

Appendix F

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Background

On October 2, 1968, the President signed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which established the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The act states, "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreation, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in a free-flowing condition and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations."

Further, it describes the need to balance dam construction with the preservation of rivers in a free-flowing condition. In 1991, eligibility and potential classification of the Little Blue River and Lost River were completed. A suitability study was not completed. As stated in the Hoosier National Forest Need for Change, the Forest would look at all eligible rivers listed in the 1991 Plan Amendment to see if conditions have changed. If conditions remain essentially the same as they were in 1991, we would continue to manage the rivers under MA 2.4, in the Proposed Plan direction (USDA 2000b).

Significant changes could include a significant increase in Federal ownership, removal or construction of bridges, removal or construction of private homes or cabins, and removal or construction of roads within river corridors. No significant changes occurred since the 1991 Plan Amendment, so a suitability determination will not be made during this plan revision process. Forest-wide guidance and MA 2.4 provide direction for full protection of the values for which the Lost River and Little Blue River were selected.

There are no new rivers under consideration for an eligibility study. The Nationwide Rivers Inventory, first published by the National Park Service in 1982, lists over 3,400 river segments nationally that seem to have characteristics making them eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This list of river segments can be a starting point for determining which rivers a national forest should study for potential eligibility as a Wild and Scenic River. No additional rivers on the Forest have been added to the Nationwide Rivers Inventory list (USD1 2004). There have been no significant changes in land ownership or riparian area management to indicate changed conditions necessitating additional consideration of rivers.

Eligibility and Potential Classification

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act established a method for providing Federal protection for certain segments of the country's remaining free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Rivers are included in the system so that they may benefit from the protective management and control of development for which the Act provides. The assessment of a river's potential as a Wild and Scenic River should follow a three-step process:

1. Determination of eligibility
2. Potential Classification (wild, scenic, or recreational)
3. Determination of suitability

As defined by the Act, a National Wild and Scenic River must be free flowing and must have at least one outstanding resource attribute; recreation, scenery, wildlife or fish habitat, history, geology, cultural, ecological, or other related feature. The Forest completed an eligibility study and potential classification for the 1991 Plan Amendment.

Eligible Rivers

Lost River Description

This corridor begins at the river's mouth at the East Fork of the White River and continues 0.25 mile on each side of the river channel to its head at the junction of the North and South branches of the Lost River 78.5 miles upstream. A significant amount of this corridor is privately owned. Proposed Plan direction along the Lost River is applied to lands under Forest Service jurisdiction. The direction does not apply to privately owned lands. Of the 78.5 miles determined eligible, only 8.9 miles of the river flow through the Forest. Only two locations of the river have national forest on both sides with the longest stretch being one mile in length. Approximately 43 miles of the river segment determined eligible are outside of the Forest boundary.

Since much of the eligible segment of the Lost River lies in a small portion of the Forest or is completely outside the Forest boundary, the State of Indiana has the lead responsibility for suitability determination of the river (USDA 1992).

This river is essentially an east to west slice through the Mitchell Plain, Chester Escarpment, and Crawford Upland, which contains the cave-bearing strata found in south central Indiana. Within its corridors are representative examples of almost all of the karst features found in rocks of Mississippian age in the state.

Indiana's Lost River system is a comprehensive karst locality. The system encompasses a collection of features and ecosystems - perhaps more complete than any similar karst locality in the world. Furthermore, Indiana's Lost River is as compact as any such system - perhaps the most compact.

Lost River is internationally known, and has been studied intensively as a fairly complete example of karst topography in the middle stage of development. Water enters the system through literally thousands of sinkholes. In addition, the surface river loses water into a system of swallow holes (sometimes exhibiting whirlpools with vortices), draining portions of the surface river. Much of the surface channel is dry except during periods of flooding. Within these sections are "boil holes" where the water actually boils back to the surface when the subterranean channel is full. In some cases, it might only remain at the surface for a short distance before disappearing down another swallow hole.

The subterranean river returns to the surface several miles down the surface streambed through features called rises. At a point below the community of Orangeville, the underground and surface rivers merge to return the river to its normal condition as a surface stream.

The karst features in this system include excellent examples of sinking streams, caverns, swallow holes, boil holes, karst windows, gulfs, alluvial cave springs, and numerous other features. Geologically significant features include Stein, Turner, and Toliver Swallow holes; Wesley Chapel Gulf; Ragsdale Gulf; and Crow Gulf along with numerous caverns.

Blind cavefish, crayfish, and cave beetles are present in the underground river. There may be other species yet to be discovered in this unique environment.

With the exception of about 22 miles in the dry bed portion, the entire river segment is canoeable. Frequent log jams and a slow meandering flow make for a challenging experience. Vegetation and wildlife are typical of southern Indiana. The portion of river flowing within the Forest boundary is entirely on the surface.

The river came under considerable controversy during the early 1970's when several dams were proposed for construction in the Lost River's drainage.

The Lost River corridor includes these features of geologic value:

- Blue Hole
- Confluence of Abandoned Stampers Creek with Lost River Dry Bed
- Cul De Sac
- Dry Branch
- First Sink
- Lost River Dry Bed (Dry Bed Channel - 22 miles long)
- Lost River Terminus Zone
- Mathers Storm Water Rises
- Nicols Cave
- Ragsdale Gulf
- Square Mile with 1022 Sinkholes
- Stein Swallow Hole
- Turner Swallow Hole

It also includes four features that are National Natural Landmarks:

- Elrod (Wesley Chapel) Gulf
- The Orangeville Rise (second largest spring in Indiana)
- The Rise of Lost River
- Toliver Swallow Hole

The potential classification for the Lost River is:

Scenic - Junction w/ White River to Roland	24.3 Miles
Recreational - Roland to Prospect	12.2 Miles
Scenic - Prospect to junction w/ SR 337	37.9 Miles
Recreational - SR 337 to junction of North and South Forks of Lost River	4.1 Miles
Total	78.5 Miles

Little Blue River Description

The Cannelton Navigation Dam on the Ohio River has a flood pool extending up the Little Blue River. Therefore, the Little Blue segment begins at the intersection of the flood pool with the river bottom at mile 7.65 up the river from its outlet on the Ohio. The river corridor is 0.25 mile

on each side of the river channel to its terminus at the town of English, Indiana. The total length of the Little Blue River determined eligible is 27.5 miles. A significant amount of this corridor is privately owned. Proposed Plan direction along the Little Blue River is applied to lands under Forest Service jurisdiction. The direction does not apply to privately owned lands. Of the 27.5 miles determined eligible, only 14.7 miles of the river flow through the Forest. Only four locations of the river have national forest on both sides with the longest stretch being approximately 2.5 miles in length.

Since much of the eligible segment of the Little Blue River flows through a small portion of the Forest, the State of Indiana has the lead responsibility for suitability determination of the river (USDA 1992).

The Little Blue River runs from near English, Indiana, to the Ohio River, a distance of approximately 17 air miles. Yet the route the Little Blue takes, winding through the countryside, gives the river a total length of 41 miles. Approximately one-third of the river corridor flows across NFS land.

The State recognized the section of river from just south of Grantsburg to the Ohio River as having met the criteria for the Indiana Natural Streams System.

The Little Blue River is one of the most natural-appearing rivers in southern Indiana. It is easily canoeable when the water is up to moderate levels. The average width of the stream is about 50 feet. The river drops approximately 3 feet per mile as it goes downstream. The occasional small rapids are navigable by canoe in early spring. Though generally shallow, there are numerous 3- and 4-foot deep pools that contain bass and other panfish. The river is free flowing.

The river meanders through wooded, rolling hills. Some of its banks are adjacent to rock bluffs. The riverbanks are tree lined, although small fields can be seen along the valley through the trees. Riverbanks are mostly mud and may extend as much as 8 feet above the stream's normal level. A large variety of birds and wildlife frequent this relatively undisturbed river. Logs lying across the river and shallows at low water levels preserve the relatively natural atmosphere and provide a challenging experience. Numerous dispersed camping spots are available on public land.

In spite of the fact that the corridor is largely unpopulated and natural appearing, access to the river is fair. State and county roads occasionally cross or parallel the stream. Interstate 64 crosses the stream and provides excellent access to the corridor from surrounding urban centers such as Louisville.

The potential classification for the Little Blue River is as follows (all distances are approximate):

Scenic River mile 7.65 from outlet to Carnes Mill	15.5 Miles
Recreational - Carnes Mill to English city limits	12.0 Miles
Total	27.5 Miles