

CITY OF OAK RIDGE



POST OFFICE BOX 1 • OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831-0001

August 6, 2015

To: Oak Ridge City Council and City Manager Mark Watson

Re: Inclusion of Three Bend Area in the Manhattan Project National Historical Park

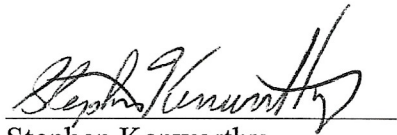
The Three Bend Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area (hereafter referred to as the Three Bend Area or the Area) of the Oak Ridge Reservation contains valuable natural and cultural resources that should be preserved as part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MP-NHP). The Area, currently managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) which limits public access, encompasses approximately 3,000 acres surrounding the popular 80-acre Clark Center Park from Solway Bend to Gallaher Bend along the Clinch River.

In 1999 the Secretary of Energy in partnership with the State of Tennessee designated the Area as a Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area in recognition of the need to preserve the area as a unique rural landscape. The restored Freel's cabin (circa. 1820), which is located within the designated area, provides an example of early settlements along the Clinch River. In addition, the Three Bend Area contains University of Tennessee agricultural research facilities where early studies to determine the acute and chronic effects of radiation exposure were conducted. These features capture both the cultural landscape of the early settlement in the area, and provide a glimpse of post-World War II activities which closely support the mission and purpose of the MP-HNP.

The Environmental Quality Advisor Board (EQAB) believes that inclusion of the Three Bend Area in the MP-HNP would:

1. Broaden the appeal of the Park and enhance the visitor experience by including natural areas as well as a glimpse of rural life in the area before the Manhattan Project,
2. Enhance the MP-HNP and provide a potential link to Oak Ridge's unparalleled system of greenbelts and greenways.
3. Provide continued protection and preservation of old growth forest and rare and endangered plants and animals.
4. Provide a broad array of recreational activities through the National Park Service (NPS) management of the Area in conjunction with the City's management of the Clark Center Park; and
5. Further establish our City's commitment to historical preservation and environmental protection within the community.

EQAB therefore requests that the Oak Ridge City Council formally recommend that the NPS include the Three Bend Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area in the designated footprint of the MP-NHP. We believe that inclusion of this area (as an “addition site in Oak Ridge” as defined by paragraph SEC. 3039(c)(2)(A)(v) of the legislation designating the Park) is “suitable and appropriate for inclusion in the Historical Park.” Although we recognize that this area was not included in the first designated areas, we believe the City should recommend it for inclusion in the overall footprint of the park in order to highlight the historical and ecological significance of the Area as the park is developed.



Stephen Kenworthy
EQAB Chairman