

Obed Wild and Scenic (TN)

Fiscal Year:

2009

Acreage:

750

Estimated Price to National Park Service:

\$3,000,000

Natural Resources:

Threatened and endangered species, rugged and undeveloped terrain, whitewater, large cliffs, and boulder fields

Cultural Resources:

Historic fords and river crossings

Programmatic Significance:

Water quality protection, scenic viewshed protection, river access, recreation, winter access

Obed Wild and Scenic River (TN)



The Obed Wild and Scenic River looks much the same today as it did when the first European settlers strolled its banks in the 1700s. The park encompasses 45 miles of streams that offer world-class kayaking, canoeing, and fishing, as well as abundant opportunities for hiking, technical climbing, and wildlife observation. The Obed is one of the “last remaining wild rivers in the eastern United States,” and the only “Wild & Scenic” river administered by the National Park Service in Tennessee.

Three decades after its establishment, however, 20 percent of the land set aside for the park has yet to be either acquired or protected, and threats from development (internal and external) jeopardize the future of this priceless resource. There are 34 parcels of in-holdings totaling 1,050 acres inside the park's boundaries, and an additional 2.5 river miles of bluff top property just outside the park that are threatened with residential development.

The Park Service has made progress towards acquiring some of these lands; however, incomplete funding has resulted in incomplete protection. In fiscal year 2004, Congress appropriated \$750,000 to acquire a series of tracts totaling nearly 300 acres but that initial sum was insufficient to complete purchase of

those properties. If acquired, these lands could provide visitors with access to river camping and hiking and increased river and trail access.

The most recent land management plan for the Obed Wild and Scenic River calls for the readjustment of its boundary to incorporate the bluff top to avert the construction of homes along one of the most scenic and widely viewed portions of the river. Willing sellers constitute the majority of private owners with tracts inside park boundaries; 750 acres of endangered land is available for purchase at an overall price of about \$3,000,000. But after three decades of waiting, some owners are losing hope and patience. Developers are standing by to pick up the property, and they have no shortage of clients eagerly awaiting the chance to buy a house with a view.

FOR SALE