



SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

SUITABILITY EVALUATION PROCESS

This document outlines the Salmon-Challis National Forest's method for evaluating the suitability of rivers for their potential inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. A suitability study provides the basis for determining which eligible rivers or river segments should be recommended to Congress as potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System. This is done by applying the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act's suitability criteria to each eligible river. These criteria are also found in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 80. Suitability considerations include the environmental and economic consequences of designation and the manageability of a river if it were to be designated by Congress.

STUDY PROCESS STEPS

1. The Salmon-Challis National Forest will complete suitability evaluation worksheets for each river that is eligible in the 2018 Salmon-Challis National Forest eligibility report.
2. The Salmon-Challis National Forest will combine worksheets into a suitability study report and include as an appendix to the environmental impact statement for the revised Salmon-Challis National Forest Plan.
3. The environmental impact statement will include a range of alternatives. The following types of alternatives are likely to be included (see Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 80):
 - a. The no action alternative, which maintains current management;
 - b. An alternative in which all eligible segments are found suitable and are recommended for Congressional designation.
 - c. An alternative in which some eligible segments are found suitable and are recommended for Congressional designation, while other eligible segments are found not suitable.
 - d. An alternative in which no eligible segments are found suitable and in which protection of river values in eligible segments will be by means other than Congressional designation.
 - e. An alternative in which no eligible river segments are found suitable for designation.
4. Make a preliminary administrative recommendation for wild and scenic river designation in the record of decision.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING SUITABILITY

As provided in sections 4(a) and 5(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the following study requirements serve as the basis for the suitability determination for each eligible river. Items 1-7 must be evaluated and documented. Items 8-13 may also be evaluated and documented, if applicable:

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the area (the corridor) a worthy addition to the National System.
2. The current status of land ownership and use in the area.
3. The reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the National System.
4. The Federal agency that will administer the area should it be added to the National System.
5. The extent to which the agency proposes that administration of the river, including the costs thereof, be shared by State and local agencies.
6. The need for, and cost to the United States of, acquiring lands and interests in lands and administering the area should it be added to the National System.
7. A determination of the degree to which the State or its political subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.
8. The adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's outstandingly remarkable values by preventing incompatible development.
9. The State or local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on lands not managed by Federal agencies. This factor requires an evaluation of the river protection mechanisms available through the authority of State and local governments. Such mechanisms may include, for example, statewide programs related to population growth management, vegetation management, water quantity or quality, or protection of river-related values such as open space and historic areas.
10. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies, and with meeting regional objectives. Designation may help or impede the goals of tribal governments, or other Federal, State, or local agencies. For example, designation of a river may contribute to State or regional protection objectives for fish and wildlife resources. Similarly, adding a river that includes a limited recreation activity or setting to the National System may help meet statewide recreation goals for that activity or setting. Designation might, however, limit irrigation and flood control measures in a manner inconsistent with regional socioeconomic goals.
11. Support or opposition to designation. Assessment of this factor will define the political context:
 - a. The interest in designation or nondesignation by other Federal agencies;
 - b. State, local and Tribal governments;
 - c. national and local publics; and
 - d. the State's congressional delegation should be considered.

12. The river's contribution to river system or basin integrity. This factor reflects the benefits of a systems approach. For example, expanding the designated portion of a river in the National System or developing a legislative proposal for an entire river system – headwaters to mouth – or watershed could contribute to river system integrity. Numerous benefits may result from managing an entire river or watershed, including the ability to design a holistic protection strategy in partnership with other agencies and the public.
13. The potential for water resources development. The intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve selected rivers in free-flowing condition and to protect their immediate environments. Designation will limit development of water resources projects as diverse as irrigation and flood control measures, hydropower facilities, dredging, diversion, and channelization. Describe specific or types of projects that may be foreclosed by designation of the segment as suitable and the implications for future water resource needs. The description may include discussion of alternative water resources projects or project sites outside a river segment being considered, or modified projects, which may be considered if a river is recommended for designation.

The interdisciplinary study team may identify and consider additional suitability factors as directed by the Responsible Official.

CRITERIA COMMON TO ALL ELIGIBLE RIVERS

Criteria 4 through 10 are expected to be the same for all eligible river segments and will not be addressed separately in each worksheet. In addition, criteria 13 will be addressed under the discussion in criteria 3. Below is a summary of findings for these criteria:

- Criteria 4: The Salmon-Challis National Forest is expected to be the federal agency responsible for administering any suitable rivers that may be designated.
- Criteria 5 and 7: Unless State and local agencies express an interest in sharing or participating in the administration or the cost of administration, the Salmon-Challis National Forest is not expecting a need to share administration with State and local agencies.
- Criteria 6, 8, and 9: There has been no need identified to acquire any land or interest in land. In addition, the lands bordering all rivers except portions of rivers located in Appendix A, are managed by the Salmon-Challis National Forest. Except for these rivers, State or local governments will have a limited ability to manage and protect outstandingly remarkable values. Suitability evaluation worksheets will address criteria 8 and 9 for any rivers with lands adjacent to National Forest System lands.
- Criteria 10: 36 CFR 219.4 of the 2012 Planning Rule requires the environmental impact statement to include a review of the planning and land use policies of Indian Tribes (43 U.S.C. 1712(b)), Alaska Native Corporations, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments. Therefore, the consistency of eligible rivers with these land use policies will be disclosed in the environmental impact statement.
- Criteria 13: The potential for water resources development will be evaluated as part of criteria 3. Criteria 3 addresses the reasonably foreseeable potential uses of

the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the national system.

WHAT WORKSHEETS WILL ADDRESS

The individual suitability evaluation worksheets, a sample of which follows, will address criteria 1 through 3 and 11 through 12. For rivers with lands adjacent to National Forest System lands, the evaluation worksheets will also address criteria 8 and 9. The evaluation worksheets will also evaluate the impact of any designation recommendation on the local socio-economic environment to evaluate any foreseeable impacts to people and the local economy.

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS SUITABILITY EVALUATION WORKSHEET

Name of River Segment

Segment Details

River Mileage Eligible:

Location:

Characteristics that make the system a worthy addition to the National System:

1. Name and Date of Eligibility Document
2. Determination of Free-flow
3. Summary of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Classification:

1. Classification (Recreational, Scenic, Wild)
2. Basis for Classification

Map of Eligible River Segment Inserted Here

Landownership

Total Eligible Length:

Length on Forest:

Percent National Forest	Percent Private	Percent Bureau of Land Managment	Percent National Forest in Wilderness	Percent and Type of National Forest Other Special Designation ¹

¹ Designation defined in the glossary

Multiple Uses

Land and Water Uses:

Current and reasonably foreseeable

Mineral and Energy Activities:

ex. # of active claims, inactive claims, interest, explorations, proposals, etc.

Water Resources Development:

ex. Diversions, impoundments, proposed impoundments or diversions

Grazing Activities:

Allotments, AUMs

Recreation Activities:**Transportation, Facilities, and other Developments:**

Roads, Trails, buildings, recreation sites, etc.

Special Designations:

Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Endangered Species Act, etc.

Vegetation Projects:

Future planned projects and importance to overall landscape health

Other Resource Activities:**Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the National System:**

1. Enhanced uses
2. Foreclosed uses
3. Curtailed uses

The adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's outstandingly remarkable values:

Answer only if eligible segment contains private lands

The State or local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-Federal lands:

Answer only if eligible segment contains private lands

The river's contribution to river system or basin integrity:**Support or opposition to designation:****Socio-Economic Environment:**

Impacts, both positive and negative