

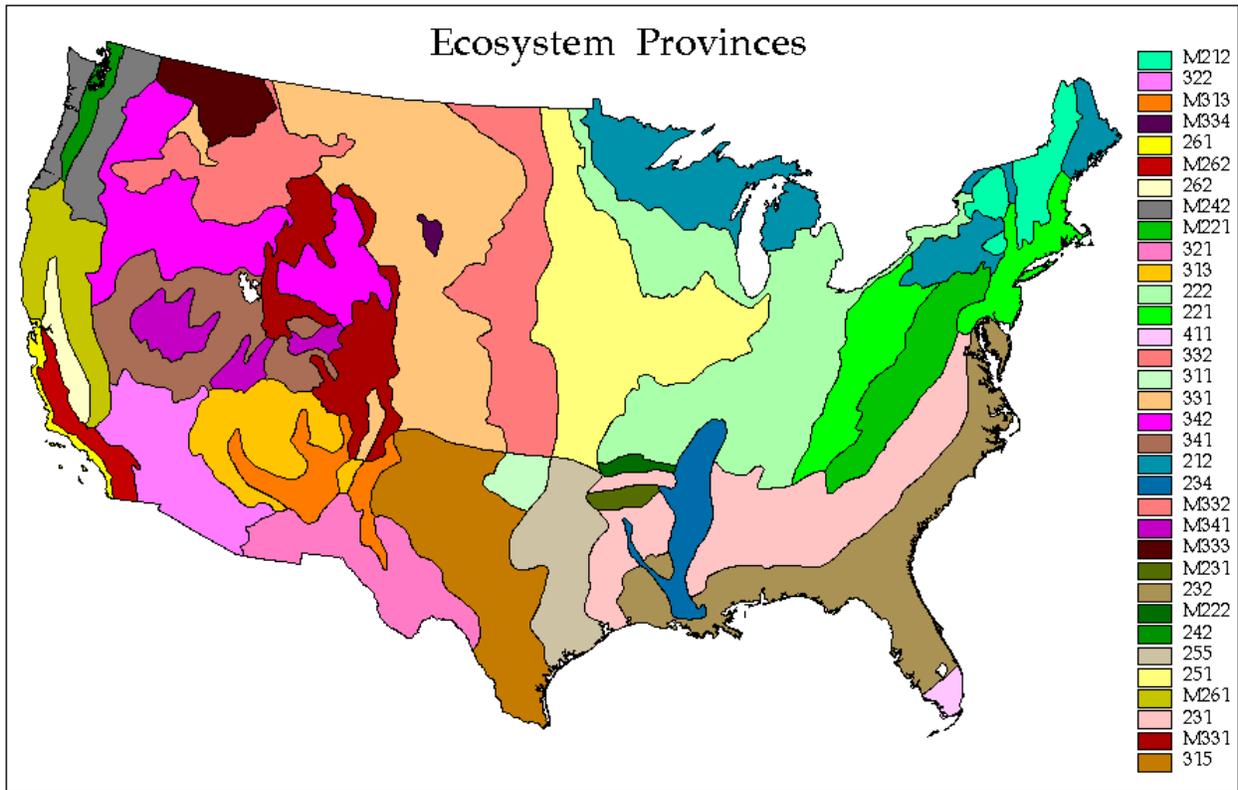
Appendix D – ORV Assessment for Clarion River

Introduction

The following ORV assessment criteria were utilized in making WSR eligibility determinations for the 2007 ANF LRMP. These criteria will also be used to assess resource values for the Clarion River. The criteria for each resource were prepared by consulting sections 1(b) and 2(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, FSH 1909.12, Chapter, Federal Register, Vol. 47, No. 173 and the Region 9 Wild and Scenic River Assessment and the Forest Plan Revision Process, November 1996.

For this analysis, national and regional scales of comparison are used to determine outstandingly remarkable values. The regional area is based on an ecosystem classification known as the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province 212 (Figure 1). This ecosystem classification has been developed for the Forest Service, Eastern United States by Robert G. Bailey and further refined by James E. Keys et al. The Laurentian Mixed Forest Province covers a larger area than Pennsylvania, approximately 147,300 square miles or 4.1% of the United States. The local area is contained within the Allegheny High Plateau Subsection of the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province and includes the Allegheny National Forest.

Figure 1: Ecoregions of the United States – Province 212 - Laurentian Mixed Forest



ORV Assessment Criteria

The initial eligibility report for the Clarion River provided an ORV assessment for each resource. This initial assessment should be reviewed for changed conditions against the criteria below.

(A) Outstanding. Values are distinctive nationally or regionally. To be nationally significant, a resource value has to be one of the best examples in the United States. To be regionally significant, a resource value has to be one of the best examples in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province.

(B) Substantial. Values are significant to the State or regionally but are not rare, unique or exceptional.

(C) Locally Common. Values are locally common to the Allegheny National Forest, Allegheny High Plateau Subsection of the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province.

Those resources which have been ranked as (A) Outstanding are considered to have outstandingly remarkable values which make a river or river segment eligible for potential inclusion in the NWSRS.

Scenic Values

Scenic value assessment for eligibility will utilize concepts described in the U.S. Forest Service Scenery Management System (SMS). River landscapes that rank as “Class A – Distinctive” under SMS will qualify for an “Outstanding” designation in this analysis. Rivers that rank as “Class B” – Typical under SMS will qualify as “Substantial” and “Class C – Indistinctive” will rate as Locally Common. Criteria will assess river landscapes where adjacent landform, vegetation patterns, and water features in combination or individually provide “Outstanding”, “Substantial” or “Locally Common” scenery. For comparative purposes, exceptional areas such as Beartown Rocks, Blue Rock, Elk Lick Bluff, Fools Knob, Gardners Rocks, Hearts Content and/or Tionesta Scenic Area, Jakes Rocks, Oil Seeps, Sandstone Springs, Stahlman Roundtop, Stony Point, South Rock, South Rocks, and Tidioute Overlook are examples of outstanding scenic features in the Province. ([High Plateau Subsection of Pennsylvania](#))

NOTE: These features also represent examples of exceptional geologic values.

Adjacent Landform

(A) Outstanding – The river or river segment and adjacent lands offer scenic values of national or regional significance which are unique, rare or exceptional (see exceptional areas above). Outstanding adjacent landforms are characterized by steep ridges and slopes (>25%), deep valleys or hilly, mountainous terrain and lowland areas with unusual or outstanding topographic features such as ledges, gorges, rock fields, outcrops, or beaches either in combination or individually. These areas may include specific locations and expanses in outdoor settings that have attractions and features that are identified as unique, different, distinctive, and extraordinary to people. Middleground or background views may be of forest or cultural landscapes such as farms, fields, and orchards which enhance the total scene when being viewed. Views may be long duration focal points or include islands as a feature of interest.

(B) Substantial – The river or river segment and adjacent lands offer scenic values which are significant but they are not rare, unique or exceptional. These are areas where landform and rock form provide less than outstanding but more than incidental or locally common scenic quality. There are some steep banks or slopes to the river, but generally the landscape is characterized by broad ridges with long gently to strongly sloping side slopes that are uncommon to the local area but common to the State or region.

(C) Locally Common – The river or river segment and adjacent lands offer scenic values that are locally common. These are areas where landform and rock form characteristics provide ordinary or common scenic quality either in combination or individually.

Vegetation

(A) Outstanding – There is a variety of vegetation types in interesting patterns and textures. Forest cover is characterized by large trees and could be punctuated by natural appearing openings. There is a high degree of vegetative patterns (trees, shrubs, and ground cover) and unusual diversity in plant species. Oil wells, oil pumps and associated oil and gas developments are subordinate or not evident visually.

(B) Substantial – There is some variation in vegetative types. Forested areas contain smaller to middle-sized trees. Obvious forest regeneration areas, pasture, farmlands and minor oil and gas development are visible, though not the predominant features.

(C) Locally Common – There is little variation in vegetative types and patterns. The understory is dense so that views through the forest are limited. Pastures, forest regeneration areas and oil and gas development are common.

Water Features

(A) Outstanding – Water forms may exhibit unusual changing flow characteristics, high flow, falls, cascades, meanders, large in stream boulders or pools. The sounds of water are predominant and mask all other human-caused sounds.

(B) Substantial – Water flow typically is slow moving and meandering with some still areas or ripples [and boulders].

(C) Locally Common – Still areas or ripples are the exception, generally caused by fallen trees (logs) in the river. There is little variation in the typically slow moving pattern of water flow.

Ranking: B

Date: December 19, 2008

Assessed By: Charles Keeports, Hydrologist

Ranking: A

Date: June 24, 2009

Assessed By: Janet Stubbe, Landscape Architect

Recreational Values

(A) Outstanding – Outstandingly remarkable recreation values with national significance provide recreational opportunities which are, or have the potential to be, unique enough to attract significant numbers of visitors from outside of the physiographic province and be known at a national level. Information on the river is routinely included in national publications. The river provides unusual opportunities for canoeing and boating, contains a variety of rapids and sufficient access points to provide a variety of trip lengths. Fishing success rate, size of take and game species composition is unusual for the region. There is an ability to navigate through long stretches of unmodified landscapes and experience the feeling of remoteness.

(B) Substantial – Visitors are willing to travel from other locations in the region to recreate along the river and its corridor. Information on the river is routinely included in regional publications. The river provides some opportunities for canoeing and boating, containing some rapids, but limitations on access points will reduce flexibility in trip planning. Fishing success rate and size of catch may be above average for the local area, but are common throughout the region. Occasional navigation through remote areas is possible.

(C) Locally Common – Visitors do not often travel long distances to visit the river for recreational purposes. Most visitors are from the local area. The river provides limited, if any, opportunities for canoeing and boating. River access may be limited and low water flows in the summer limit opportunities for other water sports. Fishing success rate and size of catch are common for the area. Shorelines are natural appearing but development is evident.

Ranking: _____

Date: _____

Assessed By: _____ (*name & title*)

Geologic Values

For comparative purposes, exceptional areas such as Beartown Rocks, Blue Rock, Elk Lick Bluff, Fools Knob, Gardners Rocks, Hearts Content Scenic Area, Jakes Rocks, Oil Seeps, Sandstone Springs, Stahlman Roundtop, Stony Point, South Rock, South Rocks, and Tidioute Overlook are examples of outstanding geologic features in the Province.

(A) Outstanding – The river or river segment and corridor contains one or more examples of a geologic feature, process, or phenomena that are rare, unusual, or unique to the region. Examples of such features are: high peaks, rocky summits, karst topography, caves, steep waterfalls, long cascades, large boulders or frequent outcrops, odd-shaped, highly folded or distorted rock formations, gorges, classic examples of glacio-fluvial deposits or talus slopes, and high knobs or points.

(B) Substantial – The river or river segment and corridor contains geologic features that are uncommon in the local area but typical of geologic features found throughout the region.

(C) Locally Common – The river or river segment and corridor contains geologic features and formations that are locally common with no significant geologic features.

Ranking: _____

Date: _____

Assessed By: _____ (*name & title*)

Fish and Aquatic Values

(A) Outstanding – The River contains fish populations or aquatic communities that occur only because of the character of the river. The area within the river corridor also provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish or aquatic organisms of national importance or may provide unique habitat or an important link in habitat conditions in the region.

(B) Substantial – The River contains fish populations or aquatic communities of State or regional importance. The river also provides high quality habitat for fish and aquatic organisms however, these types of areas are common throughout the State.

(C) Locally Common – The River contains fish populations that are not unique or rare. The river also provides habitats that are common throughout the local area.

Ranking: **B** (**numerous rare aquatic invertebrates**)

Date: **January 1, 2009**

Assessed By: **Brent Pence, Fisheries Biologist**

Wildlife Values

(A) Outstanding – The area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species. River and riparian area contains resident wildlife populations that occur because of the riparian vegetation adjacent to the river. The area within the river corridor may provide exceptionally high-quality habitat for wildlife of national significance, or provide unique habitat or an important link in habitat conditions in the region.

(B) Substantial: – The area within the river corridor provides high-quality habitat for Regional Forester’s sensitive species for the Allegheny National Forest, or for state listed species. River and riparian area contain high quality habitat that is uncommon in the local area but may be common throughout the region.

(C) Locally Common – River and riparian areas contain wildlife habitat that is locally common and this indicates that wildlife and wildlife habitats are not significant or rare.

Ranking: B

Date: January 6, 2009

Assessed By: Terry Steffan, Wildlife Biologist

Heritage Resource (Prehistory and Historic Values)

Heritage Resources include archaeological sites, historic structures, Native American traditional use sites, and cultural landscapes.

(A) Outstanding – Heritage Resources within the Corridor are regionally unique or rare, are well-preserved and offer exceptional research or interpretive values of national significance. These river corridors contain Heritage Resources that have been determined, or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

(B) Substantial – The river corridor contains Heritage Resources that are representative of the region, generally well preserved, and offer research and interpretive values of state and local significance. Sites may be similar to other sites known throughout the region but are unique to the local area. Some sites may have been disturbed prior to being archaeologically recorded. Many are eligible for the NRHP.

(C) Locally Common – The known Heritage Resources within the Corridor are common to the area. Known sites have been determined ineligible for listing in the NRHP.

Ranking: _____

Date: _____

Assessed By: _____ *(name & title)*

Botanical and Ecological Values

(A) Outstanding – Riparian corridor is continuous, with little evidence of human-caused disturbance or fragmentation. Plant species or ecological communities that are distinctive nationally. Plant species or ecological communities that are distinctive regionally. Or plant species or ecological communities that are distinctive in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province (212).

(B) Substantial – Riparian corridor is mostly continuous; however, there may be some limited human disturbance or fragmentation. Plant species or ecological communities are distinctive on the Allegheny High Plateau Subsection (212Ga) and/or plant species or ecological communities are distinctive in the state.

(C) Locally Common – Riparian corridor is mostly continuous; however, there may be some limited human disturbance or fragmentation. Plant species or ecological communities are considered common, widespread, and abundant in the State. Plant species or ecological communities are common on the Allegheny National Forest.

Ranking: _____

Date: _____

Assessed By: _____ *(name & title)*

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