

Wild and Scenic River Suitability Criteria
(per BLM Manual 8351 and
Interagency Wild & Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council Guidance)

1. Characteristics which do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the NWSRS.
2. Status of landownership, minerals (surface and subsurface), use in the area, including the amount of private land involved, and associated or incompatible uses. Jurisdictional consideration (administrative role and/or presence) must be taken into account to the extent that management would be affected.
3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters which would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and the values which could be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the NWSRS.
4. Federal, public, state, tribal, local, or other interests in designation or nondesignation of the river, including the extent to which the administration of the river, including the costs thereof, may be shared by state, local, or other agencies and individuals. Also, the federal agency that will administer the area should it be added to the National System.
5. Estimated cost, if necessary, of acquiring lands, interests in lands, and administering the area if it is added to the NWSRS. Section 6 of the WSR Act outlines policies and limitations of acquiring lands or interests in land by donation, exchange, consent of owners, easement, transfer, assignment of rights, or condemnation within and outside established river boundaries.
6. Ability of the agency to manage and/or protect the river area or segment as a WSR river, or other mechanisms (existing and potential) to protect identified values other than WSR designation.
7. Historical or existing rights which could be adversely affected. In determining suitability, consideration of any valid existing rights must be afforded under applicable laws (including the WSR Act), regulations, and policies.
8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the rivers ORVs by preventing incompatible development. This evaluation may result in a formal finding that the local zoning fulfills Section 6(c)'s requirements, which in turn preempts the federal government's ability to acquire land through eminent domain if the river is designated.
9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies and in meeting regional objectives. Designation may help or impede the "goals" of other tribal, federal, state, or local agencies. For example, designation of a river may contribute to state or regional protection objectives for fish and wildlife resources. Similarly, adding a river which includes a limited recreation activity or setting to the National System may help meet statewide recreation goals. Designation might, however, limit irrigation and/or flood control measures in a manner inconsistent with regional socioeconomic goals.

10. Contribution to a river system watershed or basin integrity. This factor reflects the benefits of a “systems” approach, i.e., expanding the designated portion of a river in the National System or developing a legislative proposal for an entire river system (headwaters to mouth) or watershed. Numerous benefits are likely to result from managing an entire river or watershed, including the ability to design a holistic protection strategy in partnership with other agencies and the public. Other issues and concerns, if any.
11. Other concerns, if any.