

Wild & Scenic River Evaluation

WEBINAR

MARCH 31, 2015

4:10 P.M.

FREEL PEAK CONFERENCE ROOM

FACILITATORS	Mike LeFevre, Lisa Herron
NOTE TAKER	Winnifer Simmons
ATTENDEES	Ivo Bergosohn, Laura Whitney, David Lass

PRESENTATION

MIKE LEFEVRE

DISCUSSION	
<p><u>Background:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We have been in this Forest Plan revision for about 10 years now. In November 2013, the final FEIS was released along with the plan and a draft record of decision which starts the objection process. The draft record of decision is pre-decisional. It describes the decisions we would make should there be no objections. As part of the Forest Plan review, we included the 1999 Eight Eastside Rivers Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) Study Report. That report recommended seven miles of the Upper Truckee Wild River and the recommendation was retained in the new Forest Plan draft record of decision. When the draft record of decision comes out, it's available for folks to make an objection. We have received 18 objections in total. One of them was related to WSR and suggested that the 1999 report did not adequately include the steps we have taken to get to eligibility. Our reviewing officer, a representative of the Chief of the Forest Service, provided us with instructions to correct that deficiency. <p><u>Instructions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ There were six instructions specifically for the WSR along with instructions for other resource topics. Four of them are pertinent to our evaluation that we currently are in the middle of.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete comprehensive evaluation and systematic inventory. Include final eligibility. Include preliminary classification (wild, scenic, recreational). Truckee River and Upper Truckee documentation adequate.2. LTBMU not required to complete suitability study – Land Management Plan (LMP) will protect eligible river corridors.3. If LTBMU decides to complete suitability – must comply with policy.4. If LTBMU decides to delay suitability – LMP must protect eligible river. <p><u>Plan Revision Process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Follow the instructions as given to us by the Chief of the Forest Service. Revise the FEIS and plan as necessary to comply with those instructions. Issue a final record of decision and we are hoping this will be done in mid-May which will complete our LMP revision. <p><u>WSR Process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Stems from the 1968 WSR Act and comes to us through the Forest Service Handbook 1909. The overall process is three steps.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine eligibility. The two criteria for eligibility: is the stream free flowing and does it have at least one outstanding remarkable value.2. Assign those streams found to be eligible either wild, scenic, or recreational in nature.3. Determine suitability. The instructions do not require us to go to the suitability step and at this point the Lake Tahoe Basin has no plans to move past eligibility and to do a suitability determination. Suitability is a complex process that includes thirteen criteria, involves all the resources that may be associated with the river but also land ownership, jurisdiction, utility lines, road systems, and all the other things that might encumber a river.➤ Once suitability is determined, those recommendations are forwarded onto Congress and only Congress can designate a WSR.	

Inventory:

- To start the process we needed to start with a clean inventory of our streams. We went to the Geographic Information System National Hydrography Database for the Lake Tahoe Basin. Looked at the 7.5' quadrangle topographic maps for named rivers and creeks. Looked at the Friends of the River website which has some information about streams their interested in to make sure we captured all the streams that would qualify for inventory. There was one prominent stream on the unit that was not found in any of those sources and that is Eagle Creek which is the creek that flows near Inspiration Point into Emerald Bay.
- The inventory includes 45 streams and is included on the LTBMU website in the draft report.

Outstanding Remarkable Values:

- The next step moves toward determining whether or not there are any outstanding remarkable values (ORVs). We gathered an Interdisciplinary Team to cover the seven resources areas mentioned in the WSR Act. Scenery, Recreation, Geology, Fish, Wildlife, Prehistory, and History. In addition we were attentive to any other standout values that might exist on the streams in the inventory.
- When looking at ORVs, the Act, and our policy there are three criteria that are critically important.
 1. Located in the river or immediate shorelands.
 2. Contributes substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem.
 3. Owes their existence to the presence of the river.
- Example: You have a nationally historic mine with buildings and remnants leftover from mining operations. If the mine had a water wheel that powered it and it needed the river to function, this might be considered an ORV. If the mine was located adjacent to a river solely because the mineral deposits were in this location, it might be considered that historical resource did not need the river and there would not be an ORV associated with the river.

Region of Comparison:

- The next criteria we looked at is the resource we are considering of National or Regional importance. National importance is fairly easy to think about. Are people coming here for that particular feature, resource, or river? Regional is more complicated. For this study, we took the region to be the ecological region of Southern Nevada. This comes from a published document Ecological Subregions of California. A lot of forests use this Eco Region concept to define their regional evaluation area of comparison.

Potential ORV Table:

- We documented what we came with so far in our draft ORV Table which is found on the LTBMU website which lists the water courses, hydrographic category, miles, potential ORVs, scale of importance of the ORV, the National/Regional or identified those less than Regional and therefore would not qualify as eligible.
- We potentially came up with three creeks that meet eligibility requirements.
 1. Eagle Creek which has geology, hydrology, scenic, and recreation ORVs.
 2. Glen Alpine Creek which has an aquatic ORV including the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog.
 3. Taylor Creek which has scenic, heritage, wildlife, and recreation ORVs.
- The spreadsheet on the LTBMU website documents our rationale of each one of these areas.

Free Flowing:

- One of the criteria also includes free flowing. The only place where we thought about this was Taylor Creek which is very mildly controlled by the dam at Fallen Leaf.

On the LTBMU website you will be able to find the draft report, ORV spreadsheet with the rationale, and two sets of maps including an overview map of the inventoried streams and one map including tiles of the more detailed of those streams.

COMMENTS

Feedback:

- Is our inventory complete?
- Did we capture all the ORVs? If not, what did we miss and what makes it Nationally or Regionally important?
- Any other comments on the process?

David Lass – why wouldn't the Basin do a suitability of other rivers and creeks? If it was already captured in the 1999 study or what's the rationale behind that.

Mike LeFevre – the rationale of suitability would be a fairly large study on the three eligible that we are proposing here. We don't have the financing or the horsepower at this time to move it further. Our leadership has left the instructions that we only have to go through the eligibility part to finish up our Land Management Plan.

David Lass – we didn't feel that the Upper Truckee watershed was studied enough to match what the other arm of the Forest Service is doing. What Maura and Sarah are doing to expand the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout population and Tributaries/Lakes. We feel that habitat in those creeks would meet those ORVs if that's the spirit of making the eligibility of the Upper Truckee, Lahontan Cutthroat, or one of those. Throw it out there as the rationale of not looking at those other creeks to be added.

Mike LeFevre – we will take a look at that. Don't have a specific answer at this point since the Fisheries folks are not sitting here in the room. As far as inventory, they would have to meet the criteria of being in the GIS system and 7.5' quad. They are all tributaries to the Upper Truckee.

David Lass – it's a really cool project that the LTBMU is doing to create better population in that upper watershed and thinks technically you have to manage the area as Wild and Scenic and tell Congress that. It just seems that it brings consistency in management of the entire upper watershed for the fish. This will be formalized in comments by April 10th.

SPECIAL NOTES

Further Information: Mike LeFevre (530) 543-2840, email: mlefevre@fs.fed.us