

MARK MEADOWS
11TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

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July 31, 2015

Mr. Bill Lane
Atlanta Federal Center
National Park Service – RTCA Program
100 Alabama Street, SW- 1924 Building
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Lane,

I am pleased to support the Smoky Mountain Host organization's grant application for technical assistance from the National Park Service. The Technical Assistance Program would be critical in the coordination and designation of the Smoky Mountain Blueways as a National Water Trail. In addition, your assistance is critical in helping them develop a "way-finding signage program" and developing a strong conservation education component for the regional effort.

The five rivers in the system all flow into Lake Fontana and provide some of the nation's most treasured waterways. The region is also home to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 60% in this region of North Carolina, and the Blue Ridge Parkway, America's favorite scenic drive. In addition, our region is an integral part of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, the 24th in America.

The entire Southwest Region of North Carolina will benefit economically from this designation and your assistance will solidify the extensive work that has already been done by the Advisory Council and their many collaborative partners in the Little Tennessee Watershed.

Smoky Mountain Host has a long history of partnering with public and private organizations to carry out initiatives such as the Smoky Mountain Blueways. They operate the Smoky Mountain Visitor's Center through a long-standing agreement with the NC Department of Transportation that is located near the border of Georgia. They conduct regional co-op marketing since their inception in 1987. They also work closely with the Southwestern Commission, the region's Council of Governments in various

community and economic development initiatives such as this one that provides connectivity between towns, counties, private industry and local governments.

We believe that the designation of the Smoky Mountain Blueways by the National Park Service as a National Blueways Trail System will be a huge step in securing our place in the global market and making our regions natural resources stronger through collaboration and conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Meadows". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Mark R. Meadows
Member of Congress

MRM/sp