

From: [Rachael Schaffner](#)
To: [Water Draft Permit Comment](#)
Subject: The Buffalo National River and the C & H hog farm
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2017 9:09:05 AM

Good morning,

I am writing to express my concerns with the possibility of a Reg 5 permit being granted to the C & H hog farm.

I am a child and grandchild of farmers and spent many years of my life working on farms and ranches in Arkansas. I am a huge supporter of our local farmers and of supporting the local economy through smart, sustainable growth practices. While I want to see agricultural and farming businesses remain a vital part of the Arkansas landscape, I have concerns about the specific placement and practices at C & H hog farm because of how they may effect one of the other economic cornerstones of our state - outdoor tourism.

Soil tests from 2012-2015 (the most recent years of testing) show that the C & H fields have exceeded optimum phosphorus levels in all their hog waste disposal fields. High levels of phosphorus can easily be leaching into ground water or into nearby streams through the Karst topography which characterizes our Ozark landscape. As the C & H farm is on a tributary of the Buffalo River, the likelihood is high that the point source pollution from the farm will eventually end up in the Buffalo. This may not be considered a problem to the farmers, but when phosphorus levels increase, eutrophication is sped up - causing excess algae in rivers and lakes. This can negatively effect water quality, aquatic animal life, and the attractiveness of a body of water for boaters, swimmers, fishermen, etc. Allowing a long-term permit to a farm that has already had issues with controlling phosphorus levels could have some very negative effects on the landscape and on Arkansas' reputation as a Natural State.

According to the 2016 APT report 28 million visitors came to Arkansas, spending over 7.2 billion dollars, and contributing over 512 million dollars in tax revenue to state and local coffers. While not all of this was spent on the Buffalo River or in natural settings, a huge portion of it, as the publication states, was spent on "the state's pristine outdoor pursuits, its unique highways and byways, world-class museums, emerging nationally acclaimed culinary experiences, and thriving arts and culture venues" (pg 4). Governor Hutchinson wrote the preface to this report, highlighting the importance of tourism in Arkansas and reminding all of us that we need to do our part to "make the Natural State a more attractive destination" (pg 2). Allowing C & H hog farm to have a long-term permit with little oversight will potentially put the States parks and outdoor tourism industries in jeopardy of being unable to fulfill this goal.

I recently spent a few nights camping at Steele Creek and met a group of young men who were filming an adventure show for Hulu.com featuring the best outdoor destinations in the United States. They were filming their first episode as a climbing/kayaking/hiking adventure through the Buffalo River and surrounding areas. The wild, pristine beauty of the Buffalo River is a huge part of what drew these individuals (and their cash) to Arkansas.

As empathetic as I am to the physical and financial difficulties of farming, particularly

in a high rural setting with little infrastructure or local markets, we should not put other vital economic components of our State in jeopardy for the sake of this one farm.

Such a large agricultural operation should not be granted a permanent permit so near the Buffalo National River. The environmental and associating economic risks cannot possibly be worth the rewards.

Thank you for your time,

-Rachael Schaffner
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