



Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
3537 NE 87th St.
Seattle, WA 98115
okeefe@americanwhitewater.org

September 29th, 2014

Jim Morgan, Stewardship Manager
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
725 Summer Street NE, Ste C
Salem, OR 97301-1271

Subject: Chetco River Scenic Waterway Assessment

Dear Mr. Morgan:

American Whitewater writes to express our support for designating the Chetco River as a State Scenic Waterway. Many of our members have chosen to call Oregon home because of the outstanding whitewater boating opportunities in the state, including those that the Chetco River provides.¹ Designating the Chetco as a State Scenic Waterway will not only enhance the quality of life for those who recreate on the river, but will also bring economic benefits to local communities.²

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) river conservation organization founded in 1954. We have approximately 6,000 members and 100 local-based affiliate clubs, representing thousands of whitewater paddlers across the nation. American Whitewater's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. As a conservation-oriented paddling organization, American Whitewater has an interest in the Chetco River. A significant percentage of American Whitewater members reside in Oregon and Northern California—a short driving distance from this river for recreation.

The Chetco River meets the criteria for a State Scenic Waterway: it is free flowing, the river has exceptional scenic quality as viewed from the river, and the water is an exceptional setting for recreational use. These qualities led to the designation of the upper 45 miles of the Chetco River from the headwaters to the National Forest boundary as a Federal Wild and Scenic River. Segments 1 and 2 are within the federally designated Wild and Scenic River reach. The proposed boundary for Segment 3 would represent a modest extension beyond the National Forest boundary. We support the inclusion of all these reaches within a State Scenic Waterway designation.

We look forward to working with you to protect this river for future generations. Please do not

¹ Our inventory of whitewater resources for the Chetco River includes the following:

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/3758>

² The Outdoor Industry Association reports that outdoor recreation generates \$12.8 billion in direct spending and 141,000 direct jobs in Oregon State. https://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/OR-oregon-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf

hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the opportunities for whitewater recreation on the Chetco River and the benefits that a State Scenic Waterway designation would bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. O'Keefe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director