



[www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

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**Tennessee Valley Authority**  
400 West Summit Hill Drive  
Knoxville TN 37902

Re: Ocoee River Region Future Management

Dear Mr. Maierhofer,

We are writing today on behalf of the thousands of citizens that kayak, canoe, and raft the Ocoee River each year without the services of a commercial outfitter. As you know, the Tennessee Valley Authority's dams have the capacity to eliminate or enhance the public treasure that is the Ocoee River. For the past several decades recreational dam releases have supported the public interest in recreation, and we write to ask for inclusion in efforts to determine the future of flows and river management on the Ocoee.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization with a mission to conserve and restore our nation's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. Our professional staff members have designed countless dam release programs across the country, and were active participants in TVA's Reservoir Operation Study. Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Bluegrass Wildwater Association, and Georgia Canoeing Association are paddling clubs whose members recreate on the Ocoee River on a regular basis. Collectively, our members are directly affected by flow management decisions on the Ocoee River.

Outdoor Recreation in Tennessee accounts for \$8.2 Billion in consumer spending, \$2.5 Billion in wages and salaries, 83,000 jobs, and \$535 Million in state and local tax revenue.<sup>1</sup> The Ocoee River Region is a significant contributor to that industry, and small investments in recreation in the area can yield huge returns.

The Ocoee River can serve as a hub for additional growth in the outdoor recreation economy and way of life of the area through smart and intentional management of natural resources. We envision additional freestyle and flat-water paddling, mountain biking and hiking opportunities that are integrated, promoted well, draw more people for longer visits, and stimulate local and regional businesses. Kayaking,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/TN-tennessee-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf](https://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/TN-tennessee-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf)

canoeing, and rafting that rely upon continued Ocoee River dam releases form the essential foundation of that vision. The paddling community looks forward to working with the Tennessee Valley Authority to create, promote, and protect a sustainable outdoor lifestyle and economy in the Ocoee Region.

We would welcome the chance to meet with you to discuss our interests within the next month, and ask that you include us in future meetings or processes regarding recreational releases on the Ocoee River.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

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