

Congressman Phil Roe
United States Senate
P.O. Box 1728
Kingsport, TN 37662

Dear Congressman Roe:

Thank you for your past support of the Rocky Fork project. The addition of that spectacular 10,000 acre property to the Cherokee National Forest will be much appreciated by local citizens and visitors who have hunted, hiked, fished and simply recreated on it over the years. Continued access to and enjoyment of Rocky Fork also adds to the tourism and recreation assets of the local community and region.

We were very pleased that the U.S. Forest has identified this project as its top acquisition priority for Fiscal Year 2011 funds with a budget request of \$6 million. Completing the conservation of Rocky Fork is important to the long-term economic health of the community and region.

In January, there was a 3-day workshop in Unicoi County with the theme of "Balancing Nature and Commerce" which was well attended and well received by local citizens and businesses. As a follow up to this workshop, there will be an Entrepreneurial Workshop in late April. Both of these were made possible through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. Progress has also been made on the proposed land exchange, and with the help of The Conservation Fund, it is hoped that an acceptable outcome can be achieved.

If successful, the land exchange will provide the opportunity for existing federal land nearby the Towns of Erwin and Unicoi to be appropriately developed, hopefully resulting in a net benefit to the county tax base and in increase in local jobs, and will aid in the protection of Rocky Fork. In addition to the proposed land exchange, Unicoi County was recently selected as a Gateway Community as part of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Community Partners Program. Currently, there are plans to designate Unicoi County as an official Appalachian Trail Community later this spring.

Again, we appreciate your leadership and support to protect significant natural and recreational features while increasing economic benefits from these wonderful assets. We look forward to working with you to complete this project to leave a conservation legacy for future generations.

Sincerely,