

ADVOCATES FOR THE OAK RIDGE RESERVATION

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October 15, 2002

Mr. Michael Holland
U.S. Department of Energy
Oak Ridge Operations
P. O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Subject: Oak Ridge Reservation Land-Use Planning Process

Dear Mr. Holland:

I am writing on behalf of Advocates for the Oak Reservation (AFORR) to communicate our official congratulations to the Department of Energy on the completion of the first phase of comprehensive land use planning for the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) and to remind you of the need to follow through with the remainder of the process.

AFORR was gratified to see that the recently concluded Land Use Planning Process for the west end of the ORR found widespread support for protecting large portions of the Reservation for conservation, research, and related public uses. Further, we are pleased that the process resulted in recommendations to designate a large section of Black Oak Ridge and other areas for these purposes. To ensure that this conclusion is not quickly forgotten, we urge DOE to follow through by moving quickly toward implementing a mechanism to ensure permanent protection for areas so designated. Permanent protection also is needed for the Three Bend Scenic and Wildlife Area, which DOE has previously designated for conservation but which lacks a permanent protection arrangement.

It is equally important that DOE build on the progress made in this effort by extending the land-use planning process to consider the entire Reservation. When AFORR and its partners agreed to drop our plans for NEPA litigation regarding Reservation land use, it was with the understanding that DOE would conduct comprehensive land-use planning for the entire ORR, and that this recent process would be the first step toward such a comprehensive plan. DOE should proceed without delay to conduct comprehensive planning for the rest of the reservation. AFORR was pleased that the "focus group" and public involvement elements of the recent process initiated some meaningful dialogue and improved mutual understanding between parties with different perspectives on the future uses of the Reservation. We hope that effective dialogue can continue during future phases of the process.

We urge you and your successors here to make sure that the planning process does not lose its momentum and to ensure that DOE takes action to guarantee that decisions to protect certain lands have lasting effect.

Sincerely,



Dev Joslin
Past President

Additional distribution: Members of Land Use Focus Group
Members of Congress representing Oak Ridge
Selected DOE and ORNL staff