

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 29, 2015

Mr. Jonathan Jarvis  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis,

We are writing today regarding the Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the current allocation of funding for designated rivers. We support increased funding for both the Taunton River, located in Massachusetts, and the Eightmile River, located in Connecticut, and respectfully request information explaining the current funding disparity for these two rivers.

In May 2008, President George W. Bush signed the Consolidated Natural Resources Act into law, which included the Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Act. The Eightmile River watershed covers 62-square miles and is home to 160 rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. In March 2009, President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 into law, incorporating the Taunton River into the National Wild and Scenic River System. This designation came after many years of community-based efforts to protect and preserve the Taunton River which is the only major coastal river in the region without a dam or obstruction over its entire length. While most Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs) received over \$130,000 on average in FY 2015, the National Park Service has never allocated more than \$30,000 for the Taunton River and no more than \$70,000 for the Eightmile River. While the overall WSR funding has grown from \$1.119 million in FY 2005 to \$1.715 million in FY 2015, both older and newly designated rivers continue to receive a level of funding that eclipses both the Taunton and Eightmile Rivers.

We believe it is critical that the Taunton River and the Eightmile River receive a fair allocation of resources in order to preserve the natural beauty, vibrant ecology, and cultural heritage of these nationally-significant rivers. Partnerships established under the Wild and Scenic Rivers System have thrived due to their collaborative, locally-driven planning and management approach. This approach, in conjunction with adequate federal funding, has leveraged significant amounts of state, local, and private funding and has encouraged thousands of volunteers to donate their time and services to preserve critical natural resources.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you, and please let us know if we can provide any further information. You can contact Ian Wilhite (Rep. Kennedy) at [Ian.Wilhite@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ian.Wilhite@mail.house.gov) or Alexa Combelic (Rep. Courtney) at [Alexa.Combelic@mail.house.gov](mailto:Alexa.Combelic@mail.house.gov) for questions or additional information.

Sincerely,



---

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III  
Member of Congress



---

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress