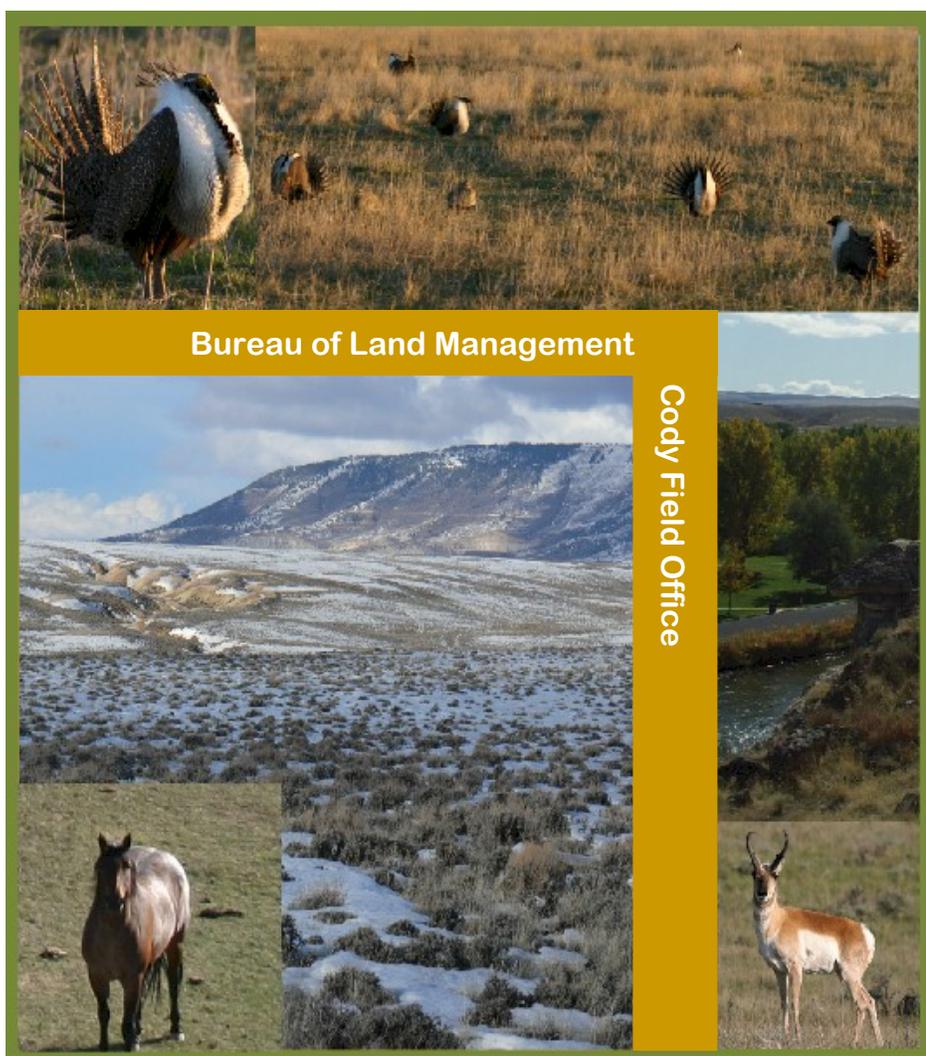


DRAFT ADDENDUM TO THE CODY FIELD OFFICE REVIEW OF POTENTIAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS IN THE CODY RMP PLANNING AREA



Wyoming State Office

May 22, 2009



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DRAFT

**ADDENDUM TO THE CODY FIELD OFFICE REVIEW
OF POTENTIAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS IN THE
CODY RMP PLANNING AREA**

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cody Field Office, Wyoming**

May 2009

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BB	Bighorn Basin
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CYFO	Cody Field Office
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	The Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
IM	Instruction Memorandum
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSO	No surface occupancy
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic River System
ORV	Outstandingly remarkable value
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USFS	United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
WFO	Worland Field Office
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WSRA	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The National Wild and Scenic River System

In 1968, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) created the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). The WSRA states that “certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.” The WSRA is intended to preserve the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) associated with these certain rivers, while at the same time allowing for their appropriate use and development (National Wild and Scenic Rivers System 2009).

Federal or state agencies administer rivers in the NWSRS, with several agencies occasionally acting as joint administrators. Waterways, however, can only be officially designated by Congress or, under special circumstances, the Secretary of the United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior (DOI).

Of the 11,434 miles of waterways that are part of the NWSRS, approximately 2,055 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs) are located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land (Interagency Wild & Scenic Rivers Council 2008). BLM Manual 8351 – Wild and Scenic Rivers – Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management provides guidance on implementing the WSRA for these WSRs.

1.2 Current Planning Effort

A Resource Management Plan (RMP) is a land use plan that provides broad multiple-use direction for managing public lands administered by the BLM. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) directs the BLM to develop such land use plans to provide for appropriate uses of public land. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. The RMP establishes goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resource management and the measures needed to achieve them. These measures are expressed as management actions and allowable uses (i.e., lands that are open or available for certain uses [including any applicable restrictions] and lands that are closed to certain uses).

The Bighorn Basin (BB) RMP Revision Project is a combined effort revising the RMPs for both the BLM Cody Field Office (CYFO) and the BLM Worland Field Office (WFO) in Wyoming. Public lands within the BB RMP Revision Project Planning Area, which is composed of the CYFO and WFO planning areas (See Figure 1), are currently managed according to three RMPs: the Cody RMP (1990) for the CYFO; and the Washakie RMP (1988) and Grass Creek RMP (1998) for the WFO. The revisions of these three plans will be managed as a single project collectively referred to as the Bighorn Basin RMP Revision Project with a single environmental impact statement (EIS). Each field office will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) and an RMP for its jurisdictional area at the end of the planning process. The BB RMP Revision Project is scheduled for completion in 2012.

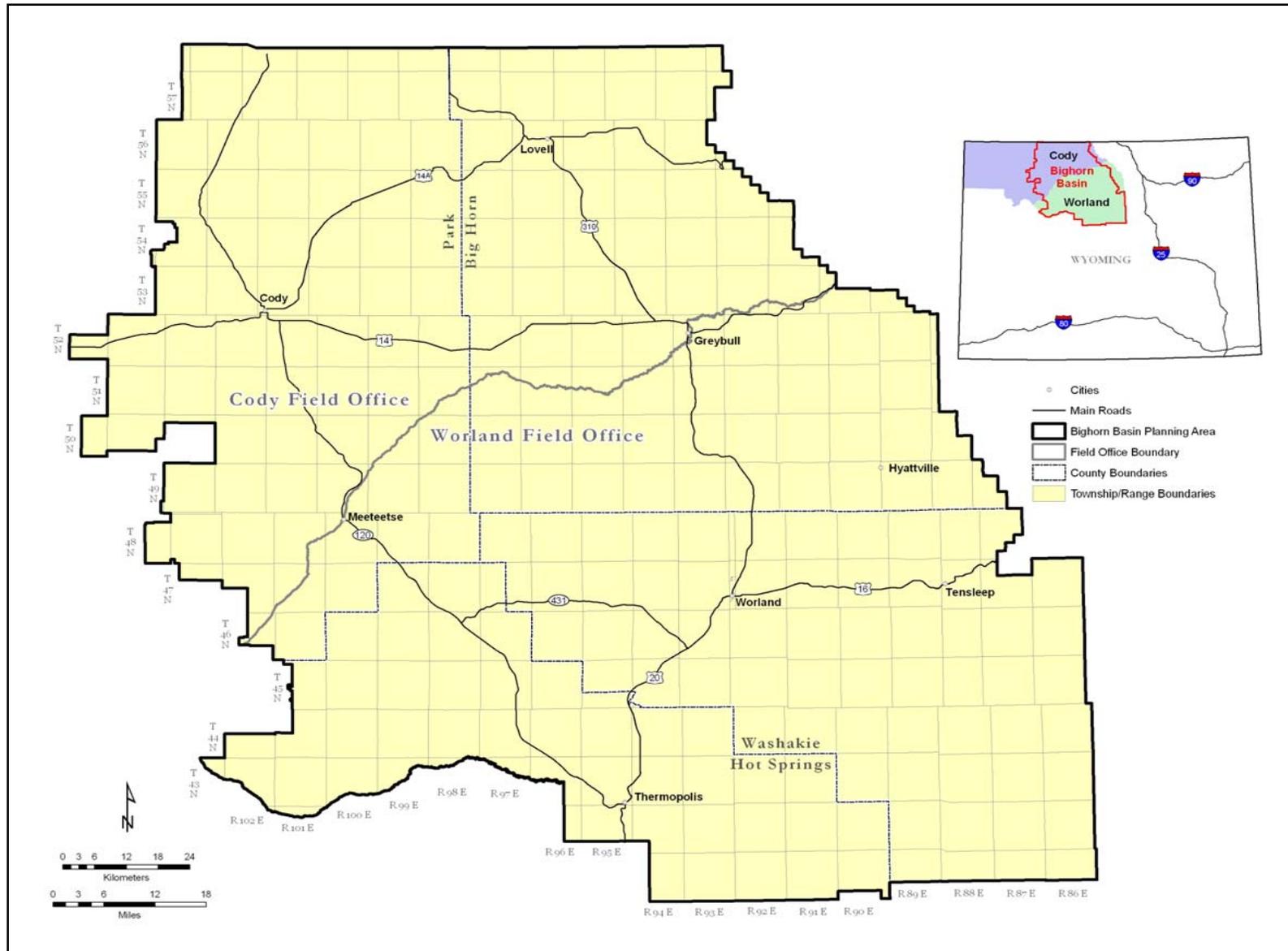


Figure 1-1. Cody and Worland Field Offices in Relation to the Bighorn Basin RMP Revision Project Planning Area.

The RMP and EIS will address management for BLM-administered lands including surface lands and federal mineral estate in the Planning Area. The Planning Area includes all of Big Horn, Park, and Washakie Counties, and most of Hot Springs County in north-western Wyoming.

1.2.1 Purpose and Need for This Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Suitability Review

During or prior to land use planning efforts, the BLM reviews and analyzes waterways within the planning area for inclusion in the NWSRS. Since the publication of the current Cody, Washakie, and Grass Creek RMPs, the BLM has conducted reviews of waterways within the CYFO and WFO for eligibility and suitability under the WSRA. A review of waterways in the CYFO, the *Cody Field Office Review of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Cody RMP Planning Area*, occurred in 1993 (with an update to management prescriptions in 2003) and a review of waterways in the WFO, the *Worland Field Office Review of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Washakie RMP Planning Area*, occurred in 2002 (BLM, Cody Field Office 2003; BLM, Worland Field Office 2002). In this document, these reports are referred to as the 2003 CYFO report and the 2002 WFO report, respectively. The findings in the 2002 WFO report remain valid and the waterway segments reviewed in that document are not addressed in this report. This *Addendum to the Cody Field Office Review of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Cody RMP Planning Area* (henceforth referred to as the “Addendum Report”) is intended to support the planning effort for the BB RMP Revision Project by serving as an addendum to the 2003 CYFO report.

To that end, this Addendum Report addresses three types of waterway segments within the CYFO planning area:

- Waterway segments that run through land that was acquired by the BLM or land withdrawals that have reverted to BLM management since the previous review was conducted.
- Waterway segments that were deemed ineligible for inclusion in the NWSRS during the 1993 CYFO review due to jurisdictional concerns (described further in the proceeding section).
- Waterway segments addressed in the 2003 CYFO report where other changes in circumstances justify reexamination. This Addendum Report reexamines the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River due to interest expressed by the public during scoping to evaluate waters that may be eligible and suitable under the WSRA. In addition, a small portion of Cottonwood Creek that was previously found to not meet criteria for inclusion in the NWSRS was re-evaluated for this Addendum Report to consider newly acquired public land on Little Mountain (the Craig Thomas Special Management Area and Little Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC]). This newly acquired land contains more of Cottonwood Creek and, as a result, this portion of the waterway has been reevaluated to see if eligibility and suitability determinations made during the previous inventory have changed.

Introduction

With these three exceptions, the finding for the lands along all other waterway segments discussed in the 2003 CYFO report remain valid, and the remaining waterway segments reviewed in that document are not addressed in this report.

2.0 THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER REVIEW PROCESS

The review of waterways in the CYFO portion of the BB RMP Planning Area for designation under the WSRA consisted of a three step process:

1. Identification of waterways on parcels of land acquired since the WSR review for the 2003 CYFO report and waterways subject to the jurisdictional consideration (described in the Identification of Waterway Segments for Review section of this Addendum Report) during the CYFO review.
2. Determination of whether the identified waterways on BLM-administered lands meet the definition of free-flowing and the eligibility criteria; assign tentative classification of either wild, scenic, or recreational to eligible waterways.
3. Review of whether the identified waterways on BLM-administered lands meeting the eligibility criteria were also suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS.

2.1 Identification of Waterway Segments for Review

The WSRA defines a river (referred to in this Addendum Report as a waterway) as “a flowing body of water or estuary or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills, and small lakes.” The BLM generally evaluates a waterway study area of ¼ mile from the high water mark on either side of the waterway, or approximately 320 acres per mile, when evaluating waterways for NWSRS inclusion. This study area can be expanded or contracted as needed to fully protect the associated ORVs, though the waterway study area should average no more than 320 acres per mile. WSR reviews only address areas of BLM-administered surface land, and not areas of “split estate lands,” where the land surface is state or privately-owned and the federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM.

For the purposes of this Addendum Report, the BLM first reviewed areas of jurisdictional change (areas recently acquired by the BLM or areas previously withdrawn and recently reverted to BLM administration) that occurred after the 2003 CYFO (conducted in 1993) screening for waterways. These areas of jurisdictional change were primarily located between Cody and Greybull along U.S. Highway 14, and in the northeastern and northwestern corners of the BB RMP Revision Project Planning Area. Using geographic information system (GIS) data, the BLM identified natural waterways (including both perennial and nonperennial rivers and streams) in these areas.

The BLM next identified waterways that had been eliminated from WSR consideration at the eligibility stage in the 2003 CYFO report due to limited (i.e., less than 40 percent) BLM-administered surface land along the waterway. Per the clarification in BLM Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. 2004-196, jurisdictional considerations cannot be used as a reason to disqualify a waterway segment during the eligibility review phase. As a result, waterways not considered for eligibility in the 2003 CYFO report due to this jurisdictional criterion have been reconsidered in this Addendum Report.

Finally, the BLM identified the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River and a small section of Cottonwood Creek for reexamination in this Addendum Report due to changes in circumstances

since the review of these waterway segments for the 2003 CYFO report. During the original CYFO review, the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River was deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. This determination was based primarily on the potential concerns over future development of water resources raised by the State of Wyoming and a conflict with previous understandings between the Governor of the State of Wyoming and the federal government concerning the designation of the existing Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land. Recent communication with the Governor's Office indicates that interest in water development along this stretch of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River may no longer exist. During the review of previously unevaluated sections of Cottonwood Creek in newly acquired BLM-administered land, the CYFO Interdisciplinary team reevaluated Cottonwood Creek based on the addition of lands to the Craig Thomas Little Mountain Special Management Area and the Little Mountain ACEC.

During its initial screening for waterway segments fitting the above criteria, the BLM identified **23 segments on 19 waterways** for review. These waterways consisted of:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Meeteetse Creek | 14. Coon Creek |
| 2. Oasis Spring | 15. Horse Creek |
| 3. Cow Creek – Segment 1 | 16. Dry Creek |
| 4. Cow Creek – Segment 2 | 17. North Fork Dry Creek |
| 5. Cottonwood Creek – Segment 1 | 18. North Fork Shoshone River |
| 6. Cottonwood Creek – Segment 2 | 19. South Fork Shoshone River |
| 7. Shoshone River | 20. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River
– Segment 1 |
| 8. Dry Creek | 21. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River
– Segment 2 |
| 9. West Branch Whistle Creek | 22. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River
– Segment 3 |
| 10. Whistle Creek | 23. Pat O'Hara Creek |
| 11. Spring Creek | |
| 12. Sage Creek | |
| 13. South Fork Coon Creek | |

Appendix A in this document provides lengths for these waterway segments and maps showing their locations.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria Review and Tentative Classification

For a waterway to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS it must be in a free-flowing state, and public lands along the waterway must possess at least one river-related ORV.

2.2.1 Free-flowing

Section 16(b) of the WSRA defines free-flowing waterways as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway.” BLM Manual 8351 states that “[t]he existence of small dams, diversion works, or other minor structures” should not be used to automatically disqualify a river from WSR

consideration. BLM Manual 8351 states that a river need not be “boatable or floatable” in order to be eligible, and rivers with intermittent flows may be considered. However, based on amended guidance regarding the definition of free-flowing provided in IM 2004-196, waterway segments considered under the WSRA should not be ephemeral (i.e., have flows lasting only a few days per year).

2.2.2 Outstandingly Remarkable Values

To be considered eligible for WSR designation, a waterway must contain ORVs in at least one of eight resource areas. These resource areas include scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, wildlife, cultural, historic, and “other similar” values. Per IM 2004-196, ORVs should be located in or immediately adjacent to the waterway, and should contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem and/or owe their location or existence to the presence of the river. The BLM used the following criteria from BLM Manual 8351 to identify waterways for eligibility under the WSRA.

1. **Scenic.** The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors along the waterway must result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook, H-8410-1 may be used in assessing visual quality, and the rating area must be scenic quality “A.” When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and length of time that negative intrusions are visible may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the waterway segment length and not common to other rivers in the geographic region.
2. **Recreational.** Recreational opportunities on public lands along the waterway are unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the waterway’s resources for recreational purposes. Recreation-related opportunities could include, but not be limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting and boating. Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic area. The waterway may have the potential to provide settings for national or regional commercial usage or competitive events. The waterway may also provide a critically important regional recreation opportunity, or be a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.
3. **Geologic.** The waterway or surrounding public land contains an example(s) of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, and other geologic structures).
4. **Fish.** The relative merits of either fish populations or habitat in the waterway, or a combination of these waterway-related conditions may be used to determine the value of fisheries.

- a. *Populations.* The waterway is one of the top national or regional 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.
 - b. *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.
5. **Wildlife.** Wildlife values on public lands along the waterway segment may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these conditions.
 - a. *Populations.* The public lands along the waterway contain nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species dependent on the waterway corridor. Of particular significance may be species considered to be unique or populations of state, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.
 - b. *Habitat.* The public lands along the waterway provide exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or provide unique habitat or a 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.
6. **Cultural.** The waterway or surrounding public land 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). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare; may represent an area where culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; or may have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.
7. **Historic.** The waterway or surrounding public land contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or unusual in the region. A historic site(s) and/or feature(s) in most cases is 50 years old or older. Sites or features listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places, may be of particular significance.
8. **Other Similar Values.** Other similar values include, but not are limited to, hydrologic, ecologic/biologic diversity, paleontologic, botanic, and scientific study opportunities. 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 are to be considered in a manner consistent with other resources.

2.2.3 Tentative Classification

Eligible waterways or waterway segments must be given a tentative classification. Section 2(b) of the WSRA allows for three classification categories for eligible waterways: wild, scenic, and/or recreational. The appropriate classification is determined based on the development along the waterway and on adjacent lands at the time of the evaluation. The criteria for the three tentative classifications are:

1. **Wild River Areas.** Wild river areas are those waterways or sections of waterways that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These waterways represent vestiges of primitive America. Wild means undeveloped; roads, dams, or diversion works are generally absent from a ¼-mile corridor on both sides of the river.
2. **Scenic River Areas.** Scenic river areas are those waterways or sections of waterways that are generally free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Scenic does not necessarily mean the waterway corridor has to have scenery as an ORV; however, it means the waterway segment may contain more development (except for major dams or diversion works) than a wild segment and less development than a recreational segment. For example, roads may cross the waterway in places, but generally do not run parallel to it. In certain cases, however, a waterway with a parallel well screened unpaved road could qualify for scenic river area classification.
3. **Recreational River Areas.** Recreational river areas are those waterways or sections of waterways that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Parallel roads or railroads, existence of small dams or diversions can be allowed in this classification. A recreational river area classification does not imply that the waterway will be managed or prioritized for recreational use or development.

Congress is ultimately responsible for assigning a permanent classification, and the tentative classification only remains in effect until legislative action occurs or the waterway segment is released.

2.2.4 Results of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Review

The CYFO Interdisciplinary team met on March 2 and 3, 2009 to conduct an internal review of the waterway segments and associated BLM-administered lands within the waterway study areas. The CYFO Interdisciplinary team first reviewed the waterways to determine which met the definition of free-flowing (see Table A-1 in Appendix A). Ten of the 23 waterway segments were determined not to be free-flowing, due to either ephemeral flows or flows resulting from produced water from oil and gas development. Waterway segments that were not free-flowing (identified in Table A-1 of this Addendum Report) were not carried forward in this WSR review.

The CYFO Interdisciplinary team reviewed the remaining 13 free-flowing waterways to determine whether the BLM-administered lands within the study areas contained any river-related ORVs. Of the 13 free-flowing waterway segments, nine were determined to have associated ORVs making them eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS and are identified below.

1. Meeteetse Creek
2. Cow Creek – Segment 1
3. Cow Creek – Segment 2
4. Cottonwood Creek – Segment 2
5. North Fork of the Shoshone River
6. South Fork of the Shoshone River
7. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River – Segment 2
8. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River – Segment 3
9. Pat O'Hara Creek

Appendix A provides maps of each of the waterway segments, including those not carried forward due to a lack of free flowing characteristics, and lists any associated ORVs. Appendix B provides a detailed description of each identified ORV. As required by the WSRA, the BLM also identified a tentative classification for each eligible waterway segment based on the criteria listed in the Tentative Classification section of this document (see Appendix B).

2.3 Suitability Factors Review

2.3.1 Suitability Factors

All waterway study areas that meet the eligibility criteria must then be reviewed to determine if they are also suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. The WSRA and BLM Manual 8351 list a number of factors that should be considered when assessing the suitability of waterways for inclusion in the NWSRS. These suitability factors include, but are not limited to:

- Factor 1:** Characteristics which do or do not make the BLM-administered lands a worthy addition to the NWSRS.
- Factor 2:** Current status of land ownership (including mineral ownership) and land and resource uses in the area, including the amount of private land involved, and any associated or incompatible land uses.
- Factor 3:** Reasonably foreseeable potential use of the BLM-administered lands and related waters which would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if they were included in the NWSRS, and the values which could be foreclosed or diminished if the BLM-administered lands are not protected as part of the system.
- Factor 4:** Public, state, local, tribal, or federal interest in designation or nondesignation of any part or the entire waterway involved, including the extent to which the administration of any or the entire waterway, including costs thereof, may be shared by state, local, or other agencies and individuals.

- Factor 5:** Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands and of administering the area if it is added to the NWSRS. Section 6 of the WSRRA 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.
- Factor 6:** Ability of the BLM to manage and/or protect the BLM-administered lands involved as a WSR or other mechanisms (existing or potential) to protect identified values other than WSR designation.
- Factor 7:** Historical or existing rights which would be adversely affected. In the suitability review, adequate consideration will be given to rights held by other landowners and applicants, lessees, claimants or authorized users of the BLM-administered lands involved.
- Factor 8:** Other issues and concerns if any.

2.3.2 Results of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Review

The CYFO Interdisciplinary team conducted an internal review and screening of the above eight factors for each eligible waterway segment and made preliminary suitability determinations. Based on this review, the BLM made a preliminary determination that the following four waterway segments were likely suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS:

1. Cow Creek – Segment 1
2. Cow Creek – Segment 2
3. Cottonwood Creek– Segment 2
4. Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River – Segment 3

Appendix C provides additional information in support of these preliminary suitability determinations from the internal review.

There were several reasons the BLM determined eligible waterway segments were not suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. Meeteetse Creek was found unsuitable due to the private ownership of the mineral estate in the study area, the development of which could complicate the BLM's ability to protect the waterway's associated ORVs. Due to the preponderance of non-BLM-administered land along each segment, the BLM determined the North Fork and South Fork of the Shoshone River, and Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River – Segment 1 were not suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. The BLM does not have the authority to manage private or state land, and the presence of large quantities of these types of lands would make it difficult for the BLM to manage for the protection of the identified ORVs. Due to the success of current management along the Pat O'Hara Creek, the ORVs are preserved, making WSR designation unnecessary.

2.3.3 Next Steps

2.3.3.1 Public Review of Eligibility and Suitability Findings

The results of both the WSR eligibility and suitability reviews in this Addendum Report, as well as those in the 2003 CYFO and 2002 WFO reports, will be presented for public review and comment during the BB RMP Revision Project Draft RMP and EIS planning effort. Based on public input, changes to the eligibility and suitability determinations presented in this Addendum Report may occur.

2.3.3.2 Record of Decision and Congressional Action

The RODs issued following the publication of the Final EIS and Proposed RMP for the BB RMP Revision Project will contain decisions on the waterway segments reviewed for inclusion in the NWSRS. The RODs will present all those waterway segments the BLM believes are suitable and will provide final interim management prescriptions for each. These interim management prescriptions will provide protection for the ORVs that make the segment suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. Congress will ultimately decide whether or not to include the suitable waterway segments in the NWSRS.

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