

November 8, 2023

The Honorable Charles F. Sams
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Sams,

We write to respectfully request that the National Park Service (NPS) conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Deerfield River to evaluate it as a candidate for potential designation under the National Wild and Scenic River program. An initial reconnaissance survey would provide critical information to understand which segments of the river are best qualified for designation and should be studied further. As champions of the Deerfield River in Congress, we will also continue to work toward passing legislation authorizing the designation of the Deerfield River and its major tributaries for inclusion in the program, as well as authorizing a study and report on the river.

The Deerfield River begins in southern Vermont and runs for 76 miles, winding through northwestern Massachusetts until it meets the Connecticut River near Greenfield, Massachusetts. The river's course runs through the Green Mountain National Forest, the Berkshire Mountains, and Pioneer Valley, providing it with unique natural value. The Deerfield River is also a recreational engine for the region, with whitewater boating and rafting on its Class II-V rapids and dry-fly fishing in one of the best wild trout fishing sites on the East Coast.^{1,2} The river is deeply tied to the culture and history of the region and parallels the Mohawk Trail, a critical Native travel corridor and a principal route for expeditions during the French and Indian Wars. NPS has designated the Cold River, the Bog Brook, and the Gulf Brook—all tributaries of the Deerfield River—as wild free-flowing rivers.³ The Nationwide Rivers Inventory identifies multiple free-flowing segments of the Deerfield River as having “outstandingly remarkable”

¹ Dan Harrison, *Fly Fishing the Deerfield River*, Fly Fisherman (Aug. 28, 2014), <https://www.flyfisherman.com/editorial/the-deerfield-river/151807>.

² John Burk, *Deerfield River*, Estuary Magazine (Sept. 2021), <https://www.estuarymagazine.com/2021/09/deerfield-river/>.

³ *Massachusetts (Nationwide Rivers Inventory)*, U.S. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/massachusetts.htm> (last visited Oct. 24, 2023).

values for fish and history; consequently, they are eligible for National Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.⁴

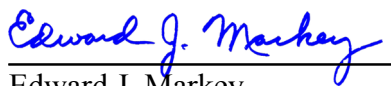
On March 1, 2023, we reintroduced the *Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study Act* (S.608/H.R.1312). This legislation would direct NPS to conduct a full Wild and Scenic River Study of the mainstem Deerfield River and its tributaries in Massachusetts. Eighteen communities and twelve organizations and businesses in the watershed support efforts to protect the Deerfield River, as their endorsements of the *Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study Act* demonstrate. The legislation is also endorsed by the Deerfield River Watershed Association.⁵

While we will continue our efforts to pass this legislation, we are eager to advance the consideration of the outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values of the Deerfield River. A reconnaissance study will maximize the benefit of the Wild and Scenic River Study, once authorized, by providing useful information to inform and enable the full study.

For these reasons, we request the assistance of NPS in beginning a reconnaissance survey of the Deerfield River and its tributaries, including: the North, South, East, and West Branches of the Deerfield River; and the major tributaries of the Deerfield River, including the Green River, North River, South River, Clesson Brook, Chickley River, Cold River, Gulf Brook, Bog Brook, and Dunbar Brook.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request and for your continued dedication to our nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



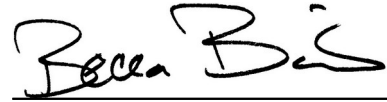
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

⁴ *Id.*; *Nationwide Rivers Inventory*, U.S. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/nationwide-rivers-inventory.htm> (last visited Oct. 24, 2023).

⁵ *Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Designation*, Deerfield River Watershed Association, <https://deerfieldriver.org/wild-and-scenic> (last visited Oct. 26, 2023).



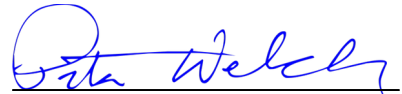
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator