

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers

Introduction

In 1968, Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) to preserve the free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) of certain, selected rivers of the Nation with their immediate environments. It allows existing uses of a river to continue and future uses to be considered, as long as existing or proposed use does not conflict with protecting river values. The WSRA also directs the development of partnerships among landowners, river users, tribal nations, and all levels of government.

To be included in the system, a river must meet the tests of eligibility and suitability. To be eligible, a river must be free flowing and possess at least one outstandingly remarkable value (e.g., scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values). To be suitable, the benefit of designation should outweigh the disadvantages. Once a river is determined to be suitable, it is first submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture, then to the President of the United States who will forward a recommendation to Congress.

There are two ways in which a river or stream might be designated for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The first is by an Act of Congress. The second is by means of an application to the Secretary of the Interior submitted by a Governor of the State (or Governors of the States) through which a river flows. The Secretary will then determine whether it meets the established criteria.

Each river or stream is administered by either a federal or a state agency. Designation may include all or part of a river and may include tributaries. A corridor of about ½ mile in width (¼ mile on either side of the ordinary high water mark) is included within the designation boundary.

Designated rivers and streams are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational. The WSRA defines these terms as follows:

Wild Rivers: Rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic Rivers: Rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational Rivers: Rivers or sections of rivers readily accessible by roads or railroad, which may have some development along their shoreline and which may have undergone some impoundments or diversions in the past.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System currently include 11,337 miles of river. (Totals include the following: Wild - 5,353 miles; Scenic - 2,481; Recreational - 3,503. The source of this information is <http://www.nps.gov/rivers/wildriverstable.html>).

Analysis Area

The analysis area for wild, scenic, and recreational rivers is the named rivers and streams on the KNF and IPNF. For the purposes of this document, each Forest's conditions and trends are evaluated separately.

Conditions and Trends

As part of the Forest Plan Revision process, the KNF and IPNF have completed systematic inventories to determine rivers that might be eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These determinations were made by conducting an inventory of the named rivers and streams on the Forests and examining the applicable characteristics (i.e., are free flowing and possess one or more outstandingly remarkable value).

Management Areas for Wild and Scenic Rivers have been developed for the Proposed Land Management Plan (the Plan). Those rivers designated by Congress which are part of the National Wild and Scenic River System are allocated to Management Area (MA) 2a – Designated Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers. The only designated river in the planning zone is the St. Joe River, on the IPNF. Rivers that are eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System are allocated to MA 2b – Eligible Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers.

A determination of eligibility is the first step in designating rivers under the WSRA. The next step, the suitability study, is a more intensive analysis. These studies result in making a determination that a river is either suitable or unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Suitability studies will be completed when a proposed action has the potential to compromise the outstandingly remarkable values of an eligible river or stream and/or when funding is available. Any rivers or streams determined to be unsuitable would be reallocated to the most appropriate Management Area.

To complete the designation process, the suitability study is combined with an EIS and then established procedure is followed for submission to Congress. Those rivers determined to be suitable would be moved through the process that would bring them to Congress for consideration. Congress would then accept, reject, or not act on the recommendation for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Existing Contributions to Sustainability

Each identified eligible river has met the above-mentioned eligibility criteria (i.e., are free flowing and possesses one or more outstandingly remarkable value). The existence of these outstandingly remarkable value(s) is a contributing factor to social, economic, or ecological sustainability.

From a social perspective, many individuals use these rivers to pursue recreational activities such as fishing, floating, boating, historical/learning pursuits, and relaxation. Economic benefits are derived through local and tourist commerce (e.g., outfitter and guide services, equipment rental and purchases, etc.). The contribution to fisheries habitat and native fisheries populations includes fish species such as bull trout.

By determining the eligibility of rivers and streams for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System the KNF and IPNF are striving to meet the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, which is to protect selected rivers for the benefit and enjoyment of present and

future generations. Those rivers that have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are protected until such time as a suitability study is completed and recommendations are made to the Secretary of the Interior.

Protection Measures

The following protection measures apply to rivers identified for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River Systems:

Congressionally Designated Rivers: Protection measures are contained in the individual management plans developed for these rivers.

Congressionally Identified Study Rivers: Under Section 5(a) of the Act, Congress identifies specific rivers to be studied. These study rivers shall be protected, as directed in sections 7(b), 8(b), 9(b), and 12(a) of the Act for the period specified in Section 7(b). The protection period is three years from the date the study report is transmitted to Congress.

Agency Identified Eligible Rivers: Under Section 5(d) (1) of the Act rivers identified by the US Forest Service as eligible shall be protected according to the direction found in FSM 1924.03 and FSH 1909.12, 82.5. The protection necessary to maintain a Section 5(d)(1) river may be modified or discontinued for identified rivers upon a finding of ineligibility or nonsuitability (see review and approval process in [FSH 1909.12, 84](#)).

IPNF Condition

Suitable Rivers – Section 5(a) of the WSRA (1968) listed three rivers on the IPNF that were to be studied for their suitability for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They were the St. Joe River (the entire main stem), the Moyie River (the segment from the Canadian border to its confluence with the Kootenai River), and the Priest River (the entire main stem).

The suitability studies were completed for these three rivers. The results of these suitability studies found:

St. Joe River – the upper 71.1 miles was determined as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. In November 1978, Congress included the upper St. Joe River as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. This action designated the St. Joe River from the North Fork of the St. Joe River to Spruce Tree Campground as a Recreational River (41.6 miles), and from Spruce Tree Campground to St. Joe Lake as a Wild River (29.5 miles). A Development and Management Plan was completed and included as Appendix Z in the 1987 Forest Plan for the IPNF.

Moyie River – this 26.1-mile section of river was determined as unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A report was transmitted to Congress on September 13, 1982.

Priest River – 20.1 miles of the Upper Priest River (from the Canadian border to Upper Priest Lake) was determined to be suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and classified as a Wild River. The remaining sections of the Priest River from Priest Lake to the confluence with the Pend Oreille River were determined as unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A report was submitted to Congress on October 2, 1979. No action was taken on the report. The

process to bring the Upper Priest River before Congress was initiated by the Washington Office again in 1993 but was discontinued.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 1987 IPNF Forest Plan also identified six rivers or streams as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They are:

1. Little North Fork of the Clearwater River
2. Little North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River
3. North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River
4. Coeur d’Alene River
5. Pack River
6. Long Canyon Creek

Tables WSR-1 and WSR-2 summarize the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers identified in the 1987 Forest Plan.

Table WSR-1 Summary of Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers on the IPNF per the 1987 Forest Plan

River	Status	Length on all lands (miles)	Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
St. Joe	Designated	29.5	Wild	8,228
St. Joe	Designated	41.6	Recreational	13,060
TOTAL		71.1		21,288

Table WSR-2 Summary of Eligible or Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers on the IPNF per the 1987 Forest Plan

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all Lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
Upper Priest River	Suitable	Recreation, Scenery, Fisheries, and Wildlife	20.1	Wild	5,096
Little North Fork Clearwater River		Recreation, Fisheries, Wildlife			
a) Segment 1	Eligible		11.3	Recreational	2,434
b) Segment 2	Eligible		26.1	Wild	5,869
c) Segment 3	Eligible		3.4	Recreational	39
Little North Fork Coeur d’Alene River	Eligible	Fisheries	38.2	Recreational	11,288
North Fork Coeur d’Alene River		Scenery, Fisheries, Wildlife			
a) Segment 1	Eligible		9.2	Recreational	2,904
b) Segment 2	Eligible		15.6	Wild	4,454
c) Segment 3	Eligible		52.2	Recreational	11,287
Coeur d’Alene River		Recreation, Fisheries Wildlife, and Cultural			
a) Segment 1	Eligible		7.6	Recreational	0
b) Segment 2	Eligible		30.2	Recreational	398

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all Lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
Pack River	Eligible	Fisheries	15.3	Recreational	4,263
Long Canyon Creek	Eligible	Wildlife	15.2	Wild	4,488
TOTAL			244.4		52,520

In the 1987 Forest Plan for the IPNF, the St. Joe River and the Upper Priest River were allocated to MA 12 (Wild and Scenic River Systems) and were described and displayed on Management Area maps. Eligible rivers were not allocated to MA 12, but were discussed in the accompanying EIS.

In accordance with the Wild and Scenic River Act at 5(d) (1) and Forest Service Manual policy ([FSM 1924.03](#)) a systematic inventory has been completed on the IPNF. The inventory of named streams and rivers on the IPNF resulted in the identification of 1,337 candidates to consider for eligibility. (Bonners Ferry District = 145, Priest Lake District = 123, Sandpoint District = 142, Coeur d’Alene District = 561, St. Joe District = 366). An assessment of these 1,337 candidates was conducted to identify any potential outstandingly remarkable values and their free-flowing characteristics. As a result of this assessment, it was determined that there were two additional rivers and streams eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These additions are summarized in Table WSR-3, below.

Table WSR-3 IPNF - Rivers Identified During Plan Revision as Eligible to Add to the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River System

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
Hughes Fork		Scenery, Recreation, Wildlife, History, and Botany			
<i>a) Segment 1</i>	Eligible		7.5	Wild	2,323
<i>b) Segment 2</i>	Eligible		7.1	Recreational	1,674
Kootenai		Fisheries, Wildlife, Botany	6.6	Recreational	1,392
TOTAL			21.2		5,389

Maps of the designated and eligible wild and scenic rivers listed in tables WSR-1 through WSR-3 can be found in Appendix M.

IPNF Trends

Past and Current Management Trends

The 1987 IPNF Forest Plan did not contain any monitoring items in relation to eligible, suitable or designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. The direction provided in the Record of Decision was to “...preserve future options for Recreational/Scenic/Wild Congressional classification.”

To this end, projects were designed and implemented so the identified outstandingly remarkable values would not be compromised, until such time as a suitability study could be conducted. As a result, the free-flowing characteristic of all eligible rivers has been maintained. In addition, management actions taken to comply with State water quality goals and INFISH and PACFISH have resulted in the protection of those rivers and streams where fisheries were the identified outstandingly remarkable value.

The INFISH Amendment (which amended the 1987 Forest Plan) provides for the protection and improvement of native inland fish species habitat; however, it also benefits wild and scenic river conditions. As a result of this Amendment, protective measures for all watercourses have improved over the last ten years

While the St. Joe Wild and Scenic River Development and Management Plan makes a provision for periodic reviews and updates, none has been conducted since its publication.

Specific strategies and directions for performing suitability studies for eligible rivers were not contained within the 1987 IPNF Forest Plan. As a result, no studies have been conducted during the life of this Plan.

Past and Current Use Trends

On rivers such as the Coeur d'Alene River, which predominantly flows through lands other than NFS lands, there has been continual development on private property. Water-related activities such as fishing /rafting /kayaking are increasing as the population in nearby urban areas increases and access points are developed.

On rivers that predominantly flow through NFS lands, there has been a steady increase in water-related activities such as fishing and rafting /canoeing /kayaking, mostly at dispersed sites. An exception to this would be those river sections that do not contain road access.

Projected Management Trends

Under the Proposed Land Management Plan, the 71.1 miles of the St. Joe River that is designated wild or recreational and the adjacent 21,288 acres will be managed under MA 2a, providing protection for the outstandingly remarkable values. The Development and Management Plan for this river will also continue to provide protection to these features.

Eligible rivers will be allocated to MA 2b in the Proposed Land Management Plan. Approximately 266 miles of eligible rivers and streams and 57,900 acres would be managed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which these rivers are eligible to the National Wild and Scenic River Systems.

Projected Use Trends

Use patterns experienced during the last 15 years can be expected to continue. Fishing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking and similar uses will likely expand as populations increase in the surrounding urban areas.

KNF Condition

Currently there are no rivers on the KNF designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and no suitability studies have been conducted.

In the 1987 KNF Forest Plan there were four rivers identified as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The 1987 KNF Forest Plan did not create a Management Area allocation for eligible rivers. They are:

1. Kootenai River
2. Yaak River
3. Vermilion River
4. Bull River

The 1987 KNF Forest Plan was amended in February 1989 (Amendment #1) and in October 1989 (Amendment #3) to include additional sections and tributaries of the Bull River and Big Creek (inclusion of several of its tributaries) and additional management standards. Table WSR-4 summarizes the eligible rivers that were included in the 1987 KNF Forest Plan subsequent to these amendments.

Table WSR-4 Summary of Eligible Rivers on the Kootenai National Forest per the 1987 Forest Plan

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all Lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
Kootenai River		Scenery, Fisheries, and History			
a) <i>Segment 1</i>	Eligible		8.9	Recreational	737
b) <i>Segment 2</i>	Eligible		10.1	Recreational	362
c) <i>Segment 3</i>	Eligible		8.8	Recreational	2,299
d) <i>Segment 4</i>	Eligible		10.2	Recreational	235
e) <i>Segment 5</i>	Eligible		8.7	Recreational	2,309
Yaak River		Scenery and History			
a) <i>Segment 1</i>	Eligible		19.1	Recreational	1,842
b) <i>Segment 2</i>	Eligible		9.8	Recreational	2,734
c) <i>Segment 3</i>	Eligible		11.4	Recreational	2,069
d) <i>Segment 4</i>	Eligible		9.3	Wild	2,586
Bull River System		Scenery			
a) <i>Segment 1 (Bull River)</i>	Eligible		11.3	Recreational	1,911
b) <i>Segment 2 (Bull River)</i>	Eligible		9.1	Recreational	1,622
c) <i>Segment 3 (North Fork and Middle Forks of Bull River)</i>	Eligible		17.4	Wild	4,135

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all Lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
d) <i>Segment 4 (East Fork Bull River)</i>	Eligible		4.5	Recreational	1,118
e) <i>Segment 5 (East Fork Bull River)</i>	Eligible		3.0	Wild	997
Big Creek System					
		Scenery and Recreation			
a) <i>Segment 1 (Big Creek)</i>	Eligible		7.6	Recreational	2,261
b) <i>Segment 2 (South Fork Big Creek)</i>	Eligible		6.7	Recreational	2,103
c) <i>Segment 3 (Little North Fork Big Creek)</i>	Eligible		1.6	Wild	452
d) <i>Segment 4 (Good Creek)</i>	Eligible		2.4	Wild	717
e) <i>Segment 5 (North Fork Big Creek)</i>	Eligible		5.6	Wild	1,797
f) <i>Segment 6 (Copeland Creek)</i>	Eligible		1.8	Wild	564
g) <i>Segment 7 (Lookout Creek)</i>	Eligible		2.4	Wild	725
h) <i>Segment 7 (East Fork Lookout Creek)</i>	Eligible		1.5	Wild	443
i) <i>Segment 7 (Unnamed tributary to Lookout Creek)</i>	Eligible		1.7	Wild	515
Vermilion River					
	Eligible	Scenery and History	13.2	Recreational	3,599
TOTAL			186.1		38,132

As indicated in the Wild and Scenic River Act at 5(d)(1) and Forest Service Manual policy (FSM 1924.03), a systematic inventory has been completed on the KNF. The inventory of named rivers and streams on the KNF resulted in the identification of 752 candidates to consider for eligibility. (Libby District = 206, Cabinet District = 180, Three Rivers District = 189, Rexford District = 84, Fortine District = 93). An assessment of these 752 candidates was conducted to identify any potential outstandingly remarkable values and their free-flowing characteristics. As a result of this assessment, it was determined that there are additional rivers and streams eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These additional rivers are summarized in table WSR-5.

Table WSR-5 KNF - Rivers Identified During Plan Revision as Eligible to Add to the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River System

River	Status	Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Length on all Lands (miles)	Preliminary Classification	Acres (on NFS lands)
Bull River System		Scenery			
a) <i>Segment 6 (North Fork of the East Fork Bull River)</i>	Eligible		2.2	Recreational	616
b) <i>Segment 7 (North Fork of the East Fork Bull River)</i>	Eligible		1.4	Wild	497
Grave Creek System		Scenery and History			
a) <i>Segment 1 (Grave Creek)</i>	Eligible		13.0	Recreational	3,699
b) <i>Segment 2 (Stahl Creek)</i>	Eligible		4.3	Recreational	1,244
c) <i>Segment 3 (Clarence Creek)</i>	Eligible		5.2	Recreational	1,654
d) <i>Segment 4 (Blue Sky Creek)</i>	Eligible		6.3	Recreational	2,002
Quartz Creek System		Scenery			
a) <i>Segment 1 (Quartz Creek)</i>	Eligible		9.5	Recreational	2,572
b) <i>Segment 2 (West Fork Quartz Creek)</i>	Eligible		2.8	Wild	892
c) <i>Segment 3 (West Fork Quartz)</i>	Eligible		3.1	Recreational	904
Vinal Creek System		Scenery and Recreation			
a) <i>Segment 1 (Vinal Creek)</i>	Eligible		4.1	Scenic	1,074
b) <i>Segment 2 (Turner Creek)</i>	Eligible		1.0	Scenic	386
West Fork Yaak River		Scenery and Recreation			
a) <i>Segment 1</i>	Eligible		4.3	Wild	1,329
b) <i>Segment 2</i>	Eligible		5.6	Recreational	1,428
TOTAL			62.8		18,297

Maps of the designated and eligible wild and scenic rivers listed in tables WSR-4 and WSR-5 can be found in Appendix M.

KNF Trends

Past and Current Management

The 1987 KNF Forest Plan did not contain any monitoring items in relation to eligible, suitable, or designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. During the life of the Plan, no suitability studies were conducted on any of the eligible rivers.

To this end, projects were designed and implemented so the identified outstandingly remarkable values would not be compromised, until such time as a suitability study could be conducted. As a result, the free-flowing characteristic of all eligible rivers has been maintained. In addition, management actions taken to comply with State water quality goals and INFISH and PACFISH have resulted in the protection of those rivers and streams where fisheries were the identified outstandingly remarkable value.

Past and Current Use Trends

On those rivers (e.g., Kootenai River, Yaak River, and Bull River) which predominantly flow through lands other than NFS lands, there has been continual development on private property. Water-related activities such as fishing, rafting, kayaking and similar uses are expanding as the population in the nearby urban areas increases and access points are developed.

On rivers that predominantly flow through NFS lands, there has been a steady increase in water-related activities such as fishing, rafting, canoeing, and kayaking mostly at dispersed sites. An exception to this, however, would be those river sections that do not contain road access.

Projected Management Trends

Under the proposed Plan, eligible rivers will be allocated to MA 2b. Approximately 250 miles of eligible rivers and streams and 56,400 acres would be managed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which these rivers are eligible to the National Wild and Scenic River Systems.

Projected Use Trends

It could be expected that the use patterns experienced over the last 15 years will continue. Fishing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking and similar uses will likely expand as populations increase in the surrounding urban areas.