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2647 N. Miller Road #12
Scottsdale, Arizona 85257
December 26, 1997

98 - 001 - 002
Upper Salt
River

Arizona Navigable Stream Adjudication Commission
1700 West Washington, Room 404
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing today regarding the Salt River from its headwaters at the confluence of the Black and White Rivers to Granite Reef Dam. Since 1991 I, along with many others, have rafted and kayaked the Upper Salt River from the Highway 60 bridge to the Highway 288 Bridge. I also have rafted, kayaked, and inner-tubed the Lower Salt from Saguaro Lake Ranch to Granite Reef. I have participated in these river trips both as a private individual and as a guide for commercial outfitters licensed to operate on various segments of the Salt. I have also participated in various conservation efforts related to the Salt and other rivers of our state.

I, along with the many others, who have boated on the Salt River can attest to its navigability in high and low water conditions. Whereas, I have no direct evidence of its navigability in 1912, I surmise that because the Salt River lends itself to boating adventures today, it was susceptible to use for commerce and trade at the time of statehood. As one who recreates frequently on the Salt River, as well as many other rivers in the Southwest, I am definitely concerned that public trust values associated with Arizona's rivers and streams be identified and protected. Navigation is what I do. Fishing is important to many Arizonans. Many of us are guides or in other ways work for today's commercial river outfitters. No one who recreates, works on, or depends on the waters of the Salt River for drinking, wishes to see alteration or destruction of the streambed, diversion of flow, or disruption of plant and wildlife habitat. We all need healthy rivers, not just for today, but for the future of Arizona.

On the Salt River there are currently many agencies charged with its management. Over the years the United States Forest Service--Tonto National Forest, White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation, San Carlos Indian Reservation, Fort McDowell Indian Reservation, and Salt River Indian Reservation have worked together and with the public to protect values associated with the Salt River. The boating community has no desire to jeopardize in any way its relationship with these managing agencies or with any private landowner. Nor does the boating community wish to jeopardize its river access or our precious riverine environments. To what extent private landowners might change their relationships with the boating community were the Salt to be determined non-navigable is anybody's guess. Also unpredictable is the reaction of current managing agencies to the State of Arizona laying claim to the bed of the Salt River were it determined to be navigable.

As ANSAC gathers and considers evidence please consider the voice that cannot speak, that of the river itself. Dams, diversions, and mismanagement have sickened our rivers. Compare the condition of Arizona's rivers now to their condition at statehood, and consider carefully how your decisions may influence their future condition.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Lees Riddle

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