

# Appendix F

## Wild and scenic river eligibility

---

### Introduction

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (PL 90-542:16 USC 1271-1287, as amended) is designed to preserve certain rivers and streams with outstanding natural, heritage, or recreational features in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. There is one designated National Wild and Scenic River in Colorado, the Cache la Poudre.

Although there are other political means to establish wild and scenic rivers, the primary process is through studies by federal land management agencies, which then present recommendations to Congress. This study process requires two steps before a river can be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). The first is an evaluation of a river's *eligibility*. This evaluation considers the area within one-quarter mile of the high water marks on both sides of a river, and other features outside this corridor if their inclusion is essential for the protection of the river's *outstandingly remarkable values*. To be eligible for inclusion in the national system a river must be free-flowing and have at least one outstandingly remarkable value.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act defines “free-flowing” as existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway. The existence of low dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time any river is proposed for inclusion in the NWSRS does not automatically disqualify it for designation, but future construction of such structures is not allowed. The guidelines state, “the fact that a river segment may flow between large impoundments will not necessarily preclude its designation. Such segments may qualify if conditions within the segment meet the eligibility criteria.”

To the extent that the Forest Service is authorized under law to control stream impoundments and diversions, the free-flowing characteristics of the study river cannot be modified by new structures that were not part of conditions when eligibility was determined.

The second step is to evaluate eligible rivers for *suitability*. This evaluation considers possible congressional inclusion of the river in the NWSRS in terms of social and economic values, effects on other resources, and effects on private lands and other uses of the area. The administration may recommend suitable rivers to Congress for inclusion in the system. When Congress “designates” a river for inclusion, a final boundary for the corridor is established and a management plan is developed.

Landownership within designated boundaries is often a combination of federal, state, and private lands. If designated, federal agencies are not required to acquire any private land and indeed are not authorized to acquire more than 100 acres per mile of river of private land within a designated river corridor. Moreover, recreational, agricultural, and

residential uses may continue. Recreation users are cautioned to be aware of and respect private property rights. Existing water rights and existing jurisdiction of states and the United States over waters as determined by established principles of law are not affected by designation.

Although study corridors include private lands, Forest Service jurisdiction and management practices defined in the 2001 Forest Plan do not control private land activities. If designation of any rivers occurs and if private land lies within the corridors, the Forest Service would consider acquisition of private lands only when the owner is willing to sell or exchange land for the appraised value. The Forest Service would not obligate anyone to sell his or her property.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is prohibited from licensing projects that lie on or that directly affect designated rivers. Other federal agencies cannot assist by loan, grant, license, or otherwise in the construction of any water resources projects (such as dams, water diversions, channelization, and rip-rapping) that would have a direct and adverse effect on river values.

Regardless of classification, rivers in the NWSRS often are referred to simply as “wild and scenic.” It is important to note that the specific legal classification of a particular river—as wild, scenic, or recreational—has a direct effect on how it is administered and whether certain activities on federally owned land are permissible. Whatever the classification, each designated river is administered with the goal of non-degradation and enhancement of the values that led to its designation.

All rivers on the forest were evaluated for their eligibility to become part of the NWSRS. If a river is found eligible it will be managed under the appropriate wild, scenic, or recreational management area standards and guidelines to protect those values that made it eligible and the characteristics that established its potential classification. The second phase of river study, suitability, will be initiated when:

- Strong local interest or support is demonstrated for wild and scenic river designation, and
- Congress expresses interest in a specific river for wild and scenic river designation, or
- A proposed project would alter the free-flowing character of a stream, such as by impoundment, or would affect the resources that made the stream eligible.

(In 1997, support for a suitability study of Deep Creek was expressed by certain local interests and by U.S. Rep. David Skaggs). These interests will be reexamined upon completion of the forest plan revision process; if they meet the above criteria, a suitability study will be initiated.)

The eligibility evaluations found five rivers or river segments to be eligible. All other rivers on the forest were found to be ineligible. The eligible rivers or river segments are described as follows:

## DEEP CREEK

---

### **Eligible segments and potential classifications**

The eligible segment of Deep Creek begins near its headwaters at Deep Lake and continues downstream to the confluence with the Colorado River near Dotsero, approximately 14.5 miles. As reported in a joint Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) letter dated October 2, 1995:

- *Segment 1 – Scenic*  
From the Deep Lake outlet to one-fourth mile downstream, encompassing approximately 50 acres of National Forest System (NFS) land.
- *Segment 2 – Wild*  
From segment 1 to the Deep Creek Ditch diversion, approximately 13.25 miles, encompassing approximately 6,130 acres of NFS land, 2,480 acres of BLM land, and 40 acres of private land.
- *Segment 3 – Recreational*  
From segment 2 to the BLM/private land boundary, approximately one mile, encompassing approximately 450 acres of BLM land.
- *Segment 4 – Recreational*  
From segment 3 to the Colorado River confluence, approximately one mile, encompassing approximately 30 acres of BLM land and 110 acres of private land.

### **General description**

As its name reflects, Deep Creek has cut a spectacularly deep, narrow canyon into the Flat Tops Plateau. The *scenic river* component of Deep Creek begins at its headwaters at Deep Lake and runs one fourth of a mile downstream. This segment is adjacent to Deep Lake Campground and is characterized by a broad valley with open meadows and stringers of Douglas fir.

In the *wild river* segment, towering canyon walls reach heights of more than 2,000 feet above the river. These walls and the surrounding rough terrain limit human access to the streambed itself. This primitive setting provides an undisturbed biological environment. Important geologic features include a high concentration of caves, rock formations, and stratification that also provide outstanding scenic features. The number of caves in the area is one of the highest in Colorado. Many of these caves have been noted for significant mineralogical, geologic, and biological features. Groaning Cave is the most widely known cave in the area.

Vegetation in the canyon ranges from open meadows to aspen and Douglas-fir stands. Engelmann spruce stands show the results of the massive spruce beetle epidemic that occurred in the Flat Tops in the 1940s and 1950s. The stark gray skeletons of dead spruce contrast sharply with other vegetation. Riparian zones are composed of spruce, aspen, cottonwood, and several shrub species.

Wildlife species common to the area include coyote, marmot, pika, deer, cottontails, black bear, and pocket gopher. Birds include pipit, rosy finch, pine grosbeak, brown creeper, golden-crowned kinglet, olive-sided flycatcher, blue grouse, Lincoln sparrow, sage grouse, saw-whet owl, sharp-shinned hawk, green-tailed towhee, white-tailed swift, MacGillivray's warbler, Virginia's warbler, and gray jays.

Fish species common to this area include speckled dace, mottled sculpin, bluehead sucker, roundtail chub, mountain whitefish, flannel mouth sucker, and Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Recreation use around the rim of the canyon includes camping, hiking, picnicking, hunting, sightseeing, caving, photography, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. Few visitors venture down into the creek itself.

Human inhabitants have used the Deep Creek vicinity for at least 10,000 years. For generations the Ute people roamed the canyons, streams, and ridgelines, hunted for game, gathered wild plants, and participated in rituals and ceremonies. The canyon rims were used as lookouts and buffalo jumps. The caves and crevices provided dwellings, caches for food, materials for religious practices, and tools for survival. Vestiges of these activities are found along Deep Creek and the surrounding canyon lands. The area is very important to the Utes as a reflection of their history and traditions.

The outstandingly remarkable values that will be recognized in Deep Creek management are its ecological condition—it contains several state and globally rare species along with occurrences of very high-quality natural communities; the scenic, natural, pristine canyon landscapes with very little disturbance from human activity, domestic livestock, and logging; and finally, the recreation and geologic values associated with the cave formations within the canyon.

## COLORADO RIVER

---

**Eligible segments and potential classifications**

The eligible segments of the Colorado River begin at the national forest boundary on the eastern end of Glenwood Canyon and extend downstream to the national forest boundary near the west end of the canyon, with the exclusion of the section from the upstream end of the Shoshone Dam to the Shoshone power plant, as this section is not free-flowing. The eligible segments total approximately nine miles. Even though there are two segments, the area will be managed as one corridor encompassing 6,500 acres.

**General description**

- **Segment 1 – Recreational**  
From the national forest boundary on the east end of Glenwood Canyon to the upstream end of the Shoshone Dam, extending four miles.
- **Segment 2 – Recreational**  
From the Shoshone power plant to the national forest boundary on the west end of the canyon, extending five miles. The Colorado River has cut its way through Glenwood Canyon, creating an exceptionally scenic passageway for travelers through the canyon. The steep and rugged canyon walls tower up to 2,500 feet above the river. Oakbrush and aspen add a splash of color along ledges on the canyon walls. As the river winds through the canyon, areas of calm water give way to frequent rapids. The river is easily accessed from several rest areas along Interstate 70 as well as from a paved bike path that runs the length of the canyon, paralleling the riverbank. This ease of access, combined with abundant stretches of whitewater, has made the river corridor a major Colorado attraction for rafters and kayakers.

Glenwood Canyon is a doorway into the area’s long geologic past, revealed by the many layers of sedimentary deposits in the canyon walls. Present in the canyon are rarely

exposed Cambrian formations. Most of the canyon walls are composed of Paleozoic sediments of limestone, sandstone, and shale. These layers contain abundant fossils of Paleozoic life. Caves and springs are found in areas of the canyon that contain limestone and dolomite.

The design and construction of Interstate 70 through the canyon (a project completed in the early 1990s) is regarded as one of the most impressive engineering feats in the interstate highway system. The project gave special emphasis to environmental aesthetics, ensuring that the highway would complement the flow and natural characteristics of the canyon. Instead of traditional construction practices that would have significantly modified the canyon's geologic formations, an elevated highway design was used that left most of these intact. In addition, materials were carefully selected to blend with the natural beauty of Glenwood Canyon.

Paralleling the interstate from Glenwood Springs to Dotsero, the Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail provides visitors with outstanding access to the scenery of Glenwood Canyon. The paved trail, which runs below the highway along the riverbank, is used by hikers, bicyclists, inline skaters, anglers, and kayakers, and features a network of picnic areas, trailheads, whitewater access points, restroom facilities, and fishing access.

From the Shoshone Power Plant to Glenwood Springs, the river provides some of Colorado's premier whitewater that is enjoyed by increasing numbers of kayakers and rafters and supported by a host of commercial outfitters.

From the south bank of the river, the canyon is viewed by passengers aboard the Amtrak train, which makes frequent runs through the river corridor, providing an exceptional sightseeing experience.

Watchable wildlife includes peregrine falcon, big horn sheep, deer, elk, and eagles.

The outstandingly remarkable values that will be recognized in managing these sections of the Colorado River are scenic driving (as the many people traveling on I-70 can attest), geology (abundantly conveyed by the canyon's sedimentary strata, caves and springs, providing outstanding visual, scientific, and educational values), and whitewater boating opportunities.

## SOUTH FORK OF THE WHITE RIVER

---

### **Eligible segments and potential classifications**

The eligible segment of the South Fork extends from the headwaters and continues downstream to the national forest boundary for about 25 miles, encompassing 14,600 acres on NFS land and 200 acres of private land.

- *Segment 1 – Wild*  
From the headwaters downstream to the Flat Tops Wilderness boundary, approximately 24 miles, encompassing approximately 13,000 acres of NFS land and 200 acres of private land.
- *Segment 2 – Scenic*  
From the wilderness boundary downstream to the national forest boundary, approximately one mile, encompassing approximately 700 acres of NFS land.

### **General description**

The *wild river* portion of the South Fork of the White River flows through the Flat Tops Wilderness for 24 miles. The South Fork Canyon has outstanding scenic qualities, with steep cliffs and high alpine meadows dotted by a few conifer trees intermixed within aspen groves. The rushing river completes the scenic backdrop. Spectacular colors paint the canyon side slopes in the fall.

From a broad perspective the dominant feature of the area is the White River Plateau, a flattened, lava-capped dome. The perimeter of this plateau is sharply defined by sheer volcanic escarpments, below which lie gently rolling benches and deep drainages. The South Fork Canyon is one of the more outstanding scenic canyons cutting through the plateau.

A special feature of the canyon is Spring Cave, which is three-fourths of a mile above the river near the South Fork Campground. Spring Cave is the third largest cave in Colorado, with a vast underground waterway and significant bat habitat.

Wildlife species common to the area include coyote, marmot, pika, deer, cottontails, black bear, and pocket gopher. The general area is home to the nation's largest elk herd. Birds include pipit, rosy finch, pine grosbeak, brown creeper, golden-crowned kinglet, olive sided flycatcher, blue grouse, Lincoln sparrow, sage grouse, saw-whet owl, sharp-shinned hawk, green-tailed towhee, white-tailed swift, MacGillivray's warbler, Virginia's warbler, and gray jays.

Fish species common to this area include mountain whitefish, brook trout, rainbow trout, and cutthroat trout.

Primitive recreation opportunities include fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding, and hiking. Caving is another popular activity in the area.

The South Fork of the White River can be documented as having a high potential for aboriginal and historic land usage. Though not completely surveyed, the last four years have provided data to support a network of important sites ranging from small lithic scatters to sacred landscapes. The Utes were documented as using the land by F.V. Hayden and George Sudworth. Photos from the early 1900s show trails crossing the high mountain plateau near the White River drainage. Travois cut deep into the soil, making ruts still used by sheepherders. The diverse features of the area provided various elements for their survival, minerals and rocks for their tools, cave and rock overhangs for shelters,

cliffs for lookouts and buffalo jumps, an abundance of plant consumables, and pathways and entrances to important traditional areas.

The outstandingly remarkable values that will be recognized in managing these sections of the South Fork of the White River are scenery, geology, and recreation.

## CROSS CREEK

---

**Eligible segments and potential classifications**

The eligible segment of Cross Creek begins at its headwaters and continues downstream to the Holy Cross Wilderness boundary. The segment is approximately 23 miles long and encompasses approximately 4,000 acres of NFS land and 30 acres of private land.

- Segment 1 – **Wild**

The entire eligible segment can be classified as wild.

**General description**

The headwaters for Cross Creek begin high in the Sawatch Range with the primary drainage continuing for over 15 miles within Holy Cross Wilderness. The drainage consists of a mosaic of subalpine and alpine communities, with a pristine network of wetlands interspersed throughout. Wetland communities are diverse and support high-quality populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout and boreal toads. The variety of vegetation, waterfalls, mountains, cliffs, and jagged peaks provide a scenic backdrop to the Cross Creek corridor.

The terrain is extremely rugged, with peaks as high as 14,000 feet towering above steep-sided, glacially carved valleys. Small rock and snow glaciers occupy the cirques at the head of the valleys, and small lakes and wetlands are common.

The most distinguishing vegetation feature of this area is the extensive hydrologically intact wetland and riparian communities that are continuous from the headwaters to the Eagle River. The extensive spruce-fir forest, wetland communities, and expansive alpine environments make this drainage outstanding for its wild and scenic qualities.

Recreation activities in the area include hiking, fishing, horseback riding, backpacking, primitive camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, and photography. The wilderness setting surrounding Cross Creek offers solitude to those who seek it.

Watchable wildlife includes elk, deer, beaver, bear, moose, marmots, and pikas. Birds found in the area include white-tailed ptarmigan, pipit, rosy finch, purple marten, gray jay, olive-sided flycatcher, blue grouse, Lincoln sparrow, pine grosbeak, brown creeper, and golden-crowned kinglet.

Mining for precious metals is part of the history of the upper portion of main Cross Creek. Dilapidated mining structures from the 1800s are scattered throughout the valley. Religious pilgrims in the early 1900s visited the Bowl of Tears, a lake at the base of Mount of the Holy Cross (and the source of East Cross Creek), to seek the reputed healing powers of the water.

Cross Creek is the largest stream within Holy Cross Wilderness in both length and discharge. The upper half of the creek also harbors one of the forest's largest populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout. A waterfall barrier about one mile downstream of Reeds Meadow and seven miles upstream of the wilderness boundary prevents non-native brook, brown, and rainbow trout from invading this population of cutthroat trout.

All of Cross Creek, from the headwaters to this waterfall barrier, is inhabited by native Colorado River cutthroat trout.

The six-mile reach from the headwaters to Reeds Meadow flows with a low gradient and meanders through open meadows that are surrounded by peaks taller than 13,000 feet. The meandering streambed provides quality habitat for trout. This remote area, except for some old abandoned miners' cabins and a moderately used pack trail, has been relatively untrammelled by humans.

A significant location of a relict boreal peat moss (*Sphagnum platyphyllum*) has been reported in four of five plant communities sampled in the Cross Creek drainage (Cooper 1986). At the time, this site was the only known location for this species in the southern Rocky Mountains. The plant has been placed on the Colorado Plant Species of Special Concern list by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

The high-quality trout habitat, minimum amount of human intervention, and size of upper Cross Creek create what is one of the largest and most valued populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout on the forest.

The outstandingly remarkable value that will be recognized in managing Cross Creek is the Colorado River cutthroat trout population.

## CRYSTAL RIVER

---

**Eligible  
segments  
and potential  
classifications**

The river segments found eligible include both the north and south forks of the Crystal River, beginning at their headwaters and then downstream to the Sweet Jessup headgate (about one mile from the forest boundary), approximately 39 miles, encompassing approximately 7,500 acres of NFS land and 4,500 acres of private land.

- *Segment 1 – Wild*  
From the headwaters of the North Fork downstream to the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness boundary, about seven miles, encompassing about 2,300 acres of NFS land.
- *Segment 2 – Scenic*  
From the wilderness boundary on the North Fork to the junction with the South Fork, about two miles, encompassing approximately 64 acres of NFS land and 160 acres of private land.
- *Segment 3 – Scenic*  
From the headwaters of the South Fork downstream to Beaver Lake, approximately 10 miles, encompassing about 2,000 acres of NFS land and 1,000 acres of private land.
- *Segment 4 – Recreational*  
From Beaver Lake downstream to the Sweet Jessup headgate (about one mile from the forest boundary), approximately 20 miles, encompassing about 3,100 acres of NFS land and 3,300 acres of private land.

**General  
description**

Rugged peaks rising from 7,500 feet to more than 14,000 feet define the river corridor. The mix of aspen with Engelmann spruce and Douglas-fir forest along the steep mountain slopes create a scenic backdrop for the river corridor. Rock outcrops and cliffs rim most of the skyline. Spectacular fall colors illuminate the corridor during much of



September and October. The outstanding scenic resources attract tourists and artists both nationally and internationally. The West Elk Scenic Byway winds through the river corridor and over McClure Pass.

Seven miles of the Crystal River lie within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness and provide outstanding primitive recreation opportunities for sightseeing, photography, and hunting. The primitive roads in the upper Crystal drainage provide challenging four-wheel-drive opportunities and access to spectacular scenery. Other recreation opportunities throughout the corridor include camping, picnicking, fishing, driving for pleasure, horseback riding, bicycling, and ice climbing. A hot spring also attracts recreationists.

Big game species include bighorn sheep, deer and elk, and black bear. Smaller species include beaver, snowshoe hare, cottontails, porcupines, raccoons, red squirrels, yellow-bellied marmots, pine marten, and Colorado pocket gopher. Bird species include gray jay, olive-sided flycatcher, blue grouse, Lincoln sparrow, saw-whet owl, sharp-shinned hawk, green-tailed towhee, white-tailed swift, MacGillivray's warbler, and Virginia's warbler. The river valley provides winter habitat for bald eagles.

Fish native to the area include the rare Colorado River cutthroat trout, speckled dace, mottled sculpin, bluehead sucker, roundtail chub, mountain whitefish, and the flannel mouth sucker. Rainbow, brown, and brook trout have all been introduced for anglers.

Forest lands are intermingled with private lands adjacent to the river from the wilderness boundary to the end of the recreational river boundary. Existing developments on private land do not detract from the picturesque qualities of the river corridor.

Significant cultural resources include Redstone Castle, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; and the Strauss and Yule Creek marble quarries. The Yule quarry is the source of the marble used in the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. Other historic attractions include the towns of Redstone, Crystal, and Marble and the Crystal Mill.

The outstandingly remarkable values that will be recognized in managing the Crystal River are scenery, historic, and recreational values.

