



Mr. Philip Wolf
Biologist –Environmental Resource Team

Patrick O'Donnell
Project Manager
Planning Branch
69A Hagood Ave.
Charleston, SC, 29403

Subject: Proposed Tyger River Impoundment and Botanical Survey

Date: 7/17/06

Dear Sir,

Imagine a place where you can travel down a tranquil river for 5 hours and experience little human impacts, no houses, barking dogs, cars, no roads, only the tranquil sounds of flowing water, birds and the wind. The Tyger River's timeless flow has carved its mark on the land for thousands of years providing a rich natural and cultural history. Watersheds and rivers have defined us as people and have provided resources, serenity and recreation for thousands of years. To place Dam's and build impoundments on special wild rivers is to erase these histories forever for perceived gains.

The Tyger River is one of South Carolina's last free flowing rivers traversing the piedmont through the heart of the Sumter National Forest The Union County Economic Development Board is proposing to construct a Dam on the Tyger River flooding over 5,300 acres of federal forest and private lands primarily for economic development purposes. The proposed project seeks to convert an additional 1,300 acres of federal land to private ownership for private development. It is estimated that approximately 1 million trees greater than 6 inches in diameter will be lost within the impoundment area alone. In addition, the Dam and impoundment will destroy forever 2,500 acres of valuable Floodplain and Bottom Land hardwood forest habitat. According to the Audubon Society of South Carolina the project poses a grave risk to federally protected bird habitat and 60,000 songbirds, neo-tropical migrants and offspring will be lost by this project.

The South Carolina Native Plant Society respectfully presents the results of our botanical inventory and plant community assessment within the proposed impoundment area. It is our intent that this document should serve to provide introductory botanical data within the proposed

impoundment area. This document provides a solid marker for species diversity and significance of the Piedmont and Bottomland hardwood forest within the proposed impoundment. This study is co sponsored by the South Carolina Wildlife Federation and conducted by professional botanist and volunteers. The South Carolina Native Plant Society is non-profit all volunteer organization dedicated to promote and protect our indigenous flora and fauna and habitats that support their existence.

The South Carolina Native Plant Society opposes this economic development project based on the mass loss of bio-diversity, and the loss of a wild free flowing river. The proposed Dam and impoundment sets a dangerous precedence of taking public lands for private development. The results of this decision shall have serious far reaching effects nationally with accelerated loss of critical habitat as the ultimate outcome. If the proposed project is measured against the cost to study, design, and build, compounded with the environmental loss then the projects economic promise seems to fall short. The economics of a river are hard to define. It is hard to place an economy on migratory birds, plants, majestic forests or serenity. Although we respectfully understand and support the economic need for Union County and its citizens, we feel this solution fails to demonstrate an economic outcome that justifies the costs.

Rivers are the soul of the land telling a long story of the timeless meander of water, land, wildlife, and people. The people of Union County may gain a lake but lose their sense of place, their values, history, and bit of their soul. The ultimate decision on the life of a river, a history, a culture comes to the point of deciding where our values are and what will be the legacy we leave for future generations. It is our desire and hope that wise farsighted decisions are made regarding the fate of the Tyger River and Union County.

Sincerely Rick Huffman

SCNPS, Upstate Chapter President