



Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests



Evaluation Criteria and Comment Form for Rivers That May Be Eligible for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System

The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in the process of revising the forest plan. A required part of the revision process identifying rivers that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. A description of this process can be found in the 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule and Chapter 80 of the Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12.

To complete this evaluation, the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan revision team developed the following questions to gather information about forest rivers and river segments. Responses to these questions from planning team members, other national forest staff, and interested members of the public will be used to identify which rivers may be eligible.

To provide input, please use one form per river and note the river name in the space provided.

If additional space is needed, provide your comments on separate sheets of paper and reference area name, evaluation criterion, and question number being addressed. Completed forms may be submitted by email to NCplanrevision@fs.fed.us with the subject line: "Wild and Scenic River evaluation input", or by mail at the following address:

Attn: Plan Revision Team Leader,
National Forests in North Carolina
160 Zillicoa St., Suite A
Asheville, NC 28801

SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY ANALYSIS
Nantahala and Pisgah NFs

River Name: _____

Additional Instructions: It is critical to describe in detail the outstandingly remarkable values and to explain how they are unique, rare or exemplary features significant at a comparative regional or national scale. For each of the potential ORVs, include a description of the region of comparison that was used.

River Segment:

From:

To:

Evaluated By: (optional)

Date:

Evaluation Step

I. ELIGIBILITY ANALYSIS

A. Free – Flowing

- Is the river free-flowing?

(According to Section 16(b) of the Wild and Scenic River Act, free-flowing is defined as, “Existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip rapping, or other modification of the waterway. The existence of low dams, diversion works or other minor structures does not automatically disqualify the segment for designation. A river segment below or between impoundments may also be considered.”)

Consider:

- Does the river exist or flow in a natural condition?
- Where there are improvements or modifications (such as culverts, fords, fish traps, weirs, fish barriers, j-hooks, rock vanes, or other instream structures), do these structures affect the free-flowing nature of the water?
- If there is a segment of the river that is not free-flowing, should other segments be considered?

Discussion:

Evaluation Step**B. Scenery**

- Do the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features or attractions? (When analyzing scenic values, additional factors—such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed—may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment. Outstandingly remarkable scenic features may occupy only a small portion of a river corridor.)

Discussion:

Evaluation Step

C. Recreation

- Are recreational opportunities high quality that attract or have the potential to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the region? (River-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, interpretation, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating. The river may provide settings for national or regional use or competitive events.)

Discussion:

Evaluation Step

D. Geology

- Does the river or river corridor contain one or more example of a geologic feature, process or phenomenon unique or rare within the region of comparison? (The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage or development, represent a “textbook” example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features--erosional, volcanic, glacial or other geologic structures.)

Discussion:

Evaluation StepE. Fish

- Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of Fish populations, habitat, or a combination of these conditions.
 - *Populations*: Is the river a nationally or regionally important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species? (Of particular significance are a diversity of fish species or the presence of wild stocks and/or Federal or State listed or candidate threatened, endangers, or species of conservation concern.)
 - *Habitat*: Does the river provide uniquely diverse or high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison? (Of particular significance is exemplary habitat for wild stocks and/or Federal or State listed or candidate threatened or endangered species or species of conservation concern. Rare and unique habitats in the corridor should also be considered.)

Discussion:

Evaluation StepF. Wildlife

- Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either terrestrial or aquatic populations, habitat or a combination of these conditions.
 - *Populations*: Does the river or area within the river corridor contain nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species? (Of particular significance are species diversity, species considered to be unique, and/or populations of Federal or State listed or candidate threatened or endangered species or species of conservation concern.)
 - *Habitat*: Does the river or river corridor provide uniquely diverse or high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and/or may provide a unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for Federal or State listed or candidate threatened or endangered species or species of conservation concern? Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.

Discussion:

Evaluation StepG. Vegetative /Ecological Values

- Vegetative and ecological values may be judged on the relative merits of either populations or communities, or a combination of these conditions.)
 - *Populations:* Does the river or river corridor contain nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous plant species? (Of importance are species considered to be unique or populations of federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Diversity and number of species area also important.)
 - *Habitat:* Does the river or river corridor contain nationally or regionally important plant communities? (Communities are exceptionally high quality, unusual or critical communities such as old-growth.)

Discussion:

Evaluation Step**H. Heritage Resources – Historic and Cultural**

- Does the river, or area within the river corridor, contains important evidence of occupation or use by humans? Or, do sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting history?

Historic: Does the river or area within the river corridor area contain features or sites associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that is now rare or unique in the region? (A historic site or feature, in most cases, is 50 years old or older).

Pre-Historic: Does the river or area within the river corridor contain sites of prehistoric human use or occupation with unique or rare characteristics or exemplary anthropological values such as evidence of prehistoric human practices and modes of living? Or were areas within the river corridor used for unique traditional ceremonial purposes? Does the area associated with the river represent the origins of cultures or conflict of cultures?

Discussion:

Evaluation Step

I. Other Similar Values

- Are other values of the river or the area within the river corridor outstandingly remarkable, containing nationally or regionally important conditions? (Consider values such as (but not limited to) botany, hydrology, paleontology, scientific resources and heritage values).

Discussion:

II. ANALYSIS OF ELIGIBILITY COMPONENTS

If the river segment is free-flowing and one or more outstandingly remarkable value items are checked “YES”; then the river area is eligible for designation.

A response to this question when submitting feedback on a specific river is not required. This question will be completed by the USFS after considering input from the public and FS specialists on the answers to questions for free-flowing and ORVs above. This question is displayed now to clarify the future questions that will be answered using input provided on the above.

Conclusion:

III. CLASSIFICATION

If river is eligible, what is the classification? Refer to Table 2 in the 1982 Wild and Scenic River Interagency Guidelines for the criteria used to determine classification.

A response to this question when submitting feedback on a specific river is not required. This question will be completed by the USFS after considering input from the public and FS specialists on the answers to questions for free-flowing and ORVs above. This question is displayed now to clarify the future questions that will be answered using input provided on the above.

- Wild
- Scenic
- Recreational

Rationale: