

## Appendix O

### O.0 Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Report For The Amargosa River

#### O.1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an eligibility study on potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System for an identified riverine system in the Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Planning Area. The river considered potentially eligible for designation within the eastern portion of the planning area is the Amargosa River, originating near Beatty, Nevada and terminating in Death Valley National Park, California. This eligibility report evolved from the inventory and analysis that was conducted for consideration of alternatives to conserve and protect the Amargosa vole (refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.3). Based on public comment, the wild and Scenic Rivers Act requirements, the final report includes the inventory of all rivers evaluated for eligibility in the Amargosa River region in eastern Inyo County. Table 1 shows the findings of eligibility or non-eligibility for each river. This report concludes with a discussion of management standards and guidelines applicable to rivers designated under the National Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Act of 1986. The report concludes with a discussion of management standards and guidelines applicable to said designated rivers.

#### O.2 Background

Federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been mandated to evaluate potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS) per Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 United States Code 1271-1287, *et seq.*). Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart 297, addresses management of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Title 43 CFR, Subpart 8350, specifically addresses designation of management areas. NWSRS study guidelines have also been published in Federal Register Volume 7, Number 173 (September 7, 1982) for public lands managed by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior. Additional guidance on wild and scenic rivers (WSR) is provided in BLM Manual 8351.

The NWSRS study process includes three regulatory steps:

1. Determination of what river(s) and/or river segment(s) are eligible for WSR designation;
2. Determination of eligible river(s) and/or segment(s) potential classification with respect to wild, scenic, recreational designation, or any combination thereof, and
3. Conducting a suitability study of eligible river(s) and/or segment(s) for inclusion into the NWSRS via legislative action. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is commonly prepared to document the analysis needed for suitability determination/WSR designation.

Any river or river segment on public lands found eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS is to be managed as if this river/segment were designated, until such time as a suitability determination is made. This requires management of public lands within 0.25 mile of the subject river/segment, to conform to management standards and guidelines presented in federal agency manuals for wild and scenic rivers until the suitability determination is completed.

If a river or river segment is found suitable for inclusion to the NWSRS, the U.S. Congress must then pass legislation designating this river/segment, prior to its formal addition to the NWSRS. In addition to Federal agencies, private individuals and/or groups, as well as State governments, can nominate rivers and/or segments for inclusion.

Only the determinations of eligibility and classification are documented in this report and the impacts evaluated in the attached Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Proposed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The remaining suitability determination would be completed in a separate document, and analyzed in an EIS format. The results of the suitability determination would amend the applicable land use plan, i.e., the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan (BLM 1980, as amended).

To meet eligibility criteria for wild and scenic river designation, a river or segment must be free-flowing in nature and must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable cultural, fish/wildlife, geologic, historic, recreational or scenic values within its immediate proximity. Free flowing, as defined in Section 16(b) of the WSR Act reflects water flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, or other modification of the waterway. However, the existence of low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures at the time of designation, does not necessarily bar consideration for inclusion on the NWSRS. Nor are there any minimum river or segment lengths necessary for inclusion. Congress has designated a riverine stretch as short as 4.25 miles. Considerations in defining study rivers and/or study river segments should include land ownership patterns, physical changes in the river/segments and their environs, as well as the type and amount of human modification of lands bordering identified rivers/segments.

The term “Outstandingly Remarkable” is not clearly defined in the NWSRS, necessitating professional judgement by submitting parties. In general, the term is defined as a resource that is considered more than simply ordinary, in the context of the local region. Examples include areas supporting an “A” Scenic Quality Rating (BLM Manual 8400); habitats for threatened and/or endangered plants/animals; exemplary physiographical, ecological, geological or recreational type locations; and areas where little human modification is evident or where terrain is rugged and physically challenging to traverse.

### **O.3 Description of River Under Consideration**

The Amargosa River is the focal hydrologic system of the eastern half of the Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert (NEMO) Planning Area. The hydrologic systems of the southern Great Basin and northern Mojave Desert are generally characterized by deep water tables. They are also considered primarily closed groundwater basins. One of only two large rivers in the Mojave Desert, the free-flowing Amargosa is largely subterranean. It begins its southerly, largely underground flow near Beatty, Nevada. A segment of the river 10 miles in length supports shallow, perennial water flow near in Oasis Valley in Nevada, but this “bitter water” river then generally flows in a sub-surface fashion as it bisects the remainder of the Amargosa Desert in Nevada. It flows adjacent to Stateline, Nevada and then southerly through the towns of Death Valley Junction, Shoshone, Hot Springs and Tecopa, in California. It crosses state highway (SH) 127 and terminates in the lowest elevation area in the United States: Badwater Basin, within Death Valley National Park (DVNP).

Water runoff from the Bullfrog Hills, Yucca Mountain, Shoshone and Spring Mountains, in Nevada, all contribute to Amargosa River water flow in California. The latter Spring Mountain area is suspected to provide a substantial amount of this runoff contribution. The Lower Carson Slough tributary of the Amargosa serves as a primary drainage for a portion of Ash Meadows and the southern portion of the Amargosa Desert in Nevada. These watersheds contribute to a largely subterranean Amargosa River at Franklin Playa in California. Several mountain ranges and alluvial basins in California, particularly Eagle Mountain and the Resting Spring Mountain Range in the upper California reach of the river, the Nopah and Kingston Mountain Ranges, as well as California Valley, progressively add to central Amargosa River water flow. Major river tributaries include the aforementioned Lower Carson Slough in the northern reach of the river, China Ranch Wash in the central reach, and Salt Creek in the south.

The Amargosa flows extensively underground, surfacing perennially at only two areas in California (Shoshone-Hot Springs and Tecopa-Sperry). Ephemeral surface flows and salt flats are common in the Upper reaches of the Amargosa River. Shallow perennial water flow and clay-hole ponding are common in the Shoshone Segment of the river. Perennial ponding, as well as ephemeral mudflats, are common in the Grimshaw Reach of the river. A substantial perennial water flow begins in the Amargosa Canyon Segment, which continues through the Amargosa Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern and the Kingston Range Wilderness, to Sperry Siding. This historic railroad depot is located on the abandoned Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad (TNTRR). Between Sperry Siding and the eastern boundary of DVNP at SH 127, water flows over the years have alternated between intermittent and perennial flows, with ponding occurring in ephemeral years. Shallow, perennial flows beneath SH 127 have been recorded as the norm in recent years, following largely ephemeral flows in the early 1990's. These ephemeral and/or perennial surface water flows, contribute to the perennial subterranean flow that terminates in Badwater Basin, within DVNP.

Lands along the river in California are largely in federal ownership, i.e., approximately 53.25 riverine miles are public lands managed by the BLM and approximately 45 additional riverine miles occur within DVNP. Substantial private ownership (3.5 riverine miles) occurs along the river in the vicinity of Shoshone, both north and south of SH 178. A degree of river diversion and modification has also occurred on the Shoshone-side of SH 178. A total of 2.5 riverine miles are also privately owned in the Grimshaw Lake reach of the river; as is a total of 2.5 riverine miles in the Amargosa Canyon Segment.

The TNTRR, abandoned and dismantled in the 1940's, parallels the river for a majority of its length in California. This railroad once crossed the river on wooden bridges at several sites in California, though only three historic crossings occurred in the high water flow segment of the river occurring between Shoshone and Sperry Siding. A pedestrian trail now exists on the TNTRR, which is breached in many areas between Shoshone and Sperry. Few roads occur immediately adjacent to the river in the Shoshone to Sperry Siding Segment, although SH 178, Tecopa Hot Springs Road and Old Spanish Trail Highway do cross this river, widely spaced over a 21-mile span of the river. Several roads are parallel and cross the river in the Sperry Siding to SH 127 Segment of the river. Further, an access road to the popular Dumont Dunes Off-highway Vehicle Area parallels the river in this segment for four miles, crossing the river once at the entrance to this public land use area.

#### **O.4 Description of Segment(s) Under Consideration**

Considerations for National Wild and Scenic Rivers System eligibility are based on resource values, land ownership patterns, shoreline development, proximity of roads and previous river modifications. These considerations were augmented with information and cooperation provided by the National Park Service at Death Valley National Park and with California's statewide river conservation group, Friends of the River, and interested local community members.

As a consequence of the analysis documented herein, an eligibility determination for a 26-mile length segment of the Amargosa River occurring in California has been made. Segments identified as eligible for consideration of Wild and Scenic River designation include the Shoshone to Tecopa Segment (10 miles), which spans the river in a southerly fashion between SH 178 and Old Spanish Trail Highway; the Tecopa to Sperry Siding Segment (9 miles); and the Sperry Siding to State Highway 127 Segment (7 miles). The required suitability study on these segments will be deferred until after the Record of Decision for the NEMO Plan amendment to the CDCA Plan.

#### **O.5 Recommended NWSRS Segment Classification and Land Ownership**

Once determined eligible, river segments are tentatively classified for study as wild, scenic, or recreational, based on the degree of access and amount of development along the river area. If Congress designates a river or segment, the enabling legislation generally specifies the classification.

**Table O.1 Summary of River Segment Eligibility and Recommended Classifications**

River Segment	Length <sup>1</sup>	Comments
Amargosa River State line to Shoshone	50 miles	Not eligible – no observable water; dry wash.
Amargosa River Shoshone to Tecopa	10 miles	Eligible – Scattered sections of perennial river flows connected by intermittent streambed. Outstanding remarkable scenic, geologic, recreational, fish, wildlife, cultural and historic values. Recommended classification of “Scenic”.
Amargosa River Tecopa to Sperry Siding	9 miles	Eligible – Perennial river flow with associated outstanding remarkable scenic, geologic, recreational, fish, wildlife, and cultural and historic values. Recommended classification of “Wild”.
Amargosa River Sperry Siding to Hwy 127	7 miles	Eligible – Perennial river flow typically reaches Dumont access road, intermittent south to Hwy 127. Outstanding remarkable scenic, geologic, recreational, fish, wildlife, cultural and historic values. Recommended classification of “Recreational”.
Lower Carson Slough	8 miles	Not eligible – no free flowing water. Spring seeps comprise an alkali mud flat with associated marsh.
Salt Creek	~ 200 feet	Not eligible – no free flowing values, riparian moisture consist of perennial seep a few hundred feet in length, beginning at the spring.
Sheep Creek Springs	~ 50 feet	Not eligible – no free flowing water. Riparian moisture consists of perennial seep flowing about fifty feet from spring then soaking into ground.
China Ranch Wash (Willow Spring)	~ 300 feet	Not eligible – no free flowing water. Perennial spring originates on private land, seeps across about three hundred feet of public land and ends in a dry wash.

<sup>1</sup> Note: All lengths are approximate. First five river segments were measured using Geographic Information System software. Last three river segments were measured by dividing the length of surface moisture by 5,280' (mile).

**Table O.2 Comparison of Outstanding Remarkable Values for River Segments Within the Amargosa River Region (Eastern Inyo County)**

River Segment	Free Flow	Scenic	Recreational	Geologic	Fish	Wildlife	Historic	Cultural	Eligible WSR
<b>Amargosa River</b> State line to Shoshone	No	4	4	4	0	4	4	3	No
<b>Amargosa River</b> Shoshone to Tecopa	Yes	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	Yes
<b>Amargosa River</b> Tecopa to Sperry Siding	Yes	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	Yes
<b>Amargosa River</b> Sperry Siding to Hwy 127	Yes	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Yes
<b>China Ranch Wash</b> (Willow Springs)	No	3	4	3	0	4	3	4	No
<b>Lower Carson Slough</b>	No	4	4	3	0	3	4	4	No
<b>Salt Creek</b>	No	4	3	4	0	3	3	3	No
<b>Sheep Creek Spring</b>	No	4	4	4	0	4	4	4	No

The following three segments of the Amargosa River have been found eligible because they are free flowing and possess at least one outstanding remarkable value: Shoshone to Tecopa segment, Tecopa to Sperry Siding segment, and Sperry Siding to State Highway 127 segment.

The following water sources have been found not eligible because they lack a free flowing body of water or outstanding remarkable values: Amargosa River from the state line to Shoshone, Lower Carson Slough, Salt Creek, Sheep Creek Spring and China Ranch Wash (Willow Spring).

Key to Ratings:

- 0 – None
- 1 – Exemplary, one of the better examples of that type of resource at a national level
- 2 – Unique, a resource or combination of resources that are regionally one of a kind
- 3 – High quality at a regional and /or local level
- 4 – A common resource at the regional and/or local level

Accessibility, primitive nature, number and type of land developments, structures, water resource developments, and water quality were all considered in assigning classifications. The primary criteria for the three classifications are outlined below [*In: A Compendium of Questions & Answers Relating to Wild & Scenic Rivers* (Technical Report of the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999)]:

**Wild River Areas:** Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free from impoundments, generally inaccessible except by trail (no roads), with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive, and having unpolluted waters.

**Scenic River Areas:** Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free from impoundments, having shorelines or watersheds largely primitive and undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads (i.e., roads may cross but generally not parallel [in close proximity to] the river. These rivers or segments of rivers are usually more developed than wild and less developed than recreational. This classification may or may not include scenery as an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV).

**Recreational River Areas:** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, may have had some development of the shoreline, and may have had some impoundment or diversion in the past. This classification, does not, however, imply that recreation is an ORV.

With these criteria in mind, as well as ORV data related to differing segments of the Amargosa River, Table O.3 displays the classifications, which have been recommended for that portion of the river, determined eligible for inclusion to the NWSRS.

**Table O.3 – River Eligibility for inclusions to the NWSRS**

Riverine Segment	Classification	Public Land Miles	Private Land Miles
Shoshone to Tecopa	Scenic	6.25	3.75
Tecopa to Sperry Siding	Wild	6.50	2.50
Sperry Siding to SH 178	Recreational	7.00	0.00

## O.6 Reasons for Consideration

The Amargosa River was considered eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS because of values identified by the BLM in the completed CDCA Plan and during development of the ongoing Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Plan. Strong support for such WSR designation has been offered by the California Native Plant Society, Friends of the River, The Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and the local community.

## O.7 Outstanding Remarkable Values

All segments identified as eligible on public lands contain Outstandingly Remarkable Scenic Values (ORVs), i.e., Class “A” scenic quality, per BLM Manual guidelines. Two specific public land areas in these segments, the Amargosa Canyon and Grimshaw Lake Natural Areas, have been previously designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in part to their spectacular scenery. These segments also encompass a portion of the Kingston Range Wilderness. Regionally rare plant communities such as Black Willow (*Salix nigra*)-Arroyo Willow (*S. lasiolepis*), and Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Riparian Galleries, Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) Bosque, as well as alkaline meadow, lacustrine, emergent and cliffside spring plant communities, can also be found in abundance along this portion of the river. Wildlife supported by these regionally rare plant communities include a high percentage of endemic species, which occur nowhere else on earth, or in very low numbers outside of this portion of the river. Several threatened and endangered species, both plant and animal, occur in or use these segments, as well as a host of sensitive and/or special concern species. Over 260 bird species have been recorded. The presence of flowing water in these segments has served to attract humans for thousands of years. The high relief, stark topography and lush riparian vegetation provided by these segments continue to offer many opportunities for non-intrusive recreation. Table 2 documents the comparative assessment of OHVs by river segment. ORVs for this portion of the Amargosa River follow.

### O.7.1 Wildlife and Plants

The state and federally listed-endangered Amargosa vole (*Microtus californicus scirpensis*) occurs exclusively in meadow and riparian habitats along these segments, and a large portion of the central Amargosa has been designated as critical habitat for this endemic species. The similarly listed endangered Least Bells Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax trailli extimus*) also utilize these segments, with the former known to nest and the latter suspected to occur only during migration seasons. So too, with the State of California listed-threatened Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), and Swainson’s Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), where the former is known to nest and the latter is suspected only during migration seasons. Two desert fish species, the Amargosa Pupfish (*Cyprinodon nevadensis amargosae*) and the Amargosa Speckled Dace (*Rhynchithys osculus amargosae*), also occur in these segments and are both designated as sensitive species by the BLM. The State of California and federally listed- endangered Amargosa Niterwort (*Nitrophila mohavensis*), and possibly the federally listed-threatened Spring-loving Centaury (*Centaureum namophilum namophilum*), also occur along a portion of these segments.

### O.7.2 Geologic

These segments of the Amargosa River have been carved into a colorful array of spires, mesas cliffs and canyons over the years by water flow of varying velocities. The ancient Tecopa lakebed is also found in the central segment, and contains fascinating landforms and extensive fossils, including many not recorded frequently in the region.

### O.7.3 Cultural

Sites along these segments indicate a continuing occupation by indigenous peoples for over 10,000 years. These sites are located on both sides of the river and are found in each segment. There is a high concentration of sites within the ¼ mile study boundary along the Amargosa River because it is the largest water source in the region.

#### **O.7.4 Historic**

The Old Spanish Trail crosses the River in the central segment and lower segment and was one of the few pioneer trails used for both east and west travel. Famed explorers such as Kit Carson and Colonel John C. Fremont described several sites along these segments. The Tonopah and Tidewater (TNT) Railroad, which traverses all three segments, provided an historic support function for the remote mining communities located in the Death Valley Region, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **O.7.5 Recreational**

As one of the few surface water, riparian vegetation and high canyon density locales in the region, the three segments of the Amargosa offer visitors unusual river and canyon-based opportunities. Particularly related to hiking, exploration, bird watching, photography and equestrian use, in rugged and physically challenging terrain. The lower segment provides a unique desert experience because it includes multiple water crossings and scenic views. The central segment encompasses a portion of the Kingston Range Wilderness, where little human modification of the landscape is evident. This segment provides an opportunity to experience solitude in the natural condition of the Mojave Desert.

#### **O.7.6 Scenic**

These segments of the Amargosa flow past unusual desert wetlands and hot spring creeks, ancient lake-beds, mesas and mudflats; an abandoned railroad and human ruins of all kinds; colorful rock formations and precipitous cliffs; expansive meadows and even waterfalls. The lush riparian and wetland plant communities present along these segments contrast dramatically with the surrounding stark, desert landscape.

#### **O.7.7 Wilderness**

The central segment would encompass a portion of the Kingston Range Wilderness, an area where little human modification of the landscape is evident. An opportunity to experience solitude in a Mojave Desert area untrammelled by man and supporting natural processes is provided in this location.

### **O.8 Interim Protection**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) Act and federal guidelines require federal agencies, upon determination of WSR eligibility, to provide interim protection and management for a river's free-flowing character and any identified outstandingly remarkable values, subject to valid existing rights, until such time as a suitability study is completed. Upon study completion, the federal agency (BLM in this instance) makes a recommendation to Congress, which acts on that recommendation.

## **O.9 Management Standards and Guidelines for National Wild and Scenic Rivers**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, as amended) established a method of providing Federal protection for certain of our remaining free-flowing rivers, and preserving these locales for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Such designated rivers benefit from the protective management that the act provides.

Section 10(a) of the WSR Act states:

Each component of the NWSRS shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration, primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.

This section is generally interpreted by the Secretary of the Interior as a stated non-degradation and enhancement policy for all designated river areas, regardless of classification.

The following National Standards and Guidelines are summarized from BLM Manual 8351 [Wild and Scenic Rivers-Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation and Management (1992)]. These standards/guidelines are intended to apply to formally designated rivers through incorporation into, or amendment of, resource or land use management plans. Incorporation or amendment efforts are typically completed within three years of formal WSR designation. However, these guidelines also apply, on an interim basis, as described above. For the sake of clarity, guidelines are presented for each separate river classification (wild, scenic and recreational).

### **O.9.1 Wild River Areas**

The WSR Act defines wild river areas to include; “those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds and shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.”

Wild river areas are to be managed with a primary objective of providing primary emphasis to protection of identified outstandingly remarkable values, while providing consistent, river-related, outdoor recreation opportunities in a primitive setting.

Where National Management Standards/Guidelines include allowable practices such as construction of minor structures related to wildlife habitat enhancement, protection from fire, and rehabilitation or stabilization of damaged resources, provided the area will remain natural looking and the practices or structures will harmonize with the environment. Developments such as trails, bridges, occasional fencing, natural-appearing water diversions, ditches and water management devices, may be permitted if they are unobtrusive and do not have a significant, adverse impact on the natural character of the river area. The following Wild River Program Management Standards apply:

#### **Forestry Practices**

Cutting of trees not permitted except when needed in association with a primitive recreation experience (such as clearing trails, for visitor safety purposes, or for fire control). Timber outside the boundary, but within visual corridors, should where feasible, be managed and harvested in a manner designed to provide special emphasis on visual quality.

### **Water Quality**

Conditions will be maintained or improved to meet Federal criteria or federally approved State Standards. River management plans shall prescribe a process for monitoring water quality on a scheduled basis.

### **Hydroelectric Power and Water Resource Development**

No such development would be permitted in the channel or river corridor. All water supply dams and major diversions are prohibited. The natural appearance and essentially primitive character of the river area must be maintained. Federal agency groundwater development for range, wildlife, recreation or administrative facilities may be permitted if there are no adverse effects on ORVs.

### **Mining**

New mining claims and mineral leases are prohibited within 0.25 mile of the river. Valid existing claims would not be abrogated and, subject to existing regulations, e.g., 43 CFR 3809, and any future regulations the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe to protect the rivers included in the NWSRS, existing mining activity would be allowed to continue. All mineral activity on federally administered land must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, water sedimentation, pollution and visual impairment. Reasonable mining claim and mineral lease access will be permitted. Mining claims beyond 0.25 mile of the river, but within the wild river boundary, and perfected after the effective date of designation, can be patented only as to the mineral estate and not the surface estate.

### **Road and Trail Construction**

No new roads or other provisions for overland motorized travel would be permitted within a narrow incised river valley or, if the river valley is broad, within 0.25 mile of the river bank. A few inconspicuous roads leading to the boundary of the river area and unobtrusive trail bridges may be permitted.

### **Agricultural Practices and Livestock Grazing**

Agricultural use is restricted to a limited amount of domestic livestock grazing and hay production to the extent currently being practiced. Row crops are prohibited.

### **Recreation Facilities**

Major public use areas, such as campgrounds, interpretive centers, or administrative headquarters are located outside of wild river areas. Simple comfort and convenience facilities, such as toilets, tables, fireplaces, shelters and refuse containers may be provided as necessary within the river area. These should harmonize with the surroundings. Unobtrusive hiking and equestrian trail bridges could be allowed on tributaries, but would not normally cross the designated river.

### **Public Use and Access**

Recreational use including, but not limited to, hiking, fishing, hunting and boating is encouraged in wild river areas to the extent consistent with the protection of the river environment. Public use and access may be regulated and distributed where necessary to protect and enhance wild river values.

### **Rights-of-Way**

New transmission lines, natural gas lines, water lines, etc., are discouraged unless specifically prohibited outright by other plans, orders or laws. Where no reasonable alternative exists, additional or new facilities should be restricted to existing rights-of-way. Where new rights-of-way are unavoidable, locations and construction techniques will be selected to minimize adverse effects on wild river area-related values and fully evaluated during the site selection process.

### **Motorized Travel**

Although this use can be permitted, it is generally not compatible with this river classification. Normally, motorized use will be prohibited in a wild river area. Prescriptions for management of motorized use may allow for search and rescue/emergency situations.

### **O.9.2 Scenic River Areas**

The WSR Act defines scenic river areas to include “those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.”

Scenic river areas are to be managed with a primary objective of maintaining and providing outdoor recreation opportunities in a near-natural setting. The basic distinctions between “wild” and “scenic” classifications, involve varying degrees of development, types of land use, and road accessibility. In general, a wide range of agricultural, water management, silvicultural and other practices could be compatible with scenic classification values, providing such practices are carried out in a manner not resulting in a substantial adverse effect on the river and its immediate environment.

National Management Standards/Guidelines include the same considerations set forth for wild rivers, except that motorized vehicle use may in some cases be appropriate and that development of larger scale public-use facilities within the river area, such as moderate-sized campgrounds, interpretive centers, or administrative headquarters would be compatible, if such facilities were screened from the river. The following Scenic River Program Management Standards apply:

#### **Forestry Practices**

Silvicultural practices, including timber harvesting could be allowed, provided that such practices are carried out in such a way that there is no substantial adverse effect on the river and its immediate environment. The river should be maintained in its near-natural condition.

Timber outside the boundary, but within the visual screen area, should be managed and harvested in a manner designed to provide special emphasis on visual quality. Preferably, reestablishment of tree cover would be through natural revegetation. Cutting of dead and down materials for fuelwood will be limited. Where necessary, restrictions on the use of wood for fuel may be prescribed.

#### **Water Quality**

Conditions will be maintained or improved to meet Federal criteria or federally approved State Standards. River management plans shall prescribe a process for monitoring water quality on a scheduled basis.

#### **Hydroelectric Power and Water Resource Development**

No such development would be permitted in the channel or river corridor. Flood control dams and levees would be prohibited. All water supply dams and major diversions are prohibited. Maintenance of existing facilities and construction of some new structures would be permitted, provided that the area remains natural in appearance and the practices or structures harmonize with the surrounding environment.

#### **Mining**

Subject to existing regulations, e.g. 43 CFR 3809, and any future regulations the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe to protect the rivers included in the NWSRS, new mining claims and mineral leases can be allowed. All mineral activity on federally administered land must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, water sedimentation, pollution and visual impairment. Reasonable mining claim and mineral lease access will be permitted. Mining claims within the wild river boundary, and perfected after the effective date of designation, can be patented only as to the mineral estate and not the surface estate.

### **Road and Trail Construction**

Roads may occasionally bridge the river and short stretches of conspicuous or lengthy stretches of inconspicuous and well-screened roads would be allowed. Maintenance of existing roads and any new roads will be based on the type of use for which the roads are constructed and the type of use that will occur in the river area.

### **Agricultural Practices and Livestock Grazing**

In comparison to wild river areas, a wider range of agricultural and livestock grazing uses are permitted, to the extent currently being practiced. Row crops are not considered as much of an intrusion of the “largely primitive” nature of scenic corridors, as long as there is not a substantial adverse effect on the natural-like appearance of the river area.

### **Recreation Facilities**

Larger-scale public use areas, such as moderate-sized campgrounds, interpretive centers, or administrative headquarters, are allowed if such facilities are screened from the river.

### **Public Use and Access**

Recreational use including, but not limited to, hiking, fishing, hunting and boating is encouraged in scenic river areas to the extent consistent with the protection of the river environment. Public use and access may be regulated and distributed where necessary to protect and enhance scenic river values.

### **Rights-of-Way**

New transmission lines, natural gas lines, water lines, etc., are discouraged unless specifically prohibited outright by other plans, orders or laws. Where no reasonable alternative exists, additional or new facilities should be restricted to existing rights-of-way. Where new rights-of-way are unavoidable, locations and construction techniques will be selected to minimize adverse effects on scenic river area-related values and fully evaluated during the site selection process.

### **Motorized Travel**

This use, on land or water, could be permitted, prohibited or restricted to protect river values. Prescriptions for management of motorized use may allow for search and rescue/emergency situations.

### **O.9.3 Recreational River Areas**

The WSR Act defines recreational river areas to include “those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, that may have undergone some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.”

Recreational river areas are to be managed with an objective of protecting and enhancing existing recreational values. The primary objective is to provide opportunities for the public to participate in recreation activities dependent on, or enhanced by, the largely free-flowing nature of the river.

National Management Standards/Guidelines include allowable practices such as construction of recreation facilities in proximity to the river, although recreational river classification does not require extensive recreational developments. Such facilities are still to be kept to a minimum, with visitor services provided outside the river area. Future construction of impoundments, diversions, straightening, riprapping and other modification of the water way or adjacent lands would not be permitted, except where such developments would not have a direct and adverse effect on the river and its immediate environment. The following Recreational River Program Management Standards apply:

### **Forestry Practices**

Silvicultural practices, including timber harvesting could be allowed under standard restrictions to avoid adverse effects on the river environment and its associated values.

### **Water Quality**

Conditions will be maintained or improved to meet Federal criteria or federally approved State Standards. River management plans shall prescribe a process for monitoring water quality on a scheduled basis.

### **Hydroelectric Power and Water Resource Development**

No such development would be permitted in the channel or river corridor. Existing low dams, diversion works, riprap and other minor structures may be maintained, provided the waterway remains generally natural in appearance. New structures may be allowed, provided that the area remains natural in appearance and the practices or structures harmonize with the surrounding environment.

### **Mining**

Subject to existing regulations, e.g. 43 CFR 3809, and any future regulations the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe to protect the rivers included in the NWSRS, new mining claims and mineral leases can be allowed. All mineral activity on federally administered land must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, water sedimentation, pollution and visual impairment. Reasonable mining claim and mineral lease access will be permitted. Mining claims within the wild river area boundary perfected after the effective date of designation can be patented only as to the mineral estate and not the surface estate.

### **Road and Trail Construction**

Existing parallel roads can be maintained on one or both riverbanks. There can be several bridge crossings and numerous river access points.

### **Agricultural Practices and Livestock Grazing**

In comparison to scenic river areas, lands may be managed for a full range of agricultural and livestock grazing uses, consistent with current practices.

### **Recreation Facilities**

Interpretive centers, administrative headquarters, campgrounds and picnic areas may be established in proximity to the river. Recreational classification does not require extensive recreation development.

### **Public Use and Access**

Recreation use including, but not limited to, hiking, fishing, hunting and boating is encouraged in recreational river areas to the extent consistent with the protection of the river environment. Public use and access may be regulated and distributed where necessary to protect and enhance recreational river values.

### **Rights-of-Way**

New transmission lines, natural gas lines, water lines, etc., are discouraged unless specifically prohibited outright by other plans, orders or laws. Where no reasonable alternative exists, additional or new facilities should be restricted to existing rights-of-way. Where new rights-of-way are unavoidable, locations and construction techniques will be selected to minimize adverse effects on recreational river area-related values and fully evaluated during the site selection process.

### **Motorized Travel**

This use, on land, will generally be permitted, on existing roads. Controls will usually be similar to that of surrounding lands. Motorized travel on water will be in accordance with existing regulations or restrictions.

## **O.9.4 Management Objectives Common to All Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers**

### **Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas**

Management of river areas that overlap designated wilderness areas or wilderness study areas will meet whichever standard is highest. If an area is released from wilderness study area status and the associated Interim Management Policy, the applicable river classification standards and guidelines would then apply.

### **Fire Protection and Suppression**

Management and suppression of fires within a designated river area will be carried out in a manner compatible with contiguous federal lands. On wildfires, suppression methods will be utilized that minimizes the long-term impacts on the river and surrounding area. Pre-suppression and prevention activities will be conducted in a manner that reflects management objectives for the specific river segment. Prescribed fire may be utilized to maintain or restore ecological condition or meet objectives of the river plan.

### **Insects, Diseases and Noxious Weeds**

The control of forest and rangeland pests, diseases and noxious weed infestations will be carried out in a manner compatible with the intent of the WSR Act and management objectives of contiguous federal lands.

### **Cultural Resources**

Historic and prehistoric resource sites will be identified, evaluated and protected in a manner compatible with the objectives of the river and in accordance with applicable regulations and policies. Where appropriate, historic or prehistoric sites will be stabilized, enhanced and interpreted.

### **Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement**

The construction and maintenance of minor structures for the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat are acceptable, provided they do not affect the free-flowing characteristics of the river, are compatible with the classifications, that the area remains natural in appearance and the practices or structures harmonize with the surrounding environment.