

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Forests & Forest Health

Testimony

**Statement of Congressman Cass Ballenger (R-NC)
before the House Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
August 3, 1999**

Madam Chairman,

Today, I am here to support H.R. 1749, a bill that when enacted would designate Wilson Creek, in my district, as a Wild and Scenic River.

Wilson Creek is a free flowing, crystal clear waterway which passes through some of the most beautiful scenery in the nation. It is home to a multitude of fish species, plant life and provides habitat for thousands of animals which live along its banks. From its headwaters below Calloway Peak on Grandfather Mountain in Avery County, North Carolina to where it empties into Johns River in Caldwell County, Wilson Creek meets or exceeds all the requirements for such an important designation.

Specifically, my bill would designate 23.3 miles of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic river. In my opinion, having this creek designated as Wild and Scenic would help maintain its natural beauty while helping to improve the quality of recreational opportunities, like hunting fishing,, camping, canoeing and other activities for the thousands of people who would visit each year.

The potential designation of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic River has received tremendous support from the County Commissions of both Avery and Caldwell Counties as well as local residents and outdoor enthusiasts. In fact, when I met with -the county commissioners of Caldwell and Avery Counties prior to introduction, I was presented with letters of support from local residents, positive newspaper articles and editorials, and a letter from the U.S. Forest Service which indicated a willingness to help us in this effort. I ask that this booklet be included in the record. I am convinced that the designation of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic River is well supported within the communities which surround it.

I believe that this is an excellent bill that would do much to preserve Wilson Creek, making it both a natural asset and a national treasure. I urge its passage.

Thank you Madam Chairman.

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