



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Special Environmental Resource Concerns

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Clean Air Act
Criteria Pollutants

Clean Air Act
Regional Visibility
Degradation

Clean Water Act

Coastal Zone
Management
Areas

Coral Reefs

Cultural
Resources

Endangered
and Threatened
Species

Environmental
Justice

Essential Fish
Habitat

Floodplain
Management

Invasive
Species

Migratory Birds

Prime and
Unique
Farmlands

Riparian Areas

Wetlands

Wild and Scenic
Rivers

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-542) was created by Congress to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. A listing of designated streams and stream segments can be found on the National Park Service's Wild and Scenic Rivers Web site.

What is it?

Rivers may be designated by Congress or, if certain requirements are met, the Secretary of the Interior. Each river is administered by either a federal or state agency. Designated segments need not include the entire river and may include tributaries. For federally administered rivers, the designated boundaries generally average one-quarter mile on either bank in the lower 48 states and one-half mile on rivers outside national parks in Alaska in order to protect river-related values. Designated rivers are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational.

Why is it important?

The designation of a river or river segment under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides legal protections from adverse development and provides a mechanism for management of the river's resources. In addition to the river segments designated as wild and scenic, many more segments are believed to possess one or more outstanding or remarkable natural or cultural values judged to be of more than local or regional significance. Under a 1979 Presidential directive, and related CEQ procedures, all Federal agencies must also seek to avoid or mitigate actions that would adversely affect one or more National River Inventory (NRI) stream segments.

What can be done about it?

Federal agencies must consider the values of these segments prior to taking actions that could exclude them from future wild, scenic, or recreational status. Generally, timber harvests and agricultural operations on privately owned lands are unaffected in wild, scenic, and recreational river designations. However, some activities may require permits or may be covered under special provisions of the management plan. Each designated river has a Federal river manager who may assist and cooperate with States or local organizations, landowners, and individuals to plan, protect, and manage river resources. The assistance may include limited financial assistance.

Wild and Scenic Rivers at a Glance

Problems / Indicators - Proposed action may adversely impact a designated river or river segment	
Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use changes adjacent to river segment Riparian modifications Changes in local hydrology (e.g., adjacent wetland draining activities) Dredge and fill activities Pollution from point sources (e.g., CAFO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation during the planning process Wetland restoration Riparian forest buffers and/or herbaceous cover Forest harvest management and BMPs Prescribed grazing Consult with NPS to coordinate mitigation plan

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