

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Goal: To maintain, enhance, and protect the free-flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values of rivers and river segments recommended for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Background: The 2008 Forest Plan identifies thirty-one rivers (or segments), pending designation by Congress as Wild, Scenic, or Recreation Rivers, to maintain eligibility of the total miles of river for the Wild, Scenic, or Recreational classification. Approximately 532 miles of rivers on the Tongass are included in this recommendation.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Monitoring Question: Are Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Standards effective in maintaining or enhancing the free flowing conditions and outstandingly remarkable values at the classification level for which the river was found suitable for designation as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System?

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation must be completed on a river by river basis as the outstandingly remarkable values vary for each river. Depending on the activity, different resources specialists will provide information as to whether or not the values for which the rivers have been recommended have been enhanced or impacted.

Sampling/ Reporting Period

Sampling period: annual; reporting period: five year

Monitoring Results

Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District

Of the six candidate river systems on the Ketchikan- Misty Fiords Ranger District, three were visited by recreation/wilderness field crews this season, and two had recent planning analyses and decisions that address the wild and scenic river LUDs. These analyses both concluded that the projects will not affect the outstandingly remarkable values and free flowing characteristics of the river systems.

For the Fish Creek System, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) were completed in 2012 for the re-issuance of the Mirror Lake Fishing Club Special Use Permit and Helicopter Use Authorization. The hydrology/fisheries analysis recognizes the Wild and Scenic River designation but states no that there are no resource concerns: "Project is located within WMWR LUD...the proposal does not indicate any disturbance of streams or riparian areas will occur." The wildlife analysis comments on mountain goats and goshawks but notes no specific concerns regarding the resource. This project will have little if any on the outstandingly remarkable values of this river system (fisheries, wildlife, recreation, scenic and cultural/historical values).

For the Naha River System, a CE was done in 2012 for the Naha River Trail Reconstruction. The Decision Memo includes this language:

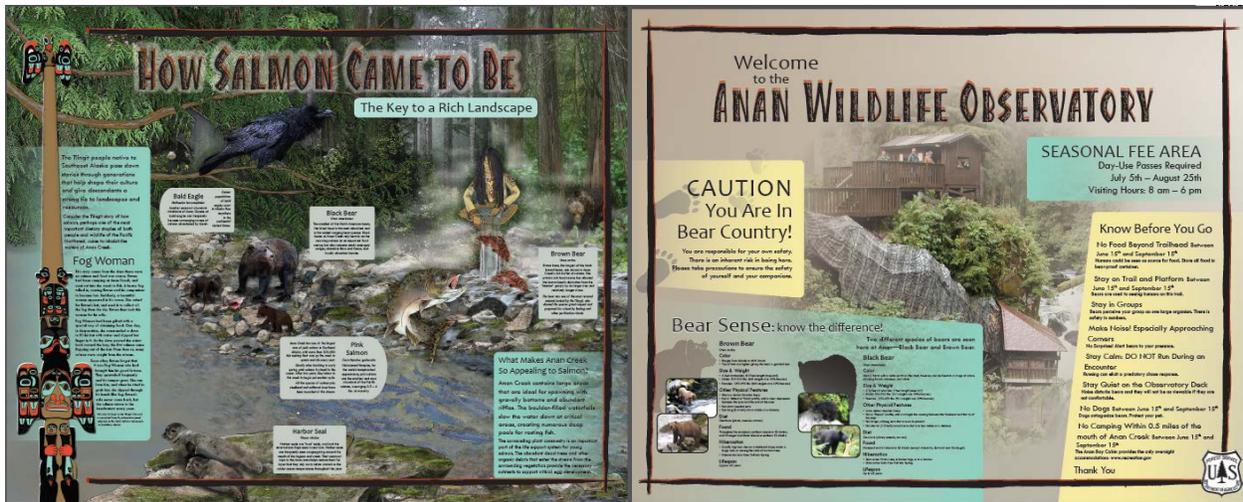
“This decision is consistent with the 2008 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The project is located within an area identified in the Forest Plan as having a Land Use Designation (LUD) of Wild, Scenic and Recreational River. The portion of the trail under reconstruction is along a proposed Scenic River corridor. Direction for management of the Scenic River LUD is to maintain an enduring wild and free-flowing river resource, while providing access and use consistent with the Wild and Scenic River Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Trail reconstruction will not affect the free flowing characteristics of the Naha River.”

There is an infestation of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) at the mouth of the Naha River in Roosevelt Lagoon. It is unknown what effect this may have on the outstandingly remarkable values of this river system. Reed canary grass grows in dense stands and provides little value as wildlife cover and poor nesting habitat for waterfowl and other nesting birds (Indiana Department of Natural Resources 2012).

For the McDonald Lake System (Wolverine Creek), field crews documented a significant accumulation of gear associated with the ADF&G field camp located on McDonald Lake as well as gear and debris along the old tram route from McDonald Lake to Yes Bay in previous years. This area was cleaned up in 2012. The trail to McDonald Lake has had increased use from outfitter guides in the past few years. There has been a noticeable increase in the level of impacts (trampling/soil erosion) along the trail. It is unlikely that these impacts are having a significant effect on the Wild and Scenic River classification. This area also received an increased level of outfitter and guide use and associated trail impacts in 2012. It is, however, unlikely that these impacts are affecting the outstandingly remarkable value and free flowing characteristics of this river system.

Other Districts

Other projects that support the goal to maintain, enhance, or protect an outstandingly remarkable value of rivers and river segments recommended for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are also underway. In the Admiralty National Monument, Trail reconstruction was completed in the Hasselborg River and Lakes system in 2012. This work contributes to the recreation value of this wild river segment. The trail is a part of the cross-Admiralty canoe route that connects the east and west side of the island through a series of lakes and trails. On the Wrangell Ranger District, the recreation values at Anan Creek were enhanced through the installation of new interpretive signs, and by installing internet service to improve the management of the site when visitor passes are required during the heavy bear viewing season (July through August). In addition to the signs, the public use recreation cabin and support buildings near the Anan Trailhead were replaced with a larger cabin. This improvement will enhance the recreation experience for the visiting public. Lastly, at the LeConte Glacier, the recreation value of this area was enhanced through the production and distribution of a new brochure specific to the LeConte Bay environment. Information to visitors and guides includes the history and wildlife associated with the glacier. This is the southernmost tidewater glacier in the United States and is a primary sightseeing destination for both aircraft and boat based visits.



Wild and Scenic Rivers Picture 1. New interpretative signs at Anan Creek