



**NEWS
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Forest Service
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SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST EXTENDS WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS COMMENT PERIOD

SALMON, Idaho – The Salmon-Challis National Forest announced they will be extending the comment period on the Wild and Scenic River Draft Eligibility Report to July 16, 2018. The Forest was originally seeking comment by May 4.

“There has been a great deal of interest in the Wild and Scenic River eligibility process that is required as part of our forest plan revision process,” said Chuck Mark, Salmon-Challis National Forest Supervisor. “One of the goals of plan revision is to hear from interested members of the public, and I want to make sure we are allowing adequate time for that. This extension is intended to allow us to tap into the local knowledge people have of rivers and streams that are so important to this area.”

Mark said that once the eligibility report is finalized, a comment period will begin about a river or stream’s suitability under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The comment period for suitability will begin on July 17, 2018, and go through October 17, 2018.

In general, suitability asks whether designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is the best method for managing the river. To answer this question, the Forest Service will evaluate the potential physical, biological, economic, and social impacts of adding the river to the National Wild and Scenic River System, its landownership status, and public support. The suitability step provides the basis for determining which eligible rivers the Forest Service should recommend to Congress as a Wild and Scenic River. While the Forest Service may recommend certain rivers, only Congress can designate them. However, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader Josh Milligan said, “Once we have a Final Environmental Impact Statement and a Record of Decision, rivers that are identified as suitable would be managed to protect the values that made the rivers suitable.” Milligan expects the Salmon-Challis will complete have a Record of Decision in 2020.

The Draft Eligibility Report and other information about the Wild and Scenic Rivers process is available on-line from the Salmon-Challis Forest Plan Revision website, and an interactive StoryMap can be found at <http://bit.ly/SCNFWSRStoryMap>. The Forest has scheduled a webinar to discuss the draft eligibility report and future steps on Thursday, April 26, from noon – 1:30 p.m. The link is <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/scnf-yfyf/>.

For more information, email jmilligan@fs.fed.us or call Milligan at 208-756-5560.

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