



Wild and Scenic Rivers

Inyo National Forest

Frequently Asked Questions

Why has the Inyo National Forest's wild and scenic river eligibility study changed?

We updated the Inyo's wild and scenic rivers (WSR) eligibility study in response to public comments on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that we published in May 2016. The public provided river-related values and outstandingly remarkable values we had not fully considered in our draft analysis. As a result several rivers that were not previously eligible now are. We also updated the values listed for all rivers inventoried, including for those rivers that eligibility did not change.

How has the list of eligible rivers changed?

In the draft EIS, we identified 44 segments on 21 rivers as eligible for inclusion in the national WSR system. Public comments provided additional river related values and outstandingly remarkable values that we missed, resulting in several more rivers becoming eligible. We also reevaluated rivers' historic and prehistoric river values. The updated eligibility study now identifies 73 segments on 32 rivers as eligible.

What other updates have been made?

In addition to updating the list of eligible rivers, and the values attached to each river, we made other updates. The first clarifies the criteria we used for historic, pre-historic and other cultural river values. The second update better explains why river related values do not meet the criteria necessary to become an outstandingly remarkable value. Additionally, we have updated our maps to reflect the new eligibility status of rivers. These updates will appear as an appendix in the final EIS to be released later this fall.

What are river-related and outstandingly remarkable values?

River-related values are characteristics of a river that fall into one of these categories: scenery, recreation, geology, fish and wildlife populations and habitat, prehistory, history, botany, paleontology, or hydrology. To be considered an "outstandingly remarkable value" the river-related value must be rare, unique or exemplary at a national or regional scale.

Is the Forest Service designating new wild and scenic rivers at this time?

No. As part of revising the Inyo's forest plan, we are evaluating rivers that may be eligible to include into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This study determines eligibility of those rivers and, if eligible, classifies them as *wild*, *scenic* or *recreational*.

In 1968, Congress created the national WSR system to preserve free-flowing rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values. Designations may be for a river segment or an entire river and may include tributaries. Both Congress and the Secretary of the Interior can designate wild and scenic rivers. Either federal or state agencies may manage designated rivers. The 2012 Planning Rule requires the Forest Service to inventory, and determine WSR eligibility and classification during land management plan development or revision. The Rule also requires us to manage eligible and suitable rivers to protect their free flow, water quality and outstandingly remarkable values.

How did public comment shape the updated eligibility study?

The updated wild and scenic river eligibility study incorporates many ideas and suggestions from the public, including:

- Several rivers are now eligible that were not previously due to additional outstandingly remarkable values provided by the public.
- Added outstandingly remarkable values and river-related values to several eligible rivers. This additional information did not change the rivers' eligibility status.
- Added river-related values to non-eligible rivers. This additional information did not change the rivers' eligibility status.
- Revised the region of comparison for historic and pre-historic outstandingly remarkable values.
- Created a table of all non-eligible rivers with at least one river-related value to explain why the river does not contain an outstandingly remarkable value.
- Revised maps depicting updated wild and scenic rivers segment eligibility.

Where can I find more information about the wild and scenic rivers eligibility study?

You may review supporting materials, including a list of the eligible rivers and a map on-line: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r5/FPRPreview. If you have questions, please contact Deb Schweizer, Public Affairs Officer, Inyo National Forest at 760-873-2427. If you're curious about past information we've shared about wild and scenic rivers, please visit the [Region 5 Wild and Scenic River webpage](https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/planning/?cid=STELPRD3833668) (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/planning/?cid=STELPRD3833668>).

Why is the Forest Service sharing this information now? Is this a comment period?

This is not a formal comment period. We are sharing information about the wild and scenic rivers eligibility study and other topics to provide you a preview of the Inyo National Forest's land management plan. These previews provide a glimpse into plan development as it is happening. This process is information sharing, and we are not receiving formal comments at this time. The completed, final EIS and forest plan will be available for a 60-day objection period this fall.

When will the Inyo National Forest's final environmental impact statement and forest plan be released?

Our goal is to publish these documents this fall. Between now and then, we will continue to provide updates on our progress, including information about the Inyo National Forest's plan direction for aquatic and riparian resources, sustainable recreation, and species of conservation concern.

What is the status of the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests' plans?

As we announced in March 2017, the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests will continue to address public comments in a refinement of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and draft forest plans [published](#) in May 2016. Those forests will release a revised draft EIS and forest plans in early 2018 for public comment. In the coming months, we will share updates on our progress with these two forests as well.

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