

## Wild and Scenic Rivers

### INTRODUCTION

On October 2, 1968, Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C 1271-1287) to address the need for a national system of rivers. As an outgrowth of a national conservation agenda in the 1950s and 1960s, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Act) was in response to the dams, diversions, and water resource development projects that occurred on America's rivers between the 1930s and 1960s. The Act concluded that selected rivers should be preserved in a free-flowing condition and be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Since 1968, the Act has been amended many times, primarily to designate additional rivers and authorize the study of other rivers for possible inclusion.

There are several steps in the process of designating a river or river segment a Wild and Scenic River. First, to be eligible for inclusion into the National System, a river or river segment must be free-flowing and possess at least one outstandingly remarkable value in any of the following resource categories: scenery, recreation, geology, hydrology, fish, wildlife, botany, ecology, history, and culture. Once determined eligible, river segments and their corridors (collectively the river area) are tentatively classified for suitability study as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational based on the degree of access and amount of development along the river corridor.

The suitability study is an assessment to determine whether eligible river segments should be recommended for inclusion in the National System. In this process, river values and their potential for designation are analyzed to determine the best use of the river corridor, and if the river values are to be protected, the best method of protection. The results of the suitability study are usually submitted to the agency head for review and subsequent transmittal to Congress. The Forest Service only makes a preliminary administrative recommendation. This recommendation will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. Congress has reserved any final decisions to designate rivers to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Further information regarding suitability studies can be found in Appendix J to this EIS.

As of September 2002, 160 river segments comprising 11,292 miles have been designated as National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Of those, four rivers totaling an estimated 48 miles are within the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup area. These nationally recognized rivers comprise some of the nation's greatest diversity of recreational, natural, and cultural resources, offering both scientific study value and scenic beauty.

During Forest Plan revision, the Forest Service evaluated rivers on Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forest System Lands to determine if additional rivers were eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. In addition, five currently eligible segments were evaluated as to their suitability for designation. This analysis describes those river segments and the general effects their status could eventually have on the river corridors and Forest resources.

## Issues and Indicators

**Issue Statement** – Eligible rivers and their corridors may affect the Forest’s ability to implement management activities.

**Background to the Issue** – In the original forest planning process, a number of river segments (35 on the Boise, 14 on the Payette, and 4 on the Sawtooth) were identified as being eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Since the original Forest Plans were written, changes have occurred that made the Forests re-examine their eligibility process and results. The *Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation Summary* (USDA Forest Service 1997) identified a need to conduct a new Wild and Scenic River eligibility study, in order to incorporate changed conditions and new information since the original plans were written. These changes included the listing of new species, changed watershed conditions, and new information from the ICBEMP Scientific Assessment (Quigley et al. 1996). Forest personnel recognized that these changed conditions could influence whether a previously ineligible stream might now be considered eligible, and vice versa. There was also a need for the three Forests to use an updated and consistent protocol for determining eligibility.

Once river segments are determined eligible or suitable, they are managed to protect their free-flowing status and any identified outstandingly remarkable values. In some instances, this change in management could restrict management activities in or adjacent to the river corridors. The amount of restriction can vary by whether the river segment is classified as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational. The main activities that could be affected are vegetation management, rangeland management, recreation development, hydroelectric development, mining, and road construction.

This analysis displays the rivers, their segments, and river corridor areas that have been determined to be eligible and their classifications. The analysis also describes the effects those classifications have on the river segments and other Forest resources.

**Indicators** - The primary indicator used to display effects by alternative is the amount of eligible river segments by classification that could affect, or be affected by, management activities. These segments are measured in both miles of river and acres of river corridor. Effects to and from management activities are also described in general terms.

## Affected Area

The affected areas for direct and indirect effects are the eligible river corridors within lands administered by the three National Forests. Corridor boundaries are established to protect the free-flowing nature, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values for which the river is considered eligible. Generally, the corridor width for designated, suitable, or eligible rivers cannot exceed an average of 320 acres per mile, which, if applied uniformly along the entire river segment, is one-quarter mile on each side of the river from the high water mark. Boundaries may be wider or narrower, but are not to exceed the 320-acre average per mile without approval by Congress. For analysis purposes, the affected river corridors are 0.25 mile from the high water mark on both sides of the river.

For cumulative effects, the affected areas are the eligible river corridors within the three National Forests. In addition, the analysis looks at the contributions of the alternatives to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

### Chronology of Events That Have Influenced Current Conditions

In 1982, the Boise National Forest initiated a Wild and Scenic River eligibility study, resulting in 16 rivers with a combined 35 segments determined as eligible for inclusion into the National System. The Boise National Forest has an agreement with the Sawtooth National Forest that the Boise will be the lead Forest in the suitability study for the South Fork Payette River.

In 1984, the Sawtooth National Forest initiated a Wild and Scenic River eligibility study, resulting in three rivers with a combined four segments determined as eligible for inclusion into the National System. The Sawtooth National Forest has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Land Management, in which the BLM has the lead responsibility in completing the suitability studies for the Salmon River and the East Fork Salmon River. The Sawtooth National Forest has an agreement with the Boise National Forest that the Boise will be the lead Forest in the suitability study for the South Fork Payette River. Suitability studies have not been initiated.

Around 1987, the Payette National Forest initiated a Wild and Scenic River eligibility study, resulting in five rivers with a combined 14 segments determined as eligible for inclusion into the National System. The potential classification was not determined at this time. A letter from Forest Supervisor, Veto LaSalle, dated April 16, 1992, stated that the Payette National Forest would manage each river segment under a wild potential classification until such time the Forest Plan was amended to include the potential classification for each segment.

In 1997, another eligibility study was initiated for the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests. This study was based on new information and changed conditions since the last eligibility studies were completed. The Forests received comments on the “potentially” eligible rivers presented in the Draft Land and Resource Management Plan during the public comment period following the release of the documents. Comments urged the Forest to reconsider the Regions of Comparison as they appeared to be too narrow in scope or applied inconsistently. Comments also supported the eligibility of the draft list or suggested that none of the rivers were eligible and the study should be discontinued.

To address these comments a three Forest interdisciplinary team re-evaluated the Regions of Comparison and the ORV criteria to ensure they were national in scope, as mandated by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and to determine that the criteria had been applied consistently by resource specialists throughout the Ecogroup. During this re-evaluation some changes were made to the Regions of Comparison and Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) criteria. This re-evaluation also determined that the criteria used to assess ORVs presented in the Draft Plans and Draft EIS had been inconsistently applied.

In early 1999, a suitability study was initiated for the South Fork Salmon River on the Payette and Boise National Forests, and the Secesh River, Big Creek, Monumental Creek, and French Creek on the Payette National Forest. No other suitability studies have been initiated as of yet. The results of the suitability study for these rivers are contained in Appendix J to this EIS.

## Current Conditions

### Designated River Segments

Three rivers that are partially on the Payette Forest, and one river that is partially on the Payette and Boise Forests are currently designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. Together they total 48 miles. These rivers are:

- Middle Fork Salmon River - designated through public law 90-542 on October 2, 1968;
- Rapid River - designated through Public Law 94-199 on December 31, 1975;
- Snake River - designated through Public Law 94-199 on December 31, 1975; and
- Salmon River - designated through Public Law 96-312 on July 23, 1980

Neither the Boise nor the Payette National Forest is the lead Forest for managing these four rivers. No rivers on the Sawtooth Forest are currently designated as Wild and Scenic.

### Eligible Rivers in the Original Land and Resource Management Plans

The following eligible rivers were analyzed in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Study Report for the Payette and Boise National Forests. Refer to Appendix J to this EIS for the complete report.

**Secesh River** – The headwaters originate in Lake Creek at Marshall Lake to where it joins with Summit Creek. It then flows from the confluence of Lake and Summit Creek to the confluence with the South Fork Salmon River. The river flows through scenic meadows and deeply dissected canyons. The river is prime anadromous fish habitat. The length of river potentially suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is 45 miles, with a river area of 12,806 acres.

**South Fork Salmon River** – The headwaters originate in the Boise National Forest several miles above Vulcan Hot Springs and flow to the confluence with Goat Creek on the Payette National Forest. From Goat Creek the river flows to the confluence with Smith Creek, then eventually into the main Salmon River. The South Fork Salmon River is recommended because of its beautiful scenery, numerous cultural resource sites, geology, and anadromous fisheries. The last 13 miles of the river are within the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness. The length of the river potentially suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is 93 miles, with a river area of 26,900 acres.

**Big Creek** – From its headwaters, Big Creek rapidly flows into the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness as Smith Creek. From there it flows to the confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. The headwaters are located in a large scenic glacial basin and the river then flows through a glacial canyon. Big Creek is being recommended for its outstandingly anadromous fish habitat and cultural resources. The length of river potentially suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is 49 miles, with a river area of 15,303 acres.

**Monumental Creek** – Monumental Creek begins at the headwaters of Coon Creek and flows to the confluence with Big Creek. The headwaters flow through large glacial basins surrounded by highly scenic ridges and mountain peaks. The creek is being recommended because of the scenery, cultural resources, geology, and anadromous fish habitat. Most of the creek is within the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness. The length of river potentially suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is 26 miles, with a river area of 8,906 acres.

**French Creek** – Three tributary segments are included in the French Creek System. They include the entire length of French Creek from its headwaters to the confluence with the Salmon River, the headwaters of Little French Creek to the confluence with French Creek, and the headwaters of Jackson Creek to the confluence with French Creek. French Creek and its tributaries are being recommended for their geology, scenic quality, and anadromous fish habitat. The length potentially suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is 34 miles, with a river area of 10,629 acres.

#### **Eligible Rivers in the Revised Land and Resource Management Plans Eligibility Study**

For the Draft Forest Plans and EIS, all rivers found at the 1:100,000 mapping scale were evaluated for potential eligibility. The initial review evaluated 889 rivers on the Boise Forest, 704 rivers on the Payette Forest, and 601 rivers on the Sawtooth Forest. All rivers were screened for free-flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values for resources listed above.

The Forest Ranger Districts reviewed the rivers to determine their “potential” for outstandingly remarkable values. On the Boise Forest, 45 streams were identified as having outstanding remarkable values. On the Payette Forest, 37 streams were identified as having outstandingly remarkable values. On the Sawtooth Forest, 94 streams were identified as having outstandingly remarkable values. For the Ecogroup, 176 streams were presented in the Draft Plans and EIS for public review as potentially eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation.

It is important to emphasize that the 176 rivers presented in the Draft Plans and Draft EIS were considered **potentially** eligible. The reasons they were only considered potentially eligible were: 1) the list of rivers presented in the Draft had not undergone public comment, 2) the Ecogroup may have applied the criteria to determine outstandingly remarkable values inconsistently, and 3) the Regions of Comparison used were possibly too narrow in scope.

For the eligible rivers in the Final EIS and Plans, suitability studies will be considered when:

- Strong local interest or support is demonstrated for Wild and Scenic designation; or
- A proposed project would alter the free-flowing character of a stream, or would affect the outstandingly remarkable values and/or classifications that made the stream eligible; or
- Concurrent analysis, such as watershed assessments, make it feasible to conduct suitability studies; and
- Budget realities make it possible to perform these detailed studies.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Effects Common To All Alternatives**

**Resource Protection Methods**

**Laws, Regulations, and Policies** - The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968) establishes objectives, goals, and procedures for designation of Wild, Scenic, and Recreational rivers, making it national policy to “preserve selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition, to protect water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation measure.” Additionally, the Act provides protection of the outstandingly remarkable values, free-flowing character, and potential classification of designated river areas. According to the Act, these rivers “shall be preserved in free-flowing condition” and “they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 directs the Forest Service to evaluate rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System during the forest planning process. Chapter 8 identifies standards for interim management of eligible and designated rivers. These standards are summarized in Table WSR-1, below.

**Table WSR-1. Wild and Scenic River Direction from FSH 1909.12**

<b>Management Activity</b>	<b>Wild Classification</b>	<b>Scenic Classification</b>	<b>Recreational Classification</b>
<b>Timber Harvest</b>	Cutting of trees is not permitted within one-quarter mile of the river except when needed in association with a primitive recreation experience, or to minimize risks to users, or to protect the environment. Timber within the visual corridor is managed to provide emphasis on visual quality.	Silvicultural practices may be allowed, provided that there is no substantial adverse impact on the river and its immediate environment. Timber within the visual corridor is managed to provide emphasis on visual quality.	Timber harvesting is permitted; the immediate river environment will be protected. Timber within the visual corridor is managed to provide emphasis on visual quality.
<b>Mining</b>	New mineral leases are prohibited within one-quarter mile of the river once it is officially designated. Mineral activity must minimize surface disturbance, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment.	New mining claims, new mineral leases, and existing claims must minimize surface disturbance, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment that would affect suitability for designation.	New mining claims, new mineral leases, and existing claims must minimize surface disturbance, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment that would affect suitability for designation.
<b>Road Construction</b>	No roads or other provisions for overland motorized travel are permitted within a narrow, incised river valley or, if the valley is broad, within 0.25 mile of the riverbank.	Roads may occasionally bridge the river area and short stretches of screened roads may be permitted.	Paralleling roads may be constructed along the river; there may be several bridge crossings and numerous river access points.
<b>Livestock Grazing and</b>	Existing domestic livestock grazing can continue,	Domestic livestock grazing is permitted to the extent	Land may be managed for a full range of agricultural

Management Activity	Wild Classification	Scenic Classification	Recreational Classification
<b>Agriculture</b>	consistent with riparian management standards and other grazing standards contained in the Forest Plans.	currently occurring.	uses, to the extent currently practiced.
<b>Recreation Development</b>	Simple comfort/convenience facilities, such as fireplaces or shelters, may be permitted if they harmonize with the surroundings.	Public use facilities are permitted within the river corridor if screened from the river.	Campgrounds, picnic areas, and other recreational developments may be established near rivers.
<b>Motorized Travel</b>	Motorized travel on land or water is generally not compatible.	Motorized travel on land or water may be permitted, restricted, or prohibited to protect river values.	Motorized travel on land or water may be permitted at existing levels, restricted, or prohibited to protect river values.

**Forest Plan Direction** – Forest-wide direction has been added to the revised Forest Plans to address interim and long-term management of eligible, suitable, and designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. This direction applies to all alternatives because it represents and refers to direction in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12. Any Forest projects or activities proposed in an eligible, suitable, or designated Wild and Scenic River corridor would be implemented under this direction. In addition, specific Wild and Scenic River segments are identified in the Management Area descriptions and direction (see Chapter III, Forest Plans).

#### **General Effects from River Classification on Management Activities**

The types and amounts of activities and changes acceptable within an eligible, suitable, or designated river corridor depend on whether it is classified as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational. Activity compatibility with classification is described in Table WSR-1 and summarized below.

A **Wild** river classification results in the river corridor being withdrawn from any new mineral development once it is officially designated and made “administratively unavailable” for new oil and gas leases. Existing valid mining claims and oil and gas leases would be allowed with restrictions that protect river values. Timber harvest is generally unacceptable, and outputs of timber from tentatively suitable timberlands that might have occurred are essentially foregone. Construction of major recreation facilities, roads, power lines, and other features is not allowed. The potential for hydroelectric power generation is also foregone. Designation would not affect the rights of landowners within a Wild river area unless local governments enacted zoning or other regulatory changes. Designation, particularly where tributary streams or important visual features lie outside the corridor, could affect the management of lands adjacent to a Wild river by requiring more constraints on water quality and visual effects of projects. Fire use within the ¼ mile corridor may be prohibited or restricted, depending on its effects to visual quality. Motorized travel is generally restricted. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act also requires that upstream water projects may not significantly degrade the river values within the designated segments, and that downstream impoundments may not back water up into the segments.

A **Scenic** river classification places significant constraints on the management of timber in the river corridor, although small sales generally out of view of the river or recreation sites could

occur. The area is not withdrawn from mineral entry, but costs of mining could increase as a result of standards for visual quality. The potential for hydroelectric power generation is foregone. Construction of major recreation facilities would not occur, but small campgrounds and boat launch facilities could be compatible. Roads, while allowed, could be more expensive as design must minimize visual impacts. Effects on management of adjacent lands would be less than for a Wild river, although activities affecting sensitive visual features may be constrained, resulting in increased cost or reduced output. Fire use could be curtailed depending on effects to visuals. Motorized travel may be allowed but can be restricted to protect river values.

A **Recreational** river classification places fewer constraints on management and development activities, although the potential for new diversions and hydroelectric power generation is still foregone. Timber may be harvested, although visual constraints can increase the cost of logging or reduce outputs slightly. Mining can occur, but would be subject to visual and other resource constraints. Road and campground construction are allowed, as is livestock grazing and other forms of agriculture. Fire use is allowed but should be compatible with recreational uses in the area. Motorized travel is generally allowed but can be restricted to protect river values.

### **General Effects from River Eligibility on Management Activities**

In general, management activities must be designed to promote or maintain the free-flowing status and outstandingly remarkable values of eligible, suitable, or designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. Should river segments not be considered eligible or suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation, they would not receive the interim management direction associated with that status. Portions of the river corridors would still receive protection under management direction around riparian areas (RCAs/RHCAs), and the remaining area would be under the general management direction for whatever Management Prescription Category (MPC) is assigned to the surrounding area. Depending on that MPC, subsequent management could affect ineligible or unsuitable segments and their potential for future eligibility or classification. These effects are described briefly for those resource programs that could have the most influence on river values.

**Effects to Special Uses** - New impoundments or diversions would generally not be allowed as they would disqualify a river from eligibility for Wild and Scenic River designation. Rivers must be free flowing.

**Effects to Minerals Management** - Mineral or energy exploration and subsequent development are generally allowed but may be limited depending on river classification (see Table WSR-1). Exploration or development could affect scenery, water quality, and habitat by excavation, drilling, tailings, and the construction of buildings and access roads. These changes could have short- and long-term effects on reducing potential eligibility.

**Effects to Domestic Livestock Grazing** - Livestock use is allowed and would generally not affect a river's eligibility or classification, but could have minor short- and long-term effects on vegetation, scenic, and recreational values within the river corridor.

**Effects to Vegetation Management** – Allowance of timber harvest activities varies greatly by classification (see Table SWR-1). Activities could reduce the potential for future eligibility and potential classification by negatively affecting vegetation screening, scenery, and recreational

values, and by constructing access roads. Harvest could also be used to improve scenery and recreational values over time, which could benefit eligibility potential over the long term.

**Effects to Recreation Management** – Recreation management emphasis and potential development vary greatly by classification (see Table WSR-1). Recreation developments, facilities, and use patterns would not necessarily reduce the potential for future eligibility, but they could affect the potential classification of a river segment.

**Effects to Scenery Management** - The effects to scenery management would depend on the visual quality objectives that are assigned to the corridor, and how much visual change to the scenery they allow. Preservation and Retention objectives emphasize maintaining a natural-appearing landscape, which would benefit the corridor and its potential eligibility. Modification objectives that allow more evident signs of development could have a short- and long-term reduction in the potential for eligibility.

**Effects to Fire Management** – The effects to fire management would depend on the river’s classification and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs). Fire activities may not negatively affect the river’s classification and ORVs. In many instances, fire management activities may be desired to preserve or enhance the river’s ORVs and classification. Fire use would also affect scenery, vegetation, and recreational values in the short term, but would not likely reduce the potential for future eligibility of any river over the long term, or change the classification.

**Effects to Motorized Travel** – In river corridors with a wild classification, motorized travel on land or water is generally not compatible. In corridors with a scenic classification, motorized travel on land or water may be permitted, restricted, or prohibited to protect river values. In river areas and corridors with a recreational classification, motorized travel on land or water may be permitted at existing levels, restricted, or prohibited to protect river values.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects by Alternative**

### **Eligible Rivers in the Suitability Study**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Report (Appendix J to this EIS) offers three alternatives for suitability consideration. These three alternatives are matched with the seven alternatives in this Final EIS. Table WSR-2 shows which alternatives from the study report correlate with which alternatives in the Final EIS.

**Table WSR-2. Crosswalk of Alternatives in the Wild and Scenic River Study Report and the Final EIS**

Wild & Scenic Rivers Study Report	Final EIS
Alternative 1	Alternative 1B and 5
Alternative 2	Alternative 2, 3, and 4
Alternative 3	Alternative 6
Combination of Alternatives 1 and 2	Alternative 7

Under Alternatives 1B and 5, none of the five river segments would be recommended for designation at this time, but they would remain eligible for future designation. Their free-flowing status and visual quality would be managed and protected under a Wild classification until a suitability study determined they were no longer eligible, or they were recommended to Congress for designation. At present, not all segments meet Wild standards. If the river segments were nominated under a Wild classification, restoration would be needed on some of the five river segments to bring them up to Wild standards.

Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 in this Final EIS would recommend all five rivers for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers under the highest potential classification. Due to existing developments, these designations would include 85 miles of Wild, and 162 miles of Recreational classifications (see Table SWR-3). These alternatives would recommend a total of 247 miles of rivers be placed into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This decision would eliminate the opportunity for major water resource development projects over the entire 247 miles of corridors and protect the free-flowing characteristics of all five rivers for perpetuity. The ORVs would receive a moderately high degree of protection. In the Wild segments, the commodity opportunities such as hydroelectric projects, mineral exploration and recreation developments, timber harvest, and road construction, would be mostly foregone. Major fish habitat improvement structures would be incompatible, but inconspicuous ones would be acceptable. In the Recreational segments, timber harvesting, prescribed fire, recreational development, road construction, and mineral entry would all be allowed at intensities commensurate with the classification. Grazing is allowed under all three classifications.

**Table WSR-3. Eligible Wild and Scenic River Miles and Acres by Alternative**

Classification	Miles/Acres	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
<b>Wild</b>	River Miles	0	119	119	119	0	70	15
	Corridor Acres	0	37,421	37,421	37,421	0	22,294	4,111
<b>Scenic</b>	River Miles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Corridor Acres	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Recreational</b>	River Miles	0	128	128	128	0	177	123
	Corridor Acres*	0	37,124	37,124	37,124	0	52,251	35,595

\*Recreational corridors have much more private and state lands within them than Wild corridors. Private and state land acreage has been subtracted from the total river corridor area.

Alternative 6 in this Final EIS would also recommend all five rivers for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers; however recommendations would be under the least restrictive potential classification. These designations would include 70 miles of Wild, and 177 miles of Recreational classifications (see Table SWR-3). These alternatives would recommend a total of 247 miles of rivers be placed into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This decision would eliminate the opportunity for major water resource development projects over the entire 247 miles of corridors and protect the free-flowing characteristics of all five rivers for perpetuity. The ORVs would receive a moderate to high degree of protection, depending on the river's classification. In the Wild segments, the commodity opportunities such as hydroelectric projects, mineral exploration and recreation developments, timber harvest, and road construction, would be mostly foregone. Also, major fish habitat improvement structures would be incompatible, but inconspicuous ones would be acceptable. In the Recreational segments, timber harvesting, prescribed fire, recreational development, road construction, and mineral entry would all be allowed at intensities commensurate with this classification. Grazing is allowed under all three classifications.

Alternative 7 in this Final EIS would recommend two of the five rivers for Wild and Scenic River designation under the least restrictive classifications. This alternative would recommend a total of 138 miles of rivers be placed into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; 15 miles under a Wild classification, and 123 miles under a Recreational classification. Protection for the Secesh and South Fork Salmon River would eliminate the opportunity for major water resource development projects within their river corridors and protect the free-flowing characteristics of the three rivers for perpetuity. Outstanding remarkable values that made these rivers eligible for designation must be maintained, primarily under "Recreational" standards. Timber harvesting, prescribed fire, recreational development, road construction, and mineral entry would all be allowed, but at a potentially reduced amount to allow for scenic quality, water quality, and fisheries habitat protection.

Big Creek and Monumental Creek would not be recommended for designation, but would continue to receive protection of their outstanding remarkable values under existing Wilderness protection. The only substantive difference between Wilderness and Wild river designation is that the President can authorize hydroelectric projects in Wilderness, while Congress must approve such projects in a Wild river corridor. The few miles on each river that are not in the Wilderness would be removed from further study as unsuitable for designation. They may be opened to hydroelectric development, mineral entry, recreation development, major habitat structures, timber harvest, and road construction, depending on the MPC that is assigned to the area. The rivers would be managed in accordance with the prescription of adjacent lands, which in Alternative 7 is 3.2, emphasizing restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial, and watershed resources.

French Creek would not be recommended for designation. The river would be managed in accordance with the prescriptions of adjacent lands. Virtually this entire creek lies within inventoried roadless areas, and little if any development is currently planned that would affect its values or free-flowing status.

### **Eligible River Inventory**

The list of rivers eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation is an inventory that does not vary by alternative. However, the criteria used to determine eligibility can vary based on geographical attributes and the Region of Comparison used (refer to Appendix D in the revised Forest Plans for Region of Comparison information).

A three Forest interdisciplinary team re-evaluated the Regions of Comparison and the ORV criteria to ensure they were national or regional in scope, as mandated by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and that the criteria had been applied consistently by resource specialists throughout the Ecogroup. During this re-evaluation some changes were made to the Regions of Comparison and ORV criteria. This re-evaluation also determined that the criteria used to assess ORVs had been inconsistently applied. The following summary describes the changed criteria used to determine ORVs and their associated Regions of Comparison. The *Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Inventory User's Guide* (USDA Forest Service 2001) has a full discussion of criteria components (see project record).

### **Presence of Outstandingly Remarkable Values by Classification**

Tables WSR-4, WSR-5, and WSR-6 shows the segments, lengths, and classifications of all rivers determined to be eligible in the eligibility study for the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth Forests.

**Table WSR-4. Boise National Forest Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers Miles by Segment Classification**

River	Segment	Classification	Segment Miles
Bear Valley Creek	1	Recreational	21.81
Bear Valley Creek	2	Scenic	7.65
Bear Valley Creek	3	Wild	3.76
Burntlog Creek	1	Recreational	1.92
Burntlog Creek	2	Wild	10.86
Deadwood River	1	Recreational	21.74
Deadwood River	2	Scenic	1.93
Deadwood River	3	Wild	13.00
Deadwood River	4	Scenic	8.58
Elk Creek (Feather River)	1	Wild	5.13
Elk Creek (Feather River)	2	Scenic	2.24
Elk Creek (Bear Valley Ck)	1	Recreational	9.78
Elk Creek (Bear Valley Ck)	2	Wild	8.20
Johnson Creek	1	Recreational	2.93
Middle Fork Boise River	1	Recreational	52.14
Middle Fork Payette River	1	Recreational	12.20
Middle Fork Payette River	2	Wild	8.97
Mores Creek	1	Recreational	1.23
North Fork Boise River	1	Recreational	4.93
North Fork Boise River	2	Wild	8.31
North Fork Boise River	3	Wild	9.36
North Fork Payette River	1	Recreational	12.45
Payette River	1	Recreational	2.53
Porter Creek	1	Wild	7.13
South Fork Boise River	1	Recreational	13.13

River	Segment	Classification	Segment Miles
South Fork Boise River	2	Scenic	3.13
South Fork Boise River	3	Wild	12.27
South Fork Payette River	1	Scenic	6.49
South Fork Payette River	2	Recreational	30.91
South Fork Payette River	3	Scenic	3.12
South Fork Payette River	4	Recreational	13.29
<b>Total Boise National Forest Eligible WSR Miles</b>			<b>321.12</b>

Table WSR-5. Payette National Forest Eligible Miles by Segment Classification

River	Segment	Classification	Segment Miles
Hard Creek	1	Wild	10.65
Hazard Creek	1	Wild	.75
Hazard Creek	2	Wild	13.65
<b>Total Payette National Forest Eligible WSR Miles</b>			<b>25.05</b>

Table WSR-6. Sawtooth National Forest Eligible Rivers Miles by Segment Classification

River	Segment	Classification	Segment Miles
Alpine Creek	1	Wild	4.03
Alturas Lake Creek	1	Scenic	8.21
Alturas Lake Creek	2	Recreational	7.99
Baron Creek	1	Wild	8.54
Beaver Creek	1	Scenic	8.37
Big Wood River	1	Recreational	27.98
Boulder Chain Lakes Creek	1	Wild	4.39
Box Canyon Creek	1	Wild	3.39
East Fork Salmon River	1	Wild	4.13
East Fork Salmon River	2	Recreational	5.83
Elk Creek	1	Wild	10.23
Elk Creek	2	Scenic	3.55
Fishhook Creek	1	Wild	5.35
Fishhook Creek	2	Recreational	1.43
Germania Creek	1	Scenic	4.19
Germania Creek	2	Wild	10.77
Goat Creek	1	Wild	7.85
Goat Creek	1	Wild	2.48
Goat Creek	2	Recreational	2.32
Hell Roaring Creek	1	Wild	2.18
Hell Roaring Creek	2	Scenic	3.73
Little Boulder Creek	1	Wild	7.40
Middle Fork Boise River	1	Wild	10.28
Muldoon Creek	1	Wild	3.43
North Fork Big Wood River	1	Wild	5.72
North Fork Big Wood River	2	Recreational	5.75
North Fork Boise River	1	Wild	9.10
North Fork Hyndman Creek	1	Wild	4.61
Pettit Lake Creek	1	Wild	3.76
Pettit Lake Creek	2	Scenic	1.28
Redfish Lake Creek	1	Wild	6.78

River	Segment	Classification	Segment Miles
Redfish Lake Creek	2	Recreational	2.74
Salmon River	1	Recreational	68.33
South Fork Boise River	1	Recreational	37.06
South Fork East Fork Salmon River	1	Wild	5.88
South Fork Payette River	1	Wild	2.54
South Fork Payette River	2	Scenic	17.89
Stanley Lake Creek	1	Wild	3.74
Stanley Lake Creek	2	Scenic	3.50
Stanley Lake Creek	3	Scenic	3.20
Trail Creek	1	Recreational	14.47
Warm Springs Creek	1	Wild	22.35
West Fork East Fork Salmon River	1	Wild	5.42
West Fork North Fork Big Wood River	1	Wild	4.51
West Pass Creek	1	Scenic	6.24
Yellow Belly Lake Creek	1	Wild	7.97
<b>Total Sawtooth National Forest Eligible WSR Miles</b>			<b>400.89</b>

Each eligible river was classified as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational based on this criteria:

- **Wild** – Rivers or sections of rivers are free of impoundments, with watershed or shorelines essentially primitive; they generally are inaccessible except by trail, with undisturbed landscapes.
- **Scenic** – Rivers or sections of rivers are free of impoundments, with watersheds or shorelines still largely primitive and undeveloped; they can be accessible in places by inconspicuous, well-screened local roads.
- **Recreational** – Rivers or sections of rivers are readily accessible by road or railroads and have some degree of development along their shorelines where minor structures are allowed, providing that the waterway generally remains natural in appearance.

For further information including segment location and outstandingly remarkable values please refer to the Appendix D in the revised Forest Plans.

Tables WSR-7 through WSR-12 show the amount of total acres, acres in Inventoried Roadless Areas, acres in Wilderness Areas, acres in Recommended Wilderness Areas, and acres within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA). The tables are arranged by classification, as the management activities allowed vary by classification (see Table WSR-1).

**Table WSR-7. Eligible River Corridor Acres by Classification**

Classification	Boise NF Acres	Payette NF Acres	Sawtooth NF Acres	Ecogroup Total
Wild	25,945	7,442	56,706	<b>90,093</b>
Scenic	9,461	0	13,202	<b>22,663</b>
Recreational	55,429	0	51,008	<b>106,437</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,835</b>	<b>7,442</b>	<b>120,916</b>	<b>219,913</b>

**Table WSR-8. Eligible River Corridor Acres in Inventoried Roadless Areas by Classification**

Classification	Boise NF Acres	Payette NF Acres	Sawtooth NF Acres	Ecogroup Total
Wild	16,685	4,976	29,792	<b>51,453</b>
Scenic	2,498	0	6,641	<b>9,139</b>
Recreational	18,329	0	10,928	<b>29,257</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,512</b>	<b>4,976</b>	<b>47,361</b>	<b>89,849</b>

**Table WSR-9. Eligible River Corridor Acres in Wilderness Areas by Classification**

Classification	Boise NF Acres	Payette NF Acres	Sawtooth NF Acres	Ecogroup Total
Wild	4,534	2,999	25,355	32,888
Scenic	930	0	61	991
Recreational	38	0	55	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,502</b>	<b>2,999</b>	<b>25,471</b>	<b>33,972</b>

**Table WSR-10. Eligible River Corridor Acres in Recommended Wilderness Areas by Classification**

Classification	Boise NF Acres	Payette NF Acres	Sawtooth NF Acres	Ecogroup Total
Wild	2,393	2,286	24,766	29,445
Scenic	0	0	1,827	1,827
Recreational	1,460	5,122	955	7,537
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,853</b>	<b>7,408</b>	<b>27,548</b>	<b>38,809</b>

**Table WSR-11. Eligible River Corridor Acres in the Sawtooth NRA by Classification**

Classification	SNRA Acres
Wild	27,555
Scenic	13,118
Recreational	32,790
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,463</b>

Wild and Scenic River designation has the potential to affect the number of acres available for timber production. According to the Wild and Scenic River Designation Standards, in river corridor classified as Wild, there should be little or no evidence of past timber harvest, and no ongoing timber harvest. In accordance with these standards, the river corridors are not considered part of the suited base. Corridor acres are displayed by classification in WSR-12 below. The Wild acres in the suited timber base will no longer be considered suited.

Vegetation management could reduce the potential for future eligibility and classification by negatively affecting vegetation screening, scenery, and recreational values, and by constructing access roads. However, vegetation management could also be used to improve scenery and recreational values over time, which could benefit eligibility potential over the long term. Vegetation management activities may also be necessary to address forest health and public safety concerns. Timberlands that fall within the Wild and Scenic River corridor for rivers with a wild classification have been removed from the suited timber base.

### Cumulative Effects

Cumulative Effects are analyzed in two different ways in this section. First, the amount of eligible Wild and Scenic River segments are calculated to show the maximum potential for effects under each alternative. Then, the amount of eligible rivers are compared to the current nationally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers to show the potential maximum relative contributions each alternative would make to the National System.

Table WSR-12 shows the cumulative amount of river miles and acres of river corridors for eligible Wild and Scenic River segments on the three Forests by alternative and classification.

**Table WSR-12. Cumulative Eligible WSR Miles and Acres by Alternative**

Classification	Miles/Acres	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
<b>Wild</b>	River Miles	294.4	413.4	413.4	413.4	294.4	364.4	309.4
	Corridor Acres	90,093	127,514	127,514	127,514	90,093	112,387	94,204
<b>Scenic</b>	River Miles	78.0	78.0	78.0	78.0	78.0	78.0	78.0
	Corridor Acres	22,663	22,663	22,663	22,663	22,663	22,663	22,663
<b>Recreational</b>	River Miles	375.0	503.0	503.0	503.0	375.0	552.0	498.0
	Corridor Acres*	106,437	143,561	143,561	143,561	106,437	158,688	142,032

Table WSR-13 shows the maximum number and miles of suitable and eligible river segments in the Ecogroup area and their potential contribution to the National Wild and Scenic River System by alternative. This contribution is expressed as a percentage of the national system numbers.

**Table WSR-13. Potential Ecogroup Forest WSR Contribution to the National System**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Alt. 1B</b>	<b>Alt. 2</b>	<b>Alt. 3</b>	<b>Alt. 4</b>	<b>Alt. 5</b>	<b>Alt. 6</b>	<b>Alt. 7</b>
Current number of rivers in National Wild and Scenic River System	160	160	160	160	160	160	160
Number of suitable & eligible rivers in the Ecogroup area	55	55	55	55	50	55	52
Percent of Ecogroup area contribution to National System	26%	26%	26%	26%	24%	26%	24%
Current miles of rivers in National Wild and Scenic River System	11,292	11,292	11,292	11,292	11,292	11,292	11,292
Miles of suitable and eligible rivers in the Ecogroup area	747.4	994.4	994.4	994.4	747.4	994.4	885.4
Percent of Ecogroup area contribution to National System	6%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%	7%