

## **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

**Goal:** Maintain the outstandingly remarkable values and the free flowing conditions of rivers designated or recommended for designation as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

**Objectives:** Manage all rivers recommended for designation as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational rivers in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to maintain their eligibility pending designation by Congress into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

**Background:** The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 established a policy for preserving selected rivers in a free-flowing condition that would balance the development of water, power and other resources on rivers of the United States. Rivers are eligible to be considered for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System if they are essentially free-flowing (without major dams, diversions, or channel modifications) and if they possess at least one “outstandingly remarkable” scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar value. These values should be a unique or exceptional representation for the area that the evaluation of a river’s eligibility considers.

### **Wild and Scenic River Question 1: Are Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Standards and Guidelines being implemented?**

The standards and guidelines are being implemented for the free flowing conditions and outstandingly remarkable values for eligible rivers on the Tongass National Forest.

Monitoring activities in 2006 to support these findings include:

Monitoring visitor use at the Anan Wildlife Observatory within the corridor of Anan creek on the Wrangell District - There were more than 2,500 visitors to this site during the staffed season in 2005. Information was gathered for the outstandingly remarkable values for recreation and wildlife. To facilitate the maintaining the wild and scenic river character, there was a solicitation to a prospectus to provide commercial services at Anan during the peak bear viewing season. The prospectus was initiated, as there was a competitive interest to provide customer services at a location at a capacity. Through implementation of the prospectus decision, the character of the site should be maintained.

### **Evaluation of Results**

It appears the goals and objectives identified by the land use designations are sufficient to maintain the outstandingly remarkable values of the rivers.

### **Wild and Scenic River Question 2: Are Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Standards effective in maintaining or enhancing the free flowing conditions and outstandingly remarkable values at the classification level for which the river was found suitable for designation as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System?**

The Recreational River Standards are effective in maintaining and enhancing the free flowing conditions and outstandingly remarkable values.

## **Monitoring Results**

Data was collected by the Petersburg High School at the LeConte Glacier. The survey information is shared nationally and internationally with groups interested in glaciology and global warming. This information has been collected and shared since the early 1980's. Use of a helicopter within the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness was approved by the Regional Forester.

Other data collected for rivers were in concert with either the administration of outfitter/guide permits or as a part of plant inventories for invasive and sensitive plants.

With the exception of the proposed timber sale near the Thorne River, there have been no additional evaluations of impacts to recommended Wild and Scenic Rivers on the forest to evaluate the effectiveness of the standards and guidelines.

## **Evaluation of Results**

Monitoring completed on the Tongass showed that the Standards and Guidelines are being implemented and are effective in maintaining the free flowing conditions and outstanding remarkable values for eligible rivers. Monitoring activities included monitoring visitor use, outfitter/guide use, compliance of a recreation project within a river corridor, and analyzing projected effects from a proposed timber harvest. This monitoring showed that existing use on the selected rivers is within the Standards and Guidelines and the rivers are being effectively managed.

## **Action Plan**

Monitoring of the Standards and Guidelines relative to implementation and effectiveness in maintaining the free flowing conditions and outstanding remarkable values for eligible rivers will continue. It is important to note that Appendix E of the FEIS for the Forest Plan recommended 112 rivers with a total length of approximately 1,400 miles for consideration as components of the National Wild and Scenic River System. This is a significant inventory and additional resources are necessary to monitor these rivers effectively. Monitoring activities will continue to include monitoring visitor use, outfitter/guide use, compliance of recreation projects within river corridors, and analyzing projected effects from proposed timber harvest.