

November 18, 2023

Chuck Roe, President  
Southern Conservation Partners, Inc.  
PO Box 33222  
Raleigh, NC 27636-3222

Dear Mr. Roe;

I am in complete support of the nomination of the Black River, North Carolina, for National Natural Landmark status. The Black River is one of the great natural areas in the United States. The forested wetlands along the Black River preserve the oldest trees in eastern North America, which are among the oldest-known trees on Earth. Hundreds of bald cypress trees over 1,000-years old can still be found in and along this remarkable stream. Many bald cypress trees at Black River are over 2,000-years old. The oldest yet documented is currently at least 2,630-years old, based on dendrochronological and radiocarbon dating analyses published in *Environmental Research Communications* in 2019. The Black River is over 60-miles long and has been designated as “Outstanding Resource Waters” by the State of North Carolina. This high-quality blackwater stream and the ancient floodplain forests it preserves were recently featured in a full-length article in *National Geographic* magazine (September 2023). Ancient bald cypress and bottomland hardwood forests in the United States have been almost completely destroyed by human activity. Only three major properties with extensive tracts of uncut ancient cypress forest remain: Black River, North Carolina; Francis Beidler Forest Sanctuary, South Carolina; and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Florida. The Black River is the largest and the ancient forests there are the most exceptional of these three critically important ecosystems. The National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy have preserved the two properties in South Carolina and Florida. The Nature Conservancy has led the protection of Black River, North Carolina. National Natural Landmark designation is certainly justified and is the least we can do to recognize the world-class wetland forests found along this outstanding river.

Sincerely,



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