

Appendix U

Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

As part of the South Dakota Field Office Resource Management Plan revision an assessment must be made as to the eligibility and suitability for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designation on identified river segments. In addition, determination must be made whether land management activities or proposed projects will have a direct, indirect, or adverse effect upon any eligible or designated WSR river (BLM Manual 6400, Chapter 1.2).

Identification

The Nationwide River Inventory (NRI) List is an accepted source for identifying potential Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Belle Fourche River from the Cheyenne River to Vale is listed; however, no BLM land is adjacent to this segment, so no evaluation of the Belle Fourche River was made. The Little Missouri River runs through the NW corner of the planning area. The State of North Dakota designates the river as scenic as it flows through the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Elkhorn Ranch Site. The NRI does not identify the Little Missouri River south of Marmarth, N.D. The BLM considered this an indication of the river’s potential, so it was not evaluated. The BLM evaluated the Cheyenne River as identified on the NRI.

<i>River</i>	<i>Segment Description</i>	<i>Reason for Consideration</i>	<i>Total River Segment Length (miles)</i>	<i>River Length Adjacent to BLM (approximate miles)</i>	<i>BLM Jurisdiction¹ (acres)</i>
Cheyenne River	Lake Oahe to Slate Springs Draw Dam (Sec. 1, T8S, R6E)	Nationwide Rivers Inventory List	206	10	1071

¹Shoreline and adjacent lands within ¼ mile of the river segment mile measured from the ordinary high water mark on both sides of the river.

Evaluation

Where a particular river segment is predominately non-federal in ownership and contains interspersed BLM-administered lands, the BLM shall evaluate only its segment as to eligibility and defer to the State or to the private landowners’ discretion as to their determination of eligibility. This is the case in western South Dakota. Only 28 parcels of BLM intersect the 1/2 mile wide river study boundary, and this evaluation will consider no more than those parcels. In accordance with the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), evaluation of identified rivers involves the following sequential determinations: eligibility; tentative classification; and suitability for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS).

Eligibility

- A. **Basis for Determination.** To be eligible, a river segment must be “free-flowing” and must possess at least one river-related value considered to be “outstandingly remarkable.”
- B. **Free-flowing.** Free-flowing is defined by Section 16(b) of the WSRA as “existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway.”

ASSESSMENT: The Cheyenne River is essentially free-flowing in the area under consideration. The Slate Springs Draw Dam is at the beginning of the river section under consideration.

- C. Outstandingly Remarkable Values. Section 1(b) of the WSRA requires that, in order for a river segment to be eligible for inclusion as a component of the NWSRS, it must possess one or more of the following outstandingly remarkable values: scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.

1. Scenic. The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors must result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region.

ASSESSMENT: The rolling bluffs of the river, the scattered juniper draws and cottonwoods, the river condition of flat, methodical water, and the muted browns and greens of the river corridor do not result in notable or exemplary visual features or attractions. Widespread, and familiar throughout the region, these features are not extraordinary.

2. Recreational. Recreational opportunities are or have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes.

ASSESSMENT: Use of the area for recreation purposes is incidental. Local residents infrequently use the area for hunting. Values are not impressive enough to attract other visitors.

3. Geologic. The river or river corridor contains examples of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that are rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region.

ASSESSMENT: No geologic features, processes or phenomenon are rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region.

4. Fish. Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

- a. Populations. The river is nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks, or populations of State, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.

ASSESSMENT: The river in this area carries a population of 55 fish species, of which 32 are native and 23 are introduced. Two State threatened species are found in this river. These populations are not federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species. These populations are not of outstanding significance.

Habitat. The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for State, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.

ASSESSMENT: Habitat is provided for two State listed threatened species; however, the habitat is not of exceptionally high quality.

5. Wildlife. Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these conditions.

- a. Populations. The river or river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species dependent on the river environment.

ASSESSMENT: Wildlife species use the river corridor, but are not dependent on the river environment.

- b. Habitat. The river or river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide unique habitat or critical link in habitat conditions for State, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.

ASSESSMENT: The river corridor is important habitat; however, it does not provide exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance.

6. Cultural. The river or river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must be rare, have unusual characteristics, or exceptional human-interest value(s).

ASSESSMENT: Occasional cultural sites are not rare, do not have unusual characteristics or do not have exceptional human interest value(s).

7. Historic. The river or river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or cultural activity of the past that was rare, or unusual in the region.

ASSESSMENT: The river corridor was used in the past; however, no significant event, important person, or cultural activity of the past that was rare or unusual in the region.

8. Other Similar Values. While no specific evaluation guidelines have been developed for the “other similar values” category, additional values deemed relevant to the eligibility of the river segment should be considered in a manner consistent with the foregoing guidance—including, but not limited to, hydrologic, ecologic/biologic diversity, paleontologic, botanic, and scientific study opportunities.

ASSESSMENT: No other similar values were identified.

- D. Eligibility Determination. Based on the above assessments the identified segment of the Cheyenne River is free-flowing, and DOES NOT possess an outstandingly remarkable value; therefore, it is ineligible for Wild and Scenic River designation.