RECREATION AREA NEEDS SUPPORT

On February 1, the Senate passed by a vote of 67:14 the Omnibus Rivers & Harbors Act, Section 61 of which creates the 125,000-acre Big S. Fork National River and Recreation Area. Senator Baker's office cooperated closely with conservationists of the Big S. Fork Preservation Coalition to write into the bill stringent measures for protecting wilderness of the gorges of all streams in the project area. Amendments added on the floor, at Sen. Jackson's request, would put final administration (after acquisition and development by the Corps are essentially complete) into the hands of the Park Service; and, at that time, in-lieu-of-tax payments would cease. These changes eliminate jurisdictional objections from the Interior Committee (hopefully in the House also), and diminish the worries about precedent-setting that certain agencies and groups have had. The bill must now pass the House and possibly weather another Presidential veto -- so there's a hard struggle ahead in the very near future. The urgency for passing this measure NOW is brought home by the fact that new timber cutting in the gorges is being initiated, and that some private developers have plans on their drawing boards for such things as a Western Ghost Town in the Big S. Fork gorge and a cable car across a tributary!

 Action call. (1) Write to your Congressman urging him to support the section of the Rivers & Harbors bill that protects the Big South Fork (in the language passed by the Senate). (2) Thank Sen. Baker for all he has done to get this measure passed, and ask for his continued support in the future (e.g., in conference committee, or to override a veto, if necessary). (3) Write to Pres. Nixon and tell him how much you support preserving the Big S. Fork through this pending legislation. PLEASE ACT NOW: WE MAY NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE!

### 3. SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR WILDERNESS IN EASTERN NATIONAL FORESTS

Two bills have been introduced that wilderness advocates can wholeheartedly support. They are (1) "The Eastern Wilderness Areas Act of 1973"--S. 316 in the Senate (Jackson-Buckley), H.R. 1881 in the House (Saylor); and (2) "The Wilderness Study Act of 1973," H.R. 2420 (Saylor). A third bill, The Wild Areas Act, S. 22 (Aiken-Talmadge), which may at first glance appear attractive, actually has the potential of wrecking the National Wilderness Preservation System. Below, we give you some particulars on these three bills. The two enclosed brochures tell you more about two of the areas close to home that would be protected. After you have acquainted yourself with this material, be sure to heed the action call in the last paragraph (below). THIS MAY BE OUR LAST CHANCE TO SAVE WILDERNESS IN THE EAST!

#### A. The Eastern Wilderness Areas Bill, S.316 and H.R.1881

(Note: H.R.1881 supercedes Haley and Saylor's virtually identical, H.R. 1758 which had a minor technical flaw). This bill, introduced 1/11/73, designates 28 new wilderness areas in 16 states, totalling about 471,000 acres. Of the 28, 16 were proposed by citizen conservationists (including the 11 included in the Eastern Omnibus Wilderness Bill introduced by Jackson last year); and 12 derive from a listing supplied by the U.S. Forest Service to the Congress, with the assertion that these 12 wild areas are not qualified for wilderness designation. (A USFS report, quoted by Sen. Jackson, states, "The criteria for adding wilderness to the National Wilderness

\*Editor: Lee Russell, 130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, TN-615, 482-2153

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Preservation System do not fit conditions in the South and East.") In introducing S.316 Sen. Jackson stressed the necessity to "correct this false so-called 'purity theory' which threatens the strength and broad application of the Wilderness Act....I remind my colleagues again that a central purpose of the Wilderness Act of 1964 was to reserve to the Congress the authority for determining what areas could be designated as wilderness. It is not up to an administrative agency [namely, the Forest Service] to make this decision as seems to be the case here."--The bill also closes two gaps in the coverage of the 1964 Wilderness Act by barring any new mining claims in these areas, and by authorizing the government to acquire private inholding.

Among the 28 areas are three which are partially or wholly in Tennessee: (a) the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness of 32,500 acres (about half in Tenn.); (b) the Cohutta Wilderness of 61,500 acres (somewhat under one-third in Tenn.), and (c) the Gee-Creek Wilderness of 1,100 acres (entirely in Tennessee, in the Hiwassee R. watershed). For the first two, see the enclosed brochures. The third is from the USFS list. Senate hearings for S.316 are scheduled for Feb. 21.

#### B. The Wilderness Study Bill, H.R. 2420

This bill, introduced 1/18/73 by Congr. Saylor, provides for a broadening of the eastern Wilderness System and provides for protection of temporarily disturbed areas in National Forests that do not now meet wilderness criteria but could later on, if left alone. The three principal provisions of this bill are as follows: (a) It establishes 29 wilderness study areas (none in Tennessee, but 9 in nearby N.C., Va., Ky.) which the USFS must study within 5 years for their suitability or non-suitability as wilderness or "wilderness reserve" (see below). During this 5-year period, these areas would receive protection equivalent to that of designated wilderness. (b) It requires the USFS to conduct, within 5 years, an inventory of all roadless areas (without size limitation) on eastern national forests for the purpose of identifying possible wilderness candidates. Citizen input will occur during the inventory process. (c) It establishes the "North Cohutta Wilderness Reserve" of about 15,000 acres in Tennessee, adjacent to the Cohutta Wilderness named in S.316-H.R.1881 (see above). A "wilderness reserve" is an area which presently does not satisfy the condition of wilderness but which could be restored to a qualifying condition. Such an area would be protected the same as wilderness, with the USFS reporting each 5 years on the findings of continuing ecological studies. Wilderness designation would become effective upon publication of notice in the Federal Register that the area had recovered its wilderness character.

#### C. The Wild Areas Bill, S.22 (Aiken-Talmadge)

At first glance, this bill attracted some conservationists because it seemed to provide a means for protecting areas that are said not to qualify for wilderness status. However, H.R.2420 (see above) now superbly takes care of this need, within the framework of the Wilderness System. S.22 would establish 13 "wild areas," but acreages were deleted from the bill and the boundaries are left to the USFS to determine. Virtually all major conservation groups oppose S.22, (a) because its passage would imply acceptance of the premise that the Wilderness Act does not apply in the east; (b) because jurisdiction would be placed in the non-environmentally oriented Agriculture Committee; and (c) because a situation where two committees (Interior and Agriculture) are concerned with the same subject would be bound to lead to stalemates. Friends of the Earth president David Brower said "The Agriculture Committee is committed to domesticating the environment....Environmental legislation, some of us suspect, would receive friendlier treatment from the Post Office Committee."

#### D. Action Call

- (1) Testimony is needed for the Senate Interior Committee hearings on S.316. Write to Sen. Henry M. Jackson, chmn., Senate Interior Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and ask that your comment be made part of the official record (if you are in Washington Feb. 21, why not testify in person?). It is very important not only to endorse the bill, but also specifically to support the inclusion of the 3 Tennessee areas -- there may be some pressure from certain quarters to have them removed.
- (2) Send a copy of your testimony to your Senators and ask them to add their names as co-sponsors to the bill.
- (3) Send a copy of your testimony to your Congressman and ask him to introduce a bill identical to H.R.1881 (the House method of co-sponsoring).
- (4) Send additional copies to Congr. James A. Haley, chmn., House Interior Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515; and to Mr. John McGuire, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, D.C. 20250.
- (5) If you want to work more intensively on this issue, contact TCWP's Eastern Wilderness Committee chairman, John Tansil, 483-8611, ext. 3-1663, or 584-7795 (home).
- (6) Circulate the enclosed petition and return it to the address indicated.

#### 4. CALENDAR

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|-------------|--|
| Feb. 10     | Hike on Oak Ridge's North Ridge Trail (Call Lily Rose Claiborne, 483-3250)                           |
| Feb. 15     | Deadline for sending comments on Nat'l Water Commission Report (see NL #52, item 6). VERY IMPORTANT! |
| Feb. 17     | TTA trail clearing, Sequatchie Valley (Call Don Todd, Wartburg, 346-3113)                            |
| Feb. 24     | TSRA Harpeth R. float (Call Bob McGaw, Nashville, 322-2416 or 269-4190)                              |
| Feb. 28     | TCWP meeting: talk by S. Leary Jones (see item 1., this Newsletter)                                  |
| March 18    | SMHC hike on Cumberland Trail (Call Charles Klabunde, Oak Ridge 483-8055)                            |
| March 23-25 | Third State Trails Seminar, Fall Creek Falls (Call Don Todd, 346-3113)                               |

Return as soon as possible to: Ray Payne, Tenn. Coordinator, Citizens for Eastern Wilderness, 4321 Deerfield Rd., Knoxville, Tenn. 37921

A Petition Supporting the Passage of the EASTERN OMNIBUS WILDERNESS BILL

We, the undersigned, recognize the following:

1. There is a real need for Wilderness Areas in the Eastern part of the United States, protected under the National Wilderness Preservation System that was established by the 1964 Wilderness Act.
2. There are several areas in the eastern National Forests which unquestionably qualify for this designation and are clearly described in the Eastern Omnibus Wilderness Bill.
3. Two of the areas included in this Bill are in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. They are the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness (Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest-Slickrock Creek area) in N.C. and Tenn. and the Cohutta Mountain area in Ga. and Tenn.

We therefore, respectfully request that you cosponsor the Eastern Omnibus Wilderness Bill and provide active support to bring about its passage.

Name

Address



# Wilderness Values Abound

The size of the area, its remoteness, and its rugged topography guarantee a feeling of solitude to the visitor. In the virgin groves, and elsewhere, the forces of nature are dominant. The few remains of man’s past are unobtrusive and usually go unnoticed. For the fisherman, the hunter, the hiker and the camper there is an unequalled opportunity for primitive recreation, in a setting completely apart from any vestige of civilization. Due to its size, hiking trips of several days duration may be taken without any doubling back, an experience not possible in any eastern National Forest Wilderness at the present.

## The Alternative: Roads and Logging

A roadless tract of 32,500 acres is rare in itself; one which is in a substantially primitive condition is doubly rare. Without wilderness protection this exceptional tract will be subdivided into three parcels by roads.

On December 29, 1972, the Federal Highway Administration released a draft Environmental Impact Statement approving a highway along Haeo Lead. This road would permanently sever the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest from the remainder of the proposed wilderness. Equally bad, it would destroy the roadless character of both Kilmer and the Slickrock Creek watersheds.

Another road, the relocation of U.S. 129, is planned to cross the lower end of the Slickrock Creek drainage. In both cases reasonable alternate routes exist, which just as easily can be used. Roads would open the virgin timber of both Slickrock Creek and Citico Creek to logging.

## The Omnibus Eastern Wilderness Bill

In January 1973 the Omnibus Eastern Wilderness Bill (S. 316; H.R. 1758) was introduced by Senator Henry M. Jackson, Congressman James A. Haley, and others in both Houses of Congress. This bill provides for the creation of a Joyce Kilmer Wilderness of 32,500 acres. Strong citizen support is necessary if this bill is to become law.

## Your Views are Important!

Please write now and express your views on the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness. Letters to the following will be particularly helpful:

Senator Henry M. Jackson Senate Interior Committee U. S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510	Congressman James A. Haley House Interior Committee U. S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515	John McGuire, Chief U. S. Forest Service Washington, D.C. 20250
Your Congressman U. S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515		Your Senators U. S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510

If you wish to help more, sign and circulate a petition seeking addition of the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Or, contact David Saylor, Coordinator, Citizens for Eastern Wilderness, 815 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20006.

### SPONSORS OF THIS ALERT

Sierra Club	Carolina Mountain Club, Inc.	Holston Valley Conservation Congress
The Wilderness Society	ECOS	Tennessee Trails Association
National Audubon Society	Carolina Bird Club, Inc.	Cherokee Sportsmens Conservation Assn.
Trout Unlimited	Save Joyce Kilmer League	Chattanooga Trout Association
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club	SCAPE	Conservation Council of North Carolina
	Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Protection	

# JOYCE KILMER WILDERNESS

## Wilderness Action Alert

Citizens now have their greatest opportunity to secure creation of the most significant new National Forest Wilderness in the Southeast since passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. Establishment of a Joyce Kilmer Wilderness is authorized by the 1973 Omnibus Eastern Wilderness Bill (S. 316; H.R. 1758), introduced 1-11-73.

The Joyce Kilmer Wilderness takes its name from Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, which would be incorporated as a part of the new Wilderness. In addition to the Kilmer Memorial Forest the proposed Wilderness includes the adjoining watersheds of Slickrock Creek, Yellowhammer Creek, and the roadless portion of the Citico Creek Drainage.

These four areas, along with small adjoining tracts needed to give better boundary control, joined together, create a contiguous roadless tract of approximately 32,500 acres. The heart of the area, and all of Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest are covered by virgin forest. The area of virgin forest, approximately 10,000 acres, is the largest single block of that character in Forest Service ownership in the eastern United States.

Fifty years have passed since the end of logging operations on most of the remaining acreage. In that time regrowth has completely healed the scars of this earlier activity, and now the entire area displays a primitive, undeveloped nature.

Since 1969, conservationists have been strongly advocating creation of a Joyce Kilmer Wilderness. Enactment of the pending legislation will bring their long fight to a successful conclusion.

The proposed Wilderness lies across the North Carolina—Tennessee State line, with about equal portions in each state. The tract is part of Nantahala National Forest, N.C., and Cherokee National Forest, Tenn.

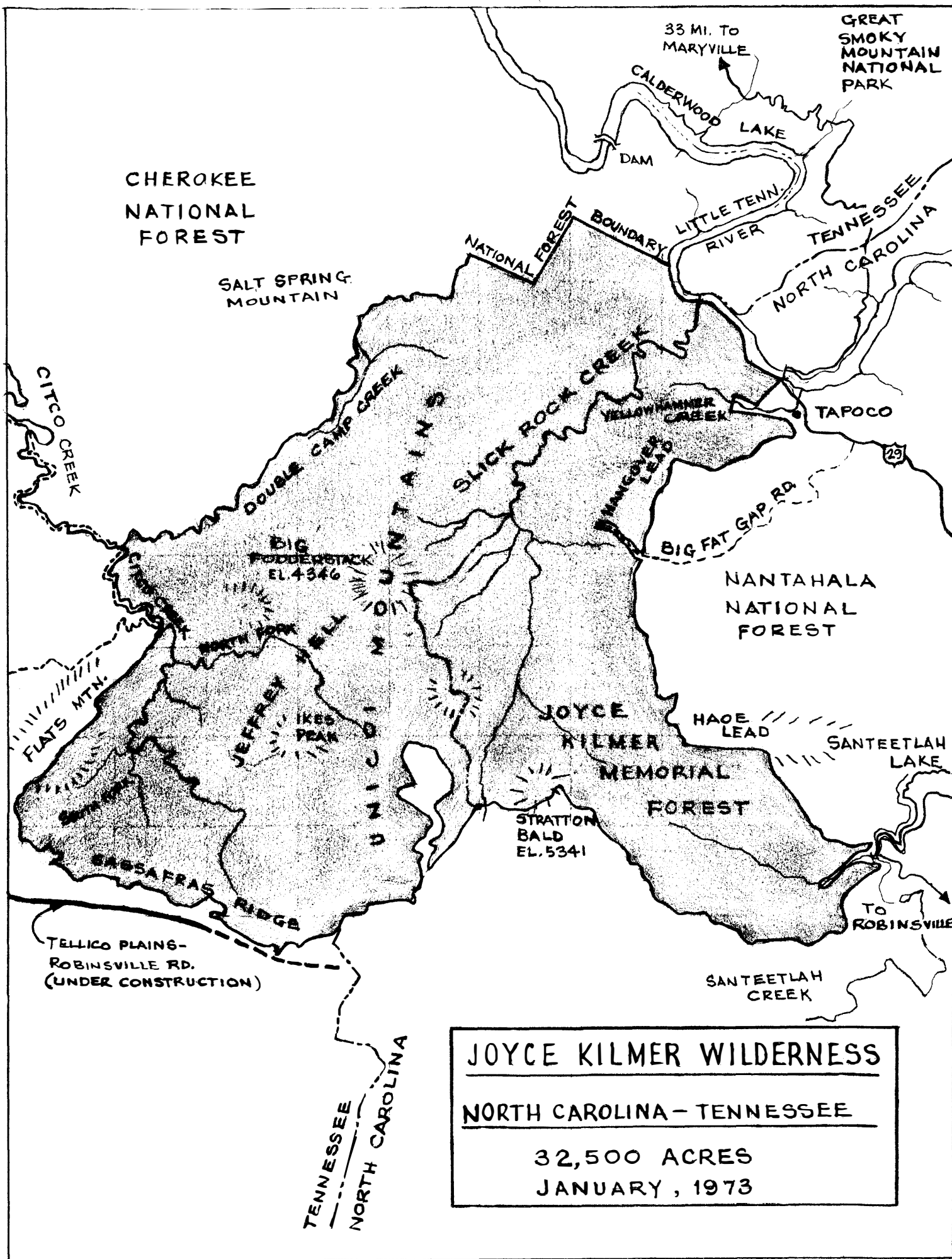
## Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest

In 1935 at the urging of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the United States Government agreed to establish a forest memorial to the soldier-poet Joyce Kilmer, author of “Trees.” The Secretary of Agriculture searched all the National Forests in the east for an appropriate area. Finally the watershed of Little Santeetlah Creek was selected as the finest example of primeval forest then in Forest Service ownership, and in July 1936 it was dedicated as a permanent memorial to Joyce Kilmer.

The Forest Service in its descriptive brochure says this of the Memorial Forest:

*“This forest is one of the most impressive remnants of our Nation’s virgin wilderness. Here, where the headwaters of great rivers rise, immense trees grow in the natural setting that was theirs when this region was the unexplored hunting ground of the Cherokees.”*

The entire watershed of Little Santeetlah Creek, over 2,800 acres, was set aside. High ridges curve like a horseshoe to surround it on three sides.



## Slickrock Creek

The northern boundary of Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is Hae Lead, a steep narrow ridge, in places a mile high. The waters cascading off the opposite slope form Slickrock Creek.

The Slickrock Creek watershed is a roadless valley. Its 11,000 acres consist of a narrow, deep valley bounded by razorback ridges: Hangover Lead, Hae Lead, and the Unicoi Crest. Tributary streams falling off these high ridges have deeply sculptured the valley walls. Slickrock Creek flows into Calderwood Lake on the Little Tennessee River, which forms its northern boundary.

The steep upper slopes and ridge tops are clothed in virgin forest. At least one tree of national record size, a Mountain Silverbell, has been discovered on Glen Gap Branch.

One of the prime attractions of Slickrock Creek is its brown trout fishery. This species, first stocked in the 30's, reproduces naturally in the stream. Slickrock Creek is generally considered to be the finest brown trout stream in the United States. One major reason for this is the undisturbed character of the watershed. The water runs pure and clear. With no activities of man in the drainage, it is free of siltation, a necessary pre-requisite if natural reproduction of the trout is to continue.

From 1918 to 1922 there was logging in the lower elevations of this valley. The old logging road grades now provide many miles of foot trail. In the fifty years since logging ended the land has regained its wilderness character. Magnificent groves of poplar grace the valley bottoms.

## Yellowhammer Creek

The Yellowhammer Creek watershed adjoins Slickrock Creek along the east side of Hangover Lead. It too is a roadless, undeveloped valley. It has been protected as the watershed for the village of Tapoco since the early 1920's. In that time the 2000 acres here have been fully restored to their former natural character.

## Citico Creek

The Citico Creek Watershed adjoins the Slickrock Creek Watershed along the Unicoi Crest. Over 16,000 acres of the Citico drainage lie in a roadless tract along this ridge. Logging was underway at lower elevations along the streams in 1925 when a disastrous fire burned the trestles on the logging railroad. The loggers pulled out, leaving thousands of acres of virgin forest on the higher slopes.

One feature of the Citico tract is Jeffrey Hell, an extensive and almost impenetrable laurel thicket, which also contains a great number of massive poplar trees.

## Superior Wildlife Habitat

The Joyce Kilmer Wilderness supports a population of deer, turkey, squirrel, bobcat, black bear and Russian boar. The boar, a species introduced from northern Europe, abound and thrive in this wilderness. Boar hunters support many commercial ventures which cater to them.

Black bear in the area are also prized. Bear are wide ranging animals, and it is generally agreed that 20,000 roadless acres is the minimum viable habitat for them. During hunting season, the area proposed as the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness is one of the few places large enough to give bear a refuge where they have a chance of survival.

The eastern mountain lion requires an even larger range than the black bear. There is reason to hope that keeping this area in its present roadless condition will facilitate the revival of a population of these giant cats.

## Plant Life

The area of the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness supports an almost endless variety of plant life. The diversity equals if it does not exceed that of the nearby Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Of even greater significance, the plant community is almost entirely of native origin. The introduced species so common where man and his works have intruded are absent here. Consequently, the proposed wilderness is of great value as an area of scientific study of native plants, and of their interrelationships.

January 1973

Honorable\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_Office Building

Washington, D. C. 20001

Dear\_\_\_\_\_:

An Eastern Wilderness Omnibus Bill is being prepared in both the Senate and the House Committee’s on Interior and Insular Affairs for introduction into Congress early in this session. This bill will place the proposed Cohutta Wilderness in Georgia and Tennessee and the proposed Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness in North Carolina and Tennessee along with others up the Appalachian Mountain chain under the protection of the Wilderness Act of 1964. All areas are United States Forest lands.

I am emphatically in favor of this legislation and ask that you support it among your colleagues now and vote for it when the time comes. This legislation is essential to protect these few remaining untrammeled areas of our mountains so they can revert to their natural state for our future generations to enjoy.

Your full cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

**SUPPORT THE**

**EASTERN WILDERNESS**

**OMNIBUS BILL**



## SUPPORT THE EASTERN WILDERNESS OMNIBUS BILL

The Eastern Wilderness Omnibus Bill comes up for consideration in the coming session of Congress. The proposed Cohutta Wilderness is included for protection under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

This report will soon be carried before the Senate Committee of Interior and Insular Affairs to be used as the basis for putting the final touches on the Eastern Omnibus Wilderness Bill so that it adequately and accurately defines the proposed Cohutta Wilderness.

The proposed Wilderness Area is located north-east of the Town of Chatsworth in North Central Georgia. It is about 115 miles north of Atlanta, Georgia and 70 miles east of Chattanooga, Tennessee, within an area with a radius of 140 miles from the proposed Wilderness Area are the population centers of Atlanta and Chattanooga. The area contains a population of 4.6 million people. By 1980, an estimated 6.1 million people will live within this area and by the year 2000, approximately 9 million people are expected to reside here. It should be noted that in the same zone with a radius of 140 miles are the National Forest Service developments at Lake Conasauga, Morganton Point and Lake Blue Ridge. Other recreation areas are Fort Mountain State Park, Lake Lanier, Lake Allatoona, Lake Chickamauga and private campgrounds along Interstate 75 to name only a few. These other areas of recreational development are designed to accommodate the recreationist that is motor-oriented. Facilities are designed for pickup campers and trailers, and often have all the comforts of home, including electricity and toilet facilities. They are likewise lake-oriented.

At present the area cannot be considered a major timber producing area. This is because of immature stands and limitations of topography. It is estimated that there is a growing stock volume of some 200 million board feet of timber in the area. The average annual yield for the past four years has only been 1.3 million board feet.

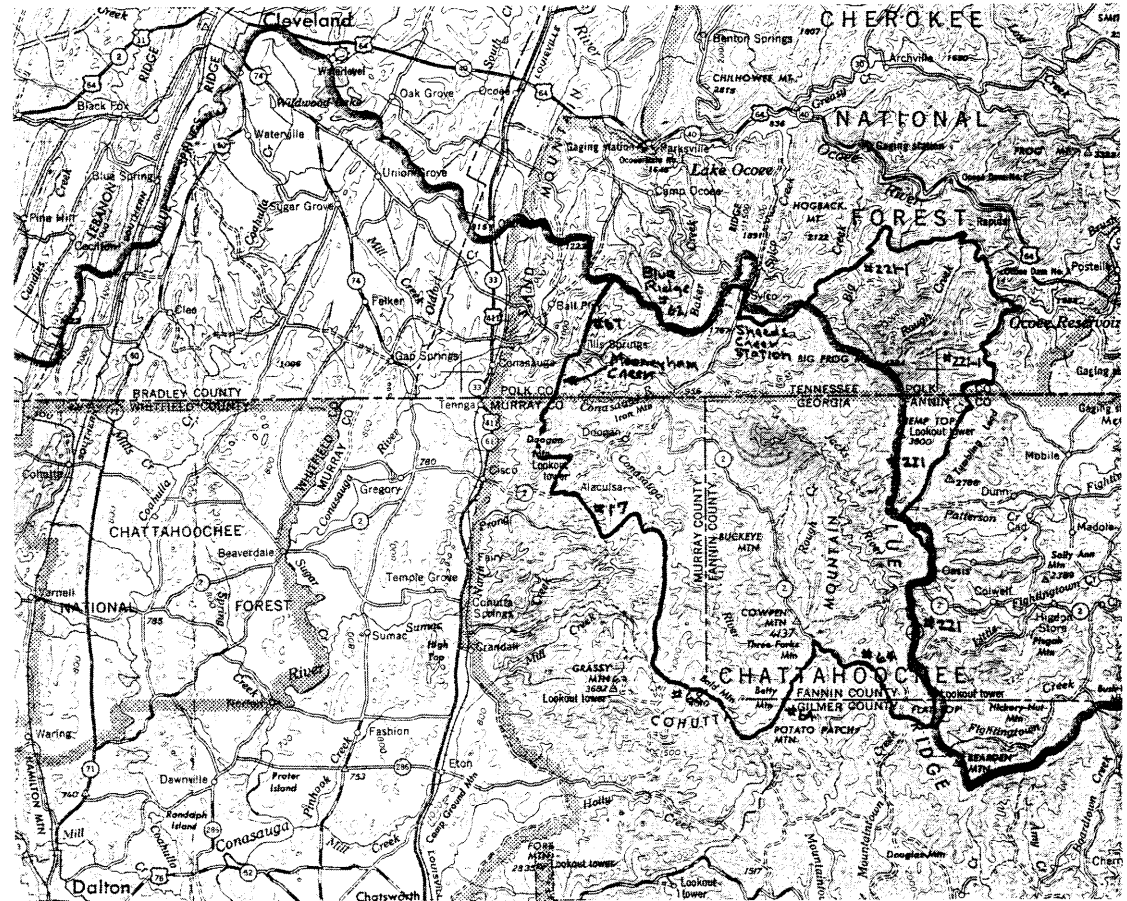
The roadless acreage here is one of the largest in public ownership in the east. It could become the largest wilderness area in the east outside of the Smokies. Its size makes possible hiking trips of several days without the retracing of steps and without the intrusion of man. The opportunities for solitude and a primitive unconfined type of recreation are superlative. But it is not necessary to walk three days to obtain this experience in the Cohuttas. In most places, after walking a few hundred yards, one is enclosed by the forest and all sounds except those of nature are excluded. The casual hiker as well as the experienced backpacker can find solitude in the Cohuttas.

The Conasauga and Jacks Rivers are classified as high quality native trout streams. The Conasauga River is one of the few remaining wild trout streams in Georgia. Prior to 1969, there were some releases of rainbow trout into the river. Likewise in the Jacks River, the State of Georgia has made some releases of hatchery reared trout, however, this practice has been discontinued and the area has been managed for the production of wild trout. Present logging practices threaten the capacities of these rivers. Siltation in the tributaries threatens the production of trout. It is essential that the area includes sufficient acreage to protect not only the main bodies of these rivers but their tributaries as well or the trout population will perish.

Wildlife abounds in the area. It is ideally suited for the eastern Black bear. In Georgia, deer have been stocked. Turkeys and Ruffed Grouse are found. Wild hogs are not considered a game animal in Georgia but Tennessee has stocked the slopes of Little and Big Frog Mountain with boar. Fox, raccoon and bobcat are found along with many other lesser species. Some beaver and muskrat are found in the rivers. Proper management techniques would improve the habitat of these game animals.

Of all possible uses, the land of the Cohuttas is best suited to Wilderness. This section of the country is characterized by steep slopes and shallow rocky soil. The land needs protection in order for the soil to be stable. A vivid example of harmful logging practices can be found in the existing cutting areas in the headwaters of the Jacks River. The slightest shower brings a downpour of siltation into the tributaries that are the wild trout hatcheries.

The need for such a designation cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents. The value of such an area cannot be measured in terms of board feet of lumber. The wilderness is our priceless heritage. There is very little of it left. Because the area in question is so inaccessible and because its topography is not such that its products are commercially exploitable there are very few roads in this area. The need is great, the availability is small, and the quality of the Cohuttas is irreplaceable.



In summation, the Cohuttas are ideal wilderness territory. There is an abundance of inaccessible public land, and absence of population and valuable minerals, scenic beauty, densely forested mountains with a wide variety of trees and plant life, clear rushing trout filled streams and ample wildlife, all of which provide a panorama of nature's handiwork upon which man cannot improve.

Now is the time to start political action. Influence as many people as possible to work with as many Congressmen and Senators as possible to gain their enthusiastic support. Give this project top priority and put your mind to devising as many ways as possible to create favorable support among House and Senate members from all over the country.

Please send the attached form letter or your own letter to: your two Senators, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C. 20510, your Congressman, U. S. House of Representatives, House Office Building, Washington, D. C. 20515. Thanking you for your continued support.